

**Diaspora Poetics & (re)Constructions of Differentness:
Conceiving Acts 6.1 – 8.40 as Diaspora**

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To Nikki, my wife, along with my mother, father and Andrew for all your love, patience and support, Thank you. For *petit un...*

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Introductions

Introduction: An Entrée to Contextual Sight(s)

Proposing

Perhaps the most insidious and least understood form of segregation is that of the word. And by this I mean the word in all its complex formulations, from the proverb to the novel and stage play, the word with all its subtle power to suggest and foreshadow overt action while magically disguising the moral consequences of that action and providing it with symbolic and psychological justification. For if the word has the potency to revive and make us free, it has also the power to blind, imprison and destroy.

Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Acts*¹

A work of advice has two natures; on one hand, it teaches what things are to be engaged; on the other, what things to avoid at all cost [τὰ δὲ φεύγειν].

Lucian of Samosata, *How to Write History*²

I can remember being nervous. Having gone back and forth for months, waiting for the perfect time. I tried to imagine every possible response or follow-up question. Yet, I could not know with certainty what was to come. Honestly, I was still uncertain of the appropriateness. My significant other did not belong to her father, and in fact, will never be anyone's property. The intention was not to ask for his permission but to inform him of my desire to propose, in a way that was responsive and respectful to any of his possible feelings, doubts, concerns or queries. I wanted: to be humble and considerate; to show respect for all parties involved; to respect the communal aspect with which both our families view the institution. I had the makings of a proposal, and I wanted its expression to be an accurate representation of the dreams in my head.

¹ Ralph Ellison, "Twentieth-Century Fiction and the Black Mask of Humanity," in *The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison*, ed. John F. Callahan, Modern Library Edition. (New York: Random House LLC, 2003), 81.

² Lucian of Samosata, "Quomodo historia conscribenda sit (Greek)," in *Luciani Samosatensis Opera*, ed. Karl Jacobitz, vol. II, Logos Edition. (Medford, MA: in aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1913), 6.1.

This time was a period of significant reflection, personal inventory, preparation and imagination. I was continuously remembering my past, our past and envisioning the various trajectories that the future could hold. Knowledge, in this circumstance, was little more than hopeful conjecture modeled upon the admixtures that were my mind's narratives: amalgamated perceptions of past experiences and possible, analogous tomorrows. Within those contemplative moments, I crafted narratives of tomorrow: some with joy; some with pain. It was in that process of critical reflection and narrative-making that I could prepare to engage in the uncertain processes that lay ahead. Regardless of the decisions to come, my future would be the fecund, generative synthesis of the narratives of my imagination and daily responses through my actions. Before the proposal, my mind envisioned future histories, and these narratives emboldened and cautioned me toward that preparatory moment.

Albert Einstein once opined to a reporter that, “[i]magination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.”³ It is with this notion of the imagination's narrative-making power that I initiate the following study on the poetics of diaspora discourse and its exegetical usefulness for cultural critical readings of Acts 6 – 8. In much the same way, the work below is a proposal that mirrors the contemplative moments described above. It is equal parts personal inventory, self-reflection, critical analysis, narrative construction and reconstruction within a matrix of overlapping spheres and contexts that I encounter and negotiate with consideration, humility and respect. My knowledge of diaspora and the ancient world—where one understands knowledge as a discursive model built from assertions, generalities and logic

³George Sylvester Viereck, “What Life Means to Einstein: An Interview,” *Saturday Evening Post*, October 26, 1929.

rooted in the ahistoric ideologies of subject position—is like the knowledge of most scholars on any subject: inert without the animating *feu* of imagination. Crossing temporal, cultural and traditional academic boundaries, this project is an exercise in (re)imagining: space; difference; relationships; texts; and history.

Bounded by Intellect: It's So Dark Outside (of history)

In this restricted sense the Negro has no history, culture, or ability, for the simple fact that such human beings as have history and evidence culture and ability are not Negroes!

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Negro*

It falls upon me as wholly astonishing, those who, when considering works of antiquity, deem it imperative to pay attention solely to the Greeks and to pursue truth from them, but when it comes to us and to other peoples to distrust.

Josephus, *Against Apion* I.6

I begin this narrative-making process with an introduction to its intellectual and contextual setting. Serving as a doctoral dissertation in a department of religion, the specific area of specialty is New Testament and early Christian literature, though the execution is transdisciplinary due to its intimate engagement with the fields of Diaspora Studies and Black Atlantic Studies.⁴ This project presupposes the importance that

⁴ Coined in art historian Robert Farris Thompson's *Flash of the Spirit*, the Black Atlantic is heuristic concept used by scholars to discuss the dynamic, interdependent and transnational socio-cultural and political spaces linked via the Atlantic Ocean that have significantly informed the development of the history, economics, cultures and identities connected with the African Diaspora. Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1983); Paul Gilroy's, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, is largely responsible for popularizing and theorizing the concept of Black Atlantic as a spatial heuristic. Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* stands as one of the most influential books written in the field of Black/Africana cultural studies. The Black Atlantic is an acerbic critique of the fractious and divisive nature of modernity, and its filial nation-oriented construct of racial consciousness and identity. Through an intriguing gloss of Black cultural history the London-born Gilroy uses music, literature and history to depict the Atlantic Ocean as a temporal and spatial reality that is a conduit for black poetic, expressive, and cultural connectedness. Gilroy transforms the notion of the African diaspora from a historic and linear corruption of Africa by modernity into a dynamic matrix of cultural and political exchanges that subverts modernity. Invoking Thompson's term, Gilroy describes the Black Atlantic as a cultural cauldron that is both figurative and historical root for black cultural identity. As an ideologically framed heuristic term, use of the nomenclature "Black Atlantic" infers the transnational reorientation of scholarly discussions and investigations of Black cultural and historical

context plays on the articulation and reception of discourse. As I attempt to (re)imagine the spaces of meaning-making in Acts of the Apostles, a foundational acknowledgement is that scholars' intellectual and contextual settings integrally shape how discourse, and scholarship in general, form. Any (re)construction of Acts' ancient context is bound by the limits and structures of a scholars' context(s) and, thus, warrants detailed discussion.

Through the intellectual and contextual setting depicted here, I submit that this project takes place in a precarious position across various contexts. Through a close inspection of this work's intellectual and contextual setting, this introduction shows how scholarship in the Humanities is suffuse with a sub-structural trend that I call Hegelian Colour-Blindness. The language of Hegelian Colour-Blindness provides a means to describe scholarship's predisposition to claims of objectivity, singularity and universality. Through this language, I situate the contextual and propositional aspect of this dissertation within the broader tradition of history writing, hermeneutics and exegesis that is found within the Humanities.⁵

Biblical Studies, particularly of Acts of the Apostles, has long had a reciprocal relationship with the development of modern critical theory and scholarly approaches to (re)constructing and writing ancient history. The presentation of this project's intellectual and contextual setting shows the contextual and invested nature of all critical scholarship. Additionally, the interdisciplinary field of Diaspora Studies, if publications are an indication, is a rapidly growing field. There are now countless studies available on

developments through the Atlantic Ocean and across Europe, Africa and the Americas. The term "Black Atlantic" now functions both as a spatial perspective for studying Black culture and history as well as a broader designation for specific streams of Africana and African Diaspora studies. See Chapter Three for further discussion of Gilroy's engagement of diaspora and the "Black Atlantic." Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

⁵ See below for a discussion of this author's understanding of context and exegesis.

various aspects of Diaspora communities, diaspora as a phenomenon and the word diaspora.⁶ Even with the surfeit of publications, this introduction presents this project's intellectual and contextual setting as ideologically flawed. The flaw resides neither in the presence or execution of an ideology, for ideology undergirds, "any human engagement with reality," nor in the discussion of generalized models and the universal.⁷ The flaw resides in the Universalizing of any one particular ideology and the hegemonic consequences that follow such procedures. This flaw, with respect to the intellectual and contextual setting of this project, is ever present in scholars' pursuit of history. History writing is a process of narrative making. This narrative-making is bounded by one's imagination. Yet, because the pursuit, analysis, critique and construction of history undergirds much of the scholar's task, this flaw appears as scholarship's congenital disorder while it is in fact a debilitating virus merely propagating off the critical and innovative pursuit of meaning.⁸

Jacques Derrida's description of *mal d'archive* is a convenient means of explaining one source of this ideological flaw. In an analysis of Sigmund Freud's treatment of the archive, Derrida provides an astute analysis of the essence of the archive, its role in the production of meaning, its bracketing of the past and subsequent impact on perceptions of the future.⁹ It is within history, its study and construction, that *mal d'archive* produces an unavoidable *trouble d'archive* that embodies both "the lightest

⁶ A Worldcat search of theses/dissertations listing diaspora as a keyword in 2012 and 2013 returned 327 results. A search for books published in English over the same period and it returned 389. Due to some duplicates these numbers are not precise, yet the sheer approximate number shows the interest, if not at least its modish popularity.

⁷ Louis Althusser, *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1984), 6–10.

⁸ This description alludes to the differences between congenital and versus inherited disorders.

⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (University of Chicago Press, 1998).

symptoms” and “great holocaustic tragedies.”¹⁰ The archive is a locus of power; it serves as a point of origin while it also defines the boundaries within which knowledge later becomes crafted. Simultaneously, the archivist exercises the powers of memory, forgetfulness and redactor. (S)he often employs this power through reason, as the individual thinker-scholar. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot explains, neither the past nor the archive as a representational figure of the past is a single-site storage container of historicity. One never simply recalls the absolute totality of an experience for an individual or community. The archive, thus, destroys and erases at the very moment one begins to strive to collect and remember. *Mal d’archive* is more than an archive fever expressing a need for, or exhaustion from archives but signifies society *en mal d’archive*:

It is to burn with passion. It is to never rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there’s too much of it, right where something in it anarchives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement.¹¹

The archive consists of more than the facts, texts, and artifacts of interest.

Inscribed on the archive’s boundaries and incorporated as the ether and protoplasma of archival space are the ideological and cosmological particularities of the archivists and historians. Power lies in perspective, and history is conceived of that power.

Consequently, after describing this study’s conceptual impetus for utilizing Black America as a lens for (re)conceiving Acts of the Apostles, I briefly introduce Acts of the Apostles and describe diaspora in a way that I find constructive for (re)imagining on texts within Black America.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid., 90.

¹¹ Ibid., 91.

¹² In this context, “imagine on texts” means to (re)conceive through a lens of diaspora, and the poetic dimensions of Black American discourse.

Archiving Power: Perceiving History as Discourse

Within the field of Humanities in general, and the study of early Christianity in particular, this project's use of Black American cultural criticism to inform a cultural critical reading of Acts of the Apostles places this study in danger of dismissal as *passé*. Scholars of early Christian history, like others in the Humanities, construct archives and canons within their disciplines that privilege certain perspectives and models upon which the historian can then offer "legitimate" constructions of the past, or in the case of biblical exegesis, offer "legitimate" interpretations of ancient texts. A brief reflection on Hegel's *Philosophy of History* evinces it as a foundational source-text for contemporary (re)constructions of history. While *mal d'archive* is a significant contributing factor to this project's intellectual and contextual setting, one of the insidiously suffuse symptoms of this fever in the Humanities is manifest in a lingering affinity towards Hegel's approach to history and history writing. If the *commencement* and rule of one's archive has a worldview limited by the parameters and convictions of an early nineteenth century German philosopher, then an aspiring historian has already restricted the number of imaginings and futures available to him/her as exegete.

Over the last decade of his life, Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831) held appointments as Chair of Philosophy and Rector at the University of Berlin.¹³ While in Berlin, he regularly offered lectures on the philosophy of history. A seminal figure in the field of philosophy in his own time and today, Hegel approached history as the rational

¹³ Hegel's use of dialectics as an epistemological framework to understand the world and its progress played a foundational role in the ideological development of Western Modernity. His influence remains visible throughout the humanities and social sciences. From Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860), who adapted Hegel's dialectic to construct a history of early Christianity to Karl Marx (1818-1883), who appropriated aspects of Hegel's work to propose a materialist universal history, Hegel's work and developmental approach to historicism undergirded diverse thought and scholarship from the nineteenth century to the present day.

explanation of the past through narrative. The world, accordingly, was a totality in progressive and dialectical development towards its teleological realization of ultimate freedom. These lectures, posthumously published as *The Philosophy of History*, elicited both a developmental framework and axiology that persists even today.¹⁴ Though the specifics of Hegel's philosophy has only modest implications for the substance of this project, his approach helps frame the archive from which scholars engage ancient discourses, and position the study of Africa and African descended peoples. The archive, in this case symbolized by Hegel's philosophy of History, provides the mechanisms for identifying repetition over time. In other words, the archive predetermines how one can find and express analogies in the past, present, and future. Hegel's lingering influence on

¹⁴ The lectures on the philosophy of history, published posthumously, identify three types of history. Original History describes contemporary events of a historian's own time. The emphasis within Original History is the collection and transformation of the disparate events of one's own life into coherent concepts and narrative. A second type of history is Reflective history. Composed of four subcategories, Reflective History concerns the engagement of broad time spans, and the distinct approaches to describing the past through narrative. Hegel's presentation contains an implicit trajectory of development. He begins by explaining that 1) Universal History attempts to narrate the entire past of a subject, whether a people, country, or the world. Advancing to next stage, 2) his Pragmatic History can be understood as the narrating of a Universal History that intentionally describes the present as a product in relation to the past. 3) The third type of Reflective History is Critical History, which is the critical analysis of how historians have discursively narrated history. In other words, Critical History entails the discursive presentation, narration, of a reception history of a people, country, or the world. Fragmentary History, the final stage of Reflective History, acts as a conduit to the type of Philosophical History with which Hegel identifies his own work. 4) Fragmentary History employs what is analogous to a hermeneutical abstract as the basis for its narration of events. This form of Reflective History narrates the development of the abstract idea over time. Using this particular point of view, the hermeneutic describes the history of said subject as a progressive relationship between the subject and idea. For Hegel, if the Historian's general point of view were "true", Fragmentary History, an observation and narration of history from a specific perspective—a fragment of all possible perspectives—is a transitory step to Philosophical History. Arriving at a discussion of the type of history under which his own work falls, "Philosophical History," Hegel defines Philosophical History as pertaining to the narration of history through careful consideration and analysis of the underlying reason and rationality governing the progressive transformation and development of the world. Implicit in Hegel's notion of Philosophy of History was the conviction that the world was a coherent and progressive spirit/mind working out its own pure reason. Philosophy of History, consequently, provides historians a means of evaluating the past and present, while logically advocating and participating in the construction of the coming. See, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History: With Selections from the Philosophy of Right*, trans. Leo Rauch (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1988).

the West is an instructive point of departure for the present study's contextual uses of Black America and diaspora as crucibles for theoretical development, subjects for cultural critical analysis, and interpretive subject-positions for the exegesis of Acts 6 – 8. Hegel's notion of history frames the academic and socio-cultural circumstance(s) within which I foreground my racial and cultural subject-position, Black American, as a constituent and heterogeneous particularity—a polyphonic articulation—of the Black Atlantic and the African diaspora.

While Cyrille Charles-Auguste Bissette (1795-1858) stood trial for sedition in Martinique and David Walker (c. 1796-1830) published and circulated his own, *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles* from Boston, Hegel was teaching Europe's burgeoning philosophers and framers of modernity that, “[Africa] is no historical part of the World; it has no movement or development to exhibit.”¹⁵ His derisively pejorative analysis

¹⁵ Cyrille Bissette, a free person of color in the French colony of Martinique, and was accused and convicted of circulating a pamphlet that was seditious. Along with a peer, Louis Fabien fils, were exiled, banded, and had their property confiscated. The anonymously authored pamphlet, *De la situation des gens de couleur libres aux Antilles françaises*, advanced the rights of people of color throughout the Antilles. A portion of Bissette's sentence would be overturned as Bissette went on to be controversial figure that had an active career as a publisher, abolitionist, and politician. See, Anonymous, *De la situation des gens de couleur libres aux Antilles françaises* (Paris: impr. de J. Mac-Carthy, 1823), <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57423258>; François-André Isambert, Cyrille-Charles-Auguste Bissette, and Louis Fabien fils, *Pétition aux deux Chambres, des hommes de couleur de la Martinique, déportés aux colonies étrangères par le général Donzelot, en décembre 1823 et janvier 1824. (Signé : Bissette, Fabien fils.)* (impr. de E. Duverger (Paris), 1828), <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5786694w>; Melvin D. Kennedy, “The Bissette Affair and the French Colonial Question,” *The Journal of Negro History* 45, no. 1 (1960): 1–10; David Walker was a Free Black living in Boston. He self-published his abolitionist pamphlet in 1829. He died suddenly in 1830. David Walker, *David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); The first edition of Hegel's *Philosophy of History* was arranged by his son Charles Hegel. This edition excised much of Hegel's views and commentary on “Africa” and “Negroes,” largely using this statement as a summation of Hegel's views. Later editions of *The Philosophy of History* include this citation, yet, contain a great deal more discussion that elaborates and clarifies his discourse on Africa as a geographical location, but additionally on “Negroes” as a people connected to Africa. Hegel divides Africa into three developmental categories: North of the Sahara, which he connects to Europe, the Nile Valley, which is a hybrid area with primary association with Asia, and Africa proper, which is unhistoric and absent any connection to human development, Reason or Rationality. Consequently, the Universal spirit, which is the Totalizing principle of the world, is absent in African proper, placing Africa, and the Negroes who are products of Africa outside the scope of his Philosophy. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*,

extended beyond the geographical continent through his description of descendants of “Africa proper:”

Negroes indulge, therefore, that perfect *contempt* for humanity, which in its bearing on Justice and Morality is the fundamental characteristic of the race. They have moreover no knowledge of the immortality of the soul, although spectres are supposed to appear. The undervaluing of humanity among them reaches an incredible degree of intensity. Tyranny is regarded as no wrong, and cannibalism *is* looked upon as quite customary and proper.¹⁶

While systematized into a theory of history, Hegel’s belief in an inherent African inferiority and savagery was not original to him. Approximately four decades earlier Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), eventual President of the United States and author of the Declaration of Independence, made similar assertions in his best-selling *Notes on the State of Virginia*—one of the most popular books of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁷ The francophile Jefferson who resided in France from 1785-1789 as the United States’ Minister to France opined that music was the sole faculty in which Black peoples display aptitude. He attacks and dismisses the literary accomplishments of Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784), a Gambian born woman enslaved in Boston and Ignatius Sancho (1729-1780), a free Black in London.¹⁸ Jefferson additionally questioned whether Black peoples, in their lone skilled area, could ever develop musical form above the level of simple melody. Despite residing in Paris at the time of Joseph Boulogne,

ed. Johannes Hoffmeister, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Also see, Frederick Beiser, *Hegel* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 265–281; Duncan Forbes, “Introduction,” in *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1975), vii – xvi.

¹⁶ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*.

¹⁷ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Folsom, CA: the Federalist Project, 2012), <http://www.thefederalistpapers.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Thomas-Jefferson-Notes-On-The-State-Of-Virginia.pdf>.

¹⁸ For more detailed discussion, See below, “Jefferson: Black Discourse as Proof of Humanity” in Chapter Five: A Poetics of Diaspora via Black American Discourse.

Chevalier de Saint-George, one of France's most popular and skilled violinists, conductors, composers, and swordsmen, the aspiring –read want-to-be—virtuoso Jefferson shows remarkable ignorance of cosmopolitan Paris. At least one of Boulogne's operas premiered during Jefferson's time in Paris, and Queen Marie Antoinette is known to have frequented Boulogne's concerts.¹⁹ As conductor of the *Loge Olympique*, Boulogne was responsible for debuting six symphonies commissioned from Franz Joseph Haydn. Jefferson, conjecturing less demonstratively, yet with equal certainty, was still able to place the denigration of Black peoples in historical terms:

To our reproach it must be said, that though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and of red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history. I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind...This unfortunate difference of colour, and perhaps faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people.²⁰

Reflecting a historical assessment of Africa expressed four decades earlier in Jefferson, Hegel's statements on Africa and Black peoples garner significance apart from the originality of their sentiments. Their significance lay in his framing. Hegel's articulation took place within a systematic and self-proclaimed Universal History that dismissed Africa and "Negroes," henceforth designated Black peoples as insignificant to world development, save their physique and "susceptibility to European culture," inasmuch as it made them suitable slaves. Broadening the chasm between world history and Black Peoples, Hegel explained that the Universal ideal and motivating force

¹⁹ Gabriel Banat, *The Chevalier de Saint-Georges: Virtuoso of the Sword and the Bow* (Pendragon Press, 2006), 145–165, 261–274.

²⁰ Jefferson, *Notes*, 165–166.

underlying existence, freedom, was incompatible and actually contradictory to Africa and its descendants.²¹

Africa and those descended from its shores are so far detached from the history and progress of human development that it becomes requisite to suspend any mores, standards and expectations implicit in normal discussions of humanity, even justice.

Slavery is in and for itself *injustice*, for the essence of humanity is *Freedom*; but for this man must be matured. The gradual abolition of slavery is therefore wiser and more equitable than its sudden removal.²²

Justice can be deferred, because Black peoples lack the necessary qualifications that would make them eligible for, in Hegel's words, 'the essence of humanity.'

Hegel's views of Africa and Black peoples are convictional; to him, they are self-evident. Convictional statements are often self-fulfilling prophecies.²³ If self-evident, there is no need to imagine. Consequently, there seems to be no recognition of another

²¹ Hegel explains the basis of the relationship between Europe and Africa. The function of this description is to create a metonym between Africa and its descendants. By dismissing Africa, all parts and corollaries to it are subsequently perpetually unhistorical and outside of human progress. "From these various traits it is manifest that want of self-control distinguishes the character of the Negroes. This condition is capable of no development or culture, and as we see them at this day, such have they always been. The only essential connection that has existed and continued between the Negroes and the Europeans is that of slavery. In this the Negroes see nothing unbecoming them, and the English who have done most for abolishing the slave-trade and slavery, are treated by the Negroes themselves as enemies. For it is a point of first importance with the Kings to sell their captured enemies, or even their own subjects; and viewed in the light of such facts, we may conclude slavery to have been the occasion of the increase of human feeling among the Negroes." Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J Sibree (Kitchener, CA: Batoche Books, 2001), 116, <http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/hegel/history.pdf>.

²² *Ibid.*, 117.

²³ There a number of scholarly works on Hegel and his relationship to race. There is debate on whether Hegel understood race in biological or cultural terms. See, Sandra Bonetto, "Race and Racism in Hegel—An Analysis," *Minerva-An Internet Journal of Philosophy* 10 (2006): 35–64; Additionally, Buck-Morss work provides an excellent intellectual and social-historical context for mutually evaluating Hegel and the Haitian revolution (1791-1803) Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009); See, Joseph McCarney and Robert Bernasconi, "Exchange on Hegel's Racism," *RP*, no. 119 (2003): 32–37 In this project, we are less concerned with deducing whether or not Hegel anticipated Black peoples could eventually, centuries later, deserve consideration for humanity's essence. The concern is the discursive presentation, its static regurgitation in subsequent generations, the ideological flaw it perpetuates, its mal d'archive, and the consequent sequestering of Black peoples from the human story.

Wilhem, Anton Wilhelm Amo (1703- ca. 1759).²⁴ Amo was a Ghanaian born philosopher who, under unclear circumstances, was transported to Europe via the Dutch West Indian Company. Having excelled at leading German universities, Amo eventually held teaching positions at the universities in Halle and Jena. The University of Jena is the very institution where Hegel would undergo vital steps in his own development and progress, training and completing his dissertation in Jena some five decades later. Yet, Hegel's self-evident realities blinded him to more than his own connection to unhistoric Africa. It prevented him from critically engaging the discourses and sources of Black peoples that were discursively engaging the same figure of freedom, albeit in diverse ways, that occupied his own work. Like protanopia, this conviction produces inherited blindness, visible in our brief discussion of Jefferson above.²⁵

While Hegel noted the incongruity between Black peoples and justice, Cyrille Bissette's land was being confiscated. A *homme de couleur libre*, Bissette was across the Atlantic, engaging in discourses of freedom and equality. Participating in the rhetoric of the French Revolution, Bissette felt *liberté, égalité, fraternité* was both a French and human dignity. His engagement, possession, and proliferation of materials that promulgated this belief in the expansive destiny of freedom resulted in his branding as a galley slave, and exile. A portion of his sentence was eventually reversed, but it would take years for Bissette, initially arrested in December of 1823, to gain permission to return to Martinique. As an educated *homme de couleur*, Bissette's Blackness denied him the right to share in Hegel's rhetoric and vision of humanity. Even as a free man, the idea of detachment governed European engagement with Black peoples.

²⁴ Amo is also known as Antonius Guilelmus Amo Afer.

²⁵ Protanopia is an inherited form of color-blindness that is sex-linked.

David Walker's *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* is a critical engagement of history and humanity. Like Hegel, Walker establishes Freedom as an essential character of humanity that reflects both physical states and mental states. Instead of refining his commentary to America, his treatise is addressed to the world and chronicles Greek, Roman, and biblical history. Like Hegel, Walker asserts that slavery is an evil institution, but in a dissimilar fashion Walker describes American slavery, not as a benefit to the savage, but as the most heinous institution in human history. Walker's discourse is absent from many discussions of early American history, though its banning in various Southern states implies its widespread presence and familiarity.²⁶

Symptomatic of *mal d'archive*, Hegel's colour-blindness is instructive. Neither Africa proper or Black peoples are, or ever have been, homogenous generalities. The use of slavery as a summation of Black peoples in Africa or in the West was, and still is inaccurate. In actuality, Hegel was in relation discursively, intellectually and culturally with Africa and Black peoples. His personal convictions, however, blinded him both to Africa's internal diversities and his own connections and similarities to Africa. While European and American scholars had very little access to accurate studies or anthologies from Africa proper, the discourses of Jupiter Hammon, Richard Allen, Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, Louis Delgrès, Julien Raimond, Phillis Wheatley, Francis Williams, Mary Prince, Paul Cuffee, Olaudah Equiano, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Ottobah Cugoana, and David Walker were all circulating the Atlantic world prior to Hegel's death in 1831.²⁷

²⁶ Walker, *David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*.

²⁷ Jupiter Hammon, *America's First Negro Poet: The Complete Works of Jupiter Hammon of Long Island*, ed. Stanley Austin Ransom (Port Washington, NY: Associated Faculty Press, 1983); Richard Allen, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labors of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen* (Philadelphia, PA: F. Ford and M.A. Riply, 1880); James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince, as Related by Himself* (Bath, UK: W. Gyer,

Hegel's fundamental "othering" of Africa, Africans, and Black peoples affected his engagement in research, and appropriation of sources.²⁸ Hegel, though derisive, was able to see Asia, Europe, and America as intertwined components of human progress and history, but Africa had none. The geographies and peoples of Asia and Europe were a part of the same universe and held corollaries; one could identify similarities, models, and parallels. Generalities and phenomena in one context had relatability to the other contexts. Critical consideration of these particularities, in the midst of acknowledged generalities, permitted civilizations within World history to mutually inform one's view of the other.

The blank slates, however, that this Hegelian worldview identifies as Africa and Black peoples exist outside of human development. While future integration is possible, however implausible, the replication of such a structure results in the perpetual stagnation of Africa and Black peoples outside the narrative of human history or progress. As

1770); Julien Raimond, *Réponse aux considérations de M. Moreau, dit de Saint-Méry, député à l'Assemblée nationale, sur les colonies* (Paris: de l'impr. du Patriote français, 1791), <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k448468>; Julien Raimond, *Véritable origine des troubles de S.-Domingue, et des différentes causes qui les ont produits* (Paris: Desenne, 1792), <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k54613585>; Julien Raimond, *Correspondance de J. Raimond Avec Ses Frères de St. Domingue, et Les Pièces Qui Lui Ont été Adressées Par Eux*. (Paris, l'an deuxième, 1794); Phillis Wheatley, *Complete Writings* (New York: Penguin, 2001); Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave Narrative* (Courier Dover Publications, 2012); Paul Cuffee, *Paul Cuffee, the Black Hero, by the Author of "Lucy Smith, the Music Governess"*, 1872; Jean-Jacques Dessalines, *Declaration of Haitian independence: Liberté ou la mort Armée indigène*. (Au Port-au-Prince: De l'Impr. du gouvernement, 1804), <http://www.llmcdigital.org/default.aspx?redir=08621>; Jean-Jacques Dessalines, *Lettres ouvertes à Dessalines ; suivies du Discours du 1er janvier 1804* (Paris: Dauphin noir éd., 2004); Olaudah Equiano, *The Letters and Other Writings of Gustavus Vassa (Olaudah Equiano, the African) Documenting Abolition of the Slave Trade* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2013); Quobna Ottobah Cugoana, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery* (Penguin, 1999); Walker, *David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*; Information and sample texts from the listed authors are available in a number of anthologies. See, Laurent DuBois and John D. Garrigus, eds., *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean 1789-1804: A Brief History with Documents*, n.d.; Arthur Paul Davis, ed., *Cavalcade; Negro American Writing from 1760 to the Present* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1971); William L. Andrews et al., eds., *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, vol. 1, 2 vols., Third. (New York: W W Norton & Company, 2014); Buck-Morss, *Hegel and Haiti*.

²⁸ Buck-Morss, *Hegel and Haiti*.

exceptions to Universal History, even the transformation of Africa from wholly invisible to subject of study lacks the structural impetus to incorporate Africa into Hegel or his descendant's narrative of human development. Thus, Africa and the study of Africa lack useful parallels, models or phenomena capable of informing a general understanding of humanity. For Hegel, the contexts, discourses, experiences and realities from Africa were nonexistent; for Hegel's intellectual descendants, these entities do in fact exist but are merely trajectories tangential to human progress and development.

Catastrophic, this view is visible throughout modernity up to the present. Its epistemological reinscription as a mode of archive and history construction plays pivotal roles in the inclusion and acceptance of sources, texts and conversation partners in the Academy. While many in the Academy cringe at the idea of reinscribing Hegel's views of Africa, primary, secondary and university curricula reflect an apartheid approach to the inclusion of the study of Africa and Black peoples. Universities have made great strides in developing departments and centers that study and teach on subjects pertaining to ethnicity, culture or particular minority groups. My critique lies not in their presence, but in the absence of these topics from "core" courses. While Africa is worthy of study, it remains outside the scope of the general domain of Universal History.

Distinguished Oxford Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper famously claimed Africa as unhistoric in 1968.²⁹ In a prior interview he further elaborated:

Perhaps in the future there will be some African history to teach. But at present there is none, or very little: there is only the history of Europe in Africa. The rest is darkness...I do not deny that men existed in dark countries and dark centuries, nor that they had political life and culture,

²⁹ Hugh Redwald Trevor-Roper, "The Past and the Present. History and Sociology," *Past & Present*, no. 42 (1969): 3–17.

interesting to sociologists and anthropologists.³⁰

Trevor-Roper's view crystallizes potential dangers within Hegelian Colour-blindness. From Jefferson to Hegel to Trevor-Roper, over the course of almost two centuries, prominent historians and thinkers of the West have maintained a stagnant view: Africa is unhistoric. Steeped in irony, Trevor-Roper's 1968 speech at the London School of Economics on History and Sociology astutely grapples with the role, utility, and dangers of history.³¹ For Trevor-Roper, history was a form of art that necessitated respect for particularity and generality. He cautioned people against using history to predict the future, yet stressed the importance of studying the past, learning from it, and then finding patterns and models for transtemporal and cross-contextual comparisons.

Within the same discourse, however, Trevor-Roper insisted on Africa's dearth of historical relevance. Africa existed in a place outside of history; it was "other than" the rest of the world. Worthy of investigation on its own right, it, like the former planet Pluto, holds no value for the historian. People should do "African studies." The only caveat is that those who study Black peoples and Africa, like astronomers, study a different world, with different concerns, and different rules in unrelated disciplines. Those people, those scholars, those specialists engage the world of Africa and Black peoples, but that pursuit has little to do with Universal History; that task is in the realm of "anthropologists" or "sociologists."

It was Jefferson who proclaimed:

³⁰ See, Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe*, [1st American ed. (New York Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965) Daniel and Aline Patte were on faculty at a teachers college in Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo in 1964. The only history books available were on French history. The established curriculum reflected Trevor-Roper's view of a dark unhistoric Africa. The Patte's were forced to appeal to local historians that developed resources for their courses.

³¹ I actually accept much of Trevor-Roper's view of history, and invoke them throughout the pages below.

When in the **Course of human events**, it becomes **necessary** for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate **and** equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God **entitle** them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind **requires** that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. **We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal**, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --**That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it**, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.³²

Hegel taught that:

The History of the world is none other than the progress of the **consciousness of Freedom**; a progress whose development according to the necessity of its nature, it is our **business to investigate**.³³

And, the twentieth-century Trevor-Roper was on BBC exhorting students of history to: [R]ead the history of other countries, knowing that they will then do so with a double advantage. From their specialist study of their own history they will know how to reserve judgment on general history where they have not penetrated so deeply and from their general study of foreign history, thus qualified, they will learn that comparative method which will prevent them from too readily accepting one formula of historical causation.³⁴

Yet, despite Jefferson's proclamations, ignoring Hegel's instruction and resisting Trevor-Roper's advice, there is a scholarly current that retains sway over Western culture that still resists integrating the discourses and subjects of Black peoples into human history. Ironically, the tributaries of this Jim and Jane Crow-esque narrative of history are found in convictional constructions of human development espoused by these very thinkers. The space that Black peoples occupy in the world is general, in that it is homogeneous, and particular, because it exists outside human, social, or cultural

³² Declaration of Independence, bold was added by author.

³³ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 33.

³⁴ Trevor-Roper, "The Past and the Present. History and Sociology," 16.

development. Subsequently, a balkanization of Africana studies exists, by and large, due to the continued presence of Jefferson's, Hegel's, and Trevor-Roper's erudite findings: Africa is outside of Universal History.³⁵

This twisted construction and its continued impact on modern thinking pervades more than the historical discussion of Africa. It has also come to shape general notions of otherness and relevance. Some may associate this worldview with an era that ended with the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. But, it persists. One might think that any current vestiges of this worldview, are the exceptional lingering beliefs of individuals who grew up prior to the 1970's. These perspectives, however, continue to find expression through overt and subtle venues by both scholars and the general population, including young people. In what some would like to charge as the post-racial twenty-first century, an anonymous student review of one of my introductory New Testament courses at Vanderbilt University evinces the epistemological byproducts of this thought stream:³⁶

³⁵ This current explains the prevalence in Black Atlantic literature from the 18th century to today of a strong apologetic of Black humanity. Francis Williams (1700-1771)—a Jamaican poet—Richard Greener (1844-1922)—the first Black graduate from Harvard, first Black faculty member at the University of South Carolina, and first Black member of the American Philological Society—William Scarborough Sanders (1852-1926)—Classicist, scholar, first Black member of Modern Language Association, and author of Greek textbook—W.E.B. Du Bois (1869-1963)—first Black to receive PhD from Harvard, and often identified as father of modern Sociology—and countless others pursued education in the humanities and social sciences in order to prove their humanity. While Thomas Jefferson denied that a Black had ever penned sophisticated verse, John C. Calhoun famously opined that Blacks could not learn Greek or Latin. Part of the scholarly production was to prove their humanity. Additionally, the trope of humanity and appeal to “national” or “religious” ideals was a second means of proving humanity. From Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912)—to current historians of the Black Atlantic, the study of history has sought to provide a basis for legitimating the inclusion of Black peoples, fully, into world history. One discerns the possible debates between various writers and thinkers as one inspects Black American debates over repatriation to Africa, Black self-rule in America, full integration into the United States. Ralph Ellison rebuffed the study of Black Americans, for he championed the belief that the study of America was, at least should be, constituent of the study of Black peoples, culture, and their contributions to the framing and shaping of America. This tidal wave of Hegelian thought has flowed throughout the Atlantic World, and generated countless responses and approaches to combat, negotiate, or temper.

³⁶ The class emphasis was the careful reading of New Testament texts for the purpose of students

We had two commentaries that were required reading: Women's Bible Commentary and an African-American commentary. Though occasionally helpful, they usually ranged from being self-indulgent with regards to the demographic they represent to exclusivity and arrogance. As one who is neither a woman nor African-American, I found them difficult to relate to. I understand that a variety of perspectives is valuable, but surely there is room in the course for one mainstream commentary that at least makes an effort to include others in its spiritual experiences.

While the student acknowledges that a variety of perspectives has value, this value requires an all too familiar qualification that invokes the coordinating conjunction “but.” Black American and female perspectives are valuable in theory, but these self-indulgent, exclusivist, and arrogant approaches to knowledge must not, in practice, demand non-females or non-Black Americans to struggle with, relate to, learn or benefit from this theoretical value. This student’s assessment employs the coordinating conjunction in a strikingly similar way to Trevor-Roper, while also expressing logic that parallels Trevor-Roper’s views on Africa. According to Trevor-Roper, Africa, theoretically speaking, may someday have history—read value—worth teaching but, in practice, it had none for Trevor-Roper; there are, theoretically speaking, aspects of Africa that some sociologist or anthropologist might study—read value—but there is nothing of value to the historian. In short, both the student and Trevor-Roper explain that a variety of perspectives is valuable as long as engagement with said perspectives is optional, value is distinguished from benefit, and whatever value associated with those perspectives is implicitly understood to be a value for others.

generating informed and coherent interpretations from their own relevant subject positions. Required texts in the class consisted of a study Bible with critical apparatus and study notes, a Gospel parallel in original translation, and two single-volume Bible commentaries written from particular subject positions. These commentaries served as illustrative complements to course lectures, student interpretations, and other resource material.

A primary difference between the opinions expressed by Trevor-Roper and the student lays in the inverted power roles, and the necessity of apology— one of defense, and forgiveness. Trevor-Roper believed there was no need to apologize if the presentation of history was Eurocentric, because Europe was the patron of civilization and history.³⁷ When they are, “European techniques, European examples, European ideas, which have shaken the non-European world of its past... [including] the barbarism of Africa.” There is, implicit in the above review, little need to obscure these ideas—the true intention of study—by the skewed articulations of unrelated contexts.³⁸ The exclusion, however alleged, of “mainstream” interpretations of the New Testament darkened the course and resulted in a failed objective: gaining the requisite objective knowledge and skills to enhance one’s understanding of Universal History through the study of the New Testament.

This student’s critique of “other” perspectives has analogous parallels to the worldviews found in Trevor-Roper, Hegel and Jefferson; a hopeful student of the New Testament, this child of the twenty-first century demonstrates Hegelian Colour-blindness. Though “a variety of perspectives is valuable,” he states that “surely, there is room for one mainstream commentary.” Failing to acknowledge the context(s) of the courses’ primary text, the study bible, filled with notes, perspectives and introductory material written by and large by Euro-American men, did little to satisfy the desire for relevant scholarship. Likewise, the student lacked respect for the diverse views of his classmates, only three of whom were not from Euro-American ancestry. In addition to the

³⁷Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe*, 11, 17.

³⁸ In a stroke of irony it seems that I may owe my students an apology for the required inclusion of alternative perspectives on a text that is implicitly universal and non-perspectival. See, *ibid.*, 11.

perspectives of classmates, the student also had recourse to supplemental lecture and library material that were predominately the work of White heterosexual males. And yet, the presence of interpretations from women and Black Americans necessitated their identification as not “mainstream.” Implicit in this student’s opinion, Black peoples and women express opinions and readings that exist outside of the mainstream. I surmise that this evaluation has less to do with the scholarly insights, and more to do with the bodies from which these interpretations come. The relevance of a discourse is primarily, at least initially, shaped by the bodily space occupied by its source and the perceived relationship between the source of that body and the Universal. When Hegelian thoughts of world development generate worldviews and consciousness, the inclusion of interpretations and alterations to language is insufficient to affect change to those governing structures that dictate perceptions of inclusion and exclusion from the Universal. This student is merely a product of the Academy, nation and religious institutions responsible for his education: a child, albeit evolved and enlightened, of Hegel. Acknowledging this systemic approach to Africa exemplifies the various ways that convictional statements continue to buttress views of identity and what counts as Universal.³⁹

This approach to Africa and Black peoples stands in seeming contrast to shifts in the attitudes and language employed when discussing Africa and peoples of African descent. Views on genetics, race, philosophy, and cosmology have changed drastically over the past three centuries. With the biological racism, physiognomy, and geographic

³⁹For a discussion of the differences between conceiving reality through rooted notions of a taproot, and the matrix-like complex of the rhizome, See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie: mille plateaux*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Paris: Éd. de Minuit, 1980); The discussion of convictional statements corresponds to the fundamental semantics of semiotics. These are self-evident beliefs that undergird any communicational or signifying act. Daniel Patte, *The Religious Dimensions of Biblical Texts: Greimas’s Structural Semiotics and Biblical Exegesis*, Semeia Studies (Society of Biblical Literature, 1990).

speciation of the nineteenth century, the original logics, arguments, and legitimation for identifying Africa as having “other” relevance or being outside the scope of Universal analogy have long been debunked. While Trevor-Roper and the New Testament student both reject the suitability of Africa and Black peoples in the production of history and knowledge, they are far from espousing similar biological or cultural assertions about Africa or its diaspora. If the bulk of the legitimation and reasoning is no longer valid, one may wonder the cause of the continued non-engagement.

History, the Grand Metanarrative

Jean-François Lyotard’s discussion of knowledge in the postmodern world is useful for framing Hegelian Colour-blindness and its symptomatic correlation to modernity, despite its divergent ideas and values.⁴⁰ Focusing on the communicative

⁴⁰ This project does not venture into a full analysis or presentation of semiotic theory. Semiotics is, however, a very useful means of considering the scholarly tradition surrounding African Diaspora Studies and Biblical Studies. Within this framework the difference in values corresponds to narrative semantics, while ideas allude to the actualization of both the narrative semantics (values) and fundamental semantics (convictions) into fundamental and narrative syntax. Thus, the different modes of legitimation, different values, and different ideas distinguishing modernity from postmodernity result in modern and postmodern discourses—including scholarship—having distinctively varied narrative and fundamental semantics. Due to the convictional and value differences between modern and postmodern discourses, their actualizations produce varied syntactic structures—ie: ideology (fundamental syntax) and logic (narrative syntax). However, as noted in the example of Trevor-Roper and the New Testament student, a correlation exists within the discursive semantics of modern and postmodern discourses with respect to the representation and signification of Africa and its diaspora. Consequently, I suggest that while the dismissive and exclusionary effect of Hegelian Colour-blindness is often manifest within the discursive semantics, Hegelian Colour-blindness is semiotically and symptomatically determined through the realms of narrative semantics, fundamental syntax, and narrative syntax. What this discussion attempts to explain is the ability for critics with extremely different worldviews to employ divergent axiological systems in order to argue through different logic, and still end up with the same views of Africa. A determinant question is whether these views of Africa are convictional (primarily resident within the fundamental and narrative semantics), logical deductions (primarily a result of the narrative syntax), or the result of semio-syntagmatic systems expressed in thematic representation (primarily observed in the discursive semantics). See, Daniel Patte, *The Religious Dimensions of Biblical Texts: Greimas’s Structural Semiotics and Biblical Exegesis*, Brown Judaic Studies (Society of Biblical Literature, 1990). If following Jean-François Lyotard’s analysis, one will note an assertion within his proposal that posits that postmodernity needs to engage in different means of legitimation, and a shift from metanarratives of the universal to narratives at local levels. Depicting the notion of consensus as hegemonic and homogeneous-seeking, Lyotard strongly opposes the practices of consensus-making observed within the Academy and Western politics. Semiotics, therefore, supports Lyotard’s point that justice and postmodernity requires the presence and embracing of debate, disagreement, and the playing of language games: justice demands difference. Later, I propose a similar

aspect of ideas and knowledge, Lyotard proposes that people view knowledge through the framework of language-games. Every conversation, every belief system, every propositional truth relies on its observation, legitimation and communication. The legitimating process takes place in various spheres, sometimes through conviction, therefore it appears self-evident and at other times through the crafting of argument. Regardless, legitimation requires parties to accept certain limits and boundaries, hence, a language world. One of the principal mechanisms of utilizing a language world is the application of metanarratives. These particular narratives build syntactic relationships that permit the identification of analogy and correlation between non-localized narratives. Embedded within the metanarratives are ideas, values and convictions that invoke specific signifying value upon the syntactic and semantic relationships of the metanarrative.⁴¹

These grand narrative structures correspond to the narrative syntax and semantics of semiotics and the metanarrative of philosopher and political critic Jean-François Lyotard.⁴² For example, if one were to identify a metanarrative founded upon the convictional belief that locates order and chaos as an oppositional relationship underlying the human subject, one could conceive a metanarrative that posited the Universal existence as the continual transition from chaotic nature to social order with the idealized

correction using Édouard Glissant's essay "le Même et le Divers" to reorient aspects of the fundamental semantics. See, Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Édouard Glissant, *Le discours antillais* (Seuil, 1981).

⁴¹ Consequently, the discursivization of the metanarrative results in readers signifying on of the actualized actants of the narrative syntax and semantics. It is this signification that leads to similar treatment of Africa despite the stark ideological and contextual differences between modern and postmodern critics.

⁴² Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*; For a discussion of the semiotic dimensions of scriptural criticism, See Patte, *The Religious Dimensions of Biblical Texts*.

telos of perfect freedom. Hegel's philosophy of history matches this precise metanarrative. Hegel, however, centers his history upon humanity, and thus, history is the story of human progress. Africa and Africans, for Hegel, are outside the sphere of progress, thus, they are outside the narrative of human history. The actualization of history's metanarrative relies upon the local, contextual views and language world of Hegel. Africans were uncivilized, unintelligent and genetically inferior. Africa contributed nothing to human development or civilization, thus Africa could not possibly be a part of human history.

For Jefferson and Hegel alike, this finding was legitimate and based on logical and rational observations. History, subsequently, relied upon a particular metanarrative that produced its own valorizing and signifying system. Thus, when Trevor-Roper, two centuries later, discusses his ideas of history, the beliefs, and convictions towards Africa and Africans have shifted in the metanarrative of the culture, but the benchmark metanarrative for history has maintained its place. And when scholars construct models and write history, the syntactic relationships reify much of their semantic value. The arguments and facts upon which these views rested, long out of fashion, were little more than minutiae and details grafted unto general narrative structures.⁴³

Daniel Patte suggests that one could think of the presence of multiple, competing metanarratives. A metanarrative of culture espouses the postmodern ideals of subjectivity and polyvocality, while an alternative metanarrative of "history" appeals to modern ideals that privilege positivism, objectivity, and verifiability. The presence of competing metanarratives "puts into question the metanarrative [and practices] of the Historians." This astute observation opens the way for the use of semiotics to critically engage logical and ideological consistencies and inconsistencies within discourses. While beyond the scope of this project, the assumption of ideological and logical coherence is an important question when interpreting texts. Daniel Patte, "Conversation on Semiotics," interview by A. Francis Carter Jr., September 10, 2014.

Lyotard's discussion of the modern and postmodern is useful for explaining the persistent manifestation of symptoms of Hegelian Colour-Blindness despite a shift in the language of legitimation. Implicit in Lyotard's presentation of the modern and the postmodern is the ironic reification of the metanarrative.⁴⁴ The metanarrative is central to understanding the means through which the modern and postmodern go about the process of producing knowledge. The modern, according to Lyotard, is "any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse of this kind making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth."⁴⁵ As illustrated below, the modern seeks and aspires towards the production of general structures that represent the totality of the universe. In order to produce this knowledge, the scholar legitimates his construct of the world by projecting himself as a metasubject, and defining the language world in which his logic functions.⁴⁶ The consequence is the production of a metanarrative the critic can actualize in the analysis of the past or present. The Universal becomes a substitution for, and projection of, the individual thinker-scholar who happens to be representative for the height of human progress, consciousness and freedom.

⁴⁴ At the core of Lyotard's discussion of modernity and postmodernity is an implicit charge against the late twentieth century. Withstanding his defining the modern as that which relies on metadiscourse, and the postmodern as that which distrusts metadiscourse, Lyotard presents twentieth century espoused "postmoderns" of the scientific age of being fundamentally modern in practice. Through the practice of terroristic consensus, supposed postmoderns have used science and rationality to reinscribe a metanarrative of liberation and progress via the practice of domination and erasure. The problem with the postmodern is its return to modern principles, albeit obscured by scholarly and expert claims of critical insight and scientific reproducibility. See, Jean-François Lyotard, *Political Writings*, trans. Bill Readings and Kevin Paul Geiman, Taylor and Francis e-Library. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*.

⁴⁵ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, xxiii.

⁴⁶ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*.

The advancement of science undermined the unquestioned trust in the existence of positivist generalities and highlighted the significance of perspective. The result is a postmodern that distrusts the metanarrative. While physical sciences have embraced notions of perspectival difference and relativity, the dependence of knowledge on localized propositions, reproducibility of experimentation and quests for consensus have led to the re-inscription and dependence of metanarratives in many of the social sciences and humanities. In the midst of understanding the postmodern as that which distrusts metadiscourse, as opposed to modern critics who sought metadiscourse, postmodern critics often continue to rely uncritically upon that which they conceive as incredulous; they employ those metanarratives that contradict their espoused principles.

While the stated goals and convictional bases of the modern and postmodern differ, they frequently rely upon similar processes of legitimation: the metanarrative. The language world and ideological reification of metanarratives suddenly predispose both moderns and postmoderns to productions of knowledge rooted within similar convictional frameworks. The metanarrative of human liberation is a principal example Lyotard uses to demonstrate the convictional relationality between nineteenth and twentieth century political ideologies. Whether discussing Hegel, Marx or Habermas, the ever-present assumption of human sociological and political progress, alongside the implicit invocation of a cosmological or sociological *telos*, and belief in the innate need and idealization of human liberation—whether spiritual, mental, social, or political—structure a metanarrative that postindustrial Western societies utilize.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ This filial product of the Enlightenment, found its legitimation in the critical theory and argumentation of Hegel's dialectics and other nineteenth century critical theories that utilized the general to explain the particular. Within the twenty-first century, these metanarratives frame the language-world in

This modern metanarrative, thus, significantly frames the varied expressions of African balkanization within the Academy's critical gazes that remain symptomatic of Hegelian Colour-blindness. While the study of Africa and Black peoples are acceptable, celebrated, and prominent within various spheres of the Academy, Hegel's metanarrative of world progress, and Africa's non-Universality continues to structure the study and analysis of non-African centered subjects in ways that patronize and dismiss Africa and Black peoples as dissimilar and outside the scope of relationality. Due to the uncritical (re)inscription of certain metanarratives, Hegelian Colour-blindness leads to the production of linear histories that either overtly claim Universality, or implicitly assert an exclusionary Universal character. Sightings with Hegelian Colour-blindness "don't" play well with others, not for a lack of will, but largely due to its hegemonic nature. As Lyotard suggests, consensus utilizes metanarrative in its efforts to dictate the rules, boundaries, and language of the game—read dialogue.⁴⁸ Resistant to their own

which postmodern individuals think, argue, and seek consensus. Consequently, the metanarrative remains, while the modes have become ensconced. For Lyotard, it is necessary for the postmodern to avoid consensus along macro-levels, and utilize the particularity of perspective in local circumstances, and local language-worlds to argue, debate, and destabilize the unquestioned reification of certain metanarratives.

⁴⁸ Two examples that come to mind are a card game called Spades and the sport basketball. Spades is a card game played between two, two-person teams. However, the game is played in a variety of ways. In my experiences, one of the first activities done prior to playing is a discussion of the rules, regulations, their preferences, and the boundaries for their particular game. The rules do not fundamentally establish "what Spades is;" instead, they merely establish a framework for that particular engagement. Among these discussions are: the values and ranking of cards; what cards to use and exclude; the consequences and protocol for identifying one who has cheated; the construction of a penal system; how to determine the winner. In fact, if conditions change (i.e. time runs short, or more people want to play, the rules can be re-visited and scoring and other rules altered. The contextual and situational nature of basketball is similar. Different governing agencies have different rules for basketball competition. Yet, all basketball does not occur under the guise of governing agencies, such as recreational play amongst friends or strangers. The National Basketball Association (NBA), the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) each have different rules and regulations governing basketball competition. Likewise, the Federation of International Basketball Associations (FIBA) governs international competition and also has different rules and regulations. Yet, each organization still conducts competition in "basketball." During Olympic games, for example, and other exhibitions, the players and organizations collaborate to agree on contextually specific rules to be utilized for their situation specific competition. Likewise, when people are in gymnasiums, playgrounds, or

discursive arguments, those who have Hegelian Colour-blindness see a darkened, flattened world largely bereft of its perspectival and three dimensional nature, and then argue through overt language or actions that what they see is the “true” or “accurate” vision of reality.

As presented here, Derrida’s description of *mal d’archive* and my presentation of Hegelian Colour-blindness are two inter-related conditions that contribute to the (dis)engagement of cultural critical scholarship, and work situated in certain “minority” contexts.⁴⁹ Actually, I propose that *mal d’archive* is an infectious condition that often leads to subsequent disorders and complications. In the case of Western approaches to Africa and the diverse Black peoples of the world, the Hegelian Colour-blindness discussed above is one byproduct of *mal d’archive*.⁵⁰ Its coordinated impact on the production of “modern” metanarratives that uncritically balkanize African Diaspora Studies is merely one of multiple manifest symptoms. A second consequence of Hegelian Colour-blindness of central relevance to this study is the rendering of reality’s multidimensional, perspectival brilliance into myopic narratives of singular

backyards they also play basketball: one-on-one, two-versus-two, and any number of other variations. The condition, context, and limits dictate how individuals participate in a game. Basketball, however, is not fundamentally defined as solely being one circumstance over-against others. But one player (or referee) might impose certain rules. When scholars with Hegelian Colour-blindness invoke their own metanarratives, they impose their own rules; they largely predispose any interactive engagement to adopt their contextually developed guidelines as privileged and ideal. Thus, regardless whether individuals desire to submit to their language and logic rules, the metanarratives of Hegelian Colour-blindness are applied. This process explains one reason for the fractured nature of Biblical Studies, and my assertion that individuals with Hegelian Colour-blindness “don’t” play well with others. It cannot be noted enough that Hegelian Colour-blindness is a condition that is pervasive amongst Western scholarship, and can be and is imposed upon any discipline, ideology, nationality, culture, age, race, sex, gender, or sexual orientation.

⁴⁹ This treatment normally occurs by scholars outside Africana-related studies, however, it can additionally occur within scholarship on Africa and the African Diaspora.

⁵⁰ Hegelian Colour-blindness impacts the gaze on all “others”, and groups that frequently experience history as apartheid or their own identity as deviant when Hegelian Colour-blindness is taken to its logical conclusion.

dimensionality and movement. While this trait is related to, yet, distinct from the former consequence discussed above, it is directly tied to the production and invocation of certain types of metanarratives.

When scholars dismiss the analogous value of Africa and of Black peoples through Hegelian gazes, their histories often presuppose univocal linearity, or unilinearity: the advocacy for a linear mode of narration that is non-perspectival, and represents a universal reality.⁵¹ The production and presentation of history through linear narratives, or localized perspectives is perfectly acceptable. In many cases, linear histories are necessary and imperative for coherent analysis, and study. It, however, becomes problematic when critics attempt to present a single trajectory to represent the totality of potential historical realities. The discussion of the convictional belief and practice of (re)constructing the past as having one authoritative structure or metanarrative with essentialized points of origin as unilinear histories (i.e. a “modern metanarrative) is useful for analyzing the contemporary New Testament studies, and Diaspora Studies. The application of unilinearity in the application of critical methods pertains to notions of univocality. Consensus is able to identify the sole perspective out which history—read truth—can be excavated.

The insistence on unilinear history, juxtaposed to the projection of one’s historical narrative upon all perspectives—univocality—betrays a hegemonic hubris.⁵² This hubris

⁵¹ In mathematics, $y=mx+b$ represents the equation for a two-dimensional line of any specific linear trajectory (slope m). I do not expect my readers to be proficient in or require that they learn this mathematical equation. As an analogy, the linear equation governs my thinking but is not necessary to appreciate the nuances of my analysis. For a detailed illustration see Appendix A.

⁵² In postmodern twenty-first century scholarship, scholars are well aware of the problems of claiming a single possible reading. To bypass this critique, scholars frequently acknowledge the plurality of voices and possibilities just prior to discursively inferring the presence of “ideal”, “legitimate” or “historic” readings and perspectives. These descriptions acknowledge the agency of “others” to read

lies at the heart of Lyotard's description the implicit language-world terrorism in postmodern invocations of the "modern" metanarrative. While critics may allow "in theory" for multiple perspectives, options for identifying points of origin, and for debate over a point of origin's use in producing knowledge of the past, the "modern" metanarrative constrains the potential of alternate and co-existing points of origin, polyvocal generative trajectories, or non-linear narratives of history. It is through this metanarrative that viable modes of legitimation and argument become prefigured. When (re)constructing history, events become progressive and enter into cause-effect relationships. These causal relationships then annihilate the potential for other perspectives of perceiving and conceiving the past and thus of history writing.

The balkanization of Africa and subjects related to its diaspora, now, is visible as merely one of various symptoms of Hegelian Colour-blindness. The persistent insistence on applying preconfigured linear metanarratives to historical constructions is a second symptom of Hegelian Colour-blindness present within this project's intellectual and contextual setting. This discussion is not a decree that "*mal d'archive* and Hegelian Colour-blindness are Black peoples' problems;" my choice of foregrounded context does not create the above described symptoms. These are conditions that constantly shape and skew many scholar's approaches to the Academy. Using Africa and African descended peoples is merely one lens with which to identify how these conditions impact scholarship, especially in scholarship on Acts of the Apostles and diaspora. These two domains of study are the principal areas under investigation in this dissertation. The

differently while undermining the value, legitimacy or authenticity of works coded as "resistant", "counter", "subversive" or "cultural." This practice is merely a nuanced continuation of the Hegelian Colour-blindness that balkanizes Africana studies outside the scope of the Universal.

perspective-informed survey of scholarly approaches to Acts of the Apostles and diaspora that follows further illumine the intellectual and contextual space in which my poetic of diaspora discourse engages Acts 6.1-8.40.

Program

Einstein was confident in his work on the theory of relativity; he attributed that confidence and assuredness to his imagination.⁵³ Once his imagination seeded and then cultivated the fruits of theorization, reflection, experimentation and analysis, Einstein was still uncertain if his theory would satisfy outside scrutiny. Regardless whether his presentation satisfied critics, he was convinced of the validity of his theory. Seeded and cultivated through a cultural critical analysis of Black American discourse, the description of a poetics of diaspora discourse offered in these pages is also the product of imagination. What follows below is tempered and textured through knowledge and study but has only my imagination as its limits. I am hopeful that it sufficiently betrays the persistent dangers of bounded identities and essentializing categories. This project proposes a type of marriage: the union of Black peoples and the world as an acting partner, not a tangential albatross of difference. Unfolding in three distinct parts and over nine chapters, this exploration of diaspora poetics consists of a series of prolegomena to a Black American cultural critical exegesis of Acts 6.1 – 8.40. In its entirety, this critical preparation and introduction to the cultural critical reading of Acts 6.1 – 8.40, serves as a grand-prolegomenon and invitation to diverse cultural critical engagements of Acts' narrative and ancient historical context. Its framing stops shorts of advancing a specific interpretation of Acts and thus, invites critics and readers to appropriate my Black

⁵³ ibid

American-oriented poetics of diaspora discourse to participate in the re-reading, re-conceiving and re-evaluation of Acts as diaspora discourse in both its ancient composition and contemporary interpretation.

Part I, “Methodological Overture: A Social and Cultural Texture for Reading Acts as a Black American Scholar” (Chapters 1-3) describes the scholarly context with which this dissertation engages. Each chapter is a socio-culturally informed exploration of the intellectual and contextual setting to which and in which my studies of Acts and the concept of diaspora take place and respond. Through both detailed analysis and my own ideologically informed sight as a Black American male, these chapters describe the relevant sites of Acts studies (Chapter 1), methodologies of cultural critical exegesis and literary criticism (Chapter 2) and Diaspora Studies (Chapter 3). Each chapter uses the notion of Hegelian Colour-blindness to reveal prevalent univocal or unilinear tendencies in scholarship. These identifications of Hegelian Colour-blindness are more than critiques of current scholarly practices, they are self-critiques and cautions to both myself and my colleagues in the Academy, who are firmly rooted and informed by such traditions.

As a unit, these chapters provide this dissertation’s social and cultural texture. It utilizes the concepts of Hegelian Colour-blindness and *mal d’archive* to unmask the intellectual, methodological and theoretical settings within which my academic, disciplinary and racialized identities situate this (re)reading of diaspora and Acts. Developed out my own Black American context, as Methodological Overture, each chapter consists of an introduction, critique and reassessment of certain traditional

approaches to this dissertation's key scholarly conversation-partners: Acts of the Apostles; Methods of Exegesis and Poetics; Diaspora Studies.

Chapter One, "Acts of the Apostles: Shadows and Acts," surveys traditions of scholarly study of Acts. It reveals the insipient presence of univocality and the continued influence of the Modern approaches to history and historiography on the study of Acts of the Apostles. This chapter calls for the acceptance of Acts as a polyvocal text that scholars view as simultaneously generating multiple axiological and historiographical readings. This subsection's title intentionally alludes, however loosely, to Ralph Ellison's collection of essays and interviews entitled *Shadow and Act*.⁵⁴ As demonstrated throughout this chapter, the notion of Hegelian Colour-Blindness helps discern a persistent shadow over both the act of interpreting but also over perceptions of Acts of the Apostles. Within the Academy, these shadows, as seen in Ellison's essays, are less frequently hegemonic interpretations battling for acceptance but instead underlying structures and principles that generate and govern the exchange of ideas, identity and meaning.

Chapter Two, "Taxonomy and Language," provides key methodological definitions. While Jean-François Lyotard's description of metanarratives and critique of the intellectual continues to provide a backdrop for (re)conceiving texts and (re)imagining relation, Édouard Glissant's essay, "*Le Même et le Divers*," describes two epistemological perspectives on the ways that people signify on difference. Glissant's

⁵⁴ Within this collection Ellison discusses a number of themes that parallel this project's impetus for discussing diaspora poetics. The relationship between identity construction, the polyvalent fluidity of cultural and national identity, a resistance of nodal or metropole dominated identity and the roles writing and discourse play in the vibrant negotiation of each of these concerns. Ralph Ellison, "Shadow and Act," in *The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison*, ed. John F. Callahan, Modern Library Edition. (New York: Random House LLC, 2003), 47–340.

description of *le Divers* is the hermeneutic frame used in this analysis to privilege the diasporic-character of Black America. Glissant's *le divers* provide a positive models for privileging difference and provides a theoretical context for my description of Black America as a dynamic and contested Black Atlantic articulation of the African diaspora within specific ideological and methodological contexts. Building on prior discussions of Lyotard and Glissant, this depiction of Black America, and consequently Black American discourse, insists on both (re)conceiving the signifying power of difference, (re)assessing the notion of poetics and continually acknowledging the politics and power that are inherent in historical (re)construction and textual exegesis.

Chapter Three, "Common Sites as Univocal Sight: The Many Trajectories of Diaspora in Diaspora Studies," is a cultural critical analysis of Diaspora Studies and its engagement with the concept of diaspora. Through close cultural critical (re)readings of theorists and scholars in the increasingly popular field of Diaspora Studies, I employ the mathematical linear equation, $y = mx + b$, as a programmatic analogy for Diaspora Studies' paradigmatic treatment of the concept of diaspora. After surveying the fields varying types of definitions, approaches and uses of diaspora, I identify the diverse trajectories of diaspora continually evoking notions of univocality and unilinearity. Through the language of Hegelian Colour-blindness, I display how many theorists insist on the concept of diaspora being the result of a single, original etymological meaning and unilinear paradigm, which is applied to various critical fields of study. This chapter concludes by briefly explaining the hazardous and at times dubious nature of aspects of the underlying metanarratives utilized in Diaspora Studies.

Part II, “A Poetics of Diaspora Discourse: (re)Conceiving Difference, (re)Reading Contexts as Ideological Texture” (Chapters 4 – 6) begins my own (re)reading of the source materials and contexts from which I develop my own reading approach as a Black American. While Part I locates this analysis of Acts and diaspora in its present intellectual and scholarly setting, Part II casts my hermeneutical and theoretical vision of diaspora and Black American poetics. Chapter 4 is both a thorough (re)construction of the Diaspora Studies archive and my own cultural critical theory of diaspora. Chapter 5 presents my Black American conception of a poetics of diaspora.

Stepping away from the unilinear assumptions of the scholarly treatment of diaspora, the beginning of Chapter 4, “Pathways: Reconstructing the Function of Diaspora,” explores, through a cultural critical lens, late nineteenth and early twentieth century scholarly depictions of diaspora. By introducing biblical scholarship to the archive of Diaspora Studies, this (re)reading presents diaspora, as an ancient term and modern heuristic-concept, as contextually derived and polyvocal. This chapter closes with my own poetic description—not definition—of diaspora.

While Chapter 4 offers my theory of diaspora, Chapter 5, “Diaspora Poetics via Black American Discourse and Criticism,” outlines my own cultural critical construction of a poetics of diaspora and uses Barack Obama’s 2007, “Selma Voting Rights Speech,” to organically demonstrate the contextual and interpretive significance of identifying a poetics of diaspora. Informed by my Black American context, this chapter situates my notion of a poetics of diaspora within the broader Black Atlantic literary tradition, particularly informed by Black American scholars. As a part of my ideological texture, this chapter outlines my positionality to the ancient historical and literary contexts in

which Acts takes place. It explains my hermeneutic sensitivity to the figures of diaspora poetics:

- Geopolitical and/or ethno-racial particularity;
- (Re)narration of the past and (re)constructions of history;
- Intra-communal dispute, diversity and debate;
- Negotiation of Empire, imperial regimes and socio-political place.

Chapter Six, “Implementations: Modeling Poetics in Tradition for the Reading of Acts,” consists of two major subsections. First, I situate my Black American-oriented poetics of diaspora discourse firmly within the intellectual tradition of Black American literary criticism. By contextually locating my poetics of diaspora discourse within the Black American intellectual tradition, I reveal both my dependence and deviation from the Black American critical tradition and archive. While this poetics responds to a prominent set of intellectual and ideological predispositions, it is also an articulation of a vibrant tradition of Black American and Black Atlantic literary criticism. As alluded to earlier, the intentional intersection of critical scholarship and Black cultural expression has a long and interdisciplinary tradition. Informed by this intellectual heritage and the heuristic insights offered by the nomenclature of Hegelian Colour-blindness, the inscription of a univocal and unilinear theory is anathema to my proposed poetics.

The second subsection of this chapter explores the viability of my contextually constructed poetics of diaspora discourse for contexts and texts deriving from eras and Diasporas other than my own twenty-first century and Black American context. Here, I use Rodolphe Desdunes’ 1907 pamphlet, “With Malice Towards None: A Few Words to Dr. Du Bois,” to highlight the contested nature of Black American identity. Desdunes’ text provides a platform for narrative-making within a Black American historical context.

Glissant's notion of *le même* guides my reading of Desdunes, which (re)conceives early twentieth century Black America through the lens of difference, diaspora, and discourse. This chapter illustrates the heuristic value and poetic dimensions of Black American literature and the generative social and cultural texture from which I approach Acts. I then explore the utility of by poetics of diaspora in the exegesis of the Elephantine papyri, Cowley-30 (B19). Composed during the Achaemenid Persia Empire in the Yahwists—i.e. Jewish—Diaspora, my poetics of diaspora provides heuristic insights that contribute to scholarly discussions concerning the historical setting for Cowley-30 (B19) and its rhetorical agenda. Through the use of two documents from different Diaspora communities and imperial eras, my poetics of diaspora discourse, though contextually constructed, is situated as a heuristic for historical and textual analysis across temporal and contextual lines.

After constructing and demonstrating the use of a poetics of diaspora in Part II, Part III, “Acts 6.1 – 8.40 as Diaspora Discourse: A Socio-Rhetorical and Contextual Reading,” (Chapters 7 and 8) concludes this dissertation by using my poetics of diaspora discourse to outline a social and cultural texture, inner texture and intertexture for a diaspora-oriented, cultural critical exegesis of Acts 6.1 – 8.40. Chapter 7, Reading Contexts of Diaspora,” uses the concept of diaspora to explore early imperial Rome and the social and cultural textures of diaspora. Engaging concepts such as polytheism, Hellenization, conflict, exile and geography, this chapter provides a historical (re)contextualization of Acts' ancient social and cultural setting. This chapter demonstrates the presence of diaspora poetics in early imperial discourse through brief discussions of Philo of Alexandria, Josephus, Lucian of Samosata as well as the

pseudonymous 4 Maccabees. The discussion of both Jewish and non-Jewish Diaspora discourse provides an ancient setting where Diaspora existence is understood as a significant imperial context for shaping the poetics of both Jewish and gentile Christ-followers. Informed by my poetics of diaspora, Chapter 7 argues that the concept of diaspora is a relevant and insightful heuristic for (re)reading the discourses of dispersed individuals living in early imperial Rome.

Chapter 8, “A Concluding Overture,” concludes this grand-prolegomenon with a series of prolegomena on the inner texture and intertexture of Acts. After identifying various inner texture elements within Acts that support its engagement as diaspora discourse, outline key components to Acst 6.1 – 8.40 that readers can engage in its exegesis. Beginning with the presentation of Hebrews (Aramaic-speaking Jews) and Hellenists (Greek-speaking Jews), these prolegomena follow the narrative as it transitions from this initial dispute (6:1-7), to a subsequent dispute amongst Hellenist Jews (6:8 – 8:3) to the scattering of Christ-followers that results in two obscured articulations of Israel—Samaria (8:4 – 25) and an Ethiopian (8.26– 40)— learning about Jesus of Nazareth. Through the lens of diaspora, Acts 6.1 – 8.40 elucidates Luke’s narration of the scattering of Israel as a consequence of the Gospel, alongside the scattering of the Gospel as a result of diaspora Jews, thus entailing a type of double-figurization of diaspora. Through a series of concluding prolegomena, I outline a particular exegetical trajectory for (re)conceiving Acts 6.1 – 8.40 in light of the ideological and socio-cultural textures of a poetics of diaspora discourse. The newly imagined mode of diaspora discourse advocates for heightened recognition of Black America’s particularity, diversity and the narratives that constitute it as an ever-changing articulation

differentness in diaspora. While Chapter 8 provides the bulk of exegetical insights for Acts 6.1 – 8.40, it seeks not to delimit readings of Acts 6.1 – 8.40 but to invite fellow exegetes to (re)view Acts through the lens of diaspora, modeled in within the contexts of Black America and Biblical Studies but informed by their own interpretive contexts.

Part I
Methodological Overture:
A Social and Cultural Texture for Reading Acts as a Black American Scholar

Chapter 1 Acts of the Apostles: Shadows and Acts⁵⁵

When my master's family were all gone away on the Sabbath, I used to go into the house and get down the great Bible, and lie down in the piazza, and read...[I]n the Bible I learned that 'God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.'

James Curry, excerpt from slave narrative⁵⁶

As exemplified in the violent murder of Stephen and its connection to the persecuting-Saul-turned-persecuted-Paul, Acts constructs Jewish and Christian identity along a simple binary: to be a nonbelieving Jew is to be an agent of violence; to be a Christian is to suffer.

Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*⁵⁷

Luke does not draw dots that his readers might connect. He is rather a drawer of lines, lines indicating movement from east to west, from Jew to gentile, from Jerusalem "to the ends of the earth" (1:8).

Richard Pervo, *The Mystery of Acts*⁵⁸

Scholarly Readings of Acts with Hegelian Eyes

Acts of the Apostles enjoys a rich tradition of interpretation within Black American discourse. Primarily invoked intertextually within sermons, speeches, and literature, few scholarship executed by Black Americans have done extended analyses of Acts as a whole discourse.⁵⁹ Still, its rhetorical use is well attested; whether preached in

⁵⁵ This subtitle is an allusion to a Ralph Ellison essay. For further discussion see the Program in the Introduction. See, *ibid.*

⁵⁶ John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 131.

⁵⁷ Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2010), 9.

⁵⁸ Richard I. Pervo, *The Mystery of Acts: Unraveling Its Story* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2008), 29.

⁵⁹ See, Demetrius K. Williams, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian K. Blount et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Pr, 2007), 213–48 for a short commentary on Acts from an African American perspective. Williams' entry is valuable for looking at the various ways Acts can be, and has been engaged in the Black American theological tradition. ; For a dissertation on Acts 8:26-40, See, Cottrel Ricardo Carson, "'Do You Understand What You Are Reading?': A Reading of the Ethiopian Eunuch Story (Acts 8.26-40) from a Site of Cultural Marronage" (Union Theological Seminary, 1999); Clarice J. Martin, "A Chamberlain's Journey and the Challenge of Interpretation for Liberation.," *Semeia*, no. 47 (1989): 105–35 While this is an article on Acts 8:26-40, it is one of the most cited scholarly treatments on Acts by an African American. For another article length entry on Acts, See, Abraham Smith, "'Do You Understand What You Are Reading?': A Literary Critical Reading of the Ethiopian (Kushite) Episode (Acts 8:26-40)," *Journal of the*

pulpits on Sunday or amongst the ecclesial writings of Richard Allen, political polemics of David Walker, injunctive orations of Maria Stewart, slave narrative of freedman James Curry or Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Acts of the Apostles has served as a discursive source for Black American social, political and ecclesial critique.⁶⁰ Women and men, clergy and lay, preachers, scholars and political dissidents have found Acts' narrative a useful fount for affirming the humanity, historicity and the ecclesial legitimacy of Black peoples. In addition to Acts' historical nature and canonical status, the text's affinity to Black American discourse frequently entail the observation of an Ethiopian official that is a subject of a female, black-African head of state (8.26 – 40), invocations of an actively present G*d who created all humanity from a single essence (17.24 – 28; cf. 7.2 – 50), shows no partiality amongst humanity's class, ethnic or gender distinctions (10.34) and whose spirit descends to speak through men, women, young, old, slave and free (2.16 - 21). Concurrent within each of these themes is the presence of communities with imminent and eschatological hopes that idealizes the care and provision of one another's needs (4.32 – 37; cf. 6:1-7). Inherent in many of these readings is the recurring hermeneutic use of Acts as means of socio-political critique.

Interdenominational Theological Center 22, no. 1 (1994): 48–70; It is worth noting that part of the reason for such a dearth of scholarly treatment by Black Americans is due to the small number of Black Americans with Ph.D. or Th.D's in New Testament studies. While the number is growing at promising rate, as of 2006 fewer than 50 Black Americans had ever earned a doctorate in New Testament or early Christian literature. See, Brian K. Blount et al., eds., *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 559–560.

⁶⁰ Walker, *David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*; Maria W. (Miller) Stewart, *Meditations from the Pen of Mrs. Maria W. Stewart* (Boston: Enterprise Publishing Company, 1879); Richard Allen, "Address to the People of Color in the United States," in *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labors of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen* (Philadelphia, PA: F. Ford and M.A. Riply, 1880), 52–72.

Employed as a text of authority across many different contexts, Acts provides models and against which speakers contrast society.⁶¹ Pitting the Acts narrative against their opponents, Black American interpreters signified on Acts to dispute and exhort. Claims of Africa's lack of contribution to religion, civilization or society; accusations that Blacks, women, or slaves are unsuitable vessels through which the divine speaks; charges that inequality, individualism and poverty are compatible with the ideal community of Christ-followers: Acts' invocation in Black American discourse, as proof or model, often works to counter any variation of these beliefs.

This (re)conceiving of Acts through the lens of a Black American centered poetics of diaspora is conscious of, and participates with this tradition. Yet, as discussed above, my intellectual and contextual setting also exists within a contextual and intellectual setting shaped by New Testament Studies' critical scholarship on Acts.⁶² These streams, concurrent with readings from the Black American discursive tradition, extend a shading pall over Acts of the Apostles through its predisposition towards *mal d'archive* and Hegelian Colour-blindness. It is this dimmed rendering of Acts, one that often serves as

⁶¹ As a part of the Christian canon, Christians confer authority on Acts as scripture. Consequently, many Christians alternatively utilize the Acts narrative as teaching, proof, the authorized view of Christian origins, or as paradigmatic history. Scholars have also approached Acts as an authoritative text in numerous ways. Chief among these approaches is the recognition of Acts as ancient material culture. As ancient material culture Acts provides insight into an ancient account of Christian origins, and accurately reflects primitive Christian ideology and worldviews.

⁶² I am aware that the sphere of critical scholarly engagement of Acts is not mutually exclusive from the Black American discursive tradition. My reading is not the first, and is in no way the definitive or authoritative reading of Acts. As early as 1893, Bishop Benjamin W. Arnett of the African Methodist Episcopal Church pursued questions of authorship and historical analysis of Acts. There are, however, few extant extended works done by Black American scholars that critically engage in a concentrated analysis of Acts of the Apostles in the field of Biblical studies prior to Clarice Martin's article on Acts 8:26-40. See Benjamin William Arnett, "Christianity and the Negro," in *The World's Parliament of Religions: An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World's First Parliament of Religions, Held in Chicago in Connection with the Columbian Exposition of 1893*, ed. John Henry Barrows (Chicago: The Parliament Publishing Company, 1893), 747-50; Martin, "A Chamberlain's Journey and the Challenge of Interpretation for Liberation.,"; Cain Hope Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989).

the reference and authoritative foundation for Black American interpretations, which is the present subject.

In a manner more nuanced, yet strikingly similar to Trevor-Roper, scholarly approaches to Acts exile a significant portion of Black America's discursive engagement of Acts from discussions of early Christianity. While certain Hegelian gazes dismiss interpretations because they have origins in Black subjects, others reject entire streams of interpretations regardless of the source or argument. It is coincidental that these streams happen to overlap with a large portion of the Black American tradition. Thus, if a Hegelian gaze permits one to read, their reading must look a certain way to be viable, scholarly or ideal.⁶³ Even when scholars attuned to "postmodernity" acknowledge the plurality of meaning and the impact perspective plays in any communicative act, a desire often remains to univocally validate and invalidate the utility of certain readings. In Shelly Matthews' informative and illuminating reading on the role of Acts 7 in early Christian identity formation, she deftly illustrates the schizophrenic character of Hegelian Colour-blindness. She paints a pointed and well-articulated picture of early Christian identity formation, and the socio-rhetorics of Stephen's speech (Acts 7) in light of its historical setting. Prior to her reading, Matthew undermines her careful observations by self-positioning herself and like-minded exegetes as arbiters of "the" proper lens and understanding to offer "the" ideal reading that discerns Luke's encoded markers.

Conscious and sensitive to postmodernity she assures readers that Acts' interpretive tradition is polyvocal. She implicitly insists, however, that critical scholars

⁶³ This invalidation seldom takes place in print or public. Normally, it will take the form of archive. Who is read, engaged, cited, or appropriated. What papers are accepted at conferences, in journals, or assigned for classes. This way the balkanization continues, albeit in a less overt or antagonistic form.

need to understand Acts historically as unilinear. In one breath she both affirms the perspectival nature of postmodern reality, “a text has no agency in and of itself,” and then undermines it, “[b]ut texts do contain rhetorical markers, and thus it is possible to distinguish between ideal readings that follow these markers and resistant readings that push against them.”⁶⁴ For Matthews, though texts have no inherent agency, there is a specific set of signs and codes endowed in the text by its author that indicate the “ideal” path towards gaining the historical meaning of texts. This coding, a constituent part of the text’s syntax, differentiates between “ideal” readings and “resistant” readings. According to her presentation, Acts can “theoretically” serve as a base for liberatory readings, “if” readers work *against* Acts’ rhetorical markers. Implicit in working against “Acts’ rhetorical markers” is the notion of working against Luke’s purpose and goal of writing. Matthews has predisposed readers to choose between the author’s message—which one presumes is permanently situated in Acts’ syntax—and their own subjective agenda—which works against history. Her summation of seemingly all readings of Acts assumes that those who read like her are positioned to exegete and attain a proper view of the past; they recognize and discern Luke’s rhetorical markers and thus have the proper tools to excavate and decode Acts.

Her nomenclature begins by offering a problematic structure.⁶⁵ Readings of Acts are either ideal or resistant. Readers either follow Acts’ markers, or they actively work against them. She fails to identify to whom the ideal reading is ideal or to what a resistant reading resists. Matthews describes resistant readings as being resistant to the

⁶⁴ Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*, 28.

⁶⁵ Matthews acknowledges borrowing her nomenclature from Adele Reinhartz. See, Adele Reinhartz, “The New Testament and Anti-Judaism: A Literary-Critical Approach,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 25, no. 4 (1988): 524–37.

text's "rhetorical markers;" in other words, resistant readings resist the text. She provides fewer clues to ascertain for whom the ideal reading is ideal. Yet, the appeal to "rhetorical markers" implies that these readings follow the text, and are thus ideal for discerning the author of Acts' message. Juxtaposed to one another, ideal readings are ideal for the "original" and "intended" author, while resistant readings resist and work against the author.

Matthews' gaze upon Acts has done more than bifurcate all readings of Acts. She fundamentally links resistant readings of Acts to liberation.⁶⁶ Thus, both resistant readings and liberation are in contrast to ideal readings, functioning semiotically as implications of not ideal. She enforces this syntactic structure by semantically describing the task of reading resistantly. The ardent inadequacy is evident; these readers, "**mine** the text of Acts for **traces** of **submerged voices** and liberatory **visions** that **might be lodged** there."⁶⁷ She paints resistant readings as an arduous task—mining—in search for intangible remnants—voices and visions—that have at the most only a possibility of partially being present inside, below, or awkwardly stuck within the discursive nature of Acts. She assures readers that there are numerous "traces" to be found, prior to blithely describing the types of people who engage in these readings in one place as **feminists** and

⁶⁶ Liberation is a subjective, perspectival reality. Even if one accepted Matthews' claims that ideal and resistant readings exist fundamentally, it is impossible to fundamentally associate certain markers, or the signification upon certain markers as universally liberatory or oppressive. This notion of liberatory readings with respect to colonial, imperial, and hegemonic power, which Matthews discusses, is rooted in the perspectival situation of the interpretation. Her very example of the slave girl in Acts 16 exemplifies this case. While Paul's exorcism of the girl, her loss of the gift of divination, and her subsequent disappearance from the scene can be read in multiple ways. I agree that her silence and disappearance is problematic, and lean towards critical interpretations of this passage, the social and political context in which this formerly exploited (or formerly privileged) slave is no longer the center of her master's attention will determine if they find this periscope liberatory, oppressive, or ambiguous.

⁶⁷ Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*, 28 Bold was added for emphasis.

theorists and at another point using **liberation theologians** as an example. Regardless, her illustrations avoid New Testament or Biblical scholars.

My concern is less with Matthews' discussion of how Stephen's speech might have functioned rhetorically within early Christian history as a mechanism for building Christian identity at the expense of Jews and more with the means by which she implies that, as a discourse, Acts' "rhetorical markers" form a single set that have singularly identifiable and reproducible ways of ideally signifying on them.⁶⁸ When she contrasts her decoding of Acts' rhetorical markers with resistant readings, she definitively states that Acts' "surface narrative...is emphatically kyriarchal."⁶⁹ Observe the contrast: submerged traces that "might" be present versus a surface narrative that is "emphatically" kyriarchal. Her reading is both ideal and requires less work. Her ideal reading is easier and more natural—read rational.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷⁰ Matthews' examples are perplexing. In her explication of the surface narrative, she needs to contextualize Acts with Galatians. Luke's use of Galatians is highly debated. She seems somewhat arbitrary with her use of theory. She uses little discussion of the social and imperial world, and how texts navigate class and colonial space. See James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990). Additionally, she attempts to note both the submerged traces, and surface narrative demonstrating that she is correct, but her illustrations often seem inverted. For example, she uses Acts 2:17-18 as an example. She notes that Peter includes a citation from Joel that proclaims that the Lord will males and females, young and old, and slaves as "prophetic agents." However, she wants to depict this "overt" invocation of Jewish scripture as an example of a submerged trace. The surface narrative happens to be "on further inspection" the difficulty on finding slaves, women, or young people prophesying. She notes that only men were considered to replace Judas, and ponders who is behind the ambiguity of the plural πάντες [all] and οὗτοι [these]. Matthews takes issues with the invisibility of women, or at least the lack of overt recognition during the Pentecost episode. After recognizing that only slave speaks in the entire Acts narrative, and this slave has an inferior spirit, is female, a non-believer, and is possibly a joke. Each of these observations is particularly useful, but to suggest that they are the surface narrative, and have only one "ideal" reading seems disingenuous. To label the explicit invocation of a prophecy as a "submerged trace" and the narrative analysis of "named" speakers in the text as "surface" narrative, that then needs to be read in light of Paul's letter to the Galatians is even more bewildering, especially when she is attempting to establish her reading as both ideal and "simpler." See, Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*, 27–53.

According to Matthews, Acts, being gifted from its ancient author with a fundamental, unchanging rhetorical character, presents twenty-first century readers with a choice: they may follow the signals provided by the ancient author; or, they can be exegetical antagonists, working against the author's intended markers. In a setting imbued with *mal d'archive* where recovery of the past serves as a primary goal, this description acts as a dichotomized axiology of scholarship that pits the ideal versus the liberatory.⁷¹ Instead of resting upon exegetical analysis, argument or rationality, Matthews' axiological foundation depends on the identification of an interpretation's praxis: is it liberatory? In an ironic twist, this praxis-oriented axiology implicitly claims that its authoritative "ideal-ness" is in its rational historicism. Promoting the univocality characteristic of Hegelian Colour-blindness, Matthews' reading of Acts presents ancient intention and reception as ideal for the New Testament scholars, because it uncovers True, Pure and Simple readings of Acts' rhetorical markers.

In one fell swoop Matthews permits and validates people who read Acts in liberatory ways, with the backhanded condition that they accept her categorical labeling of being resistant (to Luke), not ideal and doing the work of theorist and theologians.⁷² This categorizing takes place prior to any negotiation of argument, presentation of historical or contextual setting, or discussion of how these readings that are not ideal go about framing, arguing or engaging Acts. Consequently, while Matthews' Hegelian gaze

⁷¹ Matthews' description of "resistant readings" focuses solely on "liberation." Consequently, these two descriptors function as strong corollaries, almost synonyms: to identify a liberatory reading is to identify a resistant reading.

⁷² Matthews' "situating" of Acts is useful on various points, and is a very needed perspective. One cannot discern intention from discourse, so, I am uncertain whether she consciously inserted so many "rhetorical markers" to convey disdain and dismissal of communities that read Acts "resistantly." When taking her description of resistant readings collectively, it is difficult for me not to decode it as the full disqualification for critical biblical or historical conjecture.

does not overtly banish Africa or Black peoples to the ahistorical or non-Universal because of their relationship or identity with Africa, she does condemn the bulk of Black America's discursive engagement with Acts to the sphere of "not ideal."⁷³ These readings from Black America are theoretically possible and acceptable in some circles. They are also outside the realm of legitimate and historical-critical interpretations of Acts' rhetorical markers and valid (re)constructions of Acts' setting within early Christianity.⁷⁴ Black Americans, throughout the majority of their discursive history, have read Acts as their circumstances require, not as Luke intended.

Matthews' work exemplifies how contemporary scholars sometimes confine and prescribe readings of Acts prior to analysis, and how this shapes the intellectual context in which scholarly, particularly Black American, readings seek voice. In the midst of these prescriptions for Acts, scholars jockey for sole placement for accurate and historical readings of Acts. As seen in Matthews, these often dismiss the legitimacy of readings situated within the Black American discursive tradition. Matthews is no more egregious

⁷³ I find it slightly ironic that Hegelian Colour-blindness can manifest itself in various ways, and still have the same outcome. Jefferson and Hegel felt Africans were savage, uncivilized, and biologically incapable of refinement. Out of the realm of biological racism developed stereotypes of Africans and Blacks as being contrary to civilization, resistant to religion, resistant to education, working against history, and to a degree working against human nature. These same Africans and Blacks were lazy, yet specifically suited to hard, manual labor. The types of work beneath properly civilized humanity. This belief continued throughout the 20th century, however taking various forms. Today, a view of Blacks as lazy, violent, immoral, resistant to laws, progress, and work continue. Blacks are well suited for athletics, entertainment and manual labor. After jettisoning biological racism, and the recognition of the full humanity and potential of Africans and Black peoples, Matthews' construct has no intention to label or categorically engage Blacks or Black Americans. It just so happens to serve as an excellent model to label the vast majority of scholarly and non-scholarly engagement of Acts by Black Americans as "resistant." Blacks began modernity as resistant, and have entered postmodernity as resistant.

⁷⁴ Thus, along with this assumption of an ideal surface narrative her (re)construction of early Christianity is flat and homogenous. At the heart of her analysis is the belief that the majority of early Christians would read and decode Luke's markers in the same way, and that if scholars of early Christianity are interested in early Christian history, they should adopt this, and only this hermeneutic to (re)construct early Christian identity negotiation. Already stated above, the weakness of this worldview is that her decoding of early Christianity already rests upon a particular (re)construction of the social, political, and ideological world of Luke's milieu. This character is another symptom of Hegelian Colour-blindness, and will be discussed further below.

than other New Testament critics, her attempt at “situating Acts” just serves as a crystalized example for the unstated and structural approaches found in Acts scholarship. This assumption of Luke’s agenda and worldview casts a long shadow over Acts, and this shadow approaches cultural critical readings of the ancient world as suspect, while failing to recognize the cultural critical presumptions inherent within scholarship.

Yet, this hermeneutic hegemony is not the lone impact of Hegelian Colour-blindness on Acts’ scholarship. Implicit in Hegel’s philosophy of history is the presumption of history as a linear trajectory; the *de facto* goal of history is to produce a metanarrative that represents past events as rational progressions within a logical pattern that can pass through the singular present-point extending into a somewhat reproducible and predictable future. Of course, these rational progressions are the constructs on the individual thinker-scholar. These metanarratives represent more than possible trajectories or alternative representations of the past, they are attempts to conceive THE Universal structure; they are unilinear. At the core of Hegel’s philosophy of history, as well as other narratives exhibiting Hegelian Colour-blindness, is the belief in, and critical pursuit of comprehensive narratives that discursively present history as linear progressions that are either in concert or competition with alternative narratives. History, in essence, is a Newtonian attempt to articulate a unified reality for a multiplicity of perspectives.

For Hegel, exemplary of the West, there was a single *telos* for the Totality of the Universe, and his Universal History sought to reduce human development into a linear expression of rationality. This expression of rationality was the product of the individual critic and enabled the scholar to trace identifiably predictable and logical patterns through dialectical progression. Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860) was a leading exponent of

Hegel's critical method for the study of early Christianity, publishing his widely influential two volume, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi, sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre* in 1845. For Baur, early Christianity consisted of three epochs: Jesus and his ministry; the Apostles and early Church; the post-Apostolic church of the Church fathers. Study of the Gospels revolved around the singular person of Jesus, who expressed the spirit and consciousness of Christianity. The era of the Apostles, in like manner, revolved around the singular person of Paul. Baur defines the great question of his time as, "what Christianity originally was and essentially is." *En mal d'archive*, Baur and his critical cohorts' study of early Christianity, and Acts in particular, required a coherent and critical analysis of the Apostle Paul. Baur's work was significant. He sought to empower interpreters to engage scriptural texts free of ecclesial dogma, asking questions formerly shunned, and while Baur's critical theory challenged and opened the ideological and hermeneutic frameworks available to scholars his interpretive displays the muted gaze of Hegelian Colour-blindness.

At the heart of his historical critical scholarship were the processes of denial and rejection. Those processes lie in the presentation of facts and arguments. Facts and arguments, however, are distinct from the details and minutiae of artifacts, sources, or comparison, because, "[t]here is no limit to controversy on points of detail. The abstract possibility of this and that detail can never be disproved."⁷⁵ Baur's discussion of historical critical scholarship hints at the structural and ideological effect critical history has on society: "it[critical historical theory] impresses itself quietly upon the thoughtful

⁷⁵ Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine. A Contribution to the Critical History of Primitive Christianity*, ed. Eduard Zeller, trans. Allan Menzies, vol. 1, 2 vols., Second Edition. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1876), vii.

mind; and against this the party interests of the day will sooner or later cease to assert themselves.” Historical critical approaches, as demonstrated in Baur’s appropriation of Hegel, exhort the critic to root their theory of the past upon their individual perceptions of the present. History, no longer was a project of analyzing the past to anticipate the future; it became a discursive act of explaining the present through the plotting and tracing of the past to the present upon narrative trajectories of self.⁷⁶

While conscious of the invested nature of the critical task, it was modernity’s faith in critical rationality and the scholar’s agency as an objective theorist that allowed Baur to insist on history as a hegemonic linearity—unilinear. Flowing out of Hegel’s philosophy of history, Baur paved the way for a school of Biblical scholarship centered in Tübingen. The Tübingen school inscribed Hegel’s Colour-blinded gaze into a system of exegesis responsible for conceiving the present by (re)constructing primitive Christianity’s past. Anything that sought inclusion within the Universal required more than observation or recognition; it necessitated compatibility via critical theory with historical and theoretical foregrounding. Thus, Baur writes:

The principal efforts of the age in the higher walks of science are critical and historical in their nature; everything that seeks to assert a position in the world is asked for its warrant in history; everything found existing is examined down to the very foundation; it is sought to go back to the beginning, to the first elements in which the germs of the whole process, lay, in order to arrive at a clear insight into the whole from the discovered relations of the individual parts.⁷⁷

One detriment of unilinear expression is its definitional one-dimensionality. All data (events or phenomena) must find expression in, or be reduced to a particular, yet, arbitrary trajectory of progression.⁷⁸ Hegel’s overarching project was the construction of

⁷⁶ Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ*.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:1.

⁷⁸ This arbitrary trajectory is the slope-m component of the scholar’s metanarrative. See fn44.

a generality that would reduce human development to single line of rational thought. Hegel, along with Jefferson and Trevor-Roper, conceived of one-dimensional worlds that were only able to progress along this single axis. Thus, the complexities and diversities of world events required reduction to its single commonality. For Baur, it was requisite for the historical critical scholars to implement historical theories. These historical theories focus then on, “its broad general truth, to which details are subordinate and on which they depend: to the logical coherence of the whole, the preponderating inner probability and necessity of the case.”⁷⁹ This “preponderating inner probability” acts as a colonizing force combatting alternative narratives of reality and collapsing diversity into linear paths able to project acceptable trajectories onto the scholar’s view of the present.

Ernst Troeltsch would encapsulate this modern historical-critical endeavor some five decades later. Troeltsch rooted the historical critical task in religion on three principles:

- Criticism, or “Assumption of Approximation;”
- Analogy;
- Correlation.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, 1:vii; One can additionally view Baur’s use of Acts in writing his history of primitive Christianity. See, Ferdinand Christian Baur, *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, trans. Allan Menzies, vol. 1, 2 vols., Third edition. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1878).

⁸⁰ While analogy and correlation are the actual terms frequently seen associated with Troeltsch’s *Analogie*, and *Korrelation*, the initial principle that I list as Assumption of Approximation corresponds to Troeltsch’s *der methodische Zweifel* [methodological doubt]. In addition to Jack Forstman’s translation, Van Harvey, in *The Historian and Believer*, also describes this principle as the principle of criticism. Troeltsch’s assumption that all critical processes are imbued with doubt, and only exist as constructed approximations necessitates recognition. The belief that criticism permits individuals to find an absolute history or reality is incongruent with this principle of criticism. Troeltsch’s discussion of methodological doubt assumes that absolute history is unachievable, and any critical analysis of history is merely an approximated argument that seeks to display the highest probability. Thus, I employ both Van Harvey’s terminology, the Principle of Criticism, and my own, Assumption of Approximation, to convey this notion that the historical critical method only produces approximations, while maintaining expectations of objectivity and proximity to a “single” real, though unrecoverable history. See, Ernst Troeltsch, “On the Historical and Dogmatic Methods in Theology [1898],” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, trans. Jack Forstman, vol. II (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1913), 728–53; Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress; a Historical Study of the Relation of Protestantism to the Modern World*, (London, 1912),

Though a singular past exists, the critic's responsibility is to construct the model that has the highest probability to approximate this actual past. The critic, according to Troeltsch, must first acknowledge the principle of criticism by accepting that the absolute past is non-retrievable. The critic merely approximates the past through the principles of analogy and correlation. Across time, while any particular event is unique, the world itself maintains analogous systems, structures and laws that permit the historical critic to analyze texts and build models. The past and present exist within analogous worlds, the principle of analogy permits the critic to evaluate the probability and utility of their particular historical (re)constructions.⁸¹ Correlation, which Troeltsch alternatively calls, "the interconnection of all events of past history," asserts that all past events analogous to events within the critic's experience. Therefore, the critic can view all historical events as contextually and symbiotically interconnected as a single flow with prior and subsequent events. In other words, the principle of correlation demands the recognition of historical and socio-political contexts and perceives history as a linear trajectory syntactically organized through causality. Hence, Troeltsch can readily illustrate his point by claiming: "The origin of Christianity must be seen in connection with the decay of Judaism, the political movements of the day, and the apocalyptic ideas of the time."⁸² The process of building analogous models that can then have correspondence to present circumstances through the invocation of a singularly linear causality corresponds to that which Lyotard understood as the relationship between metanarrative and metasubject. The entire premise behind analogy and correlation

<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015064366597>; Van Austin Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief* (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 1, 19.

⁸¹ Troeltsch, "On the Historical and Dogmatic Methods in Theology [1898]," II:3.

⁸² *Ibid.*, II:4–5.

depend on the application of metanarratives acceptable within particular localities. In the case of Troeltsch, this particular locality was the ideological and vocational world of the religious scholar and critic.

While Troeltsch's approach did much to advance critical approaches to biblical studies, it maintained its quest for the Universal. Two examples of his analogy and correspondence are informative. Troeltsch, like Adolf Harnack, argued that because observable and verifiable miracles did not exist in the eighteenth century it was improbable that they existed in antiquity. Thus, through the principle of analogy, one could dismiss the miracles of the New Testament as ahistoric.⁸³ Likewise, when Jefferson and Hegel fail to acknowledge the presence of African history, intellect, or socio-cultural contribution, the principle of analogy requires a dismissal of the likelihood that Africa or African descendents ever contributed to history. Like miracles, the presence or contribution of Black Africans in the biblical record, necessarily, is unhistoric, marginally significant, or improperly signified.

In line with Baur's emphasis on the role of the present in his critical theory, Troeltsch notes the significance of the principle of analogy:

Thus the understanding of the present is always the final goal of all history. History is just the whole life experience of our race, which we have to remember as long and as well, to apply to our present existence as well and as closely, as we can. Every historical investigation works tacitly with these coefficients; and it is avowedly the highest goal of history wherever history is conscious of itself as an organic science with a definite significance for the whole of our knowledge.⁸⁴

⁸³ For the majority of biblical scholars today, miracles continue to be non-analogous to the present because they fall outside the realm of scientific legitimacy or experimental reproducibility. Yet, narrative approaches permit for corollaries to be made. See below.

⁸⁴ Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*, 3

Troeltsch describes the task of critical history as a perpetual cycle of approximating and constructing rational models of history through the identification of analogies. Critical history's highest goal, according to Troeltsch, utilizes the principle of analogy to project the critic's historical construction onto the present. Scholarly history, thus, is about mapping oneself onto the past in a unilinear and unidirectional manner.

In order to produce these unilinear models that approximate reality, critics rely upon certain metanarratives. The resultant (re)constructed history is a discursive representation of the subjects of the past, either by reduction or contortion, through the expression of a single axis that uses the historian's metanarrative to dictate its axial and axiological nature. Entities incapable of such expression are foreign and fall outside the scope of the Universal. Historical-critical approaches to miracles are again exemplary. Since miracles, as stated above, are non-analogous to the present day and thus ahistorical, miracle can only correlate to the production of myth, tales, irrationality, or rhetorical convention.⁸⁵ In like manner, since Black Africans are ahistoric and non-analogous to civilization, growth, or progress, the presence of an African, or particularly a dark skinned African is a likely misreading. If not a misconstrued reading, the principle of analogy demands that such a figure is probably mythic/fictitious, of marginal narrative

⁸⁵ Particularly prior to narrative approaches to Acts, miracles were unable to find analogy to contemporary activity of a supernatural power of the divine or some historic entity. Many scholars, such as Harnack and Schweitzer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Malina and Lüdemann of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, dismiss miracles as incredulous aspects of little historical value. Alternatively, Renan also dismissed the veracity of miracles occurring, yet, placed them in ancient Mediterranean culture. For Renan, miracles were more than fictitious constructions, but lay in the cultural differences between modern scientific societies and antiquity. He noted that the ancients were susceptible to use notions of miracles to explain events their historic subject position had no other way of conceiving. Unfortunately, anti-Judaic historical assumptions permeate Renan's (re)construction of the ancient Mediterranean. This anti-Judaism is particularly evident in his description of superstitious, and legalistic Jews of the first century CE.

importance, little corollary value and has no significant analogy to modern communities of African descended people.⁸⁶

Growing upon invisible metanarratives, critical history serves as the taproot of society; it is the large, centralized core just subterraneous that drives and anchors society's vertical growth. As history reaches downward, tapering and branching, its origin point just below the surface strengthens and fortifies. It serves as the base of the above-ground stem and plant; there can be only one taproot. The univocal character of writing and philosophizing history, in this instance, is a zero-sum game. When in the presence of multiple perspectives, only one perspective can be true. The construction of history—read knowledge—necessarily entails the sifting through and collation of events and phenomena; the construction of history and reality—read perspective—below the gaze of Hegelian Colour-blindness stakes claim to an exclusive universality with an observable finitude that then expunges the discards of particularity and difference from purview. As light gives shape to objects cast in its path, the historian with Hegelian Colour-blindness (re)conceives the Totality of existence solely within the bounded pall of his/her own shadow.

It is within an intellectual and contextual setting rife with these two tendencies of Hegelian Colour-blindness—the balkanization of the study of Africa and its diaspora and a preoccupation with historical linearity—that I engage ancient discourse by privileging a diaspora-informed Black American context. Susceptible to charges of irrelevance, incompetence and anachronism from exegetes and theologians who inscribe their biblical

⁸⁶ This use of the corollary principle is regularly seen modern discussions of Egypt as non-African. Hegel's division of Africa exemplifies this practice. Trevor-Roper additionally articulates this belief when he notes that the only African history was the history of Europe in Africa. This notion of correlation stresses that if something appears to have correlation to the other, it is a mirage.

readings with linear Hegelian metanarratives, this project's diasporic engagement of Acts of the Apostle seeks a place amongst other (re)conceptions about the ideological and discursive significations in both ancient and twenty-first century reading communities. Scholars and theologians continue to initiate their engagement of Acts by reifying notions of history—read knowledge—as a myopic taproot. From pre-critical treatment of Acts to post-modern, twenty-first century scholarship, scholars approach Acts as a linear narrative preoccupied with establishing itself as the Totalizing narrative.⁸⁷ The boundaries of critical inquiry, signifying value and interpretive results shift from exegete to exegete over time, but the insistence on using Acts as origin and bridge from the nascent Christ-followers of the first-century to the post-apostolic, proto-Catholic Church of the middle to late second-century remains. Regardless of era, the ideologies employed within the majority of scholarly analyses of Acts rest upon five assumptions:

- Acts is a Christian text;
- Christianity transformed from a predominantly Jewish composition to an entirely gentile composition;
- Acts seeks a place as the authoritative and foundational narrative of the Christian church;
- The gentile mission and/or gentile church are central to the author's intended message and audience;
- Acts can contribute to the delineation of a unilinear view of early Christianity.

Through the negotiation of these originating pillars and the complications arising from *mal d'archive*, the historical value and discursive discussion of Acts continues to

⁸⁷ Gasque provides a broad survey on the scholarly study of Acts. Gasque's analysis leans theologically conservative. W. Ward Gasque, *History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989); For a critical analysis of the history of scholarship on Acts between 1987-2004, See, Todd C. Penner, "Madness in the Method? The Acts of the Apostles in Current Study," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2, no. 2 (2004): 223–93; For a thematic history of the academic study of Luke between 1950 and 2005, See, François Bovon, *Luke the Theologian: Fifty-Five Years of Research (1950-2005)*, Second. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005).

plot along strikingly redundant lines of thought. A survey of scholarly engagement of Acts will demonstrate this similarity across methodological and temporal gaps.

With the English Civil War as a backdrop, John D. Lightfoot (1601-1700) interpreted Acts as the authoritative and verifiable history of the church. Lightfoot's pre-critical analysis reflects his prominent role in the Westminster Assembly and is ecclesio-centric. During this pre-critical era, scholars revered the Acts as a trustworthy historical account of Christian development. Accepting the Acts narrative as verifiable, Lightfoot's reading uses the historic events of early Christianity as means of foreshadowing the future. Displaying his knowledge of Judaism and rabbinic literature, Lightfoot read the history of Acts as an explanation of the gentile character of the Christian church.⁸⁸ His reading revolves around the historical gap and epistemological problem, that lies between Christianity's development as a Jewish messianic movement that becomes a gentile church.

In light of Lightfoot's expertise, reverence for Acts' narrative and pragmatic eye towards the future, his exegetical thrust uses Acts as the narrative taproot of Christian history. This history depicted, in a generally linear manner, the present church as a manifestation of that very lineage. Jewish particularity formed one of the initial points in this history; the Christian church formed another point; his contemporary church formed a third point; Acts and Rabbinic literature functioned as his archive. Inscribed in the walls and ether of this archive were notions of Jewish inferiority, provincialism, deicide

⁸⁸ John Lightfoot, "Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations upon Acts, and Some Chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians," in *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ: Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations upon the Gospels, the Acts, Some Chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, ed. Robert Gandell, vol. 4, 4 vols., New Edition. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1859).

and homicide alongside Western superiority, progress, monarchical exploitation and socio-political instability and unrest. Using this archive, Lightfoot attentively noted the prevalence of violence throughout Acts and the frequent evangelistic expansion as a result of said violence. Consequently, Acts did in fact embody the church's linear history, narrating Christian lineage from the divine, through Judaism to Christ and eventually the Church of non-Jews—gentiles. The mechanism by which the church developed was the violence done by those who rejected the revelatory truth of the Gospel and persecution Christians. The story of Christianity, per Lightfoot's taproot of Acts, is a story of the church watered by the blood of Stephen, blossoming into the Universal gentile-dominant entity, continually rejected by the synagogue. The present church is, for Lightfoot, simply the present expression of Acts' foundation.⁸⁹

Complementing Lightfoot's pre-critical approach, Johann Michaelis (1717-1791) is a useful example of early critical scholarship.⁹⁰ Seeking the same historical veracity assumed by Lightfoot, Michaelis observed incongruences between the historical presentations of Paul in Acts versus the Pauline corpus. History, in this era, was linear

⁸⁹ Ibid. While Lightfoot's Commentary on Acts illustrate his use and interpretation of Acts, his additional works on the history of early Christianity, and harmonizing the Gospels help depict Lightfoot's view of early Jewish and Christian texts. See Also, John Lightfoot, "The Chronicle and Order of the Acts of the Apostles," in *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot*, ed. John Rogers Pitman, vol. 3, 13 vols., Second. (London: Dove, 1822), 179–372; John Lightfoot, "Rules for a Student of the Holy Scriptures," in *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot, D.D.*, ed. John Rogers Pitman, vol. 2, 13 vols. (London: Dove, 1823), 1–58; John Lightfoot, "The Harmony of the Four Evangelists; Explanation of Divers Difficult Places of Holy Scripture; and Exercitia Academica," in *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot, D.D.*, ed. John Rogers Pitman, vol. 5, 13 vols. (London: Dove, 1823), 1–58; John Lightfoot, "The Harmony, Chronicle, and Order of the New Testament; with a Parergon Concerning the Fall of Jerusalem; Also, Four Latin Tracts," in *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot, D.D.*, ed. John Rogers Pitman, vol. 3, 13 vols. (London: Dove, 1823), 1–58; Also refer to modern scholarly assessments of Lightfoot. See, Gasque, *History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles* Or, ; Bovon, *Luke the Theologian*, ix–xii, 9–11 Bovon references Lightfoot's contributions on a number of occasions. My depiction comports with Bovon's analysis.

⁹⁰ Johann David Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament*, ed. Herbert Marsh, trans. Herbert Marsh, vol. 1–2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1802).

and non-perspectival; only one writer could be correct. Because Michaelis privileged first-hand testimony and revered Paul as the founder of gentile Christianity, he relegated Acts to being second-hand work intended to convey a particular message. Maintaining reverence for the author of Acts, Michaelis began to see the exegetical task as deciphering the author's intended message within history. Acts, under Michaelis, took its place as apologetic history, defending the gentile church through the historical proofs of miracles and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In the case of both Lightfoot and Michaelis, the history of early Christian was inscribed in the revered text of Acts and when properly interpreted the history of the church informed the reality of the present and future.

Introduced above, F. C. Baur represents a shift in critical engagement of Acts. No longer was Acts approached as the inerrant and authoritative repository of early Christian history. Initiating a school of criticism centered in Tübingen, many critics following Baur began to approach Acts as a problem. Since the highest goal of critical exegesis was the production of history, Act's narrative, now viewed as rationally subjective, obscured the real history behind rhetoric, intention and opinion. Scholars demonstrated two ways of approaching Acts as problem: Acts is an obstacle between the history within the text and the interpreter; Acts is a puzzle with its historical value in the author's social setting and context behind the narrative. For Baur, he utilized Hegel's dialectics in an effort to understand Christianity as a historical phenomenon. By identifying the author's agenda, one could use reason to (re)construct a general model that explained the historicity of Acts' bias within a linear trajectory to the present.

Yet again, like Lightfoot and Michaelis, Baur traces the taproot of Christianity backwards from its gentile character with Acts as the point of origin. Christianity, for Baur, was the dominant and highest form of enlightened consciousness of his day and the pursuit of history necessitated a general model capable of depicting a linear trajectory from Christ to the present. Differentiating himself greatly from pre-critical readings of the seventeenth century, Baur refrains from descriptions of Acts as the arrangement of verifiable or trustworthy events. He engages the narrative as a contextually and historically informed discourse; Acts, a cultural artifact, is a puzzle capable of providing insight to the historical development of the church as a human institution. Baur juxtaposes Acts to the Pauline epistles, privileges the Pauline corpus as a historical benchmark with a higher veracity, like Michaelis, and subsequently analyzed Acts as the subjective artifact of early Christian history.

By identifying the rhetoric and authorial agenda, Baur sought to excavate the ancient author's context and place in Christianity's historical development. This linear trajectory presented Christianity as the dialectical synthesis of Petrine—Jewish predominant and Pauline—gentile dominant—Jesus movements. In Baur's analysis, Peter and Paul signify the religio-philosophical domains of Rome and Judaism. Based on Baur's implementation of Hegel, History, by default, was the discursive explanation and on-going narrative of the Christian church, as the primal historic event. Rome and Judaism represented the dialectical seeds responsible for the revelation of consciousness in Jesus and its continued unfolding in the life and development of the church. Instead of describing his contemporary church, Acts represents an analogue period in human development. While the early church developed along this taproot of dialectical

synthesis, critical scholarship, history, enlightenment and Universal Consciousness was still developing through the same taproot of Christianity.⁹¹

In the midst of their exegetical and ideological differences, the pre-critical Lightfoot and critical Michaelis and Baur apply presuppositions on Acts that assume its functionality as linear history of the church, capable of definitively providing an exclusive developmental trajectory of church development. Additionally, in each of these cases the scholar's own social context serves as the medium for analogical projection.⁹² For Lightfoot, this history was an accurate depiction and explanation of the spirit's activity among Jesus's disciples after the ascension. Acts told history as it was and this history has a transcendent message for the attuned interpreter. For Baur, Acts' narrative was a phenomenological illustration of the Universal at work through the dialectical relationship of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Instead of providing details about the events of the early church, Acts helps critics construct a history of the post-apostolic period. Acts, as a subjective construction, exemplifies history at work.

Exhibiting the tendencies articulated in Troeltsch's principles of critical history, the study of Acts expanded over the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century

⁹¹ Baur, *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, 1:1–5; 10–23; 26–33; 44–55; 77–82; 99–114; 131–136.

⁹² The notion of the thinker-scholar projecting their own subjective contexts onto the Acts narrative is fairly consistent with both the Enlightenment and Modern enterprises. The notion of the individual becoming free and unrestricted by systems or constructs was vital in the increasing pursuit of reason and rationality. It was within the individual, particularly the thinker-scholar that the highest forms of rationality and freedom were able to be achieved. Consequently, when modernity sought use reason and rationality to articulate models of the Universe and world history within the guise of freedom and consciousness, the thinker-scholar became the lone repository for objective rational thought. In this circumstance, Baur embodies, in a similar manner to Hegel, the individual able to project general models on the world. This construction of the objective, alongside the construction of general models of the Universe allowed subjectivity to feign as reason. This argument only worked within certain semiotic frameworks. Luckily, most modern scholars could easily relegate critics or people functioning within different signifying worlds as other, alienated, and lacking reason. Consequently, their models were subjective and irrelevant to true modern discourse.

resulting in divergent readings and historical reconstructions. Rooted in the principles of analogy and correlation scholars used Acts to project their subject positions and ideologies onto early Christian history. Acts became the taproot for linear and positivist views of early Christianity where scholars:

- recover history by identifying the Lukan goal of legitimating Paul and gentile Christianity against Judaism and Jewish Christianity;⁹³
- denounce the historicity of early Christianity as myth divorced from Jewish heritage and born from the spirit of Hellenistic philosophy;⁹⁴
- materialize early Christianity as a radical and moral movement that outgrew Judaism, conquered Rome and became a discursive expression within the technological context and literary conventions of the ancient world;⁹⁵
- discern the original remnants of Christian belief to reject (ie. Overbeck) or explain (ie. Lake) the dogma, doctrine and theology of the Christian church.⁹⁶

⁹³ For Hug, Luke is a proselyte who writes a historical book focused on Paul. Luke, writing for Theophilus' needs, depicts Christianity's geographic development. See, Johann Leonhard Hug, *An Introduction to the Writings of the New Testament*, trans. Daniel Guildford Wait (London: C. & J. Rivington, 1827); Haenchen notes how Baur's student, Karl Albert Schwegler views Acts as the reconciliation of opposing sides. This narrative is useful for reconstructing the time period of the text's composition, which Schwegler locates between 110-150 C.E. Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Commentary*. [Translated by and Gerald Shinn, Under the Supervision of Hugh Anderson, and with the Translation Rev. and Brought up to Date by R. McL. Wilson (Philadelphia, Westminster Press [1971, n.d.], 17-18; See, Karl Albert Schwegler, *Das nachapostolische Zeitalter in den Hauptmomenten seiner Entwicklung*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Fues, 1846).

⁹⁴ David Friedrich Strauss, *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History: A Critique of Schleiermacher's Life of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); David Friedrich Strauss, *The Old Faith and the New* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1997); Bruno Bauer, *Die Apostelgeschichte: Eine Ausgleichung Des Paulinismus Und Des Judenthums Innerhalb Der Christlichen Kirche* (Berlin: Gustav Hempel, 1850); Bruno Bauer, *Philo, Strauss Und Renan Und Das Urchristenthum* (Berlin: G. Hempel, 1874).

⁹⁵ Ernest Renan, "The Apostles," in *The Origins of Christianity*, 2 vols. (New York: Carelton, 1866), 1-353; Ernest Renan, "Le Judaïsme et Le Christianisme," in *Le Judaïsme & Le Christianisme* (Paris: C. Levy, 1883), 1-32.

⁹⁶ Franz Overbeck, "Introduction to the Acts," in *The Contents and Origin of the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Joseph Dare, 2 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1876), 1-81, <http://archive.org/details/contentsorigins01zelluoft>; Kirsopp Lake, "The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles," *The American Journal of Theology* 19, no. 4 (1915): 489-508; Kirsopp Lake and Frederick Foakes-Jackson are not listed above, but their work is a significant contribution towards the location of Acts within a social world composed of both Jewish and Hellenistic influences. As demonstrated in these various (re)constructions, the ideal of historicity continued to be direct much of use of Acts to reconstruct. See, Frederick John Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity: The Acts of the*

The readings, emphases and ideologies varied. Yet, the nineteenth century study of Acts witnessed a preponderance of readings that utilized critical theory to produce unilinear models of history that strove to encompass all reality within a single perspective and trajectory.⁹⁷

The early twentieth century witnessed a new heuristic dimension in scholarship on Acts. The theology and agenda identified in Acts were mere implications of the scholars' historical constructions. With increasing interest in the social world and the subjectivity of the author, scholars began to seek the historical origins of theological belief, apart from the dogma of the church, social circumstances surrounding Acts' composition, or the narrative's historicity. In the milieu of critics such as Adolf von Harnack and Albert Schweitzer, who sought historical events of primitive Christian history behind Acts, Kirsopp Lake opines:

The Acts of the Apostles have been studied of recent years from many points of view, and by many distinguished scholars, with reference to the sources which may have been used by their author, and with the desire of fixing the date at which they were written. There has however been but little direct effort to discover the theological system which underlies their

Apostles (Macmillan and Company, 1920).

⁹⁷ Ernest Renan is a possible exception to this practice. Renan is an intriguing example of nineteenth century scholarship. Known for his poetic and novelistic presentations of the origin of Christianity, Renan appreciated the impact of method and theory on the construction of history. History, for Renan, is a contextual practice that seeks to make sense of the world. This world, then, will change due to presentation. In Renan, "The Apostles," he argues that, "We say it boldly — no one exclusive system will have the glory of solving this difficult problem of the origin of Christianity. No unique method is competent to explain the complex phenomena of the human mind. All primitive histories and religious legends present the real and the ideal mingled in different proportions." This view owes in large part to his belief in the role of the mind, psyche, and consciousness as expressions of divine revelation. Renan, despite his contextual acknowledgment, and advocated an insidious view of race. With nuanced views towards Chinese and Blacks, Renan expressed belief that one's race determined their place in the world. He, at other points in his analysis, seems to use the notion of race ambiguously. He maintained heinous and Anti-Semitic views of Jews. Jesus is depicted as a Galilean who overcomes and ceases to be Jewish. This reading, unfortunately, resembles aspects of the argument I will make below. The intent and signifying principle of what Galilean means, however, hold very different meaning. In stressing the Galilean identity of Jesus, I affirm Jesus as always and constantly Jewish; he is both, and, the general and particular. This differs from Renan who uses Jesus' Galilean identity as a dichotomy where he remains the geographic Galilean but sheds the ethnic, cultic, and genealogical link with Jews or Judaism.

composition. Yet it may fairly be urged that this is a matter of considerable importance, because, although the Acts were certainly not written in order to maintain a series of theological propositions, they undoubtedly represent the beginnings of what may be regarded as normal Christianity, as distinct from the eccentricities of heretical sects, or the learned efforts of theologians to discuss those metaphysical problems which, however important, can, from the nature of the case, never have been central in the mind of the ordinary Christian. No excuse therefore is needed for an attempt to set out the main characteristics of the theological system implied by the Acts, drawing attention to its central features, and indicating, rather than discussing, the subordinate problems, which, though they deserve separate treatment, can scarcely be handled in the body of an essay without that disproportion familiarly known as "not seeing the wood for the trees."⁹⁸

For Lake, the key to discerning the theology behind the narrative was to attending to both the Hellenistic and Jewish contexts descriptive of early Christian origins.

Highlighting the Jewish social world, Lake was able to note the diverse views, communities and traditions shaping the matrix of early Christianity. His approach maintained an emphasis on historical analysis and the plausible and possible conditions capable to be deduced: more than Paul or any other New Testament text, the theology undergirding Acts' narrative was, for Lake, the root of orthodox Christianity.

Consequently, his shift from historicity to theology focused on identifying the taproot and historical catalyst for primitive Christianity.

Advancing the pursuit of early Christian theology beyond traditional notions of historical analysis, Martin Dibelius (1883-1947) and Hans Conzelmann (1915-1989) would drastically shift the landscape of Acts scholarship. Dibelius acknowledged the long held belief Acts was written with bias, as a history of the primitive church. He, on the other hand, shifted the view of Acts from a modern, historicity focused narrative of past events to Acts as ancient literary masterpiece. This transition in the perception of

⁹⁸Lake, "The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles."

Acts as history displaced the notion of Acts as problematic obstacle and poor history with the idea that Acts was a literary achievement where its rhetoric and bias were illustrative and informative for history. Suddenly, the author of Acts went from hack to master and the study of the text itself, its syntactic and discursive elements, exploded. Dibelius' work initiated the currently predominant interest in the narrative and literary aspects of Acts as an intentional composition within a particular social setting.⁹⁹

Two objectives emerged from this revision of Acts as a source of history: identify Acts' author socially and historically; and, identify Acts' sources. By locating the author in terms of geography, class, education, socio-politics, philosophy and ethno-cultic persuasion, one can deduce bias and from bias, one can then read Acts accurately as literature or theology.¹⁰⁰ Approaching Acts as literature gave scholars new frameworks for discerning the author's intention through structures, conventions and rhetoric. By noting ancient literary convention, scholars had another means of getting behind the text. To an extent with Dibelius, and even more developed for Conzelmann, this process permitted a new means of getting at Luke's question of Acts' theology. The identification of Acts' sources had two benefits. Knowledge of Acts' sources allows critics to again excavate the historicity and past events behind the narrative to discover what "really happened" in the primitive church. Additionally, the identification of

⁹⁹ Dibelius' work is formative for this scholar's approach to Acts. In approaching Acts as an intentional work of literature, Dibelius is instrumental in introducing the critical engagement of hermeneutics and literary analysis to the Acts narrative. While Dibelius utilized form critical assumptions, the view of Acts as literature is vital for later approaching Acts as a source of potential meaning. See Martin Dibelius, *The Book of Acts: Form, Style, and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004); Or Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Heinrich Greeven (London: S.C.M. Press, 1973).

¹⁰⁰ Shelly Matthews treatment of Acts pursues this type of reasoning. By identifying a second century date she invoked a particular metanarrative of primitive Christian development that rationally supports what she identifies as "surface" narrative. It is her view of Luke's historical identity that gives insight into how Acts should be read. See, Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*, Chapters 1–3.

sources permits scholars to look at the redactional and fictional qualities of the Acts narrative. Through the analysis of redaction, scholars sought the ideology, bias, and intention behind the author's crafting of material.

In each of these approaches, the scholarly goal still focuses on finding ways to use Acts to produce or reify particular unilinear trajectories that will provide totalizing history of Christianity. Dibelius implemented rigid form critical categories to determine what and why the narrative functioned a certain way; Conzelmann developed a theological metanarrative that, although very astute and useful, coincidentally focused on Acts role of legitimating gentile Christianity.¹⁰¹ Acts ceased to be the author's simple narrative of the history of the church. Acts, for Conzelmann, was the discursive demonstration of the ancient author's theology. Acts was the story of salvation and through the author's defense of gentile Christianity. Becoming more than the story of a temporal salvation through the historic Jesus, the story of Jesus in Acts was story of salvation in the world. Conzelmann's reading of Acts became theological metanarrative, coincidentally a mirror of modernity's metanarrative of human liberation.¹⁰² Thus, Acts witnesses to the theology of the primitive church and is both the consequent rationale for gentile Christianity and source of Christian supersessionism and anti-Judaism. My criticism, again, is not with the construction of narratives, but with the hegemonic and myopic approaches implied in their articulation. Scholars were not exploring potentials and the diversity of Acts as discourse. They were constructing models that explained the

¹⁰¹ Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

¹⁰² Ibid.; Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, 1st Fortress Press ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); Hans Conzelmann, *History of Primitive Christianity*. (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1973).

past within a trajectory that explained their conceptions of the present: namely, the success of Christianity and the gentile composition of Christianity.

The univocal perception of Acts, as the rational construct of the individual thinker-scholar, has long narrated Acts' ancient social setting as a response to Christianity's Jewish heritage. The foundational taproot of early Christian history has long laid anchor in history's great erasure and magic trick: the disappearance of ethnic and/or cultic markers identifying Jews from the proto-Orthodox church. Consequently, Acts has long served as the archival response to this gap. Yet, as a key node in early Christianity's taproot, scholars regularly use the same metanarrative to (re)locate Acts in various points on the same line. Acts continually plays a similar role in this narrative. The author of Acts, consequently, is always "defending," "consolidating," or "legitimizing" Pauline Christianity.

An essential part of this metanarrative, as nuanced by Tyson, is the agonistic belief that Judaism, Jews and Jewish-Christians were parochial, belligerent, legalistic and asocial.¹⁰³ Though the author of Acts' impetus for depicting Christian origins varied from critic to critic, the combative natures of Jewishness and Christian "conversion" remains central to readings of Acts and (re)constructions of primitive Christianity. The agonistic nature, according to this particular historical (re)construction, propelled Christian progression from beyond the boundaries of "parochial" Jewish ideology. Whether the critic sees their task as (re)constructing the history of the apostolic church, or the author's ancient life-setting, the same metanarrative anchors Acts' social setting.

¹⁰³ Joseph B. Tyson, *Luke, Judaism, and the Scholars: Critical Approaches to Luke-Acts* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999).

Scholars incorporate this belief into their narrative through two polar approaches. Many nineteenth and early twentieth scholars used Acts to explain the historical phenomena and catalysts for the success of Christianity. In the midst of the anti-Judaism of nineteenth century Europe, these critics projected and reified stereotypes that Jewish culture, historically speaking, was parochial and rigid. They both built this view on readings of Acts and used this view in order to understand Acts. Thus, this interpretation of Jewish presence in Acts testified to a historical reality: Jews are asocial and Christianity escaped their confines. Acts, as discourse, is a product of some type of gentile church or pro-Paul gentile mission in need of defense or legitimation. Building on metanarrative aspects that understand primitive Christianity as a dynamic entity that survived persecution and attack, this contextual setting implicitly connects Acts to a gentile mission or gentile dominant church under attack, in need of defense, and undoubtedly from Jewish/Jewish-Christian exclusion, dissension, parochialism, rhetoric, or physical attack.

Since World War II, and the recognition of Biblical Studies' complicity and often overt catalytic role in the *Shoah*, biblical critics have become more sensitive to perceptions of contemporary and ancient Jewish culture, religion and identity.¹⁰⁴ Descriptions of Jewish tradition exhibit higher levels of contextualization and cease to serve as uncritical corollaries for contemporary Judaism, or the basis for essentialized (re)constructions of a homogenous trans-temporal Jewishness.¹⁰⁵ While still present in

¹⁰⁴ For an extensive analysis of the theological milieu of German Christian scholarship, theology, and its relationship to the Third Reich and anti-Judaism, See, and its Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton university press, 2008).

¹⁰⁵ In no way do I intended to insinuate that anti-Judaism has disappeared within Biblical Studies, especially New Testament studies. However, there is a heightened awareness to the dangers of anti-Judaic readings, and the inaccuracy of essentialized constructions of ancient Jew identity and community. For an

strains of New Testament scholarship, there is a prominent core of scholars that counter the description of Jewishness as homogenous, legalistic and parochial. This stream prominently identifies this perception as an ahistoric construct of the proto-orthodox Church.¹⁰⁶ This divergent view of ancient Jewish culture and identity has had little effect on the use of Acts constructing an agonistic view of primitive Christianity. While scholars jettison the historical validity of legalistic Judaism, they continue to identify the belief and rhetoric of legalistic Judaism as central to the taproot of early Christian history. Acts is less important for imagining the social context of the apostolic church, yet it fully aligns with the agonistic metanarrative of early Christian origins. The shift has occurred in the discursive and deductive reasoning: the author of Acts no longer represents an accurate view of history, theology, or ancient Jews; rather, the author displays an accurate view of gentile prejudice and the anti-Judaic ideology insipient in the birth of Christianity. The metanarrative underlying Acts remains unchanged, while the axiological construction and temporal presentation takes on new forms. As the social

example of contemporary debate over the anti-Judaic nature of biblical interpretations Amy-Jill Levine et al., “Roundtable Discussion: Anti-Judaism and Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 20, no. 1 (2004): 91–132.

¹⁰⁶ Conceptions of Jewishness and Judaism as homogenous, legalistic, violent, and asocial are exceedingly problematic, and ahistoric. The belief that ancient Jews viewed the law as a mechanism of salvation is largely rooted in interpretations of Paul in Galatians, Romans, and Acts. There are few textual examples that support this view of ancient Jewish theology. This debate has led to vigorous debate by the so-called “New Perspective” of Paul. E. P. Sanders, and James D. G. Dunn were key New Testament figures in this discussion. See, John G Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Daniel Patte, *Early Jewish Hermeneutic in Palestine* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975); Daniel Patte, “Paul the Apostle,” ed. Daniel Patte, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010) In addition to being a construct of the proto-orthodox Church, this view of Jewish identity and cultic practice did not originate with Christianity. Much of these stereotypes and polemics have their origins in the discourses, rhetoric, and polemics of Hellenistic and Roman historians. These views, preceding Jesus, what would become Christianity, and what would become Rabbinic Judaism, was brought into early Christian discourse via the discursive and literary traditions and social world of gentiles prior to their adherence to Christianity. Consequently, just as the proto-Christian church co-opted and adopted aspects of Jewish tradition and literary practice, they additionally adopted and co-opted aspects of the culture, literary, and discursive traditions of the gentile/“pagan,” world.

setting of the present shifts overtime, the scholar as meta-subject projects themselves onto into his/her historical (re)construction through the principal of analogy in evolving ways. Thus, *Shoah* scholars discursively articulate the metanarrative of Acts as primitive Christian history in new ways. Yet the metanarrative continues to perceive Acts as a gentile Christian text of the Christian church that defends and legitimates gentile Christianity through its depictions of Jews as parochial, violent and legalistic.¹⁰⁷

As arguments are nuanced, many of the core arguments among contemporary scholarship maintain its gaze upon Acts as source for origin. Joseph Tyson is a leading contemporary scholar on Acts and presents a nuanced reading of Acts. Amongst a group of American scholars who have begun to advocate a compositional date for Acts in the

¹⁰⁷ A minority of scholars view Acts as not anti-Judaic. The majority of arguments assuaging Acts' anti-Judaic nature continue to identify Luke as a gentile by birth, whose discourse may be susceptible to non-contextualized and problematic Anti-Judaic interpretations, but Acts' structure and content does not intend to advocate an all-encompassing denouncement of Jews, Judaism, or Jewish culture. For a representative argument, See, Jacob Jervell, "The Church of Jews and Godfearers," in *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives*, ed. Joseph B. Tyson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 11–20; For other representative essays See, Joseph B. Tyson, Richard P. Thompson, and Thomas E. Phillips, eds., *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson* (Mercer University Press, 1998); Particularly, Jack T. Sanders, "Can Anything Bad Come out of Nazareth, or Did Luke Think That History Moved in a Line or in a Circle?," in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson*, ed. Joseph B. Tyson, Richard P. Thompson, and Thomas E. Phillips (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 297–312 ; Robert Lawson Brawley, "The God of Promises and the Jews in Luke-Acts," in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson*, ed. Joseph B. Tyson, Richard P. Thompson, and Thomas E. Phillips (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 279–96; and, Richard P. Thompson, "Believers and Religious Leaders in Jerusalem: Contrasting Portraits of Jews in Acts 1-7," in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson*, ed. Joseph B. Tyson, Richard P. Thompson, and Thomas E. Phillips (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 327–43 ; Tyson provides an excellent survey of scholarship on Luke-Acts and scholarly views of Judaism. See Tyson, *Luke, Judaism, and the Scholars*; For a monograph length analysis of Luke-Acts that identifies Luke's narrative as fundamentally anti-Judaic, See, Jack T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1987); For a monograph length discuss that problematizes the view of Luke as anti-Judaic, see, Robert L Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1987); or an apologetic monograph on Anti-Judaism in early Christianity, See Miriam S. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity: A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus* (Leiden: BRILL, 1995); There is a great number of works available discussing anti-Judaism in the New Testament. See, Joseph B. Tyson, ed., *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988); Alan T. Davies, ed., *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity* (New York: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004); Terence L. Donaldson, *Jews and Anti-Judaism in the New Testament: Decision Points and Divergent Interpretations* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010).

first third of the second century, Tyson's reading demonstrates how scholars make drastic re-assessments of Acts, yet continue to invoke similar metanarratives of early Christianity.¹⁰⁸ The second century dating allows Tyson to situate his reading of Acts around the time of Marcion of Sinope and the consequent intra-Christian debate over the legacy of Paul's teachings and the Jewish heritage of the Jesus movement.¹⁰⁹ Approaching Acts as a socio-cultural artifact, Tyson and like-minded scholars use critical analysis and contextualization to construct frameworks upon which to (re)construct the historical circumstances for Acts' narrative.

As Tyson notes, "our conclusions about intended readers are, in the first instance dependent on our reading of the text," thus, there is a cyclical nature in determining an ancient, or "ideal" reading audience.¹¹⁰ In his attempt to, "determine some of the dominant themes...without first resolving questions about its [Acts'] genre or its intended readers," Tyson identifies eight themes: growth of the community; Order of the community; divine leadership of the community; the community's fidelity to Jewish traditions and practices; Jewish opposition to the community; the community's inclusion of gentiles; Jewish rejection of the Christian message.¹¹¹ After noting these themes, Tyson suggests that the Marcionite movement provides a "ready explanation," for the author's invocation of these themes.

¹⁰⁸ Tyson personally suggests a dating between 120-125 CE. Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Univ of South Carolina Press, 2006).

¹⁰⁹ Marcion of Sinope was a popular Christian teacher and preacher during the late first to mid second century. He rejected the Old Testament, and proposed a canon composed of select letters of the Apostle Paul, and the Gospel of Luke. Marcion was denounced as a heretic by the proto-orthodox early Church fathers. Tyson argues that Marcion's Gospel was an early version of the Gospel that lacked Luke 1-2, 24. Following this argument, Tyson conjectures that the author of Acts, after composing Acts revised and redacted this early version of the Gospel turning it into the current canonical version.

¹¹⁰ Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 52.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 52, 59.

Tyson's exegetical choices rely upon the pre-established notion of what and how the early, gentile dominant church co-opted Jewish literary heritage, while constraining and refuting articulations of Christianity that overly relied on Greco-Roman philosophy or ideology.¹¹² His reading of Acts, then, logically reaffirms and expands his historical reconstruction of antiquity. (Re)invoking aspects of Baur and Tübingen School visions of a second century Pauline Christianity attempting to legitimize the gentile mission through the defense of Paul's ministry, Tyson places this conversation in the setting of Marcion. Like Baur, Tyson sees the Paul of the epistles and the Paul of Acts as having strikingly different attributes and theologies. Acts', according to Tyson, stresses Paul and Christianity's fidelity to Jewish tradition to lay claim to the movement's ancientness, while intentionally combating Marcionite constructions and interpretations of Paul. Acts' concern is the second century memory of Paul, not the historic Paul of the epistles. Thus, Acts' narrative is at war on two sides, stressing the insufficiency of non-Christian Jewish practice, while emphasizing Christianity's Jewish heritage. The author of Acts' primary weapon is to co-opt Jewish heritage, in the guise of Hebrews scriptures and messianic expectation, through the narrative presentation of primitive Christian unity and solidarity. This strategy helps Tyson carefully present a nuanced view of Acts' relationship to Anti-Judaism. Partially redeeming Marcion from his consensus description as vehemently Anti-Jewish, Tyson suggests that this image is incomplete and too simple. In fact, it was

¹¹² In addition to Joseph Tyson, Gregory Sterling offers an important contribution to the study of Luke-Acts. His massive work explores the social and literary milieu of apologetic historiography. His work takes a similar perspective to Todd Penner, except Penner's work focuses more on structures and models of rhetoric and historiography, while Sterling gives a broader *sitz im leben*, and literary context for explaining the setting for Acts' production. Many of these methodological approaches overlap. See, Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1992); Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Continuum, 2003), -.

Acts' author whose rhetoric maintained the agonistic relationship between Jews and Christians that would amplify over the second and third centuries. Acts, for Tyson only lays the discursive ground work for Anti-Judaism in which it would play so heavy a role. Thus, his invocation of Baur leads to an inverted reading of Acts, yet one that is similarly univocal and unilinear. Invoking the traditional agonistic contribution of Acts to a unilinear early Christian history, Tyson's reading clearly states that, "[i]t is no exaggeration to say that the author of Acts and canonical Luke participated in a defining struggle—a struggle over the very meaning of Christian faith."¹¹³

The trend illustrated by Tyson maintains similar trajectories to earlier scholarship; as a literary construction, Acts' narrative betrays the intentions, beliefs and concerns of an ancient author.¹¹⁴ Critical analysis of the text, in theory, provides insight into the bias, perspective and rhetorical strategies of the ancient world. Instead of providing "a" narrative history, Acts is history, offering a window into the ancient world. A scholar can place Acts, as artifact, upon his/her historical timeline: a timeline that often begins with the assumption of a gentile-centered church and Acts as the claimed taproot of a hegemonic Christian church. While this approach coincides with the dominant approach

¹¹³ Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 121.

¹¹⁴ Tyson offers a useful critique of contemporary scholarship on Acts, and its cyclical return to questions about the text and context responsible for its production. He suggests that the methodological approach to Acts has undergone a cycle. Here, Tyson raises numerous questions revolving around trends in Acts scholarship. He presents the history of Acts scholarship as a binary between historical scholarship and rhetorical scholarship. In this chapter, historical scholarship includes historicity—Acts' historical accuracy— and history— Acts' discursive presentation of the past. Rhetorical scholarship includes both Classical and socio-rhetorical analyses that focus on the literary and persuasive dimensions of Acts as a product of hellenistic Rome. Historical focused scholarship addressed questions of the subjects of antiquity—such as Jews, gentiles, and the composition, belief, and development of their communities. Rhetorical focused scholarship dealt more with the text and the character of Acts as hellenistic literature. Questions of genre, and the socio-rhetorical context responsible for Acts' production and reception moved scholarship away from questions of events, accuracy, and history. See, Joseph B. Tyson, "From History to Rhetoric and Back: Assessing New Trends in Acts Studies," in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse*, ed. Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 23–42.

taken by scholars today, it begins and ends with the scholar's identification— construction— of Luke's intended message and goal and subsequently takes various forms. In each of these cases, and hearkening back to Baur, the majority of contemporary scholars use Acts as a means to (re)construct a definitive and linear history of early Christianity. Seeking to locate Acts as a definitive point and stage in primitive Christian past, the scholar's task depends on building a metanarrative that establishes a set of circumstances. These readings then negotiate Acts' narrative semantics to reveal Acts as an expression of that particular point in early Christian development.¹¹⁵

Along these trajectories and in accordance with Derrida's description of the *mal d'archive*, erasure and silence become two of the most detested aspects of antiquity. Acts, or rather readings of Acts, fill the gaps of the past's silence. The construction of coherent, univocal readings that enforce specific unilinear histories, which fit into scholar's metanarratives of early Christian history often depends on the identification of Acts' discursive objective. This discussion frequently revolves around the identification of genre. Assessments of Acts genre vary greatly from specific broad characterizations, to detailed genre categories. Among the most prominent descriptions are: history/*historia*; apologetic discourse; legitimating narrative; ancient rhetorical discourse; romance; epic; ancient travel narrative; *bios/bioi* [biography/biographies]. In the midst of these varying genre identifications, the bulk of scholars assign Acts a univocal character.

Many aspects of their historical assessments of Acts rely on the (re)inscription of historical metanarratives that, at their core, are hermeneutic projections onto the

¹¹⁵ This is in line with the purpose of this project's diaspora poetics. However, instead of constructing a univocal setting for Acts of the Apostles, the diaspora poetics describes potential discursive strategies for ancient reading communities of Acts.

consequent readings. Acts, through the act of interpretation, reifies critics' pre-established metanarratives of Christian history. If Acts is the lone testimony of the primitive church, it stands to reason that its original intent was to fill that vacuum and eradicate all competing voices? Implicit amongst the diversity of current scholarship on Acts is the belief that whatever Luke's objective, regardless whether it is retrievable or lost, his narrative desired a univocal story of early Christianity; it sought to be the lone perspective, and its nodes and points of emphasis were chosen to represent the only nodes and poles of significance. The small movement of Galilean Jews that followed Jesus became a primarily gentile Christianity; and Christianity became an imperial power; and as an imperial power, Christianity claimed hegemonic identity as its origin. Thus, when reading primitive Christianity one accepts the colonial metanarrative, whether critiquing early Christianity's hegemonic impulse as oppressive, or extoling Christianity's predestined identity as the pinnacle of human revelation. In this broad stream of scholarship, scholars focus on Acts' narrative and use history to support their historical constructions. Their historical constructions, largely, then dictate the limits and meaning of the text. Their readings are legitimated by the discussion of the social, historical and ideological context. Thus, there is little need for the critic to discuss the systems and ideology at work in their exegesis or historical reconstruction. As Lyotard discussed, as metasubject, their metanarrative legitimates the reading as historical and critical without exposing the seams, rifts and fissures of their metanarrative.¹¹⁶ This trend, in which my work should partially be located, focuses on how readers should locate Acts in its ancient context. It constructs a historical narrative for readers to place Acts. Then, when reading

¹¹⁶ Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*; Richard I Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009); Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*.

and signifying on Acts, they have the tools and structural signifiers to bring proper and legitimate linear meaning from the text.

A closely related model focuses on the narrative and the signifying value of the narrative for constructing belief systems and convictions. Developing out of Conzelmann's metanarrative description of salvation history, it has been incredibly difficult for scholars in this vein to move away from Conzelmann. This trajectory focuses on the meaning of Acts as a theological or ideological expression of primitive Christian belief.¹¹⁷ These scholars are interested in Acts' didactic properties and the faith and theology communicated. Some scholars, such as Luke Timothy Johnson and Charles Talbert focus on Acts in certain contextual settings, where the narrative represents a coherent theological view. Others scholars focus on certain narrative attributes or agents, such as the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁸ Broadly speaking these exegetes establish an origin, initiate a trajectory for the development of early Christian belief and then explicate linear histories of thought on how Christian belief developed. Discussions often return to the relationship between Jewish heritage, gentile inclusion, the activity of the divine, the varying conceptions on the nature and character of Jesus as the Christ, and the anticipation of Jesus' return (*parousia*). Largely, these are narrative-literary readings that

¹¹⁷ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992); Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003); Jacob Jervell, "The Acts of the Apostles and the History of Early Christianity," *Studia Theologica - Nordic Journal of Theology* 37, no. 1 (1983): 17–32; Charles H Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Crossroad, 1997); Howard Clark Kee, *To Every Nation Under Heaven: The Acts of the Apostles* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1997); F. F. (Frederick Fyvie) Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988).

¹¹⁸ Ju Hur, *Dynamic Reading of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004); Edward Woods, *The Finger of God and Pneumatology in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); Martin W. Mittelstadt, *The Spirit and Suffering in Luke-Acts: Implications for a Pentecostal Pneumatology* (T & T Clark International, 2004).

discursively structure their interpretations through focused analysis of theological motifs and their narrative development. Acts' narrative progression helps exegetes "discover" the theological heritage of Christian belief.

Among other approaches, very few scholars continue to focus on the historicity and verifiable recovery of the past.¹¹⁹ However, some scholars use socio-cultural models of the ancient world to locate Acts within history. These scholars explore the ways in which a text reflects ancient systems and culture.¹²⁰ Less interested in the text's narrative whole, this scholarship talks about how texts function, and how one may then extrapolate on the identity of the participants and world of the text. Bruce Malina and John Pilch's social scientific commentary demonstrates this approach.¹²¹ Using models of honor/shame Malina and Pilch rely on informed analogy to (re)construct the views and interpretive life of ancient Israelites. What Matthews' described as an ideal reading,

¹¹⁹ Gerd Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles: What Really Happened in the Earliest Days of the Church* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005), One exception is, Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989); I have not covered textual criticism on Acts, which is still a vital need for Acts scholarship. Current discussion on Codex Bezae demonstrates some aspects of this scholarship. Because textual questions on Acts revolve around the historical origins of the text, I have listed some examples here. See, Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, *The Beza Text of Acts: A Contribution of Discourse Analysis to Textual Criticism*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); David C. Parker, *Codex Bezae* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); As listed further below, Pervo has a detailed analysis on Acts date. Scholarship that pursues strict historical questions of the date, sources, and citation of Acts have dwindled. Pervo is a leading voice in these conversations, and is one reason for the resurgence in dating Acts in the second century. See, Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Polebridge Press, 2006).

¹²⁰ While the work done by these scholars take very different forms, they have updated and enhanced Dibelius' "form" approach. While Dibelius and early form critics primarily focused on text's narrative syntax to identify form, and then *sitz im leben*, modern scholars employing such methods look at text's broader discursive qualities, including its narrative functions. Dibelius, *The Book of Acts*.

¹²¹ Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008); F. Scott (Franklin Scott) Spencer, *Journeying Through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004); Jerome H. Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991); Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Coleman A. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative in Early Christianity: Peter, Paul, and Recategorization in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011).

Malina and Pilch amplify and raise the stakes by claiming that a text's meaning is of no import. As an ancient contextual discourse meant for insiders, Acts is, "not for people of all times;" its lone relevance is in its ability to inform readers of how it informs our view of the ancient world; meaning has no "practical application" for contemporary readers.¹²² This identification results in a description of Acts as a story that centers on the ministry of Paul that underscores the expansion of the Gospel. These ideological assertions remove Troeltsch's principal of analogy and help Malina and Pilch identify the combination of Acts 1.8; 9.15, and witnessing as the text's basic commands that advance the narrative.¹²³ Through the use of etic constructions of social models that are descriptive of antiquity, this social scientific reading posits Acts as solely a tool for historical construction. Failing to acknowledge the subjective and contemporary investment in historical (re)construction, aspects Malina and Pilch have again reinscribed Acts with senses of univocality and unilinearity.¹²⁴

A final stream of scholarship adapts a number of these models and focuses their questions on the discursive and persuasive aspects of texts. This camp of scholars, where both Shelly Matthews and myself should be placed, is very eclectic. Principally, they employ various ideological and methodological insights to analyze Acts as a socio-

¹²² Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts*, 9.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ There is possibly an ethical component to Malina and Pilch's commentary. Their reading is very sensitive to the role of violence throughout the Acts narrative. By dismissing the pragmatic aspect of Acts as scripture or authoritative text used through the principal of correlation for modern readers, the violent, dangerous, aspects of Acts are presented as something of the past. They attempt to encourage readers to allow the narrative to stay in the past. What they fail to note, is the role of knowledge and history. Even if the narrative is left in the past, the exegetical insights they glean from Acts about History, plays a performative role in shaping how individuals (re)construct the past, build identity, and construct present realities. Unless Malina and Pilch suggest that history has no modern value or import, analysis of Acts still, though in a secondary nature, provides meaning for the present.

rhetorical product imbued with communicative features. These hybrid models frequently come the closest to bucking trends of Hegelian Colour-blindness by identifying the polyphonic and conditional nature of their readings.¹²⁵ They determine their community of interest through various means, yet, in each approach they use analogy to advocate for their particular generative deductions. Consequently, some scholars have little interest in the ancient setting and apply modern ideological analysis to discern how Acts, as a text, generates meaning in particular communities. Other scholars discern Acts generative attributes within ancient communities. In both circumstances, scholars actively construct and acknowledge, to varying degrees of success, the theoretical subjectivity and collaboration behind their work. They additionally generally attempt to depict their analysis as a particular investigation on a specific attribute of Acts narrative.

Though a number of these works foreground their heuristic approach, some still implicitly make univocal claims about the text of Acts. Daniel Marguerat, however, provides an illuminating example of scholarship that maintains focus on the ancient context, avoids claims of univocality and, consequently, serves a model for the approach employed in these pages. Open to Acts as having polyphonic meaning, Marguerat

¹²⁵ Todd C. Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (T&T Clark Int'l, 2004); Christopher Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke* (Berlin ; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006); Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998); Stephanie R. Buckhanon Crowder, *Simon of Cyrene: A Case of Roman Conscriptio* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2002); 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 (New York: Continuum, 2004), 22–38; Vernon K. Robbins, "The Social Location of the Implied Author of Luke-Acts," *The Social World of Luke-Acts* (1991): 305–32; Vernon K. Robbins, "Luke-Acts: A Mixed Population Seeks a Home in the Roman Empire," *Images of Empire* (n.d.): 202–21; 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, *Bible and Postcolonialism* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 133–55; Williams, "The Acts of the Apostles"; Eric D. Barreto, *Ethnic Negotiations: The Function of Race and Ethnicity in Acts 16* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Robert L. (Robert Lawson) Brawley et al., *Luke-Acts and Empire : Essays in Honor of Robert L. Brawley* (Eugene, Or: Pickwick Publications, 2011).

depicts Acts' genre as multidimensional and respects aspects of Acts that are unretrievable. Conscious of semiotic thought, Marguerat opens his commentary with a citation of Ricœur that highlights the subjectivity inherent in the production of history, narrative and scholarship. Marguerat's admission sets the stage for a commentary that articulates its views extensively with the verb "to be" (être). While in some commentaries this declarative expression could connote objectivity, in Marguerat's case, he is simply offering an interpretation, while conscious, not only that other opinions exist, but also that they are, potentially equally valuable. Of the commentators treated in this paper, Marguerat is the most explicit and useful in presenting his understandings of the definition and purpose of a commentary.

What's the point of a commentary? It is grossly insufficient to say that it "explains" the Biblical text, because that is to imagine that the commentator could only really treat the text by objective technical data. And yet, the commentary is a work by which the exegete offers to read the text by following a hypothesis of interpretation, by which he thinks it valorizes and takes account of the intention of the author in such a way that he perceives it. The task is, therefore, subjective, even if the commentator is charged with being as objective as possible with the aid of arguments from philology, semantics, literature, and history. I submit to this subjectivity, which shows itself in my explicit use of "I" when the crux of an interpretation is presented...¹²⁶

Marguerat's exposition on the nature of commentaries is the first significant point for semiotic observation. Where his narrative approach expresses his awareness of Acts' discursive semiotic qualities, his description of the "hypothèses de lecture" (hypothesis of interpretation) acknowledges the discursive and overall semiotic character of his own analysis of Acts. Consequently, Marguerat describes his own commentary on Acts

¹²⁶ Daniel Marguerat, *Les Actes Des Apôtres (1-12)*, 1st ed. (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2007), 7.

through a veridictory system of being and seeming. Even though a scholar uses “seemingly” objective data and techniques, “le lecture” is “really” subjective.

Marguerat’s approach is exceedingly useful because the discourse in question, Acts, is represented as a system of signs –the object – and the interpretation is a product of a particular generative trajectory. In other cases, the discourse is viewed as half of an opposition, and the interpretation, the objective product of successful archeology. It is important to understand that Marguerat uses semiotic theory to explain the nature of scholarship; he does not, however, utilize semiotic theory to analyze Acts. His appropriation of historical and literary codes gives the commentary an appearance of declarative objectivity. However, throughout the commentary, Marguerat depicts his findings in the context of what the reader “finds” or “realizes” when explaining the narrative relevance of a particular section of the text. Through this sensitive theorization, Marguerat still follows a number of traditional conclusions about Acts. The primary contribution, however, is the reflective application of theoretical analysis.

After surveying a number of methodological approaches to Acts, the bulk of scholarship, regardless of method or focus, seeks to utilize Acts as a narrative depicting a linear trajectory. This linear trajectory is frequently univocal and unilinear. Within historical focused scholarship, the historical excavation uses the narrative to deduce information about the development and progression of early Christianity. In essence, Luke provides readers with a trajectory that a) explains the present (church or world) as a Totalizing rational progression or b) exemplifies an ancient author’s universalizing claim and belief system that clarifies the past as an expression of a linear progression. Yet, within rhetorical focused scholarship fully functioning constructs of early Christian

history and antiquity are applied to the literary nature of Acts. Consequently, Acts becomes a historical witness within a preconceived reconstruction of the ancient world that buttresses a hegemonic trajectory through the necessary analogues that allow the integration of Acts into ancient history. In both cases, the *telos* in front of readings of Acts is the identification of a linear history that is identifiable with either the below ground taproot that anchors the present, or the above ground stem/trunk that witnesses the development of (gentile) Christianity.

In a cleverly written introduction to Acts, Richard Pervo critically engages Acts through the metaphor of crime. For Pervo, the author committed a “nearly perfect crime.” The crime in question refers to his narration of events among early Christ following disciples following Jesus’ departure. The blending of sources, rhetorical and discursive crafting and obscure origins lead Pervo to charge the author with a crime: the false and misleading presentation of early Christianity. Invoking a Western hegemonic and competitive ideology undergirding Acts, Pervo projects a Totalizing intention onto Acts. “The author of Acts committed a nearly “perfect crime.” Critical study of Acts suffers from the book's success. Luke...told his story so well that all rival accounts vanished with but the faintest of traces.” *Mal d’archive* leads Pervo to implicitly assume that Luke was writing a linear and totalizing history of the past. The dearth of other sources of early Christian development is owed to the author’s intent, the erase from the archive any competing theory of Christian origins.

After noting the dearth of verifiable kernels of truth in Acts and suggesting that Acts is an uninhabitable structure of history, Pervo reveals the *mal d’archive* amongst twenty-first century critics:

The major but almost never stated reason for reliance upon Acts is that without it (we should have nothing *else*)—that is, no sustained account of Christian origins. Everyone prefers that the emperor have *something* to wear, even if the fabric and tailoring, color choice and ensemble, fall below sartorial ideals. The following pages set out to demonstrate that although Acts is far from naked, much of its attire is, historically speaking, threadbare, poorly coordinated and incomplete.

Scholars still seek linear history and want a comprehensive view of the past, thus, Acts must provide this source. Acts is the core of many scholars' archive, and it is required that it be located at the root of early Christianity's linear history: the line between Jewish movement and gentile church. In a manner inverse to the exclusion of Africa and African descended peoples from Universal History, New Testament scholars, apologists and critics alike, have projected the principles of Hegelian Colour-blindness onto the narrative of Acts. The syllogistic assumptions have now been covered extensively: History is linear and Totalizing; Luke's Acts is History; thus, Acts is Totalizing and linear. In this line of thought, Luke, like Hegel, Jefferson and Trevor-Roper, proposes a view of Christianity that is unilinear, progressive and Totalizing.

What is Acts?

This assumption regarding Luke's agenda and worldview is the long and ever expanding shadow over Acts. This shadow approaches cultural critical readings of the ancient world as "suspect," while failing to recognize the cultural critical presumptions inherent within scholarship. In order to attempt a fresh engagement of Acts, one needs to begin with one's own interpretative and textual assumptions. What is Acts?

Located after the four canonical gospels and before the Pauline Corpus, Acts of the Apostles is the fifth book of the New Testament. Debate and uncertainty surround the historical details of Acts' "who," "what," "when," and "where." Composed in a very

polished Koine Greek, the text itself is pseudonymous.¹²⁷ Acts' author also composed the Third Gospel, conventionally known as the Gospel of Luke, yet the relationship between these two narratives is also the source of scholarly debate.¹²⁸ Though I follow scholarly convention by referring to the author of the Third Gospel and of Acts as Luke, ancient ecclesial tradition that identifies this Luke as a gentile physician and travel companion of Paul is not assumed.¹²⁹ Like much of the historical context surrounding Acts, little can confidently be assumed other than the author's knowledge and competence in the Koine Greek dialect, refined literary technique, familiarity with Jewish

¹²⁷ Koine Greek was the common vernacular Greek that functioned as the *lingua franca* throughout the Hellenised ancient Mediterranean. The Greek of Acts, and Luke, is very polished, betraying a level of training and rhetorical competence. It, however, does not achieve the level of elite formalism expected from professional rhetors and sophists who began to mimic Classical diction and literary forms of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.

¹²⁸ The Gospel of Luke is also pseudonymous. While neither Luke nor Acts identify its author, they both refer to the same personage in their opening prologues. Both the Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles are dedicated to a Theophilus (Luke 1:1; Acts 1:1), who is otherwise unknown. The name Theophilus means, "friend of god." There is scholarly debate about whether Theophilus was the name of a historic patron who commissioned the two works, or is an honorary title for a patron who commissioned the two works, or again symbolically refers to the Church. In addition to the dedicatory reference, the two works share writing style and diction, Acts prologue (Acts 1.1-4) overtly refers to the Gospel of Luke, "the first work that I did, Oh Theophilus, concerning everything which Jesus began both to do and teach until the day when, after having commanded through the Holy Spirit the apostles whom he selected, he was taken up," (1.1-2). The initial scene in Acts overlaps with the ending of Luke, though there seems to be a temporal difference in the two accounts. Taking these observations into account along with narrative similarities, a consensus agrees that both Acts and Luke are the work of a single author. Additional debate exists over the relationship of the Gospel to Acts. Scholars frequently use the denotation Luke-Acts to infer their belief that Luke-Acts is one continuous two-volume narrative. Consequently, motifs, themes, narrative developments, and other intertextual allusions should be used to interpret Acts in light of Luke. Frequently scholars that believe that these are two separate works that should be read separately use the nomenclature Luke and Acts. While I identify with the Luke-Acts camp, this project does not directly engage the debate. Much of this analysis' exegetical efforts reads Acts as a free standing work. Whether written as separate pieces or as a two-volume work, the two works circulated separately, thus, readings can be valid and legitimate in both circumstances.

¹²⁹ Even those who accept the ecclesial tradition of Luke being a companion of Paul dispute whether he was a native of Antioch, Ephesus, Neapolis, Philippi or Alexandria, or if he was the Luke of Phm 1.24, Col 4.14 or 2 Tim 4.11, or the Luscious of Acts 13.3, or Rom 16.21. Codex Bezae attempts to link Luke with Antioch with an additional "we passage" in Acts 11.28. Epiphanius of Salamis (ca. 310-403 CE) identifies Luke as one of the seventy-two disciples sent out by Jesus in Luke 10, which suggests that Luke was Jewish. This shows disputed notions of whether Luke was a gentile physician, Paul's physician, a proselyte, Jew by birth, or god-fearer.

scripture, particularly as witnessed in the LXX, and positive view of the movement(s) that identified Jesus of Nazareth as Christ and as the fulfillment of Jewish scripture.

Even the text of Acts is the subject of significant dispute. While this project follows variations of the shorter Alexandrian text, a divergent “Western” tradition, of which the early fifth century Codex Bezae is a principal witness, is almost nine percent longer.¹³⁰ This Western tradition is the basis of both the Byzantine Text, utilized by the Greek Orthodox Church and the Received text, used for the sixteenth century English translation, the King James Version.

Scholars additionally argue over the date of Acts’ composition; dates range from the ca.62 CE to ca. 150 CE.¹³¹ Today, the majority of scholars place Acts’ composition in the last two decades of the first century, ca. 85 CE being the most popular. There is, however, a growing minority advocating a date from 100-130 C.E. Clouded in debate with its date are both Acts’ place of composition and Luke’s ethno-cultic identity.

Scholars have used various arguments to locate Acts in settings that range from places as diverse as: Ephesus, Antioch, Rome and Alexandria. These conjectures consistently identify Luke as a gentile Christian, with occasional arguments identifying Luke as a gentile proselyte to Judaism, an un-circumcised proselyte, a gentile god-fearer and the extremely rare description as a diasporic Jew. In attempts to glean meaning from Luke’s

¹³⁰ Scholars and most critical Biblical translations now privilege the Alexandrian tradition. The oldest manuscripts of Acts follow the Alexandrian tradition, which leads scholars to believe the Alexandrian textual tradition is the oldest, most original. Both traditions are well attested, and scholars debate over whether Luke produced both versions at different times, or whether redactors made the additions to Luke’s text to clarify interpretation and theology in ongoing early Christian debates. Critics note that most of the additions are of a theological nature.

¹³¹ For an introduction to the range of dates for Acts, and the ever-shifting consensus, See, Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 1–14 Pervo’s analysis is careful and meticulous. He provides an excellent argument for dating Acts from 110-120 CE. While I am not fully persuaded by his conclusions, this work is undoubtedly a useful resource.

narrative, critics discern Luke's intention through (re)constructions of his location, identity and the assumed bias associated with the time, setting and pertinent conditions associated to their scholarly deductions.

The results of these queries provide scholars with frameworks for understanding the social, historical, theological and ideological opinions of the exceedingly elusive Luke. These contextually derived frameworks are the hermeneutic lenses that scholars use to analyze and exegete Acts. The choices made within these debates over dating, place and socio-cultural context provide the bone and sinew for a scholar's ideological underpinnings. Both historical-critical methods and more literary modes of exegesis remain susceptible to the prefigured contexts and frameworks employed to address these debates. Scholars and critics have only texts—literary or archeological—and therefore, if they are to uncover Acts' true, accurate, or intended message through critical exegesis, they must “construct” frameworks for understanding Luke's relationship to the ancient world. Most exegeses of Acts are, consequently, vicious cycles dependent on critics' prefigured ideological frameworks of Luke and the ancient world.¹³² The scholarly analyses of Acts are unable to escape their dependence on historical questions and their affiliate (re)constructions.

These prefigured frameworks often take the form of objective observations, or consensus knowledge. When articulated in these ways the contextual root of these prefigured frameworks becomes obscured. It is in these circumstances that certain ideological assumptions can take precedence over others, particularly when embodied by

¹³² I am in no way dismissing these endeavors, or espousing their futility. I, however, do intend to bring attention to an underlying belief that Acts has a single proper generative trajectory that can legitimately disassemble the matrix of its social, temporal, and linguistic context in order to discover Luke's original intention or goal.

scholars who occupy different socio-political spaces. Suddenly, in ways similar to my former New Testament student, one's socio-political embodiment can invalidate the prefigured frameworks for approaching Acts. Where one's being black American, or female could essentialize one's interpretation as non-mainstream and less than useful. One's consistent recognition of socio-political subversion, or themes of liberation, in Matthews' case, could equally invalidate one's reading as ideal, legitimate, or plausible for an early Christian context. As discussed in this section, Hegelian Colour-blindness permeates Acts scholarship obscuring analysis of Acts' potential polymorphous ancient discursive value. Through a lack of contextual disclosure, well-meaning scholars of Acts have produced an agonistic environment that fortifies a view of early Christianity as generally homogenous, myopic and static. Consequently, "ideal readers" are unilinear notions of the ancient world who provide restricted corollary to particular twenty-first century subject-positions chosen by the scholar. Through the overt recognition of the contextual dependence of ancient historical (re)constructions and an acknowledged dependence on this history of Acts scholarship the following analysis of Acts seeks not to replace, supplant, or dismiss the diverse ideological approaches to Acts. Alternatively, the intention is to contribute and complement. I (re)conceive Acts' role in early Christianity as a polyvocal text that provided a semantic space for diverse meanings in the ancient world's complex and highly variegated social system. This (re)conception of Acts utilizes the polymorphous nature of black American discourse as a model for exploring Acts' narrative through the lens of diaspora. Seeking neither to erase nor eradicate other readings, I utilize a theory of diaspora to frame Luke's narrative, attempting to provide a coherent explication of Acts.

Chapter 2
Taxonomy and Language:
Contextualizing Context(s) for (re)Readings of Acts and Self

One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face. This, then, is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius.

W.E.B. Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*

This book is written without bitterness and without bias. The author aims to show that humanity is one in vices and virtues as well as blood; that the laws of evolution and progress apply equally to all; that there are no lethal diseases peculiar to the American Negro; that there are no cardinal virtues peculiar to the European; that we are *all* sinners and have come short of the glories of civilization. Hence, one should be careful to hear all the available evidence before giving judgment, especially when that judgment involves the welfare of a people. On behalf of the American people of African descent I ask, in the name of *justice*, for a full examination of the contents of this volume. “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.” [Prov 18.13, KJV]

Charles Victor Roman, *American Civilization and the Negro*

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Hegelian Colour-blindness is insidious in its furtive ability to infest and inform the ideologies and metanarratives undergirding critical scholarship. The description of my intellectual setting within Biblical Studies highlights the prevalence and contextual character of Hegelian Colour-blindness, particularly as expressed within the study of Acts of the Apostles from Western, Eurocentric perspectives. The desirous impulses to construct unilinear and hegemonic

narratives of being, however, lie not within a single culture or ideology. Rather, it more accurately corresponds to political and rhetorical agendas that are inherent to and observable within the discursive practices and circumstances found among any number of diverse contexts.

My focus, consequently, on the Western Academy is due to my own contextual concerns of this project. Any attempt to depict Hegelian Colour-blindness as solely endemic to Western discourse and thought, or to restrict the identification of unilinear thought to Biblical Studies is erroneous and misguided. Neither my Blackness nor my marginality immunize me from Hegelian Colour-blindness.¹³³ My theory nor my method protects my work from seeing with a gaze invested in the fetishization of the concrete.¹³⁴ Neither my grasp of history nor my contextualized perspective transform my narrations of the past from (re)presentations to static embodiments of history as it was. As a result, I seek not to supplant established narratives, but to highlight how the privileging of particularity can accompany current scholarship by offering alternative approaches and readings of texts, relationships and the past.¹³⁵

¹³³ Insights from Black feminist and womanist scholars challenge myopic (re)presentations of one's marginality as the sole consideration of subjectivity and privilege. This perspective and the critical insights made by black feminist and Womanist scholars have helped to elucidate the often unquestioned prevalence of patriarchal ideology and androcentric historiography in the study of Black American history, the meta-culture of the Black (American) Church, and the frequent lack of critical class and race consideration amongst certain streams of second wave feminists.

¹³⁴ Scholars engaged in queer theory call critics to pause, challenge, and continually query both societal and interpretive assumptions that belie any notions of normalcy, stability, or consensus. The contribution of these contextual and ideological critics situate deconstruction as a core hermeneutical principle that begins by analytically revealing and querying the basis upon which interpreters engages texts by presuming the presence, reification, or validation of literary, historical, and semantic norms, mores, standards, and ideologies.

¹³⁵ One recalls James Baldwin's invocation of James Joyce in "Stranger in the Village," when he notes, "Joyce is right about history being a nightmare-but it may be the nightmare from which no one *can* awaken. People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them." Reading between Baldwin's interpretation of Joyce and Joyce, I append another Joyce quote to Baldwin's observation: "In the particular is contained the universal." Baldwin cites an excerpt from *Ulysses*, while my excerpt comes from an often cited explanation for why Joyce's writings, particularly *Ulysses*, use Dublin as a setting.

The invocation of Hegelian Colour-Blindness as a critique of history-writing and exegetical practice demands more than scholars contextually locating themselves with respect to identity politics as marginalized outsiders. Hegelian Colour-Blindness reveals the presence of an often symbiotic relationship between unilinear hegemony and well-intended discourses that aspire to empower and free. Fuller engagement of contexts is one way to combat this corrosive symbiosis. Because of its perspectival character, history and generally all bodies of knowledge acquire meaning in both temporal, cultural and discursive circumstances. Scholars, then, must acknowledge their own privilege and marginality, while continuing to consider their own and their subject's temporality. It is imperative that discussions of scholarly context critically engage both the socio-political dimension of their subjectivities as material spaces as well as the ideological and epistemological infrastructures that conceptually frame one's contextualized experience—i.e. perspective—from any particular amalgamation of various subject-positions.

When read in tandem, the two excerpts that open this chapter provide a vision of an approach to the scholarly task that deviates from epistemologies that re-inscribe univocality and hegemony. Writing as doctors—a Ph.D. and M.D. respectively—college professors and Black men during the first decades of the twentieth century Du Bois and Roman approach their respective audiences by stressing the multidimensionality of blackness in America: American and Negro; other and native; critic and proponent. In an attempt to privilege Du Bois' "two-ness" and appropriate Roman's apologetic exhortation, this dissertation is an engagement with and appeal to both guardians of the Ivory Tower—whether they be Cerberus or Anicetus and Alexiars only entrance and

time will tell—and their already established practices from a complex and multifaceted intellectual and contextual setting.

Recognition of Black particularity, in its own diverse and polymorphic forms, advances the simultaneity of two-ness in lieu of alterneity—i.e. alternating between identities.¹³⁶ I am more than a generic victim of socio-political marginalization; I am a gendered person (male) from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group whose perspective is often vulnerable to dismissal or balkanization; and, I am simultaneously an active member and participant of the Academy and Biblical Studies. I have privilege and agency imbued in each aspect of my subjectivity. Contextualization requires this recognition.

As a result of the intellectual and contextual setting thus far presented, my privileging of context serves as a reminder of the permanence of temporality, the dynamism of memory, the perspectival nature of criticism. Those who write and critique history, then, must do their best to explicate the language, worldviews and assumptions undergirding their own discourses. Critical scholarship, especially transdisciplinary work, has even greater need for overt descriptions and contextualization of its language

¹³⁶ The polyvocality of existence can exceed two-ness. Subject position frequently exist as expressions of innumerable subjectivities. Two-ness is merely the most basic way to observe polyvocality. Roman also directly addresses the polyvocality of Black existence. His discussion expands Du Bois by comparing Black polyvocality to that of Europeans, Jews, and humanity in general. Roman states, “Civilization is the altruistic fruition of the ages and rests upon man’s unselfish service to man. Everyone who does a kind deed is a contributor, from the humble slave that did his duty in the dum and distant past to the brilliant inventor of today; and while it is the patrimony of mankind, the white man is the present administrator. He must, however, deal fairly with all the heirs or vacate his office; for civilization is the product of no particular breed of men and is therefore the heritage of all. Universality will mean perpetuation. World-wide peace can only ome with worldwide democracy. There is no middle ground for the Negro. He must go up to a citizen or down to a serf. His is not going to die out. The Negro is not going to leave here for two reasons: In the first place this is his home, and in the second place there is nowhere to go. He is not going back to Africa any more than the white man is going back to Europe or the Jew is going back to Palestine. Palestine may be rehabilitated and Europe be Americanized, but the Jew will not lose his world-wide citizenship, nor America fail of her geographical destination as the garden-spot of the world.” Charles Victor Roman, *American Civilization and the Negro: The Afro-American in Relation to National Progress* (Philadelphia, PA: F.A. Davis Company, 1916).

and key terms. As a cultural critical analysis of ancient and modern discourses that purports to develop a poetics of diaspora for the express purpose of performing an exegesis of Acts of the Apostles, the diverse ways that scholars approach concepts such as poetics, exegesis and blackness alongside scholarship's ever-present susceptibility to Hegelian Colour-blindness make clear identification of context, language and terminology imperative. The following chapter sets out a taxonomy that describes and intellectually situates this dissertation's hermeneutic and methodological approach in terms of:

- Epistemology (*le divers*);
- Scholarly task and practice (Exegesis);
- Privileged hermeneutic context (Black America);
- And, principal analytical construct (Poetics).

What follows is a presentation of the epistemological framework applied through my chosen Black American diaspora hermeneutic. Building from Édouard Glissant's essay, "*Le même et le divers*" I employ *le divers* as a means for (re)conceiving difference in discourse. After describing a *le divers* based epistemology I clarify my understanding of exegesis and socio-rhetorical criticism as a means of engaging ancient and contemporary discourses. Following these intellectual and methodological descriptions I provide a contextual reading of Black America as the privileged cultural and hermeneutic context from which I develop a poetics of diaspora and read Acts. My reading of Black America highlights both its geopolitical peculiarity and diasporic and transnational past, present and future. Closing this chapter is a discussion of the concept of poetics and its broad semantic range. Through a survey of critical approaches to the concept of poetics and (re)reading of Aristotle's *Poetics*, I broadly conceive poetics as a semantic domain that informs—as opposed to dictating or determining—the meaning-making process in

any signification process. The detailed discussion of epistemology, context and methodological terminology outlined in this chapter provides a taxonomy for the particular way in which this dissertation offers both a critical (re)assessment of the concept of diaspora as well as a contextually situated poetics of diaspora discourse that resists the unilinear and univocal tendencies of Hegelian Colour-blindness.

Epistemologies with *le Môme* and *le Divers*

Semiotic theory asserts that difference is vital. Meaning exists through the recognition of difference. The presence of individuals, groups, organizations, communities and societies emanates from the recognition and significance of difference. At an abstract level, this semiotic observation is informative, but at the discursive level it offers pragmatic insight into how one engages in daily life, how Black Americans and Black America (re)conceive identity and community in its diverse and transient twenty-first century manifestations and how scholars utilize method and theory, particularly in the case of Diaspora. A significant portion of the Black Atlantic literary corpus, especially from the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries, concerns itself with issues of life and death. The presentation of these concerns can as a discourse's stated subject, as in David Walker's *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, or implicitly as a theme or motif, as in Charles Chesnut's *The Conjure Woman*. In their respective circumstances interlocutors of Black Atlantic discourses negotiate and discursively encode notions of community, identity and social location in response to their local particularities. The three tiered racial system in the Catholic and French informed environment of nineteenth century southern Louisiana produced discourse and forms of resistance different than those in the racial binary world of Protestant dominant

nineteenth century Tennessee. The differences inherent in these two settings both necessitated varied discursive practices than nineteenth century Ontario, Canada, or the twenty-first century Nashville in which I write. Discourse and material expression affect lived-experience and life and death outcomes through their recognition, negotiation and signification of difference. Difference matters.

In Acts of the Apostles, the New Testament's sole narrative depiction of how a small band of Galilean Jews developed into a society disrupting, empire-wide movement of Jews and non-Jews of diverse geopolitical origins. Whether noting the narrative's initial Jerusalem location, the apostles' Galilean identity, the cosmopolitan depiction of Jerusalem during its annual Pentecost (*Shavuot*) festival, or the consistent inclusion of geopolitical designations when introducing characters, Luke's narrative insists that readers remain conscious of geopolitical differentness among those characters who alternatively fall under the generalizing designations Israel and *Ioudaioi*. The *euangelion* of Jesus of Nazareth spread among people of different classes, in different regions, of varied ethnic and cultic allegiance and at times through different understandings of baptism. Acts is a discourse permeating with significant representations of difference. Each representation is full of signifying potential that can generate varied meaning. The ever present relatedness within the varied geopolitical particularities of Luke's depiction of the Jewish world underscore the usefulness of Diaspora as a context and heuristic for engaging Luke's discursive presentation of difference in early Christianity. Difference matters.

The diverse particularities of the African diaspora invalidate any attempt to construct a single universalizing Blackness. No era, location, practice or history can

reduce the African Diaspora's multiplicity into a single model without generating dangerous erasures. Both Paul Gilroy's a-contextual critique of W. E. B. Du Bois' Americentric treatment of Black Folk in *The Black Atlantic* and Joan Dayan's critique of Gilroy's under-critical, Anglocentric description of Black internationalism reveal the constant presence and import of difference on discourse and history.¹³⁷ The differences found between an individual's ethno-racial, gender, socio-economic, national and generational identities shape language, experience and relationship. Even within Black America, narratives of origin, class and regionalism play vital roles in the recognition of Black America's diverse past and future. As scholars of African American history and literature combat the silencing of Black contributions to America, a great deal of this work focuses on the import of contextual and experiential difference. Difference matters.

Difference matters, this terse assertion is the **epistemological** lynchpin that undergirds the following project. Meaning "happens" only after the recognition of difference(s). Whether perceiving spatial difference—here and there; temporal difference—then, now and the coming; demonstrative difference—this and that; thymic difference—this is good for me and this is bad for me; or, any other type of difference, the observation and subsequent signification of difference governs virtually every cognitive action. We observe spatial differences between here and there and then determine whether it is near or far. We differentiate between entities, discerning their function and impact upon our actions. With sound we differentiate between tone and volume, with color, hue and intensity and with smells, scent and potency. Difference and the distinction between entities lies at the core of human experience. I assert that

¹³⁷ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*; Joan Dayan, "Paul Gilroy's Slaves, Ships, and Routes: The Middle Passage as Metaphor," *Research in African Literatures* 27, no. 4 (1996): 7–14.

perceptions of difference permit the recognition of similarity and precede the productions of meaning; difference matters. Whether acknowledged or ignored, the presence of difference is essential to critical study of Black America or Diaspora. The engagement of Diaspora through a lens that highlights the means by which entities maintain relationship allows difference to connote potentiality instead of otherness and gives this proposed critical reflection and contextual imagining a new lens for (re)conceiving Black America through Acts of the Apostles.

As witnessed in the presentation of the intellectual setting, scholars regularly employ critical gazes invested in the (re)construction of singularly hegemonic narratives. Difference matters in as much as it is an object to be converted, suppressed, or destroyed. Guided by Édouard Glissant's concepts of describes *le même* [sameness] and *le divers* [differentness], this source of Hegelian Colour-Blindness functions an epistemology of *le même*. In his *Discours Antilles*, Glissant explores the roles erasure, memory, space and place play in the generation of history, economics and socio-political realities. *Le Même* and *le divers*, as developed here, are paradigmatic structures used to explore how discourses present difference and interpreters generate meaning by signifying on difference. They are means of seeing, understanding and signifying. In his essay, "*le Même et le Divers*", Glissant describes *le même* [sameness] and *le divers* [differentness] as oppositional approaches to envisioning the world.

Differentness, which is neither chaos nor sterility, signifies the human spirit's struggle towards a lateral relationship, without universal transcendence. Differentness needs the presence of people, no longer as an object to subdue, but as a project to be put in relation. Sameness requires Being, Differentness establishes Relationship. As Sameness began by the expansionist plunder of the West, Differentness is itself created today through people's political and armed violence. As Sameness rises in the ecstatic vision of individuals, Differentness grows

by the proliferation outburst [*élan*] of communities. As the Other is Sameness' temptation, Wholeness [*le Tout*] is Differentness' demand... if it was permissible for Sameness to discover itself in the solitude of Being, be revealed in the solitude of Being, it remains imperative that Differentness "passes" through the whole of peoples and communities. Sameness is subdued difference; Differentness is accepted difference.¹³⁸

Both *le même* and *le divers* recognize the presence of difference. They, however, signify on that difference in very different ways. *Le même* values similarity and uses difference to separate and distinguish. Within the structure of *le même*, difference creates the "other"; it evokes what Hall describes as, "the old, the imperialising, the hegemonising, form of 'ethnicity'."¹³⁹ Consequently, as a paradigm *le même* seeks to clean, purify, conquer and homogenize the other. On the contrary, *le divers* recognizes difference as diversity and maintains relation and relatedness through the negotiation of differentness. Intimately related, *le même* and *le divers* help explicate the discursive properties of a text by establishing ascribing an axiology of difference. A single text can betray both principles, especially since the perceived politics and persuasiveness of a discourse lies rooted within an interpreter's signifying processes. By privileging the presence of difference, this system inspects representations of difference at the various levels of a discourse, exploring potential ways these representations affirm the assumption that difference matters. Conscious that difference permeates texts, a *le divers* reading strategy is capable of focusing on class, education, gender, sexuality, age, form, style or any number of categories. Remaining attentive to these listed, as well as other, properties, I utilize *le divers* in these pages as an epistemology for reading of diaspora. Advanced in the pages below and situated within the purview of Diaspora the

¹³⁸Glissant, *Le discours antillais*, 327 (translation is mine).

¹³⁹ Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, ed. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 233–46.

epistemologies of *le même* and *le divers* are valuable complements to any reading strategy that purports to explore critically discourses and the production of meaning.

Perspective:
Exegesis and Socio-Rhetorical Language

The view of difference advanced here heightens appreciation for the dialogical character of discourse. Discourse necessitates the transmission of meaning between multiple parties, amid entities contextual and experiential differences. The implicit dependence on multiple parties characterizes discourse as relational and suggests that meaning and interpretation are indivisible. When reading texts interpreters use ideology, culture and history to organize, decipher and generate meaning. While all discourse depends upon the relationship between author(s) and audience, neither author(s) nor audience is fully self-aware. Consequently, authors are unable to be fully conscious of how their own context(s) and subjectivity shape their thoughts and words. In addition to limited self-awareness and regardless of the level of familiarity, authors never have complete knowledge of their audience. Authors, thus, impact and shape how audiences first engage a particular discourse, but lack control over the reception and eventual meanings produced. This reality means that an author's intended message is rarely the lone meaning relayed and at times, is the less significant communicative element. Thus, constructed through ideology, culture and history, and consisting of signs and symbols, texts are merely composite worlds of meaning-potential.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ In his review of Amos N. Wilder, Vernon Robbins encapsulates this paper's view of the dynamic and constructive nature of discourse: "The inner workings of language presuppose that words, phrases, clauses and sentences stand in an interaction relation not only with thoughts, convictions, attitudes and values but also with trees, rocks, buildings, people, institution and events." Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society, and Ideology* (New York: Routledge Press, 1996), 2.

In light of the perspectival and dynamic nature of meaning, it is important that this cultural critical analysis of Acts establish a language for discussing the processes of reading texts, context(s), and self. Though a cultural critical analysis, semiotic theory informs a great deal of my preliminary analysis. As a result, this work responds to the unilinearity and univocality of Hegelian Colour-Blindness by emphasizing the prevalence of the epistemology of *le même* within New Testament and Diaspora Studies. Informed by this project's hermeneutic interest in Diaspora and semiotic influences, this cultural critical analysis employs a hybrid reading strategy that attends to the processes of (re)reading texts, contexts, as well as interpretations of texts and contexts.

Vernon Robbins' socio-rhetorical criticism offers convenient nomenclature for distinguishing and categorizing various lenses with which interpreters may analyze texts.¹⁴¹ Robbins describes texts as complex matrices composed of constituent textures; they, "are performances of language, and language is a part of the inner fabric of society, culture, ideology, and religion."¹⁴² Attuned to the dynamism of meaning production, he offers his socio-rhetorical criticism as an integrated system that helps interpreters proactively, "develop a conscious strategy of reading and rereading a text from different angles." By reading, and rereading texts from multiple angles interpreters are better able

¹⁴¹ Unlike Semiotics, Robbins' textures do not describe the system, or process through which meaning is generated. The various textures of socio-rhetorical criticism provide nomenclature for analyzing the different aspects of a text. Some of Robbins' textures—particularly the ideological, and sacred-religious—are hermeneutic frameworks generated through ideological, and interpretive concerns of the reader. Though Robbins' social and cultural textures, and ideological texture appear related to the fundamental and narrative semantics of semiotics, his emphasis has less to do with tracing, or understanding the mechanics of meaning production, and more to do with interpreter's overtly acknowledging the presence of a coherent, and contextually constructed narrative syntax. Consequently, the textures of socio-rhetorical criticism provide a pragmatic emphasis on the act of interpretation. For more on the use of semiotics in Biblical Studies, See Patte, *The Religious Dimensions of Biblical Texts* or, Daniel Patte, "Critical Biblical Studies from a Semiotics Perspective," *Semeia*, no. 81 (1998): 3–26; Mieke Bal, *Murder and Difference: Gender, Genre, and Scholarship on Sisera's Death* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988).

¹⁴² Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 1.

to explore the various ways that texts produce their own internal world through the generative encounter of the social, cultural and ideological world of an author, with the social, cultural and ideological world of an interpreter. The motifs, characters, society and world depicted in texts are only representations of the real world contextually crafted and coded by an author. Those representations only come into being when engaged and interpreted through an interpreter's context. Consequently, the meaning that interpreters construct relies on interpreters first (re)conceiving, (re)constructing and then interpreting the historical and semantic worlds responsible for producing the texts that they interpret. A complex hermeneutical circle, the insertion of notions of *le même* at any stage, as seen with Hegelian Colour-Blindness, drastically shapes any latter recognition or erasure of difference.

Robbins outlines four major angles—called textures—from which an interpreter can view a text: inner texture; intertexture; social and cultural texture; ideological texture.¹⁴³ The recognition of these textures provide interpreters with a framework to investigate a specific part of a text, while also considering how a text's different textures inform one another and impact the interpretive process. When looking at a text's linguistic and syntactic character, including its internal cohesiveness, rhetorical and literary structure and narrative progression, one is discussing the text's inner texture. The inner texture focuses on the aspects of a text's organization and language that create a cohesive internal world that functions primarily independent from insights gleaned from

¹⁴³ In his discussion of textures, Robbins says, "Likewise, when we explore a text from different angles, we see multiple textures of meanings, convictions, beliefs, values, emotions and actions. These textures are a result of webs or networks of meanings and meaning effects that humans create." *Ibid.*, 18.

historical, social and cultural, ideological, or intertextual insights or references. The inner texture is like a descriptive inventory of a text; it lacks value, intention, or meaning.

Value, intention and meaning are interpretive consequences when a reader engages the inner texture alongside other socio-rhetorical textures. The intertexture focuses on how texts include references to information, values and customs that are not explicitly presented within a text. The intertexture places emphasis on a text's semantic components and occurs in a number of ways. Discussion of a word's connotations, allusions or citations of scripture, the narration or reference to history are all constituent parts of a text's intertexture.

The social and cultural texture is closely related, yet distinct to the intertexture. While textual references to the social and cultural world presented within a text inform the intertexture, an interpreter's (re)construction of the social and cultural world in which a text was produced or initially received describes its social and cultural texture. Society and culture inform the production of texts, thus, perceptions of the pertinent social and cultural contexts help interpreters guide their reading. Though a text may not explicitly articulate its gender norms, mention honor and shame, or acknowledge the presence of diaspora, these social and cultural realities may have informed an author, and an interpreter's attentiveness to these realities can significantly aid interpretation.

Like the intertexture and social and cultural texture, the ideological texture is an interpretive construct. Dissimilar to the former textures, the ideological texture places more emphasis on the interaction between an interpreter's context and the interpreter's (re)construction of the text's social and cultural world. Instead of a detached description of the ideologies that undergirded ancient society, the ideological texture is an

interpreter's contextual evaluation of a text's purpose and intention. Informed by their investigation of their other socio-rhetorical textures, readers identify the alliances, conflicts and agenda that are at work within a text. These identifications logically support the interpreter's reading. This brief survey of socio-rhetorical criticism is a simplification of Robbins' system. Its description of Robbins' four textures, however, will suffice as an organizing principal for the cultural critical analysis employed through these pages.

This perspective of discourse leads to a view of exegesis—the critical process of bringing meaning out of a text—as a contextual process of construction. Traditional assessments within Biblical Studies, however, differentiate exegesis from eisegesis through descriptions of the former as a critical and objective exhumation of static and true meaning embedded within a text and the latter as a predominately subjective and cumbersome interpolation of meaning into a text. Rooted in the Academy's enculturated fetish for objectivity and Truth, this understanding of eisegesis additionally carries the scholarly disdain of being uncritical and disingenuous to a text's original context of production and authorial intent. Based on the above description of discourse as perspectival and inherently subjective, this paper rejects traditional distinctions between exegesis and eisegesis that rest on contrasts between objectivity and subjectivity.¹⁴⁴ The ensuing exegesis is resolutely subjective, this analysis is critically attentive to both a

¹⁴⁴ Treating interpretation and meaning as two distinct entities, this traditional view exudes hubris and hegemony. Interpretation, in this view, is an isolated and individual act of archeology that retrieves meaning, which likewise, is the isolated and individual product of the author(s). Within this model, meaning becomes synonymous with Truth. It is singular, fixed, and the sole product of the author(s)' intention. Having established meaning as something attainable and verifiable, the interpreter-scholar claims omniscient command of the author(s) and the author(s)' intended audience. This scholarly command, often little more than conveniently moderated reflections of the interpreter's context, feigns objectivity by dismissing or misrepresenting the diversity of ancient experience, and ignoring the breadth of equally legitimate interpretive options.

pericope's social and cultural texture and the inner textural coherence between that pericope and its greater textual setting.

Context(s)

Complex in its execution, this project is incessant in its attention to context and the role context plays in the production of meaning. Standard definitions of context define it as the circumstances or interrelated conditions in which something occurs. Oxford clarifies its description of these circumstances as those that, "form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood." When invoked within these pages, continually negotiating four interrelated contextual domains: Background Historical Contexts; Authorial Contexts; Discursive and Narrative Contexts; Interpretive Contexts.

Background Historical Contexts are the contexts primarily behind a text and comprise the events and socio-cultural structures preceding the text's production. Background Historical Contexts are consist of specific historical events, broad meta-narratives and typologies that utilize general ideas and concepts about the past to put it in relationship with the present. One discerns and (re)constructs aspects of this context through the interpretation of material culture and secondary scholarship on those time periods: this context shapes how scholars envision the narrative syntax and semantics of world history as a logical, coherent progression. Scholars generally focus on the Jewish, Hellenistic and Roman worlds of the first two centuries C.E. when discussing Acts of the Apostles. Incorporating general socio-cultural and anthropological insights, as well as information about specific political, economic and religious events, scholars (re)construct

various Background Historical Contexts that explain the historical setting in which early Christian discourse appeared.

Authorial Contexts are responsible for a text's production, correspond to the impetus for an enunciator to produce a message. While designated Authorial, implicit in the construction of Authorial Contexts are conceptions of an implied audience. Thus, discussion of Authorial Contexts can include both, or focus on the immediate context necessitating a text's production. Scholars derive—read construct—authorial contexts from both a text's internal content and their own perceptions of the ancient past. Like background historical contexts, these contexts are (re)constructions and interpretations based on one's own contextual analysis of discourse, history and material culture. Scholar's frequently (re)imagine what context most appropriately corresponds to their exegesis of the text in question. As a consequence, Authorial Contexts simultaneously explain what a text meant in an ancient setting and prove that text belongs to that particular ancient setting: these contexts inform how one (re)conceives a text's Fundamental Syntax, Fundamental Semantics and Narrative Semantics. Informed by Background Historical Contexts, Authorial Contexts determine the specific circumstances and lived experiences that prompted the construction of Acts of the Apostles. Scholars frequently approach Acts' Authorial Contexts with discussions of the author's ethno-cultic identity, educational background and social class, and early Christian theological concerns, historical needs, imperial ambitions and anti-Judaic polemic.

Discursive and Narrative Contexts are the contexts expressed within the world created by a text. Discursive and Narrative Contexts are the co-creations of an

enunciator's worldview, ideology and interpretation of the past, discerned by an interlocutor's reading and analysis of a text's discursive world. These contexts shape scholar's analysis of a text's discursive world, in addition to its Narrative Semantics and Narrative Syntax. Whether an accurate representation, or wholesale fiction, the world constructed, inferred and described by Acts' narrative composes its Discursive and Narrative Contexts. Discussion of Acts' Discursive and Narrative Contexts are often a principal concern in narrative critical approaches to Acts. Attention frequently focuses on the role of conflict in framing the narrative's progression, the hostile climate caused by Jewish antipathy for the Christ movement, as well as the types of socio-political, class and economic spaces in which Luke sets his narrative.

Interpretive Contexts are the principal aspects of an interlocutor's subject-position. Interpretive Contexts inform the processes and predispositions through which people perceive the four contextual domains and ultimately decipher, interpret and give meaning to texts. Except for scholars overtly engaging in ideological, contextual, or cultural critical exegesis, the majority of Biblical scholars ignore the role of Interpretive Contexts on their interpretations of Acts. Like the scholarship presented above, modernity continues to perform an integral contextual role on Acts scholarship. Additionally, since World War II, a post-*Shoah* context has enhanced New Testament studies' sensitivity to anti-Judaism within early Christian discourse. Scholars, however, have largely continued to adopt Background Historical Contexts with strikingly similar ideological assumptions, while also utilizing similar Authorial Contexts. As shown above, these post-*Shoah* readings differ only slightly in their interpretations of Acts; they

have drastically changed their evaluation and axiological views. As shown below, Interpretive Contexts significantly shape how a scholar signifies on difference.

These domains are perspectival. They are interdependent, overlap, can consist of various levels and shift based upon perspective. Frequently, interpretation and meaning are the byproduct of perceived parallels and analogies between, if not the wholesale substitution of, Interpretive Contexts and the other contextual domains. Critical scholarship is a mingled collision of each of these four domains. Ultimately each domain is a dynamic construction informed by the subject-positions and contexts of interpreters and readers. When discussing contexts, I am organically and overtly engaging each of these contextual domains. As a scholar of ancient history, my perceptions of the past are socially situated (re)constructions based on ancient material culture and secondary literature.

Instead of obscuring the contextual nature of this task, I overtly and critically engage one text, Acts of the Apostles and three contexts, early Christianity, New Testament Studies of Acts and my own twenty-first century Black American context. In my analysis of these three contexts, I establish the basis for following my interpretive choices while also uncovering predispositions and tendencies that my contextual setting may introduce to this work. Black America serves as my Interpretive Context, and shapes how I conceive social and cultural textures. Adopting an epistemology of *le divers*, I resist the presumption that there is an identical analogy between my Interpretive Context, and the Authorial Contexts of the texts that I study. Critical consideration of Black America's, and its intrinsic diversity informs how I perceives the social and

cultural textures of a text, reading, reflecting, and constructing history in the midst of complex and permeable group boundaries.

Analytical Foreground: Black American as Interpretive Context

Political disenfranchisement, economic exploitation, physical and mental persecution, and all in the midst of unmarked, forgotten and erased cultural and national contributions: these experiences and memories describe a significant portion of the histories of African descended people in the United States of America. Still, black life in America is more than the sum of violence, oppression and misery. Black experiences within America have always been varied, vibrant and creative orchestrations of life, death, marginality and agency. Through dissonance and harmony, black existence articulates its multiple selves through the consistent and tenuous balancing of the local, national and global. Phillis Wheatley (1753 – 1784), the first black poet published in America was a Gambian born, Boston slave; Cyrille Auguste Bissette, a French *l'homme de couleur* from Martinique, is responsible for publishing Victor Séjour's (1817 – 1874), "Le Mulâtre" in Paris, which is the earliest known published work of fiction by an American of African ancestry; Massachusetts raised and German trained, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868 – 1963), the first black American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard, died and was laid to rest in Accra, a Ghanaian citizen; Marcus Garvey (1887 – 1940), a Jamaican immigrant who mobilized a Pan-African back to Africa movement, drastically changed the social and cultural fabric of Black consciousness in America; Josephine Baker (1906 – 1998), a native of Missouri, migrated to France where she became a French citizen, and eventual global entertainment icon, and *Chevalier* of the *Légion d'honneur* for her heroic efforts towards the French Resistance during the Second

World War; the Black Power advocate and Civil Rights activist Stokely Carmichael (1941 – 1998) was Trinidadian born, New York reared, and Howard University educated prior to changing his name to Kwame Turé and dying in self-imposed exile in Guinea; Barack Hussein Obama II, of black Kenyan patrilineal descent and matrilineally descended from white slave-owners grew up in Hawaii and Indonesia before becoming the first person of African descent elected President of the United States. Blackness and black identities—Negro, African, *les gens de couleur*, Nigger, Coloured, Mulatto, Black, Afro-American, African-American, Black American—have consistently relied on the negotiation—observation, erasure, construction, transgression, crossing and straddling—of cultural, political and national boundaries. Never monolithic and existing neither in vacuum nor stasis, the boundaries, née ‘soul’, of black folk in America consists of fissures of migrations, conversations, memories, narrations and strivings.

It is within this vision of Black America that I conceive my own Black American Interpretive Context. The term Black America, in these pages, encompasses a large and diverse number of people and experiences that elicits an implied cohesive interrelatedness amidst difference. No one essentialized construction is adequate. As soon as one invokes the term Black American to describe a broad and diverse construct that implies African descent and geopolitical relatedness, someone else can limit the term to citizenship, parentage, or skin color. An exceedingly elusive concept Black America at varying times denotes race, citizenship, heritage, socio-political reality, culture, or location. Black America is collection of Black Atlantic articulations that negotiates specific geopolitical realities; it is a conceptual world with broad connotative value. Its

denotative meaning is as poetic and context-dependent as the spirituals, jazz, blues, R&B, hip-hop, or rap. Thus, any form of Black America is diverse, and contested.

As the principal context used for this interpretation, the above presentation of Black America underscores the complex balance between particularity and collectivity. Because Black America is a particular expression of the Black Atlantic, analysis of Black America cultural history and discourse must carefully attend to the observation of similarity, collectivity and relatedness, while simultaneously recognizing the particularity and difference inherent to varying diaspora contexts. This description of Black America is internally comparative to Black America's historical access to social, legal, and political privilege. While individual Black Americans today experience greater economic and social freedom compared to Antebellum America and the pre-Civil Rights Era, all Black America have by no means benefitted equally from these advances. Black Americans continue to lag behind other demographic groups in terms of education, political representation, and health, while have disproportionately high rates of unemployment, poverty, and incarceration. Acknowledging Black America's diversity, differentness, geopolitical particularity, and privilege permits a consideration of Acts' discursive character through a lens that privileges the polyvocality, and mutability of identity and space.

As Black Americans gain greater political and economic capital in the United States (U.S.), they consequently garner greater privilege and agency within their diasporic interactions. Increased access to power and global influence places Black America in a unique position to engage with other populations, of African descent, and otherwise. Black America, though a non-corporate entity, has never been a voiceless

mass with no agency. The complexity of lived experience, creativity of Black dissidence, and multiplicity of its diverse parts has always ensured the survival of Black America's agency. Individual Black Americans and smaller communities within Black America have, however, existed as invisible and voiceless, or transformed by historians and Hegelian Colour-Blindness into the subaltern through erasure and censure. Often this suppression of individuals and communities within Black America is the result of a failed recognition or appreciation of particularity and difference. During other times, it is an intentional strategy to acquire, consolidate and use socio-political and economic power. As a process, gender, religion, ancestry, sexuality, linguistic heritage, political affiliation, and any number of other particularities become the objects of forgetfulness and erasure, and the mechanisms of Hegelian Colour-Blindness are re-employed on Black peoples in America, by Black America. These processes take place in daily interactions, as well as the reading and writing of history. If one is to recognize the presence and danger of mimicry, it is vital to observe one's own internal diversity and polyvocality. For Black Americans, this consists of recognizing the various ways one's subject-position positions them within an American and global context. Thus, recognizing the impact that privilege and power have on experience and interpretation is an important early step.

As a Black American male from North Carolina who participates in the production of biblical scholarship, my interpretive context is one of privilege, contest and marginality. With respect to geopolitical location, the United States of America stands as one of the world's largest economies and enjoys enormous global privilege. Thus, my location within the American Academy affords me with a certain additional privilege of position. With disproportionate access to publishers, research universities, and Anglo-

centric character, my contextual location within the Academy exists in concert with my ethno-cultural and racial identification. As a Black American, past and current systems of exclusion, exploitation and racism require continued negotiation with the conscious acknowledgement of the discursive privilege embodied in my scholarly voice. In the pages below, diaspora, articulated from a Black American perspective, provides a useful lens for analyzing the relationship between particularity and similarity.

Poetics not Poetry

A central element of the ensuing study and subsequent exegesis of Acts is the proposal of a poetics for Diaspora discourse. Given the previous discussions of socio-rhetorical nomenclature, and the perspectival nature of exegesis, a discussion of poetics is necessary. In a manner similar to the use of diaspora in Biblical Studies, the term poetics enjoys frequent attestation and infrequent specification. When writers speak about poetics they often describe specific stylistic, generic, or rhetorical attributes that paradigmatically characterize a discourse as art. In these understandings, poetics deals with the specific patterns and structures that both underlie and legitimate a text as aesthetically valuable. These patterns and structures are socio-culturally specific, recognizable, repeatable and predictable means of signifying on various discursive elements of a text that can determine its sophistication, tone, *sitz im leben*, observed narrative semantics and syntax and meaning. Here, the nuanced nature of a discourse's poetics undergird and enhance the various discourse-specific elements such as themes, tropes, setting and scene that one normally associates with discursive semantics and syntax.

The frequent non-presence of definitions, explanations, or even broad descriptions of what scholars mean by poetics bares ironic witness to the term's perceived expressive value, yet conceptual elusiveness. Three approaches to poetics predominate scholarship.

Poetics appears as:

- Any discussion or description of how to write, categorize or critique—i.e. make or make meaning of—poetry and its affiliate forms;
- An interdisciplinary field of inquiry that examines the linguistic, literary, and semiotic elements responsible for making poetry meaningful art;
- A functional, though, abstract quality that makes poetry, specifically, and literature, generally, aesthetically valuable, and emotively effective.¹⁴⁵

The boundaries between these approaches are porous, with any particular work of scholarship exhibiting various traits at different times. However, only the latter two of these three approaches generally accompany any critical or theoretical development.

It is important to recognize the presence of the term *make* in each of these approaches. Early understandings of poetics relied on notions of making and producing largely because the English word poetics comes from the Greek adjective ποιητικός [*poiētikos*, capable of making or having a creative or productive quality; ingenious or creative; poetical], which derives from the verb ποιέω [*poieō*, to do, make, or produce].

¹⁴⁵ Todorov offers a slightly different description of these three approaches. He alludes to early stages that focus on categorizing literature, and instructing individuals on how to make it. Later stages, however, differentiate between literary theory and literary criticism. The early stage, associated with the Renaissance period, is analogous to the first view that understands poetics as any discussion of the writing, or categorizing of poetry. In this vein, discussions focus on form, and the identification of genres, and their stylistic requirements. Literary theory evolves into the study of the mechanics of how poetry works, while literary criticism deals with discerning the meaning and interpretation of literature. Todorov excludes literary criticism from his discussion of poetics, and offers his structuralist approach to poetics as a third approach, that explores poetics as a field of inquiry focused on both its semantic and syntactic characters. Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics* (U of Minnesota Press, 1981); Richter provides a comprehensive history of poetics within the German tradition. Sandra Richter, *History of Poetics : German Scholarly Aesthetics and Poetics in International Context, 1770-1960* (Berlin, DEU: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/alltitles/docDetail.action?docID=10373543>.

While a bit more is said below about the Greek term ποιητικός [*poiētikos*], my association of *making* with the three aforementioned approaches to poetics construes each approach as an interrelated and valid attempt to explore some productive aspect of a discourse. In these pages, I slightly adapt the third approach and view poetics as a functional quality that is generally applicable to all discourse. Instead of specifying poetics as solely characteristic of poetry or literature, I (re)conceive poetics' abstract nature as a manifestation of its semantic character.¹⁴⁶

The primary weakness in using poetics as an overarching description of the production of poetry is twofold. Underlying this view is an assumption that poetry is self-evident, distinctive, and has inherent value rooted within its form, structure, or syntax. Additionally, this understanding blurs the contextual and socio-culturally specific nature of interpretation and meaning-making, which results in the presumption of universal value. This presumption of universal value leaves scholars without terminology to critique or study the meaning-making elements within a given discourse as context specific. A number of theorists, exemplified by Tzvetan Todorov, stress the need for distinguishing between programmatic manuals filled with descriptions of genres, commentaries providing exegesis and interpretations of literature and critical literary theory that explores the mechanisms through which texts become literature.¹⁴⁷ Under these latter two conditions, poetics is a formless tool that, though seeming counterintuitive, frames discussions about how texts affect audiences and attain their

¹⁴⁶ Visible within this adaptation is the influence of semiotics on my methodological lens, which underlies the principal reason for my selection.

¹⁴⁷ Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics*.

aesthetic value through the various machinations of language, linguistics and semiotics, inclusive of genre, form, structure and to a lesser degree semantics.¹⁴⁸

Viewing poetics as a field of study envisions poetics as a heuristic tool that provides a field of questions for analyzing poetry. Todorov exemplifies this approach when stating that poetics, “aims at a knowledge of the general laws that preside over the birth of each work...it seeks these laws within literature itself. Poetics is therefore an approach to literature at once “abstract” and “internal.”¹⁴⁹ Here, Todorov specifically describes poetics as a science, comparable to, yet distinct from psychology, psychoanalytics, semiotics, or sociology. By construing poetics as a scientific field of inquiry, this notion conveniently presents poetics as a liminal concept that exists as the moderating principle, which Todorov calls trajectory, “between the very particular and the excessively general.”¹⁵⁰ As a middle space, poetics is a matrix of what Todorov presents as semantic, syntax, and verbal aspects. While these aspects function interdependently, Todorov’s science of poetics presents a system for considering how the resultant matrix determines the reader’s experience and evaluation of the text.

Maintaining the emphasis found in the view of poetics as “how-to-guide,” the most frequent articulations of poetics as field of study insist on the particular identification of poetics with poetry, or literature. In Todorov’s system, poetics allows literature to become the domain of study, and not the object of study. “This science [poetics] is no longer concerned with actual literature, but with a possible literature in

¹⁴⁸ Todorov, himself, struggles with this inevitable trajectory of utilizing poetics to address art. His final chapter predicts the eventual evolution of poetics into a general science of inquiry that performs a transitory role for all discourses. See, *ibid.*, 59–72.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

other words, with that abstract property that constitutes the singularity of the literary phenomenon: literariness.”¹⁵¹ While recognizing the abstract nature that governs meaning-making, Todorov’s poetics implicitly presumes the presence of literary value.¹⁵² Using literature as a determining factor for constructing notions of poetics permeates each of the three approaches. By invoking the notion of literature, scholars inscribe socio-cultural value on discourses. This presumption requires pre-reading, or pre-figuring of the syntactic and semantic realms within which a text functions. Additionally, literature within Western iterations often imply a certain artistic, and thus aesthetic quality. This construction of poetics leads to the obscuring of a text’s semantics through the homogenous assumption of dominant cultures, and emphasizing of syntax through the analysis of form, structure, and style.

This scientific system allows Todorov to additionally distinguish between hermeneutics, poetics, and semiotics. Hermeneutics, according to Todorov, has closer relation to literary criticism, and is a subject concerned with interpretation. Poetics, on the other hand, deals with the making of meaning between a consumer—author or non-authorial audience—and text. Semiotics, in this terminology, describes the study of signs, codes, and their functioning. Consequently, the study of literary meaning begins with semiotics as the study of verbal and non-verbal signs and codes that comprise any form of communication, while poetics presupposes a text’s literary value and describes

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁵² In the preface to his 1981 revision, Todorov acknowledges how his work maintains temporal signs that date it. The distinction between poetics as a field for the study of all discourse versus the study of literature is one of four ways he notes the change in scholarly context. His final chapter struggles with whether poetics will become a general theory for discourse or can continue to purport to be specific to literature. Noting the inherent contradistinction and destabilizing consequences of acknowledging context, perspective, and artistic value Todorov resigns to state the obvious inconsistency while leaving the question open. of perspective, *ibid.*, xxviii–xxx, 63–72.

the mechanisms through which texts generate meaning and attain their literary value—read literariness. Hermeneutics, the most narrow field of inquiry deals with interpretation, which one can understand as the explanation, or articulation of meaning. In this system, poetics privileges a text’s inner texture, while hermeneutics is second tier, and highlights a reader’s interaction with the ideological texture, intertexture, and social and cultural texture. Though understood as a false dichotomy in terms of post-structuralist semiotics, the distinction between meaning and articulated meaning is still useful for distinguishing between internally experiencing the meaning-making between a text and reader, and the later discursive explanation, or articulation of said, experienced meaning.¹⁵³ Todorov, thus, intends his poetics to be pathology of initial meaning, and a science of literariness, which is, “a theory of the structure and functioning of literary discourse, a theory that affords a list of literary possibilities, so that existing literary works appear as achieved particular cases.”¹⁵⁴ However, his science works inversely, as it relies upon pre-readings, pre-established systems of aesthetic valuation, and existing evaluations of works as literature in order to describe the pathology of meaning-making prior to interpretation. Poetics, still differentiated from hermeneutics, is a post-hermeneutic, post-interpretive process that explains how already existing literary works attained, and maintain their value. This articulation frequently presumes a text’s aesthetic value, and structural significance. Consequently, scholars ignore significant portions of a text’s semantic realm, and the contextual specificity of their analyses.

¹⁵³ In lieu of doing a massive overhaul seven years after his already revised 1973 edition of, *Introduction to Poetics*, Todorov includes a preface to the 1980 edition. He acknowledges a number of changes and developments in the field of poetics, and notes its increasing application to discourse, as opposed to literature or poetry. See, Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics*.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

Staying in line with the prefiguring of discourse as poetry or literature, Roman Jakobson famously asserts that, “Poetics deals primarily with the question, “What makes a verbal message a work of art?”¹⁵⁵ While Todorov’s construction is a structuralist project attempting to create space for the critical and attentive study of literary theory, Jakobson outlines his view on poetics as an appeal to linguists to incorporate the study of poetics into linguistics.¹⁵⁶ Instead of developing a separate field of study, Jakobson offers an example of how scholars approach poetics as a functional quality at work within literature. His linguistics background lends his system to emphasize poetics as being characteristic of verbal messages. Yet, while poetics appears as a functional quality, his system handles the concept in an uneasy fashion, as he also discusses poetics as an area of study. Through the course of his essay, “Linguistics and Poetics,” Jakobson uses a number of terms such as poetics, poetic, poetic language, poetic function, historical poetics, and synchronic poetics in his attempt to integrate the quality that transforms discourse into art into the field of linguistics.

This diverse language reflects his identification of poetics’ elusive nature. Poetics and poetic function are the two primary notions that characterize Jakobson’s system, yet, he offers multiple descriptions and definitions for each term. In addition to a subject evaluating artistic value, poetics is a field that, “deals with problems of verbal structure...an integral part of linguistics,” the ‘focal point’ of literary studies, which also, “may be defined as that part of linguistics which treats the poetic function in its

¹⁵⁵ Roman Jakobson, “Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics,” in *Style in Language*, ed. T. A. Seboek (New York: Wiley, 1960), 350, https://noppa.aalto.fi/noppa/kurssi/bece-e3060/luennot/BECS-E3060_communication.pdf.

¹⁵⁶ Jakobson, “Closing Statement.”

relationship to the other functions of language.”¹⁵⁷ Poetic function, for Jakobson, is an aspect of language that corresponds to the transference of a text’s message, largely, by mediating a text’s syntagmatic and semantic characteristics.¹⁵⁸ Distinct from an author’s attitude, desire, context(s), or code(s) Jakobson understands poetic function as the dominant linguistic function of ‘verbal art.’ Noting the need to expand the scope of poetics beyond the literary boundaries of poetry, Jakobson’s system infers that poetics, specifically poetic function, is a product of semantic and syntactic interaction. Yet, his description, and linguistic leanings portray poetics as a principally expressed by syntactic decisions within a verbal art’s inner texture. Even Jakobson’s discussions of codes, metaphor, and metalanguage focus on their structure, organization, and syntactic nature.¹⁵⁹

Jakobson’s system, like Todorov, presumes both text’s overall and generic values. The consequence is a theory of poetics that requires certain aesthetic qualities, heightens the presence of meter, and pursues semantics through the study of sub-textual as well as discursive syntax. In each of these three approaches, poetics is abstract and necessitates that scholars engage poetics much like a physicist studies electromagnetic waves, through indirect analysis of tangible and observable effects upon other entities. The primary distinction being whether poetics is understood as an actual, yet elusive, quality, or

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 350, 350, 351, 358.

¹⁵⁸ Jakobson specifically discusses an author’s word and image choice by differentiating between “selection” and “combination.” “The selection is produced on the basis of equivalence, similarity and dissimilarity, synonymy, and antonymy, while the combination, the build-up of the sequence, is based on contiguity. The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination. Equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device of the sequence.” See, *ibid.*, 356. *Ibid.*, 356.

¹⁵⁹ Describing both metalanguage and poetry as constructive, he differentiates these two by describing metalanguage as the construction of linguistic equations, while poetry is the sub-textual construction of sequences. *Ibid.*

simply a means of analyzing certain literature, through prefigured aesthetic valuations of form, structure, and genre. In line with the above presentation, poetics, here, is believed to be an incredibly useful analytical subject that can help critics begin thinking about how individuals experience texts.

The implicit difficulty in directly discussing poetics is longstanding, and is even evident in the fourth century B.C.E. philosopher Aristotle (384 B.C.E. – 322 B.C.E.). Even Aristotle noted the absence of a term that accurately described the medium-transcendent, communicative element responsible for making—possibly better expressed as a simultaneously configuring and enlivening ^{activating}—discursive representations—read significations. It is within the first book of Aristotle's *Poetics* that scholars find the earliest critical and systematic theorization of drama and poetry. *Poetics*, composed as a two-part lecture or treatise, discusses the nature, character, objectives, and methods involved in fashioning the poetic dimensions of drama. Originally covering the ancient genres of tragedy, epic, comedy, inclusive with aspects and elements of other expressive forms, only the first book and its engagement of tragedy and epic survive.

My reading of *Poetics* suggests that Aristotle struggled with many of the ambiguities and expressive difficulties still present among popular twentieth and twenty-first century discussions of poetics. While titled *Poetics*, the text is technically only an indirect study of poetics as far as it associates poetics with the arts, and then details a theory of the dramatic arts, principally functioning more as a pathology of poetics. As a consequence, significant discussion centers on the means by which ancient genres of drama and poetry work. For Aristotle, poetry, drama, music, and generally any text containing an artistic element consists of syntactic and semantic components that prompt

audiences to see, feel, or perceive in ways that correspond to other ideas, concepts, or feelings. These correspondences are foundational to Aristotle’s understanding of poetics, and are as close as he comes to defining the concept. Referring to the presence of these correspondences as μίμησις, [*mimēsis*, representation, imitation, mimesis], *mimēsis* is the transcendent commonality characteristic to all artistic forms. *Mimēsis*, however, is not poetics; it is Aristotle’s required, ever-present affect of poetics.¹⁶⁰

The absence of unambiguous discussion of the nature of poetics is due to concept’s complexity, and the lack of available terminology. While the bulk of *Poetics* discusses drama construction as its medium to engage the topic of poetics, Aristotle’s opening makes two important assertions. He first links diverse artistic forms together by describing their functional effect as a *mimēsis* that appears as totality:

So, epic poetry, and the poetry¹⁶¹ of tragedies, and yet also comedies, dythrambic poetry, and the majority of flute and cithara-playing: all these are imitations¹⁶² occurring existing¹⁶³ as Totality¹⁶⁴. They differ¹⁶⁵ from one another in three ways: by which it is either representing [things]¹⁶⁶ through different [mediums]; [representing] different things, or [representing] differently and not by the same manner.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁰ I intentionally use the less popular noun meaning of affect: “the conscious subjective aspect of an emotion considered apart from bodily changes also : a set of observable manifestations of a subjectively experienced emotion.” See, “Affect,” *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

¹⁶¹ ποίησις, *poiēsis*

¹⁶² μίμησις, *mimēsis*; This author is torn on the use of representation, imitation, and mimesis. Each of these potential translations carries significant differences within their respective contextual and philosophical connotations. Due to Aristotle’s preference for metaphor, I have elected to use representation within these translations. It, however, is advisable to keep the transliteration in mind, as I am uneasy with this rendering.

¹⁶³ τυγχάνω οὔσα (εἰμί), *tugchanō ousa*; Used three times, the verb *τυγχάνω* only occurs in the opening section. The construction with the supplementary participle occurs twice. 1447a: *πᾶσαι τυγχάνουσιν οὔσαι μιμήσεις τὸ σύνολον*; 1447a: *τινες ἕτεροι τυγχάνουσιν οὔσαι τοιαῦται τὴν δύναμιν*; 1447b: *ἀνόνημος τυγχάνει οὔσα μέχρι τοῦ νῦν*.

¹⁶⁴ σύνολος, *sunolos*; The clause reads: *πᾶσαι τυγχάνουσιν οὔσαι μιμήσεις τὸ σύνολον*.

¹⁶⁵ διαφέρω, *diapherō*;

¹⁶⁶ μιμέομαι, *mimeomai*; In line with the difficulty of , I am unsatisfied with imitate and represent as translations. While not employed in the translations, signify is a preferred conceptual alternative. Its omitted in these translations due to potential secondary connotations, and in favor of scholarly custom.

¹⁶⁷ Whalley notes that this is generally taken as medium, object, and mode. He, however, views

(Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1447a)

Resident within Aristotle's attempt to tacitly describe poetics lie implications for notions of *le même* and *le divers*, along with a context for reviewing alternative discussions of poetics. This description introduces poetics in a way that seems compatible with *le divers*. Differentness—the state of privileging relatedness amid differences—is an apropos vernacular for Aristotle's subsequent discussions. His functional approach views poetics as the property that permits the perception of relatedness between composer, text, and audience. Central focus on *mimēsis* provides Aristotle with an open framework that approaches poetics as conduit into and concept of *le divers*.

The implicit presence of *le divers* gains importance with Aristotle's second assertion: the absence of a language to actually talk about poetics. Vital both to reading *Poetics*, and to comprehending my use of the term poetics is the distinction between poetics as a theoretical principle with which Aristotle was concerned, and poetics as a pedestrian syntactic reference to a text's use of meters or forms commonly associated with poetry. The first words of Aristotle's treatise identify poetics [ποιητικός, *poiētikos*, creative; capable of making; poetical; the quality of poetry, poetic] and its affiliate attributes as the treatise's intended subject.¹⁶⁸ With these two assertions Aristotle is able

this as matter, subject, and method, which corresponds to the material, efficient, and formal causes. Aristotle, *Aristotle's Poetics*, trans. George Whalley (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 1997), 46.

¹⁶⁸ This text is about poetics [ποιητικός, *poiētikos*, poetics], both it, its appearances [Εἶδος, *eidōs*, appearance; nature, or character; shape, or form; icon], each of which has a certain agency^{effect/ability/power} [δύναμις, *dunamis*, potentiality; agency; power; ability], how it's necessary for plots [μῦθος, *muthos*, plot; myth; story] to be organized [συνίστημι, *sunistēmi*, combine; unite; organize; establish] if poetry [ποίησις, *poiēsis*, poetry] is going to come out well; and how [poetry] is yet a collection of parts arising from various amounts and types. Likewise, [this text] also deals with other things associated with [poetics] that concern method. Let us speak first by beginning according to nature with those things which are first. (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1447a); *Eidos* is frequently translated as, "form." While this rendering is accurate, it obscures the term's broad semantic range. Understood within my translation, *eidōs*, which is found in the genitive plural here in Aristotle, deals with more than a rigid form, but with the variable, mutable, iconographic nature responsible for, or acting mediating the presence of poetics. *Dunamis* deals with inherent ability, agency.

to expand his treatise through attentive discussion that focuses on plot, narrative unity, length, word choice, and genre character, which in terms of semiotic theory, primarily entail the discursive narrative.¹⁶⁹

In the midst of treating the structures, and construction of Epics and Tragedies, Aristotle contrasts poetics to history, suggesting teleological and subjective differences between these two modes of expressive projection. History, centered on specific events, entailed less thought as it recited things as they occurred.¹⁷⁰ Poetics, according to Aristotle is a more serious subject that requires more skill, and focuses on fashioning representations of general truths, or universals. Both history and poetics make use of plots, and include aspects of representation.¹⁷¹ However, the *mimēsis* associated with poetics attends to both the representative Totality that affects the audience, in addition to the more local constituent representations comprised by metaphor, language, and the like. It is this notion of the Totality that clarifies Aristotle's understanding of poetics. As seen

Dunamis can infer an essential quality, function, or potentiality. Thus, agency, effect, or even quality are plausible translations.

¹⁶⁹ Even when extolling the virtues and supreme effectiveness of metaphor in the making of poetics, Aristotle approaches metaphor from the perspective of its syntactic construction, and arrangement. He, however, does emphasize the semantic effects of metaphors in particular, and poetics in general; *Poetics*, 1458b-a: "It is great to properly engage in each of the types of speaking, in addition to making use of double-words and rare ones, but it is much greater to be skilled in metaphors, since this alone is not taken from another place, but is a mark of inborn genius. For, the [ability] to exceptionally transform (metamorphosize) something is perceiving it as something else." ἔστιν δὲ μέγα μὲν τὸ ἐκάστῳ τῶν εἰρημένων πρεπόντως χρῆσθαι, καὶ διπλοῖς ὀνόμασι καὶ γλώτταις, πολὺ δὲ μέγιστον τὸ μεταφορικὸν εἶναι. μόνον γὰρ τοῦτο οὔτε παρ' ἄλλου ἔστι λαβεῖν εὐφυΐας τε σημεῖον ἔστι: τὸ γὰρ εὖ μεταφέρειν τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν ἔστιν.

¹⁷⁰ Aristotle provides an overly simplified view of history. His invocations of Herodotus fails to consider Thucydidean insights. This simplification is consistent with the style and purpose of *Poetics*. I do not take his depiction of history as flat, static, or totalistic, rather, as a principal means of differentiating poetics from history.

¹⁷¹ Rather it differs in this: the one says by what way things happened/occurred, but the other says how things ought to occur/happen, wherefore poetry is more philosophical and serious/weighty than history. For poetry talks more about Universals/general things, and history talks about things according to each event. The subject of a Universal [deals with] the types of ways certain types of things end up turn out/experience/occur speaking or acting due to probability or necessity, from which poetry aims when laying out names. (*Poetics*, 1451a-b)

in his opening qualification, Aristotle does not allow his understanding of poetics to plunge into a collection of indiscriminate and nondescript representations. Alternatively, Aristotle insists that poetics occurs as a body of imitations/representations [μιμήσεις, mimēseis] as Totality.

Noting that poetics and poetry, while related entities, are different subjects. The identification of poetry, discussed throughout *Poetics*, is primarily a question of medium and syntax. The quality and effect of an art's representative aspect, which various modes of art share is a much more difficult subject:

By means of bare words alone or through meters, whether these [meters] mix together with one another or make use of one particular species among the [various] meters, they occur, as far as now, without name¹⁷². Since, we have nothing common to name the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus, and the dialogues of Socrates, we have no common term to call it if someone made their representation through tri-meters, elegy or some of the other similar ones, except that people, associating [works] together at the very least on account of meter, name Elegists ^{those who do elegiac poems} and Epicists ^{those who do epic poems} “poet-maker,” not according to the poet's representation, but rather appealing to commonality on account of meter, since they might even execute some [discourse] on Medicine or Physics ^{the Natural World} through the meters. Such is the way they have become accustomed to referencing [things]. But, there is nothing shared between Homer and Empedocles save their meter, yet here custom calls the one poet, and the other, more often than not, Physiologist ^{Scientist/Naturalist} rather than poet. [Thus,] in similar fashion, even if someone, through mixing all the meters together, were to make a representation—just like Chaeremon made the blended rhapsody “Centaur” out of all the meters, that one too must be called poet¹⁷³.

(Aristotle, *Poetics* 1447a-b)

This description infers that the problem is one of epistemology. The common practice of employing categories rooted in sameness to label works was inaccurate, inconsistent, and ineffective. Poetics describes the relatedness across the different

¹⁷² ἀνόνημος, anōnumos

¹⁷³ ποιητής, poiētēs

genres. Within the Greek employed in *Poetics*, he only uses ποιητικός [*poiētikos*] eleven times, alternatively speaking of ποίησις [*poiēsis*, fabrication; production; poetry, poem] and its compound constructions more than thirty times. Aristotle's use is additionally informative.¹⁷⁴ Derived from the noun, ποίησις [*poiēsis*], and related to the verb ποιέω [*poieō*, to do, or make], ποιητικός [*poiētikos*] is generally an adjective in much the same way that English uses the word poetic as the adjective to describe something relating to, or characteristic of poetry. Aristotle, however, consistently employs the feminine of *poiētikos*, ποιητική [*poiētikē*] in substantive construction giving it the quality of a noun.¹⁷⁵ This permits a view of poetics as being different than poetic; poetics, here, is a noun.

This distinction is important. For Aristotle preoccupation with meter overly determined how people categorized art, and identified poetry's discursive similarities; today, one may perceive this over determination on the grounds of meter, assonance, and alliteration. In both circumstances, his observation explains why he, and countless modern day scholars find it necessary to discuss poetics through those things that it effects, instead of direct discussion of poetics itself. Without terminology to adequately depict the underlying mechanisms through which texts—musical, visual, or discursive—contribute to the generation of meaning, they deal with the tangible, and explore the discursive import of representations, and the various tactics involved in fashioning a text

¹⁷⁴ While framed within a different argument, and containing a different conclusion, Watson makes a number of similar observations about Aristotle's grammatical invocation of poetics. See, Walter Watson, *The Lost Second Book of Aristotle's Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 76–78.

¹⁷⁵ Only one of the eleven constructions comes reasonably close to modifying a noun. Even in this instance, the cases do not match, and the most coherent reading requires reading ποιητικῆ as a feminine noun: For, knowledge or ignorance of these things carries no censure for the poetics, [none] that is even worthy of mentioning. παρὰ γὰρ τὴν τούτων γνῶσιν ἢ ἄγνοιαν οὐδὲν εἰς τὴν ποιητικὴν ἐπιτίμημα φέρεται ὅτι καὶ ἄξιον σπουδῆς. (*Poetics*, 1456b)

capable of representing—read signifying—some other general truth, universal, or experience.

As is visible in my discussion, Aristotle's *Poetics* outlines a number of relevant concerns this invocation of poetics needs to navigate. In a strikingly similar pattern to Aristotle's pathological approach, late twentieth century discussions of poetics continued to investigate poetics as a tacitly understood concept. Though *Poetics* overtly references musical and graphic mediums alongside dramatic genres in discussing poetics, twentieth and twenty-first century scholars regularly present poetics as solely the study of poetry, literature, or artistic verbal messages. Aristotle's presentation insinuates that poetics is at work in the makings of μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*] in both literary and non-literary mediums. While his analysis in *Poetics* focuses on poetry and drama, his introductory discussion of poetics presents poetics as an active subject in the fields of music, painting, and drawing. Following this reading, Aristotle's depiction of poetics necessitates it consisting of both semantic and syntagmatic elements.

Whether considering Winfred Nöth's description of poetics as "theory of literature," or Roman Jakobson's focus on 'verbal messages as art,' the predominating approaches conceive of poetics as primarily aesthetic, distinctively literary, and principally syntactic.¹⁷⁶ Evident within Jakobson's discussion, these expressions of poetics prefigure texts with cultural value as artistic, poetic, and meaningful. Poetics is understood as something inherently coded within a text. Thus, formalist and structuralist scholars are able to discuss literature, or poetry as exhibiting specific characteristics,

¹⁷⁶ See, Jakobson, "Closing Statement"; Linda R. Waugh, "The Poetic Function in the Theory of Roman Jakobson," *Poetics Today* 2, no. 1a (1980): 57–82; Winfried Nöth, *Handbook of Semiotics [electronic Resource]* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

forms, and attributes that determine its artistic value. The texts attain universal value, and static meaning, and the meaning making nature, and generative character of discourse becomes rooted in the socio-cultural context of the exegete. While this myopic view of texts, art, and meaning-making is inconsistent with my reading of Aristotle, it is fully consistent with scholarly descriptions, and uses of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Jonathan Barnes, for instance, discusses Aristotle's understanding of μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*] strictly as syntactic representation.¹⁷⁷ Translating both ποιήσις [*poiēsis*] and ποιητικός [*poiētikos*] as poetry, Barnes asserts that poetry, "imitates in language." His engagement of *Poetics* struggles to grapple with Aristotle's use of μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*] as imitation, likeness, counterfeit, or representation. Imitation, for Barnes, is a unique type of representation that only carries partial relevance to the study of contemporary forms of poetry that maintain drastic differences from the poetry of Aristotle's day. Failing to consider μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*] and poetics as integrally related to the semantic sphere, Aristotle's inclusion of painting and music prevent Barnes from conceiving poetics as a subject always relevant to these other mediums, because, "not all paintings are likenesses." For Barnes, and interpreters following similar trajectories, the abstract character of poetics is particularly syntactic, and uniquely literary. In another twist of irony, invocations of non-

¹⁷⁷ Jonathan Barnes, "Rhetoric and Poetics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 259–87; Husain offers an excellent analysis of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Her reading begins by developing critically insightful intertextual, and social and cultural texture. Through analysis of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and *Metaphysics* Husain describes μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*] as a term encompassing two distinct definitions. Poetics, for Husain, attends solely to the second definition, which focuses on the making/producing of things from already existent beings. Husain suggest transliteration of μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*], but identifies imitation as the best English equivalent. While there is much to commend in Husain's analysis, she speaks little about the semantic impact of the term μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*] having two definitions. If her construction of these definitions is accurate, they still share the same semantic domain, being signified by the same word. In this line, it is difficult to accept readings that require all interpretations to consistently signify along one trajectory. See, Martha Husain, *Ontology and the Art of Tragedy: An Approach to Aristotle's Poetics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).

literary examples require consistent rendering as metaphor, as opposed to demonstration or example. An important distinction between my interpretation and traditional readings of *Poetics* depends on whether one envisions Aristotle's view of making as principally structural, formal and semantically disinterested with the bulk of *Poetics* being prescriptive, or fully conscious of the semantic nature of meaning-making, and *Poetics* as primarily demonstrative through indirect description.

As shown, poetics, as a noun, is distinct from the adjective poetic. Aristotle's discussion of poetics recognizes that poetics informs both a text's syntactic and semantic elements. As discussed above, meaning never occurs in a vacuum, but within diverse arrangements and perspectives that can lead to varied generative trajectories. Thus, I have invoked Aristotle not as a feverish appeal to a privileged Classical Greek archive, nor to orient my view of poetics along a hegemonic taproot with Hellenic-centric origin. Rather, instead of exemplar *par excellence*, Aristotle functions as an inter-contextual interlocutor that helps demonstrate how my understanding of poetics stresses its active composition of both syntax and semantics. Moving on from *Poetics* and other alternative pathologies of poetics, the guise advanced in these pages advances a view of poetics as a description of the semantic environment through which a text negotiates its narrative and discursive semio-syntagmatic universe. Informed by Paul Valéry's early views of poetics as an abstract, dynamic, and contextually determined aspect of discourse, this construct understands meaning-making as a process of the mind.¹⁷⁸ By locating meaning-making within the mind, the rooting of poetics within a text becomes less tempting, because

¹⁷⁸ Paul Valéry, "The Course in Poetics: First Lesson," in *The Creative Process: A Symposium*, ed. Brewster Ghiselin, trans. Jackson Mathews (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1952), 92–106.

meaning-making occurs between the contexts of text and consumer; it demands critical consideration semantics.

While Valéry's description leaves poetics largely unspecified due to its abstract and dynamic natures, I specifically locate poetics within semiotic nomenclature. Consisting of un-actualized motifs, subjects, or themes poetics characterizes the domain through which a text's particularity is able to generate meaning through execution of μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*]. As employed in my analysis, poetics describes a semantic environment that contributes to the functioning and meaning-producing elements of a text. Considering the role of solutions in certain chemical reactions is a potential analogy. In much the same way semantic and syntagmatic systems comprise fully integrated matrices, solutions appear as homogeneous substances comprised of interactive solutes and solvents. While each solution will have its own characteristics and properties determined by its constituent parts, and their respective distributions, solutions function as the environment in which chemical reactions occur. Solutions are able to facilitate reactions, and the nature of a solution determines the potentiality present within a reaction. Solutions do not determine the actual resultant products; chemical products are actually determined by the specific elements, and reactants with which an experiment begins.

Along these lines, poetics does not dictate a text's meaning, value, or interpretation; poetics, as a semantic and syntagmatic environment, determines what, not how, interlocutors negotiate aspects of texts during the meaning-making process. As any discourse is a system of syntactic and semantic reactants existing as potential-meaning, poetics provides a perspectival system that drives, and prompts signification. Whereas

semiotic codes depict established systems and conventions that mediate meaning-making between text and interlocutor, poetics points towards significant features and prioritization of signs. Codes, consequently, working on and through poetics explicate meaning, while poetics, in tune with Aristotle's *Poetics*, μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*], characterizes the nature of the meaning-making process. Consequently, μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*] need not intend, nor achieve the production of a mirror image, or rote execution of a genre's guidelines. Mirror images and replicas are matters of scale and syntax; a totality of meaning, however, is contextually dynamic, and concerns the generation of expression via an entire semantic and syntagmatic universe.

Chapter 3
Common Sites as Univocal Sight:
The Many Trajectories of Diaspora in Diaspora Studies

Beginnings

Introduction

Revolving around the questions “from where does the concept of diaspora come,” “what is diaspora” and “what is Diaspora Studies, this chapter (re)presents another aspect this project’s intellectual setting through a critical analysis of the field of Diaspora Studies and its scholarly invocations of diaspora. A critical analysis of current scholarship and its subsequent (re)construction and (re)membering of the ancient semantic range of diaspora, this assessment of Diaspora Studies precedes my (re)conceptualization of diaspora in Chapter Four.

Over the course of this chapter, I provide: i) an overview of the concept diaspora and the causes of its growing popularity, ii) a summary of pertinent discursive and conceptual practices employed in the discussion of diaspora, and iii) a detailed pathology of Diaspora Studies and its unilinear and archive-oriented archeology of diaspora. Through my demonstration, Diaspora Studies, as a transdisciplinary field of scholarly inquiry, consistently models constructions and interpretations of the diaspora concept upon linear paradigms whose validation rests upon i) retrieval of the term’s original meaning, and ii) that meaning’s association with Jewish ideas of exile, punishment, trauma and return. As such, I characterize Diaspora Studies as yet another incredibly valuable sphere of inquiry etiolated by an insatiate *mal d’archive* and ever-present Hegelian Colour-blindness.

Much like the Western approaches to history and Africa outlined in Chapter One and the reception history of Acts of the Apostles discussed in Chapter Two, *mal*

d'archive and Hegelian Colour-Blindness habitually plagues the inchoate field of Diaspora Studies with unilinearity and univocality. As the final chapter in the presentation of my intellectual and contextual setting, this discussion of diaspora within the confines of Diaspora Studies evidences the contextual interrelatedness of perspective, the porousness of subject-matters and subjectivity and the pervasive temptation of linearity. As a burgeoning field predicated on the subversion of national boundaries and hegemonic homogeneity, this chapter's (re)presentation of diaspora within Diaspora Studies highlights the need for an ideological and epistemological shift away from notions of *le même*, even if only to permit the attentive and coherent analysis of Diaspora Studies' nascent archive—i.e. canon.

Overview of Diaspora (re)Conceived

Definitions, theories and histories of the concept of diaspora are literally legion today. As will be discussed in this chapter, the concept originated as a Greek word designating a dispersal or scattering. The bulk of the earliest attestations of the noun diaspora are in the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint (LXX).¹⁷⁹ Consequently, the concept developed an intimate connection with Jewish history and paradigmatic descriptions of Jewish existence outside of Palestine.¹⁸⁰ Despite the hackneyed assertion that prior to the late twentieth century CE diaspora was,

¹⁷⁹ Scholars debate the specific provenance and textual development of the LXX. A generally accepted consensus places its early developmental stages in the third and second centuries BCE. The pseudepigraphical Letter of Aristeas narrates a myth of origin that depicts the LXX as originating in Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy II (285-247 BCE). This early dating makes the LXX one of the oldest extant codified versions of Jewish scripture. While a translation of Hebrew and Aramaic the LXX predates the eventually codified Hebrew-language Masoretic Text by some twelve centuries. The LXX has multiple textual traditions. All LXX citations in this work rely on Rahlfs's critical text. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta*, Second Revised Edition. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

¹⁸⁰ I use the nomenclature of Palestine loosely. It simultaneously describes the geographic region biblically associated with the twelve sons (tribes) of Jacob and alternatively with the geopolitical area constituted by the Hasmonean Dynasty.

“exclusively used in a context-bound way,” to solely signify, “Jewish history, and the plight of Jewish people being dispersed among the nations,” extant literature suggests that writers have long had the semantic recourse to employ the term and concept of diaspora—admittedly in a minority of extant ancient cases—to signify non-Jewish entities.¹⁸¹

Largely employed without theorization for its more than two-thousand years of attestation, current study of the concept diaspora has drastically reversed its fate. Some scholars provide strict checklists that qualify or disqualify groups as Diaspora,¹⁸² and others provide broad frameworks that identify Diasporas through paradigms of generalized experiences or institutions.¹⁸³ An increasing number of scholars avoid defining diaspora all together and simply presume their subjects’ diaspora identity, which permits focused research on the complexities and polymorphous nature of this presumed diaspora existence.¹⁸⁴ In these senses, diaspora infers some type of geopolitical

¹⁸¹ Martin Baumann, “Diaspora: Genealogies of Semantics and Transcultural Comparison,” *Numen* 47, no. 3 (2000): 313; In a separate article Baumann refers to the terms Judeo-Christian heritage, yet only speaks of the Jewish history. Martin Baumann, “Conceptualizing Diaspora. The Preservation of Religious Identity in Foreign Parts, Exemplified by Hindu Communities Outside India,” *Temenos* 31 (1995): 20–22.

¹⁸² William Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1, no. 1 (1991): 83–99; William Safran, “The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective,” *Israel Studies* 10, no. 1 (2005): 36–60; Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, Second Edition., Global Diasporas (New York: Routledge, 2008).

¹⁸³ John A. Armstrong, “Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas,” *The American Political Science Review* 70, no. 2 (1976): 393–408; James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994): 302–38; Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*; Kim D. Butler, “Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 10, no. 2 (2001): 189–219.

¹⁸⁴ Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, “Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity,” *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 4 (1993): 693–725; Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” (ed. Braziel and Mannur); Henry Louis Gates Jr., *Tradition and the Black Atlantic: Critical Theory in the African Diaspora* (New York: BasicCivitas, 2010); Houston A Baker Jr., “The Point of Entanglement: Modernism, Diaspora, and Toni Morrison’s Love,” in *Contemporary African American Literature: The Living Canon*, ed. Lovalerie King and Shirley Moody-Turner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Pier Larson, “African Diasporas and the Atlantic,” in *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000*, ed. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Erik R. Seeman (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), 129–47; Paul E. Lovejoy, “The African Diaspora: Revisionist Interpretations of Ethnicity,” *SWHSAE* 2, no. 1 (1997): 1–23.

navigation and frequently finds reference alongside topics such as home and origin, exile and return, hybridity and *creolité*, as well as citizen, nation and transnationalism. While falling under the conceptual framework of diaspora, these dispersions-across-geopolitical-boundaries result in unique community (re)constructions of identity, memory and space. It is through the vernacular associated with these resultant perceptions and theories of diaspora that both scholars and lay are able to categorize, define and interpret virtually any aspect of a subject they deem “diasporic.”

Renewed interest in diaspora has eclipsed the walls of the Academy and references in popular culture may refer to anything from religious groups and refugee communities to a relocating restaurant.¹⁸⁵ This ability of diaspora to function as an emic and etic designation further expands and complicates the term’s contemporary meaning and connotative range.¹⁸⁶ While etic usage is the primary catalyst for the term’s present scholarly popularity, the growing self-identifying emic function contributes to the widening attestation of the term in various print mediums. The growing popularity and disparate use of the word diaspora frequently makes discerning the term’s meaning and its varying contexts of incidence a difficult task. To clarify the term’s usage and

¹⁸⁵ Khachig Tölölyan, “Diasporama,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 9, no. 2 (2000): 309–10.

¹⁸⁶ Emic and etic are terms appropriated from social and cultural anthropology. I use the term emic to describe terms and concepts employed within a specific context or community of study. Etic, alternatively, describes terms and concepts employed by critics and scholars to describe their subjects of study. The use of emic and etic serve to differentiate between language that one may observe within a given context and possibly anachronistic or technical language that aids scholars in discussing and analyzing a subject. In my usage, etic examples that scholars at times use to study early Principate Rome could include concepts as far ranging as modern concepts of religion, race, church, postcolonialism, Marxism, or even health, disease, and medicine in terms germs and bacteria. Additionally my use of Palestine is an example of an etic term. Alan Barnard, “Emic and Etic,” ed. Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Robert H. Winthrop, “Emic/Etic,” *Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, January 1, 1991).

contextual setting, I find it advantageous to identify and distinguish between various factors. Among these factors is the distinguishing between:

- Whether the incidence occurs in an etic or emic context;
- Whether the incidence occurs within discussion of, or alludes to the etymology and history of:
 - Diaspora as a word and its specific usage;
 - Diaspora as an anthropological or philosophical phenomenon independent from the term's denotative presence
 - Diaspora Studies as a late twentieth and twenty-first century academic endeavor:

And, the identification of:

- How the speaker defines or understands diaspora;
- How the speaker approaches diaspora as a subject of inquiry;
- And, how the speaker applies and uses diaspora within their scholarship or discourse.

It is over the last three decades that non-Jewish references to diaspora have become commonplace. This increased interest and unceasing application of theories of diaspora to non-Jewish contexts broadly across the Humanities and Social Sciences correlates with the West's growing and inspired interests in the peoples, communities and institutions produced by migration, transnationalism and globalization. This contemporary investment into the study of diaspora exists and proliferates largely as a heuristic response to modernity's preoccupation with nationalism and the nation-state.¹⁸⁷

The intellectual and philosophical impetus behind much of the growing work in diaspora

¹⁸⁷ See Schnapper's article on the relationship between Diaspora and the nation-state. Dominique Schnapper and Denise L. Davis, "From the Nation-State to the Transnational World: On the Meaning and Usefulness of Diaspora as a Concept," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 8, no. 3 (1999): 225–54. A version of the original French is also available in ; Dominique Schnapper, "Introduction - De l'État-nation au monde transnational: Du sens et de l'utilité du concept de diaspora," in *Les diasporas, 2000 ans d'histoire*, ed. Lisa Anteby-Yemini, William Berthomière, and Gabriel Sheffer (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2005), 21–51; This seminal piece opens the first issue of the journal *Diaspora*. Here, Tölölyan opens by identifying the challenge diaspora brings against the idea of the nation-state. Khachig Tölölyan, "The Nation-State and Its Others: In Lieu of a Preface," *Diaspora* 1, no. 1 (1991): 3–7.

as a concept, thus, revolves around twentieth and twenty-first century questions about the importance and nature of the nation-state and the mores, politics, and economics associated with national identity.

As a contextual catalyst for current approaches to diaspora, notions of nation-state have informed current conceptualizations and theorizations of diaspora. The nation-state, however, is a homogenizing narrative born at the confluence of collective identity and political governance. As depicted in Renan's nineteenth century essay, "*Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?*" the nation-state is an entity that unites through erasure and forgetfulness.¹⁸⁸ This understanding of the nation-state frames notions of human organization, identity, geography and ideology. Because it utilizes geography and geopolitical boundaries to forge notions of solidarity, culture, rights and being, it has a significant predisposition towards a *le même* epistemology.

Following the Second World War, a number of factors altered the composition, perception, and discussion of national identity. Marxist critiques of class, the expansion of postmodern discourse and increased visibility of, and interest in underrepresented communities fostered an atmosphere at odds with hegemonic constructions of national identity. This shift gradually created fertile ground for the West's interest in diaspora. Among the factors that made it more difficult for national narratives to proliferate unchallenged were:

- Continual geopolitical and economic re-organization of Europe, and beginning of the Cold War;
- Widespread occurrence of independence movements from the 1950's through the 1970's that ultimately led to the political decolonization of numerous colonies;

¹⁸⁸ Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-Ce Qu'une Nation?" (presented at the Conference prononcée à la Sorbonne, Paris: Les Classiques des Sciences Social avec la Bibliothèque Paul-Émile-Boulet de l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, 1882).

- Shifts from nation-state political imperialism to transnational economic imperialism;
- Presence of significant economic and labor needs in Europe following World War II;
- An increase in migration from colonies and former colonies to the West;
- Technological advances in travel and communication, particularly with respect to air travel, television, and computer technology;
- Continued population shifts away from rural areas, and into urban areas.¹⁸⁹

As a concept that inherently signifies the transgression of the very boundaries that characterize and define the nation-state, diaspora reveals and contradicts the assumed homogeneity of the nation. Thus, scholarly interest in such a concept has naturally progressed in the decolonialization of the middle to late twentieth century and increasing economic transnationalism of the twenty-first century.

In a rapidly globalizing world, the concept of diaspora provides scholars with lenses to study various populations and their derivative communities that have experienced migratory scatterings across geopolitical boundaries. The resultant scholarship amplifies the Academy's ability to identify and articulate spheres of human experience that one-dimensional metanarratives of culture, identity and place otherwise obscure. Concepts of diaspora, at their core, are sites that (re)collect difference, interrogate homogeneity and disrupt linear metanarratives.¹⁹⁰ Despite this nature, the

¹⁸⁹ Tölölyan offers a related, but different list of factors contributing to the expansion of interest in diaspora. For Tölölyan, his list collapses etic and emic usage largely describing the systems and institutions prompting communities and scholars to self-identify as diaspora. Khachig Tölölyan, "Rethinking Diaspora (s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment," *Diaspora* 5 (1996): 20–27.

¹⁹⁰ Ashcroft and company provide a useful definition of nation and nationalism. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, Third Edition. (New York: Routledge, 2013) ; Renan's seminal essay continues to be a foundational source for contextualizing the relationship between modernity and nation. Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?: conférence faite en Sorbonne, le 11 mars 1882*, ed. Levy, Calmann, 2nd ed. (Paris: Ancienne Maison Michel Lévy Frères, 1882), <http://archive.org/details/questcequunenat00renagoog>; Both Bhabha and Said offer insightful

short history of Diaspora Studies reveals symptoms of Derrida's *mal d'archive*, as well as the unilinear and univocal consequences of Hegelian Colour-Blindness.

The concept of diaspora encourages scholars to consider the complex and interdependent ways that communities conceive identity and space through the various lenses of culture, religion, history, politics, economics and language: an influence especially visible in the growing field of Diaspora Studies. This scholarly context places significant importance on how scholars construct and navigate the various etic theories and definitions of diaspora as a conceptual construction. Ideally, the concept diaspora challenges hegemonic and univocal narratives of space by valorizing the diversity of origin stories and insisting that the experience and significance of geopolitical borders on any particular body-politic are heterogeneous. Unfortunately, many scholarly invocations of diaspora rely on notions of *le même*, re-inscribing and propagating univocality and unilinearity within their work.

In my rendering, diaspora de-emphasizes the idea of center in exchange for a vision of the multiplicity of nodal points of emphasis and privilege. This view presumes that ubiquitous within the concept of diaspora are diversity and heterogeneity, socio-cultural exchange and the permanency of shared space(s) and interdependence. Hybridity, assimilation, and acculturation are, therefore, perpetual processes that give the diaspora experience a dynamic, polyphonic character. When critical consciousness of diaspora is present neither the nation-state, the diaspora community, nor individuals within the diaspora community may claim objective or sole ownership of their respective

analysis and critique of culture and nation within the guise of postcolonial thought. Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage Books, 1994).

pasts or present. In contrast, uncritical constructions frequently attempt to critique hegemonic perspectives of reality by offering contextually-developed theories of diaspora that rely on myopic constructions of diaspora experience.

It is through a multiple front destabilization of place and space that diaspora can offer useful critiques of discourses that presuppose national or metropole-centered perspectives. Diaspora, within the guise of this (re)construction, can designate religious, ethno-political or racial groups. It demands introspection of both the relationships between a particular community and its geopolitical surroundings, and the relational dynamics between that community and those communities scattered across other geopolitical spaces with whom it shares a related-identity. Thus, by rejecting univocal notions of diaspora as traumatized existence in perpetual exile or as a root-diaspora binary, **diaspora is a dynamic trans-spatial relationship in perpetual negotiation of relatedness and particularity**. Thus, diaspora is a particular type of relationship that acquires a metonymic character as it functions figuratively to represent all entities sharing said relationship. Highlighting the dynamic and contextual nature of Diasporas and diaspora discourse, as a type of relationship, **diaspora exists as a relatedness across geopolitical boundaries between communities and/or individuals who co-narrate a shared identity, being or ancestry**.

Diaspora Studies and its Constructs

Outlook

This section's thematic emphasis focuses on the classification of scholarship's engagement with the term and concept of diaspora and the identification of the consequent trends and trajectories that portray Diaspora Studies as symptomatic of Hegelian Colour-blindness. It, consequently, revolves around three tasks:

- The presentation of Diaspora Studies as a transdisciplinary field that operates as a type of material economy;
- The presentation of a nomenclature for analyzing Diaspora Studies' engagement and use of the concept of diaspora for diaspora-related research
- A critical assessment of pertinent trends and trajectories observed within Diaspora Studies that highlight the field's predisposition towards *mal d'archive* and Hegelian Colour-blindness

Each of these tasks progress this chapter towards a critical re-assessment of Diaspora Studies via its practices and historical (re)constructions, while highlighting the discursive and material impacts that these practices have on the intellectual and contextual setting in which I contextually construct a poetics of diaspora.

The description of Diaspora Studies as an economy claims that the field is not analogous to an economy, but can actually be viewed as a type of economy with tangible material significance where the production, study, exchange and negotiation of the concept of diaspora correspond to scholarship, monetary exchange, institutional organization, community organization, employment and tenure. The nomenclature outlined focuses on how scholars define, approach and use the term or concept of diaspora. The assessment of Diaspora Studies' trends and trajectories within Diaspora Studies that highlight the field's predisposition towards *mal d'archive* and Hegelian Colour-blindness.

As a transdisciplinary field, the beginnings of Diaspora Studies temporally corresponds with the comparatively recent explosion of scholarly use of the concept of diaspora for non-Jewish contexts.¹⁹¹ In addition to the massive number of Diaspora Studies research finding itself printed in journals, edited volumes and monographs, a

¹⁹¹ Stéphane Dufoix, *Diasporas* (Berkeley: Univ of California Press, 2008), 1–4.

growing numbers of dictionaries, encyclopedias and reference works are including entries on Diaspora.¹⁹² These entries denote a key stage in the maturation of Diaspora Studies. As fields (and economies) become formalized and attain greater levels of institutionalization, the canonization of theories, definitions, constructs and practices—i.e. culture—shape perceptions and authoritative narratives of the field’s heritage and past. A number of resources provide excellent descriptions of this development in Diaspora Studies.¹⁹³ While it is not my intention to replicate those efforts, current developments necessitate a cursory discussion.

Through discussion of these trends and trajectories, a fuller contextualization and description of Diaspora Studies will better equip this field to discern its gaps, institutionalized silences and logical inconsistencies. The three trends that I identify are:

- Presentation of a Fixed Point of Origin (b);

¹⁹² A sample includes, Guido Bolaffi, ed., “Diaspora,” *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture* (New York: SAGE, 2003); Alan J. Avery-Peck, “Diaspora,” ed. Orlando O. Espín and James B. Nickoloff, *An Introductory Dictionary of Theology and Religious Studies* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007); Derek Gregory et al., eds., “Diaspora,” *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); Steven Vertovec, “Diaspora,” ed. Ernest Cashmore, *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Frank Leslie Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., “Diaspora,” *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Amy Elizabeth Ansell, “Diaspora,” *Race and Ethnicity: The Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Alan Gamlen, “Diasporas,” ed. Helmut Anheier, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Victor Faessel, *Encyclopedia of Global Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2012); James Procter, “Diaspora,” in *Routledge Companion to Post Colonial Studies*, ed. John McLeod (New York: Routledge, 2007), 151–58; Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Postcolonial Studies*; Carol R. Ember, Melvin Ember, and Ian Skoggard, eds., *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World. Volume I: Overviews and Topics; Volume II: Diaspora Communities* (Springer, 2005).

¹⁹³ While I disagree with Dufoix on a number of points, his text is the best and most accessible introduction to Diaspora Studies. See Dufoix, *Diasporas*; Cohen has made some valuable and much-needed revisions to his first edition. His revised preface is a brief but extremely informative history of Diaspora Studies. Unlike Dufoix, Cohen’s presentation primarily reflects his own theory of diaspora and the history of Diaspora Studies as a unilinear trajectory through his construction. See, Cohen, *Global Diasporas, Second Edition*; Edwards article is an excellent history of Diaspora Studies in Africana studies. Like this author, Edwards approaches Diaspora as a phenomenon that existed prior to the use of the term. Thus, the study of the African Diaspora predates the use of the term in the 1950’s and 1960’s. Diaspora Studies is the rebranding of Pan-African studies and Black Internationalism. See Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora,” *Social Text* 66 19, no. 1 (2001): 45–73; This recent text is very useful, and provides a short survey of Diaspora Studies. Kevin Kenny, *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction, Very Short Introductions* 361 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

- Adoption of One-dimensional Metanarratives (m);
- Analogy by Application and Diversity related Neurosis (x).

Discussion of these trends reveals how each performs an integral role in the construction of unilinear definitions and theorization of diaspora.

Utilizing the mathematical equation for a straight line ($y = mx + b$) I explain how these three trends act as a paradigm that characterizes Diaspora Studies as unilinear and inscribed along an interpretive trajectory buoyed by homogenizing paradigms of identity, power and historiography.¹⁹⁴ This presentation claims that, like the variable-y in the linear equation, the various definitions and conceptions of diaspora that permeate Diaspora Studies are discipline-dependent constructions paradigmatically developed as extensions of a unilinear metanarrative (m) amplified by scholar's various specific field of research (x) originating in a singular and fixed point of origin (b).

As stated in the opening, there are myriads of definitions of diaspora now circulating because of the growth of Diaspora Studies, and while these concepts vary across disciplines and subjects, the vast majority utilizes variations of a common paradigm whose character is univocal and constant. Consequently, the collective unity of definitions of diaspora within Diaspora Studies can be, theoretically, viewed as a straight line organized via a linear function—i.e. equation—of x, D(x). Following this analogy, any specific discipline-dependent definition or conception of diaspora appears as: $y = D(x) = mx + b$, where conceptions of diaspora are consistently the result of a starting

¹⁹⁴ For a detailed discussion of mathematics as analogy, See, Appendix A. The linear equation, $y = mx + b$, is an equation that can describe any straight line with respect to its constants m and b, and variable's y and x. The equation $y = mx + b$ indicates that for any straight line, the value or location of its y-coordinate is in relationship and dependent on the constant-b (the value of y when $x = 0$) added to constant-m (the paradigmatic trajectory governing the rate at which the line ascends or descends) multiplied by the variable-x (the corresponding variable that identifies any specific point on the line). The constant-b is also known as the y-intercept. For lines that only have positive values of x, the constant-b serves as the line's point of origin or starting point.

point (b) that presents or infers that the diaspora concept has a fixed and definitive origin and then uses analogy to apply a one-dimensional metanarrative (m) to the theorist's specific subject of study (x). Among the diverse definitions, approaches and uses of diaspora found in Diaspora Studies are traces of a persistent pattern that constructs the diaspora concept with this linear function. Future theories of diaspora need to evaluate the causes, reasons and impacts that these linear constructions have on scholarship.

Framing Diaspora Studies as Economy

As specialists in various areas of study, scholars utilize—i.e. invest in—diaspora as a means and medium—i.e. currency—to produce field-specific scholarship. Following this description, Diaspora Studies can be viewed itself at an alternate level, as an economy: an expansive space and rapidly expanding currency that permits the research, publication, hiring and tenuring of specialists in any number of avenues and departments. Recognizing the economy of Diaspora Studies is important for understanding the impetus underlying the interest, research, methods and discourse present within Diaspora Studies. To view Diaspora Studies as a material economy is to take a contextual step towards disclosing the field's pertinence and engagement with culture, politics and ideology.

Though its parameters remain nebulous, Diaspora Studies is quickly becoming an authoritative space for advancing understandings of the history, meaning and utility of diaspora. Scholarly interest and exchange within Diaspora Studies spans disciplines and sub-disciplines across the Humanities and Social Sciences. The theorists and researchers that participate in this incipient field come from an extensive range of intellectual and methodological backgrounds. In addition to their inherently varied backgrounds, specialists research an array of subject matters and envisage their scholarship as working towards drastically different end-products. Yet, despite this transdisciplinary nature, the

space that Diaspora Studies occupies is slowly acquiring its own vernacular, archive, canon and authoritative view of its development—i.e. history: the systematic inscription of language, logic and past facilitates greater efficiency in the transdisciplinary exchange of ideas and provides scholars with easier access to discursive and institutional authority and power.

Whether considering definitions, methods or subjects, Diaspora Studies' seemingly multi-disciplinary inclusivity predisposes it as somewhat resistant to unilateral or metropole-oriented hegemony. However, the Academy generally exhibits a contradictory nature. Disciplines and sub-disciplines most often retain their own intellectual tradition, language and logic. Competencies in these benchmarks act as the specialty's core tender, which permits scholars to contribute and advance within their specific field or discipline. Publication, tenure and the departmentalization of research and teaching are material and experienced institutions that compel participation and compliance to this system. Because Diaspora Studies is a conglomerate of multiple specialties, it has a multi-nodal nature that lets it function at one level as a type of transdisciplinary tender producing value within the disparate economies of specific specialties and disciplines.

The diversity among subjects of study means that each scholar's interest in diaspora is actually an intellectual and material investment that anticipates disparate results. In other words, though scholars across disciplines are investing in a common commodity—Diaspora Studies—each investor, based on specialty, desires a different product. In Sociology, one might quantitatively study the opinions, experiences or interactions of specific groups of people by simply identifying a community as Diaspora

or by associating diaspora with a specific migratory paradigm. The economist, however, may employ diaspora as a condition or traceable network of material institutions that provide a framework for analyzing monetary practices and policies. In Anthropology, diaspora may function as a human phenomenon, though the historian might implement the notion of diaspora as an attitude, agenda and experience that logically explains the past. Still, the student of literature may associate diaspora with particular ideologies, themes or hermeneutics that enhances one's ability to analyze, interpret or classify literature.

Despite the establishment of journals devoted to the study of diaspora-related research and institutions employing diaspora within the nomenclature of department and research center names, Diaspora Studies lacks a centralized bank to govern its development or uniformly assign valuation for its scholarly product. This economy, in ways similar to any economy, derives its utility through mechanisms of valuation, governance and exchange. Diaspora Studies is a field characterized by the generation and interchange of ideas across disciplinary boundaries. It, thus, fosters the mediation of multiple academic currencies.¹⁹⁵ Two of the most important tasks within Diaspora Studies, which function as currencies, are the defining of diaspora and the identification

¹⁹⁵ The United Kingdom offers to illustrations of how governments and the Academy have attempted to institutionalize and profit on the growing field of Diaspora Studies. From 2005-2010 the UK government, through the guise of the Arts Humanities and Research Council (AHRC), funded *Diasporas, Migration, and Identities*, a five year research institute headed by the University of Leeds' Kim Knott. By funding and sponsoring scholarly research and domestic outreach programs, the program sponsored academics who pursued various topics, most of which, dealt with the impact diaspora identity had on the UK and migration experience. Funding agencies chose, to my knowledge, not to renew the program. Kim Knott and Sean McLoughlin, eds., *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities* (Zed Books, 2010). In 2011, the Leverhulme Trust collaborated with Oxford University to initiate the Oxford Diasporas Program through 2015. By sponsoring various scholars and doctoral students, the Oxford Diasporas program, also, sponsors a wide range of scholarship, most of which focus on migration and migrant experiences. In both circumstances, these types of programs are responsible for producing a large amount of scholarship, publications, and thinkers. Consequently, with their geo-spatial and academic localities these centers begin to carve out spaces of authority and legitimation.

of Diasporas. These tasks govern the economy of Diaspora Studies. Definitions enable scholars to identify, dismiss, categorize and valorize the people, communities, institutions, systems and behavior across diverse geopolitical spaces. The identification of Diasporas, whether through argument or presumption, situates a subject within Academic discourse as a legitimate domain for study. These two processes are the foundations that permit scholars to simultaneously participate in Diaspora Studies while advancing scholarship in their specific area of study.

The framing of Diaspora Studies as a transdisciplinary economy situated within the Academy helps elucidate its material and contextual nature. More than an intellectual endeavor, participation within Diaspora Studies involves more than cursory interest. Thus, as shown with the earlier discussion of Hegelian Colour-blindness and Academy in the West, a significant portion of Diaspora Studies' material import correlates to (re)construction of history and modernity.

The implicit connection between diaspora and nation-states and the relationship between the growth of Diaspora Studies and the global decolonization that followed World War II gives this field a peculiar relationship to modernity and postmodernity. As a field of inquiry that focuses on the impact of globalization and the deterioration of the nation-state, Diaspora Studies is responsive to postmodern ideologies and concerns. Additionally, scholars, particularly in the Social Sciences, focus much of their energy on the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. For these scholars 'history' performs more as a framing narrative rather than a subject of study. History, as a contextually constructed narrative of the past, aids in their identification of a group or individual as diaspora. It helps in identifying subject material and constructing definitions. History

contributes to the legitimation of a scholar's definition and theorization of diaspora as a concept. Consequently, the foundational role that history and its constructed, perspectival nature play on diaspora-related scholarship often goes unnoticed.

Due to an under appreciation for the framing and contextual impact of history on the production of diaspora-related scholarship, the hermeneutics involved in conceiving historical contexts receives insufficient attention. This two-pronged de-emphasis on the contextual nature of Diaspora Studies directly affects the material and economic dimension of Diaspora Studies. Two of the most critical places where theorists use history—i.e. garner currency—are in presentations of the etymology and origin of the diaspora concept. The etymology and history of diaspora largely functions as the root currency for participation in Diaspora Studies. Diaspora Studies is thus an “origin” based currency.

Like most economies, Diaspora Studies has developed alternative methods of economic exchange. In modern capitalist systems one can trade in currency, debt, collateral or service; scholars working in Diaspora Studies either explicitly invoke the origin of diaspora to tender their argument or implicitly do so through citation, context and place of dialogue and publication. Regardless of form, scholarship taking place in Diaspora Studies relies upon the methods and theories that locate their root—through either argument or analogy—in the origin of the term diaspora.

My approach, outlined in Chapter Four, differs only slightly in regards to this task. I too contextualize my notion of diaspora within an analysis of ancient usages of diaspora.¹⁹⁶ This act, in part, is due to my particular area of specialty in early Jewish and

¹⁹⁶ I, however, overtly differentiate between whether I am inspecting the Greek noun *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) or the verb *διασπείρω* (*diasperō*).

early Christian literature(s)—two of the more prominent literary contexts for ancient attestation—and belief that across literary contexts two closely related but different words can indeed have variant histories and semantic value.¹⁹⁷ Informed by Derrida’s concept of *mal d’archive*, I submit to his contention that the aware critic need not escape the archive but simply attend to and acknowledge the presence of gaps and silences. My study of diaspora and Diaspora Studies asserts the inevitability of existing in the midst of archives, and turns its attention to inspecting the foundations and would-be archives of diaspora that so frequently invoke etymology and history as if it were definitive, clear, unilinear and univocal.¹⁹⁸

Instead of identifying a singular fixed root upon which theorists and researches of diaspora construct a unilinear history of diaspora, my survey of contemporary diaspora theories, assessment of Diaspora Studies and word-study on ancient use of the Greek terms for diaspora disclose the presence of Hegelian Colour-blindness in popular scholarship of diaspora while providing my own self-acknowledged contextual and *le divers* informed theory of diaspora. Through this type of assessment and (re)construction, diaspora can better reveal, query, and contest certain hegemonic practices rooted in the economic nature of Academia. By challenging univocal depictions of diaspora’s past as singularly rooted or unilinear, I envisage a different future for Diaspora Studies: a future where, by transforming perceptions about the origins

¹⁹⁷ This is also a largely contextual observation. Though I rely on Black and Black American nomenclature, the terms negro, nigger, nigga, *nègre*, and *noir* are etymologically, and at times contextually closely connected. They, however, have different connotations, histories and can generate a diverse range of meanings in different contexts. To uncritically collapse all ancient use of the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) and verb διασπείρω (*diasperō*) into a single analysis of the ancient word “diaspora” is short-sighted.

¹⁹⁸ Derrida’s discussion of gaps corresponds to Edwards invocation of *décalage*. See, Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of BlackInternationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

of its namesake diaspora and illuminating its own multimodal scholastic heritage, Diaspora Studies evolves into a field guided by better understandings of itself, subject matter and practices as dialogical and situationally constructed across contexts, subfields and disciplines.

Categorizing Discussion of Diaspora: Define, Approach and Use

The mere declaration that an economy exists, in this case Diaspora Studies, is a separate act than the analysis and discernment of its principles, trends and means of valuation and trade. To understand these specific aspects is to begin understanding its systemic character. When considering Diaspora Studies as a material economy, this process must begin with language that describes the variety of ways that people: a) define the word diaspora as an entity or concept; b) conceptually approach diaspora as something with heuristic and/or scholarly import; and, c) use the word diaspora within scholarship. Stéphane Dufoix and Steven Vertovec provide useful categories for developing such a language.¹⁹⁹

A. Defining the Word Diaspora

Dufoix has developed a nomenclature that identifies three types of definitions of diaspora: categorical; open; oxymoronic (hybridity-based).²⁰⁰ Categorical definitions are

¹⁹⁹ Dufoix, *Diasporas*; Vertovec, “Diaspora”; Steven Vertovec, “Religion and Diaspora,” *Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches* (2004): 275.

²⁰⁰ I slightly alter Dufoix’s nomenclature by re-naming oxymoronic definitions as hybridity-based definitions. Dufoix’s choice of oxymoronic suggests that the ability for an individual to contain multiple ethno-racial, national, religious or geopolitical identities is somehow counterintuitive. The use of oxymoronic assumes certain identities are exclusivist and inherently contradictory when linked to other identities of the same sphere. Theorists that use these definitions, even according to Dufoix, do not view these identities as contradictory or oxymoronic, thus to use nomenclature that asserts that they are undermines the definitional category and introduces a pejorative tone absent from the other two classes of definitions.

those concerned with differentiating between “true” and “false” diaspora communities. Found widely among the social sciences, categorical definitions, “place the object of study within a matrix of strict criteria that must be fulfilled for it to warrant the scientific designation as a “diaspora.”²⁰¹ Open definitions, according to Dufoix, “offer a loose and nondiscriminating view of the object of study and leave[s] the door open to an undetermined number of a priori cases.”²⁰² Largely found among scholars in cultural studies and the Humanities, Dufoix asserts that oxymoronic (hybridity-based) definitions, “stress reference to a point of departure and maintenance of an identity in spite of dispersion, postmodern thought instead gives pride of place to paradoxical identity, the noncenter, and hybridity.”²⁰³

Whether implicit or explicit, any scholarship that engages the subject of diaspora infers some type of definition(s) and conceptualization(s) for diaspora. In each scholarly invocation of diaspora, the investigator legitimates the scope of their research by invoking a conception of diaspora. This conception infers a definition or definitions of diaspora. Scholars, at times, express their definition(s) in overt and well-articulated ways. Sometimes, however, scholars’ omit clear definition(s) while presuming the existence of a discipline-specific consensus that makes their specific definition of diaspora self-evident. Works that lack clearly stated definitions frequently inconsistently infer multiple definitions that are at times contradictory or inconsistent with the substance of their research. This practice often occurs when scholarship takes place in a restricted subspecialty where the diaspora identity of the subject may be assumed “self-evident.”

²⁰¹Dufoix, *Diasporas*, 21–23.

²⁰²*Ibid.*, 22.

²⁰³*Ibid.*, 23.

Individuals employing open and hybridity-based definitions regularly omit references in this way.

B. Approaching Diaspora as Heuristic Concept

After evaluating a theorist's definition of diaspora, it is helpful to conceptualize how scholars conceptually approach diaspora. Though the explicit presentation of a definition is helpful, many scholars omit such clear declarations. When these definitions are absent, the scholars approach to diaspora becomes even more important to discerning the term's utility. Vertovec describes a way of loosely categorizing the ways that interlocutors now approach diaspora as a practice of investigation. He describes these approaches to diaspora as social category, consciousness or mode of cultural production.²⁰⁴

Diaspora Studies researchers that work in Migration Studies often approach diaspora as a social category. This approach frequently leads to the identification of specific communities as Diaspora. Diasporas exist within specific societies and display particular attributes that are determined by its relationship to its resident and parent societies. This approach is especially useful when employing an anthropological lens, which perceives diaspora as an unavoidable and specific social phenomenon of human movement and migration. Approaching diaspora as a social category downplays both the significance of diaspora as an emic term and its specific denotative presence. Frequently

²⁰⁴ While Vertovec refrains from explicit mention of Diaspora Studies, he initiates his diaspora entry with reference to how, "Diaspora...and its adjective diasporic have been utilized in recent years in a variety of ways...Among these uses...three approaches to the notion of diaspora emerge..."(99) He additionally offers a fourth approach that is nonscholarly. This fourth approach deals with the antagonistic view of diaspora and migration in general, as problematic and dangerous to pure and traditional notions of local identity. Because this presumption can also appear within the other three approaches, it is less a distinct "approach" and better understood as an attitude. Vertovec, "Diaspora."

invoking categorical or open definitions, scholars that approach diaspora as a social category leads to the subsequent study of related groups, institutions, communities and individuals that exhibit diasporic traits.²⁰⁵ In these cases, diaspora is a type of category that delimits and frames the study of certain subjects.

The approach to diaspora as a consciousness permits scholars to focus on structural perceptions, attitudes and responses to an individual's or a community's existence. This existence privileges collective identity across geopolitical boundaries and prefers to develop generalized paradigms for whole Diaspora groups. Where approaching diaspora as a social category privileges diaspora more for its quantitative, institutional and material being, approaching diaspora as consciousness places emphasis on diaspora as psychological, experienced and felt. Diaspora provides the scholar insight into the reality that characterizes and binds the corporate community.

The pan-African character of Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and Frantz Fanon's psychoanalytic work, *Wretched of the Earth*, exemplify this approach.²⁰⁶ While the term diaspora is, to my knowledge, absent from Garvey's writings, his pan-African vision linked all the dispersed descendants of Africa together within a specific relationship to Euro-American imperialism and racism while describing them in need of a specific (re)constructed view of self and nation—i.e.

²⁰⁵ Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (New York: Cambridge Univ Press, 2003); Sean McLoughlin, "Migration, Diaspora, and Transnationalism: Transformations of Religion and Culture in a Globalising Age," in *The Routledge Companion to The Study of Religion*, ed. John R. Hinnells, First Edition. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 526–49, <http://archive.org/details/TheRoutledgeCompanionToTheStudyOfReligionHinnellsJohnR>; Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies."

²⁰⁶ For a survey of Garvey's philosophical views, See, Marcus Garvey, *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Or, Africa for the Africans*, ed. Amy Jacques Garvey, Centennial. (Dover, MA: The Majority Press, 1986); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann, 1st Evergreen ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1968).

consciousness. The UNIA had global impact because it sought to articulate a unified and coherent national consciousness for Black persons dispersed across the world. Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask* also omits the word diaspora. Here, Fanon describes through psychoanalysis the effects that colonialism and white-racism perform internally within the consciousness of Black persons subject to French colonialism. Blackness, here, functions, as a specific type of consciousness and reality that transcended the specific geopolitical boundaries present in the French Empire. Later in his *Wretched of the Earth* (French title: *La damnée de la terre*), Fanon explicitly employs the term diaspora, again approaching the trans-nationally dispersed collectivity of Black peoples as a type of consciousness. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, he depicts the diaspora as characterized by a neurotic and debilitating consciousness that is past and present. In *Wretched of the Earth*, however, his use of diaspora points forward into cultural consciousness that is presently becoming. The Negro Diaspora occurs in this text as a description of those Black persons dispersed throughout the Americas who may experience a growing unity and supplanting culture provided by interaction with Africa, Africans and its intellectuals.²⁰⁷ In both of these cases, the intellectuals approach the trans-nationally dispersed collectivity as a specifically situated experience and consciousness.

A number of categorical definitions from the early 1990s conflated their approaches to diaspora oscillating back and forth between social category and consciousness.²⁰⁸ When using checklists to identify communities as Diaspora, scholars

²⁰⁷ “La Société africaine va devenir la société culturelle du monde noir et sera amenée à inclure la diaspora nègre, c’est-à-dire les dizaines de millions de Noirs répartis sur les continents américains.” Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de La Terre. Préface. de Jean Paul Sartre*, 2. éd. (Paris: F. Maspero, 1961), 201.

²⁰⁸ William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Unabridged Edition. (New York: Dover, 1994); Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.

presume that members of these communities experience their socio-political environments in paradigmatic ways and envision diaspora as the particular diaspora was a social category. Their checklists predetermined what communities could qualify as diaspora through the assumption of a specific type of consciousness. They, thus, stipulated that a community must display a certain consciousness—e.g. longing to return to homeland; view of their place of residence as traumatic and non-home—to legitimately qualify as the social category of diaspora.

The approach to diaspora most associated with hybridity-based definitions is that of cultural modes of production. This approach shifts the focus of diaspora away from the classification of people towards the analysis of material culture. Diaspora becomes a medium or context through which language, music, literature, fashion and politics are uniquely constituted as products of diasporic existence. This existence depends on definitions of diaspora to delimit the area of study. This approach is foundational to Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora* and Fernando Segovia's description of diaspora as a medium for intercultural hermeneutics. Edwards' excellent study explores the diaspora as visible in its literary interchange across the Atlantic. His approach to hybridity-based definition of diaspora allows him to approach the subject as primarily expressed in the Black Atlantic literary tradition.

Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* is a notable illustration of a work that vacillates between all three approaches to diaspora. This influential examination begins by approaching diaspora as an alternative consciousness to nationalism. He characterizes the African American literary tradition as exhibiting tendencies that mimic Eurocentric nationalism. Shifting gaze towards the Atlantic Ocean, he suggests the Atlantic Ocean is

an alternative space, informed by diaspora, for the analysis of history and Black cultural production. Following his first chapter, bulk of Gilroy's work jettisons the notion of consciousness, and focuses revealing the trans-national nature of Black cultural production through the cursory inspection of music and literature.²⁰⁹ Black material culture, whether it be literature, music or lived experience, comes about as the collaborative expression of the crucible of diaspora. Though Gilroy engages deeply in discussion of Black Atlantic consciousness, he depicts this consciousness as a material product in a way that differs from his discussion in the opening and closing chapters.²¹⁰ After censoring Du Bois and the majority of Black American writers throughout the bulk of his work, Gilroy closes his work by again approaching diaspora as a consciousness. Here, he offers Jewish consciousness as the model paradigm for the Black Diaspora. Reducing Jewish history and experience to a consciousness characterized by the cultural memory of suffering and ineffable terror, Gilroy exhorts Black Americans to embrace diaspora as both a consciousness and mode of cultural production. Throughout, *The Black Atlantic*, Gilroy assumes the particularity of diaspora as a special, non-national and self-evident reality. It is in this assumption that Gilroy can wed Jewish and Black trans-national dispersions. Thus, he imbues his entire project with an approach to diaspora as unique social category. Many of the weaknesses and criticisms found in Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* are the result of the creative and complex scope of his objective, the lack of a clear definition for definition and his constant, un-signaled movement between various approaches to diaspora.

²⁰⁹ Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of "Race" and Nation* (London: Hutchinson Education, 1987); Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*.

²¹⁰ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*.

C. Using Diaspora, Doing Research

While the defining of diaspora is crucial to the study of diaspora and the approach is informative, it is equally important to discuss how people use the concept. I identify three ways that scholars tend to use diaspora in their research. Corresponding most often to categorical definitions, diaspora can function as the main object of study. These works ask, “what is diaspora?” and “how does it function?” These scholars study the aspects that create and qualify something as diaspora. By focusing on the established criteria, these scholars look at both quantitative and qualitative properties that discern certain communities as diaspora. Abundant in the Social Sciences, a number of important early contributions to Diaspora Studies from Migration Studies and Sociology use diaspora as their central subject of study.²¹¹

Diaspora can also function as a context. These works incorporate diaspora into their research by asserting a particular space—physical geographical space, psychological or mental state or socio-political condition—and then informing their audience about something that takes place in that space. Found among both open and oxymoronic definitions, scholars use diaspora as an assumed identity to delimit and contextualize their subject of study. In this usage, the primary intent is to analyze the lived experience and/or socio-political cultural productions of an individual or community, and diaspora serves as a contextualizing agent. Often through broad and vague explanations, diaspora functions in these works as a generic signifier that highlights a community’s imperial circumstance, transnational character, counter-national character, common experience(s)

²¹¹ Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*; Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, First Edition., Global Diasporas (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997); This interest resulted in two separate research centers being founding in the United Kingdom. Kim Knott lead a center Knott and McLoughlin, *Diasporas*.

or socio-cultural marginality. This scholarship investigates the experiences that take place within a Diaspora, but contain significantly less theorization on what exactly the authors mean by diaspora.

The third way scholars use diaspora is as a non-critical spatial designation. With a few exceptions, the use of diaspora in early Christian and early Jewish studies falls under this category.²¹² Here, diaspora is principally an othering agent used to locate groups or individuals socially, politically or geographically. The categorization of these entities takes place within broad spheres that assume uniformity. This uniformity can reflect ideology, axiology, or experience. Scholars can speak of “in the Diaspora” signifying Diaspora as an apophatic space, which is an uncritical way of geographically

²¹² I have listed a number of influential works that, despite their contribution to scholarship at their time of publication, dealt with issues of the Jewish Diaspora without critical consideration of what the Diaspora entailed. These works vary from (re)constructions of Hellenistic Judaism (Tcherikover, Rutgers) to invocation of the term diaspora within New Testament exegesis (Johnson, Cargal, Spencer) to detailed study of Hellenist Jewish literature, life and Diaspora (Wilson, Levinskaya, Penner). See, Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, Reprint Edition. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999); Stephen G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge University Press, 2005); Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*; James Cargal, *Restoring the Diaspora: Discursive Structure and Purpose in the Epistle of James*, SBL Dissertation Series 144 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993); Leonard Victor Rutgers, *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism* (Peeters Publishers, 1998); Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*, vol. 5, 5 vols., *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting 5* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996); Spencer, *Journeying Through Acts*; Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*; For works that deviate from the standard un-critical approach to diaspora in their study of Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian literature, See, Willem Cornelis Van Unnik, *Das Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora in der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit*, ed. Pieter Willem van der Horst (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Aiyenakum P.J Arowele, “Diaspora-Concept in the New Testament: Studies on the Idea of Christian Sojourn, Pilgrimage and Dispersion According to the New Testament” (Ph.D., Würzburg, 1977); John M. G. Barclay, ed., *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire*, Library of Second Temple Studies 45 (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004); Boyarin and Boyarin, “Diaspora”; John Joseph Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000); Fernando F. Segovia, “Interpreting beyond Borders: Postcolonial Studies and Diasporic Studies in Biblical Criticism,” in *Interpreting Beyond Borders*, *The Bible and Postcolonialism 3* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 11–35; René Krüger, *La diáspora: de experiencia traumática a paradigma eclesiológico* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Universitario ISEDET, 2008); K. Jason Coker, “Calling on the Diaspora: Nativism and Diaspora Identity in the Letter of James,” in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, ed. J. Brian Tucker and Coleman A. Baker (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 441–54; Ronald Charles, *Paul and the Politics of Diaspora*, *Paul in Critical Contexts* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2014) Van Unnik, Arowele and Krüger are actually studies on the word diaspora and its theological meaning.

describing the area that is not home, or “in Diaspora,” which implies that Diaspora is a condition of existing away from home. The diaspora’s diversity—geographic, geopolitical or cultural—is subsumed into one non-location.

In response to the transdisciplinary character of Diaspora Studies, the above nomenclature provides a system for discussing the diversity of methodological and conceptual approaches that mark Diaspora Studies. The lack of a central bank often frequently transforms Diaspora Studies transdisciplinarity attribute into a multidisciplinary obstacle. Obscured definitions, inconsistent approaches and confused use of diaspora stagnates dialogue between these theorists who, due to divergent intellectual and discipline backgrounds, find it difficult to appreciate the work and logic within other scholarship. The above discussed classification systems aid in the clarification of work done in Diaspora Studies. Understanding how scholars define, approach and use the term diaspora also allows scholars to locate their work within other scholarship while ensuring the internal coherence of their own theoretical and ideological engagement with the concept and term diaspora.

The Diaspora of Diaspora Studies and Its Unilinear Metanarrative

Actually, the term “diaspora” had a wider meaning than merely the Jewish exile, a meaning that is less well known. Consider the Greek origin of the term “diaspora”: *sperio* = to sow, *dia* = over. Among those who are aware of the origin of the term, it is widely believed that the term first appeared in the Greek translation of the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, with reference to the situation of the Jewish people — “Thou shalt be a diaspora in all kingdoms of the earth” (Deut. 28.25). Yet the term had also been used by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* (II, 27) to describe the dispersal of the Aeginetans. Thus, already at a very early period, the term had been applied to two of the oldest ethno-national diasporas—the Jewish and the Greek—that had been established outside of their homelands as a result of both voluntary

and forced migrations.²¹³

Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*

The Presentation of a Fixed Point of Origin for Diaspora (b)

Conceptual Overview

Points of origin and starting points are very important, often playing critical roles in framing, characterizing and reifying identity. In various cultures, the status of a person's social class at birth can play a larger role in determining how society perceives their intelligence, virtue and propriety. Because of the heightened importance of origins, this assessment can override actual behavior. Disregarding the United States' history of tolerating, supporting and benefitting from legal and institutional racism, as a nation with "Christian" origins, purportedly founded on "religious liberty" many Americans use this perceived origin as the frame to evaluate all of the United States' actions. Instead of viewing the breaking of treaties with Native Americans and the trail of tears as endemic to American character, one perceives it as a hiccup on the United States' embodiment of its origin. Instead of reading the United States' history of slavery, race-based segregation and exploitation of cheap, impoverished labor as the essence of the American success story, these things are simply precursors to singular moments of exceptionalism, such as the Union's Civil War victory or the gains attained during the Civil Rights movement, that reflect the United States' divine appointment in the world.

Whether right or wrong, individuals and entities often appeal to beginnings to inform, prove and at times dictate an entity's being or essence, conceiving an entity in relation to its origin. When engaged within notions of *le divers*, the identification of points of origin can function in at least three ways. 1) The point of origin can act as an

²¹³ Sheffer produced a revised edition of this work in 2006. This assertion remains in the second edition. Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*, 9.

ontological paradigm. When acting in this way, the point of origin encapsulates the totality of what an entity was, is and can be. Behavior, value and character are understood as the manifestation of an entity's inborn and permanent nature, which is discerned and dictated by observation of its point of origin. Time changes nothing; one is and always will be the essence of what they begin as. 2) The point of origin can also function as a point of reference and benchmark for evaluation for positively valued—i.e.: euphoric—entities. By evaluating the presumed change in state, character or value over time, one can establish an entities' improvement.²¹⁴ The observation of the time-gap between origin and present becomes the mechanism for characterizing and giving value to entities. For euphoric entities, the time-gap reveals growth, maturation, perseverance and virtue. 3) Alternatively, in opposition to the positively-valued euphoric view, the point of origin can also function as a point of reference and evaluation over time for negatively valued—i.e. dysphoric—entities. When observing the same temporal gap for dysphoric entities, one witnesses ineptitude, failure, perversity, stasis and deterioration.

Where the ontological view conceives the point of origin as a mirror that invalidates the need for temporal consideration, the euphoric and dysphoric approaches construct the point of origin to amplify their evaluations of history. In simplified terms: with respect to time, the entity is either a performative projection, positive transformation or the deviant corrosion of its point of origin. In all three cases, the point of origin garners its critical importance due it is relation to time; it is important, thus, because of its paradigmatic role in perceiving history.

²¹⁴ Euphoric entities frequently enjoy affiliation with insiders, while dysphoric entities frequently appear as history's greatest antagonists.

The way a theorist views the origins of diaspora influences how they conceive the term's governing metanarrative and interpretive trajectory (m).²¹⁵ It is also how they legitimate the term's applicability and analogous value for their specific discipline and subject of study. Within univocal and unilinear projections, the calcification of difference and framing of metanarrative is often a byproduct of the perceived and fixed point of origin. So, if the origin of diaspora is singular and categorical scholars will often evaluate its expanded economic meaning as a projection, positive transformation or deviant deterioration of its singular and categorical origin. Simply put, the point of origin (b) delimits diaspora's archival potential.

These practices exacerbate Hegelian Colour-blindness and are rife within Diaspora Studies. The blanket assertion that diaspora has a fixed past is one of the most entrenched beliefs in Diaspora Studies. The presentation of this perspective in Diaspora Studies is generally two-fold. The first step is to provide a strict Greek definition. The second step entails describing the only pertinent use of the word from antiquity to the 1960's as having one meaning: the generally traumatic dispersal of Jews into Gentile lands. Theorists at time diminish or all together omit the pre-Jewish stage. Those theorists that include the pre-Jewish stage often conform the stages as iterations of the same meaning as exemplified by the above quotation from Gabriel Sheffer's, *Diaspora*

²¹⁵ With respect to my invocation of the linear equation, because the y-intercept (b) represents a specific point in history or time it cannot be negative. It is the point at which the meaning of diaspora (y) exists apart from theoretical tradition and without consideration of discipline or subject of study. The characterizing metanarrative (m) exists at this point, but is nullified by the absence of a specific subject of study. This understanding highlights the contextual and constructed nature of concepts of diaspora. For, while scholars present the point of origin as definitive and objective, their equation retains the metanarrative, though its impact is not readily visible due to it being presented as it equivalent with the concept. One can understand (b) either as the absence of specific subject or temporally as before the application of scholarship. In both cases: $D(0) = m * 0 + b$ is generally presented as $D(0) = b$. For a detailed discussion, see Appendix A.

Politics. Sheffer privileges the Jewish meaning as commonly known and then acknowledges the diminished pre-Jewish origin as analogous to that propagated by Jewish tradition. This two-step depiction of the fixed-origin of diaspora are frequently ripe with difficulties due to a lack of contextual disclosure and the regurgitation of historical “facts” that at times lack support and in other instances are flagrant inaccuracies.

Presentations of a Fixed Point of Origin for Diaspora in Practice

Theorists of diaspora generally approach the origin of the term and concept diaspora from two perspectives that for the purposes of this analysis are variations of the same history:

- The term originates as an ancient Hellenistic Jewish creation/neologism;
- Or, though the term has Greek, pre-Jewish etymology, Jewish use represents the origin of diaspora as a fully developed concept that functions as a technical description of ethno-national migration.

Whether individuals acknowledge the dearth early attestations of the term diaspora, the legitimate origin is consistently rooted in specific renderings of ancient Jewish history. Stéphane Dufoix models this perspective when he acknowledges a range of pre-1950 invocations of the term diaspora before dismissing his observations by claiming, “[u]ntil the 1950s, “diaspora” had no possible meaning except religious.”²¹⁶

Founding editor of the field defining *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, Khachig Tölölyan cautions the field from continuing its amnesia of the term’s historical origins.²¹⁷ Tölölyan’s 1996 article, “Rethinking Diaspora(s),” exemplifies a

²¹⁶ See Chapter Four for further discussion of Dufoix’s observations. Dufoix, *Diasporas*, 17.

²¹⁷ Tölölyan, “Rethinking Diaspora (s).”

common approach to establishing a fixed point of origin for the concept of diaspora. His argument takes the form of scholarly archive and history, where he legitimates the origin of the concept of diaspora via ancient attestation and scholarly dictionaries. Appealing to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the French dictionary, *Larousse*, and the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* Tölölyan asserts that prior to the 1960's the term diaspora was primarily absent from daily quotidian use and held only localized meaning.²¹⁸

While the Eleventh Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1910-1911) lacked an entry for diaspora, the 1958 edition described diaspora as a crystalline aluminum oxide and the 1979 *New Encyclopaedia Britannica* again lacked an entry; *Larousse* only included an entry, "Diaspores" describing a type of fungi, and the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* contained an entry in 1931, but removed the entry from its 1968 edition.²¹⁹ His invocation of dictionaries attempts to portray a world in which the concept of diaspora was restricted and the meaning fixed. This description is useful in its appeal to a primitivism that values oldness and original meanings. The lack of definitions in the early to mid-twentieth century enhances the authority of those definitions and uses occurring amongst the dearth.

Tölölyan's engages Simon Dubnow's 1931 entry in the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* as the, seemingly, definitive voice in the desert. Thus, Dubnow's depiction of the Jewish Diaspora as paradigmatic becomes, for Tölölyan, the original means, which was fixed and uniform for almost two millennia. Withstanding the term's pre-history as reflected in ancient Greek use that could denote colonies and its original Jewish use as reference to voluntary Jewish migration practices prior to the destruction of the Second

²¹⁸ For further discussion of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, See Chapter Four.

²¹⁹ Tölölyan, "Rethinking Diaspora (s)," 9.

Temple in 70 CE, “the destruction of Judea by the Romans, the loss of the homeland and the ethnocidal violence of the Roman legions gave the term “Jewish diaspora” its full and painful meaning.”²²⁰ Thus, it is both Jewish textual use and Jewish historical experience that are responsible for originally transforming diaspora from a Greek term into an established and technical concept that described a specific aspect of Jewish history and experience.

Additionally, Tölölyan invokes Dubnow as an expert and authority on Jewish history and experience. This presentation of Dubnow evokes the sense of archive, as Tölölyan credits Dubnow as a theorist of diaspora that predates the term’s expansion and transformation in Diaspora Studies. Depicted as a single voice amid scholarly silence, Dubnow’s entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* claims that Greek and Armenian dispersion are legitimate contexts able to carry the nomenclature of diaspora; thus, his description presents these two ethno-national groups as providing the lone examples that are both ancient and analogous in their alignment with original Jewish paradigm. Dubnow’s entry establishes Tölölyan’s own Armenian contextual perspective as an authentic and ancient expression of the original concept of diaspora.

Tölölyan’s historical presentation validates his contextual rendering of the history and origin of diaspora over against the plethora of post-1968 dispersions engaged in changing the term’s meaning. While Tölölyan acknowledges that the meanings of words can change and that this is acceptable, he extols that origins and history, during the stages of evolution and transformation, must be recalled and remembered. According to this historicization, the history of diaspora consists of two stages, where, “[t]he Jewish-

²²⁰ Ibid., 11.

centered definition that prevailed from the second century CE until circa 1968, has since been displaced...”²²¹ As a result of this presentation, legitimate identification of diaspora’s original meaning depends on a (re)constructed archive that prioritizes Septuagint use of the term, post-70 CE interpretations of the concept, and a single early twentieth century scholarly definition.

In addition to descriptions of the history of the term as fixed prior to the late twentieth-century, Tölölyan and other theorists frequently appeal to etymology to establish the origin and fixedness of the term diaspora. When describing the Greek definition theorists regularly reference the root-verb σπείρω [*speirō*, scatter; sow; spread]. Most studies of the concept of diaspora first link its Greek origin to the noun διασπορά [*diaspora*, a scattering; a dispersion; the state or condition of being dispersed] and verb διασπείρω [*diasperō*, disperse; scatter; dissipate]. Invocation of the verb διασπείρω (*diasperō*) leads to the acknowledgment that the term is a compound word composed of the prepositional prefix διά [*dia*, through; throughout; over, on account of; because of] and root-word σπείρω (*speirō*).²²² This observation allows scholars to shift attention

²²¹ Ibid., 12.

²²² Many introductions to the diaspora concept within contemporary Diaspora Studies invoke the word’s etymological origin. Few introductions, however, note the diverse connotative values covered by diaspora’s constituent parts. There are studies within Biblical Studies that have treated the concept of diaspora extensively. While theorists in Diaspora Studies rarely cite these works, some of their findings provide the paradigmatic understanding of diaspora. Stéphane Dufoix has provided an excellent chapter that identifies many of the weaknesses and myths circulated among Diaspora Studies. This work was identified after the bulk of this chapter was complete. While informative, Dufoix’s lack of familiarity with ancient Greek has left his chapter still susceptible to a handful of inaccuracies. Stéphane Dufoix, “Deconstructing and Reconstructing ‘Diaspora’: A Study in Socio-Historical Semantics,” in *Transnationalism: Diasporas and the Advent of a New (Dis)order*, ed. Eliezer Ben Rafael and Yitzhak Sternberg (Boston: Brill, 2009), 47–74; Among the most influential works, See Karl Ludwig Schmidt, “διασπορά,” ed. Gerhard Kittel and Geoffrey W.. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W.. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964); Unnik, *Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora*; Arowele, “Diaspora-Concept in the New Testament”; A. T. Kraabel, “Unity and Diversity among Diaspora Synagogues,” in *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lee I. Levine (Philadelphia: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1987), 49–60; A. T. Kraabel, “Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33, no. 1-2 (1982): 445–64; James M. Scott, “Exile

away from the origins and ancient use of διασπορά (*diaspora*) and διασπείρω (*diasperō*) and highlight the meaning of the root-verb σπείρω (*speirō*).

Tölölyan reifies his insinuation that the concept diaspora only gained full meaning under Jewish scriptural use by asserting that, “a certain ambiguity is inherent even in this [diaspora’s] earliest use.”²²³ He then then shifts attention, without acknowledgment, to

and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period,” in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott, Supplements to the journal for the study of Judaism 56 (Leiden: BRILL, 1997), 173–220; Krüger, *La diáspora*.

²²³ Tölölyan, “Rethinking Diaspora (s),” 10 While σπείρω served as the root for the distinct, yet, overlapping words σπέρμα [sperma, seed; semen] and σπορά [spora, seed; seeding-time], ancient attestations of the noun διασπορά maintain close relationship to the verb διασπείρω. The verb διασπείρω has a much greater attestation than the noun, διασπορά, with many writers rendering the verb διασπείρω as a noun through participle constructions. Consequently, modern notions of the term Diaspora derive from both ancient use of the noun diaspora, and the verb διασπείρω. The strict denotative meanings of δια, and σπείρω are consistent within dictionaries of Classical and New Testament Greek. This consistency, regarding the strict denotative sense extends also the terms διασπείρω and διασπορά. However, their application and connotative significance is a matter of debate when discussing use in Hellenistic Jewish, and early Christian discourse. If describing the etymology of the word diaspora, virtually all contemporary scholarship only lists the spatial denotative meaning of the prefix δια. As a preposition, δια- takes on different values based upon the grammatical context; the spatial meaning through, as in throughout, functions when δια modifies a genitive. However, this genitive modification is also determined by context, and may also indicate agency. In cases of agency, δια denotes through with the sense of through X means; by, or by means of are also possible renderings. The word δια frequently accompanies accusative nouns, and in these cases δια takes on a causal meaning indicating cause, reason, or purpose. James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997); Barclay M. Newman, “A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament,” in *The Greek New Testament (UBS4) with a Concise Greek-English Dictionary*, ed. Barara Aland et al., Second Edition. (Stuttgart: Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993); For brief discussions of Greek prepositional use, and the spatial aspects of compound word constructions, See Luisa Brucalè, “Space (Adpositions),” in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Vanderbilt University: Brill Online, 2013), http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/entries/encyclopedia-of-ancient-greek-language-and-linguistics/space-adpositions-EAGLL_COM_000038?s.num=6&s.q=dia+preposition; Pietro Bortone, “Adpositions (Prepositions),” in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Vanderbilt University: Brill Online, 2013), <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/entries/encyclopedia-of-ancient-greek-language-and-linguistics/adpositions-prepositions-EAGLL_COM_00000007>; Silvia Luraghi, “Adpositional Phrase,” in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Vanderbilt University: Brill Online, 2013), http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/entries/encyclopedia-of-ancient-greek-language-and-linguistics/adpositional-phrase-EAGLL_COM_00000006?s.num=0&s.q=dia+preposition; Dag Haug, “Preverbs,” in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Vanderbilt University: Brill Online, 2013), http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/entries/encyclopedia-of-ancient-greek-language-and-linguistics/preverbs-EAGLL_SIM_00000519?s.num=5&s.q=dia+preposition.

σπείρω (*speirō*) stating that this root-verb traces to a proto-Indo-European root that, “always contains the triconsonantal root *spr*, which then takes various forms with the addition of vowels, as in “spore, sperm, spread, disperse,” or the Armenian *spurk* for diaspora.”²²⁴ After stating that the definition of σπείρω is to sow, scholars continually conflate the definitions of σπείρω and διασπείρω. Further complicating this presentation is a resistance to distinguishing between the noun διασπορά and verb διασπείρω. These theorists, acting as historians, are unclear or indifferent to which word they derive their constructions. As a result, they appeal to any number of textual examples as proof, relying at times on the definitions of very different words.

While the above description is an accurate explanation of the word’s construction and its constituent parts, this description, for many, has come to stand, for many, as an explanation of the term’s meaning. The semantic range and literary use of the σπείρω (*speirō*) supplants study and analysis of the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) and verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*). Suddenly, the source of diaspora’s meaning derives import from it being an agricultural term. Jumping on this imagery to invoke plant and garden imagery to depict the origin of diaspora and characterize its semantic range.²²⁵ A sampling of Diaspora Studies scholarship—articles, monographs and dictionary articles—reveals this practice as a trend. Tölölyan in 1996:

For the Greeks, “*diaspeirein*” was originally an abrupt but natural process, the fruitful scattering away of seeds from the parent body that both dispersed and reproduced the organism.²²⁶

²²⁴ Tölölyan, “Rethinking Diaspora (s),” 10–11.

²²⁵ Adam McKeown, “Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas, 1842 to 1949,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58, no. 02 (1999): 306–37; Arnold J. Band, “The New Diasporism and the Old Diaspora,” *Israel Studies* 1, no. 1 (1996): 323–31; Virinder Kalra, Raminder Kaur, and John Hutnyk, *Diaspora and Hybridity* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2005); Gamlen, “Diasporas”; Tölölyan, “Rethinking Diaspora (s).”

²²⁶ Throughout this text, I generally provide the first person singular present active form of verbs.

Band also in 1996:

And so, risking the possibility of belaboring the obvious, I will open with some basic facts about the historical Jewish diaspora. The term, of course, is Greek, deriving from “*diasporein*,” the scattering of seeds, and it is usually assumed that the Jewish diaspora was a product of the Hellenistic period, during which more Jews established permanent residence outside of the Holy Land than in the Holy Land itself with its Holy City, Jerusalem, often referred to as Zion.²²⁷

McKeown in 1999:

The word diaspora can be traced back still earlier, to a Greek word used to describe the sowing of seeds, and then applied to Greek colonization in the Mediterranean.²²⁸

Kalra, Kaur and Hutnyk in 2005:

In a conventional mode, diaspora is related to the Greek gardening tradition (as is hybridity), referring simply to the scattering of seeds and implying some description of dispersal. While the etymology of seeds and sperm as carriers of both culture and reproductive capacity is central to this description of diaspora, these themes are taken up in Chapter 3. Rather, we take the accepted site of the Jewish experience of forced exile as a starting point for discussing diaspora.²²⁹

Gamlen in 2012:

The word diaspora derives from Greek words *speiro* (“to sow”) and *dia* (“over”) and is related to the word *diaspeirein*: a scattering of seeds as from a bursting pod. From the Ancient Greek context, where it referred to the colonization and settlement of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean, the word found its way into the Greek translation of the Old Testament and, over the centuries, became almost inseparable from the mournful narrative of Jewish exile.²³⁰

This practice results in a slight formal difference than some texts that prefer to list verbs in the infinitive form. Regarding the concept of diaspora, this results in the same verb being listed as διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) by me and as διασπείρειν (*diaspeirein*) by other authors. Tölölyan, “Rethinking Diaspora (s),” 10.

²²⁷ One observes Band’s misspelling of the infinitive by attaching the present active infinitive ending to the noun diaspora. See, Band, “The New Diasporism and the Old Diaspora,” 325.

²²⁸ McKeown, “Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas, 1842 to 1949,” 308.

²²⁹ Kalra, Kaur, and Hutnyk, *Diaspora and Hybridity*, 9.

²³⁰ Gamlen, “Diasporas,” 412; Such constructions within Academic publications explain the presence of non-scholarly descriptions, such as Craig Combs’ online piece, “Aramaic Diaspora: The Scattered Seed,” where he parrots Diaspora Studies with the assertion that, “the word was taken directly into English vocabulary from the Greek, meaning, “a scattering or sowing of seeds.” This online article was published by an internationally active Christian organization with missionary aims named, Wycliffe Global Alliance. Craig Combs, “The Aramaic Diaspora: Scattered Seed,” Wycliffe Global Alliance, *The Watchman*, n.d., <http://www.wycliffe.net/stories/tabid/67/language/en-US/Default.aspx?id=907>.

I discuss the ancient usage of diaspora in more detail Chapter 4, but it suffices here to note that I have yet to find ancient use of διασπορά (*diaspora*) or διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) in the context of gardening, farming or sowing seed. In opposition to the absence of extant sources using either the noun or verb of diaspora in the context of agriculture or farming, Greek historian Thucydides' fifth century BCE *History of the Peloponnesian War* (*War*) does use the word σπείρω (*speirō*), in apparent figurative usage, to describe the compelled emigration of a geopolitical and ethno-cultural group. In *War* 2.27, Thucydides, as mentioned by Tölölyan and seen in the Sheffer quotation atop this subsection, recounts how the Athenians forcibly removed the Aeginetans from Aegina and then, as a precautionary maneuver, colonized the area with their own settlers.

The Athenians also removed the Aeginetans from Aegina during this summer, even their children and women, charging that they themselves were in no small means the cause of this war. Also, with Aegina laying by Peloponnesus, it seemed safer to have colonists who were sent from amongst themselves. And then, after not much time, they dispatched settlers to the region. But, the Lacedaemonians gave to the Aeginetans Thyrea [as a place] to live and its land to be cultivated. [They did this] both on account of their dispute with the Athenians and because they were both together around the time of the earthquake and the revolt of the Helots doing charitable work for each other. The land of Thyrea is a boundary between Argolis and the Laconia extending to the sea. Now, some from among them [the Aeginetans] lived there, **but others scattered** throughout the rest of Greece.

(Thucydides, *War*, 2.27)

Ἀνέστησαν δὲ καὶ Αἰγινήτας τῷ αὐτῷ θέρει τούτῳ ἐξ Αἰγίνης Ἀθηναῖοι, αὐτούς τε καὶ παῖδας καὶ γυναῖκας, ἐπικαλέσαντες οὐχ ἥκιστα τοῦ πολέμου σφίσιν αἰτίους εἶναι· καὶ τὴν Αἶγιναν ἀσφαλέστερον ἐφαίνετο τῇ Πελοποννήσῳ ἐπικειμένην αὐτῶν πέμψαντας ἐποίκους ἔχειν. καὶ ἐξέπεμψαν ὕστερον οὐ πολλῶ ἐς αὐτὴν τοὺς Ζοϊκίτορας. ἐκπεσοῦσι δὲ τοῖς Αἰγινήταις οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι ἔδωσαν Θυρέαν οἰκεῖν καὶ τὴν γῆν νέμεσθαι, κατὰ τε τὸ Ἀθηναίων διάφορον καὶ ὅτι σφῶν εὐεργέται ἦσαν ὑπὸ τὸν σεισμόν καὶ τῶν Εἰλώτων τὴν ἐπανάστασιν. ἡ δὲ Θυρεᾶτις γῆ μεθορία τῆς Ἀργείας καὶ Λακωνικῆς ἐστίν, ἐπὶ θάλασσαν καθήκουσα. καὶ οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν ἐνταῦθα ὤκησαν, **οἱ δὲ ἐσπάρησαν [hoi de esparēsan] κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην Ἑλλάδα.**

In and of itself, this use of σπείρω (*speirō*) sheds little light on the ancient use and meaning of diaspora. It simply displays the semantic and figurative value of the term σπείρω (*speirō*), which unlike διασπορά (*diaspora*) and διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*), has prominent attestation throughout ancient Greek literature. However, when theorists follow Tölölyan and Sheffer’s lead and couple 1) the uncritical conflation of διασπορά (*diaspora*), διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) and σπείρω (*speirō*) into a single word with 2) negligent and apathetic attention to detail, they are able to transform Thucydides’ metaphorical use of σπείρω (*speirō*) into proof that the concept of diaspora: a) traces back to the origins of Western Civilization; b) originally described the forced migration of people-groups; and c) can legitimately apply to non-Jewish populations. This process satisfies the unilinear impulse of Hegelian Colour-blindness. It also satiates *mal d’archive* by providing a pretense for these ‘critical’ theorists—i.e. historians and archivists—to claim mastery control of the original-meaning.²³¹

Excursus: Sheffer as Exemplar

Consider Gabriel Sheffer’s influential, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad*, which I cite at the beginning of this section. His choice descriptions of the term’s origin are telling in his rhetorical posturing, claims of historical support, questionable analysis and incongruent findings. His description of the constituent Greek parts of the term “diaspora” as *dia* and *speirō*, obscures the presence of the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*). This description is impervious, and readers have no clear indication whether the English word diaspora is an English invention created by uniting two Greek terms or if the original term is a Greek combination of *dia*+*speirō*. The former suggests that the independent study of the ancient use of the preposition δια (*dia*) and

²³¹ James M. Scott’s piece is referenced in more detail below. He notes a number of the traditional misconceptions about the origin of the word. He even acknowledge the absence of the word diaspora and that the scattering is not destructive. He, however, argues that for general disregard of the distinctions between terms, especially diaspora. He wants to conflate analysis of σπείρω (*speirō*), διασπορά (*diaspora*), διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) in addition to any words semantically related to exile or colonization. His approaches diaspora mostly as a social category, more specifically as an anthropological phenomenon of human movement. Thus, the word’s actual meaning and use is of less importance. Scott, “Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period,” 184.

verb σπείρω (*speirō*) are the best ways to unearth the original meaning. The latter option implies that retrieval of the original meaning resides in ancient use of the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*). Either option fails to acknowledge that the English term diaspora is most directly linked to the ancient noun διασπορά (*diaspora*).

After omitting reference to the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) and establishing the English word diaspora's origin to δια (*dia*) and σπείρω (*speirō*), Sheffer fails to note that his newly constructed archive consists of the ancient Greek words διασπορά (*diaspora*) (Deut 28.25) and σπείρω (*speirō*) (War 2.27), nor that War 2.27 is in no way the word σπείρω (*speirō*)'s earliest attestation.

Following this confused image of the Greek origin of diaspora, Sheffer effectively establishes his definition of diaspora as informed and grounded in erudition and historical fact. In a subsection titled, "Clarification of Terms," Sheffer contextualizes his impending definition by describing the field of Diaspora Studies and analysis of diaspora as filled with "much confusion."²³² Implying that his offering is unique, he asserts that the origin of diaspora has a, "meaning that is less well known." He then infers the existence of a select group of, "those who are aware of the origin," and by suggesting that among this group that, "it is widely believed," he implies the presence of a consensus belief that Deuteronomy contains the first use of the term diaspora. Situating his own analysis above even that of "those who are aware," Sheffer depicts himself as correcting the consensus with the disclosure, "[y]et, the term had been used by Thucydides..." As a result, Sheffer's insights allow him to link the perceived first usage, which is Jewish, with a more ancient, non-Jewish usage. This new linkage establishes a new and purportedly "better" collection of ancient uses of diaspora—i.e. archive—that objectively prove that the original meaning of diaspora pertained to ethno-national identity. Implicit in his construction, Sheffer claims mastery of an unknown past, and an understanding of diaspora rooted in objectively unearthed history.

Having grasped the term's origin, scholars, in this case Sheffer, legitimate the erection of boundaries around contemporary theorization of the term. Founded on this presentation, Sheffer has the authority, "to begin clarifying the current confusion about the term and to facilitate an in-depth discussion of the ethno-national diaspora phenomenon."²³³

Having claimed this authority, he then posits a preliminary definition founded in the term's earliest use.²³⁴ While I appreciate Sheffer's open

²³² Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*, 8–13.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 9.

²³⁴ "An ethno-national diaspora is a social-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries. Members of such entities maintain regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as their homelands and with individuals and groups of the same background residing in other host countries. Based on aggregate decisions to settle permanently in

definition and its inclusion of voluntary and forced migration, his assessment of the Deut 28.25 and *War* 2.27 is difficult to discern due to an obtuse presentation that seems to suggest that each text contains a single invocation of diaspora. While this is the case for Thucydides use of διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*), it is neither the case for Deuteronomy's use of διασπορά (*diaspora*) or διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*).

Following Sheffer's (re)presentation, he first mentions Deuteronomy and then Thucydides. He follows this syntax later by invoking "the Jewish and the Greek" ethno-national diasporas. In the same paragraph, he refers to "voluntary and forced migrations," which based on his earlier syntax should match Deuteronomy with voluntary migration and Thucydides with forced. This introduces a problem in logic. Neither citation alludes to voluntary departure from a homeland.

As discussed below, in both Deut 28.25 and *War* 2.27, the respective groups are forced to vacate their homeland: Israel by their Lord via foreign kingdoms; the Aeginetans by the Athenians. Both passages also consist of two separate descriptions that one can read as i) distinct processes or ii) reiterated descriptions. In Deut 28.25, the narrator first announces that Israel will 1) flee in seven directions before their enemies, and then 2) will be a diaspora amongst all the kingdoms of the earth. In *War* 2.27, Thucydides says that 1) the Athenians expelled the Aeginetans from Aegina and 2) some Aeginetans settled in Thyrea, but some others sowed/spread throughout the rest of the Greek world. The question of whether the diaspora is a heightened clarification of the expulsion is important for Sheffer's presentation, particularly his classification of Thucydides' migration as forced or voluntary. If the diaspora is a clarification of the expulsion then *War* 2.27 depicts a single type of migration that is not voluntary but forced.

In his assertion of Thucydides' usage of diaspora, Sheffer fails to distinguish between the Aeginetan expulsion from Aegina and their partial migration to various parts of the Greek world. While Thucydides says that the Athenians forcibly removed the Aeginetans from their land, he also recounts of how the Lacedemonians (Spartans) provided the Aeginetans with a nearby region to settle. The narrative supports a reading of Aeginetan settlement in this region, though near a Lacedmonian military outpost, as one in which they became a majority presence. Thus, one can conceive the sowing/spreading, though

host countries, but to maintain a common identity, diasporas identify as such, showing solidarity with their group and their entire nation, and they organize and are active in the cultural, social, economic, and political spheres. Among their various activities, members of such diasporas establish trans-state networks that reflect complex relationships among the diasporas, their host countries, their homelands, and international actors." While this open definition is attractive to me, and largely comports to my own view of diaspora as a type of transnational relatedness, my primary concerns revolve not upon his resultant definition, but his use of the past, implicit claim of the singular origin of diaspora, and obscured view of the origin(s) of the term diaspora. How one constructs and represents their construction is an important as the final construction itself. See, *ibid.*, 9–10.

prompted by the Aeginetans' expulsion, as the voluntary choice of those that chose not to remain with the bulk of the community in Thyrea.

If one continues to read Sheffer as maintaining his original syntax, then the simplistic valuation of the Aeginetan sowing/spreading as definitively dysphoric becomes even less apparent by Thucydides' latter discussion of later conflict between the Aeginetans and the Athenians (*War*, 4.56-57). In Book 4.56-57, Thucydides tells how the Athenians, after further military conquests, returned to the region of Thyrea where the Lacedemonians (Spartans) were helping the Aeginetans settle. The majority of the Lacedemonians retreated before the Athenians arrived leaving the Aeginetans to defend themselves. The Athenians burned and looted the city, depopulated the entire region and imprisoned everyone that survived the attack, whether Aeginetan, Lacedemonian or Cytherian. Upon returning to Athens with their prisoners, the Athenians permitted the minority Cytherians to pay a tribute and settle elsewhere, but killed all the Aeginetans. Consequently, the lone Aeginetans to survive their conflict with Athens were those who chose to sow/spread, *σπείρω* (*speirō*) throughout the Greek world. Those individuals who migrated as a majority collectivity from Aegina to Thyrea and remained as a corporate and geopolitically constituted "ethno-national" body died, while those who "spread/sowed" throughout the rest of Greece preserved a remnant.

This reading makes two important steps. It distinguishes homeland expulsion from migratory sowing/spreading, and it makes a reading of the Aeginetan sowing/spreading as forced difficult to follow. Even withstanding the fact that language invoked by Thucydides is *σπείρω* (*speirō*) and not diaspora, a description of this use of *σπείρω* (*speirō*) as clearly negative and forced would be an overly simplistic interpretation, not fact.

Continuing to assume Sheffer's maintenance of his syntactic order, Deut. 28.25 would need to depict voluntary migration. To identify Deut 28.25 as voluntary migration, one must differentiate between a) homeland expulsion and b) later migration. Viewing a) and b) as separate types and processes of migration sees *War* 2.27 employ the sowing/spreading as a distinct act separate from the expulsion from their homeland and different from the community's collective translocation as a majority group in one place to a majority group in another space. Consequently, the Deuteronomistic image in 28.25 portrays Israel as a diaspora in reference to Israel's secondary and potentially voluntary migrations following their initial expulsion. In this reading, the impetus for the original migration becomes inconsequential, and the denotative focus shifts to the presence of multiple locations and minority-status, as differentiated by the Aeginetan majority status in Thyrea and the implicit minority status of those sowing/spreading into disparate localities of the "rest" of the

Greek world. Within this reading, consistency demands that one separate notions of homeland expulsion from the identification of secondary migration, and both Thucydides and Deuteronomy become models of similar migrations: voluntary.

This raises questions about the relationship between Sheffer's description of diaspora and "ethno-national" migration out of one's homeland. When considering the impetus for migration from one's homeland, the Thucydidean text is fairly explicit in its description of Athenians, one specific Greek ethno-cultural group, forcibly removing the Aeginetans, a different Greek ethno-cultural group, from their homeland. The notion that Thucydides applies the term to a generic Greek ethno-national identity or that their migration moved beyond the world of Greece is unsubstantiated by the text. The secondary spreading/sowing of the Aeginetans into many different parts of the Greek world may be a voluntary act, but in this reading it is important to note that the sowing/spreading that occurs within the Greek world and must be read as distinct from the Aeginetans departure from Aegina. . Within this reading, the question remains to which group does Sheffer apply voluntary migration, and what about his archival texts necessitate opposing images of migration. The following observations make it unlikely that Sheffer maintained his syntax by depicting Deut 28.25 as voluntary migration and *War* 2.27 as forced.

I can only conjecture, but Sheffer's decision to redact Aeginetans as Greeks suggests that he probably views the passages as depicting a single type of migration where b) reiterates the forced migration present in a). His language, thus, has likely reversed, albeit arbitrarily his syntactical arrangement. Following a generic understanding of ancient Greek history, Sheffer could assume that conquest and voluntary migration characterize all Greek civilization and should, thus, be the presumed impetus for any Greek migration. Along a similar metanarrative trajectory, his implication that original Jewish use of diaspora indicates forced migration undergirds myopic claims that Jewish use of diaspora carried negative connotations of punishment and trauma. As a result, both of Sheffer's invocations of Jewish and Greek migration follow standard metanarratives of Jewish and Hellenistic civilizations.

Thus, if this is the logic underlying Sheffer's assessment of his evidence—i.e. archive—his construction has uncritically invoked a unilinear metanarrative of Greek history and conflated Athenians and Aeginetans into a homogenous and univocal articulation of Greek ethno-nationality at the expense of the actual texts. If Sheffer has not made these unilinear and univocal presumptions of Greek history, it is difficult to conceive why or how he developed such novel and independent readings of either Deut 28.25 or *War* 2.27.²³⁵ On the other

²³⁵ I try my best to refrain from asserting any one interpretation as a misreading, particularly if I cannot clearly identify the author's logic.

hand, if my conjecture is accurate, his construction of diaspora betrays the myopic symptoms of Hegelian Colour-blindness. It, then, additionally (re)presents the historical synthesis of the classic Hegelian dialectic between Greeks (voluntary: those with agency: freedom) and Jews (forced: those without agency: enslavement). The persistent substructural influence of Hegelian-Colour-blindness identified in both modern approaches to Africans and Acts of the Apostles is again observable as framing the discourse and historiography of a field at the heart of this study's intellectual and contextual setting. This extended analysis of Sheffer's description of the origin of the term diaspora is helpful for gleaning the arguments and assumptions underlying his, otherwise excellent work, but is also instructive for previewing Diaspora Studies in general. Sheffer's reading models many practices found rampant within Diaspora Studies.

Petrified Root:
Diaspora Origin(s), a Disciplined Consensus

Though exemplary, Gabriel Sheffer is not alone in claiming, "Thus, already at a very early period, the term had been applied to two of the oldest ethno-national diasporas—the Jewish and the Greek—that had been established outside of their homelands as a result of both voluntary and forced migrations."²³⁶ This belief is also evident in Tölölyan's reference to Dubnow, as well as the above citations of McKeown and Gamlen.²³⁷ Sheffer is simply one of many possible models that believe the term's origin is singular and retrievable.

Having determined that a singular meaning of diaspora existed for two millennia and then identified the etymological origin of the term diaspora, theorists further establish the fixed origin of the concept of diaspora by linking the term's etymology to its original conceptual meaning. They, thus, are able to (re)construct, (re)present, and delimit the original concept of diaspora as a fixed and singular semantic range rooted in Jewish

²³⁶ Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*, 9.

²³⁷ In Chapter Four I contain a brief, but more elaborate discussion of Simon Dubnow and his influential (re)conceptions of diaspora as a mode of de-territorializing notions of nationalism and the nation-state in Jewish context.

history and experience. This fixed meaning at times appeals to pre-Jewish usage, but, more times than not, asserts that the concept, in its fully developed conceptualization, is a third century BCE Jewish neologism found in Deut 28.25. Consequently, even withstanding the problems observed in scholarly use of *War* 2.27, theorists depict the term's original meaning as negatively construed within a semantic realm of forced migration, exile and trauma. The various presentations contain an argument whose coherence appears obscured as they infer a standard pattern of philological archeology:

- Emphasis on the etymology of the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*);
- Illustrate the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*)'s non-Jewish, original meaning by inspecting figurative use of the verb σπείρω (*speirō*);
- Identification of Deut 28.25 as the paradigmatic attestation and the noun's first use.

One is regularly left wondering whether their identifications of this root refers to the first conceptualization of the phenomena of dispersed peoples maintaining connection, first use of any compound derivate of δια- (*dia-*) and σπείρω (*speirō*); or first use of the specific noun διασπορά (*diaspora*). The ambiguity permeating these scholars' language and etymological (re)constructions gives cause for suspicion and pause.

In the midst of this popularized—i.e. canonized—depiction of diaspora's fixed origin (b), it is important to recognize that Diaspora Studies continues to have theorists make advances. Enhanced scrutiny of the term diaspora has led to the correction of some of the now canonized depictions of diaspora's origin. Martin Baumann, Stéphane Dufoix and Kevin Kenny offer some of the most nuanced and detailed corrections.²³⁸ Baumann,

²³⁸ Dufoix, "Deconstructing and Reconstructing 'Diaspora': A Study in Socio-Historical Semantics"; Baumann, "Diaspora"; Kenny, *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction*; The former authors exemplify theorists that overtly engage the field of Diaspora Studies and its transdisciplinary practice. Their

at an early stage, describes depictions of pre-Jewish Greek use of diaspora as colonization as erroneous and notes that the LXX never uses the concept of diaspora to translate the Hebrew concept of exile—גלה [golah, to uncover, or reveal; to leave; to go into exile] and גלות [galut. exile, exiles].²³⁹ Dufoix, in addition to his outstanding primer to Diaspora Studies, *Diasporas*, addresses numerous inaccurate assumptions about the origins of the term in his 2009 article, particularly the term's absence from *War* 2.27. Kenny's contribution to Oxford Press's *A Very Short Introduction* series, highlights the multiple trajectories of the concept and the concept's early religious connotations.

These improved assessments, however, continue to conflate διασπορά (*diaspora*) and διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) into a single literary history. Kenny exemplifies the persistence of these fixed-origin perceptions. He employs language that is more open, qualifies the origin of diaspora as polymorphous and temporally specifies his examples. Yet, he still fails to fully escape the shadow of the consensus myth. Under a sub-heading titled, "Origins," he states:

The Greek noun *diaspora* derives from the verb *diaspeirein*, a compound of "dia" (over or through) and "speirein" (to scatter or sow). The word emerged from the proto-Indo-European root, *spr*, which can be found

correctives often deal directly with erroneous assumptions about the origin of the term and its etymology. These scholars, however, are not alone in offering insightful critiques of theories and discourses of diaspora. Numerous scholars have contributed helpful critiques and nuances of diaspora over the fields development. I omit them from the former list because many of these critiques rarely provide broad depictions or definitions of the term or its ancient use. They also are often based in specific application of the term in a specific area of study. As a consequence, their critiques at times offer correctives to specific research and discursive practices, but remain rooted upon the larger practices and assumptions. For some of the theorists that I find most informative and insightful critics, See Boyarin and Boyarin, "Diaspora"; Clifford, "Diasporas"; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Spaces of Dispersal," *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994): 339–44; Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World," *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (2000): 11–45; Jonathan Boyarin, "Introduction," in *Powers of Diaspora: Two Essays on the Relevance of Jewish Culture*, ed. Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 1–34; Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," (ed. Braziel and Mannur).

²³⁹ Baumann, "Conceptualizing Diaspora. The Preservation of Religious Identity in Foreign Parts, Exemplified by Hindu Communities Outside India," 19–21; Baumann, "Diaspora," 314–318.

today in such English words as “spore,” “sperm,” “spread,” and “disperse.” In all of its various uses, diaspora has something to do with scattering and dispersal. To the ancient Greeks, diaspora seems to have signified mainly a process of destruction. Epicurus used diaspora to refer to the decomposition of matter and its dissolution into smaller parts. Human communities subject to the destructive force of diaspora were similarly split asunder. Thucydides employed diaspora in this way, in a minor passage in the History of the Peloponnesian War (2:27), to describe the Athenians’ destruction of Aegina and the banishment and dispersal of its people.²⁴⁰

In similar ways, Baumann solidifies the origin of the diaspora-concept as a Jewish neologism and singularly rooted LXX use of the noun, where “post-Babylonian Jews theologially interpreted the Babylonian captivity as God’s punishment for their disobedience to the commands of the Torah.”²⁴¹ His acknowledgment of the variant attestation histories between pre-Jewish use of the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) and Jewish creation of the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) reifies belief in a fixed original term by dismissing the need to engage in pre-Jewish usage. The contributions and advancements of Baumann, Dufoix and Kenny are welcome and much needed. Yet, the majority of work in the field of Diaspora Studies continues to use the compound character of diaspora and Thucydides’ use of σπείρω (*speirō*) in *War 2.27* to establish the first stage in rooting the origin of diaspora as singularly fixed in agricultural imagery that signifies the forced deportation of ethno-national communities. Note, Baumann made his observations in both 1995 and 2000.

As shown in Baumann and Kenny, the increasingly nuanced depictions of the term’s early use are well-received. When considering Baumann and Kenny’s approach, which diminishes the presence of potential pre-Jewish usage, description of diaspora as a

²⁴⁰ Kenny, *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction*, 2.

²⁴¹ Baumann, “Diaspora,” 317.

neologism of Hellenistic Jewish translators continues to presume univocality. One of the most significant weaknesses to this description is either the continued conflation of *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) as a single term or the total-divorce between the noun and verb. The noun *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) may in fact be a Jewish neologism, but the verb *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) has both pre-LXX and LXX attestation and can provide insight to the term's early usage.²⁴² Each of these approaches is a hyper-response in search of singularity.²⁴³

A number of the citations included above reveal the variant ways that theorists achieve the second-stage of establishing the origin of diaspora as a univocal expression of Jewish discourse. Some depict pre-Jewish use of the term diaspora as a non-technical mirror of the LXX concept, others focus on the LXX's extension of the term diaspora into a fully-developed concept of import, while others, following Baumann's insights, present diaspora as both a term and concept as a solely Jewish creation by focusing on the noun *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and removing considerations of the verb *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*). With each claim:

- Diaspora had a single meaning prior to the 1960s;
- Jewish invention of the diaspora-concept centers on a single root meaning;
- The origin of the concept of diaspora involves ethno-national description of multi-destination migration and minoritization;

Theorists re-affirm belief in a privileged, retrievable and univocal origin for Diaspora Studies.

²⁴² For a discussion of early Greek use of *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) see Chapter Four. See also, Arowele, "Diaspora-Concept in the New Testament"; Unnik, *Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora*; Schmidt, "TDNT Diaspora."

²⁴³ If these theories focused solely on the etymology of the Greek noun, their (re)construction would appear more tenable.

Fossilized Construction(s):
Diaspora Semantics, a Disciplined Consensus

Because diaspora's popularity and value stem originate in Jewish articulations of self and past, the concept's root can delimit a specific and original semantic range that involves exile, punishment and trauma. A single LXX attestation (Deut 28.25) predominates Diaspora Studies as **the** first and exemplary use of the term. Deuteronomy 28.25, as evident in Sheffer's citation, functions as the definitive and paradigmatic ancient Jewish use, symbolizing the totality of Jewish conceptions of diaspora. Predating Sheffer and within a separate intellectual trajectory, George Shepperson opens his 1966 essay:

Thou shall be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth," said the Lord God of Jews, according to Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, verse 25: and from then onwards, the Jewish Dispersal or Diaspora swept over the world.²⁴⁴

John Durham Peters illustrates how both pre-Jewish etymology and Jewish neologistic find their full expression through their Deuteronomistic usage:

The term *diaspora* first appeared in the Septuagint... Used in Deuteronomy 28:25, the term *diaspora* combines *dia* (through, throughout) with *spora* (sowing, scattering, dissemination; related to the English *spore*, *spread*, and *sperm*). The notion of diaspora as the dispersed Jewish community outside the holy land was widely seen as a penalty for national transgression...Ever since, exile has been a leitmotif of Jewish thought, not only political but metaphysical.²⁴⁵

As is discussed further below, the insistence that Deut 28.25 encapsulates the totality of the ancient meaning of diaspora and proves its original Jewish usage is further problematic. The close connection between the concept of diaspora and Jewish history and experience is undebatable. That Jewish meaning and usage was singular, fixed and

²⁴⁴ George Shepperson, "The African Diaspora—or the African Abroad," *African Forum: A Quarterly Journal of African Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1966): 76–93.

²⁴⁵ Bold added for emphasis. John Durham Peters, "Exile, Nomadism, and Diaspora: The Stakes of Mobility in the Western Canon," in *Visual Culture: Spaces of Visual Culture*, ed. Joanne Morra and Marquard Smith (Taylor & Francis, 2006), 23.

identical to non-Jewish use is the implicit unilinear and univocal claim that Diaspora Studies suggests. One sees how Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur assert that Jewish usage pertained solely to exile and displaced persons. In their edited volume, *Theorizing Diaspora*, they claim:

Etymologically derived from the Greek term *diaspeirein*, from *dia-*, “across” and *-speirein*, “to sow or scatter seeds,” diaspora can perhaps be seen **as a naming of the other which has historically referred to displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration, or exile. First used in the Septuagint**...to describe the Jews living in exile from the homeland of Palestine, diaspora suggests a dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and a relocation in one or more nation-states, territories or countries.²⁴⁶

Possibly one of the most internally conflicted, but thoroughly detailed presentations of diaspora’s original meaning is Minna Rozen’s. The body of her text participates in the Diaspora Studies’ consensus myth by exchanging a definition of σπείρω (*diaspeirō*) for διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*). She, then, invokes Deut 28.25, providing a thorough reading and explanation of the term’s original meaning.

Stemming from the Greek verb *diaspeiro* (διασπείρω = to sow), the term diaspora (διασπορά) was first used in the Septuagint.⁶⁵ “The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and thou **shalt be removed into** all the kingdoms of the earth” [Deuteronomy 28: 25]. The last part of this verse “thou shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth” was the translation of the Hebrew expression “*hayita le-za’avah*,” which literally means “thou shalt become a horror to all the kingdoms on the earth.” Thus, although the Greek word diaspora came to denote the Hebrew term *pezurah* (Jeremiah, 50:17), in essence it was a euphemized translation of another word altogether: horror. The term diaspora still encapsulates the horror of the original biblical expression. **In Jewish tradition, diaspora sums up the idea of galut —exile — horror.** Since a human being cannot live indefinitely in a state of horror, the word diaspora was invented to render the exiled Jews’ condition more

²⁴⁶ Bold added. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, “Nation, Migration, Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies,” in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, ed. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 2–22.

tolerable.²⁴⁷

I kept the notation for her footnote sixty-five. After claiming that Jewish translators were the first to use the term diaspora, Rozen explains in her footnote, “The word was used in Greek before the Septuagint with reference to the dispersal of matter as opposed to people — the sense that is used in the Septuagint.”²⁴⁸ One is left attempting to discern in what sense Rozen claims a pre-Jewish meaning juxtaposed to the term first being used in the Septuagint. While Rozen refrains from using *War 2.27*, her nebulous distinction between applying diaspora to matter and to groups of people still raises problems.

Rozen’s detailed explanation of Deut 28.25 and suggestion that diaspora was a neologism to psychologically ameliorate their tormented condition is very useful. It clarifies the logic behind this prominent depiction of diaspora’s original semantic intention. It also explicitly demonstrates the connection between the idea of exile and diaspora. While the Hebrew words גלה [*golah*, to uncover, or reveal; to leave; to go into exile] and גלות [*galut*, exile, exiles] have significant emic and scriptural relevance to narratives of Jewish history and experience. References to exile and forcible removal from lands have occurred throughout the citations provided in the above texts. Septuagint translators, however, never use διασπορά (*diaspora*) and διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) to render *golah* or *galut*. Yet, theorist regularly imply that the Hebrew words

²⁴⁷ Bold is in original text. Minna Rozen, “People of the Book, People of the Sea: Mirror Images of the Soul,” in *Homelands and Diaspora: Greeks, Jews, and Migration*, ed. Minna Rozen, International Library of Migration Studies 2 (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 43–44.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 337.

for διασπορά (*diaspora*) and διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) are *golah* and *galut*.²⁴⁹ Alan Avery-Peck pens a dictionary entry where directly beneath the heading Diaspora, he begins:

DIASPORA

(Hebrew, “Golah,” or Galut”). The term designating Jewish areas of settlement outside the land of Israel from the period of the Babylonian Exile of 586 B.C.E. and on...²⁵⁰

The massive and influential edited volume, *Les diasporas: 2000 ans d’histoire* explains:

Le terme de diaspora plonge ses racines dans la langue grecque et repose sur la transcription du mot hébreu, *Galout*. Construit sur le verbe *speiro* (semmer) et le préfixe *dia* (au-delà) du grec ancien, le terme réfère aux notions de migration et de colonisation.

This analysis reveals a uniformity to Diaspora Studies’ discussion about the origins of the term diaspora. This uniformity consists of uncritical assumptions and the repetition of interpretive (re)constructions as obvious fact. The result is a field of Diaspora Studies that initiates its conceptualization of diaspora by envisioning a singular and fixed root. A single root is an ideal launching point for constructing unilinear and univocal histories. When theorists note the presence of pre-LXX and Jewish semantic ranges they homogenize them into a single origin and meaning or they dismiss one as ancillary. The compound nature of diaspora and its pre-LXX meaning enhances the beginnings of the diaspora concept as rooted in Jewish history and experience. Its supposed agricultural essence and original affiliation with exile solidify the term’s Jewish

²⁴⁹ Avery-Peck, “Diaspora”; Bolaffi, “Diaspora”; Cross and Livingstone, “Diaspora”; W. Berthomière, “Diaspora: An Overview of a Concept at the Crossroads of Nation-State and Transnationalism,” in *Comparative European Research in Migration, Diversity and Identities*, ed. Wolfgang Bosswick and Charles Husband (Bilbao, ES: University of Deusto Press, 2005), 25–32; Lisa Anteby-Yemini and William Berthomière, “Avant-propos - Di(a)positif: décrire et comprendre les diasporas,” in *Les diasporas, 2000 Ans d’Histoire*, ed. Lisa Anteby-Yemini, William Berthomière, and Gabriel Sheffer (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2005), 9–20; Tölölyan, “Rethinking Diaspora (s).”

²⁵⁰ Bold is in original text. Avery-Peck, “Diaspora,” 346; Baumann corrects this misinformation. Baumann, “Diaspora”; Though Tölölyan associates exile loosely with the paradigm of exile, he notes that the term does not translate diaspora in the Septuagint. Tölölyan, “Rethinking Diaspora (s).”

meaning. This practice is endemic of *le même* epistemologies. With strikingly similarity to Hegel's philosophy of history, Diaspora Studies approaches the origin of diaspora through assimilation and exclusion. As Hegel was unable to see his own intellectual relatedness to Wilhelm Amo, Diaspora Studies launches its conceptions of diaspora from a fixed-origin constructed within myopic and under-critical analysis.

***Extending Diaspora as Paradigmatic Root and Beyond:
Trajectory and Scholarly Application (mx)***

Conceptual Overview

One of the most influential statements marking the beginning of contemporary diaspora studies was Safran's article in the opening issue of the then new journal, *Diaspora*. Safran was strongly influenced by the underlying paradigmatic case of the Jewish diaspora, but correctly perceived that many other ethnic groups were experiencing analogous circumstances due perhaps to the difficult circumstances surrounding their departure from their places of origin and/or as a result of their limited acceptance in their places of settlement. Safran was, of course, not alone in recognizing the expanded use of the concept of diaspora, but he was crucial in seeking to give some social scientific contour to the new claims rather than allow a journalistic free-for-all to develop.²⁵¹

The second and third constituent elements that I find foundational to Diaspora Studies' variable conceptualizations of diaspora are its unilinear metanarrative (m) and the variant field-specific areas of research for which the concept of diaspora is engaged (x). As in the linear function $y = mx + b$, a close relationship exists between the constant paradigmatic trajectory (m) and the independent and variable field of expertise (x) to which the trajectory is applied. One can view the result of applying a paradigmatic trajectory to a specific field of research as a distinct entity united via an almost intrinsic rapprochement. Isolated identification and discussion of the metanarrative is difficult due to its integrative role. Applied to various contexts and specific fields of research (x) and

²⁵¹ Cohen, *Global Diasporas, Second Edition*, 4 Bold has been added for emphasis.

predicated on perceptions of the terms fixed Jewish-origin, the metanarrative is an independent variable that moderates and essentializes—i.e. expresses the general as universal—notions of diaspora within Diaspora Studies. The direct interdependence and mutual amplification of the metanarrative and field of research (mx) make it difficult to discuss either constituent part in isolation. Any discussion of the paradigm (m) has immediate inference to how theorists build analogies with their own areas of expertise. The below discussions, intending to concentrate independently on the metanarrative (m) and subject of research (x), will undoubtedly involve some overlap, in addition to continued inferences to the term's original meaning (b), outlined in the above section.

The metanarrative identified within Diaspora Studies is constant, undergirding and dictating theorists' conceptualization of the term. While the point of origin (b), serves as the starting point for understanding diaspora, it also signals scholars to engage the term's archival origins to understand the essence and historical significance of the term. The unilinear metanarrative is largely predicated upon four points:

1. The identification of a fixed original meaning;
2. The assertion that the term's original usage is broadly analogous to a variety of experiences beyond the scope of the term's limited original meaning;
3. An endemic primitivism that revolves around the potential for analogies and privileges the term's origin as paradigmatic and metaphorical;
4. A belief that diaspora, as a paradigm, provides a useful frame for (re)constructing history and analyzing current human experience.

The archival origins, as depicted in discussion of the point of origin primarily consists of Jewish history, experience and Deut 28.25. Reliant upon contextual (re)constructions of Jewish experience and history, this metanarrative relies upon a generalized narrative of Jewish history and experience from which theorists deem certain

aspects essential. These essential aspects of the Jewish narrative persist as a basis for the identification of diaspora as paradigmatic. The generalized narrative is always a selective and contextual construction, though scholars rarely acknowledge this reality.

Simultaneous to this (re)construction, theorists identify those “essential” parts, largely based on the heuristic needs of their chosen field of research.

When describing contemporary Jewish conceptions of diaspora, Sander Gilman discusses the relationships between history and historiography and identity. Without explicitly framing it as metanarrative, Gilman presents the conceptualization of the diaspora concept as the “construction of organizational categories by the authors and the readers of texts.”²⁵² As Gilman primarily frames his discussion as an emic term contextualized within intra-Jewish discourse, he notes that “[w]e inscribe who we believe ourselves to be and where we believe we came from in these texts we call history. Identity is what you imagine yourself and the other to be; history and historiography is the writing of the narratives of that difference.”²⁵³ This construction consists of both syntactic—i.e. organization—and semantic elements negotiated by the contextual interaction of reader, subject and object, and can thus be understood as the governing metanarrative identified in my assessment.

Gilman’s observations are equally relevant for other communal contexts that conceive diaspora as an emic term as well as etic uses that purport distance and objectivity in their theorization of diaspora. If one’s field of expertise benefits from notions of return being present, Jewish discourse of return becomes a part of the

²⁵² Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Frontiers : Essays on Bodies, Histories, and Identities* (Gordonsville, VA, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 3, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/alltitles/docDetail.action?docID=10089188>.

²⁵³ Ibid.

metanarrative; if questions of assimilation and hybridity are prominent, then alternative aspects of the Jewish metanarrative are identified. If diaspora need only depict geopolitical migration, then the diversity of Jewish migration throughout history becomes the essential characteristic that moderates their definition. Undoubtedly, regardless of the field-specific needs, the vast majority of theorists invoke the point of origin (b) to construct a unilinear vision of Jewish history and experience that provides an analogy to which their field-specific area of study can be amplified and moderated.

The identified metanarrative, consequently, relies upon historical (re)constructions and valuations of Jewish antiquity—both events of Jewish past(s) and representations of Jewish theology and thought. Geographic migration, biblical narrative, exile, punishment and trauma are key signifiers that pattern interpretations of diaspora's essential paradigmatic meaning. The construction of a generic metanarrative paradigmatically structured after Jewish history leads to the subsequent conceptualizing of diaspora through the metanarrative's analogous utility to a field of research (x). In the course of discussing the product (mx) of Diaspora Studies' unilinear metanarrative and transdisciplinary applications, I characterize the field as concurrently governed by the creation and performance of poetic literary practice and plagued by a neurosis predicated upon a paranoia that the variable use of the term will lead to the loss of its heuristic value.

Application by Analogy (x)

One of the main reasons that interest in Diaspora Studies increased following the de-colonization and independence movements of the twentieth century is due the concept's seeming applicability to a variety of contexts. Theorists and thinkers

presumed that the concept of diaspora was able to describe and explain aspects of reality that nineteenth century notions of the nation-state and its assimilation propaganda failed to adequately engage. Suddenly, diaspora's broader application provided analogies between a greater and more inclusive range of human experiences and people-groups. Diaspora became an entity enabling scholars to make sense of present realities with immediate socio-cultural and political import. This immediate benefit corresponds to the economic significance of Diaspora Studies with an enhanced cachet. No longer solely an emic concept and appropriated to do more than generally describe an aspect of the past, the concept of diaspora and Diaspora Studies sustained an actual scholarly economy. In line with the economy of Diaspora Studies, scholars want to study objects in an effort to better understand the present world and its social, political and economic complexes. Their objective is to categorize/classify communities of people. Thus they want to pinpoint diaspora, and its nature in ways that give them a language, typologies, generalized trajectories (metanarratives), and corollaries for investigating, discussing, organizing research, or extrapolating.

For instance, Shepperson's essay acknowledges the long-standing discursive tradition within the African Diaspora that employed Jewish history and experience as a lens for discussing Black experience and memory. Yet, he specifically links the analytical import of diaspora as legitimating and shifting scholarly approaches pertaining what subjects are legitimate for study within the Academy. Shepperson observes that while there is a "tendency to neglect the subject peoples in the study of the great migrations," the application of originally Jewish concept of diaspora, "not only created a term which could be applied to any other substantial and significant group of migrants,

but also provided a concept which could be used to interpret the experiences (often very bitter experiences) of other peoples who had been driven out of their native countries by forces similar to those which had dispersed the Jews: in particular, slavery and imperialism.”²⁵⁴ The benefits of diaspora, according to Shepperson, extend beyond the insight provided by a Jewish paradigm, but also legitimated the study and integration of subject people’s into the study and writing of history.²⁵⁵

In order to use the concept of diaspora for scientific research the term needs to be reproducible, and applicable to their specific field of research. Few scholars theorize and opine on the notion of diaspora outside of how it relates to their discipline. This impetus is the reason the term has begun showing up in dictionaries and resource books for Global Studies, Postcolonialism, Migration Studies, Biblical Studies, Race and Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, and Classics. The concept, however construed, is applicable to any valid subspecialty(x).²⁵⁶

Unilinear Metanarratives (m)

Constructions of diaspora generally view diaspora as a paradigmatic term that utilizes metanarratives extrapolated from assumptions inferred by readings of the point of

²⁵⁴ George Shepperson, “Introduction,” in *The African Diaspora: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Martin L. Kilson and Robert I. Rotberg (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 1–2.

²⁵⁵ Of course, some early categorical definitions, based on Hegelian Colour-blindness and diversity related neurosis, sought to exclude certain articulations of diaspora.

²⁵⁶ Early in Diaspora Studies scholars depended on Jewish experience as the lone meaning of Diaspora. As such, they described this process as “metaphor.” Shepperson in Africana studies, Armstrong in political science, and Safran in sociology each attempt to define and discuss non-Jewish application of the term diaspora as metaphorical use. George Shepperson, “The African Abroad or the African Diaspora,” in *Emerging Themes of African History*, ed. Terrence O. Ranger (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), 152–76; George Shepperson, “African Diaspora: Concept and Context,” in *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*, ed. Joseph E. Harris, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1993), 41–50; Armstrong, “Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas”; Clifford, “Diasporas”; Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies.”

origin (b). Consequently, these metanarratives rely upon historical (re)constructions and valuations of Jewish antiquity. Geographic migration, biblical narrative, exile, punishment and trauma are key signifiers that pattern interpretations of diaspora's essential paradigmatic meaning. Therefore, diaspora's establishment of a fixed point of origin (b) for the concept of diaspora is foundational for the Diaspora Studies' production of a constant and unilinear metanarrative (m).

Metanarratives, as discussed in the Introduction, consist of their own syntactic arrangements and infer their own logic and axiology. Interacting with both syntactic and semantic spheres, they can be internal components of some paradigms or the discursive byproducts of others. It is this figurative dimension of metanarratives that is most characteristic of Diaspora Studies' engagement with the concept of diaspora.

Before establishing parallels, a metanarrative of Jewish experience and reality is first constructed. The point of origin (b) for the diaspora concept serves as the starting point.

By conceiving the origin of diaspora as essentially Jewish, the term's meaning and value rests solely in its ability to build analogies with various subjects (x). Illustrating this perspective analogous, William Safran implies that scholars underutilized the concept of diaspora prior to the late twentieth century expressly because its meaning was singular and static for millennia. The term's scholarly use is, in and of itself, of little value to social scientists except that it permits the study of other subjects. He argues:

This omission [of attention to diaspora in books on nationalism and ethnonationalism] is not surprising, for through the ages, the *Diaspora* had a very specific meaning: the exile of the Jews from their historic homeland and their dispersion throughout many lands, **signifying as well the oppression and moral degradation implied by that dispersion. But unique phenomenon is not very useful for social scientists attempting**

to make generalizations. ²⁵⁷

A number of scholars have identified the problematic nature of depicting Jewish Diaspora as monolithic or homogenous. However, withstanding this acknowledgement, the majority of theorists within Diaspora Studies take one of two paths to reifying the homogenous dimension of diaspora as a paradigm: i) the affirmative description of Jewish life and existence as monolithic or homogenous; ii) a corrective attitude that describes ancient Jewish articulations of diaspora as specific univocal, homogenous or hegemonic representations of Jewish history and experience with the greater diversity and heterogeneity of Judaism and Jewish history.²⁵⁸

For instance, when Safran explains that Diaspora's original meaning held a specific meaning, which was Jewish, he goes on to subsume the totality of its meaning with exile, oppression and moral degradation. This general historicization of Jewish history and notions of diaspora allow Safran to outline a paradigm for his categorical definition of diaspora. Safran defines diaspora as expatriate minority communities that "share several" of six paradigmatic characteristics, which I paraphrase:

1. Dispersal from a specific original center to multiple "peripheral," or foreign regions by a people and/or their ancestors;
2. Retainment of a collective memory or myth about an original homeland;

²⁵⁷ Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," 83 Bold added for emphasis.

²⁵⁸ Gilman provides an informative analysis of the diaspora concept with respect to Zionism and the present nation-state of Israel. In the course of his assessment, Gilman makes a similar observation. He frames his finding in regards to the role of center and periphery in conceptions of Jewish experience and diaspora. He suggests that, "o Since the post-Egyptian biblical narrative, the reader finds the center defined as the God-given space of the Jews speaking the authentic language of the Jews; all other Jewish experience lies beyond. But beyond is a space poisoned by the very notion of the center. The competing notions of Diaspora and Galut that structure Jewish historiography presuppose a model of center and periphery and condemn the periphery to remain marginal. These concepts can be understood as either cosmopolitan (good) or rootless (bad) in their expression. The Jews are either the exemplary people at home in the world or are so isolated from any natural attachment to place that they become the consummate mimics of everyone else on the frontier." Gilman, *Jewish Frontiers*, 3.

3. Feeling of alienation from host country and subsequent belief that they are not and may never be fully accepted;
4. View of ancestral homeland as true, ideal home to which they or their descendants should return;
5. Belief in the collective and committed maintenance/restoration of their ancestral homeland;
6. Continued relationship or identification with the ancestral homeland and ethnocommunal consciousness.²⁵⁹

Yet, scholars advancing categorical definitions are not alone in their myopic depiction of Jewish history and experience. The recurring emphasis found among Diaspora Studies' (re)construction of the term's fixed point of origin and conceptual corollary to exile and trauma discussed above help reveal the seeds of univocal metanarrative in Diaspora Studies as a field. In his attempt to explain the positive contributions of Caribbean and Black British identification with diaspora and depict diaspora the concept as a term that celebrates hybridity and diversity, Hall advances his vision as "new" and the traditional view as "old."²⁶⁰ Highlighting the figurative and metaphorical value of cultural identity, Hall describes diaspora:

The 'New World' presence - America, Terra Incognita - is therefore itself

²⁵⁹ Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," 83–84.

²⁶⁰ Jonathan Boyarin provides a pointed critique of Stuart Hall that explains how Hall's hybridity-based definition of diaspora reifies a distorted and monolithic view of Judaism. Boyarin, "Introduction"; Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 235–236 Boyarin provides a pointed and useful critique of Hall's language. Though singled out for his use of a "caricature" of Zionism to represent the entirety of Judaism, Hall is by no means alone in this practice. As shown in the preceding section on the point of origin (b), Diaspora Studies largely approaches ancient Jewish notions of diaspora in this way. While Hall's use of Old and New world appear problematic, one may be able to contextualize Hall's use of Old and New within the context of his article. Hall omits any explicit reference to Judaism or Jewish history, and is unclear whether the Old and new he refers to is within the context of European history or the history of cultural studies and Academia. Additionally, Hall attempts to qualify his use of Old and New within the article as metaphoric representations in opposition to Eurocentrism. Thus, aspects of Hall's article employ Old and New as non-temporal, non-chronological signifiers that operate synchronically as opposed to diachronically. If alternatively read along these lines, critics such as Boyarin and Stratton that criticize theorist for ignoring, obscuring or divorcing diaspora theory from its Jewish context remains accurate, but Boyarin's critique of the invocation of a caricatured metanarrative based on a straw-man argument has less standing. Additionally, one may link Hall's use of "old" to James Clifford's influential survey, where he references "old" strategies by saying, "It is now widely understood that the old localizing strategies...may obscure as much as they reveal." (Clifford 303). Clifford, "Diasporas," 303.

the beginning of diaspora, of diversity, of hybridity and difference, what makes Afro-Caribbean people already people of a diaspora. **I use this term here metaphorically, not literally: diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the imperialising, the hegemonising, form of 'ethnicity'. We have seen the fate of the people of Palestine at the hands of this backward-looking conception of diaspora - and the complicity of the West with it.** The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. One can only think here of what is uniquely - 'essentially' – Caribbean...²⁶¹

Thus, even in his rejection of a static, colonizing and homogenous view of cultural identity and diaspora, Hall uncritically reifies myopic reconstructions of Jewish history and experience. Attempting to move away from conceptions of cultural identity that infer hegemony and essentialism within their metanarratives, Hall actually defines diaspora by invoking and affirming the historical validity of that very univocal metanarrative.

Despite Hall's implicit caricature of Jewish culture and history and Boyarin's critique said representation, a number of intriguing trends reveal common practices between these two scholars that also helps characterize the diverse articulations found within Diaspora Studies. Both theorists present their theoretical consideration of diaspora as a response to Western practices of univocality and nation-state centered constructs of identity, and both theorists to situate their definitions within their personal intellectual and contextual context: Boyarin in the context of twenty-first century non-Zionist, Jewish ideology; Hall as a Black Brittain of Jamaican ancestry. In each case, their critique of

²⁶¹ Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," (ed. Rutherford), 235.

univocality and historical linearity becomes a rallying cry for conceiving diaspora theory as a radical departure from hegemony, colonialism, ahistoricism and privileging of difference. Both authors perceived their present social, political and ideological circumstances as analogous to the phenomena of diaspora and the experiences encompassed under its aegis.

The contextual nature of each of these practices correspond the chosen metanarrative to the theorists specific field of inquiry (x). Consequently, even those theorists critiquing the univocal views of diaspora frequently inscribe that metanarrative at the heart of their definitions. James Clifford's much cited and excellent work on diaspora is susceptible to such practice.²⁶² Where Clifford warns scholars against overly essentializing the term, he also speaks of recognizing "the strong entailment of Jewish history on the language of diaspora without making that history a definitive model."²⁶³ However, he still recognizes "Jewish (and Greek and Armenian) diasporas...as nonnormative starting points for a discourse that is traveling or hybridizing in new global conditions."²⁶⁴ Here, Clifford has invoked language strikingly similar to Hall's "Old" and "New", while also suggesting that as a fixed point of origin (b) the Jewish diaspora and its closest parallels should be treated as non-normative because the "new" post-Jewish understandings of diaspora are "traveling or hybridizing." Implicit is a historical representation of a Jewish paradigm of diaspora that has not "traveled" or been "hybrid" over its two millennia past.

²⁶² Clifford, "Diasporas."

²⁶³ Ibid., 306.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

Again, through a theorist's heuristic preference on social and contextual conditions, they incidentally reified univocal and unilinear metanarrative of Jewish history, experience and the conceptual trajectory of the concept of diaspora. While Safran and Hall exemplify theorists that invoke univocal metanarratives of Jewish history and experience, Boyarin and other scholars reject such historical reconstructions while continuing to champion a vision of diaspora as a typology properly modeled after specific (re)constructions of Jewish existence. While these approaches vary, they by and large, reify the original metanarrative either as:

- Historically accurate and the basis for paradigmatic replication—e.g. Safran;
- Historically accurate but theoretically irrelevant since the general phenomenon is paradigmatically modeled upon socio-political circumstances instead of historically situated attitudes and ideology—e.g. Hall; Clifford;
- Historically inaccurate, but an accurate representation of the meaning behind diaspora and the ideology of the ancient Jewish context(s) responsible for developing and employing the concept—e.g. Stratton; Scott; Sheffer; Cohen.²⁶⁵

Origin as Paradigm:

Figures, Analogy and the Poetic Game of Diaspora Studies

From Diaspora Studies' earliest stages, scholars have described in recurrent unison that the primary value of diaspora as a concept resides in its paradigmatic utility to discern previously underappreciated analogous subjects. In 1976, political scientist John Armstrong situates his work on diaspora as the beginning stage of theoretical development that builds a "typology" of different types of diaspora. Armstrong suggests that his typology is a "step towards theoretical development" that builds the value of

²⁶⁵ For examples, See Jon Stratton, "(Dis)placing the Jews: Historicizing the Idea of Diaspora," *DIASPORA* 6, no. 3 (1997): 301–29; Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*; Scott, "Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period"; Cohen, *Global Diasporas, Second Edition*.

diaspora in pointing towards, “extended longitudinal framework for adequate comparative investigation of the multiethnic polity.”²⁶⁶ Diaspora theory is the mechanism of establishing and legitimating scholarly value to the concept of diaspora. Armstrong employs an open definition of diaspora, identifying the term as, “any ethnic collectivity which lacks a territorial base within a given polity, i.e., is a relatively small minority throughout all portions of the polity,” yet identifies various types of diaspora that begin with considerations of the “archetypal diaspora.”²⁶⁷ Armstrong asserts that:

Because the Jews are commonly considered the model for all diasporas, I shall refer to the first subcategory, in which they fit, as the archetypal diaspora. The second subcategory may be termed the situational diaspora. As these terms imply, the superficial difference between the two subcategories is the completeness and permanence of the diaspora condition of the first, or archetypal, as compared to the partial and temporary condition as a diaspora of the situational ethnic group...²⁶⁸

In 1976, George Shepperson approached diaspora from a very different way, yet also described the term as primarily paradigmatic in its being foundationally “Jewish” and “applied” to other groups, or establishing “parallels.” Where Armstrong’s description identifies diaspora as a type of ethnic collectivity, Shepperson’s approach designates diaspora as a type of historically situated migration. For Shepperson:

The application of the Greek word for dispersion, *diaspora*, to this process of Jewish migration from their homeland into all parts of the world not only created a term which could be applied to any other substantial and significant group of migrants, but also provided a concept which could be used to interpret the experiences (often very bitter experiences) of other peoples who had been driven out of their native countries by forces similar to those which had dispersed the Jews: in particular, slavery and imperialism. It was perhaps inevitable that “diaspora” should come to be used of another great human migration which had been the result, too often, of slavery and imperialism but which, unlike the Jewish dispersion, did not become until recently the matter for intense study. When the expression ‘the African diaspora’ was first used it is difficult to say:

²⁶⁶ Armstrong, “Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas,” 393.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 394.

probably the 1960s could be claimed as its gestation period. However, the parallels and links between the Jewish and black African experiences of uprooting from their homelands had been noticed at least from the early nineteenth century.²⁶⁹

In its scholarly inception as a critical lens, the conceptualization of diaspora deals with the treatment and study of Black peoples based on Jewish paradigms and not necessarily the specific use of the term diaspora. Building on Shepperson's suggestion, African historian Elliot Skinner reveals a hybridity-based notion of diaspora that further emphasizes this view that the invocation of the concept of diaspora in Africana studies is merely one example of a long tradition of studying and discussing Black history and experience through their lens and analogy to Jewish history and discourse.

The concept of diaspora, sometimes defined as *galut*—exile or bondage—and as *golah*—a relatively stable community in exile—derives from the historic experience of the Jewish people. In many respects, the plight of the people of African descent, especially those in the New World, is similar to that of the Jews....Like the Jews, the Africans were victims of powerful imperialism...Peoples in the diaspora develop myths, rationalizations, and theories to explain their light. In many cases these ideas are created to counter explanations given by their enslavers or their countrymen still at home. The result is often a mass of dialectical contradictions.²⁷⁰

In each of these three examples, the scholar in question has described diaspora as a concept that implies a specific organizational—syntactic—structure with variable implications and associations—semantics—that scholars can employ in numerous ways to discuss, study and contextualize analogous circumstances. In essence, these scholars have depicted the concept of diaspora as a poetic figure that transforms social, cultural, political and historical observations into patterned systems with greater signifying value.

²⁶⁹ Shepperson, "Introduction," 1–2.

²⁷⁰ Elliott P Skinner, "The Dialectic between Diasporas and Homelands," in *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*, ed. Joseph E. Harris, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1993), 11–13.

These three examples illustrate a prevalent practice throughout Diaspora Studies, which is responsible for the production of the concept's unilinear metanarrative. Though framed by various definitions and approached in divergent ways, the valuation of diaspora as a paradigm based in a static root appears throughout Diaspora Studies.

There is an inherent danger in locating an entity's value as primarily figurative or paradigmatic. Over time, the process of defining a paradigm can disfigure and ossify the complex dynamism of an entity's being, while the process of building analogies can additionally wrest an entity's appearance, whether a material or conceptual being, away from its being: i.e., the semantic world is torn from its sign. The result is the transformation of the initial entity into a static caricature that is more or less a general and essentialized form of its own paradigm. This practice correlates to Trevor-Roper's ability to re-inscribe Hegelian and Jeffersonian notions of Africa, while operating in a drastically different intellectual and technological era. Africa was a figure whose analytic value lay in its ability to inform conversation about Europe, America and modernity.

Having identified the origin of the diaspora concept as fixed, Diaspora Studies theorists frequently essentialize and generalize this root as a model upon which diaspora as a concept can point towards some other observations. Instead of the entity maintaining value because of its character, nature and being, its value becomes reduced to its ability to point outward to something else. This practice has a specific twofold impact on perceived root origin (b) of diaspora. First, it prioritizes the concept of diaspora as a particular expression of Jewish history, and then it promotes belief in a univocal Jewish antiquity whose belief system and perception of non-Palestine existence remained static

and unchanged for nearly two millennia.²⁷¹ Its value, born from a static construction of Judaism, comes from what it is able to tell the Academy about non-Jewish subjects. The second effect that this practice has on Diaspora Studies' conceptions of diaspora is that it acquiesces to a vision of diaspora as essentially a Jewish object and phenomena. I am not arguing that Jewish existence is not unique, but more so that the diversity of Jewish responses to geopolitical dispersion becomes obscured by the propagation of a homogenous Jewish antiquity that perpetually stagnant and unchanged.

In the context of the concept of diaspora, theorists in Diaspora Studies utilize this fixed point of origin to delimit the structure of diaspora's paradigmatic basis. Among the three types of definitions of diaspora, one can expect a predisposition towards stringent paradigms of diaspora among categorical definitions. Thus, it is less surprising when Safran implies that the value of diaspora is in its paradigmatic quality and depicts scholarly use of diaspora as metaphoric. He claims:

Today, "diaspora" and, more specifically, "diaspora community" **seem increasingly to be used as metaphoric designations for several categories of people**—expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities *tout court*—in much the same way that "ghetto" has come to designate all kinds of crowded, constricted, and disprivileged urban environments, and "holocaust" has come to be applied to all kinds of mass murder.²⁷²

²⁷¹ This envisioning of a static Judaism comports with certain Christian anti-Judaism and supersessionism that construct images of Judaism as the negation of the West's modern nation-state, and thus anathema to the Western civilization. These (re)constructions relied on and propagated stereotypes and historical constructions of Judaism and Jews as legalistic, anti-progress, anti-social, unpatriotic and antagonistic towards their locations of residence specifically and Western civilization in general. Working alongside this anti-Judaism, notions of diaspora often works upon a similar model where diaspora, like messiah-oriented salvation, functions as a theological concept rooted in Jewish experience, misunderstanding and ultimate rejection. In this line of thought, diaspora, conceptualized in the LXX and subsequent Jewish thought as negative, becomes an additional example of Christian universalization, fulfilment and perfection of Jewish failure and rejection. While much of this logic remains unarticulated, the consequent theorization of diaspora, whose value begins in a Jewish concept, is useful only to the degree that it points outward toward other subjects. Often found within Diaspora Studies, diaspora invokes Judaism as the concept's essential origin to legitimate the use of a caricature of Jewish history and thought in order to acquire insights about fields of research.

²⁷² Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," 83 Bold added for emphasis.

Yet, the perspective of diaspora as a term whose value lies primarily in its poetic and metaphoric value extends beyond the limits of categorical definitions. The seemingly inclusive and deconstructive characteristics of open and hybridity-based definitions suggest that they would be more resistant to viewing diaspora as primarily valuable due to its paradigmatic quality. All three types of definitions found within Diaspora Studies reveal dependence on this view of the basis of diaspora's value as scholars use a variety of words to present diaspora's value as poetic and figurative. Stratton traces scholarly use of diaspora to 1876 calling it "metaphoric transfer".

Clearly, the thinking is that even for the Jews we can understand two kinds of "diaspora"; a literal one—limited to the original meaning of the term—which is the historical/mythic/religious understanding of the Babylonian captivity and the Roman exile, and one shaped by the **metaphoric transfer** of this sense to describe the mundane, large-scale movement of *Ostjuden* to the west.²⁷³

Shuval invokes Safran as she speaks of how, "[i]ndeed, the term diaspora has **acquired metaphoric implications** and is used more and more by displaced persons who feel, maintain, invent or revive a connection with a prior home."²⁷⁴ Patterson and Kelley's excellent work provides an open definition that frames diaspora as both "process and condition."²⁷⁵ Their presentation describes African and Black Atlantic discourse and scholarship as prominently containing a biblically rooted, "understanding of Ethiopia as the metaphor for a black worldwide movement against injustice, racism, and colonialism lay at the heart of the early historical scholarship on the role of African peoples in the making of the modern (and ancient) worlds."²⁷⁶ Also within Black Atlantic Studies, Brent

²⁷³ Stratton, "(Dis)placing the Jews," 302–303 Bold added for emphasis.

²⁷⁴ Judith T. Shuval, "Diaspora Migration: Definitional Ambiguities and a Theoretical Paradigm," *International Migration* 38, no. 5 (2000): 42 Bold added for emphasis.

²⁷⁵ Patterson and Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations."

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Bold added for emphasis.

Edwards advances a hybridity-based definition that speaks of, “the crystallization of these figurative allusions into a theoretical discourse of diaspora, explicitly in dialogue with the long-standing Jewish traditions behind the term...”²⁷⁷ while the postcolonial literature theorist Michelle Keown alludes to Clifford’s language by asserting that, “[t]he term [diaspora] once referred specifically to the dispersal of the Jews... has evolved to **operate as a traveling metaphor associated with tropes of mobility, displacement, borders and crossings.**”²⁷⁸ This poetic character becomes overtly expressed in terms of economic value when Banerjee claims that:

Amid this rethinking of spatial and temporal categories, the term *diaspora* has gained currency **as a productive frame** for reimagining locations, movements, identities, and social formations that have either been overlooked by earlier modes of analysis or, equally important, stand the chance of being flattened by the homogenizing effects of global capital.²⁷⁹

Rogers Brubaker describes the proliferation of the concept diaspora as the ‘diaspora’ diaspora and says that early discussions of diaspora within Diaspora Studies:

were concerned with a paradigmatic case, or a small number of core cases. **The paradigmatic case was**, of course, the Jewish diaspora; some dictionary definitions of diaspora, until recently, did not simply illustrate but defined the word with reference to that case... **As discussions of diasporas began to branch out to include other cases, they remained oriented**, at least initially, to this conceptual homeland to the Jewish case and the other ‘classical’ diasporas, Armenian and Greek.²⁸⁰

Robin Cohen is aware of the potential negative connotations generated by discussions of ideal types. He, thus, attempts to assuage these negative connotations

²⁷⁷ Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora,” 49.

²⁷⁸ Michelle Keown, David Murphy, and James Procter, “Introduction: Theorizing Postcolonial Diasporas,” in *Comparing Postcolonial Diasporas*, ed. Michelle Keown, David Murphy, and James Procter (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1–18.

²⁷⁹ Sukanya Banerjee, “Introduction: Routing Diasporas,” in *New Routes for Diaspora Studies*, ed. Sukanya Banerjee, Aims McGuinness, and Steven Charles McKay (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 1–22.

²⁸⁰ Rogers Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 2.

qualifying his terminology through discussion of prototypical diasporas, Weberian ‘ideal types’ of diaspora and real diasporas.²⁸¹ Even withstanding his nuanced nomenclature, the value of diaspora and the theorization of diaspora function primarily in the same way that other scholars describe Diaspora Studies’ understandings of diaspora as metaphorical, figurative, transferred, paradigmatic, model or analogous structure—i.e. metanarrative—that relates the term’s singularly fixed Jewish point of origin (b) the alternative subjects of analysis (x) through the presence of attitudes and ideologies, experiences, conditions or a set combination of all three.²⁸² of diaspora in Diaspora Studiconcept as metaphoric

These examples illustrate the initial stages of metanarrative construction for Diaspora Studies: i) the inference that Jewish origin of diaspora was static for almost two-thousand years, and b) the description of the term’s primary heuristic value being paradigmatic. The combination of these two processes ends up playing a formative role in the metanarrative produced and identified. If diaspora, as a concept, is fundamentally metaphorical or paradigmatic, then the substance of its meaning becomes inextricably rooted to and modeled after its point of origin. While certain scholars, such as James Clifford and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett warn against the normalization of constructions of the term’s Jewish origin, they too predispose their depictions of diaspora to value the term primarily in relation to its comparative and paradigmatic quality, thus, founding their definitions upon aspects of Jewish history and existence that they find foundational—i.e. paradigmatic.²⁸³ Consequently, the primary differences between

²⁸¹ Cohen, *Global Diasporas, Second Edition*, 4–5, 15–17.

²⁸² As observed in Hall, the relationship is inverse. The metanarrative, however, still remains a unilinear reaction to the univocal and unilinear metanarrative modeled after the point of origin (b).

²⁸³ Clifford, “Diasporas”; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Spaces of Dispersal.”

definitions within Diaspora Studies resides not in the overall approach or history, but upon the contextual selection and prioritization of what aspects of the term's point of origin (b) they find most valuable for generalizing or building analogy.

Excursus: Diversity Related Neurosis

As a field birthed in the era of postmodernity, de-colonialism and neo-colonialism a significant amount of Diaspora Studies surprisingly revolves around the formation of an objective, delimited and centralized theory of diaspora. The field is rampant with a fear of the term losing its heuristic significance.²⁸⁴ Connected with its material value as scholarly currency, many scholars invest a great deal of capital in theories of diaspora for expressed purpose of providing fixed boundaries on the meaning, method and application of the term. In turn, certain currents within Diaspora Studies lead to a counterconstructive neurosis that undermines much of the term's insightful and modernity-correcting attributes.

Paranoia that over-proliferation and application of diaspora will divest the concept and thereby field of its recent undergirds Diaspora Studies' engagement with theory. For example, in Dufoix's introduction to diaspora, which I extol above, he concludes by suggesting the term may have proliferated beyond the point of retrieval. Dufoix does not mourn the theoretical uselessness of the term, but simply characterizes its use in terms that can be viewed strictly through the prism of the economics of the Academy and public discourse.

Is "diaspora" a useful word? Answering in the negative would be to deny the interest shown it by so many journalists and scholars, as well as by those many individuals who use it to describe the "community" they represent or feel they belong to. Words do not circulate without purpose, even if the meanings they carry are not the same for everyone. But how is "diaspora" useful? To impress people? To give coherence to a group? No doubt. To guarantee greater visibility for scholars by allowing them to coalesce around a word? Certainly. **To better describe certain phenomena? I do not think so.** The usefulness of the word mainly rests in its existence as a rallying cry. It may be scientifically and politically effective, but **theoretically it is lifeless.**²⁸⁵

Martin Brubaker makes similar claims in his article, "The Diaspora' Diaspora."²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Cohen, *Global Diasporas, Second Edition*; Baumann, "Diaspora"; Tölölyan, "Rethinking Diaspora (s)"; Dufoix, "Deconstructing and Reconstructing 'Diaspora': A Study in Socio-Historical Semantics"; Dufoix, *Diasporas*; Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies"; Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*.

²⁸⁵ Dufoix, *Diasporas*, 105 Bold added for emphasis.

²⁸⁶ Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora" Bold added for emphasis.

One dimension of dispersion, then, involves the application of the term diaspora to an ever-broadening set of cases: essentially to any and every nameable population category that is to some extent dispersed in space. **‘The term that once described Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community’.** **The problem with this latitudinarian, ‘let-a-thousand-diasporas-bloom’ approach is that the category becomes stretched to the point of uselessness.** If everyone is diasporic, then no one is distinctively so. The term loses its discriminating power its ability to pick out phenomena, to make distinctions. The universalization of diaspora, paradoxically, means the disappearance of diaspora.²⁸⁷

This paranoia is likely the consequence of the economic, and practical aspects of Diaspora Studies. As an economy, those who participate in the market are invested in maintaining a strong system for valuation, and exchange. Regulators, boundaries, and structures are vital to the maintenance of an economy. The trans-disciplinary nature of the field complicates regulation. Because of the number of participants across various fields, who adapt the word for their specific research, one can see a number of scholars express concern over the over use of the term. These concerns, however, most often deal with categorical and open definitions.

Safran:

Lest the term lose all meaning, I suggest that Connor’s definition be extended and that the concept of diaspora be applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics...²⁸⁸

Baumann:

“Diaspora” seems to be the right notion at the right time. **However, the abundant use went hand in hand with the term’s semantic dissolution.** In view of this, part 1 shall recall ‘basics of diaspora’ to shed light on the once existent meaning.²⁸⁹

Vertovec:

In recent years, intellectuals and activists from within these populations have increasingly begun to utilise the term ‘diaspora’ to describe themselves...However, the current over-

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 3 Bold added for emphasis.

²⁸⁸ Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies,” 83 Bold added for emphasis.

²⁸⁹ Baumann, “Conceptualizing Diaspora. The Preservation of Religious Identity in Foreign Parts, Exemplified by Hindu Communities Outside India,” 314 Bold added for emphasis.

use and under-theorisation of the notion of ‘diaspora’ among academics, transnational intellectuals and ‘community leaders’ alike...threatens the term’s descriptive usefulness.²⁹⁰

This identified distrust in the term’s proliferation and paranoid anticipation of the term’s theoretical dissolution is a neurosis that is symptomatic of *mal d’archive*. Without institutionalized governance or theoretical consensus, the archive is a primary mechanism for control. Directly connected to desire for an established archive that will delimit and organize articulations of diaspora and their subsequent theories. I believe this neurotic current within Diaspora Studies is a direct catalyst for the univocal metanarratives that permeate Diaspora Studies. Lack of control over the proliferating invocations diaspora maintain give theorists a neurotic fear of the field’s collapse and loss of the term’s analytic *dynamis*.

For various reasons, scholars of Diaspora Studies are invested in the material and economic utility of diaspora, and result in the replication of a linear metanarrative, largely based on contextual (re)constructions and readings of Jewish history and experience. These theories primarily seek to formulate a paradigm that i) authentically reflects/maintains essential aspects of the term’s original/ideal/paradigmatic root (b) while ii) maintaining diaspora’s heuristic utility within the Academy. These two objectives are critical to the production of a recurring metanarrative within Diaspora Studies. Because the term is largely conceived as having an identifiable original meaning (b) Diaspora Studies conceives the term’s transdisciplinary value in the paradigmatic and figurative use of the concept of diaspora.

Scholars, relying upon preconceived notions of root of diaspora (b) and the essence of diaspora (m) seek interpret texts—events, experiences, material artifacts—by perceiving their character as analogous to diaspora’s essence. Thus, Diaspora Studies is, at the heart of its current practice, a field predicated upon and grounded in poetic—the adjective, *sans s*—practice. Theorizing diaspora can be viewed as literary acts of totalizing *mimesis* where participation in Diaspora Studies, as a field of metaphors, is principally the intertextual and contextual—i.e. subjective—identification, construction, analysis and legitimation of signs, figures and metaphors. Virtually anathema to Hegelian Colour-blindness, this perspective presents Diaspora Studies, regardless of protest, as little more than the performance of literary games. For a transdisciplinary field consisting of scholars of the Social Sciences and Humanities, the idea of diaspora theory as a domain engaged principally engaged in the negotiation, construction and legitimation of metaphors elicits the most strident critiques of deconstructionism: fear that anything goes.

²⁹⁰ Steven Vertovec, “Three Meanings of ‘Diaspora,’ Exemplified among South Asian Religions,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 6, no. 3 (1997): 277 Bold added for emphasis.

Controlling valid use of the concept provides for greater understanding across the various disciplines from which scholars of diaspora descend. By establishing theoretical uniformity will enhance the term's applicability and archival legitimacy. As a consequence, Diaspora Studies' currency as a field stands to acquire greater import and insight. The lack of theoretical consensus has contributed to a growing concern of the concept's scholarly dissolution. This concern is a major contributing factor to reliance on the concept's univocal metanarrative is due to a primitivism and consensus-making character of univocality that grants authority. The analogous potential of diaspora has given theorists greater visibility and expanded conversations partners. This material benefit makes scholars weary of the term's potential loss of heuristic value. The field's newness and trans-disciplinary nature of Diaspora Studies, frequent emic investment and lack of institutional or scholarly governance lends diaspora de-territorial quality. One of the primary mechanisms of argument in such an environment is appeal to antiquity and origin, which I have outlined in discussions of both Diaspora Studies' construction of a fixed point of origin, and its extrapolation of that origin into univocal and unilinear metanarratives.

Diaspora (x) = mx+ a Jewish Origin

Based on my identification of several trends within Diaspora Studies, I find a strong tendency towards the development of unilinear definitions of diaspora. Understandings of diaspora often function as or build upon unilinear, one-dimensional metanarratives that pervades categorical, open and hybridity-based definitions. Through the analogy of the linear equation, one can view Diaspora Studies' general approach to diaspora as paradigmatic where definitions of diaspora are rigidly linear functions applied adapted to various scholar's field of specialty: $Diaspora (X) = mx + a$ Jewish origin. Alternative stated: the understanding of diaspora for any "valid" field of study, is a heuristic analysis of said field through a contextually constructed and unilinear metanarrative of Jewish history that originates with the identification of singularly fixed original Jewish concept of diaspora. When scholars replicate linear paradigms of Jewish history and uncritically echo univocal etymologies of diaspora, their subsequent postmodern approaches to diaspora maintain traces of the linear and hegemonic

predispositions found in the nineteenth century imperialistic and nationalistic discourses that they seek to critique. Many of the shifts and adjustments taken place within Diaspora Studies have actually been responses to some of the limitation presented by the trends identified above.

What I propose in Chapter Four is an adjustment to the fundamental function of diaspora. Instead of employing theory to localize and delimit the meaning of diaspora historically or methodologically, I suggest the function of diaspora theory is to better clarify the contextual relationships, internal coherence and hermeneutic intentions of said theory. By acknowledging the contextual nature of any diaspora theory, embracing the legitimacy of the diaspora concept's non-linear, polyvocal and polymorphous origin(s), Diaspora Studies can consciously negotiate its diversity related neurosis while pursuing practices that maintain the field's material and economic currency without resorting to representations of diaspora as the product of a singularly-fixed origin and the theoretical construct of a unilinear and univocal archive. Privileging the polyvocal reality of diaspora metanarratives, Jewish and other, will aid Diaspora Studies critically and coherently engage the heritage and future of diaspora and Diaspora Studies as it moves into its next phase.

Part II
A Poetics of Diaspora Discourse:
(re)Conceiving Difference, (re)Reading Contexts as Ideological Texture

Chapter 4 Pathways: Reconstructing the Function of Diaspora

[I]t is important to recognize that all definitions of the term are contested and therefore require a considerable amount of explanation, qualification, and contextualization. With this requirement in mind, the historical development of the term and its main current usages are outlined in this entry.²⁹¹

Alan Gamlen

It is important to insist not on the *centrality* of Jewish diaspora nor on its *logical priority* within comparative diaspora studies, but on the need to refer to, and better understand, Jewish diaspora history within the contemporary diasporic rubric. Doing so promises, first of all, to contribute to the reinvention of Jewish studies by finding points of intersection between studies in Jewish culture and those cultures that are already vibrantly located within critical cultural studies. But even more so, if Jewish diaspora is confined to the archives—either as already sufficiently researched and acknowledged (having nothing to teach post-colonial studies) or worse yet, as *obviated* because there is now, after all a Jewish state—key considerations in comparative diaspora studies will not be articulated.²⁹²

Jonathan Boyarin

Objective, Introduction

In Chapter Two: *Taxonomy and Language*, I broadly outline an epistemological, analytical and contextual approach to cultural critical exegesis, and in Chapter Three: *Trajectories of Diaspora and Diaspora Studies*, I use a critical and historical assessment of Diaspora Studies to demonstrate the impacts of Hegelian Colour-Blindness on scholarly conceptions of diaspora. Building on the insights of those chapters, this chapter employs an epistemology of *le divers* to (re)conceive diaspora from my Black American context. As the central analytical concept through which I employ my personal Black American context to (re)read Acts of the Apostles, my focus on Diaspora Studies and the concept of diaspora are essential to describing a coherent and contextual poetic that is

²⁹¹ Gamlen, “Diasporas,” 413.

²⁹² Boyarin, “Introduction,” 10–11.

responsive to the ever-present symptoms of Hegelian Colour-Blindness. While my analysis of Diaspora Studies in Chapter Three concludes the presentation of my intellectual and contextual setting, the rendering of diaspora found in this chapter serves as the launching point from which I begin a contextual construction of a poetics of diaspora discourse.

This (re)presentation of diaspora exhibits many of the characteristics of my peers in Diaspora Studies. It is both archeological—i.e. philological—and historiographical in its backward gaze upon Antiquity as I inform my theorization of diaspora by considering the concept’s ancient use—i.e. origin(s). But, this engagement with the ancient world does not intend to uncover “the” definitive and static original meaning for purposes of ensconcing it as the authoritative scholarly paradigm. Furthermore, my use of *le divers* to engage the concept of diaspora’s past provides a perspectival assessment of the semantic range with which the term diaspora appears in ancient literature and developed between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Through *le divers*, a revised epistemological view of difference cautions me from presuming the presence of either single original meaning or linear conceptual trajectory. I locate this reassessment firmly within a tradition that approaches diaspora as a polyvocal concept with broad semantic potential.

The majority of contemporary New Testament scholarship engages diaspora uncritically as a non-location, my theory of diaspora is not a *creation ex nihilo*. While traditional approaches to diaspora, as outlined in Chapter Three, generalize the concept through its *mal d’archive* and Hegelian Colour-blindness, a number of scholars contribute theoretical and contextual insights that provide nodes of dissonance or discord against the persistent paradigm of univocality. It is with these cords, particularly those situated

within Biblical Studies, that this (re)conception of diaspora employs *le divers* to organize—i.e. harmonize—the polyvocality of diaspora in to a coherent—i.e. symphonic—theory inclusive of multiple articulations and expression. This perspective understands that at times analysis of diaspora concentrates on specific invocation of the word diaspora, its derivatives and derivations but at other times points toward a socio-political phenomenon with little interest in the lexical presence of the term diaspora. It is important to be continually aware of the related difference between these two registers.

Indebted to late twentieth and twenty-first century scholarship in early Jewish and Christian literature, I (re)conceive the concept of diaspora by expanding the available archive and then (re)reading it oriented towards *le divers*. To this end, the following chapter contains three main parts. The first part expands understanding of the diaspora archive by redressing Diaspora Studies’ relative exclusion of Biblical Studies scholarship with three separate discussions. The initial discussion extends Stéphane Dufoix’s archive of sources by surveying Biblical Studies’ “traditional” uncritical, non-theorized use of diaspora. Present in both pre and post-1960 scholarship, these views of diaspora primarily treat the word as a metonym for post-70 CE Jewish life, culture and geography.

The second discussion of this section surveys key Biblical Scholars that critically engage diaspora as a biblical construct. Finding occasional reference in Diaspora Studies literature, these theoretical (re)constructions play an important role in developing a conceptual foundation that supports the univocal metanarratives frequently observed across Diaspora Studies. Often depicted a definitive reference works, the theoretical nature of this scholarship is seldom acknowledged by subsequent theorists. The focus of

the initial two discussions deals with de-mythologizing pre-1960 conceptions of diaspora as technical, univocal and singular.

The third subsection discusses four scholars of early Jewish and Christian literature that provide valuable insight to my (re)construction of diaspora by deviating from predominate Biblical Studies treatments of diaspora. Here, I foreground my (re)conception of diaspora as largely informed by the works of Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, William Barclay and Fernando Segovia. Combined, these three discussions (re)view and (re)construct the available archive for theorizing diaspora, by treating the intellectual and conceptual development of diaspora within Biblical Studies as varied and contextual.

The second part of this chapter (re)assess the term diaspora's ancient origin and meaning by (re)viewing and (re)reading some of the earliest extant attestations of the word diaspora. This discussion surveys use of the noun *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and verb *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) in Jewish and non-Jewish Greek literature from the era of Classical Greece until the last half of the first century C.E.²⁹³ The inspection of ancient uses of diaspora further enhances the archive available for theorizing diaspora. Instead of presuming a static term canonized in Antiquity, this discussion highlight the semantic flexibility and potential polytonality of diaspora in Antiquity.

After examining diaspora as an ancient word, the final portion of this chapter organizes my archival insights in order to provide my own working theory of diaspora. Informed by my Black American context and moderated by an epistemology of *le divers*, I summarily outline a theory of diaspora that expresses the concept as a polymorphic and

²⁹³ I intentionally terminate my survey prior to the works of the early Church fathers. My focus primarily looks at the use of the word prior to its appropriation in early Christian discourse.

heuristic type of relatedness. This rendering of diaspora challenges unilinear descriptions of the term's origin by reappraising the sources from which scholars construct its etymology and ancient usage. I close this chapter with a poetic description of diaspora that (re)conceives diaspora and Diaspora existence through a vision of Black America perpetually in-relation with the Black Atlantic.

Rather than theorizing diaspora atop a corpus of modern scholarship that rests upon unilinear etymology and univocal interpretations of ancient attestations, I, foregrounded by my Black American context, describe a theory of diaspora that is critical and diachronically sensitive to the term's historical development and the ubiquitous negotiations of human movement and the recognition of geopolitical boundaries. The resultant (re)construction of diaspora serves as a heuristic that is particularly useful for attending to the assumed polyvocality of discourses composed or read among individuals who maintain a shared, geographically oriented community-identity across geopolitical boundaries—i.e. Diaspora. The goal of (re)conceiving diaspora is neither to better categorize nor to identify persons and groups; diaspora is not a fundamental ontology. The conceptual consequence is a theory of diaspora that resists the sanitizing and homogenizing temptations of *le même* while also intrinsically functioning as both a heuristic and perspective. Scholars' diverse sociological, anthropological, historical and socio-political analyses of diaspora offer valuable insight to the concept's figurative versatility and heuristic potential. These endeavors are useful in assessing—not identifying—the nature and complexity of any particular Diaspora and its study within Diaspora Studies. By demonstrating the term's longstanding polyvocal potentiality, my contextual (re)construction of diaspora emphasizes the importance of relatedness, which I

suggest is an endemic quality of Diasporas (when (re)conceived through my historiographic mapping).

(Re)Reading the Archive: Assessing Amnesia and Memory

Overview

Despite the lack of scholarly engagement between Diaspora Studies and Biblical Studies, the unilinear metanarratives adopted by theorists in the Humanities and Social Sciences correspond to a segment of the religious scholars who specialize in Biblical Studies, Second Temple Judaism(s), primitive Christianity and early Judaism. These similarities prevail particularly between Diaspora Studies and the biblical scholarship produced in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. While Diaspora Studies is partially culpable for its lack of engagement with Biblical Studies, the prevalence of uncritical and non-theoretical use of diaspora in Jewish Studies and Biblical Studies is an additional contributing factor in sustaining Diaspora Studies' unilinear metanarratives of the concept of diaspora.²⁹⁴ An inspection of Jewish and Biblical Studies' traditional engagement of diaspora as a socio-historical phenomenon enhances understanding of the archive and presumptions through which many theorists in Diaspora Studies (re)construct the concept of diaspora.

A majority of biblical scholars today employ the term diaspora as a non-critical term that simply signifies a non-location or homogenous otherness. Pamela Eisenbaum and Bart Ehrman illustrate this traditional usage of the term among New Testament scholarship. Eisenbaum describes diaspora as, "Jewish communities (in antiquity in the context of this book) outside the land of Israel, mainly spread around the Mediterranean

²⁹⁴ The concluding section of Chapter Three, "Diaspora (x) and Archival Amnesia," discusses Diaspora Studies'

basin and parts East.”²⁹⁵ Along similar lines, Ehrman defines diaspora as, “Greek for “dispersion,” a term that refers to the dispersion of the Jews away from Palestine into other parts of the Mediterranean, beginning with the Babylonian conquests in the sixth century B.C.E.”²⁹⁶ Both examples reflect the field’s predisposition for open definitions, and in the setting of their field of study, the term refers specifically to a Jewish circumstance.

Because of the metonymic use of diaspora within segments of Biblical Studies, the open definitions deployed in scholarship often shift indiscriminately among the various approaches to diaspora as social category, consciousness or material culture.²⁹⁷ The combination of open definitions and vacillating approaches sustain non-theorized and uncritical uses. Primarily used as a general and uncritical means of denoting non-location, these conceptions of diaspora reinforce those persistent binary-dependent metanarratives of Christian Origins that Baur and other Hegelian-informed nineteenth century scholars advocated. In such an interpretive trajectory, diaspora frames historical (re)constructions of the ancient world through dialectic relationships such as Peter/Paul, Judea/Diaspora and Jew/Gentile. These relationships conform to models of history that

²⁹⁵ Eisenbaum deserves credit for overtly noting that her definition is specific to her work. Yet, the definition still exhibits the negative value, restricted geographical understanding and uncritical homogenizing tendency found among numerous religious scholars. Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (New York: Harper One, 2010), 257.

²⁹⁶ Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 492.

²⁹⁷ For illustrations of various approaches to diaspora in New Testament scholarship, see Van Unnik and Krüger (consciousness); Levinskaya (material culture); and Wilson and Esler (social category). The default approach to diaspora as a social category permeates most treatments of diaspora within New Testament studies due to the continued influence of Baur’s dialectical historiography of Christian origins. Unnik, *Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora*; Krüger, *La diáspora*; Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*; Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts*; Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*.

depict the past as the general and systemic synthesis of oppositional relationships of thesis/antithesis.

Due to traditional binary conceptualizations, the term diaspora largely functions as a metonymic signifier. This usage builds on an interpretive tradition that views the scattering and dispersion of Jewish populations—i.e. “Israel”—following the Assyrian Captivity (eighth – seventh centuries B.C.E.), Babylonian Captivity (sixth century B.C.E.), Macedonian prompted Hellenization of the Mediterranean (fourth – first centuries B.C.E.) and Roman conquest(s) of Palestine (63 B.C.E. – 135 C.E.) as central and formative moments in Jewish historiography, literature and culture. Informed by Septuagint (LXX) use of the Greek terms *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirô*), which denote dispersion and scattering, the narrative emphasis on the dispersions of Jewish populations allow the term diaspora to highlight a particular and recurring aspect of historiography. As a specific aspect of Jewish historiography and experience, geographic dispersion in many cases (re)presents an amorphous and all-encompassing socio-cultural and socio-political spatial orientation that evokes non-location and trans-temporal experience. The collective spaces outside of Palestine and the combined communities of non-Palestine living Jews, which are the interrelated results of various stimuli across centuries, fall under the single spatial designation diaspora.

Though use of diaspora as an uncritical denotation of non-location predominates references to diaspora in Biblical Studies, these renderings are neither a-temporal nor non-contextual. Neither do they represent the totality of the scholarly tradition within Biblical Studies. My reassessment of Biblical Studies’ constructions of diaspora augments the traditional archive invoked by Diaspora Studies by contextualizing it as

perspectival, unfixed and polyvocal. Dating at least to the latter third of the nineteenth century C.E., various scholars of Judaism and early Christianity have engaged the concept of diaspora in response to their intellectual, religious and socio-political concerns. These varying perspectives show the religious, intellectual and socio-political import that the concept of diaspora has held over the last two centuries. Demonstrating the contextual and debated nature of Biblical Studies' perspectives of diaspora demythologizes Diaspora Studies' belief that pre-1960 views of diaspora were singular and fixed.

As a result of the contextual use of the term diaspora, many scholars in Jewish and Biblical Studies use Diaspora to designate the fixed, historical body of events and contexts that characterize(d) Jews living beyond the limits of Palestine. Following this framework, as a signifier and lens, use of the concept of diaspora predisposes historical (re)constructions towards notions of *le même*—i.e. sameness. Diaspora interchangeably signifies the people, non-place, culture, ideology and material culture(s) that generally exists in opposition to its own “root” and origin. Often implicit in this thinking is belief that associates authenticity with the root and the tainted amalgamations of syncretism and hybridity with Diaspora. Instead of a social phenomenon or heuristic concept, diaspora becomes a historic artifact and entity. The irony of this construction is evident in how the term signals the particular by generalizing the meaning of geopolitical difference and minimizing the significance of other difference. On one hand, diaspora points to specific temporal events and their resultant geographical and sociopolitical differences. The term then generalizes by encompassing the consciousness, material culture and socio-political circumstances and realities experienced by that specific category of Jews during that

specific time. As a result, New Testament scholars end up speaking in overtly general terms about Palestinian Judaism versus Diaspora Judaism or events occurring in Judea versus in the Diaspora.

In many iterations this perspective propagates myopia depictions of a homogenous Hellenistic Judaism, which often results in the (re)presentation of a homogenous Diaspora Judaism.²⁹⁸ Through a general characterization of Diaspora existence as perpetually precarious and fraught with homelessness, statelessness, discord and persecution, the historical (re)constructions of sixth century BCE and first century CE Jewish experience eventually became a timeless and a-contextual representation for all Jewish existence outside of Palestine. Prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 the term diaspora primarily functioned as a metonym denoting the entirety of ancient and modern Jewish existence. This uncritical and non-theorized use of diaspora, thus, found heightened currency among the nation-centered ideologies and discourses of religious scholars and non-specialists in a West informed by Modernity.

By acknowledging the metonymic character of pre-1960 uses of diaspora, this section offers a (re)vision of the archive of early Diaspora Studies. This proposed archive attends to erasures, gaps and contexts that undergird those claims frequently found throughout Diaspora Studies and discussed in Chapter Three. The inspection of archival gaps and erasures is important because of its ability to connect theoretical discussion of diaspora to Biblical Studies. The incorporation of Biblical Studies into an archive of Diaspora Studies reveals a number of Biblical Scholars who, through their

²⁹⁸ This depiction of a homogenous Diaspora or Hellenistic Judaism occurs in various iterations. Many of these versions revolve around the unilinear premise that Acts provides the unilinear historical or theological link between Second Temple Judaism and Christianity. For an excellent discussion of these various approaches to Hellenistic and Diaspora Judaism, See Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 1–58.

engagement with the concept of diaspora, offer important deviations from the field's traditional view of diaspora as an uncritical, non-location. I specifically highlight segments of this tradition that provide a) context(s) for Diaspora Studies as a whole and b) insight for which my own *le divers* (re)construction of diaspora most depends. This contextual (re)reading of scholarship suggests that contemporary constructions of diaspora within Diaspora Studies have significant correlations with the Hegelian Colour-blindness that is endemic to modernity and Biblical Studies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Analysis of this frequently erased tradition provides a contextual lens for better understanding how theorists underappreciate Diaspora Studies' reliance on Biblical Studies as well as the process and substructural foundation upon which contemporary scholars theorize the concept of diaspora.

Recovering Sources: Non-Theoretical Diaspora as Metonym and Non-Location

While religious scholars and non-specialists during the early to mid-twentieth century similarly approached the notion of diaspora as a general and figurative means to discuss Jewish non-location and experience, the logic and semantic presumptions behind their uses differ. Unlike Diaspora Studies, Jewish and Biblical Studies' traditional description of diaspora as a specifically Jewish phenomenon and technical term has little to do with presentations of the terms etymology, theoretical development or claims that the word diaspora has historically had a single meaning. As an uncritical and non-theorized term, this use generally lacks conceptual explanation and appeals to the field's specific subject of study. Because Jewish history and culture are the field-specific subjects of study for scholars in Jewish Studies and Biblical Studies, scholars appeal(ed) to a field-specific tradition and range of semantic meanings present within the study of Jewish history and Judaism. This field-specific appeal, largely prompted by Septuagint

and New Testament use of the Greek terms διασπορά (*diaspora*) and διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*), is contextual and rarely accompanies claims about the term's semantic meaning or validity outside discussion of Jewish and occasionally Christian scattering and dispersion.²⁹⁹

The differences between the various orientations used for identifying the source of diaspora's meaning are nuanced and minute, yet significant. Both Biblical Studies and Diaspora Studies consist of a majority of scholars that situate the diaspora concept in terms of a paradigm based upon Jewish history and existence. As demonstrated by Eisenbaum and Ehrman's definitions, scholars in early Jewish and Biblical Studies traditionally employ diaspora as a field specific, non-technical and uncritical term. This usage rests upon tradition and the metonymic association of geographic dispersion and Jewish historiography. Whereas, in Diaspora Studies, many theorists invoke Biblical Studies' non-theoretical definition, albeit with rare reference to biblical scholarship, as the single and consensus original meaning of diaspora prior to the 1960s. In lieu of critically engaging early Jewish and Biblical Studies, these theorists legitimate their univocal (re)constructions by presenting their findings as etymological and historical certainty.

This appeal to etymology and historiography (re)presents an archive of diaspora that gives a sense of objectivity and critical insight. As found in Tölölyan, Baumann, Dufoix and the many theorists that follow their lead, this often constructed archive depicts scholarly interest and discourse on diaspora prior to the 1960s as underutilized, singularly construed and virtually nonexistent.

²⁹⁹ In addition to its Biblical influence, nineteenth century nation-state discourse and Zionism played an additional role in shaping diaspora discourse. I discuss these influences in more detail below.

Tölölyan:

The famed Eleventh Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1910-1911) has no entry for the word “Diaspora.” The 1958 Edition of the same *Encyclopedia* identifies “diaspora” as a crystalline aluminum oxide which, when heated, sheds or scatters flakes from its surface, and thus takes its name from the Greek verb “diasperein,” to “scatter.” The *New Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1979 has no entry for the term. The French *Larousse* of 1982 lists “Diaspores,” defined only as the sports by which fungi propagate. Finally, though aspiring to authoritative completeness, the 1968 *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* also fails to find “diaspora” a category useful to social science, and does not list it. Curiously, the earlier 1931 edition of this reference work has an excellent entry on diasporas, authored by Simon Dubnow, who writes primarily on the Jewish diaspora as the paradigmatic case. He also stipulates that the Greek colony-cities of Antiquity might be called diasporas, and adds that the Armenians, whose dispersion began in the mid-eleventh century, are also a “typical” diaspora. Indeed, up until the late sixties, on the rare occasions when western scholars thought of diasporas, they took the Jewish diaspora to be the paradigm, case and the Armenian and Greek dispersions to be the two other noteworthy examples of it. The cunning of history arranged matters so that just as the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* was dropping the term “diaspora” in 1968, the use of this and related expressions, such as transnational,” began to increase.³⁰⁰

Baumann:

Looking back, until the 1960s, the diaspora term was distinctly confined to the histories of Jewish and Christian traditions and their diaspora communities.¹¹³⁰¹

Save their acknowledgements to i) accidental usage, ii) a dictionary entry that defines diaspora as an oxidized metal, and iii) Dubnow’s founding entry in the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, these presentations depict scholarship as void of scholarly discussion about the concept diaspora. The West’s growing investment from the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries—cf. Chapter One—in criticism and general theories of knowledge accompanied increased interest in the production of

³⁰⁰ Tölölyan, “Rethinking Diaspora (s),” 9.

³⁰¹ Baumann supplements this assertion with a footnote that recognizes Dubnow as “an exception to this rule.” Like Dufoix noted non-Jewish and non-Christian uses of the word diaspora prior to 1960. In his footnote, Baumann acknowledges these examples, but characterizes them as “accidental.” He asserts, “Certainly a literature archaeology would bring to the fore a number of early non-Jewish and non-Christian related employments of the term, although primarily of accidental use.” Baumann, “Diaspora,” 320–321.

reference works under varying nomenclatures of lexicon, dictionary and encyclopedia. These resources provide scholarly and lay audiences with access to general knowledge across a wide range of subjects in the form of ready-made archives.

The dominant archive (re)presented throughout Diaspora Studies scholarship appeals, though selectively, to this tradition. Tölölyan's reference to the "famed" *Encyclopedia Britannica* is an allusion to this period that helps construct a context for the birth of Diaspora Studies. For Tölölyan, the absence of diaspora from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* supports his archival (re)construction of a scholarly environment bereft of interest or engagement with the term. Additionally, Dubnow's frequent archival presence contextualizes his entry within a field-defining encyclopedia in the early stages of the twentieth century. Scholars implicitly portray Dubnow as a proverbial 'voice crying out in the wilderness,' a presentation that works well within descriptions of Diaspora Studies as a field anchored in the Social Sciences and non-religious Humanities. Dubnow's entry permits theorists to deduce that scholarly engagement of diaspora is an endeavor firmly rooted in the Social Sciences. As evidenced by both aforementioned invocations to reference works, the scholarly meaning of diaspora depends heavily upon the presentation of general-knowledge reference works during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

However, in contrast to the traditionally proposed archive, increased inclusion of scholarship from early Jewish and Biblical Studies—as well as some works from Classics—depicts a more diverse and multidimensional tradition of discourse on diaspora that reaches back into the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁰² This expanded

³⁰² These dates are representative of the reference works that I have consulted. I do not suggest that earlier or later entries do not exist.

archive destabilizes the traditional metanarrative of diaspora as having a fixed meaning for the two millennia preceding Diaspora Studies. Instead of a scholarly context represented by void and non-scholarly context encompassed in a single consensus meaning, the concept of diaspora has a scholarly tradition that includes variant meanings, uses and contexts.

Contextualizing Reference Works before 1960

Lexicons and Perspective

Despite Tölölyan's appeal to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, a number of nineteenth and early twentieth century dictionaries, encyclopedias and handbooks contain entries on the concept of diaspora.³⁰³ In fact, closer inspection of early editions of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* reveals a need for the clarification of Tölölyan's claim. While Tölölyan is correct when noting the eleventh edition's lack of a specific entry under the heading diaspora, multiple contributing scholars do employ the term diaspora within other entries. Some uses are present in nineteenth century editions of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*,

³⁰³ Jean-Augustin Bost, "Diaspora," *Dictionnaire d'histoire ecclésiastique* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1884); William Dwight Whitney and Benjamin Eli Smith, eds., "Diaspora," *The Century Dictionary: An Encyclopedic Lexicon of the English Language* (New York: Century Company, 1889); Emil Schürer, "Diaspora," in *A Dictionary Of The Bible: Supplement*, ed. James Hastings, vol. 5 (Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 1898), 91–109; Theodore Reinach, "Diaspora," ed. Isidore Singer and Cyrus Adler, *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1902), <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100164414>; Thomas Davidson, ed., "Diaspora," *Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language* (London: W. & R. Chambers Limited, 1907); Paul Fiebig, "Diaspora: I. Judische," ed. Friedrich Michael Schiele et al., *Die Religion in Geschichte Und Gegenwart; Handwörterbuch in Gemeinverständlicher Darstellung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1910), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/njp.32101073261784>; Auhner, "Diaspora: II. Evangelische," ed. Friedrich Michael Schiele et al., *Die Religion in Geschichte Und Gegenwart; Handwörterbuch in Gemeinverständlicher Darstellung*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1910), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/njp.32101073261784>; Paul Fiebig, Franz Rendtorff, and Erhubert, "Diaspora," ed. Friedrich Michael Schiele et al., *Die Religion in Geschichte Und Gegenwart; Handwörterbuch in Gemeinverständlicher Darstellung*, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1927 1918), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/njp.32101073261784>; Jehoschua Gutmann, "Diaspora," ed. Jakob Klatzkin and I Elbogen, *Encyclopaedia Judaica: das Judentum in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. (Berlin: Verlag Eschkol, 1930).

such as the ninth, that predate the “famed” eleventh edition. These entries use the term variably to designate geopolitical non-location—ie. the place of residence for Jews living outside of Palestine (cf. entries on Jews; Philo)—an ethno-cultural people—i.e. the community of Jews that live outside of Palestine (cf. entry on Peter, Epistles of)—and a minority religious community—i.e. the first century CE Gentile Christian community that live dispersed among “heathens,” (cf. entry on Peter, Epistles of) or specific European branches of the Moravian Church (cf entry on Moravian, Brethren).³⁰⁴

Belief in the semantic singularity of the term diaspora becomes less tenable upon further inspection of the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*’s vernacular association between the terms “Diaspora” and “Dispersion.” Scholars frequently utilized the words diaspora and dispersion interchangeably to denote a single concept.³⁰⁵ The same eleventh edition that Tölölyan cites includes an entry written by Kirsopp Lake on the “Epistles of Peter.”³⁰⁶ Making use of both words, Lake presents “Diaspora” and “Dispersion” as equivalent terms. While speaking about 1 Peter 1.1, Lake says that, “[t]he epistle is addressed to “the elect who are sojourners in the Dispersion [Diaspora] in

³⁰⁴ Emil Schürer, “Philo,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Or, A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature, Enlarged and Improved* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1888); “Israel,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago: Belford-Clarke Company, 1890); T. M. Lindsay, “Moravian, Brethren,” ed. Day Otis Kellogg, Spencer Baynes, and W. Robertson Smith, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (New York: Werner Company, 1902); Emil Schürer and Charles Bigg, “Philo,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Or, A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature, Enlarged and Improved* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1911); T. M. Lindsay, “Moravian, Brethren,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 1911); Kirsopp Lake, “Peter, Epistles of,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Or, A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature, Enlarged and Improved* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1911).

³⁰⁵ For examples, See “Israel” and; While Tölölyan notes the absence of an entry on Diaspora in the 1982 French Larousse dictionary, the English Century Dictionary lists an entry for Diaspora in 1889. Additionally, the English Webster dictionary included Diaspora at the beginning of the twentieth century. See, Whitney and Smith, “Diaspora”; Davidson, “Diaspora”; Noah Webster, ed., “Dispersion,” *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1917); Noah Webster, ed., “Diaspora,” *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1917).

³⁰⁶ Lake, “Peter, Epistles of.”

Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia.”³⁰⁷ Lake’s use of the word of dispersion reflects the language of the late nineteenth century Revised Version translation of the Bible. Though the word diaspora is absent from prominent translations of this period, Lake’s bracketed inclusion of the word diaspora suggests that he viewed the terms as equivalent while also pointing to his preference for the diaspora. Following his juxtaposition of “Dispersion” and “[Diaspora]” Lake repetitively utilizes the language of diaspora instead dispersion. Describing multiple uses of diaspora, he explains:

The "Diaspora" was the name generally given to the Jews who were "scattered abroad...[but] it is better to take this view [to mean Gentile Christians], and interpret the "Diaspora" metaphorically as referring to the isolated position of Christians among the heathen.

Lake’s inclusion of both dispersion and diaspora reflects a diversity among nineteenth and early twentieth century Biblical and Jewish Studies.³⁰⁸ His description of the multiple meanings of the term also challenges notions that the term solely described a Jewish phenomenon prior to the 1960s.

Multiple scholars join Lake in their use of dispersion and diaspora as equivalent in the context of Biblical Studies. Louis Pirot, editor of the Supplement to the *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (1934), used both terms as the entry heading for J. Vandervorst’s French-language article, “*Dispersion ou Diaspora*.” This interchange between terminology is also evident, though less overt, some seven decades earlier in Jean-Augustin Bost’s field-specific engagements with the concept of diaspora. In 1865, Bost authors an entry on “Dispersion” in a different *Dictionnaire de la Bible*.³⁰⁹ First

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ While both the terms dispersion and diaspora etymologically descend from the Greek διασπορά (*diaspora*) or διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*), diaspora is a direct transliteration of the Greek noun. See, discussion below.

³⁰⁹ Jean-Augustin Bost, “Dispersion,” *Dictionnaire de la Bible, ou Concordance raisonnée des*

published in 1849, this *Dictionnaire de la Bible* approaches the term as a historical entity that consists of a series of geographically distinct Jewish migrations: Assyria; Egypt; Syria and Asia Minor; Greece and Asia Minor; and Rome and Italy.³¹⁰ By 1884, Bost revised his nomenclature and published an entry in his *Dictionnaire d'histoire ecclésiastique* using the heading Diaspora.³¹¹

The scholarly connection between these two terms deals primarily with the author's context and audience. Both dispersion and diaspora are transliterations of the same biblical source material. Diaspora is the direct English transliteration of the Greek διασπορά (*diaspora*) that appears in the LXX and New Testament. The English word dispersion is a transliteration of the Latin word *dispersion*, which appears in an authoritative Latin translation of the Christian, Greek scriptures called the Vulgate. The Latin Vulgate translated the Greek New Testament's use of διασπορά (*diaspora*) and διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) with the Latin equivalents *dispersio* and *dispergere*. In addition to its presence in the Vulgate, dispersion also entered both French and English languages as a general word describing the state or act of multi-dimensional outward movement. Both the textual presence of *dispersion* in the Vulgate and the vernacular transmission of dispersion into French and English help explain why many nineteenth and early twentieth scholars used dispersion and diaspora interchangeably; these words were different denotations that subsumed the same conceptual and semantic range. Consequently, scholars alternatively determined their English terminology, particularly when semantically related to the scattering of a religious or ethno-cultural community, from

Saintes Écritures (Paris: Librairie de Ch. Meyrueis, 1865).

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Jean-Augustin Bost, *Dictionnaire d'histoire ecclésiastique* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1884).

either the Greek original or Latin translation. In these cases, the difference between the two terms has less to do with different semantic ranges and more to do with the reference work's target audience and whether the scholar privileged the Vulgate's Latin or the LXX and New Testament's Greek as a basis.

In addition to reference works that list their entry headings under the transliterated headings diaspora or dispersion, some reference works list entries according to the ancient Greek term instead of the work's research language. The testimony on pre-1960 use of diaspora broadens considerably when including entries listed under *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*).³¹² As reference works such as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* show, the pre-1960 scholarly invocations of the concept of diaspora, these sources depict diaspora as a contextual concept with multiple dimensions to its meaning and usage, and not the a-contextual, fixed-term (re)constructed by the traditional metanarrative.

Both the reference work's subject of study and structural form influence how authors present diaspora. While some reference works purport to encompass a general knowledge of all subjects—e.g. *Encyclopedia Britannica*—a great number of reference works focused on specific subjects of study. Taking forms more similar to the

³¹² Edward Robinson, “*διασπορά*,” *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1836); Edward Robinson, “*διασπείρω*,” *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1836); Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Drisler, eds., “*διασπορά*,” *A Greek-English Lexicon: Based on the German Work of Francis Passow* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1852); Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Drisler, eds., “*διασπείρω*,” *A Greek-English Lexicon: Based on the German Work of Francis Passow* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1852); Erwin Preuschen, ed., “*διασπείρω*,” *Vollständiges Griechisch-Deutsches Handwörterbuch Zu Den Schriften Des Neuen Testaments Und Der übrigen Urchristlichen Literatur*, Griechisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch. (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1910), <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012391018>; Erwin Preuschen, ed., “*διασπορά*,” *Vollständiges Griechisch-Deutsches Handwörterbuch Zu Den Schriften Des Neuen Testaments Und Der übrigen Urchristlichen Literatur*, Griechisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch. (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1910), <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012391018>; Karl Ludwig Schmidt, “*διασπορά*,” ed. Gerhard Kittel and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Theologisches Wörterbuch Zum Novi Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1935).

Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, it is vital to remember that the entries within these subject-specific—i.e. topical—publications summarize a term’s use within a specified intellectual context and tradition; they do not claim to cover the entirety of the term’s use. A number of entries of this latter type devote attention to Jewish or Biblical studies. These entries also portray a pre-1960 intellectual context for understanding notions of diaspora prior to the formation of Diaspora Studies.

Lexicons, particularly in Biblical Studies and Classics, generally provide formal equivalence definitions between two different languages. Instead of providing general or tangential information about terms’ socio-cultural or scholarly contexts, these works focus on terms’ literary attestation and lexical equivalence. Towards this purpose, lexicons often define terms via synonyms and terms that are semantically analogous or lexically interchangeable.³¹³

Published in 1836, Edward Robinson’s *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament* is an example of this genre.³¹⁴ Robinson’s entry ascribes the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) with two related, yet distinct, uses. As a topical—i.e. subject-focused—lexicon focused on the context specific Greek vocabulary of the New Testament, this lexicon describes both uses of διασπορά (*diaspora*) as being specific reference to Jewish history and experience. Διασπορά (*Diaspora*) can indicate a state of being—i.e. the condition that describes Jewish presence throughout the world *sans* a single geopolitical

³¹³ These reference works offer additional insight to nineteenth and early twentieth century use of the term diaspora. For the purposes of the works that I survey, dictionaries and encyclopedias differ from lexicons in that they deal with meaning within a single language. For a brief history of the Greek-English lexicographical tradition, See Walter Bauer et al., eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Revised Third Edition. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), v–viii.

³¹⁴ Edward Robinson, *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1836).

plurality—or it can function as metonymy, signifying Jewish people who live outside of Palestine.³¹⁵ Maintaining focus on the term’s New Testament lexical use, Robinson refines his textual examples to the scholarly domain of interest to his readers: early Jewish and Christian literature.

In contrast to Robinson’s specification of the noun *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) to Jewish contexts, his entry on the verb *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) lacks explicit reference to Jews or Jewish history. Describing the verb as, “*to sow hither and thither, to scatter as seed, i.e. to scatter abroad, to disperse, spoken of persons,*” his literary citations include references to non-Jewish, non-Christian authors such as Claudius Aelianus and Xenophon alongside its LXX and New Testament examples.³¹⁶ The second portion of Robinson’s definition specifies the term’s application to groups of people. His reference to “seeds”, though probably an illustrating analogy, sheds possible light on the origins of the prevalent etymological misnomer that is present in Diaspora Studies’ traditional metanarrative.³¹⁷ Inspection of this nineteenth century entry provides context for understanding the range of meanings of *διασπορά* (*diaspora*), *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*), and a possible source of Diaspora Studies’ inaccurate depiction of diaspora’s original meaning as agricultural.

In 1843, Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott published a general lexicon of Ancient Greek in English that lacked a specific literary or subject of focus. Liddell and Scott’s work, though based on Francis Passow’s earlier Greek-German lexicon, is the first major Greek-English lexicon and focuses on the broader lexical range of ancient

³¹⁵ “The state of dispersion in which many of the Jews lived after the captivity, in Chaldea, Persia, and chiefly in Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor...In N.T. (sic) meton. [metonymy] the dispersion, for the dispersed Jews, i.e. the Jews living in dispersion.” See, Robinson, “*διασπορά*.”

³¹⁶ Robinson, “*διασπείρω*.”

³¹⁷ Italics are in the original. Ibid.

Greek.³¹⁸ As a result, Liddell and Scott's American Edition (1859) lacks explicit reference to Jews or Jewish experience in entries on διασπορά (*diaspora*) or διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*). Both terms have general meanings that lack ethno-cultural, religious or geopolitical particularity. They, according to Liddell and Scott's entries, are ancient Greek terms that are applicable to both Jewish and non-Jewish circumstances. The entry on διασπορά (*diaspora*) cites both the LXX and New Testament as illustrations of the term's terse definition, "a scattering, dispersion; also collectively, persons scattered or dispersed."³¹⁹ While Liddell and Scott's biblical references mirror Robinson's, their entry on διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) contains mostly non-Jewish, non-Christian illustrations; it also omits the analogy of sowing seeds, while adding 'to squander' and 'to separate' to the verb's lexical range.³²⁰

Contrasting Robinson's entry in a topical reference work to Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* illuminates the impact of context and perspective on archival sources. The Robinson and Liddell and Scott entries are benchmarks for scholarly approaches to diaspora in their respective fields of Biblical Studies and Classics. Robinson, a field-specific work that focuses on Biblical Studies, specifies the word as a technical reference to the Jewish historical situations found in the Bible. The general lexicon, however, defines diaspora in general terms without restricting the concept to Jewish circumstances. The factor that dictates whether the reference work specifically and solely relates diaspora to Jewish contexts is based on the scholar's context and not the term's intrinsic or original meaning. Resembling this pattern, Preuschen's Greek-

³¹⁸ Liddell and Scott based their work on Francis Passow's Greek-German lexicon, *Handwörterbuch der griechischen Sprache* (1819).

³¹⁹ Liddell, Scott, and Drisler, "διασπορά, LSJ (1852)."

³²⁰ Liddell, Scott, and Drisler, "διασπείρω, LSJ (1852)."

German lexicon (1910), which served as a basis for the influential editions of Bauer's *Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (BAGD, BDAG), deviates little from Robinson's entries, linking diaspora specifically to Jewish historical experiences and populations. Liddell and Scott (LSJ) is in its ninth edition and serves as the standard English-language lexicon for the study of ancient Greek. Its entries on *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) still define the terms generally by including biblical and non-biblical literary examples while refraining from presentations of either term as a technical reference to Jewish circumstances. Thus, the definitional restriction of *διασπορά* (*diaspora*), *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*), diaspora or dispersion to Jewish circumstances in pre-1960 reference works appear to be more a case of the source reference work's agenda and scope than the singular and static meaning of the term diaspora prior to its "metaphorical" proliferation in the 1960s.

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias as Nodal Points of Scholarly Tradition(s)

In addition to the variant nomenclature and formal definitions witnessed in the above mentioned lexicons, late nineteenth and early twentieth century dictionary and encyclopedia entries offer additional resources for (re)constructing an expanded archive. These latter works often begin with a section that mirrors the entry found in lexicons. Following this lexical description is additional historical and contextual information that elaborates the terms' semantic range, including insight into its scholarly use, development and history.³²¹ Such entries on diaspora are present in a number of late nineteenth and early twentieth century dictionaries and encyclopedias dedicated to a

³²¹ The above references to Bost's *Dictionnaire de la Bible* and *Dictionnaire d'histoire ecclésiastique* belong to this category. Jean-Augustin Bost, *Dictionnaire de la Bible, ou Concordance raisonnée des Saintes Écritures*, ed. Ch. Meyrueis, Second. (Paris: Librairie de Ch. Meyrueis, 1865); Bost, *Dictionnaire d'histoire ecclésiastique*.

range of disciplines spanning from Biblical Studies and Jewish Studies to the Social Sciences.

A number of these entries share a similar form. They consist of a brief lexical description followed by a series of subsections that comprise what amounts to a history and context section. The introductory definition frequently acknowledges the term's Greek origin, lists formal equivalents, and references biblical passages that contain the term. The history and context section consists of a series of subsections that focus on specific geographic regions. The geographic subsections are then addressed in chronological order with respect to the time Jews purportedly first developed a community within that region or when said community became historically significant to the Western and/or Christian narrative. These subsections are socio-cultural histories that give information about:

- i. The impetus and reason for Jewish scattering into the region—i.e. origin;
- ii. The community's biblical, literary and historical contributions—i.e. scholarly significance;
- iii. The community's socio-cultural uniqueness and distinctiveness from Palestinian Judaism and Gentiles—i.e. particularity and difference;
- iv. The community's political status and relationship within the dominant cultures and regimes—i.e. imperial context.

A comparison of Bost's entry on Dispersion in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible*

(1865) and the Smith-Barnum entry on Dispersion in *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Bible* (1868) shows some of the variation found in this model. As expected from a topical reference work focused on Biblical Studies, both entries specify the term within a context of biblical Judaism. They begin with a general description of the term and key biblical attestations:

Dispersion, L'épître de Jacques, et la 1^{er} de Pierre sont adressées aux juifs

de la dispersion, c'est-à-dire aux tribus qui sont dispersées dans les pays voisins de la Palestine, dans le Pont, en Galatie, en Cappadoce, en Asie, en Bithynie, etc. On doit entendre par le mot général de dispersion, tout l'ensemble des juifs qui demeureraient en dehors des limites de leur pays, parmi les nations étrangères. Il n'y avait, au temps de Jésus, aucun pays de l'ancien monde dans lequel ne se trouvassent des juifs expatriés, volontairement, ou par le fait de circonstances indépendantes de leur volonté. On peut grouper en cinq classes les juifs appartenant à la dispersion.³²²

Dispersion, the Jews of the, or simply **The Dispersion** (Gr. *diaspora*, A.V. "the dispersed," [Jn vii. 35], "which are scattered abroad"[Jas. i.1.], "scattered" (1 Pet. i.1); comp. Deut xxviii.25; Jer. xxxiv. 17), was the general title applied to those Jews who remained settled in foreign countries after the return from the Babylonian exile, and during the period of the second Temple. The Dispersion, as a distinct element influencing the entire character of Jews, dates from the Babylonian exile...At the beginning of the Christian era the Dispersion was divided into three great sections: the Babylonian, the Syrian, the Egyptian.³²³

These two dictionaries present diaspora, albeit under the heading of Dispersion, as an ancient Jewish entity. Their definitions exclude contemporary use of Dispersion or Diasporas as nineteenth century emic terms. Rather than a totalizing claim about diaspora, these omissions indicate that such meanings and usage, though plausible, is beyond the semantic scope of these topical reference works. Present in the citations above, Bost and Smith-Barnum conclude the lexical portion of their entries by referencing the internal diversity of the Jewish Diaspora.

Despite the difference with Bost identifying five classes while Smith-Barnum suggests three, both introductory definitions share a common form by anticipating the

³²² "Dispersion, The Epistle of James and 1 Peter are addressed to Jews of the Dispersion, in other words, to the tribes who are dispersed in the countries neighboring Palestine and in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, etc. One should understand this generic word dispersion as the entire collectivity of Jews who lived outside the borders of their country and among the foreign nations. During the time of Jesus there was no country in the ancient world in which one could not find Jewish expatriates, those who left voluntarily or those who left due to life circumstances independent to their will. One can group the Jews belonging to the dispersion into five classes." Bost, "Dispersion."

³²³ William Smith and Samuel W. Barnum, eds., "Dispersion," *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1868) (Bold is in the original).

ensuing geography-organized subsections. Immediately following their introductory descriptions, both dictionaries include their proposed classes as subsection headings that elaborate on the origin, history and significance of each geographic “class” of Jewish Diaspora. Discussions of the geographic specificity of diaspora highlight the polyvocality that is implicit in the critical study of Jewish historiography. While not explicitly named, the geographically organized historiographies found in these dictionary and encyclopedia entries depict diaspora as the vernacular space that highlight the perpetual difference and relatedness implied in discussion of Jewish history. For many of these modern scholars, both the Jewish past and present attest to the socio-cultural, religious and political symbiosis of Jewish ethno-cultural, political and national identities.

The above two illustrations are informative examples because of their nineteenth century date and the explicit way that their language corresponds with my hypothesized form of dictionary entries. While these two dictionaries closely align with my model, this rubric is also helpful when reading pre-1960 dictionaries and encyclopedias that comport to this form in a less stringent manner. Even when editors deviate from the organizational form found in Bost and Smith-Barnum, the substance of their entries continue to revolve around content found within the historical and contextual subsections. Regardless of organizational form, early entries normally focus on diaspora as an important signifier for the totality of scholarship’s understanding of non-Palestinian Judaism and Jewish existence in Antiquity.

Like lexicons, it is important to acknowledge that many of these dictionaries and encyclopedias portray a field-specific character. Instead of comprehensive assessments of the term diaspora’s semantic range, these works generally restrict discussion of

diaspora to its use in Biblical Studies and religion. Bost's treatment of the concept of diaspora exemplifies how a text's subject of study can affect an entry. When Bost published the *Dictionnaire d'histoire des ecclésiastiques* in 1884, he deviated from the form and nomenclature used in his *Dictionnaire de la Bible*. He altered the entry heading from Dispersion to Diaspora while greatly generalizing the definition. The 1884 entry omits mention of the five classes of the Jewish Diaspora and lacks the geographic subsections. Only offering the introductory portion of the entry, Bost expands his description of the semantic range of the concept by including ancient, modern, Jewish and non-Jewish uses of the term. The *Dictionnaire de la Bible* solely depicts the term's general use in Biblical Studies, while the *Dictionnaire d'histoire des ecclésiastiques* outlines the term's meaning within the broader purview of Church History. As such, his *Dictionnaire d'histoire des ecclésiastiques* mentions the variant contextual uses of diaspora in reference to a state of being dispersed, or a collectivity of dispersed people as in Jews in Antiquity, Moravians in Europe, or European Protestants living as minorities in Catholic countries.³²⁴ The differences between Bost's two entries need not suggest a fundamental change in Bost's view of the concept or a fundamental difference between Dispersion and Diaspora. Instead, a better explanation can attribute this alteration to the differences between Biblical Studies and Church History as scholarly fields of study and their uses of diaspora.³²⁵

³²⁴ "DIASPORA, mot grec qui signifie dispersion. ou les dispersés, et qui est employé dans ce sens Jean 7, 35. Jacq. 1. 1. 1 Pier. 1, 1. pour désigner les juifs demeurant hors de Jérusalem et disséminés dans l'empire. Les Fr. moraves l'ont adopté pour désigner de même ceux de leurs membres qui vivent éloignés des centres et dispersés dans le monde. Il s'emploie par extension, dans les Égl. évangéliques, en parlant des protestants disséminés parmi les populations catholiques." Bost, "Diaspora."

³²⁵ The frequency with which scholars list Diaspora and Dispersion together dissuades me from viewing Bost's changes as an indication that the two terms are different.

These similarities in form and content suggest the presence of an intellectual context and scholarly tradition for the concept of diaspora that stretches back at least to the late nineteenth century. By the time Emil Schürer, an eminent historian of Second Temple Judaism, writes an entry on Philo in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1888), he was using diaspora to historically contextualize Philo, while specifically denoting the term as requiring additional reference and research. By 1898, Schürer penned his own entry on Diaspora in the supplement to *Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible*. This entry, largely following the form discussed above, contains an extensive assessment of Jewish history and socio-cultural development during biblical times and later Antiquity.³²⁶ The first third of the twentieth century resulted in entries on diaspora appearing in a number of influential reference works. Among these works are two separate editions of *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Singer and Alder's *Jewish Encyclopedia*, an *Encyclopaedia Judaica* by publisher Verlag Eschkol, Simon Dubnow's frequently cited entry in *The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* and Karl Schmidt's influential contribution to Gerhard Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.

Thus, the socio-historical setting in which a reference work appears is an additional context that frames an entry's treatment of diaspora. Many of the pre-1960 reference works cited in this assessment are principally the products of European scholars working within the same intellectual milieu as Baur, Renan, Troeltsch, Lake and the other

³²⁶ In his scholarly review of Hasting's Supplement, Bethune-Baker specifically acknowledges Schürer's entry on diaspora. Listing it alongside a short list of four other entries, Bethune-Baker claims that Schürer's entry is one of the book's most vital and important contributions. This recognition suggests both interest in diaspora as a scholarly term. It also increases the probability that other scholars might reference or be aware of Schürer's entry. J. F. Bethune-Baker, "Chronicle: New Testament," *JTS* 6 (1905): 151.

biblical critics discussed in Chapter One. Developing alongside criticism and nineteenth century nationalism were theories and constructs of race as a biologically determined entity. As new nation-states emerged around univocal narratives of religious, cultural, ethnic and geographically-oriented peoplehood, particularity and difference became obstacles to national homogeneity. Each national context derived its own criteria for participation and exclusion, and any number of perceived differences could serve as a catalyst for civic disruption. Ethno-cultural, religious and somatic particularities were among the most common signifiers that prompted vigorous public debate and political rancor.

The ideological centrality of the nation-state and intellectual preference for historical linearity were concomitant realities with the authoritative and paradigmatic character of biblical scholarship. Working interdependently, these contexts informed scholars' treatments and descriptions of diaspora. As an uncritical concept and metonymic figure, Diaspora became a repository for the theological, ideological and national preferences presumed by nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars. Consequently, the concept of diaspora became a space in which scholars could construct Jewish historiography in a way that integrated Jewish culture and past into the narrative of world history—i.e. narratives of the West's development and ascension—as contributor, benefactor and ever-present participant.³²⁷

³²⁷ This tendency is most visible in the Jewish, Antiquities scholar Theodore Reinach. In 1900, Reinach wrote an entry in, *le Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines* on Judea, which primarily consisted of a history of the Jewish people, particularly in relationship to the Judea. In 1902, this article served as the basis of Reinach's entry on Diaspora. Reinach, "Diaspora"; Theodore Reinach, "Judaei," ed. Ch Daremberg, Edm Saglio, and Edm Pottier, *le Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1900), http://dagr.univ-tlse2.fr/feuilleter/tome_1/partie_1/page_4.

The incipient nationalism and biological racism of nineteenth century Europe had a significant impact on scholarly treatment of the term diaspora. This significance was primarily due to its historiographical contributions to two major conversations of the period. One of these conversations relates to the nation-state and the unilinear evolution of Western Civilization. Based on the term's connotative connections with migration, geopolitics and Christian history in the West, the term diaspora and its affiliate themes fit within discussions on the nature of imperialism and colonialism and the reasons behind the successful expansion of Western culture and political influence. As scholars used biblical texts to identify analogies and cohere correlation between their (re)constructions of the past and contextually-perceived present, diaspora became an increasingly useful historiographical space. With one of its primary uses being metonymic, the concept of diaspora functioned as a figure naturally prompting discussions about Hellenism, assimilation and Christian conquest in terms of the various Roman, Greek and Jewish discursive threads that comprise the West's historiographical narratives of origin and progression.

In addition to conversations about migration, the nation-state and the West's historiographical progression, the "Jewish Question," also known as *Judenfrage*, is a key component for contextualizing nineteenth and early twentieth century scholarly descriptions of diaspora as both a lexical term and metonym for Jewish historiography. The "Jewish Question" is the nomenclature popularized during the nineteenth century to describe a series of intellectual and public debates about the role, place and significance of European and American Jewry within Modernity's notion of the nation-state. Though not directly intrinsic to the "Jewish Question," xenophobia and anti-Judaism prompted

and characterized many of the assumptions, argumentation and solutions proposed in response to the “Jewish Question.” Ranging from Bruno Bauer’s *Die Judenfrage* (1843), which postulates that societal integration and civic protection of Jews into the nation-state depends on their renouncement of religion, to Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich’s *Endlösung der Judenfrage* (Final Solution to the Jewish Question), which perpetrated the Holocaust in pursuit Jewish genocide, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had no shortage of anti-Judaic responses to the “Jewish Question.” These affiliations with anti-Judaism and Nazi Germany are largely responsible for the term’s decreased use, particularly following the establishment of the State of Israel.

Even with these pejorative connotations, the “Jewish Question” generally refers to the open-ended consideration and discussion of the political status, social and national identities, civic participation and protection of a nation-state’s Jewish inhabitants in light of Modernity’s frequent conception of the nation-state as reflecting ethno-cultural, geopolitical and/or ideological unity. In some early iterations, the “Jewish Question” dealt with the questions of: *how* to secure and protect the rights of Jews living within a nation-state; *how* to respond to the civil unrest and discord caused by rampant anti-Judaism; *how* to integrate Jews into a modern nation-state that is predicated on ethno-cultural, narrative-historiographical, linguistic and ideological *sameness*. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the “Jewish Question” had transformed into a question of what to do *about the problem* occasioned by Jewish particularity within the modern nation-state. Consequently, debates over the “Jewish Question” had significant consequences over domains from ideology and literature to politics and life-and-death. Numerous nineteenth and early twentieth century thinkers engaged the “Jewish Question” either

directly with proposed “solutions” or indirectly with responses and criticism of solution. These debates sparked responses from influential nineteenth and early twentieth century intellectuals such as materialist historiographer Karl Marx, formative Zionist advocates Ahad Ha’am and Theodor Herzl, author Émile Zola and philosophers Martin Buber and Jean-Paul Sartre.³²⁸

One of the many drawbacks to a nationalism predicated on geography and ethno-cultural commonality is its tendency towards xenophobia. Functioning in an epistemology of *le même*, particularity and difference signify otherness and danger. In this framework, those invested in maintaining a uniform center, though an allusion, peer dimly and derisively upon the “Other.” Obscured through self-interest and hegemony, the existence of an “Other” represents an impending threat to unity that must be expunged—e.g. exile or imprisonment—ameliorated —e.g. assimilation—or annihilated—e.g. genocide. Shaped by nineteenth century nationalism and biological racism, the affiliation between diaspora and Jewish history provided scholars with a medium to (re)construct biblical Israel as a figurative representation of the “other.” As an uncritical term, the figurative dimension of scholarly use of diaspora provided a

³²⁸ Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, trans. Foreign Languages Publishing House (New York: Norton, 1978), 26–46; For a discussion of Ha-am’s “spiritual” Zionism see Pinson’s Introduction and Dubnow’s response, particularly in Letters 6-9 and his conclusion to Part I. Simon Dubnow, *Nationalism and History; Essays on Old and New Judaism*, ed. Koppel S. Pinson, trans. Herbert A. Strauss and Henrietta Szold (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1958), 10–74, 242–249; Theodor Herzl, *A Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, ed. Jacob de Haas, trans. Sylva d’Avigdor (New York: Federation of American Zionists, 1917); Émile Zola, “J’accuse...! Lettre à M. Félix Faure, Président de la République,” *l’Aurore* (Paris, January 13, 1898); Bein uses Buber as symbolic figure to contextualize twentieth century Jewish understanding of the “Jewish Question.” See Introduction, Alex Bein, *The Jewish Question: Biography of a World Problem*, trans. Harry Zohn (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1990); Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*, trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1995).

language for scholars to (re)construct Jewish biblical history as a paradigmatic explanation or justification for Europe's nineteenth and twentieth century anti-Judaism.

The transnational and multi-lingual natures of Western scholarship and the Jewish Diaspora comprise a third context that significantly influenced the treatment of diaspora. As previously seen in the scholarly oscillation between the Greek derived diaspora and Latin derived dispersion, a scholar's language of publication can also alter a word's semantics. The reference works included in this archeology primarily appear in English, French and German. Consequently, as publishers, translators and scholars participated in the development and use of diaspora as a historiographic figure, they utilized these various terms and their related-connotations. Growing primarily from its Jewish and Christian heritages, the term Diaspora gained currency primarily due to its "scriptural" presence, historiographic utility and theological importance.

As an uncritical historical figure, the concept found invocation in both Jewish and Christian across various geopolitical contexts. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scholars invoked the conceptual figure of diaspora alternately using either its formal translation or a transliteration of the Greek noun. I have already noted above English and French use of the Vulgate-descended formal translation *dispersion*, but this practice also occurred in German with the word *Zerstreuung* [scattering or dispersal]. In addition to the languages that traditionally dominate Western scholarship, a number of other languages, particularly those of the Jewish Diaspora, were equally important to the scholarly development of diaspora. Chief among these languages are Russian, Modern Hebrew and Yiddish.³²⁹ Nineteenth and early twentieth century

³²⁹ Prior to the late nineteenth century, Hebrew was primarily an ethno-religious and liturgical

Russian scholarship appears to use multiple words to formally translate the various dispersion-related states and movements associated with diaspora such as scattering (рассеяние, *rasseyanie*), dispersion (рассеивание, *rasseivaniye*) and spreading (разброс, *razbros*).³³⁰

In Modern Hebrew, early scholars primarily used the words גלות (*galut*) and גולה (*gola(h)*) to translate the diaspora.³³¹ Unlike the formal equivalent translations in the former listed languages, *galut* and *golah* are figurative translations; neither term means dispersion or scattering. Both *galut* and *golah* are semantically related to notions of removal and exile. In nineteenth and early twentieth century use, *galut* frequently infers a negative, dysphoric view of exile. It corresponds to the state of exile as an active process of being barred by force or circumstance from living in one's homeland. *Golah* is a more general term that omits the intrinsic negativity associated with *galut*. The word *golah* describes both the condition of living outside of one's homeland and the subsequent spaces of residence.

In concert with a number of contextual circumstances—namely, the modernization and secularization of Hebrew; increased use of Hebrew as a unifying “national” language; Zionist advocacy for a Jewish territorial “nation-state;” and, the rampant anti-Judaism occasioned by the “Jewish Question”—many late nineteenth and early twentieth century members of the Jewish Diaspora understood their own

language of the Jewish faith tradition. Russian-born Eliezer ben-Yehuda (1858-1922) was a catalyst for the modernization of the Hebrew-language. He championed the use of Modern Hebrew as a transcultural, trans-denominational national language to unify diverse number of Jews who had made *aliyah* to live Palestine, but spoke the numerous languages and dialects brought from their various geopolitical places of origin. This transition in the language's status from primarily a liturgical language to a national-language with Zionist aspirations played a formative role in shaping discourse on diaspora.

³³⁰ The works of Simon Dubnow are my primary source of reference.

³³¹ I discuss these two Hebrew words in more detail below.

geopolitical diversity and transnational relatedness specifically through the lens of exile. Based in political ideology, lived-experience and scriptural exegesis, notions of exile and its affiliate semantic range became synonymous with the notion of Diaspora, particularly within Zionist discourse. Because both *galut* and *golah* can translate to exile or diaspora, people frequently employ the term as a metonym to (re)present Jews living outside of the national “homeland.”³³²

Alongside terms with formal and figurative equivalence to the concept of diaspora, a significant number of writers opted to denote the diaspora concept by directly transliterating the Greek noun *διασπορά* (*diaspora*). Consequently, the presence of the word “Diaspora” in English, French and German scholarly and non-scholarly texts increased significantly through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Likewise, Simon Dubnow and other scholars publishing in Russian employed the transliterated word *Диаспора* (*diaspora*). Relying on the figurative translations of *galut* and *golah*, Modern Hebrew did not develop a transliteration of the Greek term.

These contexts each contribute to the development and variety of the concept of diaspora during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Use and description of the term occurred as a part of the West’s ideological predisposition towards nation-states, the wide ranging debates on the “Jewish Question,” and increased Jewish migration, including *aaliyah*. In the midst of these contexts, scholars engaged in discourse on

³³² This description is specific to nineteenth and early twentieth century use. While these trends are still generally accurate for twenty-first century use, a third term, *תפוצת* [tfutsot, dispersion], with actual formal equivalence to diaspora and dispersion has gained currency since the establishment of the State of Israel. Consequently, in contemporary Modern Hebrew the word diaspora may be rendered at times by *galut*, *gola* or *tfutsot*. For a brief discussion, See, Simon Rabinovitch, “Diaspora, Nation, and Messiah: An Introductory Essay,” in *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism: Writings on Jewish Peoplehood in Europe and the United States*, ed. Simon Rabinovitch, Brandeis Library of Modern Jewish Thought (Waltham, MA: University Press of New England, 2012), xv – xli; Leonard J. Fein, “Israel or Zion,” *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought* 22, no. 1 (1973): 7–17.

diaspora and its affiliate concept across multiple languages as well as in translation. Thus, the value, meaning and specificity of the term varied from scholar to scholar, largely based on their own positionality.

This influence is present in many of the major reference works of the early twentieth century, possibly most apparent in the multiple ways that scholars ideologically inscribed their descriptions of diaspora through their own notions of nationalism and the Jewish Question. Description of diaspora as a curse is an often repeated characterization in both uncritical and critical uses of the term, and the RGG contains one of the earliest scholarly entries to describe diaspora as a curse. Paul Fiebig contributed to the entries on diaspora in the RGG both in 1910 and in its significantly revised 1917 entry. Fiebig, a German New Testament scholar, would become a staunch supporter of Germany's Nationalist Socialist Party and actively participate in the Anti-Jewish, *Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben* (Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life). By viewing Hellenism as Greek—i.e. Western—culture's positive influence on Jewish life and culture, Fiebig describes Jewish understanding of diaspora as imbued with an exclusionary, anti-social and anti-national worldview. He asserts:

The Jewish diaspora according to the prophetic verdict (Is. 35:8; Jer. 23:24; Ez. 22:15) is an outworking of the divine judgment and therefore a curse. Only with Hellenistic optimism does a different view develop. We can thus understand how the Septuagint uses the term *διασπορά* to veil the stark severity of the Hebrew expressions which pitilessly describe the judgment of scattering which God executed on Israel.³³³

Inscribing his entry with a similar anti-Judaism, George Barton's entry depicts diaspora in the *Dictionary of the Bible*. While Barton acknowledges that multiple types

³³³ Fiebig, "Diaspora: I. Judische."

of migration can cause a Diaspora, he prioritizes forced migration as the primary generator of the Jewish Diaspora. After describing various geographical and historical aspects of the Jewish Diaspora, Barton claims that it was only with the Babylonian Exile that the “real” Diaspora began.³³⁴ His entry further characterizes diaspora as an aspect of Jewish culture that improves the state of the community by expanding it beyond its provincial and exclusive nature.³³⁵ This concept of Diaspora, however, also creates a problem by transforming Judaism into a proselytizing—i.e. colonizing and encroaching—religion. He goes on to state that:

Contact with the world gave them [Diaspora Jews] a broader outlook and a wider thought than the Palestinian Jews, and they conceived the idea of converting the world to Judaism. For use in this propaganda, the *Sybiline Oracles* and other forms of literatures likely to interest Greco-Roman readers were produced.³³⁶

Numerous entries display similar attempts to define diaspora by describing the Jewish Diaspora.

Cultural assumptions and religio-ethnic biases are contextual and insidious especially if unconscious. Due to these reasons, supersessionist assumptions and pejorative stereotypes of Jewish culture and identity often accompanied responses to the “Jewish Question.” Even Jewish allies and other persons that criticized the persecution and civic discrimination against Jews at times propagated negative stereotypes and Anti-Judaic beliefs through their intended defense and support. For instance, American sociologist and eventual University of Chicago professor Charles Zueblin was critical of

³³⁴ Barton’s entry is on Dispersion. Yet, throughout his entry he oscillates between the terms Dispersion and Diaspora, using Diaspora more frequently. George A. Barton, “Dispersion,” ed. James Hastings et al., *Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909).

³³⁵ These descriptions of Judaism are not this author’s opinion. Descriptions of Judaism as provincial and exclusivist are a part of the anti-Jewish metanarrative frequently propagated in nineteenth and twentieth century anti-Jewish discourse.

³³⁶ Barton, “Dispersion.”

anti-immigration policies and the targeted social discrimination and persecution of Jews. Framing himself as a Jewish ally, Zueblin penned an article on the ethic of the “Jewish Question” where he critiques Anti-Jewish policies. He notes the contributions of a number of Jews throughout history and links Anti-Judaism alongside other forms of racial and ethno-national discrimination:

The spirit [of anti-Semitism] which would prevent the production of Lohengrin in Paris, or the sending of paintings by French artists to Berlin, which retain Alsace-Lorraine at the expense of millions annually, the spirit which lays a duty on English books coming into America, or which keeps negroes out of the machinists' labor organization, is the same which drives Jews from Russia. It is selfishness, the lowest motive that incites men to action.³³⁷

Further demonstrating his awareness and concern about the transnational nature of the “Jewish Question,” Zueblin informs his readers of the discriminatory policies and pogroms taking place in Russia. Responding to the exact circumstances that served as a catalyst for Dubnow’s engagement with the concept of diaspora, Zueblin exhorts his American audience to respond to transnational anti-Judaism by embracing Jewish immigration and employment possibilities.

We must recognize our duty to the Jew for the altruistic reason that we should aid the oppressed, and for the egoistic reason that the solution of this problem will enable us to solve the greatest question before our nation -the assimilation of races. We must see that the Jew has opportunity... We must guard against all cheap labor. All must be afforded the opportunity to rise above the " cheap labor" stage... While multitudes in Great Britain and America indulge in the easy, conscience-allaying practice of sending petitions to the Czar, while other citizens in great number raise a hue and cry against wealthy Jewish intrusion at Long Branch, or at jewellers' dinners, or against pauper Jewish labor in New York, let the sober-minded cultivate a scientific, humanitarian spirit. Thus will the happiness of Israel become the glory of humanity.³³⁸

³³⁷ Charles Zueblin, “Ethics of the Jewish Question,” *International Journal of Ethics* 2, no. 4 (1892): 473–474.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 475.

Zueblin, however, depicts Zionism as an unscientific and primitive ideology that was both unrealistic and a contributing factor to anti-Judaism. Denigrating certain Jewish scriptural practices and socio-political aspirations, Zueblin juxtaposes his advocacy with pejorative stereotypes of Jewish need.

What the Jews in Russia [according to Chief Rabbi Adler of London] most need is "Freizsigzkeit, liberty to circulate through the length and breadth of the land." The numbers are too great for a large proportion to emigrate from Russia. There is, however, abundant room for extension in Russia. Despite the hopes of biblical enthusiasts, Palestine is uninhabitable. Jews are now starving between Joppa and Jerusalem...

Insisting that only certain expressions of Jewish identity are legitimate and capable of survival, Zueblin goes on to outline those beliefs are acceptable in an integrated America.

So to-day[sic], if the eyes of the Jews were opened to Biblical criticism, to see ethical teaching rather than theology in the Bible, and to scientific knowledge, it would lead to a community of ideas between Jews and Gentiles that would tend to destroy the present barrier of exclusiveness. As early as 1840 a convention held at Frankfort-on-the-Main anticipated the liberal Jew of the present, by taking the advanced ground indicated in its three items of confession: 1. The Mosaic religion is capable of unlimited development. 2. The Talmud has neither dogmatic nor practical value. 3. No Messiah is expected nor a return of the Israelite to Palestine. It is not necessary for the Jew to discard all of his traditions, but he must eliminate the unessential beliefs and reach high ethical ground if he would purify Judaism. Jewish ethics have been distinctively national ethics. Even the beauties of the Psalms are marred by some of their teachings. Still there is latent in Judaism that which may be of great benefit to itself and the world if tradition be made subservient to progress. On the other hand, we must recognize our duty to the Jew for the altruistic reason that we should aid the oppressed, and for the egoistic reason that the solution of this problem will enable us to solve the greatest question before our nation -the assimilation of races. We must see that the Jew has opportunity.³³⁹

Zueblin's supposed advocacy argues for the acceptance of a univocal, majority-dictated articulation of Jewishness. Reflecting nineteenth and early twentieth century

³³⁹ Ibid., 474-475.

policies of assimilation and acculturation, Zueblin's support for Jewish integration argues for cultural assimilation and the eradication of Jewish living-communities. His argumentation infers an eschatological vision that anticipates the erasure of Jewish identity and particularity.

The solution of the problem is to make room for the Jew and to prevent his resorting to his past gregarious habits. There are thirty thousand Jews in one colony in the heart of Chicago. In our large cities we must legislate not only against the Jew, but against all people who attempt to collect in dense colonies. There must be no discriminating legislation... Adopting this principle, the races hard to assimilate will ultimately die out, as the "poor Indian" has, under slightly different and much less commendable circumstances, or finally become an actual part of the blood and brawn of the nation, as the Slavs in Prussia.³⁴⁰

As one observes the anti-Jewish views inherent in individuals feigning support of Jewish integration illumines the contextual and complicated relationship between anti-Judaism, "the Jewish Question," Zionism and transnational discussions about diaspora and exile. While scholars and theorists such as Simon Dubnow and Ahad Ha'am critically engage in notions of diaspora and exile, Zueblin lambasts Jewish interpretations of biblical history as detached from biblical criticism and modern thought. Recognition of these contexts is informative for understanding the reigning metanarratives for diaspora and the environments in which they appeared. While "friends" such as Zueblin vocally opposed Anti-Jewish persecution, they also revealed their own participation within biblical metanarratives as evident in Zueblin's assertion that, "It is also noticeable that no Jewish teacher, from Jesus and Paul to Spinoza and Marx, whose words have had value for humanity, has remained—a Jew."³⁴¹ Laced within his feigned advocacy for

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 475.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 474.

Jewish integration into the American society and culture are Zueblin's ethnocentric and supersessionist biases.

While Zueblin's article exhibits the hazardousness of responses to the "Jewish Question" even among individuals that oppose Anti-Jewish persecution, these dangers are also evident in dictionary entries on diaspora. James Donald is a closing illustration. Donald's entry on dispersion also illustrates the insipient character of anti-Judaism. He locates the concept of diaspora within a metanarrative that explains the presence of both Jews living in Western societies and the prevalence of anti-Judaism within these largely Christian Western societies. Donald's definition of Diaspora explains that the supposedly anti-social nature of Jewish communities in the early twentieth century mirrors anti-social Jewish behavior observable during the age of the Prophets.

Following Jeremiah's advice to the exiles in Babylon, they 'sought the peace' of the cities they settled in, without, however, amalgamating with the other inhabitants. This dislike created by their aloofness gave way a little before the involuntary respect commanded by their intelligence, their aptitude for work, and their exemplary family life, but was never completely overcome....³⁴²

One quickly recognizes Donald's negative description of Jewish "aloofness" and invocation of "model minority" stereotypes with the descriptions of "intelligence, aptitude for work and exemplary family life." In a vein similar to Zueblin, Donald's historiographical agenda and paradigmatic bias are evident in his definition of diaspora. Each of these examples highlight the contextual nature and impulse associated with a number of the essential metanarrative assumptions that continue to prevail in descriptions of the origins of the diaspora concept.

³⁴² James Donald, "Dispersion," ed. James Hastings, John Alexander Selbie, and John Chisholm Lambert, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1916).

Biblical Studies' early, uncritical use of diaspora mirrors many of the unilinear and univocal expressions articulated in Diaspora Studies. Rooted in the early stages of critical Biblical Studies, these presentations of diaspora provide Diaspora Studies with a fixed root, linear trajectory and univocal bias well situated for scholarship principally shaped by Hegelian Colour-blindness. As such, these streams of Biblical Studies scholarship implicitly reinforce an archive that anchors Diaspora Studies' unilinear and univocal (re)construction of diaspora. The intention of this section is not to deconstruct or dismiss the traditional archive of Diaspora Studies. To the contrary, the goal is to broaden and diversify the sources included within the archive, clarify the sources traditionally included and illuminate the perspectival and contextual nature of any archival construction of Diaspora Studies. Such a construction permits a more informed assessment of pre-Diaspora Studies references to the term and concept of diaspora. Consequently, one may hesitate prior to dismissing pre-1960 thinkers such as Charles Victor Roman and his use of diaspora to frame Black American existence as 'accidental' or 'deviant.' One can instead situate Roman's conceptual and discursive presentations within the milieu of early twentieth century nation-state discourse and the variant available scholarly uses of diaspora.

Recalling Contexts and Foundations: Theorizing Diaspora as Biblical Construct

There is an important stage between the uncritical definitions found among the early twentieth century biblical critics and the early theorists of diaspora in the 1990s. These biblical scholars provided early (re)constructions of diaspora that were informed by the contexts and assumptions found among the various uncritical definitions of the nineteenth and early twentieth century but established a critical and analytical logic that supported these contextual notions. The bulk of the references that Diaspora Studies

scholars make to Biblical Studies appear as appeals to authoritative and objective fact. The scholarship appealed to most often derives from the middle third of the twentieth century. By claiming that the origin of the concept of diaspora is identical with its early twentieth century meaning, theorists within Diaspora Studies (re)present diaspora as a concept rooted in the Septuagint and ancient Jewish discourse without needing to closely engage the Biblical Studies scholarship upon which their metanarratives depended. This intermediary group of scholars, though seldom referenced, provide scholarly validity and the guise of objective, historical fact necessary for Diaspora Studies to legitimate its unilinear metanarratives and etymological claims.

Consequently, the contextually construed biblical constructs of diaspora that scholars of Judaism and early Christianity developed in the midst of Modernity, an evolving Anti-Judaism, the Holocaust, Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel serve as a-contextual and a-historical proofs that legitimate Diaspora Studies' unilinear metanarratives. The Biblical references and historical contexts that are the subject of an entire field's analysis, debate and exegetical nuance feign simplistic meaning and self-evident fact. Consideration of the import of Biblical Studies into Diaspora Studies' approach to diaspora is one means of using *le divers* to further contextualize my own theory of diaspora. Taking the narrative gaps and erasures seriously while appreciating the relatedness between Diaspora Studies and Biblical Studies is an important and informative step in my process.

Diaspora Studies' assumption that the concept of diaspora maintains a linear heritage largely rests upon scholarship's historical depiction of the concept's pre-1960 use as singular, fixed, two millennia-old and derived outside of any significant contextual

concerns. An essential aspect of this argument relies on claims that scholarly interest in the concept of diaspora only began with the beginning of scholarly interest in the 1960s. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, a portion of this perspective rests upon the uncritical repetition of dubious etymologies and ancient citations. Complimenting these arguments and their subsequent narratives are nineteenth and early twentieth century biblical constructs of diaspora. Developed by scholars of early Judaism and Christianity, these constructs and definitions of diaspora outline both the narrative and argumentation adopted by theorists in the Social Sciences and Humanities following the 1960s.

Inspection of pre-1960 scholarly definitions of diaspora offers an alternative perspective that suggests relatedness and differentness between Diaspora Studies and its Biblical Studies precursors. Few biblical scholars have directly engaged the etymology and history of the term diaspora as a theoretical concept. Those biblical scholars who offer detailed analysis of the meaning and origin of diaspora as a concept present the term as a biblical construct that signifies a single theological worldview.³⁴³ The chief scholarly treatments of the term prior to the popularization of Diaspora Studies in the 1990s are the mid-twentieth century works of Karl Ludwig Schmidt, Wilhelm Cornelius

³⁴³ I provide, to the best of my ability, a chronological list of some of the most influential works that have engaged the concept of diaspora and the origins and nature of the Jewish Diaspora. This list uses initial year of publication and is begins with the earliest and goes to the most recent. Reinach, "Diaspora"; Fiebig, "Diaspora: I. Judische"; Schmidt, "TDNT Diaspora"; Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*; Unnik, *Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora*; Menahem Stern, "Diaspora," ed. Cecil Roth, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1971); Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135)* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1973); Arowele, "Diaspora-Concept in the New Testament"; Kraabel, "Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions"; René Krüger, "Das Biblische Paradigma Der Diaspora. Die Solidarische Und Missionarische Gemeinschaft Der Glaubigen," *Die Evangelische Diaspora* 63 (1994): 87–109; Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*; Scott, "Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period"; Rutgers, *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism*; Krüger, *La diáspora*.

Van Unnik and Aiyenakun Patrick .J. Arowele and late twentieth century works of René Krüger, James M. Scott and Johannes Tromp.³⁴⁴

The mid-twentieth century works act as intermediaries between non-theoretical definitions of diaspora developed in the late nineteenth and early of the early twentieth centuries and the burgeoning Diaspora Studies of the 1990s and early twenty-first century. These scholars provide an initial theoretical approach to the concept of diaspora. The late twentieth century biblical constructs of diaspora are nuanced reappraisals of the earlier biblical constructs. Developed parallel to Diaspora Studies and in response to some of the same socio-political and cultural stimuli, scholars such as Krüger and Scott nuance the earlier analyses through enhanced methodological consideration. Where mid-twentieth century analyses primarily approached diaspora from historical-critical and philology, these late twentieth century studies garner greater methodological sensitivity to archeological advancements, literary criticism and consideration of the socio-cultural textures implicit in the analysis of diaspora as a technical term or phenomena.

Karl L. Schmidt (1891 – 1956), Wilhelm C. Van Unnik (1910 – 1978) and Aiyenakun P. J. Arowele (1939 –) offer contextual readings of biblical material that rehearse and legitimate narratives that present diaspora as a singular worldview. Instead of depicting pre-Diaspora Studies discussion of diaspora as vacuum or homogeny,

³⁴⁴ Krüger first outlines his construct of diaspora as an expression of early Christian ecclesiology in an article and later expands his argumentation to depict diaspora as the product of both Old Testament and New Testament theology in a full length monograph. Krüger, “Das Biblische Paradigma Der Diaspora. Die Solidarische Und Missionarische Gemeinschaft Der Glaubigen”; See also, Krüger, *La diáspora*; Scott, “Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period”; Tromp’s treatment is under utilized. He offers a thorough and contextually conscious analysis that refrains from espousing belief in a single theological expression of diaspora. Johannes Tromp, “The Ancient Jewish Diaspora: Some Linguistic and Sociological Observations,” in *Strangers and Sojourners: Religious Communities in the Diaspora*, ed. Gerrie ter Haar (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 13–35.

definitions and constructs among early to mid-twentieth century Biblical scholars such as Schmidt, Van Unnik and Arowele evince the contextual and polymorphous nature of scholarly approaches to diaspora prior to the growth of Diaspora Studies as a field.³⁴⁵ These scholars: i) find occasional citation in early Diaspora Studies scholarship; ii) foreshadow the theorization of diaspora by (re)constructing the term as a historical and literary biblical construct; and, iii) systematically present arguments that support the metanarratives Diaspora Studies would later regurgitate as self-evident fact. By approaching diaspora from various intellectual, theological and methodological directions, works such as these continue to be among the most influential and informative biblical scholarship on diaspora.

These mid-twentieth century constructs of diaspora are critical in nature and offer the first extended analysis of the term diaspora through analysis of the ancient usage of *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*). Originally published in German, Schmidt penned his entry for Gerhard Kittel's field-defining *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Novi Testament* in 1935.³⁴⁶ The English translation appeared in 1964.³⁴⁷ Schmidt, a German New Testament scholar who is widely known for his form criticism of the Gospels and public opposition to the National Socialist Party of Germany, restricts his analysis to the noun *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and discusses the term's ancient use in both biblical and non-biblical texts. Reflecting the ideas of his scholarly community, Schmidt's entry describes the term as having already developed both a general meaning with respect to geographical non-location of Jews and a broader meaning with respect to

³⁴⁵ Schmidt, "TWNT, Diaspora"; Unnik, *Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora*.

³⁴⁶ Schmidt, "TWNT, Diaspora."

³⁴⁷ Schmidt, "TDNT Diaspora."

religion and nationalism. With little analysis, Schmidt associates the general, Jewish meaning of diaspora with a specific biblical, theological and eschatological meaning. It is only after these contextual assertions that Schmidt begins an analysis of the term's ancient use, which with little surprise, deductively finds that early use complies with his contextual assertions. It is through this brief word study that theoretical claims that diaspora originally reflected a single theological worldview finds an early voice. Because Kittel's dictionary focuses on New Testament use, Schmidt's analysis revolves around the pre-Christian, primarily Jewish, semantic value of the term.

The Dutch scholar Van Unnik's lectures on diaspora are the most thorough analysis of the origin of the diaspora concept to date.³⁴⁸ Published posthumously in 1993, Van Unnik originally gave this series of lectures in 1967. Like Schmidt, Van Unnik focuses on the noun *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and similarly suggests that the term has a single theological meaning within the LXX. An historical-critical New Testament scholar, a significant portion of Van Unnik's career centered upon using Hellenistic and Jewish literature to understand ancient historical and literary contexts of the New Testament writers. His meticulous inspection of ancient attestations of *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) carefully presents the concept of diaspora as consistently associated with negative semantic spheres. He, thus, deduces early in his study that:

Es ist ganz eindeutig und klar: das Wort *διασπείρειν* hat eine ungünstige, unheilvolle Bedeutung. Es ist pikant, daß wir diese schöne Erklärung des Verbums eben dem Diaspora-Juden Philon verdanken.

It is very plain and clear: the Word *διασπείρειν* [*diasperein*, the infinitive of *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*)] has an unfavorable and ominous meaning. It is piquant that we owe this beautiful explanation of the verb solely to the

³⁴⁸ Unnik, *Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora*.

Diaspora Jew, Philo.³⁴⁹

Aiming to explicate the experience and worldview of Jews living in the Greco-Roman Diaspora, Van Unnik demonstrates a consistent pejorative connotation with the term's ancient usage. From Classical use of the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) to Hellenistic appropriation of the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) by translators of the LXX and later Roman-era authors such as Plutarch, the concept of diaspora maintains a negative semantic register through allusions to decomposition, destruction, punishment and decay. His reading of Epicurus' alleged usage, which I discuss in detail below, is paradigmatic for Van Unnik and serves as the hermeneutic lens through which he interprets all other attestations. Ultimately, when the translators of the LXX begin using the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) diaspora to express a specific theological concept, their intention, according to Van Unnik, is to portray the negative connotation of the term's verbal root as an expression of divine punishment. An important component of Van Unnik's argument is the distinction between diaspora and exile. Van Unnik charges that exile denotes geography while diaspora is a notion of being that intimates destructive decomposition. Though largely unavailable until its publication in 1993 and still solely available in German, Van Unnik's assessment epitomizes the argumentation that is implicit in the context-dependent definitions of diaspora appropriated during the early stages of Diaspora Studies.

Aiyenakun P.J. Arowele is a priest and Nigerian New Testament scholar that completed his undergraduate studies in London and doctoral training at Würzburg in Germany. While both Schmidt and Van Unnik concentrate their focus on

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 88.

(re)constructing the theological significance of diaspora within the LXX and its Jewish context, Arowele alternatively uses his doctoral dissertation to retrieve the importance of diaspora in its Christian theological context. Schmidt and Van Unnik give cursory attention to the New Testament uses of *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and expands his analysis beyond the explicit uses of *διασπορά* (*diaspora*). Arowele begins his project by arguing that scholars spend too much time discussing social, political consequences and have forgotten are questions of theology. The sociological phenomenon is itself simply a reference to the “dispersion” of a minority group amongst a majority group. Yet, the notion of a Christian Diaspora implied in New Testament texts connotes a specific theological worldview.

The original idea of Christian Diaspora is not an (inter-)denominational relationship of majority to minority, but a purely Christian phenomenon. It properly depicts Christian existence as such in the world, not solely the characteristic of an “out-post” ecclesial community. Therefore the Diaspora situation is a “salvific expediency” of the people of God on earth, an ecclesio-sociological characteristic.³⁵⁰

Arowele’s central questions deal with what grounds allowed for the expansion of the theological concept of diaspora. An integral part of Arowele’s objective is to separate the historical and sociological semantics of diaspora within biblical Israel and ancient Judaism from the early Christian concept of diaspora. Diaspora, according to Arowele, is a theological reality. Scholars spend too much time discussing the social, political consequences of diaspora. His analysis, though expansive, lacks methodological and theoretical coherence. As a result and with little support, Arowele’s study focuses on “diaspora and similar terms.” With little support or explanation, Arowele expands the semantic register of diaspora. Thus, with little distinction, he identifies any New

³⁵⁰ Arowele, “Diaspora-Concept in the New Testament,” 2.

Testament use of terms as diverse as διασκορπίζω [diaskorpizō, to scatter; squander], παρoικέω [paroikeō, to dwell beside; to migrate or sojourn], παρoικία [paroikia, sojourn or sojourning], ξένος [zenos, a foreigner or stranger], πολιτεύομαι [politeuomai, to live or lead one's life] and πόλις [polis, a city; a town] as reflecting the theological worldview of early Christianity's diaspora-concept.

Withstanding its weaknesses, a number of observations are worth acknowledging. Arowele (re)constructs the concept of diaspora for an overtly Christian-centric worldview that articulates—at the very least propagates the metanarrative—Christianity as the superseding replacement of Jews and Judaism. It is within this specific worldview that he places the diaspora concept in a particular linear trajectory. Diaspora originates as the religious and historical depiction of Jews, G*d's chosen people, and Judaism throughout the world but evolves into a theological-philosophical reality whose implicit religious dimension is transferred through New Testament writings to Christians. As a consequence, Arowele's analysis had already debunked much of the traditional metanarrative by demonstrating the polyvocal nature of the term diaspora in Antiquity.

Van Unnik and Arowele are among the few biblical scholars that find occasional citation within the early theorizations of diaspora in the 1990s. As evident in their (re)constructions, they both perceive diaspora as an emic term whose ancient significance resides, at least partially, in its discursive use. Though thorough and novel in their critical engagement with the etymology and origin of diaspora, the resultant (re)constructions for Arowele and Van Unnik lead to myopic descriptions of early Jewish and Christian sensibilities.³⁵¹ Also resembling the rest of Biblical Studies, these works

³⁵¹ Scott has the most advanced theoretical argument in this body of work. He engages the textual

approach diaspora as strict social category or consciousness. Including Schmidt, these quasi-critical analyses are vital for understanding the ground upon which Diaspora Studies developed.

Alongside these mid-twentieth century biblical constructs of diaspora were a number of biblical scholars that played an integral role in challenging prevailing historical assumptions about Jewish identity and culture during the Hellenistic and early Roman period. The scholarship of Martin Hengel (1926 – 2009) and A. Thomas Kraabel (1934 –) exemplify these contributions. While neither Hengel nor Kraabel directly engaged the philological or literary discussions of the term diaspora, both advanced notions of diaspora as a sociological phenomenon or cultural consciousness. Both scholars utilized diaspora interchangeably as non-location and untheorized metonym for non-Palestinian Judaism. They, however, are among the first scholars of early Judaism and Christianity to challenge uncritical approaches to the Jewish Diaspora as homogenous or singularly expressed.

Focusing on Hellenistic articulations of the Jewish Diaspora, the works of Kraabel and Hengel bring critical attention to the socio-cultural and political dimensions implicit in the consideration of Diaspora. Hengel appeals both to literary and material culture to dismantle rigid constructions for terms such as Judaism, Hellenism, Paganism or Christianity.³⁵² He argues that Hellenization affected both the cultures of Jews in both

incidences, and discusses their meaning. He, however, disregards them as secondary to archeological evidence conveying Diaspora attitudes. While Scott's work contains a number of weaknesses, he must be credited for directly acknowledging the diversity of Jewish Diaspora experience and that he seeks only to suggest how some Diaspora Jews may have existed. Scott, "Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period."

³⁵² Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period*, 2 vols. (London: SCM Press, 1974); Martin Hengel, "The Political and Social History of Palestine from Alexander to Antiochus III (222-187 BCE)," in *The Cambridge History of*

inside and outside of Palestine and that the study of early Christianity necessitated an appreciation of its polymorphous Jewish context(s). As a consequence, Hengel's work argues that the social and cultural milieu responsible for producing early Judaism and Christianity demands a complex narrative of interdependent cultures, worldviews and identities.

Relying primarily on advancements in archeology and increased awareness of the material culture, Kraabel also challenges univocal metanarratives of the Jewish Diaspora.³⁵³ Leaning on literary and material evidence, he argues Hellenization, like other examples of cultural and socio-political acculturation, can elicit diverse responses. As a result, it is unreasonable to assume that Jews living outside of Palestine had a homogenous liberal and assimilation-oriented response to Hellenistic culture. In a similar vein, it is equally untenable to assume that Jews living within Palestine would have a single conservative, antagonistic response to Hellenistic culture. Consequently, Hengel's work recommends the need for expanded consideration of the impact of Hellenization for the study of early Jewish and Christian identity as well as an enhanced criticism of the assumptions implicit within many historical-critical renderings of early imperial Rome. Kraabel's revised approach to Jewish history resulted in a view of diaspora that deviated from that of Van Unnik and Arowele. Like Van Unnik and dissimilar to Arowele, Kraabel asserts that diaspora and exile are different. Yet, in contrast to Van Unnik and in a similar vein to Arowele, Kraabel argues that diaspora has a positive connotation and is

Judaism: The Hellenistic Age, ed. William David Davies and Louis Finkelstein, vol. 2, 4 vols. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 35–78; Feldman's article offers a useful analysis of Hengel's approach and includes consideration of some of the ethical implications of Hengel's argumentation. Louis H. Feldman, "Hengel's Judaism and Hellenism in Retrospect," *JBL* 96, no. 3 (1977): 371–82.

³⁵³ Kraabel, "Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions"; Kraabel, "Unity and Diversity among Diaspora Synagogues"; Scott provides a useful synopsis and critique of Kraabel's approach to diaspora. Scott, "Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period."

a good thing. While exile signifies socio-political and geographical displacement, diaspora implies divine activity, preservation and eschatological hope. While contributing little to understanding the meaning of diaspora as a term, both Hengel and Kraabel are vital contributors to the mid-twentieth century biblical construction of diaspora. Their scholarship served as a catalyst for shifting biblical constructs of Jewish identity and Diaspora away from non-critical iterations of unilinear metanarratives to more nuanced polyvocal articulations of particular texts and material culture.

Because theorists in Diaspora Studies rarely engage Biblical Studies, the contributions of Hengel and Kraabel had minimal impact on early theories of Diaspora. However, the shift in narrative and methodological approach stimulated a handful of biblical scholars to revisit the theological and ideological meaning of diaspora as a concept. James M. Scott, René Krüger and Johannes Tromp consist of the most significant re-appraisals around the end of the twentieth century.

Scott's article is an important advancement in the biblical construct of diaspora. He specifically locates his analysis within the scholarly context of Kraabel and Van Unnik and includes an excellent synopsis and critique of both scholars' work. Consequently, he utilizes literary, historical and archeological argumentation to inform his (re)construction of diaspora as both an ancient literary term and consciousness. Like both Kraabel and Van Unnik, Scott also privileges the Jewish milieu responsible for developing diaspora as a theological and socio-cultural ideology. Influenced by the methodological and historical advances in Biblical Studies between the 1970s and 1990s, Scott cautions his audience from developing a myopic, univocal construct of diaspora. He also appropriates Van Unnik's terminology of destructive decomposition to assert that

the fundamental axiological connotation of diaspora is pejorative. Difference and decomposition, for Scott, have only a negative meaning-potential.

In much the same way Arowele situated his analysis as a response to scholar's overemphasis on the historical and socio-cultural dimension of diaspora, Scott argues that the literary use of the word has received too much attention. He depicts his study as a response to this overemphasis on the literary meaning of diaspora by showing how archeological material culture is more useful for (re)constructing early Jewish perceptions of diaspora and exile.³⁵⁴ Scott's primary objectives revolves around a demonstration that some ancient Diaspora Jews self-identified as being in perpetual exile. He wants to shift scholarship's methodological approach to studying ancient Diaspora Judaism from being text-centric towards fuller utilization of archeological material culture. He arrives at this finding through a careful reading of A. T. Kraabel, who is a precursor towards his own archeology based approach, and Van Unnik, who symbolizes the text-centric, word-study approach to historical (re)construction of ancient Jewish ideology and theology. After revealing the subjective and seemingly arbitrary—i.e. contextual—nature of Van Unnik's analysis to light, Scott advocates for the overall de-particularization of the term diaspora. He then uses the apparent diversity of the noun *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) in ancient literature, particularly the LXX, and the term's occurrence alongside notions of exile and shifts his own analytical focus on (re)constructing a single model for understanding Jewish live and worldview leads to his disregarding the particularity of the word diaspora altogether.

³⁵⁴ Scott actually argues that the Greek terms for diaspora are little more than synonyms describing migration, colonization, and exile. For Scott, the concept of diaspora has no particular semantic character or signifying significance. Scott, "Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period."

Somewhat resembling Arowele, Scott argues emphatically asserts reflect a single semantic register and should thus be engaged as synonyms. He additionally employs the frequently cited Thucydidean passage that employs the verb σπείρω (*speirō*) and lacks the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) as support for the term's negative value. After properly noting that the term is σπείρω (*speirō*) and not διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*), Scott argues that the specific word used is of little consequence because all the words within the concept's semantic register connote the same axiological negativity. Thus, there is no reason to distinguish between literary uses of sowing [σπείρω, *speirō*], dispersion [διασπορά, *diaspora*] or exile [ἀποικία, *apoikia*: settlement or colony; exile]. After surveying key literary uses of the noun and verb, Scott implies that all words dealing with Jewish movement, migration or displacement occupy the same semantic register and are thus synonyms.

Instead what we find is that the two terms ['exile' and 'diaspora'] are in fact synonyms, as can also be seen by the fact that they sometimes occur together, and they often stand within the covenantal context of sin-punishment-return.³⁵⁵

Focused study on specific use of the term diaspora appears to provide Scott with little insight into the historical (re)construction of ancient views of Diaspora Judaism. He, thus, surmises that, "a complete philological study of the Jewish Diaspora in the Greco-Roman period must not only include a broader range of terms for "scatter"...but also the whole vocabulary of exile and return in both literary and non-literary sources."³⁵⁶

René Krüger provides an intriguing engagement of the concept of diaspora from both emic and etic perspectives. As a biblical scholar and ordained clergy of the

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 184.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

Evangelical Church of the River Plate, Krüger is an Uruguayan born, nationalized Argentinian member of the German-speaking Diaspora in Latin America.³⁵⁷ He identifies with the Latin American Diaspora while also being a member of an evangelical branch of the broader German-Protestant Diaspora. The notion of diaspora encompasses multiple aspects of Krüger's intellectual, professional, cultural and theological identities. Krüger published an article in the journal titled, *Die evangelische Diaspora* in which he first outlines his biblical construct of diaspora. It is important to note that his construct is both historical and contextual. Like Arowele, his focus is on describing diaspora as concept descriptive of a Christian, theological worldview. Located in an ecclesiastically-oriented journal, the implicit purpose of this construct is to inform members of the Evangelical, German Diaspora Church of aspects of their own identity. Krüger expands his analysis in a monograph initially published in 2008. Krüger's study retraces much of the ground done by Van Unnik and Arowele. He, however, restricts his study to the Greek derivatives of diaspora and provides a more nuanced and careful reading of the LXX and New Testament texts.

Johannes Tromp's article on diaspora is perhaps the most advanced, theoretically nuanced and contextually sensitive biblical construct of diaspora to date. Tromp overtly states that the "general" term diaspora that exists today has been divorced from its ancient meaning. He agrees with earlier scholars that believe the original meaning of noun was a Jewish invention (coinage) with lexical ties to the concept of gathering. The neologism

³⁵⁷ Krüger, "Das Biblische Paradigma Der Diaspora. Die Solidarische Und Missionarische Gemeinschaft Der Glaubigen"; René Krüger, "Luke's God and Mammon, A Latin American Perspective," in *Global Bible Commentary*, ed. Daniel Patte (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 395; Helmut Sauter, "Prof. Dr. René Krüger aus der GAW-Partnerkirche zu Gast in Heilbronn : Evangelischer Kirchenbezirk Heilbronn," *Evangelischer Kirchenbezirk Heilbronn*, April 4, 2013, http://www.kirche-heilbronn.de/cms/startseite/aktuelles/meldungen/detailansicht-news/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=44676&cHash=7b79a9af330087e4b9558f16bacab40d.

was an attempt to express a contextual theological and ideological worldview. The evocation of Diaspora, treated primarily as a consciousness, signifies a mechanism for praising the divine and expressing the omnipotence of Israel's Lord. According to Tromp, it was only through later Christian polemics that the term garnered pejorative connotations. Current notions of diaspora reflect a Christian perversion. Tromp's treatment of diaspora attends to the historical and literary advances provided by biblical scholars dealing with the philology of the term while maintaining critical rigor in his consideration of diaspora as an ancient social category or consciousness. Though advocating for a specific "original" meaning of diaspora, Tromp reminds his readers of the complex and polyvocal nature that diaspora developed over its more than two millennia evolution.

While insightful, the analysis found in these studies garners little attention among contemporary theorists in Diaspora Studies.³⁵⁸ Because the trend in Diaspora Studies is to adopt, uncritically, the etymology and origin of the term diaspora from largely nineteenth century theological paradigms of a monolithic biblical Israel, the resultant metanarrative constructions described by these works, however, find recurrent regurgitation among various theorists of Diaspora.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸ Dufoix's article is one exception. Dufoix, "Deconstructing and Reconstructing 'Diaspora': A Study in Socio-Historical Semantics."

³⁵⁹ A. T. Kraabel refutes many of the monolithic tendencies advanced by traditional readings of Diaspora Judaism. Instead of anchoring his analysis in literary evidence like Van Unnik and this study here Kraabel integrates archeological and material research into his analysis. For Kraabel, Diaspora Judaism must be understood as having diverse geopolitical and socio-political histories and circumstances while also being liberated from the sphere of being solely a religious category. Again, Kraabel's intention is to describe the diversities and experiences of Diaspora Judaism, which is less concerned with the etymology of the term itself. Kraabel, "Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions"; See also, Kraabel, "Unity and Diversity among Diaspora Synagogues."

Among these two generations of theoretical biblical constructs of diaspora, Van Unnik, Krüger and Tromp offer the most detailed and elaborate considerations of the ancient literary attestations and meaning(s) of the word diaspora.³⁶⁰ Yet, each of the discussed authors contributes to the early stage of theoretical constructions of diaspora. As evident in these twentieth century renderings, these biblical scholars each had as their goal to (re)construct diaspora as expressive of a particular ancient worldview and theology. Though seldom cited, these arguments influenced the public and scholarly assumptions about the origin of diaspora. Most influential was the recurring presumption of the term's fundamental pejorative meaning. As discussed in the following section, each of these biblical constructs reflects earlier views of diaspora found throughout nineteenth and early twentieth century non-critical treatments of diaspora. As products of their respective European, North American, Latin American and African contexts, these scholars ensconced much of the contextual assumptions and logic of nineteenth and early twentieth century Modernity into their theories of diaspora. Consequently, as intermediaries between the un-critical, non-theoretical notions of diaspora and the theories of late twentieth century Diaspora Studies, these biblical constructs both obscured the contextual nature of their analyses and transmitted these assumptions as objective, criticism into Diaspora Studies. Thus, when scholars from the Humanities and Social Sciences occasionally cite Schmidt, Van Unnik or Arowele or drew upon the historical-critical definitions found in reference works, they were beginning not from an

³⁶⁰ Van Unnik provides the most thorough analysis. This posthumously published work, however, is only available in German. Unnik, *Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora*; In addition to Arowele and Scott, Krüger also provide detailed studies of the literary incidences of diaspora. They, however, restrict the majority of their study to Jewish and Christian literature while also being more interested in developing theologies of diaspora. Arowele, "Diaspora-Concept in the New Testament"; Scott, "Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period"; Krüger, *La diáspora*.

objective, a-contextual and universally accepted root; they were beginning from and responding to the contextual (re)constructions, convictions and arguments of the nineteenth and twentieth century concerns about religion, nationalism and objectivity.

***Founding Deviations and Biblical Studies:
Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin, Barclay and Segovia***

Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, John M. G. Barclay and Fernando Segovia are four notable exceptions within this intellectual setting who have developed insightful and alternative strategies to incorporating the concept of diaspora into the study of the New Testament and early Jewish and Christian literatures.³⁶¹

Daniel and Jonathan Boyrain have contributed to the study of diaspora in Jewish studies as a social phenomenon shaping interpersonal and community cohesion. Utilizing hybridity-based definitions of diaspora, Daniel Boyarin, ancient historian and scholar of rabbinic Judaism, has used diaspora as a critical lens for exploring Paul's Jewish identity. Describing diasporic identity as "disaggregated identity," Boyarin stresses the recognition of the bodily presentation of concomitant identities that shape cultural articulation. In the body of Paul, Boyarin finds the tenuous negotiation of a person from the Jewish diaspora who attempted to mediate Jewish cultural particularity with Hellenistic universalism within the confines of Jewish cultural practice and articulation.³⁶² As such, he notes the

³⁶¹Erich Gruen's landmark study of diaspora is also a significant contribution to early Jewish and Christian studies. I, however, omit Gruen from this list because he is a Classicist and ancient historian. See Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Harvard University Press, 2002); Charles and Coker are two recent works in New Testament Studies that critically engage diaspora theory firmly within the literary tradition of Diaspora Studies. These works both imply a hybridity-based definition as they utilize postcolonial theory to approach diaspora as use diaspora as a means to contextualize early Christian discourse. While Charles approach to diaspora alligns closer to a mode of cultural production, Coker raises cogent questions to primarily approach diaspora as consciousness. These publications became available after the bulk of this chapter was written. They are important contributions to the field, though, they refrain from critical evaluation of Diaspora Studies. See Charles, *Paul and the Politics of Diaspora* Or, ; Coker, "Calling on the Diaspora: Nativism and Diaspora Identity in the Letter of James."

³⁶²Boyarin and Boyarin, "Diaspora"; See Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

precarious relationship between Jewish and Christian communities as the outgrowth of an initial diasporic negotiation. His critical invocation of diaspora attempts to contextualize his subject of study, Paul. However, as an assumed identity, the Boyarins' assessment gives little attention to the transitory character of diaspora, or its systemic qualities. Their work offers valuable insights on the nature of diasporic identity.

John M. G. Barclay invokes diaspora to study early Jewish literature and the Pseudepigrapha. Largely employed as a means of describing the geographic provenance of early Jewish discourses, Barclay exemplifies the common practice among religious scholars that depict diaspora as primarily, if not entirely, Hellenistic and as cultural deviance from expressions found within Palestine (traditional Israel). Attempting to study the diversity of diasporic expressions of Jewishness—i. e. how non-Palestinian expressions of Jewishness deviated from Palestinian expressions—Barclay provides assimilation, acculturation and accommodation as categorizing scales for evaluating diasporic literature.³⁶³

Hardly doing his work justice, a loose overview of his concepts can understand assimilation as an evaluation of one's integration into or "aloofness" from social institutions. Assimilation, for Barclay, categorizes social practice, behavior and comfort with respect to institutions. In discussing early Judaism, this might concern whether one participates in the gymnasium, synagogue, theatre, and *collegia*. Acculturation, on the other hand, describes one's familiarity with language, culture, and education. Accommodation, then, describes how one employs their assimilated and acculturated characters to socially position themselves in relation to the dominant culture and Jewish

³⁶³John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 92–101.

society. This scale slides from submersion of Jewish uniqueness to opposition to dominant culture. Differing from the Boyarins' focus on the nature and complexity of diasporic existence and identity, Barclay's scales intend to help scholars grade and evaluate a text's relationship to Jerusalem and Rome. Incredibly useful for its recognition of the discursive properties of diasporic literature, Barclay's analysis of diaspora envisions diaspora as an expression of socio-political and cultural negotiation of identity. Concerned with the discursive properties of literature, he explores "how" literature works, but assumes a type of static outsider identity for diasporicized individuals. Between poles, oscillating from one end to another, Barclay's diaspora are implicitly deviant others, perpetually negotiating their liminality in limbo.

New Testament scholar Fernando Segovia's treatment of diaspora is original and gives a vital step for New Testament studies to interact with the broader field of diaspora studies.³⁶⁴ Unlike Boyarin, and Barclay, Segovia actually provides a critical definition of diaspora, in addition to his description of its impact on experience. Segovia offers a broad conception of Diaspora Studies that is a useful springboard for the current conversation. Diaspora Studies, according to Segovia, is, "concerned with the analysis of geographical translations of peoples in general, whether in the present or past, whether in the West or outside the West," and revolves around a common phenomenon that he calls the geographical denominator of "un-settlement - travel - re-settlement."³⁶⁵ His emphasis on geographical movement and translation correspond to Dufoix's open definition, and

³⁶⁴Segovia, "Postcolonial and Diasporic Studies," 11–15.

³⁶⁵See Segovia, "Postcolonial and Diasporic Studies"; or Fernando F. Segovia, "Toward a Hermeneutics of the Diaspora: A Hermeneutics of Otherness and Engagement.," in *Reading from This Place, Vol 1: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 57–73.

accurately reflect a central aspect visible across Diaspora Studies, while also contributing to the concept's critical reflection.

Segovia is also the first New Testament scholar known to this scholar who offers diaspora as a useful hermeneutic context for interpretation. Eisenbaum, Daniel Boyarin and Barclay each discuss diaspora as a context or space for the study of the ancient world. Segovia, identifying as part of the Cuban-American diaspora, places diaspora within the realm of postcolonial studies and suggests that the phenomenon of diaspora is a contextual identity beneficial for generating cultural critical interpretations of the New Testament. Responding to categorical definitions of diaspora, Segovia acknowledges his preference for open definitions that resist making any one diaspora experience the ideal for judging others. He additionally points out the variant and diverse articulations of diaspora existence. He, however, fails to offer his own definition or understanding of diaspora, preferring to broadly outline his understanding of the subjects covered under diaspora studies, quoted above, and the generic principle of "re-settlement - travel - un-settlement."

For Segovia, diaspora is an 'in-front of the text' means of developing an intercultural hermeneutic where people engage texts, not as myopic participants in dominant culture, but as othered individuals on the margins. By recognizing the transnational quality of diaspora, an interpreter's diasporic identity invites her/him into contextual and ideological dialogue throughout the interpretive process. Thus, the primary value of diaspora, in Segovia's construction, is both its privileging of the transnational and counter-cultural, and its intrinsic diversity. His open understanding of diaspora and its potential in interpreting the text is an explicit description of the hermeneutical practice

employed, but not explicitly outlined, by the Boyarins. Segovia, however, limits his discussion of diaspora to its pertinence to the interpreter's context and subject-position.

Withstanding the contributions to the study of diaspora by the above religious scholars and a few others, diaspora remains a largely underutilized category in New Testament exegesis. Segovia's discussion of postcolonialism and the ever-presence of geographical translation in cultural production is informative, yet, he chooses to refrain from providing examples or commentary on the role of diaspora in the analysis or (re)construction of ancient history, or the social and cultural world of texts. His approach deals with the inherent subjectivity in the interpretive process and the value in allowing a text's imperial location inform an exegete's interpretation. Using his own Cuban-American experience, Segovia legitimates diaspora as a valid hermeneutic because of the reader's inherent role a reader's subject-position plays in the interpretive process.

Through Segovia and Barclay, one can recognize the benefits of using diaspora based on the recognizable provenance of a text, or the lived-experience of the author. Both concepts of diaspora and Diaspora Studies also become better situated as contextual constructions in need of self-critique and identification. The obscured relationship between diaspora as emic, and etic articulation, however, remains. For Barclay, diaspora is an etic concept enlightening his (re)constructions of history, but for Segovia diaspora is an emic identity that enriches New Testament exegesis by employing a critic's subjective perspective and positionality to enhance relationality to the text.

Diaspora and Ancient Usage: (re)Assessing Etymology and Historical Meaning

Introduction: Diaspora not Sowing

As demonstrated above, the word diaspora generated meaning for more than two millennia through the combined semantic power of its denotative and connotative meanings. In comparison to terms such as ἔθνος [*ethnos*, nation/a people/culture group], γένος [*genos*, a people/kin-group/generation/"race"] or πόλις [*polis*, city/urban area], the term diaspora has relatively modest ancient attestation, particularly in its noun form.³⁶⁶ Alluding to this modest attestation, Kachig Tölölyan notes, "a certain ambiguity is inherent even in this [diaspora's] earliest use."³⁶⁷ As the transliterated form of the Greek noun διασπορά [*diaspora*, a scattering; a dispersion; the state or condition of being dispersed], Diaspora Studies is correct in its description of the noun as a derivative of the Greek verb διασπείρω [*diaspeirō*, disperse; scatter; dissipate]. The root-verb is a compound word composed of the prepositional prefix διά [*dia*, through; throughout; over, on account of; because of] and root-word σπείρω [*speirō*, scatter; sow; spread].³⁶⁸ Though many theorists of diaspora attempt to collapse the semantic domains of διασπορά (*diaspora*) and διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*), the ancient witnesses suggest separate semantic domains.

³⁶⁶ As will be discussed below, ancient use of the term diaspora, in both its noun and verb forms, occur in both the LXX, and New Testament, in addition to authors as temporally and contextually diverse as Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Herodotus, Plutarch, Philo, and Josephus. For discussions of other Greek concepts that deal with the categorization and theorization of groups, communities, and geospatial identity, See, Jonathan M. Hall, "Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 8, no. 2 (1998): 265–83; Christopher P. Jones, "ἔθνος and γένος in Herodotus," *The Classical Quarterly (New Series)* 46, no. 02 (1996): 315–20; Greg Woolf, "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East," in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, vol. 40, 1994, 116–43; Rebecca Futo Kennedy, C. Sydnor Roy, and Max L. Goldman, eds., *Race and Ethnicity in the Classical World: An Anthology of Primary Sources in Translation* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett PubCompany, Inc, 2013).

³⁶⁷ Tölölyan, "Rethinking Diaspora (s)," 10–11.

³⁶⁸ Swanson, *DBL Greek*; Newman, "Concise Greek-English Dictionary"; For brief discussions of Greek prepositional use, and the spatial aspects of compound word constructions, See Brucale, "Space (Adpositions)."

While theorists frequently attempt to use, albeit uncritically, the term diaspora's constituent parts to anchor the term's etymology and original meaning, few individuals discuss the diverse connotative values covered by diaspora's constituent parts. Because diaspora is a derivative of the noun διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*), these arguments usually focus on the constituent parts of διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*). Part of the process of homogenizing the semantic range of diaspora with other ancient terms is to overly reduce descriptions of its constituent parts. For instance, the spatial denotative meaning of the prefix δια- (*dia*-) as through or across is consistently the only meaning theorists of diaspora provide. However, as a preposition, δια- (*dia*) takes on different values based upon the grammatical context. The spatial notion of "through" can indicate direction of movement as in "throughout." Meaning such as these occur when the preposition modifies a genitive. However, this genitive modification is also determined by context and may also indicate agency. In cases of agency, the preposition infers "through" with the sense of "by" or "by means of." These are not the only constructions. The preposition can infer temporal sense; it frequently accompanies accusative nouns, thereby, indicating cause, reason, or purpose. Yet, reducing this preposition to solely meaning "through" is incomplete and contributes to de-contextualized presumptions and metanarratives that diaspora and its constituent parts originate from a unilinear and univocal root.

In response to these common practices, my first task in this section is to display the weaknesses in this practice. Two passages from the Gospel of Luke illustrate multiple ways the constituent parts of διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) can function independently. In Luke 4.30, the preposition διὰ (*dia*) occurs alongside a compound verb comprised of the prefix διὰ- (*dia*-). In this case the preposition amplifies and reiterates the effect of the

compound verb διέρχομαι [*dierchomai*, to go through, pass, travel through; complete], which is a compound verb from the preposition διὰ (*dia*) and verb ἔρχομαι [*erchomai*, to go, or come]. Thus, 4.30 can be rendered: “But he, passing through [διελθὼν διὰ, *dielthōn dia*] their midst, moved on.” Here, διελθὼν (*dielthōn*) is a participle of the compound verb διέρχομαι (*dierchomai*) while the preposition διὰ (*dia*) indicates direction via its genitive compound structure. In this instance, the preposition and prefix somewhat overlap in function.

Luke 8.4-8 provides an example of the use of the preposition διὰ (*dia*) and the verb σπείρω (*spierō*). In the often-cited Thucydidean passage in *Peloponnesian War II*, 27 σπείρω (*spierō*) denotes the scattering of people throughout Greece. Alternatively, Luke 8.4-8 uses the verb in its agricultural sense:

4. When a large crowd came together and those traveling to him [came] from each town, he spoke by means of [διὰ, *dia*] a parable: 5. “The sower [ὁ σπείρων, *ho speirōn*] went out in order to sow [τοῦ σπεῖραι, *tau speirai*] his seed [σπόρον, *sporon*]. And, while he sowed [ἐν τῷ σπεῖρειν, *en tō speirein*], that which fell beside the path was trampled, and the birds of the sky devoured it. 6. And other [seed] fell upon the rock and having sprouted, it withered because [διὰ, *dia*] it did not have moisture. 7. And other [seed] fell in the midst of the thorns, and the thorns, having grown together with [it], choked it. 8. And other [seed] fell in the good soil, and after having sprout, it produced fruit a hundredfold. After saying these things, he shouted, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

This passage demonstrates multiple uses of both constituent parts of the verb διασπείρω (*diaspierō*). The preposition διὰ (*dia*) occurs in a genitive construction with an instrumental sense—i.e. through or by means of as in 8.4—and in an accusative constructions with the sense of causation—i.e. because or on account of as in 8.6. The verb σπείρω (*spierō*) appears in both infinitive and participle forms. Functioning as a subject, “the sower” or “the one sowing” in 8.5 uses a nominal participle construction. Alternatively, the passage also employs the word in its articular infinitive construction

and a temporal infinitive construction in 8.5. While the verb σπείρω (*speirō*) connotes movement and has a distributive quality, its use in this passage and others is distinct enough to differentiate it from διασπορά (*diaspora*) nor διασπείρω (*diaspierō*). Its frequency of use is vastly greater than both διασπορά (*diaspora*) nor διασπείρω (*diaspierō*) combined. As previously stated, neither διασπορά (*diaspora*) nor διασπείρω (*diaspierō*) appear to have been used in an agricultural or botanical sense. It is insufficient to simply argue that the semantic range of σπείρω (*speirō*) and διασπείρω (*diaspierō*) are indistinguishable because they share a common stem. Using the same logic, one could assert that there is no distinguishable semantic variance between the Greek terms for throwing [βάλλω, *ballō*], expelling [ἐκβάλλω, *ekballō*], clothing/dressing [περιβάλλω, *periballō*], parable [παραβολή, *parabolē*] or devil [διάβολος, *diabolos*]. Each of these terms derives from the stem-verb βάλλω (*ballō*). Yet, the suggestion this etymological relationship means that the word parable in Luke 4:4 carries the same semantic essence as devil is critically imprudent. Likewise, as one strives to (re)construct the ancient meaning of diaspora it is equally naïve to pre-emptively assume univocality.

The word σπείρω (*speirō*) does serve as the root for a number of other words. Some of these derivative words, such as σπέρμα [*sperma*, seed; semen] and σπορά [*spora*, seed; seeding-time] maintain somewhat closer semantic ties with the root. As visible in the Luke 4.4-8 passage above, σπορά (*spora*) maintains a much closer semantic to the agricultural use of sowing connected to the verb σπείρω (*speirō*). Ancient attestations of διασπορά (*diaspora*), on the other hand, display closer semantic relationship with its most direct root-verb διασπείρω (*diaspierō*). LXX translators employ both the noun and verb in the same chapter in two separate instances (Deut 28 and Jer 15).

Extant ancient literature offers only a small incidence of use for the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*). These extant examples lack extended descriptions or philosophical dialogue on the breadth of the word's meaning, application, complexity or variety.³⁶⁹ As a result, scholars' (re)constructed perceptions of the concept of diaspora depend greatly on etymology and incidences of the much more attested verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*). It is rare that Diaspora Studies scholars acknowledge their reliance on the verb διασπείρω when constructing their notions of diaspora. This tendency gives an impression that the etymology and select examples provided by scholars accurately represent the whole of the terms ancient attestation. As previously discussed, theorists lack of distinction between διασπορά (*diaspora*) and διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) contributed to a scholarly culture that repeatedly reiterated uncritical assumptions or erroneous work. Sheffer and other scholars' repeated claim that Thucydides II, 27 is one of the first applications of the word diaspora to a people-group exemplifies these dangers.³⁷⁰

While Sheffer may be using a manuscript tradition unavailable to me, the most readily available manuscripts lack διασπορά (*diaspora*) and διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*). It contains, however, the adjective διάφορος [*diaphoros*, differing; unlike, disagreeing] as a substantive that indicates disagreement or hostility. Alternatively, Sheffer and other scholars may have misread οἱ δε ἐσπάρησαν κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην Ἑλλάδα [*hoi de' esparēsan kata tēn allēn Ellada*]: "those sowed/spread over of Greece." Here, οἱ δε ἐσπάρησαν [*hoi de' esparēsan*] is comprised of the particle δε [*de*] juxtaposed to the aorist third person plural verb σπείρω [*speirō*]. Thucydides, in this instance, is not invoking the concept diaspora to depict a people-group, but is figuratively using the root-verb σπείρω [*speirō*]

³⁶⁹ Philo of Alexandria's description of diasporain *De Praemiis et Poenis* is a possible exception.

³⁷⁰ Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*, 9.

to depict Greek migration. Interestingly enough, Thucydides does use the verb διασπείρω in *Peloponnesian War* 1.11 and 3.30 with respect to people-groups; however, these incidences explicitly invoke military contexts and not ethno-political migration.

Even more influential than the ancient literature itself, these scholarly perceptions and metanarratives discourage further critical analysis. One also notes scholars James M. Scott and P.J. Aroele who preemptively expand the semantic range of the diaspora concept to the point where one assumes any number of ancient words related to migration, spreading, sowing, settling, sojourning, colonization, distribution, difference or exile reflects a single socio-political, ideological and theological semantic domain. Consequently, Scott can correctly identify the presence of the verb σπείρω [*speirō*] in *War II*, 27 and still utilize it as a primary illustration of the origin and meaning of the diaspora concept. Rooted in contextual interpretations of Jewish history and experience, these metanarratives (re)construct and delimit the ancient semantic range of both the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) and verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) into a uniform diaspora concept that functions as a theological worldview and historical phenomenon. These scholarly (re)constructions, situated in the socio-political and historical contexts discussed above, have also struggled to distinguish between their study of the ancient term diaspora and their investigation into the phenomena and lived experience of ancient Diaspora communities.

I approach this evaluation and (re)construction of the ancient term diaspora in line with Van Unnik's word-study. However, the contextual and cultural critical nature of my hermeneutic acknowledges the contextual and constructive character of such an analysis. Always cautious of argument from silence—i.e. erasure—if extant literature is at all

indicative of ancient views toward definitional diaspora, its use warranted little conjecture, debate or theorizing. Because a great deal of theory on diaspora begins by rooting diaspora in a specific historical and etymological context, I review the ancient attestation and re-appraise early use of the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) and noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) as an initial step in constructing a theory of diaspora situated within my Black American context. Because the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) enjoyed a much broader attestation in Antiquity, a complete accounting and discussion of each of occurrence exceeds the limits of this study. A brief discussion of its meaning and semantic range, however, is important for evaluating the development of diaspora as a concept in ancient literature. After a cursory discussion of the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*), I devote the majority of my attention to (re)constructing the concept of diaspora from ancient attestation of the noun.

Diaspora from Διασπείρω (Diaspeirō)

Use of the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) traces back to at least the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. Extant works by Classical writers such as Sophocles (ca 496 BCE – 295 BCE), Thucydides (ca 460 BCE – 404 BCE), Xenophon (ca 493 BCE – 354 BCE), Plato (427 BCE - 347) and Aristotle (384 BCE – 322 BCE) all contain at least one use of διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*). Later writers spanning from pre-Principate writers Diodorus (90 BCE – 30 BCE) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (60 BCE – 7 CE) to early Principate authors Dio Chrysostom (40 CE – 120 CE), Plutarch (ca. 45 CE-120 CE) and Lucian of Samosata (125 CE – 180 CE) also utilize the verb. With respect to the Jewish and Christian traditions, LXX translators use διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) to represent eleven Hebrew words as it occurs sixty-seven times. The first century CE Jewish authors Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 BCE – ca. 50 CE) and Josephus each employ the term at least

sixteen times while Acts is the lone New Testament work to employ the verb (Acts 8.1, 4; 11.19).³⁷¹

A significant number of the early uses of the term occur within discussions of military personnel. In these circumstances, it appears the term carries a sense of unorganized dispersal and scattering. The notion of disbanding is useful for many of these cases. Frequent use in this manner describes soldiers following a battle. This post-combat dispersal, however, can describe positive and negative circumstances. Josephus offers both examples. In Ant 7.244, the verb appears in the context of Absalom's army scattering following his death. In contrast, Ant 8.41 describes a portion of a victorious army that had, "dispersed into the royal villages, living there." In each case, διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) signifies the unstructured scattering of soldiers. However, the pejorative connotations that this movement deals with terror or is prompted by punishment or danger only fits into one of the cases. Additionally, in both circumstances the potential for re-constitution remains.

Xenophon and Thucydides both employ διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) with this sense. According to the context provided in *Anabasis* 1.8.21-26, Xenophon describes a victorious battle led by Cyrus. After seizing the advantage over a Persian army, Cyrus' soldiers pursued the enemy soldiers who were fleeing. It is in this context that Xenophon says that Cyrus' soldiers in their aggressive pursuit dispersed (1.8.25). This dispersal resulted in Cyrus having a smaller group of soldiers at his immediate side. This decreased size, however, did not prevent Cyrus from his opposing commander,

³⁷¹ Philo: Posterity 89; Planting 59; Confusion 1, 118, 121, 196; Preliminary Studies 56-58; Moses 1.128; Flaccus 71. Josephus: *Antiquities* 7.244; 8.41, 271; 9.40, 200, 286; 10.65, 137; 11.212; 12.139, 278; 14.271; 16.273; *Against Appian* 16.273; *Wars* 2.491.

Artagerses, with his own hand. During this attack, an enemy soldier superficially wounds Cyrus. But, in the context of this event, the suggestion that the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) infers a negative connotation is inaccurate. *Anabasis* 2.4.3 is another key example of military use of the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*). In this instance, Xenophon, again, depicts diaspora-scattering as a reversible process. Here, he parallels διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) with the verb ἀλίζω [*alizō*, to gather, collect, constitute; to salt or make salty].

καὶ νῦν μὲν ἡμᾶς ὑπάγεται μένειν διὰ τὸ διεσπάρθαι αὐτῷ τὸ στράτευμα· ἐπὶ δὲ πάλιν ἀλισθηῖ αὐτῷ ἡ στρατιὰ, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἐπιθήσεται ἡμῖν.

And now, he is undermining us to remain [here] because his army has disbanded (διὰ τὸ διεσπάρθαι, *dia to diesparthai*); but, when the soldiers are gathered together (ἀλισθηῖ, *alithē*) again by him, it is not a question that he will come against us.

(Ana 2.4.3)

In a similar trajectory, Thucydides utilizes the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) in his *Peloponnesian War* 1.11.2. In this instance, he describes a ten-year period prior to the Trojan War when the Trojans were able to easily defend themselves from their Greek opponents. Thucydides attempts to explain the success of Troy by depicting the Greek envoy as being small in number. In order to dispel any ideas that this somewhat piecemeal dispersal of soldiers was due to Greek inferiority Thucydides assures his readers that this small unit was militarily strategic and due to the lack of resources around Troy. The soldiers encamping around the Trojans gathered provisions by farming in the peninsula and pillaging from the Trojans. It is during this time period that Thucydides describes the Greek armies as “dispersed” or “disbanded.” He could be describing the state of the entire army as scattered or specifically to the moments when soldiers disbanded to pillage and farm and their camps had smaller presence. In either

interpretation, Thucydides employs the verb to describe a superior force, capable of reconstitution that would eventually destroy Troy. This use of *σπείρω* (*speirō*) differs significantly from the interpretations of *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) popularly used to construct notions of diaspora.

There is also a tradition of using the verb *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) to describe the spreading of news. These instances frequently associate *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) with *λόγος* [*logos*, word; sentence; subject; speech; discourse; topic; report]. In a similar way, Plato employs the verb to discuss the dispersal-scattering-dissipation-evolution of myth. Writing in the form of dialogue, Plato presents discussion of creation myths, saying:

Now, these things [creation and myth stories] are, on the one hand, all together from this [same] experience/event/incident and with these, other myriads and even those yet more astonishing [unbelievable]. Over much time, however, things from among them vanish, but on the other hand, things that are dispersed are told each apart from the others. But, no one recounts that event, which is common/necessary to all these things. But, it is now the subject, for in the exhibition of a king, it is fitting that [this] be discussed. (Plato, *Statesman* 269)

Here, one sees the ability of Now, these things [creation and myth stories] are, on the one hand, all together from this [same] experience/event/incident and with these, other myriads and even those yet more astonishing [unbelievable]. Over much time, however, things from among them vanish, but on the other hand, things that are dispersed are told each apart from the others. But, that thing, the event, which is common/necessary for all these things no one recounts. But now, it is indeed the subject, for it is fitting that proof/demonstration of a king be discussed. (Plato, *Stat*

Other ancient authors also display this use of the term. Aristotle (*Athen Const* 36.1), Xenophon (*Ana* 6.4.24; *Hellenica* 1.5), Plutarch (*Cicero* 3.4) and Josephus (*Ant* 16.273) each use the term in this sense. In addition to reports, *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) occasions philosophical discussion in Plato's *Sophists* 260, Aristotle's *Poll* 3.128 and throughout Philo's *Confusion*. My intention is not to depict *διασπείρω* (*diaspeirō*) as having a single semantic meaning or having no axiological value. I include the above

examples to dispel notions that the verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) had a single univocal origin. The term frequently occasioned negative circumstances both within and outside of the LXX. However, these examples, coupled with my assessment of the noun below, seeks to provide support for alternative interpretations of the historical development and semantic domain of the term.

Diaspora as Διασπορά (Diaspora)

Though the LXX holds prominence in descriptions of the word's ancient meaning, the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) appears only twelve times within its pages.³⁷² The extant corpus of Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexander contains the noun twice (Confusion 197; Rewards 115). One of these two uses of the noun is merely a LXX quotation (Confusion 197; cf. Deut 30.4). The New Testament contains three references to the noun (John 7.35; Jas 1.1; 1 Pet 1:1). Contemporary with the writings found in the New Testament, Greek philosopher Plutarch was aware of the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*), providing three of the earliest extant literary attestations outside of early Jewish and Christian literature (*Suav viv* 27; Against Colotes 6; Solon 32.4). Second century Christian apologist and eventual martyr Justin (ca. 100 CE-165 CE) was a Gentile originally from Flavia Neapolis—ancient Shechem of Samaria—whose surviving writings use the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) twice (*Dial* 113; 117). The above list, to my

³⁷² Citations are given for the LXX. Where differences occur, Hebrew Bible/Old Testament parallels are placed in parentheses: Deut 28.25; 30.4; Esd β 11.9 (cf. Neh 1.9, HB); Judith 5.19; 2 Macc 1.27; Ps 146.2; Ps Sol 8.28; 9.2; Isa 49.6; Jer 15.7; 41.17 (cf. 34.17, HB); Dan 12.2. One of the few errors found in Dufoix's correction of traditional approaches to diaspora within Diaspora Studies is his identification of 13 LXX uses of the noun. Dufoix lists Ps 138 (LXX)/139 (MT) as containing the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*). I have been unable to find the reasoning for this attestation. Dufoix, "Deconstructing and Reconstructing 'Diaspora': A Study in Socio-Historical Semantics."

knowledge, exhausts extant uses of the noun διασπορά until later invocations by Christian theologians and heresiologists around the turn of the third century CE.³⁷³

A cursory look at the earliest extant uses of the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) readily shows that the word had broad signifying value.³⁷⁴ References apply to the dissipation of the soul after death (Plutarch, *Suav. viv.* 27, attributed to Epicurus), the spreading of a person's ashes (Plutarch, *Solon* 32.4), an ambiguous depiction of worldly difference and diversity (Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 9.88.3), a geospatial reference associated with a community spread across specific geopolitical regions (Judith 5.19; 1 Peter 1.1), or the generalized state or condition of an entity being scattered due to its general lack of spatial or corporate continuity (Deut 28.25, 30.4; Jer 15.7). A number of the LXX references are ambiguous and capable of referring to either a place or condition. Regardless, the equivocal nature of the diaspora and the connotative language-world surrounding it sufficiently provided authors and translators with broad potential signifying values. Consequently, knowledge of ancient meanings of diaspora is primarily the interpretive (re)construction of modern scholars. A brief discussion of key examples will aid in discerning the connotative domain of the noun.

Διασπορά (*diaspora*) in Plutarch (or the Classics?)

³⁷³ In addition to a reference in the difficult to date Testament of Asher, I am also aware of scattered usage among later Christian patriarchs of the third and fourth centuries such as Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Basil of Caesarea. Though LXX Ps 138 (cf. 139 HB) contains neither the noun *diaspora* or verb *diaspeirō* fifth century CE Codex Alexandrinus entitles the Psalm, "To the End: a Psalm for David from Zacharias in the Diaspora [Εἰς τὸ τέλος, τῷ Δαδ ψαλμὸς Ζαχαρίου] διασπορά, *eis to telos tō Dad. Psalmos Zachariou diaspora*].

³⁷⁴ I begin with and privilege the noun διασπορά because it is the direct transliterated source of the contemporary concept of diaspora. Additionally, the low incidence and disproportionate occurrence within the Jewish and Christian literature suggests the possibility for a specific and contextually driven use of the noun either as a neologism or culture-specific semantic trajectory closely related to Hellenistic Jewish contexts. The concept of diaspora, as currently employed in theory, continues to gravitate towards the use of diaspora concept as a noun or adjective—diasporic—failing to garner any jargon or theory specific correlation with the verb and its affiliate forms or translations such as disperse and dispersion.

Plutarch's three references are of considerable import. Though a first century writer Plutarch attributes two of his references (*Suav viv* 27; *Against Colotes* 6) to the philosopher Epicurus (ca 342 BCE-270 BCE). Unattested by other ancient witnesses, one cannot definitively place these references in the fourth century BCE. Yet, if original to Epicurus these references are arguably the oldest extant witnesses to the noun form of the diaspora concept. Stringent criticisms of Epicureanism in general and *Colotes* in particular both Plutarch's *Suav viv* and *Against Colotes* are elaborate and caustic refutations of Epicurean philosophy. In both treatises, Plutarch exhorts his audience to critically and carefully engage one's philosophical opponents, as to ensure the ability to refute them honestly and fairly.

The treatise *Suav viv*, whose English title translates to *The Inability to Live Pleasantly by Epicurus* (*non posse suaviter vivi secyndum Epicurum*) invokes the title of a third century BCE treatise attributed to Epicurus' pupil Colotes.³⁷⁵ Here, Plutarch reverses Colotes' argument that it is impossible to live based on the tenants of non-Epicurean philosophers and embarks on a demonstration of the inability to live a pleasant life based on Epicurean teachings. Through his discourse, Plutarch suggests that Epicurus' emphasis on material observation and sensory evaluation of nature is an untrustworthy basis for discerning good. Humanity naturally gravitates toward feelings of desire, and any experience of material pleasure is both local and fleeting. Plutarch

³⁷⁵ The Loeb lists the English name as, "That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible." Plutarch, "That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible," in *Moralia*, trans. Benedict Einarson and Phillip H. De Lacy, vol. 14, Loeb 428 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 14–150, http://www.loebclassics.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/view/plutarch-moralia_that_epicurus_actually_makes_pleasant_life_impossible/1967/pb_LCL428.15.xml?rskey=EA9BVQ&result=1.

believes the sole affirmation of the body's pleasant feelings is additionally inconsistent, since the body helps the mind discern in a variety of ways.

In *Suav Viv* 27, Plutarch attacks Epicurean nonbelief in an afterlife. Epicureans denied the presence of an after-life and argued further that belief in the afterlife prevented one from living a happy life. Unattainable things lead to idle distraction and preoccupation. These aimless distractions lead people's focus away from those things which actually surround, thereby inhibiting them from living a pleasant life. Belief in an afterlife revolves around constructions of a spiritual non-material world, superstition and fear of the gods. Conversely, according to Epicureanism, the universe was the complex matrix of two entities: atoms and void. Understanding happiness as the absence of pain, stress, or fear, Epicurus, according to Plutarch, believed that the existence of an afterlife generated stress and fear of judgment. By removing such concern, Epicureans felt humans could better enjoy life knowing that there was no punishment, judgment, or dependence on other entities.

Plutarch disputed this logic and argued that nonbelief in the afterlife actually increased fear, anxiety and sorrow. It is in this context that Plutarch uses the noun *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) while refuting Epicurus:

To us, that which has become senseless, has decayed, and is nothing, is [in and of itself senselessness], not destroying the anxiety of death, but instead, as its demonstration, increasing it. For this is the thing which nature fears: but you all may become water and earth. The decay of the soul [διάλυσιν τῆς ψυχῆς] into that which does not think, and does not perceive, which Epicurus calls a diaspora into void and atoms[ἦν Ἐπίκουρος εἰς κενὸν καὶ ἀτόμους διασπορὰν ποιῶν], still cuts off [even] more the hope of immortality. On account of this, there is little [else] that I must say, [save that] all men, and all women are willing to be bitten by Cerberus, and to endure [into the Underworld] after the virgin so that, while existing solely in that moment, they might live on, and not be

destroyed.³⁷⁶

Here, Plutarch uses the noun διάλυσις [*dialysis*, parting; decay; dissolution] to introduce in his own words the idea of bodily deterioration at death. Plutarch follows his own description by rephrasing it with what he describes as Epicurus' language. An alternative and overly formal translation can read as, "what Epicurus makes into a void and atom dispersal." Alluding to Epicurean physics, this invocation of diaspora describes a twofold process: the transformation of a corporate body into its constituent parts and the subsequent disassociation and scattering of those constituent parts.

Through this description of diaspora, the essence and fundamental nature of matter remains unchanged; yet, the existence and ability of the original body is fundamentally changed. Epicurus uses diaspora to focus on the essence of matter in order to explain why people should take solace in the absence of an afterlife; upon death people simply return to their fundamental material components having no fear of death, corruption, eternal torment, or material pain. Though diaspora, here, has association with death, its invocation is for the express purpose of refuting connotations of trauma, pain, or terror. For Epicurus, and possibly this fourth century BCE reference, diaspora provides a means of completion and escape.

Instead of having an ameliorating affect, Plutarch asserts that this very imagery increases angst and introduces anxiety into the foundational cosmology of Epicurus' philosophy. Building upon his earlier arguments against Epicureans and their inconsistent practice of valorizing sensory observation of the material world, Plutarch implicitly concedes to the inevitable diaspora of the ψυχή [*psychē*, life; person; soul].

³⁷⁶ Suav Viv , 27. For Greek text, See: Ibid., 14:134–137.

Continuing to agree with aspects of Epicurean logic that encourages the use of senses to evaluate good and bad, Plutarch then refines Epicurean cosmology. Built through a subtle discussion of human consciousness, he contrasts his conception of humanity's constituent parts—water, earth, and mind—to that of Epicurus—void and atoms. While both he and Epicurus accept the existence of the mind as self-evident, Epicurus' cosmology inductively suggests that the mind is corruptible and not fundamental. Thus, within the logic of Epicurean nonbelief in an afterlife, the diaspora of the soul contradicts self-evident assumptions about human existence and any positive description of the mind or its essence.

Implicit in this concession is an emphasis on the importance of corruption and the body's ultimate decay. Shifting Epicurus' focus from material dispersal into the world to the impact death has on the ψυχή [*psychē*, life, person, soul] Plutarch highlights the positive associations with the mind and negative attitudes pertaining to the corruption of the mind. Plutarch's correction of Epicurus rests partly on his identification of the nature of the mind as positive and partly through a descriptive shift from language of diaspora to that of decay.

Plutarch's description of the decay of material nature, and Epicurus' description of the diaspora of ψυχή (*psychē*) describe the same process. Their language, however, signifies these transformations in very different ways. Plutarch, a Platonist, believes in both material and immaterial entities. His description of the decay of the body avoids the immediate production of alienation and anxiety because one's body is merely a portion of their being. The decay of the body only involves two of the three constituent parts of a person. Epicurus presents this transformation of the body as the dissipation of humanity

into all of its constituent parts: atoms and nothing. Where Epicurus' description represents finality and ultimate alienation, Plutarch restricts concern over the decay of the body to the realm of nature. Thus, fear and anxiety associated with bodily decay has its source in nature and the material world. It is at this point that Epicurus and Plutarch have fundamentally different worldviews. Plutarch attempts to co-opt aspects of Epicurean thought, such as their use of sensory observation, to challenge their lack of concern for the immaterial, and the belief that disbelief in the afterlife decreases anxiety in people.

Plutarch suggests that if one follows Epicurean tenets, sensory-observation affirms the presence of an immaterial mind. Consequently, Epicurus' diaspora of the ψυχή actually presents more than atoms and void. Implicit in his logic is the representation of the mind. This argument attempts to undermine Epicurus' statement on two points. The first implies that Epicurus' description of the diaspora of the soul is either incomplete or misguided. If the word diaspora indicates a dissipation into constituent parts without fundamental destruction or alteration of those parts, then Epicurus' description implies the separation of atoms from void, and the destruction of the mind. Another option is that Epicurus simply failed to incorporate the mind into his overarching philosophy as a fundamental component on the soul. Failing to recognize the mind as a fundamental component of the soul suggests that Epicurus, according to Plutarch, developed faulty philosophy, or fails to follow his own philosophical tenets by ignoring the self-evident presence of the non-material mind. In either course, Plutarch believes that this discourse proves that it is impossible to live a happy life by following Epicurean philosophy.

After attacking Epicurus' logic, Plutarch explains that disbelief in the afterlife actually increases anxiety. He enhances his argument through a discussion of a hypothetical individual that has lost a loved one to death. If the mind decays into nothing, he argues, and then death represents total alienation and separation from loved ones. The finality of this alienation opposes what Plutarch asserts is humanity's natural desire to exist. He assures Colotes that humans rarely worry about the superstitions surrounding death and given a choice people between existence and non-existence people will choose to battle under the most heinous circumstances just for the opportunity to continue living. Absent belief in an afterlife, death inevitably becomes a twofold experience of terror: alienation and non-existence. Those who survive deceased loved ones have no hope for solace, and those who are dying are embarking on the process of ultimate corruption. Instead of calming individuals as Epicureans asserted, Plutarch insists that non-belief in an afterlife enhances anxiety. By constructing an opposition between *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) and *διάλυσις* (*dialysis*) Plutarch builds a semantic world that allows a two-pronged signification of *διασπορά* and bodily-death: as an Epicurean, existential *διάλυσις* (*dialysis*), which connotes decay, anxiety, ultimate alienation; or, simply as material *διασπορά*, evoking notions of the reorganization of the elements of the physical world while remaining outside the scope of existence and essential being.

In his *Against Colotes*, Plutarch is again criticizing Epicurean philosophy via direct attacks against Colotes. Addressing Colotes' argumentative inconsistencies, Plutarch returns to notions of *διάλυσις* (*dialysis*) in *Against Colotes* 10. However, this discussion lacks direct discussion of diaspora. However, when addressing Epicurean notions of atoms and void in *Against Colotes* 6, Plutarch does employ the noun *διασπορά*

(*diaspora*) to again discuss this dissipation of elementary atoms. Through allusion and citation, Plutarch foregrounds his discussion with Epicurus' *Symposium*, which recounts a conversation between a certain Polyaeus and Epicurus about the source and cause of a wine's heating effect.

According to Epicurus, a wine's heating property is not an essential characteristic. It depends principally on the amount of wine consumed and the disposition of the drinker. Plutarch counters this assertion by explaining that the heating effect that people associate with wine is actually caused by, "both the pressing [θλίψις, *thlipsis* affliction or oppression; pressure] and dissipation of atoms [διασποράς ἀτόμων]."³⁷⁷ The noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) here contrasts θλίψις (*thlipsis*).³⁷⁸ Additionally, the θλίψεις καὶ διασποράς (*thlipsis and dialysis*) of atoms are meta-processes that correlate the effects of wine with Epicurus' greater philosophy. Thus, even the natural senses experienced with wine serve as illustrations for the mingling and mixing of atoms. The dissipation, thus, is not final, and is but a perpetual process within Plutarch's cosmology.

Plutarch additionally employs the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) in the conclusion of his biography of Solon. While this use lacks explicit attribution to another source,

³⁷⁷Against Colotes, 6. For Greek text, See Plutarch, "Reply to Colotes in Defence of the Other Philosophers," in *Moralia*, trans. Benedict Einarson and Phillip H. De Lacy, vol. 14, Loeb 428 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 204, http://www.loebclassics.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/view/plutarch-moralia_reply_to_colotes_defence_other_philosophers/1967/pb_LCL428.201.xml?result=1&rsk=V7mA g6.

³⁷⁸The word θλίψις (*thlipsis*) generally carries a pejorative connotation, especially by the early Principate period. Acts 7.11 can illustrate this negative connotation. Here, Luke uses the term θλίψις (*thlipsis*) to describe the harsh conditions associated with the biblical famine experienced in Egypt and Canaan associated with Joseph's rise to power under Pharaoh (Acts 7.11 cf Gen 41-43). In Acts 11.19, Luke also uses θλίψις (*thlipsis*) to depict the persecution διωγμός [*diōgos*, persecution, pursuit] Paul imitated against the Assembly (8.1). Coincidentally, 11.19 links διωγμός (*diōgos*) with θλίψις (*thlipsis*) through the innertextual reference to διασπαρέντες (*diasparentes*), which is the passive, aorist, nominative plural participle of διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*). Thus, Luke builds a semantic connection between diaspora and pressure via διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*) and θλίψις (*thlipsis*).

Plutarch, however, does invoke the name of Aristotle when describing how many reputable authors recounted the same story about Solon's death and dispersion. In this case Plutarch invokes the term to describe the scattering of ashes. In Solon 32.4, Plutarch attests that though many reputable philosophers recount the story, "the scattering [ἡ διασπορά, *diaspora*] of [Solon's] ashes around the island of Salamis after he was cremated is, on account of it being out of the way, altogether unlikely and myth."³⁷⁹

Absent the same type of philosophical discourse, this reference, like *Suav Viv*, pertains to the material transformation of the human body, and its subsequent scattering. Again, the diaspora required an initial corporate body that was subsequently transformed into constituent parts. Invoking Plutarch's depiction of material nature being fundamentally water and earth, cremation can represent the initial transformative process from body to constituencies. Additionally removing the discussion of death from notions of the soul or mind, one can limit the discussion of death to the material body. While one reading of this text can view it as a generic scattering, one different perspective could focus on the spreading of Solon's ashes as a type of fundamental dissipation of Solon's body into its constituent material parts: earth; water.

Each of Plutarch's uses of the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*), whether viewed from the perspective of Epicurus, Aristotle or Plutarch resist approaching diaspora as a *telos*. Particularly in *Suav viv* and Solon, these uses dissuade readers from being anxious about death or finality. In *Suav Viv*'s philosophical context, Plutarch's view of the deterioration of the body can symbolize a type of release from the fundamental aspect of humanity's

³⁷⁹Solon 32.4. For Greek text, See Plutarch, "Solon," in *Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, vol. 1, 46 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 498–99, http://www.loebclassics.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/view/plutarch-lives_solon/1914/pb_LCL046.405.xml?rkey=H3dQIg&result=2.

connection—i.e. enslavement—to the material world. Refuting Epicurus’ depiction of diaspora, Plutarch stresses that bodily decay is not the fundamental dissipation of the soul or the termination of existence. When depicting a materially restricted scattering of the body, Plutarch employs this term to affirm that the spreading of ashes is the fundamental dissipation of that which is indigenous to the physical world: the material body and not the soul. With both Epicurus and Plutarch, depictions of diaspora accompany ideal constructions of death that lack connotations of fear, trauma or pain. In each case, diaspora represents a process that is natural and inevitable. Lacking explicit or solely negative connotations, the connotative perception of the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) depends on the reader’s perspective.

Διασπορά (*diaspora*) and the LXX

Having closer relevance to (re)constructed metanarratives of diaspora as distinctly Jewish are the various examples found in the LXX. As a translation of Jewish scripture, references to diaspora that have Hebrew corollaries reflect both the translators’ linguistic and hermeneutic worldview. The identity and intention of said translator remains elusive. No single Hebrew term directly correlates to the Greek notion diaspora in the LXX. Septuagint translators correlate the Greek noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) to four distinct Hebrew words that display a broad semantic range: נָדַח [*ndh*, drive out, scatter](Deut 30.4; Esd β 11.9; Ps 146.2);³⁸⁰ מְזַרְחָה [*mzrh*, a winnowing fork, pitch fork, or device used for spreading] (Jer 15.7); הַעֲוֹה [*zw’h*, a trembling, or an object of terror] (Deut 28.25; Jer

³⁸⁰ This verb takes on nominal meaning in participle form.

41.17);³⁸¹ נציר [*nš'r*, preserved, survivor] (Isa 49.6);³⁸² Four of the twelve LXX examples lack a Hebrew corollary, because the texts themselves are believed to be original Greek compositions (2 Macc 1.27; possibly Judith 5.19), the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) is an interpolation of Greek provenance (Dan 12.2), or the original Hebrew text is lost (Ps Sol 8.28; 9.2; possibly Judith 5.19).³⁸³

A few preliminary observations are useful for analyzing these LXX verses. Only two of the twelve attestations (Judith 5.19 and Ps Sol 9.2) present a static image of Israel as a geopolitical, corporate-body. While the incidence in Ps Sol 9.2 presents Israel's dispersed state without reference to possible future reconstitution, Judith 5.19 is a hybrid case that alludes to potentiality. The narrator of Judith places the term diaspora in the mouth of a Gentile general of the Assyrian army, named Achior. Achior is very familiar with Israel's past and attempts to dissuade the Assyrians from waging war on Israel by narrating Israel's history to his fellow Assyrian commanders and leaders. Instead of the

³⁸¹ This noun occurs in two variant forms. The relationship of this noun is further supported by the Jeremiah text's apparent dependence on Deuteronomy. Jeremiah 41.17c (34.17c, Hebrew Bible) is actually a citation of Deut 28.25b. Hebrew and Greek translations reveal Jeremian dependence on Deuteronomy that shifts only the subject of the primary verb. Consequently, Deut 28.25 reads, "and you will be *in diaspora*..." while Jer 41.17 asserts, "and, I will give you *into diaspora*..." Other subtle changes include an altered Hebrew construction of לְזַעֲנָהּ to לְזַנְנָהּ, and a Greek substitution of the prepositional phrase ἐν plus the dative to the preposition phrase consisting of εἰς and the accusative.

And you will be in diaspora in all the kingdoms of the earth. (Deut 28.25b)

And I will permit you to become a diaspora in all the kingdoms of the earth. (Jer 41.7c)

καὶ ἔσῃ ἐν διασπορᾷ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς βασιλείαις τῆς γῆς. (LXX, Deut 28.25b)

καὶ δώσω ὑμᾶς εἰς διασπορὰν πάσαις ταῖς βασιλείαις τῆς γῆς (LXX, Jer 41.17c);

וְנָתַתִּי אֶתְכֶם לְזַנְנָהּ לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ; (reJ BH 34.17)

וְהָיִיתִי לְזַעֲנָהּ לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ; (Deut 28.25, HBS)

³⁸² The noun נציר (*nš'r*) occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible; its verb root is נָצַר [*nšr*, keep, guard, keep watch, persevere, observe]. Implicit in the rendering of the נציר (*nš'r*) is the passive quality of being maintained.

³⁸³ Daniel 12.2 is a special case of interpolation. The Book of Daniel is originally a bilingual composition, written in Hebrew and Aramaic. The text contains neither a Hebrew nor an Aramaic word that corresponds to the LXX's use of διασπορά (*diaspora*). Consequently, either the presence of the noun depends on a lost version of Daniel, or διασπορά (*diaspora*) is an interpolated addition by a translator or scribe. I ascribe to the latter of these two possibilities.

concept of *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) being narrativized within the context of Jewish discourse, the author of Judith portrays Achior invoking the notion of diaspora with reference to Israel. Within his speech, Achior depicts Israel as a specific geopolitical community of Jews, but explains their existence as the consequence of both dispersion and return.³⁸⁴ Achior's speech, thus, contains notions of diaspora and movement, yet depicts the conditional potentiality of diaspora as something that had already occurred.

Across all other uses, the nature and geopolitical constitution of Israel is propositional and future oriented. Thus, LXX use of the noun *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) generally lacks the permanent sense of geopolitical or eschatological finality. All twelve cases, including Judith 5.19 and Ps 9.2, infer a propositional or prophetic reality that presents their audiences with futures of hopeful potential. Enhancing the description of diaspora as potentially dynamic is the propositional nature of each reference.³⁸⁵

The potentiality present in each of the ten cases that infer future movement can fall under two innertextual classes of movement: outward dispersion (Deut 28.25; Jer

³⁸⁴ Achior's speech does not offer Israel a potential future, but reflects on the potential pasts that Israel had. They chose faithful service to the Lord, and thus maintained hope. Achior's speech offers a potential future to the Assyrians. The reference to diaspora actually replicates the consistent practice in order to invert it. Judith does, however, contain a potential future for Israel. This discourse occurs, however, in Judith's speech. She embodies faith and courage for Israel. I have included a translation of the conclusion of Achior's speech: "And now having returned to their God, they have come up from the dispersion from which place they were scattered, occupied Jerusalem where their sanctuary *is located*, and settled in the hill country because it was desolate. Now, then, O lord my master, if there is a fault of ignorance among this people and they sin against their God, and we should observe that there is this offence among them, then we shall go up and engage them. ²¹ But if there is no lawlessness in their nation, let *them* pass by now, O lord, lest their Lord and God protect and defend them. For then we shall be as a reproach in the sight of the whole world." (Judith 5.19-21, LES)

³⁸⁵ This recognition resembles Van Unnik's finding. Van Unnik attempted to create a definitive difference between diaspora and exile by situating diaspora within the semantic sphere of anticipated or possible reversal and exile as the perceived, permanent result of forced migration. For Van Unnik, diaspora was a theological worldview and hope, while exile was a geopolitical condition. My largest critique of Van Unnik on this point is his insistence on identifying a singular theological metanarrative for Greco-Roman Diaspora Judaism in mass. The theological homogeneity of the various translators and interpreters of the LXX is untenable within my notions of *le divers* and Diaspora existence. See, Unnik, *Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora*.

15.7; 41.17) or inward reconstitution (Deut 30.4; 2 Esd 11.9; 2 Macc 1.27; Ps 146.2; Ps Sol 8.28; Isa 49.6). Among the uses that have a corresponding Hebrew term, the grouping of these terms according to their proposed movement can provide further context for discerning the semantic range associated each LXX use of διασπορά (*diaspora*). With only three attestations fall within the class of outward-movement, the majority of the LXX uses of the Greek noun occur in discourses that point towards an optimistic future of reconstitution.

In addition to locating the use of the noun within its innertextual context, it is also necessary to consider the specific intertextual semantics of the Hebrew term translated. When observing the connotation of the various Hebrew terms, only נָדַח (*ndḥ*) and מְזַרְחָה (*mzrh*) overtly imply a type of separating motion. While נָדַח (*ndḥ*) is a verb that expressly denotes scattering or driving away, as a noun, the term מְזַרְחָה (*mzrh*) is a tool for separating and dividing. These two verbs, thus, represent different types of division. The term נָדַח (*ndḥ*) signifies a corporate-body that subsequently undergoes separation from the limits of its initial spatial-locale through the exertion of some force. Whereas the separation indicated by מְזַרְחָה (*mzrh*) emphasizes internal division with respect to an entities constituent parts: likening itself to selective filtration.

Contrary to the terms explicitly imbued with a sense of separation, הַעוּז (*zw'h*) and נִצְרִי (*ns'r*) lack direct relevance to dispersal, division or any type of movement. These terms function as epexegetical signifiers for their LXX translators.³⁸⁶ Both semantic transitions to diaspora, in one case from, "an object of terror," and in the other case, "preserved," open the door for insightful conjectures on ancient Jewish perceptions of

³⁸⁶ It is difficult to know definitively whether the dependence of the Hebrew Jer 34.17 on Deut 28.25 produced their respective LXX dependencies, or whether these are independent translations.

diaspora. Reading from traditional perspectives that privilege nation-state existence, one may make a direct substitution between the terms diaspora and object of terror. In this case, the negative connotation of trembling and terror becomes the *defacto* connotation for diaspora. However, one could also focus on the purpose and potentiality of diaspora by identifying an implicit relationship between dispersion and the positive connotations associated with the adjectival character of being preserved or maintained: it is those who are in the scattered state that the Lord continues to watch over and guard. Through this alternative substitution, the assumed ancient perception of Israel's dispersed state is both positive and hopeful as opposed to its constituted corporate-state. This dispersed state could appeal to religious or political dissidents that view current or past administrations as unjust, corrupt, illegitimate or sinful.

Immediately evident is the inherent contradiction accompanying a simple, yet, consistent application of connotative substitution. The observation of contradiction does require consistent application of connotative substitution. As detailed below, theorists of diaspora rarely fulfill this requirement, opting instead to ignore actual ancient usage, or the inconsistent, and selective analysis of a single case. Two other options remain. One can continue to use connotative substitution, and assume diverse perceptions of ancient Israel's geopolitical diversity. In this mode of thought, the exegetical translations of these two connotatively divergent Hebrew terms as diaspora represent a minimum of two alternative Jewish perspectives. The identification of two perspectives suggests heterogeneity within the Hellenized Jewish world. The approach advanced below altogether dismisses simple connotative substitution. Instead, it engages the literary,

social, and historical world to (re)construct more textured, three-dimensional views of the ancient notions of the noun diaspora.

The observations of motion in these LXX examples reveal similarities and differences with Plutarch. In Plutarch's use in *Suav Viv* and Solon, the Greek noun depicts the dissipation of an entity into constituent parts. For Epicurus these parts are atoms and void; for Plutarch, these parts are water and earth. The actual *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) is the changed relationality of those parts to a former corporate-body and to one another.³⁸⁷ The corporate-body in both instances appears at one level to be a single entity, a whole, but upon transformation displays itself as a composition contextual composition. Dissipation, signified by death, does not result in the destruction or corruption of the fundamental aspects of one's being. It simply results in the re-organization of constituent parts. This re-organization leads to the decay of the corporate-body through destruction of those instrumental ties that bind the more fundamental constituent parts. Epicurus and Plutarch imply that after diaspora all that remains is that which is essential and fundamental. Epicurus believes the only thing that exists fundamentally are atoms and void. The dissipation of the soul leaves nothing but atoms and void. For Plutarch, the process results in water, earth and mind. In the context of a debate over Epicureanism, the deterioration of the body into earth and water cannot qualify as diaspora/dissipation unless you include the mind/soul. His intentional framing of decay with respect to nature provides a subtle but insightful shift in view.

³⁸⁷ I recognize that the diaspora in Solon solely represents the spreading of the ashes. Here, the ashes represent the earth portion of the corporeal body's fundamental make-up. The cremation transformed the state of the body, but the body did not undergo a diaspora because until the scattering of the ashes through the island these components were still in close physical proximity. Thus, the scattering of the ashes truly represents the full diaspora/dissipation of both earth, and water. The mind/soul, as argued above, is the third constituent part. It too has dispersed upon death. The diaspora occurs at the completion of complete scattering of all three parts.

The evaluation of the impact of diaspora requires both a philosophical perspective and an analytical perspective. By analytical perspective, I mean that the interpreter must decide which from which entity is the diaspora being evaluated: from that of the original corporate-body (a person); from that one of the dissipating constituent parts (water or earth; atoms or void); from that of a non-dissipating constituent part (mind, soul, or non-material being), from that of an outside observer (philosopher, cosmos, or nature). Depending on the analytical perspective and philosophical perspectives the significance of diaspora can lead to contradictory meanings. For the corporate-body, diaspora/dissipation signifies corruption and ultimate destruction. From the perspective of nature and the physical world's fundamental building blocks the diaspora/dissipation functions as a type escape, reclamation and return. No longer confined by the corrupting decay of the corporate body, atoms and void return to their natural state. The mind and soul become freed, ready to return to their loved ones, and those elements originating from the earth return to earth. The assigning of value to diaspora through this view compels a multi-perspective approach. The positive or negative effects of diaspora depends on the perspective from which one evaluates the dispersal. In Plutarch's citation of Epicurus, the dissipation of the soul ends one's life and in the absence of an afterlife it ends pain. This observation was the foundation of supporting Epicurus' assertion that disbelief in the after-life was ideal. It is the end of life that allows one to ultimately attain the absence of pain, which for Epicurus was the ultimate pleasure and happiness. From this perspective, diaspora was wholly positive, "if" one abided by Epicurean logic. Plutarch, disagreeing with Epicurean cosmology, continued to identify diaspora as a positive event. He, however, argued that if one followed Epicurean thought, this same

event would increase anxiety. It is perspective that determines the experience and worldview of diaspora.

This perspectival model also functions in the LXX's invocation of the noun diaspora. As mentioned above, the notion of diaspora found in the LXX lacks finality. Eight of the twelve LXX references occur in direct reference to return (Deut 30.4; Esd b 11.9; Judith 5.19; Ps 146.2; Ps Sol 8.28; 9.2; Isa 49.6). Self-evident in this observation is the fact that LXX invocation of the noun diaspora often occurred outside the realm of finality or ultimate destruction.

Applying the model viewed in Plutarch suggests that diaspora be understood as a corporate-body undergoing decay and its instrumental ties destroyed. In the case of Israel, the instrumental ties represent political institutions and geopolitical boundaries. Following this model in the LXX, one then perceives culture and geopolitical unity as functional means of bonding Israel that are apart from Israel core essence and being. Through analogy, this culture and geopolitical unity is corruptive. Diaspora, then, becomes the dissipation of corporate Israel into its fundamental constituent parts, the people of G*d, and the destruction of the political instrument that bonded the people in a corporate-body of sin, disobedience or injustice.

If the theological perspective of the scripture writers was to encourage fidelity to the Divine and adherence to the mores of their cultic leaders, then this reading of the diaspora of Israel is logically consistent. Though one could deem the diaspora from the perspective of punishment and wrath, an alternative reading of διασπορά (*diaspora*) that views diaspora as merciful and salvific is equally plausible. Following this perspective,

διασπορά (*diaspora*) functions as a cultural, political and temporal purge. The fundamental constituent parts—i.e. members—re-organize across the world.

Evident by statements such as the various iterations of Deut 30.4 that signify Israel as a διασπορά (*diaspora*) “from [one] boundary of heaven unto [another] boundary of heaven” the various writers, redactors, compilers and translators recurrently affirmed Israel’s diasporic nature as being one of transformation rather than destruction:

Even if your διασπορά (*diaspora*) is from [one] boundary of heaven unto [another] boundary of heaven, from there, the Lord your G*d will gather you together. From there, the Lord your G*d will receive you and the Lord your G*d will lead you into the land which your father’s had inherited.

ἐὰν ἢ ἡ διασπορά σου ἀπ’ ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἕως ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἐκεῖθεν συνάξει σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου, καὶ ἐκεῖθεν λήμψεται σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου, καὶ εἰσάξει σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἰς τὴν γῆν, ἣν ἐκληρονόμησαν οἱ πατέρες σου, καὶ κληρονομήσεις αὐτήν, καὶ εὖ σε ποιήσει καὶ πλεοναστόν σε ποιήσει ὑπὲρ τοὺς πατέρας σου.

Deut 30.4–6

And if you will turn back to me, guard my commandments and do them; if your διασπορά (*diaspora*) be from [one] boundary of heaven to [another] boundary of heaven from there I will gather them. I will lead them into the place, the one which I have selected to establish there my name.

Esd B 11.9

καὶ ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψητε πρὸς με καὶ φυλάξητε τὰς ἐντολάς μου καὶ ποιήσητε αὐτάς, ἐὰν ἢ ἡ διασπορά ὑμῶν ἀπ’ ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἐκεῖθεν συνάξω αὐτούς καὶ εἰσάξω αὐτούς εἰς τὸν τόπον, ὃν ἐξελεξάμην κατασκηνῶσαι τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐκεῖ.

Esdras B 11:9

Gather together our διασπορὰν (*diasporan*); set free those who are slaved amongst the nations. Look upon those who are despised and disgusted and let the nations know that you are our G*d.

ἐπισυνάγαγε τὴν διασπορὰν ἡμῶν, ἐλευθέρωσον τοὺς δουλεύοντας ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, τοὺς ἐξουθενημένους καὶ βδελυκτοὺς ἔπιδε, καὶ γνώτωσαν τὰ ἔθνη ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν.

2 Macc 1.27

Regardless of the temporal or geo-spatial separation associated with *διασπορά* (*diaspora*), many of the LXX cases suggest that Israel's dispersion is merely a re-organization and re-constitution through re-location that permits the purging of those cancerous elements to its corporate-body. Despite the extremity of distance, the divine can re-constitute all dispersed members into a renewed being.

The use of the noun in Deut 30.4 occurs within a larger innertextual framework that connects it to the pejorative use in Deut 28.25. The three uses of the noun with respect to outward movement (Deut 28.25; Jer 15.7; 41.17) challenge this current reading.). The Hebrew verbs innertextually associated with outward movement are *נָזַח* (*zw'h*) in Deut 28.25 and *מָזַח* (*mzrh*) in Jer 15.7 and 41.17. These occurrences associate Israel's transformation into a *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) as the propositional outcome of disobedience. Taking place in a long unit consisting of potential blessings and curses for the corporate people Israel, Deut 28.25 stresses the propositional nature of these proclamations as the consequences of obedience or disobedience and the opposition to Deut 30.4. Consequently, 28.1-3 proposes:

And it will be as if you crossed over the Jordan into the land that the Lord, your G*d is giving to you, and if you will attend to the message from the Lord, your G*d, obeying and doing all his commandments that which I am commanding of you today, then the Lord your G*d will give you [place] above all the nations of the earth. All these blessings will come upon you and they will find you if you hear the message from the voice of the Lord, your G*d. Blessed shall you be in the city; Blessed shall you be in the field.

Καὶ ἔσται ὡς ἂν διαβῆτε τὸν Ἰορδάνην εἰς τὴν γῆν, ἣν κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν δίδωσιν ὑμῖν, ἐὰν ἀκοῇ εἰσακούσητε τῆς φωνῆς κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν φυλάσσειν καὶ ποιεῖν πάσας τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ, ἃς ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι σοὶ σήμερον, καὶ δώσει σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἤξουσιν ἐπὶ σὲ πᾶσαι αἱ εὐλογίαι αὐταὶ καὶ εὐρήσουσίν σε, ἐὰν ἀκοῇ ἀκούσης τῆς φωνῆς κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου. εὐλογημένος σὺ ἐν πόλει, καὶ εὐλογημένος σὺ ἐν ἀγρῷ,

While 28.15-16 states:

And it shall be that lest you, while hearing to the voice of the Lord, your G*d, guard and do all of his commandments to the extent that I am commanding you today, then they will come upon you, all of these curses, and they will overtake you.

Καὶ ἔσται ἐὰν μὴ εἰσακούσης τῆς φωνῆς κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου φυλάσσειν καὶ ποιεῖν πάσας τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ, ὅσας ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι σοὶ σήμερον, καὶ ἐλεύσονται ἐπὶ σὲ πᾶσαι αἱ κατάραι αὗται καὶ καταλήμψονται σε.

It is in this context that 28.25 continues describing the proposed cursing:

The Lord will give you [up] to slaughter before your enemies; by one path you will go out against them and by seven paths will you flee from their face and you will be in διασπορᾶ (diaspora) in every kingdom of the earth.

δῶך σε κύριος ἐπικοπήν ἐναντίον τῶν ἐχθρῶν σου, ἐν ὁδῷ μιᾷ ἐξελεύσῃ πρὸς αὐτούς καὶ ἐν ἑπτὰ ὁδοῖς φεύξῃ ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔσῃ ἐν διασπορᾷ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς βασιλείαις τῆς γῆς.

Deut 28.25

One can see both Deuteronomic references to διασπορά (*diaspora*) as parallel possible futures for Israel. The possible curse in 28.25 functions not as the ultimate death of Israel. Neither does it signify Israel's complete alienation from the Lord. In opposition, it points towards the dissipation of a corporate body into elemental pieces so that the elemental pieces maintain the potential for re-constitution. Amplifying the temporal nature of διασπορά (*diaspora*) and its relationship with curses is its prepositional construction in 28.25, which suggests that this be taken as, "a state of dispersion." It is through this prepositional nature of διασπορά (*diaspora*) that 28.25 foreshadows the reconstitution announced in 30.4 as dependent on Israel's response to dispersion. This response becomes framed as the redemptive product of divine mercy

and the action of the essential elements of Israel when freed from the corrosive nature of its corporate constitution.³⁸⁸

The LXX's association of 28.25 and 30.4 is striking. These two depictions work together to present the full potentiality of Israel's future as conditioned on their chosen actions. However, this explicit innertextual parallelism is not a consequence of the Hebrew, but is the product of the LXX translators. The Hebrew manuscripts use different words in both passages. While one could argue the use of *העז* (*zw 'h*) in 28.25 establishes a negative semantic range for the concept of diaspora, it is equally plausible that the Greek insertion of *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) is an intentional attempt to obscure the overtly negative connotation depicted by *העז* (*zw 'h*). Blessings and prosperity are the Lord's perpetually open promise, and it is through the mechanism of *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) that the Divine works to distill disobedience and evil from material and geopolitical constitution of Israel as a corporate-body.³⁸⁹ By translating both *העז* (*zw 'h*) in 28.25 and *נדח* (*ndh*) in 30.4 as *διασπορά* (*diaspora*) the translators have transformed assumptions about the oppositional relationship between blessings and curses. Instead of understanding blessings and curses as oppositional *teloi* rooted in finality, they are two interrelated processes that characterize the covenantal relationship between Israel and G*d. Neither the experience of death and destruction depicted among the curses nor the

³⁸⁸ Beyond the scope of this analysis is the use of the verb. In this section the author speaks to the collective Israel, and chooses the verb *diaskorpizw* in 30.2. Israel will be spread out/scattered, yet the dissipation will be re-constituted.

³⁸⁹The theology underlying this reading of the LXX translators is ripe with ethical dangers. It is not my intention to advocate at this point for any specific meaning or interpretation of Deuteronomy as scripture. Here, I am providing a plausible (re)construction of the ideological texture that led the Hellenistic Jewish LXX translators to construct parallelism between Deut 28.25 and 30.4 through *διασπορά* (*diaspora*).

prosperity depicted in the blessings indicates finality. They are merely potential futures conditioned on the actions of the people Israel.

The Jeremiah passages take a decisively more negative and ambiguous approach to the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*). In Jer 15.4 the dispersion avoids any hint at return.

Like Deut 28.25, the text takes place within a series negative consequences.

Differentiating the Jeremiah passages from Deuteronomy is the depiction of a potential future of re-constitution, where Jeremiah stresses the severity of Israel's impending punishment with an emphasis on the inevitability of pain and suffering. The notion of vindication is still present within innertextual context Jeremiah. This vindication, however, occurs in 15.19 absent the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*):

Because of this, this is what the Lord says: "If you will turn back [to me] then I will restore you and stand you before my face. And, if you bring out that which is of value from among the worthy, you will be like my mouth and they will turn upon you yet you will not turn upon them, and I will grant you [place in] this people as a firm, bronze wall. They will war against you. Yet, they will not, [they shall] not prevail against you for I am with you: saving you and delivering you from the hand of evils. I will ransom you out of the hand of plagues.

διὰ τοῦτο τάδε λέγει κύριος Ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψῃς, καὶ ἀποκαταστήσω σε, καὶ πρὸ προσώπου μου στήσῃς, καὶ ἐὰν ἐξαγάγῃς τίμιον ἀπὸ ἀναξίου, ὡς στόμα μου ἔσῃ, καὶ ἀναστρέψουσιν αὐτοὶ πρὸς σέ, καὶ σὺ οὐκ ἀναστρέψεις πρὸς αὐτούς. καὶ δώσω σε τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ ὡς τεῖχος ὄχυρόν χαλκοῦν, καὶ πολεμήσουσιν πρὸς σὲ καὶ οὐ μὴ δύνωνται πρὸς σέ, διότι μετὰ σοῦ εἰμι τοῦ σῶζειν σε καὶ ἐξαιρεῖσθαί σε ἐκ χειρὸς πονηρῶν καὶ λυτρώσομαί σε ἐκ χειρὸς λοιμῶν.

Jer 15.19-21

The initial reference to turning back [ἐπιστρέφω, *epistrephō*, return or turn back] is ethical and behavioral. Unlike the translator of Deuteronomy, the Jeremiah text exhibits no impetus for assuaging negative notions of dispersion or assuring a future physical reversal. Much like Plutarch's refutations of Colotes and Solon's cremation,

διασπορά (*diaspora*) in Jeremiah points toward a dissipation of a corporate body into elemental parts in way that avoids drastic impact to the essential character of the body. Just as the re-constitution of Solon's ashes are impossible, and the re-corporation of the a person's material body— water and earth molecules—is implausible, the geopolitical reconstitution of Israel, according to this reading of Jeremiah, exceeds the scope of expectation. However, the potential for ethical return and vindication does support the notion that dispersion, as punishment, does not create a fundamental break or alienation from the divine. Neither does it prevent the ability for communal re-organization. Even within Jeremiah's pejorative depiction, διασπορά (*diaspora*)'s primary impact is on the corporate body of Israel. Consequently, in both Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, διασπορά (*diaspora*) displays little impact on the foundational relationship between Israel and G*d or the expectation for their obedient faithfulness. While the majority of LXX uses of the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) occur within innertextual contexts that overtly depict diaspora as that state or place from which G*d will find and re-constitute the faithful, my focus on the three uses of the noun as punishment and threat shows that even these occurrences connect diaspora to a non-teleological future conditionally dependent on the actions of the faithful.

The Beginnings of an Ancient Concept

The above survey of the etymological origins of the concept of diaspora suggests that ancient writers had a broad semantic realm at their disposal. Contemporary notions of diaspora owe much to the ancient semantic versatility to both the noun διασπορά (*diaspora*) and verb διασπείρω (*diaspeirō*). The meager number of extant incidences of the noun does not preclude analysis of its ancient use. The concept of diaspora, as an

ancient word, was like most language and garnered its meaningfulness because of its contextual potentiality and malleability: not because of its strict paradigmatic reality. Though applied in different ways between Plutarch and the various LXX translators, the concept does is only found in reference to humanity. The aspect of humanity varies. Epicurus applies it to the person/soul. Plutarch applies it to the material ashes of the human body. The LXX examples apply the noun to the corporate community of Israel. It is of note that the term finds no witness to plants, animals, or inanimate entities not connected with human existence. Though applied in variant ways, this analysis has (re)constructed a view of the ancient diaspora concept, only through the presence of the noun, that understands diaspora as a transformative process associated with improving the state of constituent parts either through positive connotations of return, or the purging of negative conditions. The notion of return seems to have the ability to be either spatial or condition. In both Jer 15.19, and Ps Sol 9.2 the dispersed state provides the space and opportunity for return, without overt expression of a geographic or geopolitical constitution.

A Diaspora of Differentness

In response to the intellectual setting outlined in these opening chapters I propose a view of diaspora that opposes notions of a fixed, determined identity and instead highlights the relationality between people. Rooted in the unilinearity of Diaspora Studies, one can recognize how prevalent notions of diaspora presuppose an assumed “sameness” or “similarity” within collective identities. These conceptions begin with a notion of group identity dependent on commonality. The removal of this assumption of similarity or sameness, leads to an understanding of diaspora that replaces sameness with

an assumption of relatedness. By focusing on assumptive connectedness, no particular cultural, biological or ethnic trait bears the weight of fundamental identity.

As demonstrated in the above presentation of Diaspora Studies, my this (re)construction shares similarities with previous definitions and avoids any inference that its genesis is a *tabula rasa*. In opposition, the focus on heterogeneity and building identity through difference accentuates and helps theoretically discern Segovia's view of diaspora as an interpretive context. Additionally, this construction approaches diaspora in a way that appeals to a vision similar to that articulated by Stuart Hall:

[D]iaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the imperialising, the hegemonising, form of 'ethnicity'... The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity.³⁹⁰

In addition to (re)conceiving diaspora as a form of relatedness the use *le divers* gives diaspora both a discursive and hermeneutic property. Dispersals of people that maintain collective identities have occurred in the past and history, understood as the narration of the past, oftentimes attempts to explain such dispersals. Reading through the lens of *le divers*, one recognizes the dynamic, and perspectival nature of diasporic cultural production. Privilege calls one to ignore the difference. Diaspora, a relationship that anticipates a future re-orientation that improves upon the past, and suggests the recognition and critique of that negotiation, exists on within the affirmation of difference. Diaspora is a hopeful concept that acknowledges imperfection in the past, and the

³⁹⁰According to the categories developed by Dufoix and Vertovec one can view Hall as approaching diaspora as cultural production and engaging an oxymoronic definition. ibes this metaphoric usage: Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," (ed. Braziel and Mannur), 235 (italics are in Hall's text).

potential for further mistakes in the future. Thus, it reads relationship, instead of validating narrative.

The primary shift associated with this (re)conception of diaspora is a transition of the heuristic focus from the categorization of people to the investigation of relationships. Instead of placing emphasis on diaspora as a particular location or space, diaspora within the confines of this paper is a type of relatedness between communities or individuals who identify as in relation across and through geopolitical boundaries. Recognizing the necessity for geographical translation, geopolitical difference and shared historical stimuli, this notion of diaspora resists notions of authentic roots or home and highlights the precarious and perpetual negotiation of said relationships and relatedness. Space—geographical, temporal, social, political and cultural—transforms from a negative expression of an assumed root to a circumstance prompting recognition, critique and (re)interpretation. Diaspora, then, signifies the pliant and circumstantial dance between communities interpreting and (re)constructing their history, identity and relationship to both their resident location and constructed identities across national boundaries.

Thus, it is through ancient attestations of the Greek noun *diaspora* that an open definition can determine a heuristic that focuses on the negotiation of related-ness. Guided by Édouard Glissant's conceptualization of *le même* and *le divers*, I employ *le divers* as the epistemological lens for conceiving diaspora in a way that highlights the permanence of intrinsic difference within diaspora. Here, Diaspora is a relationship that necessitates humble self-contextualization, and encourages the sharing of power. Though a technical definition of diaspora is offered above, I prefer the following poetic—read paradigmatic in its semantic malleability—affirmation of diaspora:

Diaspora is ontologically elusive; its nature is both process and condition.³⁹¹

Diaspora is discursive.

Diaspora has an affinity for opacity and relation; its character is that of a rhizome; Diaspora is a category of becoming.

Diaspora seeks similarity; it exists in difference. Memory, *le Même* and *le Divers*, Translation, Violence, and Creolité are its outcomes.³⁹²

Diaspora definitions signify the particularity of experienced and recollected dispersion in ways opaque enough to underscore its contestedness and mutability.

Diaspora has nature, character, outcomes, and definition. A type of related difference...

Diaspora **IS** the **Relatedness** between geopolitically distanced communities who create narratives of self through overlapping memories of exile, migration and/or dispersion.³⁹³

Centering understandings of diaspora on relation instead of land or a particular people (re)imagines diaspora as an ongoing development and malleable articulation. By understanding diaspora as a form of relatedness, I insist on the recognition of differentness where its pliant character actually anticipates sightings of relatedness in the face of recognized and negotiated difference.

³⁹¹ Patterson and Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations."

³⁹² Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant, "In Praise of Creoleness," *Callaloo* 13, no. 4 (1990): 886–909; Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*; Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," (ed. Braziel and Mannur); Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (University of Michigan Press, 1997).

³⁹³ Invoking a similar vision of diaspora, Stuart Hall explains his metaphoric usage: "diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the imperialising, the hegemonising, form of 'ethnicity'... The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity," See, Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," (ed. Braziel and Mannur), 235 (italics are in original).

Chapter 5 Diaspora Poetics via Black American Discourse and Criticism

The label of propaganda will be affixed to what I say here. I shall not mind; propaganda has now come into its respectable rights and I am proud of being a propagandist... my birthright, and the historical background of the race that gave it to me, made me very respectful and receptive of propaganda...

Claude McKay, "Soviet Russia and the Negro"³⁹⁴

This millenium requires the (re)narration of Black identities with the integration of formerly excluded voices and μάρτυρες of black experience.

Arthur F. Carter, Jr., "Special Area Question"

Introduction: Poetics as Ideological Texture

The notion of relatedness is essential to the formation of a text's ideological texture. If, as Althusser claims, ideology is a "representation' of the imaginary relatedness [*rapport*] of individuals and their material [*réelle*] conditions of existence," it is the ideological texture that positions reader and text within a particular hermeneutics and axiology.³⁹⁵ As readers perceive relationships between a text's internal elements, valorize those relationships and generate—i.e. construct, glean, discern—meaning, the ideological texture is the matrix that characterizes and directs relationships between a reader and a text's innertexture and social and cultural texture; it is additionally responsible for the acknowledgement of a text's intertexture. Through notions of analogy and correlation, a reader will (re)construct a texts' occasion and setting—i.e. social and

³⁹⁴ Claude McKay, "Soviet Russia and the Negro: Part I," *The Crisis* 27, no. 2 (1923): 61.

³⁹⁵ Althusser depicts ideology in two similar yet distinct manners. The titular claim states that ideology is a representation of a particular relatedness, "L'idéologie est une <<représentation>> du rapport imaginaire des individus à leurs conditions réelle d'existence." Alternatively, when he explains his first thesis, the description shifts and presents ideology as substantively representing a particular type of relatedness: "l'idéologie représente le rapport imaginaire des individus à leurs conditions réelles d'existence..." and "[l]'a une existence matérielle." See, Louis Althusser, *Idéologie et Appareils Idéologiques d'État: Notes Pour Une Recherche*, ed. Jean-Marie Tremblay, Chicoutimi Edition., Les Classiques des sciences sociales (Saguenay, QC: Paul-Émile Boulet Library of the University of Quebec at Chicoutimi, 2008), 38, http://classiques.uqac.ca/contemporains/althusser_louis/ideologie_et_AIE/ideologie_et_AIE.pdf.

cultural texture—and (re)conceive its speaker’s intention and attitude with respect to content. Informing these processes are readers’ interests, needs, presuppositions, worldviews and habits; each contributes to what textual elements they privilege and how they imagine—i.e. (re)construct—the material relationships reflected in a text and their own relationships to analogous material systems and experiences.

Discourse, see Chapter Two, is integral to any group or community’s existence and maintenance. It is through discourse that individuals organize and express notions of self, place and other. Inscribed in these expressions of self, place and other are the circumstantially conditioned intentions and motivations of speakers, writers and auditors. Based on language, culture or code, the intentions, ideas and values may or may not always match between speaker and audience. Nevertheless, the generation of meaning and communication of ideas rely on the codes implemented by speakers and auditors and the manners through which they employ them. Inscribed in the interstitial spaces of these expressions of self, place, other and their meaning-potential are the circumstantial realities conditioned by language, culture, code, memory and hope.

Recall the description of poetics offered in Chapter Two:

Consisting of un-actualized motifs, subjects or themes, poetics characterizes the domain through which a text’s particularity is able to generate meaning through the execution of μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*]. As employed in my analysis, poetics describes a semantic environment that contributes to the functioning and meaning-producing elements of a text.

Poetics is one of the critical systems through which readers experience the presence or absence of a totalizing μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*]. The transformation from text/speech to discourse is most apparent in the manifestation of the ideological texture. Thus, it is through the context-dependent prisms of ideological textures that discourses negotiate poetics as a generative site of expression and communication.

While poetics describes a text's syntactic and semantic potentiality, the ideological texture provides conditions through which the poetics is activated. How readers perceive a text's artistic properties and how a text affects audiences through the generation of μίμησις [*mimēsis*, representation, imitation, mimesis] characterizes a discourse's poetics, which directly informs the ideological texture. By departing from Hegelian Colour-blindness and notions of poetics as a univocal quality introduces the idea that individual speakers, readers and texts can reflect and/or employ different poetics. The employed poetics, then, informs the (re)constructed ideological texture and resultant meaning. While it is the ideological texture that helps actualize and valorize the potentiality resident within a text's poetics, it is the circumstantial-relatedness between ideological texture and poetics that characterizes the perception of discourse as literature and art. Communities hold this transformation in high esteem, often using the processes of interpretation or criticism to inscribe and transmit the mores necessary for socio-political and cultural maintenance. In my reading of Acts 6 – 8, the below contextual formation of a poetics of diaspora identifies central figures that organize the semantic and syntactic world through which I, as a Black American, engage texts. This poetics, however, is also descriptive of the hermeneutic and ideological perspectives that position the text and myself within an interpretive world of relatedness. Thus, my poetics of diaspora also functions as a description of my exegesis' ideological texture.

Critics frequently and involuntarily employ univocal hermeneutics and context-derived poetics that predispose their evaluations of discourses towards Hegelian Colour-blindness. A poetics of diaspora discourse offers critics of Black American discourse an invaluable heuristic, particularly when considering the implicit diversities—i.e.,

geographic, ideological, ethno-cultural, socio-political and class—associated with Diasporas. When discussing Black America as an articulation of the African Diaspora, a poetics of diaspora takes on increasingly important value because poetics is vital to understanding and appreciating Black Atlantic discourse. The perceived quality of Black Atlantic—inclusive of Black American—discourse relates to how readers engage, perceive and appreciate the relatedness, mutability and meaning-making potential sustained by texts. Through diaspora poetics, critics have access to alternative means of seeing the semantic and syntactic relationships that organize the ideas generated through texts produced in Diasporas or read by individuals in Diaspora.

The articulation and explicit adoption of a poetics of diaspora is not the haphazard introduction of some new device or obstacle to the study, analysis or reception of a text. It is the conscious recognition of *potential* textual and interpretive relationships that *can* inform the processes of signification and meaning-making. The use of a poetics of diaspora does not determine a text's meaning or its contextual origin; it informs them. Nor does it delimit a text's sole meaning-making trajectory or lone legitimate reading; it provides the contours out of which meanings are constructed. Part of the validity of a poetics of diaspora rests in the acknowledgement that poetics of diaspora discourse involves the making and reception of texts; it embraces texts as discourse.

In the construction of a Black American informed poetics of Diaspora, it is helpful to acknowledge two types of interrelated discourses and their polyvocal meaning-trajectories. The first type consists of works authored by individuals identified as a part of the Black Diaspora. The second category of works deal with works read, interpreted and engaged by people within the Black Diaspora. Because crafting and discerning of

discourse are contextual activities shaped by one's social, cultural, linguistic, political and ideological realities a poetics of Diaspora informs readers in both the crafting and reading of texts. Thus, texts authored by persons of African descent are vital for any discussion of a Black American informed poetics. Texts, ancient and modern, provide equal access to understanding and exploring the poetics of meaning-making within Black America. Texts such as the Bible or Declaration of Independence act as platforms upon which Black Americans interpret—i.e. create new texts—and discern meanings.

Through this process, all texts available to Black American engagement can provide valuable insight into the poetic and generative processes of Black American discourse.

Through this perspective, whether a text's author is diasporic or not, a poetics that is sensitive to the ideological and socio-political particularities of Diaspora can greatly contribute to a critic's analysis of a text's meaning-making potential. Adopting a poetics of diaspora infers the acceptance that while meaning remains interdependent on text and auditor, its poetics are dynamic and contextual. For, modernity has brought and introduced its own poetic sensibilities to the interpretation and criticism of texts. Implicit and frequently unacknowledged in the critical and scholarly analyses of language and history is Modernity's predisposition to positively value individual identity, individual liberty, reason and rationality, progressive views towards technology and humanism, the adoption of criticism, as well as the ever present residue of Western teleology and nationalism.

These long standing dictates drive the study of texts. Traditional historical-critical biblical scholarship utilizes Enlightenment values to actualize figures such as plausibility, veracity, objectivity and analogy to guide interpretations of scripture.

Similarly, social scientific exegesis of the New Testament and other ancient discourses imbues its own poetics in the use of honor/shame as a governing figure through which exegetes interpret ancient social interaction. Through this revision, poetics shapes one's experience of a text by informing how one:

- i. (Re)constructs a text's social and cultural texture;
- ii. Attends to a text's innertexture;
- iii. Envisions a text's intertexture
- iv. Builds rapport between a text's intertexture and social and cultural texture through processes of signification.

The consequence is that the formulation of a particular poetics becomes closely related to a text's ideological texture. Consequently, chapters five and six, which contain my formulation of a poetics of diaspora discourse, also serve as a representation of the ideological texture with which I (re)read Acts 6 – 8. Utilizing the taxonomy and methodological concepts outlined in Chapter Two, this constructed poetics is both particular and contextual in its reliance on the diasporic character of the Black American literary tradition.

As a poetics, this construction (re)presents an underlying system of figures available to diasporic writers and/or readers that can guide the construction of texts, the reception of texts and ultimately the generation of meaning in discourse. As a description of the ideological texture employed in my exegesis of Acts 6 – 8, this construction outlines the hermeneutic, ideological and axiological lens through which I interpret Acts from my twenty-first century Black American context and in its ancient setting. I develop my poetics of diaspora over two steps. The first step occurs here in Chapter Five where I use a speech by Barack Obama to highlight the material and *réelle* consequences for interpreting Black American discourse. Oscillating between a critical description of Black American discourse and illustrative analysis of Obama's speech, I note a number

of discursive and political elements that demonstrate the utility of a poetics of diaspora discourse for interpreting texts produced in Diaspora and texts read in Diaspora. Over the course of this chapter, the traits highlighted in my analysis of Obama's speech introduce the ideological and interpretive foundation through which I identify the four figures that function as the primary pillars of my poetics of diaspora:

- Geopolitical and/or ethno-racial particularity;
- (Re)narration of the past and (re)constructions of history;
- Intra-communal dispute, diversity and debate;
- Negotiation of Empire, imperial regimes and socio-political place.

Ideological Texture as Purview:
Reading Black American Discourse as Occasion

Selma as Setting, Setting Selma in Diaspora

When men who had PhD's decided that's enough and we're going to stand up for our dignity. That sent a shout across oceans so that my grandfather began to imagine something different for his son. His son, who grew up herding goats in a small village in Africa could suddenly set his sights a little higher and believe that maybe a black man in this world had a chance... There was something stirring across the country because of what happened in Selma, Alabama, because some folks are willing to march across a bridge... **So don't tell me I don't have a claim on Selma, Alabama. Don't tell me I'm not coming home to Selma, Alabama.** I'm here because somebody marched. I'm here because you all sacrificed for me. I stand on the shoulders of giants. I thank the Moses generation...
Barack Obama, Jr.³⁹⁶

On March 4, 2007, then Senator and presidential hopeful Barrack Obama, Jr. was a guest speaker at Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in Selma, Alabama.³⁹⁷ Brown Chapel A.M.E Church was the starting place for the 1965 Civil Rights march from Selma to Montgomery. Part of Obama's charge on this forty-

³⁹⁶ Barack Obama, "Selma Voting Rights Speech," in *C-SPAN.org* (presented at the Selma Voting Rights March Commemoration, Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, Selma, AL: C-SPAN.org, 2007), <http://www.c-span.org/video/?196942-1/civil-rights-issues> Bold has been added for emphasis.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

second anniversary of “Bloody Sunday” was to commemorate the atrocities, courage and sacrifices of the diverse participants of the Selma marches. Streaming this speech live, I watched from the wall-mounted desk in my Manchester, England apartment as Senator Obama channeled his best stereotypical Southern Black preacher. Living in university-affiliated housing in Rusholme, a neighborhood known for its significant South Asian Diaspora communities, and two blocks from Moss Side, a frequently maligned neighborhood known for its significant West Indian Diaspora population, I listened to Senator Obama eulogize the efforts of the Civil Rights era and exhort current generations to raise the mantle from upon the hopes and aspirations begun by previous generations.

Through tone, gesture and discursive formation Obama performed a number of tasks. Among these tasks, he outlined his ontological oneness with Black America, argued for recognition of his relatedness to Selma and the Civil Rights, noted his generation’s collective indebtedness to foreparents and exhorted teleological unity throughout post-Civil Rights era America. Weaved throughout this discourse, Obama appeals to a Diaspora consciousness that relies on the identification of relatedness amidst particularity. This speech is a contemporary illustration of the pervasive pertinence of Diaspora on discourse and its evaluation. The following cursory consideration of this speech’s execution and reception offers a platform to consider the ways that I hear and evaluate Black American discourse through the prism of Diaspora in lieu of a univocal and definitive explanation of Obama’s intention or the speech’s true meaning.

The atmosphere surrounding Obama’s speech was feverish. This excitement was due, in part, to his speaking during a Sunday worship service; it was partly due to the commemoration of the Selma March; and, in large part, it was because both candidates

for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States were speaking in Selma, mere blocks from one another. The circumstances surrounding this particular Bridge Crossing Jubilee commemoration of the Selma March was a contentious presidential primary campaign between Candidate Obama and New York Senator and former first-lady Hillary Clinton.³⁹⁸ According to journalists and lay commentators, both candidates direly needed to secure the support of Black American voters. Whoever garnered the majority of the Black American support would likely claim the Democratic nomination. Clinton sought to cultivate support based on the familiarity, relationships and popularity that she developed while her husband was president. Obama, alternatively, attempted to assure voters that he not only identified racially as Black American but culturally, historically, experientially and even ontologically shared the same “Black American” identity as his audience. By describing a shared identity and outlook, his request for the support of Black American voters inferred that he was more than an advocate and political ally; instead, he would serve the interests of Black American voters as an expression of the common history, experiences and perspectives of Black America.

The Politics of Black American Identity in Discourse

Excursus

Black Discourse, Vernacular Theory: Politics as Scholarly Perspective

A number of scholars express the view that Black American vernacular is inherently political. Though I agree with this position in principal, I slightly nuance these established approaches by expanding the characterization to Black American discourse. Sieglinde Lemke pulls from the works of literary theorists Leo Marx, Houston Baker and Henry Gates to broadly characterize all American vernacular literature. She appropriates the language of vernacular as a spring board for a cultural critical and comparative analysis of American literature produced in various ethno-cultural settings. The primary point of

³⁹⁸ The official title of the city’s annual commemoration of the Civil Rights march from Selma to Montgomery is the Selma Bridge Crossing Jubilee.

departure between my discussion and Lemke's description is dependence on the concept of vernacular literature:

The aesthetic innovations of vernacular literature are inseparable from their political message. And the reverse holds true as well: the politics of class, place and race speak through the vernacular's formal innovations and multifaceted, alluring particularities. Thoroughly entrenched in the culturally particular, vernacular literature is consistently antihierarchical and antiexclusionary. Informality in language and composition defines its aesthetics. Formal innovations are bound inexorable to their political counterparts. Both hold fast to one another to build a larger body that is the literary work itself. In short, vernacular literature renders aesthetics and politics partners in crime.³⁹⁹

As Lemke notes throughout her analysis, the nomenclature of vernacular literature rarely accompanies clear or consistent usage. The term is, "[I]ndiscriminately applied across disciplinary fields towards various ends;" its "usages are inconsistent and incongruous, multivalent and multifunctional."⁴⁰⁰ Like the notion of scripture, the concept of vernacular is a contextual claim. Where scripture describes a community's view of a text as sacred, inferring culturally specific modes of engagement, vernacular is a two-pronged claim that a text i) belongs to a particular community's expressive culture, and ii) lacks expressive or aesthetic value by the standards of dominant culture. In each case, scripture and vernacular are primarily descriptions of interpretive perspective and not descriptions of a text's essential character.

One reason that I avoid using the concept of vernacular within this study is the term's range of usage and frequent association with aesthetic difference and cultural particularity. After surveying diverse scholarly treatments of vernacular across Anglo-American, African American and Chicano literature, Lemke arrives at a similar view of the concept of vernacular to what I state above; she asserts:

The concept of the vernacular is a term of praise to foreground the value of previously marginalized cultural expressions. This usage has been driven by an inexhaustible desire to empower marginalized ethnic or racial traditions.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁹ Sieglinde Lemke, *The Vernacular Matters of American Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 5.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 131.

Robert O’Meally, co-editor of the *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, is one example from the Black American literary tradition that she uses. O’Meally restricts the scope of the vernacular tradition to culturally particular forms of expression oriented towards orality such as church songs, blues, ballads, sermons, stories and hip-hop.⁴⁰² While also noting the diverse scholarly meanings of vernacular, O’Meally chooses to approach vernacular as a category of literature. I agree that the oral nature of the forms of expression described by O’Meally contribute to their subversive and political character. I, however, refrain from assigning the entirety of their political and subversive significance to their oral nature. Instead, portions of their subversive and political significance are intrinsic to its production or reception within racialized constructs of blackness in America. To restrict the presence of subversive and political meaning to vernacular as category of literature is either a disservice to the political dimensions of vast other forms of Black American discourse or the overdetermined designation of a characteristic of these texts as a defining essence.

As noted by Lemke, O’Meally’s view of vernacular is considerably different than that what Houston Baker describes across his historiographic trilogy on Black American literary criticism and poetics.⁴⁰³ More in line with my description of vernacular as a circumstantial perspective, Baker uses the tropes of “the blues” and “spirit work” to propose a vernacular theory of Black American literature that explicitly incorporates the analysis of poetry and novels. For Baker, the political and oral traditions of Black American discourse provide a tropological paradigm that is descriptive of an available meaning-making trajectory. This potential meaning-making trajectory, described as a “blues matrix” is resident within all Black American cultural forms. Baker, in short, employs vernacular to denote the circumstantial interpretation of literature as intracommunal discourse. His theory then uses “the blues” to characterize the particularity of Black American discourse, absent claims uniqueness, as perpetually open to “nonlinear, freely associative, nonsequential meditation.”⁴⁰⁴

Within my reading of Baker, any text has the potential to be read as vernacular. In his analysis, his description of a vernacular theory is a claim of reading both history and texts from in a way that privileges lessons, models and strategies of meaning-making with which he associates with his own experiences and acculturation within

⁴⁰² Robert G. O’Meally, “The Vernacular Tradition: Part I,” in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, ed. Robert G. O’Meally, vol. 1, 2 vols., Third. (New York: W W Norton & Company, 2014), 3–10.

⁴⁰³ Houston A Baker Jr., *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Houston A Baker Jr., *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Houston A Baker Jr., *Afro-American Poetics: Revisions of Harlem and the Black Aesthetic* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

⁴⁰⁴ Baker Jr., *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature*, 113.

Black American oral traditions. Thus, the differences between the approaches to orality outlined by O’Meally and Baker become more stark in how they connect vernacular to oral-oriented expression. O’Meally uses orality to define vernacular as a category of discourse while Baker etiologically invokes orality as the origin Black American hermeneutics and signification. It is O’Meally’s restriction of vernacular to specific forms of discourse and Baker’s suggestion that all texts have vernacular potential that caution me from using the concept of vernacular.

The concept of vernacular, as advanced by Lemke, implies the idea of spatial movement from margins to center. In comparing Euro-American, Black American and Chicano literature, Lemke identifies a recurring motivation to valorize literature that is culturally and intellectually marginalized. This position, while useful for some discourse, may disqualify certain contemporary discourses from the view of vernacular as category. The shifting and diversified socio-economic and political position of Black Americans is one reason I hesitate to appropriate the language of vernacular. As Black Americans occupy a broader range of social and political spaces, the range of occasions and contexts in which Black Americans speak also expands. As President of the United States, Obama’s discourse, contrary to some thought, does not cease to navigate the historical and socio-cultural particularities of the identity politics blackness in America. The assumption that dominant culture involuntarily dismisses or refuses to engage Black American discourse is currently untenable as a universal claim. With the commodification of Black American expressive culture—i.e. from jazz and blues to hip-hop and rap—alongside the socio-political positions that select Black Americans occupy—from the White House to university professors—the socio-political position of Black Americans have diversified to the point where the assumption of non-Black disengagement with Black American discourse can no longer be uncritically assumed.

Lemke’s analysis of Baker is informative for the present reading of Obama’s Selma speech. Dissatisfied with the openness and interpretive flexibility of Baker’s theory of vernacular, Lemke reads Baker will-intentioned, yet, rife with unresolved facets, confused terminology and conceptual dissonance.⁴⁰⁵ I read Lemke as rejecting, either consciously or involuntarily, Baker’s inferred suggestion that a theory of vernacular need not pre-determine the values, tropes, attitudes or ideology signified within a community’s expressive tradition. Baker’s “blues matrix”, which he reconceptualizes as “spirit work” has the fundamental semio-syntactic worlds of Black American discourse as his theoretical target while it appears Lemke anticipated the formulation of specific discursive models for analyzing Black American discourse.

⁴⁰⁵ Lemke, *The Vernacular Matters of American Literature*, 25, 20–31.

Accordingly, Lemke describes Baker as indiscriminately oscillating between two notions of the blues and two understandings of vernacular. She identifies occasional use of blues as a euphemism for black and other use that describes qualifying texts, which reflect his understanding of blues. The observation of these two distinct uses of blues causes a desire for a clear differentiation between the oral dimension of music and literature. In my readings of Lemke and Baker, her identification of multiple notions of blues is a false distinction. Blues, for Baker, is semio-syntactic; it is a process of experiencing meaning through the constant (re)organization and significantion of the patterned structures and textual attributes present at any particular point of interaction—i.e. reading. The patterned structure in Baker’s case is the everpresent political and ideological circumstances generated by Black Americans’ material, imagined and (re)imagined experiences as both Black and American. What she discerns as two distinct views of the blues is a single description of both the oral and musical dimensions of blues as an underdetermined and non-repeatable signifying and organizing process.

The second area in which Lemke notes Baker’s dissonance is dual use of the term vernacular. She rightly notes that Baker’s objective is two-fold; he “describes what is culturally particular” and “invents a scholarly model.”⁴⁰⁶ Identifying these two objectives, she asserts that they, “aspire for divergent agendas,” and, “produce the unresolved tensions and inconsistencies of Baker’s project.”⁴⁰⁷ Implicit in this characterization is a presumption that scholarship exists in a domain separate from Black American cultural expression. The agendas presumed in the production of vernacular literature belongs are naturally at odds with the production of theory by Black Americans.”

While Lemke’s work is an excellent contribution to comparative literary criticism, a few of her methodological choices distance her reading of Baker from mine. Lemke’s assertion that critical theory and Black cultural expression have such little relation that their agendas are at natural odds reflects a lack of familiarity with the Black American literary tradition. From Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson to James Cone, Toni Morrison, Molefi Asante and Cornel West—who Lemke engages—the assumption that scholarly theory is at odds with the adengas of Black cultural expression is a blatantly acontextual assumption within the confines of the Black American discursive tradition and equally problematic when considering Black Diaspora thinkers such as Paul LeFargue, Jean Price-Mars, Jane and Paulette Nardal, Aimé Césaire or Édouard Glissant.⁴⁰⁸ As consistently expressed through the Black Atlantic discursive tradition, there is

⁴⁰⁶ Baker Jr., *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature*, 23–24.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁰⁸ One may also wonder if such an assumption would be equally applicable to theorists such as Hengel, Karl Marx, Umberto Eco or Judith Butler.

frequently a strong correlation between the description of Black cultural expression and the development of models and lenses to contextually study Black Atlantic discourse.

As discussed in more detail below, it is dangerous to assume that scholars of African descent universally view their scholarship as existing outside the cultural or political world of Black America; these works often reflect to and contribute to the literary traditions found throughout Black American history. Instead of diminishing one's recognition of the racialization of blackness or its affiliate identity politics, the political and economic realities of higher education and the Academy often amplifies cognizance.⁴⁰⁹

Baker highlights the symbiosis between the traditions of Black cultural expression and his own literary theory. He asserts:

If the analyses that I provide are successful, the blues matrix will have *taken effect* (and *affect*) through me... "Take effect," therefore, does not signify discovery in the traditional sense of the word. Rather, it signals the topological nature of my uses of an already extant matrix.⁴¹⁰

His conditional emphasis on the successful formulation of theory defines success as the production of a critical theory that reflects and models the same blues matrix that he identifies as characteristic of Black American vernacular culture. It is important to attend to the subtitle of his *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory*. While Lemke's critique approaches Baker's work as a theory of vernacular literature, which aligns with Lemke's own project, an alternative reading sees this subtitle as describing the theory itself as vernacular. More than an objective, anthropological presentation of authentic writings by common Black folk—i.e.: people with whom Baker suspends relationship—Baker offers the Academy a theory of Black American literary criticism modeled on the discursive and hermeneutic traditions of Black American discourse.

Following this reasoning, Baker's project can be reframed as a (re)construction and translation of the paradigms and practices of the Black American discursive tradition into a critical theory situated within the Western Academy. As a translation of one language—i.e. *le langage*; vernacular—into another, Baker posits his translation in an analogous thought-world of poststructuralist and postmodern academic thought by framing his theory with critical theorists such as Todorov, Derrida, Eco, Baudrillard and Foucault. Each of these thinkers' work invokes ideological and axiomatic preferences similar to his own. However, Lemke challenges the appropriateness of Baker's use of

⁴⁰⁹ This point is a central observation throughout the description of my intellectual and contextual setting, particularly outlined in the Introduction's, "Bounded by Intellect: It's So Dark Outside (of history)."

⁴¹⁰ Baker Jr., *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature*, 9.

these European, non-Black theorists. As though Baker's utility betrays a Black academics authenticity, Lemke reinforces her assessment by interpreting an Arnold Rampersad assessment of Baker, which provides the basis for her claim that Baker's, "[A]ppropriation of white theory, Rampersad suggests, represents a rejection of his intellectual roots."⁴¹¹

The grounds of Lemke's characterization is Baker's engagement with European theorists, an act that she fashions as the rejection of roots. Though Baker presents his theory as perspectival and temporal, Lemke uses both Rampersad and Gates to invalidate the authenticity of Baker's description of Black American vernacular literature. In lieu of juxtaposing Baker and Gates as different approaches to African American literary criticism, Lemke pits the two theorists against one another. With consideration that Gates' *The Signifying Monkey* (1988) appeared four years after *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature*, Lemke notes that Gates' theoretical superiority is largely due to his description of a concrete Black American discursive paradigm, genealogical construction myth of origin for the Black American vernacular tradition and use of a precolonial African trope as the paradigmatic foundation of Black American discourse. Lemke appreciates both Gates' Afrocentric historicization of Black American literature and his broader engagement of slave narratives and texts written in black dialect. It is primarily through timeperiod and political agenda that Lemke finds overlap between Baker and Gates.

While Baker's engagement with European thinkers positions his work as a rejection of his intellectual roots, Lemke reads the rest of Baker's blues matrix as an apophatic construction against Euro-American literary criticism:

Blues books, he seems to suggest, are vernacular expressions that differ significantly from canonical Anglo-American works of literature because they find their origins in African American verbal art forms (boasts, toasts, and the dozens), folktales, or music (work songs, hollers, and the blues).

Foreshadowing her paradigmatic treatment of difference, Lemke's treatment of Baker espouses her preference for essentialized identity. After identifying three paradigms of difference—i) oppositional and antagonistic; ii) interrelated/hybridity; iii) inter-communal/heterogeneity—Lemke asserts the need for a fourth, transformational paradigm. This fourth paradigm, which is currently inarticulatable, will aid theorists in comparative literary criticism. Through a careful description of each paradigm, Lemke rejects each of the first three paradigms for her vernacular theory.

⁴¹¹ Lemke, *The Vernacular Matters of American Literature*, 25.

Most interesting is Lemke's rejection of difference through the guise of hybridity and interrelatedness. Referring to this approach as border crossing, Lemke's dissatisfaction with this paradigm is evident throughout her critique of Baker. Her assumption of a permanent chasm between the interests of the Academy and Black America fails to consider Black America as a heterogeneous identity produced by a myriad of events, cultures and syntheses. Her critique of Baker's engagement with European theorists is a consequence of her viewing Baker's blackness and subject material as static and unrelated to modern Western thought. Similarly, she finds Baker's treatment of Black American particularity as a claim universality and uniqueness. Thus, as Baker outlines his vernacular theory within traditional approaches to Black American discourse, Lemke hears a homogenous description of Euro-American discourse.

Throughout the totality of Baker's theory, Lemke sees no clear or concrete description of Black American discourse. To the contrary, all she perceives is a hodgepodge commentary of inconsistent and inauthentic reflections on blues as valorizing metaphor for Black American literature. This survey of Lemke's critique of Baker's vernacular theory outlines my refrain from appropriating the term vernacular alongside a demonstration of the intrinsic politics of the broader category of Black American discourse. In much the same way that Lemke reads, decontextualizes and challenges Baker's vernacular theory as imprecise, dissonant and inauthentic, candidate Obama's negotiation of Black American identity is susceptible to similar accusation.

Identity Politics and Racialized Blackness

The Black American discursive tradition dates back at least to the origins of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Some scholars, such as Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in his *Signifying Monkey*, take account of the traces of cultural or epistemological residues of African retentions observable in Black Atlantic culture and life.⁴¹² In these instances, the Black American discursive tradition stretches back beyond the trans-Atlantic slave trade. It is commonplace to note that African descended persons were brought to the Americas in various stages as laborers, venture commerce and chattel property between the

⁴¹² Henry Louis Gates Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is less common to consider the diversity of indigenous languages, ethno-cultural religious traditions and class distinctions reflective of these African captives or the informal and sporadic ways through which enslaved Africans gained exposure to European languages via the number of ports, ships, crews, auctions and owners their journey entailed.⁴¹³ The heinous inhumanity of the trans-Atlantic slave trade formed a heated cauldron smelting aspects of genealogical, socio-cultural and linguistic particularity; overtime, the Black Atlantic would emerge as a Diaspora of racialized alloys of the New World where tradition, memory and expression became invaluable mediums for relating and interpreting experience and hope. In places, slang and vernacular developed; and in others, entire dialects were born. As such, the Black American and Black Atlantic discursive traditions, inclusive of literature, song, myth and vernacular, hold a crucial place in the development and transformation of the social, cultural and political life of African-descended peoples throughout the Diaspora in addition to America, the Black Atlantic, as well as the Americas and Europe as wholes. These discourses performed many important roles. They were means of: memory and communication; subversion, protest and rebellion; demonstration and proof of humanity; coalition building and social participation; liberation and livelihood; cultural retention, expression and creativity.

As introduced in Chapter Two, the persistent threat of violence often prompted writers to embrace the polyvocal nature of discourse. Some authors—e.g. David

⁴¹³ The nomenclature of trans-Atlantic can be misleading because trans-Atlantic solely references the economic catalyst and origins of the New World's four century long enslavement and commodification of Africans and their progeny. The amalgamation of African, European and Indigenos American cultures via the Americas' racialized slave institutions was never monolithic; references to its barbary and polymorphic nature always should always be understood to reference both its trans-Atlantic and intra-continental trajectories and transactions.

Walker—utilize their discourse to overtly communicate with multiple messages to diverse auditors. Employing what James C. Scott refers to as “public transcripts”, these texts employ poetics in ways that recognize, frame and organize the various inner and intertextual aspects of a text to the reader’s ideological texture and (re)constructed social and cultural texture.⁴¹⁴ Consequently and depending on auditor, David Walker’s *Appeal* may be perceived as primarily expressing hate, hope, American Democratic ideals of justice, an eschatological and theological vision of Divine justice, anti-American ideals, heresy, reverse-racism, impatience or any number of other motifs or overarching meanings. The poetics and politics of these discourses reflect the diversity of lived experiences and the complexities of the socio-political and cultural circumstances occasioned by various articulations of the Black Diaspora in the past and present.

The language and imagery used in Obama’s Selma speech suggests an appreciation for the complex nature of Black American identity politics and discourse. The identity politics of blackness in America involves the intermingling of two interpretive spheres: i) how texts will generate meaning within the consciousnesses and worldviews of dominant culture; ii) how texts produce meaning by negotiation the politics of Black America itself. It is within this interstitial space of hidden and public transcripts, ethno-racial and national interests, and Black and non-Black receptions of discourse that Black American discourse perpetually maintains a political character.

⁴¹⁴ Scott describes the different methods available to peasants and individuals located on the socio-political margins of society. Texts, according to Scott, can consist of a public transcript that consists of codes and meaning that are readily discernable across the power and cultural diversities of a society. Texts, however, could also consist of hidden transcripts. These hidden transcripts consist of codes and language that are culturally and contextually dependent. Through the use of hidden transcripts, a text could appear to convey one meaning that appeared compliant to dominant society while simultaneously conveying an alternative, socially subversive meaning only discernable to insiders intuned to culturally specific codes and signifiers. See, Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*.

The endemic political character appears in W. E. B. Du Bois' description of Black American cultural expression as "double-consciousness": "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."⁴¹⁵ Nearly a century later, Houston Baker alludes to this same political character as the creative space where Black Americans negotiate and refigure their "identity-in-difference." Using rap music as one particular temporal example, he finds that, "[I]t has always been necessary for black people in America not only to comprehend the space of their identity-in-difference but also energetically to refigure this space by employing expressive counterenergy."⁴¹⁶

For both Du Bois and Baker, meaning in Black American discourse is always acutely aware of its particularity and relatedness to dominant culture; it is inherently polyvocal; it holds multiple discursive domains, simultaneously, in tandem. These assertions postulate that the constant legal and socio-cultural politicalization of blackness in America give all Black American discourse an intrinsic political character in its negotiation of both dominant society and Black America.⁴¹⁷

For the greater portion of American history, blackness was explicitly political and materially legal. From the time that colonies began using race as a legal criteria to secure or withhold rights and privileges, any discourse explicitly or implicitly related Black America became inherently political. At various points in North American history, colonies, the federal government and states passed laws to restrict African descended

⁴¹⁵ Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*.

⁴¹⁶ Baker Jr., *Afro-American Poetics*, 7.

⁴¹⁷ This position is not a claim that overt political interests and agendas consciously motivate all Black American speech. It is also separate from any claim about a specific text's motivation or agenda. Equally important, one to differentiate the polyvocality of Black American discourse from the identification of audience. A text's occasion, objective and genre are actually composite characteristics that inform its polyvocality—i.e. a text's explicit and implicit political and ideological significances.

individuals ability to own property, migrate, participate in government, communally congregate or freely participate in society. Even the emancipation of enslaved persons was legislated and dissuaded through mandated economic policies and obstacles.

When antebellum communities passed legislation that made literacy illegal for persons of African descent, the mere demonstration of literacy became a political act. In different, yet similar ways, the postbellum era continues this legacy. During the twentieth centuries and twenty-first centuries governments have used various forms of legislation, tax law and gerrymandering to legally exacerbate inequalities in education. Prior to the *Brown vs the Board of Education* (1954), racial segregation was a means to legally suppress educational opportunities for the masses of Black America. Since 1954, the execution of integration via the closing of formerly Black schools, the prevalent incorporation of separate school districts for suburban communities, the illegalization of cross-town bussing via *Belk and Capacchione v Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (2000), and the public provision of funds for charter, sectarian and private education are examples that demonstrate the continued political signification of Black American discourse and literacy.

Likewise, institutional racism and America's culture of discrimination give Black American discourse an additional political and ideological character. Connected to the legislation of Black life, assumptions of Black inferiority, inhumanity and lack of history gives any artistic or discursive expression by or pertaining to Black Americans socio-political and cultural signifying power. The overtness and pervasive history of discrimination against Black Americans provide many individuals with an acute sense of the intrinsic political significance of Black American discourse, regardless of medium or

form. Due to these contextual circumstances, Black American discourse has an inherent political character.

Thus, the politicization of Obama's address to Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church was not introduced into the ceremony by his candidacy. The politicization of his speech arose out of its occasion and was furthered by his negotiation of the identity politics of blackness. The politicization of his speech commenced when he began to speak as a racialized person of African descent in America. Regardless of his personal history, his speech signifies debates surrounding the institutional and socio-cultural circumstances of American blackness. These politics manifest themselves throughout Obama's candidacy and presidency.

Discourse as Negotiation:
Polyvocality and the Generation of Conflict

The Politics of Acknowledgment:
Reception outside of Diaspora

The political nature of Black American discourse has material consequences for both Black and non-Black American auditors. From aspersions about Obama's patriotism to doubts about his citizenship, the racialized identity politics of his blackness has participated in his identification as American, Muslim, Christian, African American, Black and/or biracial. Obama's future Vice President, Joe Biden, illustrates how Obama's blackness, being and speech connote specific socio-political realities regardless of subject. Biden announced his candidacy for president in January, 2007. *The Observer* released a recent interview with Biden in conjunction with the then Senator's announcement.⁴¹⁸ In this interview, Biden commented about some of his competitors.

⁴¹⁸ Jason Horowitz, "Biden Unbound: Lays Into Clinton, Obama, Edwards," *New York Observer*,

Likening Obama to fiction, Biden characterized his opponent as a storybook.⁴¹⁹ Stupified by the presence of such an opponent, Biden lauded Obama by acknowledging, “[Y]ou got the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy...I mean, that’s a storybook, man.”⁴²⁰ Building on socio-cultural stereotypes, Biden viewed his then rival as the first Black American capable of donning the description as mainstream. Implied in his description is an assessment and expectation that Black Americans are generally inarticulate, dull-witted, slovenly, unkempt, menacing and unattractive. This description portrayed Biden’s astonishment, somewhere between wonder and incredulity, at the possibility of a Barack Obama while invalidating the earlier campaigns of Representative Shirley Chisolm (1972), Jesse Jackson (1984, 1988), Alan Keyes (1996, 2000), Ambassador Carol Mosely Braun (2004) and Al Sharpton (2004) as mainstream. It is in this type of racialized environment that Obama’s Selma speech, as an articulation of Black American discourse, negotiates material and ideological realities.

The Politics of Community:
Strategy, Survival and Passing

The politics of Black American discourse also informs its reception within Black America. Because the identity politics of blackness frequently carries material consequences, Black American discourse must often navigate concerns of blackness, ideology, allegiance and worldview. The implicit diversities of Black America contribute to the presence of a broad range of discursive expressions that have produced a legacy of internal rifts and debates. These disputes, which appear as conflicts over ideas,

no. Feb 5, 2007 (n.d.), <http://observer.com/2007/02/biden-unbound-lays-into-clinton-obama-edwards/>.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

ideologies, strategies and politics, revolve around material issues such as survival, advancement, life and death.

Black American discourse frequently negotiates these disputes in order to locate speakers and auditors in relation to the idea of survival, which serves as a sentient and existential fulcrum of Blackness in America. Speakers envision themselves aligned on one side of the axis. Their discussion and negotiation of blackness becomes an attempt to offset and counteract the systems, ideas and people that are responsible for creating the social imbalance that generates Black degradation, regression and death. One's identity and politics, thus, becomes a response to the material system and commentary on survival.

In response to these concerns, this idea of survival takes numerous forms. Radicalism and conservatism, assimilation and acculturation, Black nationalism and integration, escape via migration and escape via passing—i.e. the successful social and political adoption of non-Black racial identity by individuals of African descent whose legal and/or familial status falls under the purview of blackness; the affirmation of Africanness and the denial of Africanness: each of these perspectives are the consequence of ideological constructs that condition the discourses found within Black America.

A vital component of Black American discourse is the implicit racialization of blackness as a social construct of both collective and personal identity. Blackness functions as an ambiguous intersection of heritage, phenotype, ethnicity, culture, ideology and politics in which no one sphere predominates others. The averse social and legal consequences of Black identity complicate the identity politics of blackness. These circumstances at times produce conflicts between one's personal identity and their socio-

cultural and political classification. Some individuals reject, or at the very least, challenge their own inclusion within the construct of blackness. While Barack Obama claims Black American identity while simultaneously affirming his biracial heritage, actress Raven-Symoné Pearman and professional golfer Eldrick “Tiger” Woods are contemporary figures who have publically challenged their assignation of Black American identity.⁴²¹

Differing approaches to identity politics impacts more than an individual’s personal identity; it leads at times to progress and at other times to regression. For many individuals, identity politics becomes a signifier of more than individual preference or esoteric consciousness but as communal and political action. In response to the antebellum socio-political climate of Charleston, SC, Denmark Vessey organized a slave revolt in 1822 yet George Wilson, Joe LaRoche and Peter Prioleau, enslaved persons of African descent, disapproved of Vessey’s vision and informed on Vessey and his collaborators. A secret trial convicted and sentenced Vessey and his alleged co-conspirators to death. In this instance, differences in ideological vision had direct correlation to life and death. It is this legacy of identity politics and racialized blackness that often signify personal identity choices as communal and political action.

Because Blackness has always been multidimensional, Black American discourse has never solely qualified Blackness as somatic but as a matrix of heritage, experience, worldview and phenotype. Black American discourse has long been perceived as both

⁴²¹ For instance, Tiger Woods, whose father was Black American and mother is from Thailand, rejects Black American and Asian American identities on the grounds of heterogeneity and culture. Despite the inherent heterogeneity of blackness, Woods views ethno-racial identity, whether Asian, Black or Thai, as univocal and homogenous. To claim Black American identity, for Woods, is a rejection of everything else. Consequently, Woods celebrates the various aspects of his heritage—i.e. past—but rejects any single or set of personal identities that function at a greater social level. At a certain level, Woods’ logic relies on notions of racial purity and assumptions of monocultural existence.

political and a means of survival: one's identity politics are an essential sphere through which Black American discourse is crafted and received. Free, enslaved, citizen or voter; educated or unlearned; Colored, Negro, Black or African American; Baptized, Christian, Muslim or Humanist; Republican or Democrat; American, West Indian or African: one's claim and negotiation of these identities matter. The implicit multi-ethnic and multiracial nature of blackness in America subverts any critical argument that blackness is homogenous or univocal. Yet, the averse and pejorative racialization of blackness in America is responsible for creating a tension between individual's personal and social identity politics. Blackness, therefore, is often challenged, rejected or revoked on the grounds of heterogeneity, phenotype or ideology. The discourse around this topic is a longstanding debate within the Black American discursive tradition.

Key figures throughout American—Black American?—history illustrate the discursive and material consequences of Black American identity and the potential benefits of passing. Father Patrick Francis Healy was a Catholic Priest born into slavery in Georgia that became president of Georgetown University in 1874. Belle da Costa Greene, librarian and chief acquisition advisor to banker J. P. Morgan, was the daughter of Classicist and Diplomat Richard Greener. Greener was the first Black graduate of Harvard and the first Black American professor at the University of South Carolina. Embattled politician and pastor, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. chose to pass for a portion of his undergraduate college career. Following this period, Powell would become an instrumental figure in Black American politics. Similarly obscure, the identity politics of Jean Toomer, author of *Cane* (1923), continues to be a point of contention among scholars of African American literature. Each of these persons of African descent had

parents who were legally, socially and culturally situated within communities and identities that composed the range of Black American identities.⁴²² Yet, their negotiation of identity politics informed both their being and discourse in ways that determined their life opportunities.

Rodolphe Desdunes briefly discusses the politics of passing in his *Nos Hommes, Notre Histoire* (1911), which is a eulogistic anthology of New Orleans' francophone *gens de couleur libres*. Desdunes attests:

[B]on nombre de personnes d'origine douteuse avaient recours à la loi pour se fixer un état civil favorable. Ces personnes, une fois *régularisées* par les tribunaux, passaient dans les rangs de la race blanche et jouissaient de tous les droits et privilèges attachés à cette position. Une décision adverse, par contre, était désastreuse, fatale, car elle entraînait la perte de tout prestige pour la victime, qui ne pouvait plus alors vivre dans les mêmes conditions sociales. D'un autre côté, la population de couleur était sérieusement divisée sur cette question d'*usurpation ethnologique*. Les uns approuvaient, les autres désapprouvaient la conduite des gens de couleur qui voulaient se glisser dans la société des blancs. Les dissidents étaient en majorité...⁴²³

Desdunes' language is informative. The identity politics of blackness in Desdunes reconstruction of late nineteenth century New Orleans was material and political; the process of self-identification, whether it be Black, White or Creole of color—carried material risks and rewards. The lived experience associated with blackness created diverse views on strategies of survival. Desdunes notes, however, that the majority of Black New Orleans negatively viewed this strategy. While Desdunes wrote in the early

⁴²² Excluding the Healy and Woods, the above mentioned individuals had two parents that identified with categories that fall under the scope of American blackness such as Negro, Coloured or Mulatto. It is only through personal particularity that individuals of African descent in America acquire passing or rejection as means to negotiate racial discrimination. Class, income, geographic mobility and color are essential factors that determine one's opportunities to pass. As individuals in the twenty-first century claim post-racial identity, the idea of rejecting Black identity, as exemplified by Raven-Symoné, is an alternative approach to passing.

⁴²³ Rodolphe Lucien Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire: Notices Biographiques Accompagnées de Reflexions et de Souvenirs Personnels* (Montréal, Québec: Arbour and DuPont, 1911), 33.

twentieth century, his commentary is an important context for understanding Obama's negotiation of Black American history and Black American identity.

Desdunes' discussion of passing appears in a biographical discussion of Creole poet and song-writer, Joseph Beaumont. Beaumont, according to Desdunes, was with the majority of New Orleans Black population that disapproved of passing and penned a song that derided the practice. The source for Beaumont's song was the the Louisiana Supreme Court Case *Anastasie Desarzant vs. Pierre Lablanc and Eglantine Desmazillier* (1858), which is more popularly known as the Toucoutou Affair.⁴²⁴ Desdunes describes the Toucoutou Affair as a New Orleans street dispute between neighbors of supposed African descent over passing and blackness. The dispute escalated when Anastasie DeSarzant, locally known as Toucoutou, rebuffed at being called a *nègre*—Negro, Black, Nigger.⁴²⁵ Instead of hearing *nègre* as a baseless and figurative insult, the aggrieved girl interpreted it as a literal aspersion with socio-political and legal ramifications. She took the case to court to prove and legally establish her non-blackness. The courts, however, ruled against her. The outcome of this street dispute turned lawsuit had a devastating effect on the girl. Legally classified as Black, she likely lost many of the social privileges that her racial ambiguity had afforded her. Additionally, she became the object of much disdain amongst New Orleans' communities of color. She had attempted to disassociate

⁴²⁴ For a critical and contemporary treatment of the Toucoutou Affair, See Sybil Kein, "One-Drop Rules: Self-Identity and the Women in the Trial of Toucoutou," in *Louisiana Culture from the Colonial Era to Katrina*, ed. John Lowe (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 136–46; Shirley Thompson, "'Ah Toucoutou, Ye Conin Vous': History and Memory in Creole New Orleans," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (2001): 232–66; For nearly a century, Desdunes' eulogy of Beaumont was the primary historical treatment of the Toucoutou affair. While Kein, Thompson and Caryn Bell offer contemporary discussions of Toucoutou, Desdunes' presentation is still valuable. As early twentieth century Black American discourse, Desdunes treatment is still extremely valuable. While it lacks considerable historical detail, the socio-political insights gleaned from his presentation is informative. Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, 32–35.

⁴²⁵ The claim that she was called a *nègre* comes from Desdunes recollection of events. See, Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, 33.

and socio-politically ascend those racialized individuals who Louisiana law marginalized because either their ideologies or phenotype prevented them from retreating into the privilege of racialized whiteness. That same Black New Orleans community had little sympathy for her, mocking her through the discourse and memory. While Beaumont immortalized her in song soon after the ordeal during the nineteenth century. New Orleans' cultural memory continued to give the Toucoutou Affair discursive power decades later when musician Edward Tinker revived her story through the composition of a novel, *Toucoutou* (1928), inspired by her DeSarzante's ordeal.⁴²⁶ The Toucoutou Affair helps elucidate the identity politics of blackness as having to negotiate the spheres of both the dominant, national culture and Black American discourse and culture.

While Desdunes' discussion of Beaumont and the Toucoutou Affair involve the communal and external politics of passing, James Weldon Johnson's novel, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* (1927), explores the personal dilemma and internal strife associated with racialized blackness and passing. Johnson constructs the image of an internally conflicted protagonist whose racial identity and social identification evolves over his adolescent and young adult life. Contextualized within American racialization, Johnson's character is conscious the roles that both nation and diaspora play in his own being. While Johnson attempts to balance and evoke compassion for his protagonist, the work closes with an aged protagonist reflecting on his life.

It is difficult for me to analyse my feelings concerning my present position in the world. Sometimes it seems to me that I have never really been a

⁴²⁶ Thompson, "Ah Toucoutou, Ye Conin Vous"; Rodolphe Lucien Desdunes, *Our People and Our History; a Tribute to the Creole People of Color in Memory of the Great Men They Have Given Us and of the Good Works They Have Accomplished.*, ed. Dorothea Olga McCants, trans. Dorothea Olga McCants (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1973).

Negro, that I have only a privileged spectator of their inner life; at other times I feel that I have been a coward, a deserter, and I am possessed by a strange longing for my mother's people...Beside them [a small but gallant band of coloured men who are publicly fighting the cause of their race] I feel small and selfish. I am an ordinarily successful white man who has made a little money. They are men who are making history and a race. I, too, might have taken part in a work so glorious. My love for my children makes me glad that I am what I am and keeps me from desiring to be otherwise; and yet, when I sometimes open a little box in which I still keep my fast yellowing manuscripts, the only tangible remnants of a vanished dream, a dead ambition, a sacrificed talent, I cannot repress the thought that, after all, I have chosen the lesser part, that I have sold my birthright for a mess of pottage.⁴²⁷

Johnson avoids harsh criticism or judgment by describing the protagonist as a husband, father and contributor to society. This conclusion still weaves in notions of cowardice, betrayal and emotional angst. The protagonist loves his wife, who knew his secret. He loves his children, and he achieved an ordinary life. His identity as an ordinary White American protected him from the material, socio-economic and physical dangers inherent in the existence of a Black American man in America. Johnson is resolute in describing this decision to pass as not eradicating the psychological or emotional tensions of Black American being.

Because of the protagonist's achievements, Johnson portrays the decision to pass broadly successful. Yet, withstanding the established sympathy, the novel closes with biblical reference to the patriarch Isaac's two sons, Esau and Jacob (Gen 19.25 – 34). This passage refers to Esau, Isaac's first-born and heir, impetuously selling his birthright to his younger brother Jacob for a bowl of soup. Imbedded within this intertextual reference is Johnson's depiction of the perpetual tension embodied by his protagonist. As

⁴²⁷ James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, New edition edition. (New York: Dover Publications, 1995).

Black American discourse, Johnson suggests that regardless of the identity politics chosen, the politics of blackness is inescapable.

The discursive decisions, whether one asserts Black identity or rejects it, carries an internal and external politics that is an important aspect of Black American discourse. Black American discourse has long consisted of intense disagreements that frame the context and organize the logic conveyed. Central figures had well-known disputes: Du Bois with Booker T. Washington; Malcolm X with Martin Luther King, Jr.; Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. with Martin Luther King, Jr. and many Black Republicans; Cornel West with President Obama, Michael Eric Dyson, Tavis Smiley and a litany of others; Clarence Thomas with the majority of twenty-first century Black America.

The New Orleans based *Comité des Citoyens*, which Desdunes was a member, combatted racial segregation in the South and received little aid or support from Fredrick Douglass and other prominent leaders at the end of the nineteenth century. While Douglass and Washington pursued Civil Rights primarily through social, cultural, educational and economic domains, the *Comité des Citoyen* pursued immediate legal and constitutional recognition. This difference in approach is partly responsible for the lack of financial resources and public support of the *Comité des Citoyens* and their lawsuit, *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896). The failure of *Plessy v Ferguson* to end racial segregation in the South was a disastrous setback. In 1919, Marcus Garvey enraged Black intellectuals and leaders by meeting with and seeking to collaborate with Edward Young Clarke, the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. The complexities surrounding this dispute contributed to Garvey's eventual arrest and deportation. A caustic media conflict raged between supporters of Garvey and the supporters of socialist leader and Garvey critic, A.

Philip Randolph. At the height of this dispute, A. Philip Randolph received a severed hand in the mail. These examples offer insight into the polyvocal and political dimensions of Black American discourse in general and Obama's Selma speech in particular. The identity politics of Black American discourse extends beyond the scopes of phenotype or nationality. As I sat listening to Obama's speech, I was subconsciously aware that the identity politics one inscribes into Black American discourse positions them within specific historical and political affiliations.

***Considering Black American Discourse:
(Re)Viewing Selma, (Re)Viewing Obama:***

The Speech as Diaspora Discourse

The stakes for Obama's presidential campaign and political career were incredibly high. Given the complex nature of Black American discourse's identity politics and the frequency of internal disputes, Obama's Selma speech needed to negotiate his racialized and national identity in ways that appealed to a large swath of Black American voters as well as dominant society. Seventeen months after this Selma speech supporter and supposed ally Rev. Jesse Jackson would critique Obama, though accidentally into a live microphone, for his discursive engagement with Black American faith communities, whispering: "See, um, Barack been talking down to Black people about this faith based... I wanna cut his nuts off." Such divisiveness could have been devastating to the future president's campaign in March, 2007. While Jackson's disapproval of Obama's discursive engagement with church communities occurred in the summer of 2008, the Selma speech was integral in outlining Obama's preferred racial and national vision of himself and his relatedness to Black America and the United States as a whole.

It was firmly within the above described aspects of the Black American discursive tradition that Candidate Obama acknowledged and addressed his audience in Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church in Selma. Aware of accusations that focused on his particularity as the child of a White, Kansan mother and Black, Kenyan father, candidate Obama juxtaposed his own biography with the Civil Rights movement to assert both his Blackness and African-Americanness.

More persuasive than an acknowledgement that he calls himself Black or holds American citizenship and has African ancestry, Obama approached the entire matrix of Blackness by appealing to Blackness as corporate, political and historical. He merges the narratives of the Civil Rights movement, British colonialism and his parents' meeting to portray his own identity historiographically as both the product and fulfillment of the Civil Rights movement. This speech uses Blackness, racial discrimination, parental sacrifice and hope and generational improvement as figures that elicit commonality and relatedness among Black Americans living under Jim-Crow era discrimination and Black Kenyans living under British colonization. These figures implicitly stress the importance to recognize the presence of Diaspora as Obama thematically evokes a consciousness that presumes socio-political, experiential, aspirational and teleological relatedness across the African Diaspora. Couched within his autobiographical narration, Obama de-particularized the Civil Rights movement as a set of geographical and geopolitical specific, socio-cultural and political efforts of Black Americans and allies to secure their Constitutionally protected rights as American citizens. Instead, Obama's speech offered a vision of the Selma March and Civil Rights movement and transcending both the geographic and political particularity of its circumstances. They were, instead, Diasporic

and Divine iterations of Black survival, hope and progress. For Obama, the Civil Rights movement was a geopolitically situated event with trans-national objective and audience.

The process through which Obama legitimates the authenticity of his Blackness is careful and multi-pronged. He avoids claiming connection to Selma and the Civil Rights movement through geography or citizenship. This argument, though plausible, can lead to one (re)conceiving the Selma March as a largely de-racialized national event. This (re)construction is susceptible to depossessing Black Americans and other participants from any unique connection to its catalysts or consequences. This approach, which is widely visible across twenty-first century discourse, frequently results in discursive (re)presentations of the Civil Rights movement as ambiguously lauding America's insipient ideals of justice, democratic freedom and equality. Consequently, the movement's counter-cultural, economic, racial and politically subversive particularity become downplayed and transformed into an expression of a national Euro-centric and androcentric metanarrative.

Avoiding a nation-oriented argument, Candidate Obama, instead, highlights the racial significance of the Selma March and its role in combatting racial discrimination. Imbedded in this characterization of Selma, Obama stresses the diasporic character of Blackness through his own (re)constructed ontological Blackness. It is specifically the racialized specificity of the Selma March that secures Obama's relatedness and authenticity.

He describes the individuals that question the authenticity of Obama's connection to Selma, his heritage or his Blackness as lacking understanding. With vigor, he charged:

[Y]ou don't understand. You see, my Grandfather was a cook to the British in Kenya. Grew up in a small village and all his life, that all he

was—a cook and a house boy. And that’s what they called him, even when he was 60 years old. They called him a house boy. They wouldn’t call him by his last name. Sound familiar?

His argument is illustrative. His claim of authenticity begins with his grandfather.

Instead of arguing from place, he argues through the narration of the past. Likewise, he invokes ontological Blackness by introducing and developing the oppositions of Britain and Kenya. Signifying European colonization, segregation and denigration of Africa and its descendants, Obama offered a brief, but powerful, image of racialized identity and oppression as transnational. This ancestry of racialized existence receives additional contextualization in Obama’s decision to note both the socio-cultural and economic consequences of racial discrimination. The specific occupations, cook and house boy, often carry stereotypical associations with Jim Crow era discrimination and the depressed employment opportunities available to Black persons. The emphatic notation that they would refer to him as house boy instead of his last name brings this description of Obama’s heritage to crescendo. As a child raised on re-runs of 1970’s Black television such as *Sanford and Son*, *What’s Happening!!*, *The Jeffersons*, *Diff’rent Strokes*, and *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*, I hear echoes of *Good Times*’ character, Michael Evans in Obama’s appeal: “Mama, boy is a white racist word!”⁴²⁸ This identification of boy as a racist epithet links the experiences of Obama’s father with the cultural memory of oppression during Jim Crow-era segregation. Obama locates his detractors as lacking understanding. The individuals who question the authenticity of Obama’s blackness fail to grasp history, the transnational impact of the Civil Rights movement or the true significance of the Jubilee Bridge Crossing. By alluding to experiences that people

⁴²⁸ Donald McKayle and Perry Rosemond, “Getting Up the Rent,” *Good Times* (Los Angeles, 1974).

frequently stereotype with Jim Crow segregation—i.e. as employment as a cook; being called a house boy—Obama suggests that his grandfather’s experience of racial discrimination and aspirational hope provides himself with the requisite heritage to claim Black American identity.

The invocation of familial and filial language is an essential aspect of Obama’s language, particularly when he uses the language of generations as an integral figure to organize this speech’s discursive coherence around relatedness and *le divers*. With the language of generations, Obama suggests a historical and familial relatedness between participants during the Civil Rights movement and the larger voting public of his era. The individuals who lived and participated in the Civil Rights movement, some of whom were present in Brown Chapel, comprised a single generation. He commemorated this generation because they had sacrificed and accomplished many advances enjoyed by later generations. The majority of his audience he considered the benefactors and offspring of the Civil Rights generation. They comprise a separate generation; they are the heir to the future hoped for by the Civil Rights generation; they embody the future anticipated by the first generation.

The speaker’s volume and tempo fluctuated metrically while his voice produced an occasional drawl. Speaking of Moses and Joshua as representatives of their respective generations, Obama’s discourse (re)presents the Civil Rights movement and Post-Civil Rights era as biblical history. This use of scripture as paradigm infers a teleological and axiological vision of the event he was commemorating and the people whose votes he sought. With paraenetic fervor, Obama charged listeners to affirm his Black

Americanness by recognizing both his ontological blackness and relatedness to the Civil Rights movement. He urges them to join him, and:

Keep in your heart the prayer of that journey, the prayer that God gave to Joshua. Be strong and have courage in the face of injustice. Be strong and have courage in the face of prejudice and hatred, in the face of joblessness and helplessness and hopelessness. Be strong and have courage, brothers and sisters, those who are gathered here today, in the face of our doubts and fears, in the face of skepticism, in the face of cynicism, in the face of a mighty river. Be strong and have courage and let us cross over that Promised Land together.⁴²⁹

Through his depiction of a related heritage, Obama suggests that he and his Black auditors share, at least ontologically, common history. His use of biblical imagery presents a common indebtedness and shared aspirational hope. The resulting effect of Obama's negotiation of Diaspora is an argument for his own identity politics and a proposed vision for Black America's political future.

Ideology and the Myopic Evaluation of Black American Discourse

Jefferson:

Black Discourse as Proof of Humanity

Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches in poetry. Among the blacks is misery enough, God knows, but no poetry. Love is the peculiar *oestrum* of the poet. Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. Religion indeed has produced a Phyllis Whately[*sic*] but it could not produce a poet. The compositions published under her name are below the dignity of criticism.

Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia

The valuation and evaluation of Black American discourse is a longstanding practice with considerable socio-political, intellectual and economic consequences. The analysis and critical study of Black American discourse is itself a form of discourse production imbued with social and political consequences.⁴³⁰ Intellectual pursuits,

⁴²⁹ Obama, "Selma Voting Rights Speech."

⁴³⁰ For a contemporary illustration, See the above excursus, Black Discourse, Vernacular Theory.

literature and discourse have long had close relationships to socio-politics and identity politics of blackness. Early treatments of Black American discourse focused more on the diasporic relatedness of Black writers than the national particularity of Black American discourse. Thus, assessments of Black American discourse frequently occurred within broader treatments of Black Atlantic discourse.

A recurring motivation for the study of Black Atlantic, and thus Black American, discourse has been its use as a political act in the validation or subjugation of Black folk. Many people view the analysis and criticism of Black Atlantic discourse as a means to discursively prove and signify the legitimation and full humanity of Black folk. In addition to its cultural and expressive components, one of the most significant roles of early Black Diaspora discourse was to exhibit and prove black humanity.

In line with Hegel's racialized approach to historiography, European and Euro-American oriented assessments of Black American discourse has frequently served as a means to discount, disprove and disqualify Black peoples' personhood, inclusive of their: intelligence; legitimacy; contributions; and, humanity. In much the same way Hegel, Jefferson and Trevor-Roper assert the inconsequence and dearth of African presence and contributions to history, large swaths of cultural and literary critics have employed cultural-dependent iterations of poetics as style and syntax to denigrate aspects of the Black American discursive tradition as bereft of skill, creativity or value.⁴³¹ The pejorative assessment of Black American discourse is a disservice, in part, because of its negative judgement of the aesthetics and artistic value of Black cultural expression and

⁴³¹ I discuss Hegel, Jefferson and Trevor-Roper's unilinear approaches to history as well as their racialized excommunication of Africa and its descendants from human history in the Introduction. The univocal and unilinear historiographical methodology devised by Hegel, Jefferson and Trevor-Roper serve as the basis of my conception of Hegelian Colour-blindness.

creativity. However, and more importantly, these assessments, which often betray Hegelian Colour-blindness, are destructively disastrous because of the frequency with which they support or accompany racialized and discriminatory socio-political and economic opinions.

Because the United States and Republican France were products of Enlightenment values, many of the social elites in these societies felt literacy, literature and reason were hallmarks of civilization and humanity. The Enlightenment-informed Thomas Jefferson serves again as a useful illustration. As discussed above, Thomas Jefferson engaged in Black Atlantic literary evaluation and found it wanting, thus, legitimating his ideological and racial worldview. His refutes the full human potential and intellectual capability of Blacks with arguments that center on a summary critique and derisive estimation of the literary accomplishments of Black Atlantic writers. The representative authors who Jefferson dismisses are Phillis Wheatley and Ignatius Sancho. Jefferson's selection of a female from America and a male from England gives his assessment the air of universality in its attempt to represent a trans-Atlantic critique of Black Atlantic discourse.

For Jefferson, the colonization and enslavement of Africans and their descendants afforded them access to religion and Western civilization. Consequently, the most likely place to find an intellectually developed or artistically adept Black person was within the contexts where Blacks had the most interaction and exposure to European culture. Due to these views, Jefferson dismissed the possibility of finding enlightenment or artistry in Africa, which left Europe and America as the sole places where Jefferson could find examples of intellectual potential within the African Diaspora. Black Atlantic discourses

produced by individuals living as minorities amongst Europeans and Euro-Americans represented the highest degree acculturation and civilizing capabilities of Black peoples. By acknowledging material inequities between the resources available to Black and non-Black writers, Jefferson feigns deliberation over the roles that socialization and restrictive colonial contexts play on education and exposure to the arts and sciences. This concern receives little exploration as he invokes Native Americans as an “ideal minority” whose culture, argues Jefferson, exhibits traces of creativity and potential while subjected to inequities comparable to persons across the African Diaspora. For Jefferson, Native Americans invalidate any defense of Black humanity based on inequity because their culture, throughout history, has expressed neither trace nor potential of creativity.

As seen in the above quote, Jefferson perceived poetry as a craft developed out of experience, intelligence and human expression. Poetry and advanced art were components of humanity’s generative and creative ability. Two of the most useful tools a poet has recourse to are misery and love. While misery, for Jefferson, is an attribute and frequent source for successful poetry, it is love that is the poet’s *oestrum*: the stimulating passion and uncontrollable impulse that drives one to creation and generation. Thus, in this terse assessment, Jefferson constructs a model that describes both poet—i.e. speaker—and poetry—i.e. discourse. His use of misery and love suggest that the integral ingredients for both poet and poetry are experiential and inherent. Following Jefferson’s logic, Africans and their descendants have the requisite love to stimulate poets to poetry; and, slavery and discrimination in Britain and the Americas provide Black peoples with exposure to culture, arts and civilization and the necessary misery to transform their discourse into poetry. Yet, despite all the *contributions* that the United States and Britain

offered Africans and their descendants, *contributions* that produced poets and civilization in other peoples, they had not created a single Black poet or persons of literary accomplishment. Jefferson derides the works attributed to Wheatley and Sancho and, then he questions the authenticity of its authorship. At each stage, his intent is to convince his readers of the biological and intellectual inferiority of people of African descent.⁴³² Based on his readings, Blacks could become religious and emotional, but they did not produce literature.

Resting at the core of Jefferson's assessment are his hermeneutics, aesthetic ideals and inherently conceived poetics. Yet, in a cyclical and systemic way, these literary assessments conditioned his politics and, thus, American politics. It was a product of his beliefs and the support for his convictions—i.e. that which is self-evident-pertaining to people of African descent. It governed his relationships; and, as a slave owner, it informed the experiences and realities of those individuals owned by him. As a politician and framer of the Constitution, his literary assessments and their consequences shaped the lives and personhood of Black American throughout the continent. Consider the additive nature of his arguments. It is through literary criticism that Jefferson argues that Blacks had the capacity to: i) love and be in loving relationships; ii) receive Religion and the rudiments of civilization; and, iii) neutralize their Africanness and become more humane and potential-filled through miscegenation with Whites. Somewhat rooted in Jefferson's inability to appreciate Black Diaspora discourse, he constructed a reality in

⁴³² After asserting that American slavery was better and more humane than ancient Greek or Roman slavery, Jefferson notes that ancient slaves were White, many of which were also skilled in the arts. The presence of skilled and accomplished White slaves in ancient circumstances more restrictive and inhumane than the conditions of Black peoples enslaved in the Americas proved, for Jefferson, that the dearth of Black poetics was biological and not due to social and class conditions. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

which enslaved persons of mixed heritage were better and more humane than those of greater non-White heritage. Still inferior and stained by the disability of Blackness could, however, provide respectable and positive emotional relationships and love. The logic underlying this thought process construes the Master/Slave dynamic as humane and mutually beneficial. The relationship, for example, between Slave-owner and enslaved person—e.g. Sally Hemmings—can be understood here as proper, logical and of mutual benefit. African Descendants are fully capable of feeling and loving. Jefferson accepts and valorizes this love-potential. Any children produced by such relationships signify biological enhancement through the dilution of their blackness. This ideological perspective shapes various approaches to the analysis and criticism of Black American discourse.

Anthology as Hidden Transcript:
Black Discourse as Proof of Humanity

As early as the 18th century, Black persons and their allies confronted the views advanced by Jefferson. These individuals used the speech and discourse of Black persons as proof of Black humanity. Roman Catholic priest and staunch abolitionist Henri Grégoire (1750 – 1831) encapsulates this view. Initially published in 1808, Grégoire's, *De la littérature des nègres, ou Recherches sur leurs facultés intellectuelles, leurs qualités morales et leur littérature* (On the Literature of Negroes: Studies on Their Intellectual Faculties, Moral Qualities and Literature) is one of the earliest anthologies of African Diaspora literature. By demonstrating the literary and social accomplishments of Black persons, Grégoire sought to refute claims that people of African descent had limited intellectual and thus civilizational significance.

Following Grégoire, the study and collection of Black Diaspora discourse would become a key strategy in combatting the pejorative racialization of blackness. As editors, Black and non-Black, published journals and anthologies across the Atlantic, they began listing accomplishments and literary works produced by authors of African descent.⁴³³ Through this process, the Black Atlantic and its discourse became more conscious of its diasporic character and implicit relatedness. One of these publications was Martinican exile Cyril Bisette's, *le Revue des Colonies*. Bisette (1795 – 1858), a free person of color, had been accused of disseminating seditious material and inciting slave unrest. After being exiled to France, Bisette founded and edited a journal that kept its readership apprised of a variety of issues around the world. Advancing an abolitionist agenda, Bisette included both news, literary accomplishments and literary excerpts. Aware of Grégoire's work, Bisette included excerpts *De la littérature des nègres*.⁴³⁴ Within the select excerpts, Bisette provided Grégoire's translations of Phylis Wheatley's poetry alongside a picture of Wheatley.

Reproducing works of Wheatley, Bisette's analysis and collection of Black Atlantic discourse was a central component to his abolitionist habits. Through the recognition of Black Diaspora relatedness, Grégoire, Bisette and others embraced Diaspora discourse as an expression of both particularity and relatedness. It is within this ideological perspective and Diaspora consciousness that Bisette encouraged the careers

⁴³³ Gates and Smith offer a brief but informative discussion of the tradition of anthologies in the Black American literary tradition. See, Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Valerie A. Smith, "Introduction: Talking Books," in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Valerie A. Smith, vol. 2, 2 vols., Third. (New York: W W Norton & Company, 2014), xxxiii – xlv; Houston A Baker Jr., Patricia Redmond, and Henry Louis Gates Jr., eds., "Canon-Formation, Literary History, and the Afro-American Tradition: From the Seen to the Told," in *Afro-American Literary Study in the 1990s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 14–38.

⁴³⁴ Notice Bisette's editorial hand as he redacted Grégoire's original nègres for noirs. See, Henri Grégoire, "Littérature des noirs," ed. Cyrille-Charles-Auguste Bisette, *RDC* 3, no. 7 (1837): 287–91.

and literary interests of writers throughout the Black Atlantic. Bissette's publication of New Orleans born Séjour's "*Le mûlatre*," is one example. Entrenched in nineteenth century Romanticism, Séjour's excoriates the institution of slavery as mutually destructive to the enslaved and free alike. The longing for freedom, love, family and peace juxtaposes the vices of greed, abuse of power and vengeance in a way that dooms civilization. This form of social critique, written by a New Orleanian free person of color that immigrated to France in order to flee the perils of America's racialization of blackness, legitimates both the literary skill and social utility of collecting Black American discourse.

The majority of these anthologies assumed an encomiastic position with respect to their content. Desdunes' above mentioned *Nos Hommes, Notre Histoire* (1911) is an example of this type of collection. Desdunes describes the work as, "[A] hommage to the Creole population, remembering the great men it has produced and the great things they accomplished."⁴³⁵ Reflecting emancipatory agenda I describe above, Desdunes opens his first chapter by quoting Montesquieu, "An injustice done to a single one is a threat to all." It is through Desdunes' collection of the discourse of Creoles of color that he provides a discursive history while also demonstrating the contributions and humanity of his increasingly marginalized ethno-cultural community of color.

Six decades earlier, another French-speaking, Creole of color compiled one of the first anthologies of Black American poetry. Armand Lanusse published *Les Cenelles* (1845), an anthology of poetry written by Louisiana Creoles of color. Houston Baker

⁴³⁵ "Hommage à la population créole, en souvenir des grands hommes qu'elle a produit et des bonnes choses qu'elle a accomplies," Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, Title Page.

alludes to the subversive political objective underlying Lanusse's collection by describing the volume's content as apolitical.

The first attempt to define a black canon that I have found is that by Armand Lanusse, who edited *Les Cenelles*... Lanusse's "Introduction" is a defense of poetry as an enterprise for black people, in their larger efforts to defend the race against, "the spiteful and calumnious arrows show at us," at a target defined as the collective black intellect. Despite this stated political intention, these poems imitate the styles and themes of the French Romantics and never engage directly the social and political experience of black Creoles in New Orleans in the 1840s. *Les Cenelles* argues for a political effect—that is, the end of racism—by publishing apolitical poems, poems which share as their silent second texts the poetry written by Frenchmen three thousand miles away. We are like the French—so, treat us like Frenchmen. An apolitical art was being put to uses most political.⁴³⁶

The strategy Gates describes as apolitical aligns with the broader and subversive argument that Lanusse's community were in fact fully human. On the public transcript one sees Creoles of color writing poetry modeled after European poets and engaging in topics revolving around seemingly apolitical themes. The hidden transcript, which Lanusse heightens through his introduction, consists of an ideological attack on arguments that claim the inherent inferiority of Black Americans. The hidden transcript shows the inability of racist ideology and oppressive legislation to thwart the expressive and cultural development of individuals on the margins.

Lanusse frames *Les Cenelles* as temporal and hopeful that their expressive culture would continue to speak to later generations. He further argues that this volume participates with the greater literary world. Respecting European models without

⁴³⁶ Baker Jr., Redmond, and Gates Jr., "Canon-Formation, Literary History, and the Afro-American Tradition: From the Seen to the Told," 32 Gates relies on Latortue and Adams' 1979 translation. The portion of the text translated within this quote appears in the original as, "De toutes parts un grand besoin d'instruction se fait sentir. On commence à comprendre que, dans quelque position que le sort nous a placés, une bonne éducation est une égide contre laquelle viennent s'émousser les traits lancés contre nous par le dédain ou par la calomnie."

envying them, *Les Cenelles* is intrinsically political in its insistence on the full humanity of these Black Americans. Lanusse appropriates a notion of relatedness when framing the goals and perspective responsible for producing *Les Cenelles*.

In contrast to Jefferson's cursory dismissal of Wheatley and Sancho's works, the nineteenth and twentieth century editors used Black Atlantic discourse to refute these oppressive ideologies. Anthologies and collections of Black accomplishments and discourse utilized their inherent political and ideological character to subvert dominant culture's pervasive arguments against Black creativity and humanity. The subversive politics couched in assemblage and presentation of Black gave added value to collection and publication of Black Atlantic discourse. These works attended to an archival and historical lacuna; the erasure of voices from the African Diaspora from the literary history of humanity. Increased interest in compiling Black Atlantic discourse paralleled demand for and appreciation of Black Atlantic discourse an increased demand for Black Atlantic discourse. Each volume enhancing the socio-cultural and political claim of Black persons presence among the Universal. A number of these collections used the fact of Black discourse to envision the African Diaspora in progressing towards a hopeful *telos* fully conscious of the erasures, particularities and contextual nature of their projects. Attuned to the dangers of Hegelian Colour-blindness, Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson opened her collection with such an expectation and awareness:

Therefore, it seems appropriate in putting forth a volume commemorating the birth of the Negro into manhood, to collect some few of the speeches he made to help win his manhood, his place in the economy of the nation, his right to stand with his face to the sun. The present volume does not aim to be a complete collection of Negro Eloquence; it does not even aim to present the best that the Negro has done on the platform, it merely aims to present to the public some few of the best speeches made within the past hundred years. Much of the best is lost; much of it is hidden away in

forgotten places. We have not always appreciated our own work sufficiently to preserve it, and thus much valuable material is wasted. Sometimes it has been difficult to obtain good speeches from those who are living because of their innate modesty, either in not desiring to appear in print, or in having thought so little of their efforts as to have lost them.⁴³⁷

Through various means and mediums, editors and authors utilized discourse as the primary social, cultural and political demonstration of commonality and relatedness amongst humanity. From eras where literacy was illegal to the present day, Black American discourse has been an integral mechanism to combat Hegelian Colour-Blindness and assumptions inferiority. It is between the cultural memory and physical collection of Black American discourse that individuals appeal to when claims such as Biden's assertion that Obama was the first clean, intelligent and articulate, mainstream Black presidential candidate appear. And, through (re)constructed, retrieved and (re)viewed treatment of these discourses, revived archives of Black discourse recall the actions and speech of Shirley Chisolm, Carol Mosely Braun, Jesse Jackson, Alan Keyes and Al Sharpton to plug the holes left in traditional unilinear and univocal historical (re)constructions. It is through Black American discourse, a particular articulation of Black Diaspora discourse, that writers, authors and critics demonstrate a need for the inclusion of Black folk and their discourse into the Universal.

Evaluations of Obama:
Critiques of Selma and the Poetics of Privilege

Senator Obama's speech received a range of responses. While some critics lauded this speech, a few journalists gave negative reviews. Obama received criticism

⁴³⁷ Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson, ed., *Masterpieces of Negro Eloquence: The Best Speeches Delivered by the Negro from the Days of Slavery to the Present Time.*, Masterpieces of Eloquence (New York: Bookery Publishing Company, 1914).

from some commentators for pandering and “politicizing” a memorial service.⁴³⁸ Despite the fact that the 1965 Selma March was at its essence political protest, these pundits implicitly argue that its legacy is best remembered outside the scope of politics. This expectation reflects a preference for the national metanarrative over the the complex and shameful details of the Civil Rights movement. Commemorating the political protest of a marginalized community and its allies as an apolitical, national celebration is a form of historiographic erasure. In effect, these critics are advocating that Selma be decontextualized and fettered to America’s national myth of origins. These critiques also fail to acknowledge the inherent political character of Black American discourse and the majority Black American audience listening to him in Selma.

Listening to candidate Obama in Manchester, UK, I was caught offguard by the overtness of his claim to the Civil Rights movement and virtual dismissal of Black American particularity.⁴³⁹ Having demonstrated his racialized—i.e. ontological—relatedness with Black America, Obama enhanced his claim on the Civil Rights movement by depicting his birth as a result of the events of the Civil Rights movement.

And what happened in Selma, Alabama and Birmingham also stirred the conscience of a nation and it worried folks in the White House who said, you know, we're battling communism, how are we going to win the hearts and minds all across the world if right here in our own country, John, we're not observing the ideals that are set forth in our Constitution? We might be accused of being hypocrites. So the Kennedys decided, we're going to do an airlift. We're going to go out to Africa. And we're going to start bringing young Africans over to this country and bring them scholarships to study so that they can learn what a wonderful country America is. And this young man named Barack Obama got one of those

⁴³⁸ It is difficult to fathom why someone would expect the commemoration of an event as overtly political as the Selma Civil Rights March to be apolitical. This expectation further displays how communities can de-contextualize the narration of the past.

⁴³⁹⁴³⁹ The single mode of particularity among Black Americans that Obama highlighted was generational. In effect, Obama collapsed the narratives of post-Civil Rights America into a single expression of blackness. Consequently, Obama’s speech exudes attributes of *le même*.

tickets and came over to this country.

Through this narration, Obama claims relatedness to Selma both via the experiences and hopes of his Kenyan grandfather and as the material byproduct of the American political system. This depiction argues for the pragmatic nature of American politics, providing a redemptive view of American government. This view of American politics suggests that the hopes and actions of average persons on the street—e.g. the participants in the march from Selma to Montgomery and his grandfather in Kenya—are effective and powerful strategies of survival. It is interesting how Obama employs Diaspora and his ontological vision of blackness to convey the effectiveness of Selma.

According to Obama's narrative:

- 1) The establishment is susceptible to charges of hypocrisy from outside Communist forces, which comprise America's greatest concern and danger;
- 2) The charge stems from America's internal failure with respect to its Black American citizens;
- 3) The establishment attempts to rectify and neutralize charges of hypocrisy by building relationships with individuals outside the United States who lacked first hand experience of America's failure.

As developed in Obama's narrative, the Kennedys' efforts are a manifestation of Selma's success. Through Obama's utilization of *le même*, the importation and financial support of individuals of African descent who ontologically share in the racialization of blackness signifies success. Through the figurization of Selma and Africa, Obama's narrative validates the Selma March's effect on Washington while incorporating Obama's vision of relatedness into the domain of nation as well as Diaspora. It is only after developing Obama's ontological vision of blackness that the airlift of African college students becomes the teleological accomplishment of the sacrifices performed at Selma. Through ontological relatedness, the Civil Rights movement is transfigured into a

transnational catalyst for socio-political advancement across the Diaspora. Likewise, the teleological objectives of Black America become intricately connected with the nation's struggle with Communism. Thus, Obama's narrative envisions the Civil Rights movement as an event woven together through both Diaspora and national interests. Instead of separate identities of Diaspora and Nation that require separate histories, Obama provides a polyvocal autobiography that expresses both his Diaspora and national consciousnesses into a single history.

A number of the news outlets that critiqued Obama's speech challenged aspects of the speech's veracity and narrative presentation of the past.⁴⁴⁰ Obama avoids statistics, specific dates or direct quotations. The majority of the Selma speech stresses relatedness and analogy through figurative use of the past. In line with his development of an ontological blackness through the figures of racial oppression, Obama weaves the interests of Black Americans, dominant American culture and the greater African Diaspora together through figurative references to the White House, the Kennedys, John F. Kennedy specifically, Communism, an African airlift and his father, Obama, Sr.. These figures receive little context or temporalization outside of their figurative depictions as expressions of an interconnected era for which the Civil Rights movement

⁴⁴⁰ Journalist Michael Dobbs's work on this speech was reproduced in multiple outlets. Cashill and Morrissey are both conservative political commentators with active presence over social media. For a sampling of responses to the speech, See, Michael Dobbs, "Obama Has Overstated Kennedys' Aid to His Dad," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, March 30, 2008), <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/mar/30/nation/na-obama30>; Michael Dobbs, "Obama Overstates Kennedys' Role in Helping His Father," *The Washington Post* (Washington, DC, March 30, 2008), sec. Politics, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/29/AR2008032902031.html>; *ibid.*; Ed Morrissey, "WaPo Reports on Obama-Selma-Kennedy Birth Myth," *Hot Air*, March 30, 2008, <http://hotair.com/archives/2008/03/30/wapo-reports-on-obama-selma-kennedy-birth-myth/>; Jack Cashill, "The Obama Lie That Drove the Birther Movement," *American Thinker*, April 29, 2011, http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/04/the_obama_lie_that_drove_the_b.html.

participated as a catalyst. Their relationships as particular historical events remain clouded throughout the speech.

If engaged with a focus on chronology and cause-and-effect, Obama's narrative portrays, albeit indirectly, a complex of interrelated political contexts. The airlift of African college students was a multistaged program that became a contentious political issue leading up to the 1960 presidential election.⁴⁴¹ The airlift was actually an African initiative led by Kenyan activist Tom Mboya. The Kennedy family's economic and political influences were well established by the beginning of the 1950s.⁴⁴² Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower occupied the White House from 1953 – 1960 while Democrat John F. Kennedy held office from 1961 – 1963. Mboya first met John F. Kennedy while visiting the United States in 1959. In addition to the growing presence of independence movements and the decolonization of Africa, the 1950s and early 1960s witnessed a rapid escalation and expansion of Cold War hostilities.

Though Obama's narrative frames the airlift within the context of America's conflict with the Soviet Union and implies American initiation, the greater context of African independence movements, Kenya's Mau Mau rebellion and the British colonial regimes preparation to hand over sovereignty to Kenyan control, which occurred in 1963, also serve as useful backdrops. While it appears that Vice President Richard Nixon approached the State Department on behalf of the program, the Republican-controlled administration initially declined the program financial support. Thus, when Obama's

⁴⁴¹ For more information about the Student Airlift, See "JFK and the Student Airlift," *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum*, n.d., <http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/JFK-and-the-Student-Airlift.aspx>; Tom Shachtman, *Airlift to America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009).

⁴⁴² President Franklin Roosevelt had appointed the family patriarch, Joseph Kennedy, Sr., over Wall Street in 1934 as the first Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and later as Ambassador to the United Kingdom during the early stages of the Second World War. John F. Kennedy served in both houses of Congress from 1947 until his election to President of the United States in 1960.

father received his initial funding in 1959, neither the State Department nor the Kennedys' had yet financially contributed to the program. The Kennedys' financial support in 1960, however, did contribute to the debt and maintenance of students already in the program.⁴⁴³ These historical observations are plausible contexts that help clarify the precise chronology of the events depicted in Obama's narrative. They also serve as the foundation through which critics negatively evaluated Obama's speech.

It is important to again note the discursive nature of Obama's speech. The minutiae of Obama's narrative receives little detail. The allusion to Selma and Birmingham de-stabilize the linear, chronological tone of this portion of the speech. The prominent Civil Rights events of Selma occurred in 1964 and 1965 while King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham occurred in 1963. His apparent intention is to invoke a complicated matrix of interwoven agendas, events and outcomes and not a precise linear articulation of cause-and-effect.

One reading of this speech is to discern, through his myriad of figures—i.e. Blackness; nation; indebtedness; oppression; race; hope; history—a negotiation of Obama's own identity politics. The candidate, born in 1961, was a toddler during the Selma marches in 1965 yet sees the events, movements and circumstances responsible for his life as an articulation of an American political system, Civil Rights movement and Diasporic struggle for survival and progress whose beginnings, endings, stimuli and achievements are effectively displayed within the polyvocal relatedness of Diaspora.

⁴⁴³ Michael Dobbs, "Obama's 'Camelot Connection,'" Newspaper, *The Washington Post: The Fact Checker*, March 31, 2008, http://voices.washingtonpost.com/fact-checker/2008/03/obamas_camelot_connection.html.

Either Obama forgot what year he was born or his discourse employs Selma and his birth as figures that connote a larger complex of events and individuals linked through ideological and experiential relatedness. Obama conveys understanding of the historical interrelatedness of his chosen figures in explicit fashion. His being and his candidacy represents the converging interests and sacrifices of i) those who struggled in the fight for Civil Rights (Black America), ii) a nation combatting its own past while protecting liberty and justice from the external threat of Communism (the Nation), and iii) the broader African Diaspora who, encouraged by Black America, simultaneously wrestled against vestiges of European colonialism and encroaching threat of Communism (the Diaspora).

The discussion of anachronisms in Obama's chronological presentation are legitimate and useful observations. A number of the critics that focus on this aspect of the Selma speech, however, extend their criticism to characterize the speech as consisting of lies, inaccuracies and half-truths. For conservative pundits, this speech serves as evidence of Obama's moral deficiencies and the naïve, ineptitude of liberals and Black Americans that are impervious to truth and susceptible to such manipulation. Chief among the accusations charged against this speech is that he falsifies the connection between his father's immigration to the United States and the Kennedy family's financial support.⁴⁴⁴ As explained above, the chronology presented by Obama is untenable. Yet, a valid question still remains on whether his figurative approach to history employs an alternative poetic or is a lie. The evaluation of Obama's historical presentation, in line

⁴⁴⁴ Dobbs, "Obama Has Overstated Kennedys' Aid to His Dad"; Cashill, "The Obama Lie That Drove the Birther Movement"; Morrissey, "WaPo Reports on Obama-Selma-Kennedy Birth Myth."

with evaluations of Black American discourse throughout history, has a close relationship to an interpreter's ideological position and view of Obama's identity politics.

Many of these journalists evaluate the Selma speech through specific hermeneutical lenses that are predicated upon their own evaluation of the speech's ideological texture and their own (re)construction of the speech's social and cultural texture. Because these contexts focus on Obama as Democrat and Presidential candidate, their readings of the speech and the speech's context ignore numerous intertexture elements that would inform other readings. They seldom acknowledge the speech's location: the pulpit of an A.M.E. Church during a Sunday service. In much the same way that Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sermons and speeches are now decontextualized from their cultural, religious and political contexts, commentators frequently fail to evaluate this speech or its imagery within the framework of its cultural, political or religious occasion.⁴⁴⁵

Many of these critics also evaluate Obama's adamant defense of his Black Americanness as pandering. This claim ignores the murky and complex aspect of racial identity in America and intracommunal debates over national heritage, biraciality and the complicated identity politics of blackness. Another commonality among these critiques is the attempt to evaluate Obama's discourse as developing upon a linear chronological progression from past to future. These readings engage the meaning-making potential of the Selma speech from a limited hermeneutic perspective. Employing a poetics that privileges chronological linearity, this critiques also assume the speech's primary goal, more in line with a white paper, was to transmit information and facts.

⁴⁴⁵ Obama, "Selma Voting Rights Speech."

Additionally, portions of Obama's ambiguity receive little attention. One instance is when Obama describes the White House in communication with "John" regarding possible conflicts with Communism. Cashill lambasts Obama's biography partly on account of this scene. He mockingly depicts Obama's biography as circulated as much as Jesus' birth without the accuracy.⁴⁴⁶ Yet, Obama's language, intentionally or incidentally, presents the "folks in the White House" and "the Kennedys" as two separate figures. It is the White House that engages "John" out of concern over the events taking place in Selma and Birmingham and their potential effect on the United States' reputation around the world. Responding to the identified concern, Obama depicts, "the Kennedys" acting. Due to Obama's figurative approach the text lacks a specific date. Cashill interprets this scene as depicting President Kennedy in 1961, engaging himself and his advisers in conversation prior to outsourcing the solution to his family. Cashill then notes that Obama's father arrived in the United States prior to the Kennedy administration while Eisenhower was still in power. Though Cashill employs a strict chronological hermeneutic to critique Obama, he appropriates an equally flawed timeline. While Obama's father did arrive prior to the Kennedy donation, the Kennedys contribution to the airlift occurred in 1960, prior to the beginning of the Kennedy administration. Consequently, the timeline Cashill uses to critique Obama's anachronism relies upon equally flawed historical assumptions.

If appropriating Cashill's historical-critical hermeneutic, one can recognize Obama's recognition of two signifiers: the White House and the Kennedys. The narrative does not require a post-1960 date to explain interaction between the Kennedys and the

⁴⁴⁶ Cashill, "The Obama Lie That Drove the Birther Movement."

White House. Communication the Kennedys and the White House the Kennedys as a family having significant political and economic clout dating to the 1930s and John F. Kennedy's position as presidential candidate and Senator of Massachusetts in 1959 and 1960, communication between the two entities is more than plausible; it is expected. A 1960 context also aligns with the actual year that the Kennedys agreed to help sponsor Mboya's airlift. While the claim that Obama, Sr. received a portion of the tickets funded by the Kennedys is still untenable within this hermeneutic framework, this inspection of Cashill's attack against Obama's command of American history and truthfulness reveals its interpretive and inconsistent character. Cashill's critique models itself after other evaluations of Black American discourse that reflect Hegelian Colour-blindness. By decontextualizing Black American discourse, ignoring alternative discursive practices and inconsistently executing their own standards of poetics, these critics subject Black American discourse to harsh criticisms that often support perjorative evaluations of the person, character and potential of authors and interpreters.

Formalizing/Recognizing Poetics in my Gaze

The language and imagery employed by Obama in this Selma speech had a significant effect on me. As I listened to this Selma speech from my Manchester apartment, I, acutely aware of my own Diaspora circumstance, experienced this speech through the negotiation of its various components, structure and my context. Obama's figurative approach to narrating the past and consistent appeal to relatedness found ready contrast to "The Duty to Integrate: Shared British Values," a speech on multicultural Britain that Prime Minister Tony Blair had delivered a few months prior."⁴⁴⁷ While

⁴⁴⁷ Tony Blair, "The Duty to Integrate: Shared British Values," Speech, *The National Archives: 10 Downing Street*, December 8, 2006, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20040105034004/http://number10.gov.uk/output/Page10563.asp>.

listening to Obama speak in Selma, Blair's speech functioned as an intertext. I listened to Blair's speech as an immigrant contemplating a future in Britain and took note when he ordered immigrants to view integration and acceptance of British values as a duty.⁴⁴⁸ Obama's figurative correlation of colonial Kenya and Jim Crow era America interplayed with Blair's assertion that the acceptance of British values and their affiliate duties, "take clear precedence over any cultural or religious practice."⁴⁴⁹ The ideological and discursive difference between the two speeches, in addition to their drastically different political contexts, peaked my interest in understanding process through which I interpreted and contextualized the Selma speech.

Upon reflection, it appeared as though Obama's self-identification with a Diaspora consciousness was a principal attribute that framed my hearing and experience of this speech. Seeing Obama as both "mainstream" candidate and Black American while engaging his discourse as sermon, Black American discourse and stump speech, I experienced the Selma speech as a conflation of multiple messages in carefully crafted in Obama's approach to identity politics. For these reason, Obama's Selma speech, serves as a contemporary platform for exploring criticism of Black American discourse. It exudes a Diaspora consciousness that reflects numerous elements that I associate with my conception of diaspora as a form of relatedness.

⁴⁴⁸ The 7/7 London attack was a prominent backdrop for Blair's speech. While Blair qualified British values principally as articulations of Western democracy, his discourse appealed to a greater context in which many individuals would not confine British values and culture to democracy. But when it comes to our essential values - belief in democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment for all, respect for this country and its shared heritage - then that is where we come together, it is what we hold in common; it is what gives us the right to call ourselves British. At that point no distinctive culture or religion supercedes our duty to be part of an integrated United Kingdom." Particularly interesting is the ambiguity implicit in notions of respect for Briatins shared heritage. Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

The above discussion of Barack Obama's 2007 Selma speech and its reception identifies a number of discursive elements that frame the text's meaning-making potential. His figurative use of autobiography and history play an integral role in both my identification of an articulation of ontological blackness, derived from Obama's Diaspora and conservative pundits' description of the speech as manipulative and false.

Thus far, each aspect of my argument describes an aspect of the occasion and consequences for Black American discourse. These attributes help explain my own experience of Obama's speech through my notions of diaspora. It is the epistemological presumption of *le divers* that sensitizes my hearing to Obama's recurring pursuit of particularity amidst difference. When comparing the Civil Rights era to twenty-first century America, he refrains from simple descriptions of difference—i.e. the static observation of dissimilarity. It is through differentness—i.e. the recognition of relatedness in particularity—that Obama speaks of generations in aspirational and eschatological relationship. While noting his biracial and Kenyan heritage, Obama employs a vision of ontological blackness to build transnational and trans-temporal relatedness in Diaspora. He uses his own autobiography as a figure to discursively negotiate the pertinent political, racial and class differentness found in the United States. By contextualizing Obama's speech as Black American discourse, I place it within a particular discursive and literary tradition. As detailed in the sections above, this tradition presumes that Black American discourse generally exhibits the following characteristics:

- Is inherently socio-political in its articulation;
- Can be read as negotiating the identity politics of race and state;

- Has the potential of polyvocality as interpreters engage it across diverse contexts;
- Is often socio-political in its interpretation and evaluation due to the varied ideological and hermeneutic approaches employed by interpreters.

It is through these circumstances and consequences that I identify the four figures that characterize my poetics of diaspora. Obama crafts and recrafts ideas about: racial identity and consciousness; history and the past; intra-communal dispute, diversity and debate; and, the relationality between community, place and the systems of governance and institutional marginalization. Attentive recognition to these aspects of Obama's speech can help inform one's analysis and (re)construction of the text as political or Diaspora discourse. If one approaches each element as a sphere of potential semantic signification, they can collectively be understood as unactualized figures. These figures act as semantic domains that frame and organize aspects of a discourse's logic, dynamism and communicative effect; as signifying figures they comprise the pillars of what I conceive as a Black American informed, Poetics of Diaspora Discourse:

- Geopolitical and/or ethno-racial particularity;
- (Re)narration of the past and (re)constructions of history;
- Intra-communal dispute, diversity and debate;
- Negotiation of Empire, imperial regimes and socio-political place.

As an ideological texture, these figures highlight the domains that I privilege when critically analyzing texts; they provide a framework through which texts may affect diasporic hearers, conditioning meaning as the responsive generation, recognition and experiences of μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*]. From the perspective of Diaspora, this poetics informs the process through which interpreters perceive and correlate a text's codes and signifiers in aesthetic, axiological and emotive—i.e. euphoric/dysphoric--relationship to

themselves. Hesitant to predetermine or assign any set axiological perspective across all Diasporas, this poetics, as an ideological texture, establishes these four figures as discursive domains of particular importance to socio-political, cultural and nostalgic circumstances associated with the experience of Diaspora.

The polyvocal and circumstantial character of Black American discourse, which serves as my model for Diaspora discourse, is suspicious of any method or valuation that claims universality or permanence. Based on the Black American discourse surveyed above, the notions of survival and advancement are the most central convictions anchoring the politics of Black American discourse. Yet, even these agendas are context dependent and require actualization through the negotiation of ideological worldview. Thus, through the use of diaspora poetics, a text's discursive strategic approach to survival and advancement will be visible in how writers and readers understand discourse and its communicative property as the performance of, specifically in Black America, ethno-racial identity, history, Empire and the intra-communal debate over strategies of existence.

Chapter 6
Implementations:
Modeling Poetics in Tradition for the Reading of Acts

Overview: Confession as Context for a Diaspora Poetics of Black America

Introduction

I have not come armed with definitive truths. My consciousness has not passed through to an essential radiance.⁴⁵⁰

The present work's architecture is situated in temporality. Every human problem must be considered based on its season. The ideal, always being that the present is in service to the construction of the future. And this future does not belong to the cosmos but to my age, my country, to my existence. In absolutely no way ought I undertake to create the world that will follow me. I irreducibly belong to my era. And for it, I must live. The future has to be a structure sustained by the man who currently exists. This edifice attaches itself to the present to the extent that I envision the latter as an entity to exceed.⁴⁵¹

Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

The "Introduction" to Frantz Fanon's, *Black Skin, White Masks* contains the above two confessions. Both declarations inform my approach to poetics and critical theory. Despite the fact that Fanon's work has been appropriated countless times and continues to speak to the experiences of countless persons, he insists that his own work is temporal. Houston Baker's approach to the literary criticism of Black American discourse appropriates a similar posture. He depicts the act of criticism as contextual and political. The critic and interpreter are co-creators. "Critics eternally become and embody the generative myths of their culture by half-perceiving and half-inventing their

⁴⁵⁰ "Je n'ai point arrive armé de vérités décisives. Ma conscience n'est pas traversée de fulgurances essentielles." Frantz Fanon, *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (Seuil, 1952), 25.

⁴⁵¹ "L'architecture du présent travail se situe dans la temporalité. Tout problème humain demandé être considéré à partir du temps. L'idéal étant que toujours le présent serve à construire l'avenir. Et cet avenir n'est pas celui du cosmos, mais bien celui de mon siècle, de mon pays, de mon existence. En aucune façon je ne dois me proposer de préparer le monde qui me suivra. J'appartiens irréductiblement à mon époque. Et c'est pour elle que je dois vivre. L'avenir doit être une construction soutenue de l'homme existant. Cette édification se rattache au présent, dans la mesure où je pose ce dernier comme chose à dépasser." *Ibid.*, 30.

cultures, their myths, and themselves.”⁴⁵² In line with Fanon and Baker, this contextually constructed poetics is temporal, partially autobiographical and makes no claim to a universally transcendent truth. Yet, the insights gleaned from my (re)constructed description of diaspora and analysis of Black American discourse and criticism provide a contextually derived heuristic that I propose for the study and analysis of non-Black American diaspora discourse. Just as critical methods derived in Eurocentric contexts have contributed to the development of general theories in the aid of historiography and critical analysis of history, this contextual poetics, likewise, offers an alternative reading of diaspora discourse and the historical reconstructions that accompany them.

Chapter Five approached the task of introducing a poetics of diaspora primarily through an inductive demonstration and reflection on Barack Obama’s 2007 Selma speech and its critical reflection. Because this construction proposes to be self-expression and critical theory, it remains necessary to acknowledge the intellectual trajectories in which this poetics derives. The concept of Hegelian Colour-blindness has helped me explicate my own intellectual and contextual setting. Description of a work as evincing Hegelian Colour-blindness, however, does not jettison the findings or the perspectives advanced within the work. Alternatively, the observation of Hegelian Colour-blindness simply identifies certain presuppositions, inconsistencies and axiological assumptions that inform the critics findings.

A Confession of Indebtedness

While this poetics responds to a prominent set of intellectual and ideological predispositions, it is also an articulation of a vibrant tradition of Black American and

⁴⁵² Baker Jr., *Afro-American Poetics*, 8.

Black Atlantic literary criticism. As alluded to earlier, the intentional intersection of critical scholarship and Black cultural expression has a long and interdisciplinary tradition. Inclusive in this tradition is the intersectional and multi-purposed theory-oriented scholarship reflected in the work of critics such as: W.E.B. Du Bois (sociology); Alain Locke (philosophy); James Cone (theology); Houston A. Baker, Jr. (literature); Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (literature); Jacqueline Grant (theology); Patricia Hill Collins (sociology); Vincent Wimbush (Biblical Studies); and, Toni Morrison (literature).⁴⁵³

Informed by this intellectual heritage and the heuristic insights offered by the nomenclature of Hegelian Colour-blindness, the inscription of a univocal and unilinear theory is anathema to my proposed poetics.

As a Black American male, it is imperative that I am both conscious and overt about my subjective privilege and existence within a largely patriarchal and androcentric

⁴⁵³ My work also draws on the insights of non-Black scholars across disciplines. This list reflects the tradition out of which this work appears at the nodal point of critical scholarship in the guild and Black American discourse and cultural expression. It in no way invalidates the incredible theoretical dependencies of non-Black scholars, theorists and artists. The following works are a small sampling of works done by individuals in the Black American context that can fall under the domain of critical theory and methodology or theory criticism. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia, PA: Published for the University, 1899); Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*; Zora Neale Hurston, "Characteristics of Negro Expression," in *Negro: Anthology*, ed. Nancy Cunard (London: Wishart & Co., 1934); Zora Neale Hurston, "Folklore and Music," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 12, no. 1 (1991): 183–98; Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance*, 1st Touchstone ed. (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1997); Alain Locke, "Values and Imperatives," in *American Philosophy Today and Tomorrow*, ed. Horace M. Kallen and Sydney Hook (New York: Lee Furman, 1935), 312–33; James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 20th Anniversary. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990); Baker Jr., *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature*; Houston A Baker Jr., *Workings of the Spirit: The Poetics of Afro-American Women's Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Gates Jr., *The Signifying Monkey*; Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1989); Patricia Hill Collins, "WHAT'S IN A NAME? Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond," *BLACK SCHOLAR, THE* 26, no. 1 (1996199601040101): 9–17; Patricia Hill Collins, "Social Inequality, Power, and Politics: Intersectionality and American Pragmatism in Dialogue," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012); Vincent L. Wimbush, "Reading Texts Through Worlds, Worlds Through Texts.," *Semeia*, no. 62 (1993): 129–40; Vincent L. Wimbush, "Introduction: Reading Darkness, Reading Scriptures," in *African Americans and the Bible: Sacred Texts and Social Textures* (NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003), 1–42; Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

West, Anglocentric United States and wealth and education-oriented class system. It is vital that I admit this works contextual nature and temporality. It is with this recognition that I am indebted to Womanist scholars and discourse for providing the ground work for what Raquelle St. Clair calls a “hermeneutics of wholeness.” Womanism is critical perspective developed in response to the consistent exclusion of Black women’s perspectives from feminist and African American liberation movements. By calling attention to the significance of particularity and wholeness of individuals and communities, womanist discourse charges my own theoretical and discursive constructions to be vigilant against the debilitating effects of Hegelian Colour-blindness.

Neither solely woman nor only Black yet fully woman and fully Black, womanist scholars critique the univocal expressions of ontological blackness and the unilinear histories of their respective intellectual pasts. It is through the guise of womanist discourse that womanist scholars were able to construct a general construct of Black female existence, and then reach back into the past and identify the seeds of this hermeneutics among Black female writers far before Alice Walker’s coinage in 1979. It is with this hermeneutics of wholeness that womanism demands the acknowledgement of my own points of privilege and the presence of Hegelian Colour-blindness within my own chosen contexts for this analysis: Black America and Diaspora.

Excursus:
Womanism

Womanism, understood here, is an expressive genre of human reflection, socio-cultural critique and pragmatic analysis practiced principally by Black, but alternatively at times by other women of color, that celebrates and utilizes the diverse lived-experiences and perspectives of Black women to take seriously:

- 1) The pervasive mutability of power;
- 2) The multidimensional polymorphism of human identities;

- 3) The multi-structural and polyvocal articulation of violence and oppression;
- 4) Hegemony's dangerous practice of erasure and invisibility;
- 5) The value of communities;
- 6) The interdependence of humanity;
- 7) The imperative of justice.⁴⁵⁴

By privileging Black female subjectivity as gendered, classed and racialized, Womanism uses Black women's voices as fully participatory within humanity to reflect upon a universal susceptibility towards the re-inscription of violence, the universal presence of human interaction via family, community, or society, and a universal call for justice.⁴⁵⁵ It affirms that Black women and Womanist gazes are fully valid expressions of Black American expression, feminist expression and humanity universal.

Articulated by and through the experiences of black women, Womanism is universal in its desired awareness and contextual in its myriad forms of expression. From the pre-figured demonstrations by Sojourner Truth, Zora Neal Hurston and Ida B. Wells to Alice Walker's initial neologistic invocations in her 1979 short story, "Coming Apart," and poetic descriptions in *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose* (1983) towards the burgeoning field of discourse found in Canon, Williams, Weems, Townes, Phillips, St Clair, Coleman, Turman, and Junior, the development of Womanist discourse has contributed to the archival (re)collection and recovery of long ignored works by Black women and other women of color.⁴⁵⁶ An

⁴⁵⁴ My description of womanism is a broad composite that attempts to be inclusive of the history and variety of womanism expressed by various writers that have adopted the terminology of womanism and contributed to its expanding diversification and critical utility.

⁴⁵⁵ In a discussion about the nature of womanism and the significance of terminology, Floyd-Thomas takes the position that, in her expression, only Black women can be womanist. This piece also provides four tenets of Womanism and a fifth postscript for allies: (1) Radical Subjectivity (2) Traditional Communalism (3) Redemptive Self-Love (4) Critical Engagement; and, (Postscript) Appropriation and Reciprocity. While Floyd-Thomas' framework is a critical benchmark for my presentation, the description that I outline also reflects key dialogues outlined by other scholars such as Monica Coleman, Layli Phillips and Emilie Townes. Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas, "Introduction," in *Deeper Shades of Purple: Womanism in Religion and Society*, ed. Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas (New York: NYU Press, 2006), 1–14.

⁴⁵⁶ A number of iterations and expressions of Womanist discourse have risen over the past three decades. The following list reflects many of these discussions and debates. The two roundtables are of particular interest in the development of Womanism as a theoretical position and identity. Delores S. Williams, "Womanist Theology: Black Women's Voices," *Christianity and Crisis* (1987), <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=445>; Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus*, 198; Cheryl J. Sanders et al., "Roundtable Discussion: Christian Ethics and Theology in Womanist Perspective," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 5, no. 2 (1989): 83–112; Katie Geneva Cannon, "Structured Academic Amnesia: As If This True Womanist Story Never Happened," in *Deeper Shades of Purple: Womanism in Religion and Society*, ed. Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas (New York: NYU Press, 2006), 19–28; Monica A. Coleman et al., "Roundtable Discussion: Must I Be Womanist? [with Response]," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 22, no. 1 (2006): 85–134; Layli Phillips, "Introduction: Womanism: On Its Own," in *The Womanist Reader*, ed. Layli Phillips (New York: Routledge, 2006), xix –

enhanced critique of the myopic character of feminist and black liberation discourses, aids its particular work in recognizing its own participation within systems and ideologies of oppression and exclusion.

The provision of spaces and nomenclature for Black women to read, critique and articulate in ways rooted and validated in their own experience is an important model for all contextual critical approaches to historiography and cultural studies. In addition to its heuristic insights, various non-Womanist discourses build intellectual bridges that enhance the ability to see relatedness and differentness in context. The theoretical work of individuals like Jean-Francois Lyotard recognize and reveal the structural dangers inherent in consensus-communities that re-inscribe hegemonic models of power through erasure, invisibility, and homogeneity. Womanist discourse is an articulation of Black women's experience that takes up these issues and concerns specifically in its subjective, contextual approach to thought.

Womanist discourse models for me heuristic approaches to (re)conceiving one's subjectivity, marginality and intersectionality. The idealism underlying my sensitivity Hegelian Colour-blindness reflects the critical tradition out of which this poetics arises. Following this insight, this chapter transitions from the descriptive introduction of a poetics of diaspora in Chapter Five's description of Obama's Selma speech to a contextually and theoretically-grounded poetics that can aid in the analysis of texts across imperial contexts.

The beginning of this chapter discusses my poetics of diaspora as a product of the Black American and Black Atlantic discursive tradition. This discussion highlights the

lv; Karen Baker-Fletcher, "A Womanist Journey," in *Deeper Shades of Purple: Womanism in Religion and Society*, ed. Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas (New York: NYU Press, 2006), 158–75; Raquel Annette St. Clair, "Womanist Biblical Interpretation," in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian K. Blount et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Pr, 2007), 54–62; Floyd-Thomas, "Introduction"; Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, "Womanism," in *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*, ed. John Hartwell Moore, vol. 3 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008), 227–29, <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX2831200405&v=2.1&u=nash87800&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=73f56af128bdc5f90a3228767584944f>; Monica A. Coleman, "Introduction: Ain't I a Womanist, Too?: Third Wave Womanist Religious Thought," in *Ain't I a Womanist, Too?: Third Wave Womanist Religious Thought*, ed. Monica A. Coleman (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 1–33; Eboni Marshall Turman, *Toward a Womanist Ethic of Incarnation: Black Bodies, the Black Church, and the Council of Chalcedon* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Nyasha Junior, *An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation* (Presbyterian Publishing Corp, 2015).

presence of critical theory within the tradition of Black American discourse and criticism. In the process of contextualizing my theory as informed by and indebted to a diverse Black American tradition, I highlight the important role that Diaspora, criticism and dispute play in maintaining the political and polyvocal elements of diaspora poetics. The identification of these recurring contextual and interpretive concerns are the catalysts that result in the discursive environment that utilizes a poetics of diaspora in the meaning-making process. Following these discussions, I conclude treatment of my Black American context by reading Rodolphe Desdunes' essay, "With Malice Towards None: A Few Words to Dr. Dubois," through the lens of diaspora poetics. This reading serves as a model for my reading of Acts 6.1 – 8.40. This modeling of the heuristic benefits of diaspora poetics is in preparation for the analysis of Acts of the Apostles and its social and cultural texture that begins in Chapter Seven.

Critical Spaces: Diaspora Poetics in Tradition

Criticism as Context and Ideology

In the rejection of static and myopic identities or alienated personhood, many Black scholars engage their various subject-positions as concomitant and inseparably Black and American.⁴⁵⁷ The poetics that I glean from Obama's Selma speech and its presented context is imbued with ideological presuppositions. For instance, I assert and then demonstrate the inherent political nature of Black American discourse because of the racialized socio-political, economic and ideological environments in speakers and hearers negotiate blackness. While inductively modeled through Obama's speech, this claim

⁴⁵⁷ Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*; Roman, *American Civilization*.

advocates for a view—at least for the language—that follows in a tradition that can be illustrated through the criticisms and theoretical proposals of DuBois, McKay and Locke.

In a speech delivered at a NAACP convention in Chicago and later published in *The Crisis*, Du Bois challenged his audience to view all art as propaganda.⁴⁵⁸ Dismissing claims that art is a leisured distraction or welcome respite from discussions of justice, equality and social oppression, Du Bois frames “art” within Black America’s continued struggle for survival and advancement. Art, according to Du Bois, is the conduit of beauty, and beauty is what he sees as the true teleological aim that Black America has for itself and all America. De-materializing the goal of civil rights, economic and political liberty are resources used to live lives of self-awareness, hard work, creativity and pleasure. Beauty is a critical catalyst that conveys a truth that at times transcends the precision of statements and knowledge. This argument advocates the importance of semantics and the discursive: semantics over syntax. Du Bois claimed:

What has this Beauty to do with the world? What has Beauty to do with Truth and Goodness -- with the facts of the world and the right actions of men? "Nothing", the artists rush to answer. They may be right. I am but an humble disciple of art and cannot presume to say. I am one who tells the truth and exposes evil and seeks with Beauty and for Beauty to set the world right. That somehow, somewhere eternal and perfect Beauty sits above Truth and Right I can conceive, but here and now and in the world in which I work they are for me unseparated and inseparable.

This is brought to us peculiarly when as artists we face our own past as a people. There has come to us -- and it has come especially through the man we are going to honor tonight -- a realization of that past, of which for long years we have been ashamed, for which we have apologized. We thought nothing could come out of that past which we wanted to remember; which we wanted to hand down to our children. Suddenly, this same past is taking on form, color, and reality, and in a half shamefaced

⁴⁵⁸ William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, “Criteria of Negro Art,” in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, ed. William L. Andrews et al., vol. 1, 2 vols., Third. (New York: W W Norton & Company, 2014), 771–78.

way we are beginning to be proud of it. We are remembering that the romance of the world did not die and lie forgotten in the Middle Age; that if you want romance to deal with you must have it here and now and in your own hands.⁴⁵⁹

Du Bois does not restrict his discussion to the value and production of art. For Du Bois, the interpretation and criticism of Black art is a necessary field of discussion precisely because of the “singular unanimity of judgement,” against Black art by both Black and non-Black critics. Du Bois’ analysis reflects an attentiveness to the role that Euro-American bias and *mal d’archive* plays in continuing the negative racialization of blackness in America. Yet, his chosen language acknowledges the inevitable gaps and erasures, with which he is at ease. The objective, then, is to depart this epistemological mimicry that strives for univocality. With current practices rooted in the systemic erasure and devaluation of Black expression, art is a necessary component in the advancement of Black persons.

The apostle of Beauty thus becomes the apostle of Truth and Right not by choice but by inner and outer compulsion. Free he is but his freedom is ever bounded by Truth and Justice; and slavery only dogs him when he is denied the right to tell the Truth or recognize an ideal of Justice.

Thus all Art is propaganda and ever must be, despite the wailing of the purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda for gaining the right of black folk to love and enjoy.

Though influential, Du Bois was not the first person to advance this thought, neither within or outside of the Black American tradition. As general editor of *The Crisis* magazine, Du Bois was likely responsible for the publication an essay, “Soviet Russia and the Negro,” by the Jamaican-born writer and Harlem Renaissance participant, Claude

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 1:773.

McKay.⁴⁶⁰ McKay begins this essay, which recounts his recent visit to the Soviet Union, by espousing that, “The label of propaganda will be affixed to what I say here. I shall not mind; propaganda has now come into its respectable rights and I am proud of being a propagandist.”⁴⁶¹ It is the overlapping label and binary between art and propaganda that highlights two intricately related, but critically important aspects of the tradition(s) of criticism of Black American discourse and art by African descended peoples:

- It simultaneously reflects Black America’s discursive involvement in the maintenance of Diaspora while also showing an overt attentiveness to both national and transnational consciousness;
- It displays both a diversity and interrelated indebtedness that is often revealed in the various debates, disputes and schisms generated by Black critics and scholars.

A Diaspora Tradition of Scholarship and Criticism

The first aspect deals with the diasporic nature of Black American criticism and discourse.⁴⁶² As discussed above in Chapter Two, Black America, as an identity, has always had porous boundaries. The examples of Du Bois and McKay above help illustrate the diasporic nature of Black Discourse criticism. While both McKay and DuBois’ essays appear in *The Crisis*, the intellectual context in which both writers reflect on art responds to both national and transnational concerns.

⁴⁶⁰ McKay, “Soviet Russia and the Negro: Part I”; Claude McKay, “Soviet Russia and the Negro: Part II,” *The Crisis* 27, no. 3 (1924): 114–18.

⁴⁶¹ McKay, “Soviet Russia and the Negro: Part I.”

⁴⁶² For a discussion of the diasporic nature of Black America and the Black Atlantic, See Chapter Two. For further discussion of the literary and cultural influences found across the traditions of criticism, See Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Negritude Women* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*; Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting, “Erasures and the Practice of Diaspora Feminism,” *Small Axe* 9, no. 1 (2005): 129–33; Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*; Michelle M. Wright, *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); K. Merinda Simmons, *Changing the Subject: Writing Women across the African Diaspora* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2014).

McKay moved to the United States in his twenties with the purpose of attending the Tuskegee Institute, a Historically Black College and University founded by Booker T. Washington. Unfamiliar with the particular expression of racial prejudice and racialized blackness in the American South, McKay left after only two months. He eventually settled in Harlem but still traveled in Europe and elsewhere over the course of his career. His reflection on the political and propagandistic nature of art in an article that recounts his visit to the Soviet Union and speaking engagement at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International.⁴⁶³

McKay was a renowned poet and novelist who works hold an integral role in the Black American literary tradition. Brent Edward Hayes describes McKay as holding the elder DuBois in high esteem, characterizing him as a hero.⁴⁶⁴ This early relationship highlights the Black Atlantic nature of Black American discourse due to DuBois' influence on the young Jamaican poet. In addition to the transnational distribution of Black American discourse, some motifs, themes and responses to the negative racialization of blackness informed the poetics and political inferences in literature. *The Crisis* exemplifies a long Black Atlantic tradition of literary journals, which were situated in one national context but incorporated the literature of Black persons and allies from across the African Diaspora.⁴⁶⁵ Within this subjectivity, McKay was able to talk about

⁴⁶³ Brent Hayes Edwards, "Claude McKay," in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, ed. Brent Hayes Edwards, vol. 1, 2 vols., Third. (New York: W W Norton & Company, 2014), 1002.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:1004.

⁴⁶⁵ The aforementioned *Revue des Colonies*, edited by Bisette is another example that joins a number of Black American newspapers and periodicals. New Orleans based Paul Trévigne and Louis Charles Roudanez provided two such newspapers, *l'Union* (1862 – 1864) and *la Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orléans* (1864 - 1869). Trévigne served as the editor of the French-language, *l'Union* during the Civil War. A staunch supporter of the Union, Trévigne's tri-weekly newspaper frequently included updates and information about events and persons from across the Diaspora. Dr. Roudanez, though raised in New

racial prejudice and Americanness in the first-person as one adopting a Black American identity, yet not at the expense of other aspects of his subject-position.

The diasporic character of Black American discourse criticism influenced criticism in multiple directions. Writers in the United States were impacted by Antillian, African and European based writers. Likewise, non-American writers were also informed by the various trajectories occurring among Black American writers. McKay illustrates one type of this multidirectional influence. The physical migration of individuals leads to a type of intellectual and cultural interaction. One considers the role that DuBois' *Souls of Black Folks* had on McKay and the reciprocal impact McKay had on the entire tradition of Black American discourse through his poetry, novels and relationships.

In addition to migration, the exchange and flow of discourse also impacted this tradition. The Black American literary scene, according to Hayes, was significantly impacted by the English translation of René Maran's *Batouala*.⁴⁶⁶ Maran was a Black Guyanese, Martinican-born, colonial administrator in French Equatorial Africa. His novel *Batouala* won France's prestigious *Prix Goncourt* in 1921. Maran appeared on the cover of May issue of *The Crisis* in 1922. The notoriety associated with winning

Orleans, received his medical training in Paris before returning to Louisiana. His *la Tribune* was a French and English, bilingual newspaper that also engaged matters in both Louisiana and abroad. Cyrille-Charles-Auguste (1795-1858). Directeur de publication Bissette, ed., *Revue des colonies. Recueil mensuel de la politique, de l'administration, de la justice, de l'instruction et des moeurs coloniales* (Paris, 1834), <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32858266g/date>; Paul Trévigne, ed., *L'Union*, microfilm., Negro newspaper for the American Council of Learned Societies (New Orleans, LA: Frank F. Barclay, 1862); Paul Trévigne and Jean-Charles Houzeau, eds., *Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orléans*, microfilm., Negro newspapers on microfilm (New Orleans, La: Louis Charles Roudanez, 1864).

⁴⁶⁶ Brent Hayes Edwards, "René Maran," in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, ed. Brent Hayes Edwards, vol. 1, 2 vols., Third. (New York: W W Norton & Company, 2014), 994.

France's prestigious *Prix Goncourt* in conjunction with critical responses appearing in American-based periodicals such as *Negro World* and *The Crisis* resulted in the wide circulation of *Batouala* among Black American literary circles.⁴⁶⁷ The presence of non-American writers like Maran—or Mary Prince, Alexandre Dumas, Alexandre Dumas fils or Alexander Pushkin—demonstrate the influence that Diaspora plays on the internal construction of Black American discourse and identity construction.

While Maran illustrates the awareness of Black Atlantic literature, Paulette Nardal exemplifies the impact of Diaspora on the evaluation and criticism of discourse with her comparative, critical analysis of Black Atlantic literature. Andrée, Jane and Paulette Nardal were Martinican educators, writers and critics during the first half of the twentieth century.⁴⁶⁸ These sisters were leading figures in the development and collaboration of France's Black intelligentsia, particularly during the interwar years. Much of their influence is visible in their literary contributions beginning during the interwar years and formative role in foreshadowing many of the elements that would later characterize the *Négritude* movement. During the 1930s, for instance, the Nardal sisters hosted the Clamart salon in Paris:

Drinking *thé à l'anglaise* and speaking in French and English, the hosts and their guests dances; discussed interracial and colonial problems, racist injustices, and current events...In this salon, where three cultivated women perfected *l'art civilisateur*, women and men, blacks and whites, French, Africans, and Americans exchanged ideas.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁷ *Negro World* was the periodical published by the American-based, Jamaican Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association. This connection further amplifies the Diasporic nature of Black American discourse.

⁴⁶⁸ For a thorough treatment of the Nardal sisters, and Black female roles in the development of *négritude*, See Sharpley-Whiting, *Négritude Women*; Paulette Nardal and Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Beyond Négritude: Essays from Woman in the City*, trans. Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2009).

⁴⁶⁹ Sharpley-Whiting, *Négritude Women*, 52–54.

In addition to her role as salon sponsor, Paulette Nardal composed various pieces on Black Atlantic culture and literature while also serving as an editor for the journals *La Revue du Monde Noir* and *La Femme dans la Cité*. *La Revue du Monde Noir* was an instrumental bilingual journal that published the work of Black scholars and artists from across the Diaspora. As a student of Black American literature and Antillean culture, Nardal utilized her strengths to engage literary criticism as a means of cultural development.

These intra-Diaspora encounters stimulated the transformation of nation-specific cultural critical and literary critical movements. France served as a vibrant and relatively open environment that fostered interaction between the Diaspora and its many articulations. Brent Edwards's analysis of diaspora discourse across the African Diaspora during the Interwar years highlights the creative and generative role transnational dialogue played in the specific cultural development of Black America and Black France.⁴⁷⁰ The tradition of Black Americans visiting or migrating to France is longstanding and contributed to the transnational consciousness of Black Americans from renowned biologist Ernest Everett Just to tennis player Serena Williams.⁴⁷¹ Through discussion of Du Bois, McKay and Nardal, one begins to understand the early tradition of Black Atlantic discourse criticism and its transnational interdependence. Many theoretical iterations for the critical analysis of Black American discourse have been offered since Du Bois, McKay and Nardal. What is most important at this juncture is to

⁴⁷⁰ Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*.

⁴⁷¹ . In many instances, France has functioned as a space that fostered a Diaspora consciousness as both francophone and Anglophone Black Americans have spent considerable time in France. France has provided a place of socio-cultural reprieve, creative reflection and productive stimulus for individuals such as Victor Séjour, Louis Roudanez, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Langston Hughes, Jessie Redmon Fauset, Alain Locke, James Baldwin, Richard Wright and Nina Simone.

note the existence of a transnational tradition from which my poetics derives. Additionally, this acknowledgement guards my critical approach from the infectious and debilitating essentialization of the past, nation or experience. Nostalgia, described by Baker is a “form of arrested development akin to hero worship. It tends to construct idealized landscapes and portraits. And it is almost always too self-exonerating.”⁴⁷² Thus, it often leads to ossification and Hegelian Colour-blindness in its treatment of the nation as bounded and pure. Through the presence of a Diaspora consciousness and critical theory of Black Atlantic discourse, scholars have guarded against static constructions of discourse as form or *le langage*. Critical approaches to Black Atlantic discourse view its subject as a constructive process perpetually dynamic in the expression of its content and critical gaze through which it is evaluated.

Excursus:
Comparative Diaspora Literature and Cultural Criticism

In an article written for *la Revue du Monde Noir*, “*l’Éveil de la conscience de race chez les étudiants noirs*”, (Awakening of Race Consciousness among Black Students), Nardal provides an analysis of the traditions of Black American and Black French literatures through the lens of historical development and political significance. Nardal produces a material cultural history who critical, formal and thematic heuristic perspective focused on the intended particularity of Black Atlantic discourse. Her essay outlines a tripartite view of history. A brief discussion of Nardal’s historiographic paradigm demonstrates both the diasporic nature of Black American discourse criticism and the implicit attentiveness to exploring the nature of Black Atlantic cultural expression.

In the April 1932 issue of *la Revue du Monde Noir*, Paulette Nardal describes the incremental literary development of colonized persons and its relationship to art. In this essay, “*L’Éveil de la conscience de race chez les étudiants noirs*”, (The Awakening of Race Consciousness among Black Students), Nardal contrasts black American and black Antillean literary development and suggests that “assimilative force of the French spirit” is most responsible for the ambiguous attitude of black Antilleans to race. As articulated by

⁴⁷² Baker Jr., *Afro-American Poetics*, 176.

DuBois and McKay and demonstrated in the above reading of Obama, Nardal places all Black Atlantic discourse within a political prism by identifying three stages in the development of colonized persons:

- 1) Period of ‘Negro absorption:’ characterized by ‘docile imitation,’ where, “the blacks imported from Africa had to learn a new and adapt to a hostile environment;”
- 2) Period of controversy and moral protest, which is visible in antislavery movements or where the “oratorical genre is cleftly cultivated,” with incessant appeals that elicit a pity that effuses its poetic production;
- 3) Period of true culture: characterized by the development of original thought and forms of expression, and often directly address the questions of identity, race, gender and experience.⁴⁷³

Nardal offers caveats to her analysis by acknowledging the political and social contexts of her predecessors. She notes how struggles and accomplishments informed the contexts and cultural perspectives of earlier generations. It seems, from her tripartite historiography, that true culture are the products of reflecting upon oneself as subject and depends on notions of cultural and/or identity autonomy, or at the bare minimum a level of distinctiveness. This perspective is strikingly similar to Du Bois’ claim that the true ideal of Black Americans are neither legal or economic but:

Even as you visualize such ideals you know in your hearts that these are not the things you really want. You realize this sooner than the average white American because, pushed aside as we have been in America, there has come to us not only a certain distaste for the tawdry and flamboyant but a vision of what the world could be if it were really a beautiful world... if we had... to be sure, not perfect happiness, but plenty of good hard work, the inevitable suffering that always comes with life; sacrifice and waiting, all that –but, nevertheless, lived in a world where men know, where men create, where they realize themselves and where they enjoy life. It is that sort of a world we want to create for ourselves and for all America.⁴⁷⁴

Assimilation, in Nardal’s analysis, is the governing political and economic ideology that permeates the first two stages of a people’s literary and cultural development. Underlying Nardal’s assessment is a view that assimilation functions as a strategy of survival that stagnates creative expression and material progress. These first two periods reflect the alienation of expression from Black experience. This ideological assessment of assimilation is extremely pertinent for the current discussion of Diaspora and its implicit identity politics. The

⁴⁷³ Paulette Nardal, “L’*éveil de La Conscience de Race Chez Les étudiants Noirs.*,” *La Revue Du Monde Noir*, no. 6 (1932): 25–31; Paulette Nardal, “The Awakening of Race Consciousness among Black Students (1932),” in *Negritude Women*, trans. Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 119–24.

⁴⁷⁴ Du Bois, “Criteria of Negro Art.”

notion of assimilation is a constant strategic calling cry from both within and outside of Diaspora. Inferred by Tony Blair's coded discussion of integration as duty and critiques of Obama's Selma speech as pandering, the univocal assessment of a Diaspora's cultural and literary expression stifles the generation of authentic expression.

Nardal's essay is an insightful and informed commentary on Black American and Antillean literary development and warrants a more extensive study than current space permits. What is most pertinent for current conversation is how Nardal's literary historiography reflects interest in the figures that inform my poetics of diaspora. The expressive particularity of Black Atlantic discourse is in itself a material reflection of ethno-cultural and geopolitical particularity. Involved in each of her developmental stages, the identity politics implied by one's ethno-racial or geopolitical particularity shape a colonized people's literary and discursive consciousness. The facility with which individuals utilize language and discourse to negotiate the specific expressive and socio-political realities is a signifier that contributes to notions of development and self-expression.

Likewise, the meaning and significance of discourse, for Nardal, is a function of imperial negotiation. The initial period reflects a desire to acquire the skills and capacity to negotiate via literature and discourse. Underlying this period, is a desire to speak and be heard. Prior to overt demands to be viewed as human or included within the nation is the period in which one finds voice. This period is vital in the negotiation of Empire because it is in the period of "docile imitation" that the colonized develop a linguistic relationship with dominant culture.

The stage is vital in notions of Diaspora. Each geopolitical articulation of Diaspora, thus, experiences each stage differently. The imperial circumstance determines both language and mediums of imitation. In this initial stage in a colonized people's literary development, the figure of Empire plays a prominent role in enhancing the discursive differences between Diaspora groups existing in different geopolitical circumstances. The initial stage, thus, is an integral period in the detachment and deconstruction of Diaspora. The way that Diaspora groups, or certain articulations of Diaspora, proceed through this initial stage determines both the nature of the communities transnational relatedness and their memory and (re)narration of transnational displacement. The period of "docile imitation" can result in the loss of transnational relatedness, physically or discursively.

Nardal's critical approach to Black Atlantic discourse is helpful for analyzing later critical approaches to colonialism, particularly within her home context of Martinique. Psychiatrist, freedom fighter and author Franz Fanon's *Peau noires, masques blancs* outlines a

psycho-analytic assessment of colonization on Black persons.⁴⁷⁵ He begins his analysis with a discussion of language in a way that crystalizes the relationship between one's ability to engage in discourse and their psychological and ideological existence. Fanon's work provides a psycho-analytic assessment of colonization firmly within the framework of Nardal's initial period of literary development.

Throughout this opening chapter, "*Le noir et le langage*," Fanon oscillates between two terms that can translate as "language" in English: *le langage* and *la langue*. He specifically associates *le langage* with the systematized and culturally regulated nation-oriented language of the colonial powers. Less specifically, he speaks of *la langue* when discussing the creative and culture powers of a language:

To speak, is to be able to employ a certain syntax, to possess the morphology of this or that *le langage*. But, above all, it is to assume a culture, to bear the weight of a civilization.⁴⁷⁶

According to Fanon, more than mastery, it is the internalization of *le langage* that permits one to become "white." This bleaching, for Fanon, is understood as the process of approaching the status of "true man" (*véritable l'homme*). These discussions reflect what Nardal describes as the impact of discourse in the initial period. Fanon shifts from specific discussion of the impact of *le langage* on Black Antilleans to general views of the power of *la langue*. While *le langage* is restrictive and generates a dearth of self-consciousness, the possession of *la langue* is beneficial:

We do not ignore [the fact] that this, here, is one of man's attitudes when confronted with Being. A man who possesses *la langue* possesses, by contradistinction, the world expressed and implied by *la langue*. There is, within the possession of *la langue* an extraordinary power. Paul Valéry knew it when he fashioned language as "god within errant flesh."⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁵ Fanon's construction of blackness is divergent from mine and a question worthy of analysis. It is proposed here that Fanon appropriates a different notion of blackness than in his later works. Blackness, as developed in this early articulation, is a particular type of consciousness. His work functions as a psycho-analytic model for understanding the devastating effects of colonization and racialization. See, Fanon, *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*.

⁴⁷⁶ "Parler, c'est être à même d'employer une certaine syntaxe, posséder la morphologie de telle ou telle langue, mais c'est surtout assumer une culture, supporter le poids d'une civilisation." Ibid., 32–33.

⁴⁷⁷ The above quotation originally appears as: Nous n'ignorons pas que c'est là une des attitudes de l'homme en face de l'Être. Un homme qui possède le langage possède par contre-coup le monde exprimé et impliqué par ce langage... il y a dans la possession du langage une extraordinaire puissance. Paul Valéry le savait, qui faisait « le dieu dans la chair égaré... » ibid., 34; Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (Grove Press, 2008). Fanon cites Paul Valéry's poem, *La Pythie*. The two most popular English-language translations of *Peau noires, masques blancs* are by Markmann in 1967 and Philcox in 2008. Fanon scholarship in English continues to rely on this translation, which intimates that *la langue* is a misguided or strayed deity by rendering Valéry's, "Le

Based in a similar vision of *le langue* and *la langage*, Glissant infers that this period is a stage when a people acquire *le langue* as a consequence of domination.⁴⁷⁸ However, the acquisition of *le langue* does not necessitate the loss of other languages or communicative practices. Intracommunal discourse, at times, maintain or develop alternative mechanisms of meaning-making. Due to the material and political circumstances, various articulations of a Diaspora may appropriate in number of languages [*les langues*] from those of the ruling elite, to dialects retained across national boundaries to creole systems whose particularity reside in the specific temporal and cultural context.

The second period reflects strategies of appeal. Within this period, meaning-making focuses on proof of humanity, the presence of injustice and discursive assimilation. Individuals appropriate s subject position that highlights their lack of agency. Instead of gaining a voice, this period uses the voice to combat the systems, policies and ideologies that lead to marginalization and oppression. The use of discourse to elicit pity is a strategy that appeals to an imperial regime’s hypocrisy and inconsistency. Though this period still focuses on the national and local, its political and material agenda begins to prompt transnational consciousness. Conversations among other Diaspora articulations may be fostered in efforts to maintain or generate sympathetic communities. Again appropriating Glissant’s terminology, this period begins to develop *la langage* that permits communication across linguistic boundaries.⁴⁷⁹ Obama’s use of ontological blackness in the Selma speech illustrates the strategic utility of this strategy. Through the semantic appeals of racialized blackness exemplified by both of Obama’s allusions to British colonial oppression and Jim Crow segregation, speakers attempt to elicit notions of pity that will motivate audiences to self-identify in relation-to-oppression, concede or protest. This notion of “pity” and shared experience due to racialized blackness marks the transnational component of this second stage.

The third stage in Nardal’s periodization signifies the pinnacle of a people’s arrival into the domain of culture.⁴⁸⁰ Each of the periods

dieu dans la chair égaré ” as “the god gone astray in flesh.” An inspection of Valéry’s poem suggests a need for this translation to be adjusted. *Égaré* modifies *la chair* (flesh) and not *le dieu* (god). The consequence for this reading is significant when looking at Valéry’s role in theories of poetics and in the observation of Fanon’s decision to initiate discussion of colonization with language and poetics. This specific citation comes from the last stanza of Valéry’s poem. Valéry addresses “*Saint LANGAGE*” as the honor of men. Describing *la langage*, Valéry substantively equates it to, “prophetic and adorned discourse, beautiful strings [*chaines*] which engages the god within errant flesh, Illumination, largesse!” As outlined, it is *Saint LANGAGE* is generous provision of Illumination. It is illumination that signifies the divine while errant flesh, inclusive of *le langue*, are the obstacles.

⁴⁷⁸ Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 22–26, 100–108.

⁴⁷⁹ Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*.

⁴⁸⁰ Césaire appropriates Nardal’s model and depicts the third and final stage as cultural maturity.

See, Aimé Césaire, “Nègreries: jeunesse noire et assimilation,” *L’étudiant Noir Journal De l’Association Des Étudiants Martiniquais En France* (Paris, March 1935), 1 edition.

prior to this stage are marked by the mastery and mimicry; it lacks a creative animus. In line with this developmental stage is a shift in discursive focus from imitation and appeal to self-expression. In this latter stage a people begin to affirm their differentness and identify the agency inherent in their modes of cultural expression. The goal in this third period is to cultivate both *le langue* and *la langage*. Glissant's proposal for a poetics of relation engages this period as the step where *la langage* transcends the boundaries erected by the over-determined and regulated national languages of oppression.

One's discursive evaluation can no longer be understood as univocal. It is in this stage that a particular poetics is not only evident but articulated. Meaning-making within discourse moves outside of the sphere of local or national appeals to a variety of cultural expressions and political strategies. Glissant, in this period, claims to hold greater relatedness to English-language or Spanish-language writers in the Caribbean than to French writers.⁴⁸¹ Identity shifts from the ambiguous "other" or inferior-national to the related-particular. The relationship between culture and history highlights the historiographical role that discourse performs in this stage. The erasures, denigrations and negative evaluations no longer function as obstacles to socio-cultural inclusion but foster a creativity that negotiates Empire in multiple ways.

It is important to remember that Nardal's historiographic model seeks to describe historical eras and not individual works; it is a generalizing model. Thus, as each stage progresses the qualities and dimensions acquired in the latter stage do not disappear but mutate and recede in emphasis. These context-specific characters build and eventually provide a complex and diverse domain of experiences and trajectories through which their culturally specific discourse will find expression in the third stage. So, Obama's appeal to ontological blackness does not relegate his speech to the second period. It simply serves as evidence of that particular form of protest and identity politics being present within his own Black American context.⁴⁸²

Explicit in Nardal's presentation is the valuation of the critical and scholarly study of Black Atlantic discourse for the retrieval of the gaps, erasures, histories, traditions and relatedness of Black persons

⁴⁸¹ Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de La Relation: Poétique III* (Plessis-Tréville, France: Gallimard, 1990), 35–48, 197, 230, fn1.

⁴⁸² What Nardal does not mention and which is beyond the scope of this work is whether a people can experience a material regression. Is a "Dark Ages" plausible where a community retreats from understandings of transnational relatedness and culturally specific poetics and expressive values appeals to ontological blackness. Is it possible for a community, after understanding the role of erasure and their community-specific experiences, to choose to re-adopt the erasures: to move from cultural expression to protest through pity to docile imitation? Is it possible for a Diaspora group to relinquish their own agency in cultural expression and allow dominant culture's typecast, commodify and commercialize their "expression:" to define authenticity and consumption? If so, what impact does this process have on Diaspora when a people acquiesce to the nation-state and accepts only a nationally bound identity.

and humanity universal. Criticism, in Nardal's case, engages the particularity and places it in relationship with other particularities; Antillean, American or African particularities help inform the circumstances that move Black cultural consciousness towards the production of racially conscious literature and art.

Nardal's essay gives specific focus on literary development instead of cultural or social identity. Acknowledging the embeddedness of Antillean lived experience within Latin culture, Nardal thwarts any accusations of a 'declaration of war upon Latin culture, and the white world in general.' Alternatively, through the explicit analysis and study of Black Atlantic literature in the American and French contexts as racialized and racially conscious subjects, her essay implies that this critical retrieval will lead to the production of a conscious and unique history. Through the production of this history, assimilation can, with its primarily political and economic interest, lead to a true culture that celebrates more than its national and Latin character in a way that stresses sameness as the benchmark for identity. Alternatively, by identifying differentness and being responsive to the internal poetics developed out of Black Antillean or Black American existence, her transnational and cross-cultural criticism of Black Atlantic discourse enhances, for her, the political, cultural, historical and intellectual relationships to other particularly contextualized Black communities. Assimilation, while a political and economic concept, holds significant cultural and literary consequences in the production of literature and art.

Implicit in each of these author's discussion of Black American art, including literature and discourse, are the figures of ethno-racial/geopolitical particularity, Empire and imperialism and the negotiation of history. While exhorting audiences to understand theory as a means of truth telling and history writing, these examples demonstrate the political consequences of critical scholarship. These confessions on their part help contextualize Baker's blues matrix/Afro-American poetics/spirit work while revealing Lemke's de-contextualized reading of Baker.⁴⁸³ While Du Bois and McKay focused on the reciprocal relationship between art and the (re)collection of the past and truth, Nardal critically uses literary theory to write history.

Critical Approaches: Diversity

The interrelated and interdependent nature of Black American discourse is the second aspect that this analysis highlights as informative. The above discussion of the

⁴⁸³ See Excursus above on, "Black Discourse, Vernacular Theory: Politics as Scholarly Perspective."

diasporic nature has already demonstrated this attribute to a degree in the connectedness found between DuBois and McKay or Nardal and Fanon. The observation of this trait is important for understanding the consistent contextual nature of Black American discourse criticism. The inherent political nature of Black American discourse suggests the potential for multiple strategies, multiple visions and multiple approaches. Each of the choices, though contextual, exist within a greater discursive world—i.e. *la langage*—that evaluates and values texts. The consequence of each of these decisions locates the thinker and their theory along a political and ideological perspective. As a result, these positions should be acknowledged in order to prevent the appearance of univocality or consensus.

My proposed poetics fits firmly in this tradition. While my assertion that all Black American discourse is political is similar to the viewpoints of DuBois and McKay, it somewhat deviates from the position advanced by Alain Locke. Only by acknowledging this tradition of difference and dispute am I better able to contextualize my own thought. Alain Locke was a Harvard-trained philosopher and professor at Howard University. The first Black American Rhodes Scholar, Locke was an influential participant in the Harlem Renaissance and is well-known for his work, *The New Negro*.⁴⁸⁴ Locke was a firm supporter of culturally-determined art and literature. It is in this line of thinking that he challenged the notion of ontological blackness and cultural essentialism. These positions lead Locke to oppose arguments that literature should be propaganda.

⁴⁸⁴ Locke, *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance*.

In his essay, “Art or Propaganda?” Locke describes an alternative vision to the purpose and need for Black American discourse. Locke subtly frames his essay in biblical imagery. This imagery presents his proposals for what to do and what not to do as oppositions within the sacred space of scripture formation. In line with Nardal’s historiographic approach to Black Atlantic literature, Locke suggests that both his and his opponents views are well-intended and necessary at various temporal points in a people’s cultural development and socio-political advancement. Yet, because approaches, strategies and need are temporal and contextual, Locke notes:

We have had too many Jeremiahs, major and minor prophets and too much of the drab wilderness. My chief objection to propaganda, apart from its besetting sin of monotony and disproportion, is that it perpetuates the position of group inferiority even in crying out against it. For it leaves and speaks under the shadow of a dominant majority whom it harangues, cajoles, threatens or supplicates. It is too extroverted for balance or poise or inner dignity and self-respect. Art in the best sense is rooted in self-expression and whether naive or sophisticated is self-contained. In our spiritual growth genius and talent must more and more choose the role of group expression, or even at times the role of free individualistic expression, – in a word must choose art and put aside propaganda.⁴⁸⁵

Locke accepts the notion that the tradition of Black American discourse, during the 1930’s, was largely propagandistic. In contrast to McKay and DuBois, Locke called for a change. Propaganda, for Locke, was unable to generate the very art that DuBois sought. Propaganda has fewer themes and generative trajectories at its disposal. Because of its frequent polarization, propaganda fails to offer the diversity of expression that Locke desired.

One could envision Locke arguing that DuBois’ call for the production of art as propaganda to be analogous to the relegation of Black American discourse to Nardal’s

⁴⁸⁵ Alain Locke, “Art or Propaganda?,” in *The New Negro: Readings on Race, Representation, and African American Culture, 1892-1938*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 260–61.

second period of development, the period of protest. Implied in Locke's charge is a suggestion that Black American discourse is primarily oppositional in constitution and thus falls short of the level of culture. Yet, he anticipates a transformation from this penultimate stage to a final era of the New Negro that is developing her own range of literary and artistic endeavors.

Despite the differences in argumentation, my assertion that all Black Atlantic discourse is political maintains a close affinity to Locke's vision. The point of contention between Locke's treatment and the treatment found in these pages is the term propaganda. Locke employs the term in a way to signify the thematic and expressive objective of discourse. For Locke, the characterization of Black Atlantic discourse as propaganda reduces Black identity to achievable and recognizable goals. My approach to propaganda and the politics of diaspora discourse integrates the insights of Scott's public and hidden transcripts. Differing from both Du Bois, Nardal and Locke, I would revise assessments of literature that appeared to be docile imitation, Phyllis Wheatley for example, and highlight the ideological opposition inherent in her performance. Thus, I reject the presumption that the characterization of propaganda restricts the thematic or generic scope accessible to producers of Black discourse. McKay opens, "Soviet Russia and the Negro" by identifying a similar position. Speaking in an autobiographical tone, he recalls his own epiphany and unlearning of literary criticism. He notes that the works of non-Black authors, such as Milton, constituted, "some of the finest spirits of modern literature—such as Voltaire, Hugo, Heine, Swift, Shelly, Byron, Tolstoy, Ibsen—had carried the taint of propaganda."⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁶ McKay, "Soviet Russia and the Negro: Part I," 61.

Withstanding Locke's disapproval of the term propaganda, his point notes an insightful nuance that contextualizes his position with respect to the aesthetics and form of Black discourse. Implicit in his description is a view that continues to hold the position that Black American art is "political" in its performance and creation; his stress is that it need not be political or propagandistic in its motivation or objective.

Maintaining his biblical framing, Locke argues that in lieu of prophets, the new generation of writers and artists should identify with ancient Israel's King David as its patron-saint confronting Philistines.

The literature and art of the younger generation ready reflects this shift of psychology, this regeneration of spirit. David should be its patron saint: it should confront the Phillistines [*sic*] with its five smooth pebbles fearlessly. There is more strength in a confident camp than in a threatened enemy. The sense of inferiority must be innerly compensated, self-conviction must supplant self-justification and in the dignity of this attitude a convinced minority must confront a condescending majority. Art cannot completely accomplish this, but I believe it can lead the way.⁴⁸⁷

His figurative language is especially poignant at this point. His invocation of the term Philistine carries a biblical historical meaning that refers to an imposing, dominant force. The production of non-propagandistic art is a means and mechanism to combat, though with pebbles, a dominant and oppressive system of bigotry and racism. The term philistine, in contemporary English, connotes someone that lacks cultural exposure, adeptness and is hostile to the refined accoutrements of culture and cultural value. Through this biblically derived ethno-graphic stereotype and synecdoche, Locke's essay characterizes the view of Du Bois and those in his camp as untimely, misguided—i.e. *égaré*—and philistine.

⁴⁸⁷ Locke, "Art or Propaganda?"

This use of imagery is piercing in its subversion and reversal of socio-cultural expectations of language [*le langue*]. Where traditional notions of philistine imply vulgarity, lack of refinement and absence of culture, Locke's argument associates literary mimicry and the banality of protest discourse with philistine expression. The expressive dependence and overt utilitarianism of the arts is in its essence vulgar because of its failure to appreciate and attend to the generation and stimulation of Black American culture. Consequently, that which dominant culture views as "vulgar," "nauseating," "pandering," or "lies" may in fact be the true cultural expressivity of another people.

Locke's advocacy of a new generation that reflects what he describes as the "New Negro" exhibits the view that follows Nardal's differentiation between the second and third periods of literary development. A people's cultural expression cannot become univocal in its thematic or expressive articulation. Consensus must not stifle the individual experiences that comprise the diversity and polyvocality of culture. Following Locke's argument, Du Bois and the discourse reflected in the second period of literary development understands itself solely through the prism of marginalization or oppression. For Locke, this is insufficient. Du Bois, like some non-Black critics, are the philistines confronted by community derived cultural forms of expression.

David's pebbles also assail the oppressive systems, ideologies and policies that denigrate Black humanity. The generation of Black American discourses that reflect diverse mediums and employ a range of motifs is a means of claiming the subjectivity and personhood denied Black persons. This proactive seizing of a culture is a strategy akin to Nardal's third period. The consequences of such a view is not lost on Locke. For, while rejecting the premise that Black art must be propagandistic, he similarly

rejects a view of “art for art’s sake.” He advocates discursive strategy that flee from Hegelian binaries of master-slave. Black discourse and art deviate from notions of mimicry, appeal and request. They use their own cultural sensitivity to challenge ignorance, racism and cultural inferiority.

The perspectival nature of Black American Discourse criticism, though beyond the scope of this paper, perpetually leads to ardent debates over the use of vernacular, the authenticity of certain genres, the impact on class and economics on culture. Schism and dispute, within my poetics framework, is an essential characteristic of Black American culture and discourse. The identification of this position highlights the polyvocal dynamism inherent in its traditions. Dispute and schism can derive from language and terminology—i.e. DuBois and Locke—but it can also be a function of ideology and taste. The same McKay that venerated DuBois and prefigured DuBois’ chosen nomenclature of art and propaganda received a scathing review from DuBois. DuBois opined that McKay’s novel, *Home to Harlem*, “for the most part nauseates me.” DuBois held a strategic alignment with respectability that denounced what he perceived as McKay’s open treatment of sex, sexuality and Harlem night life. The June 1928 issue of *The Crisis*, which also contained the unauthorized publication of McKay’s poetry, DuBois reviewed McKay’s *Home to Harlem* and charged that the depiction of Harlem life catered to dominant society’s desire to consume certain stereotypes and caricatures.⁴⁸⁸ The poetics involved in DuBois’ perception of *Home to Harlem* negotiated the same figures. He evaluated them, however, upon an axiology different from McKay. Responding in a

⁴⁸⁸ William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, *The Correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois: Selections, 1877-1934*, ed. Herbert Aptheker, vol. 1 (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), 374–375.

private letter from Spain, McKay tells DuBois that when compared to white publications, *The Crisis* exhibited extreme disorganization and a lack of professionalism. He challenges DuBois' critical training and the appropriateness for him to judge Black American art at all.

Noting the perceived personal nature of the attack, McKay assumes the identity of an artist and acknowledges that he intends his ensuing comments to be regarded as personal attacks and not critical—i.e. objective and professional.

My motive for writing is simply that I began in my boyhood to be an artists in words and I have struck to that in spite of the contrary forces and colors of life that I Have had to contend against through various adventures, mistakes, successes, strength and weakness of body that the artist-soul, more or less, has to pass through. Certainly I sympathize with and even pity you for not understanding my motive, because you have been forced from a normal career to enter a special field of racial propaganda and, honorable though that field may be, it has precluded you from contact with real life, for propaganda is fundamentally but a one-sided idea of life. Therefore I should not be surprised when you mistake the art of life for nonsense and try to pass off propaganda as life in art! Finally, deep-sunk in depravity though he may be, the author of "Home to Harlem" prefers to remain unrepentant and unregenerate and he "distinctly" is not grateful for any free baptism of grace in the cleansing pages of the "Crisis." [sic]

Yours for more "utter absence of restraint"
Claude McKay⁴⁸⁹

As evident in McKay's reception of DuBois' criticism, Black American discourse consists of divergent views and consistently evolves. The author that once championed the role of art as propaganda invokes the notion of propaganda in an alternative light when located within the framework of DuBois. Hero no more, critical theory and reception are matrices imbedded in socio-cultural and economic contexts.

⁴⁸⁹ Claude McKay to William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, "Letter from Claude McKay to W. E. B. Du Bois," October 27, 1925, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, <http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/pageturn/mums312-b029-i519/#page/1/mode/1up>.

These examples serve to display the diversity that remains within the tradition of Black American discourse even after the appropriation of a similar framework of poetics. As such, the rejection of the term propaganda by Locke and appropriation of it by Du Bois and McKay does not pre-determine one's view or evaluation of discourse. Black America and its discourse tradition remains polyvocal. Similarly, my poetics derives from these and similar conversations, disputes and transformations within the Black American discursive tradition as informed by both national and transnational observations.

Each writer was conscious of the diasporic and transnational nature of Black American discourse. Du Bois and Locke were both Harvard graduates that studied abroad, Du Bois in Germany and Locke in England. McKay was a Jamaican immigrant that terminated studies to pursue a writing career. Yet, each author engaged the material situation present in the United States and argued that Black American discourse was intrinsically political. However, they articulated views that were similar in their difference. They espoused various strategies to achieve self-expression, self-consciousness, physical survival and socio-political advancement. Their perspectives developed in dialogue and dispute with both Black and non-Black individuals both in the United States and abroad.

Locke's primary dissatisfaction was DuBois' preference for respectability and call for overt thematic challenges to racial discrimination. Lock and DuBois suggest that the meaning-making trajectory of Black American discourse negotiates the lived and ideological circumstances in which Black Americans exist. What differs are the terminologies and strategies that they develop out of their contextual particularities. It is

the recognition of this differentness and its relatedness that helps characterize my poetics as an semantic domain of unactualized figures.

Through my reading, DuBois, McKay and Locke each exhibit nuanced views of Black Atlantic discourse and thus diagnose its needs in slightly different ways. Three scholars that represent differing national heritages, generations and educational backgrounds approach Black American art from different directions while maintaining a relatedness in their view that Black American art and discourse has a role in combatting the marginalization and inequities experienced by African-descended peoples in America. The dual nature of the criticism of Black American discourse described above reflects what Hortense Spillers suggests begins to:

...capture something of the drama that informs the work of Afro-American critics, for it is in the center of antagonisms that they stand, trying to transform an opposition into a dialectical encounter.⁴⁹⁰

The material consequences of Black American discourse and its criticism places an onus on these expressions that compel theorists and artists to respond. The production of theory seeks to enhance the figurative dimension of Black American discourse. The focused identification of Black American discourse's figurative dimension, whether it be primarily intended as art, criticism or theory, provides an identifying-signature component of Black American discourse. This signature, in line with Spillers discussion of formalist methods, offers approaches to Black American discourse and not a methodological or discursive allegiance. Thus, this signature prompts dispute and signifies different meanings for different scholars.

⁴⁹⁰ Hortense J. Spillers, "Formalism Comes to Harlem," *Black American Literature Forum* 16, no. 2 (1982): 58–64.

In the face of theories of Black American discourse criticism, scholars like Kenneth Warren argue against the continued use of such terminology to describe contemporary literary works. Through astute analysis of Black American discourse and its political impulse, Warren invokes perspectives similar to DuBois and Locke to affirm the belief that works composed by persons of African descent in America prior to *Brown v Board of Education* negotiated the socio-political reality of Jim Crow. The shift in socio-political reality and the recognition of Black American literary achievements by the Academy lead Warren to argue that “African American literature as a distinct entity would seem to be at an end, and that the turn to diasporic transatlantic, global, and other frames indicates a dim awareness that the boundary creating this distinctiveness has eroded.”⁴⁹¹ Warren's focus is on periodizing and historically contextualizing the Black American literary tradition. Thus, to a degree, part of his work deals with first assessing the Black American literary history and secondly supporting his periodization through cursory literary criticism.

Warren's perspective provides a current alternative view within the tradition of Black American literary criticism that directly opposes many of the positions advocated in the construction of my poetics. For Warren, “African American literature” was in fact a temporal expression of socio-political needs and responses. One notes a number of differences between my historical (re)construction and Warren's description. He raises the question of racism and the apparent social, cultural and political unity or coherence evident in the literature produced by Black folk living in during the era of American Jim Crow segregation. He stresses the significance that the conscious reality and experience

⁴⁹¹ Kenneth W. Warren, *What Was African American Literature?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 8.

of Jim Crow played on the construction of literature during this period that necessitates the literature produced in different eras be understood and construed as categorically different-than contemporary realities. This proposal fails to take into consideration the diverse experiences and socio-political realities present in Black America prior to the dismantling of legal Jim-Crow segregation. Simultaneously, he fails to stake serious the institutional and systemic realities of racial profiling and institutional racism. The experiences and realities of racialized blackness continues to vary across the United States.⁴⁹²

This endeavor, in and of itself, is productive and valuable endeavor. It also raises its own questions in terms of community-critique and the perpetual role of self-understanding. His invocation of the nomenclature African American, however, is anachronistic and incites concern for numerous reasons.⁴⁹³ Among these reasons are a *le mème*-oriented concern that advocates rigidly, fundamental breaks in time, history and experience. Such perspectives obscure or ignore the polyvocal, mutable and ever-changing experience of Blackness in America. For Warren, the role of folklore, myth

⁴⁹² While one may readily take issue with his emphasis on the legal dismantling of Jim Crow, what is more intriguing is his focus on periodization and subsequent decision to invoke nomenclature expressly tied to the post-Jim Crow era. He demands contextual weddedness to the judicial and legal system of segregation, but names the period using term popularized in 1988 by Rev Jesse Jackson. The terminology African American first appeared on US census in 2000. Additionally, Warren struggles with his own strict periodization because he employs the term black writers and black literature throughout. If one were to accept Warren's somewhat arbitrary and anachronistic categorization of African American literature and periodization of segregation, one is still left to inquire as to his views on the coherence and relatedness of what he terms Black literature and black writers. He has simply attempted to particularize Jim Crow-era Black literature within the gambit of black literary practices

⁴⁹³ The use of anachronistic terminology is acceptable in itself as a means of analysis. However, Warren approaches African American literature as closed set of literary responses to a temporally restricted and closed set of experiences of oppression. To utilize anachronistic terminology while insisting on a definite historical temporality elicits inconsistency. Enhancing the problematic nature of this terminology is the close proximity in which the term African American, a term closely associated with the middle of the 1980's, and the Civil Rights era. The individuals raised and informed by the era of African American literature continue to shape and inform the discourse and literature produced today. The proximity and shared experiences create temporal confusion and distinction between Warren's two periods.

and memory have little impact on the production and categorization of Black American literature.

Warren's invocation of shifts to diasporic and transnational realities as a question concerning the distinctiveness and utility of the term African American literature. As demonstrated in my presentation, current legal circumstances do not commence Black Atlantic consciousness or its diasporic discourse. The transnational and diasporic nature of Black American discourse is a heuristic perspective that scholars and critics have access to for any temporal period of Black American discourse. The lack of scholarly focus prior to the twenty-first century is more a reflection of the recent increase in presence of scholars within the Academy who focus on Black American discourse. What results in Warren's proposal is the transformation of Nardal's third period of literary development and Locke's proposal of Black American literature becoming the end of Black American literature. Locke's criticism of propaganda—the simplistic regurgitation of univocal motifs and genre forms—becomes the essentialistic quality that Warren uses to define "African American literature" as temporal. The distinctiveness that Warren attempts to associate with Jim Crow-era Black American literature essentializes its traits and characteristics as distinct—i.e. different and other. Inclusion and engagement with dominant culture equates to the erasure of particularity.

Critical theorists of Black American discourse will interpret and evaluate discourse differently. However, because of the diasporic and cultural relatedness fostered through the transnational nature of Black American identity and history, the employed poetics, through which they perceive the figures of ethno-racial particularity, intra-communal debate, the (re)narrative of history and Empire, remain similar. Thus, the

poetics of diaspora advanced here participates in the tradition of evaluating diaspora discourse for Black American readings by responding to and disputing with other approaches, views and voices.

Character, Figure and Poetics in Black American Discourse

The previous discussion of Du Bois, McKay and Locke illustrates a number of points that are strategically significant for my poetics of diaspora and perception of Black American discourse. This description of Black American discourse and an illustration of its traditions of criticism **have** moved this discussion to the consideration of the nature or character of Black American discourse, particularly as it pertains to being viewed as diaspora discourse. The assertion that all Black American discourse negotiates identity politics describes its circumstance and significance more than its character. Additionally, this observation is useful for understanding why a certain poetics functions. It can also aid in proposing reasons that certain readers respond to texts certain ways. Yet, it falls short of describing Black American discourse.

The suggestion that Black American discourse is diasporic and linked to other iterations and articulations increases the difficulty in identifying a particular character to Black American discourse. By considering the works of authors mentioned above such as the francophone Lanusse, Desdunes, Séjour and Trévigne and anglophone Walker, DuBois and McKay, I highlight the impact that nation and circumstance play in linking discourses that at times fail even to utilize the same language [*le langue*]. This observation simultaneously invokes Glissant's—and Valéry's— notion of language [*la langage*] as the communicative and discursive relatedness that maintains the meaning-making potential within Diaspora discourse.

Through each of these characterizations, my reading of Barack Obama's Selma speech becomes better contextualized. The polyvocality and political significance places it firmly with the traditions of Black American discourse and criticism. Toni Morrison eloquently frames discussion of Black American literature around orality, participation of reader, the chorus and the ancestor.⁴⁹⁴ Each of these "characteristics" or "distinctives" of Black American discourse depends on the signification of both text, context and community. Through Morrison's construct, two central stylistic components that help inform this discussion of Black American discourse are its figurative dimension and its use of the autobiography. Hortense Spillers advances a position that views:

[T]he thrust of Afro-American writing this [twentieth] century privileges metaphorical truth, or the transcending human possibility... My own belief about the relationship between the critical work and that which it contemplates is this: The literary work describes, or carves out, an arena of choices, and in doing so, the writer suspends definitive judgment.⁴⁹⁵

Responding to the realities of exclusion and erasure, Morrison nuances Spillers' observation by suggesting that Black American literature frequently functions in a way that views fact and fiction as separate domains instead of oppositions. The appeal to the figurative is central to the transfer of truth. Thus, for Morrison, the binary opposition is fact-truth instead of fact-fiction.⁴⁹⁶ She additionally highlights the important balance between the individual and the collective. The autobiographical form plays a vital role in discursively negotiating the self as figure-in-relation. This notion of the self as figure-in-relation elucidates inherent political nature of Black American discourse. The individual

⁴⁹⁴ Toni Morrison, "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation," in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Valerie A. Smith, vol. 2, 2 vols., Third. (New York: W W Norton & Company Incorporated, 2014), 1067–1069.

⁴⁹⁵ Spillers, "Formalism Comes to Harlem," 58–59.

⁴⁹⁶ Morrison, "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation," 2:1070–1071.

at once represents both individual and collective; the individual is figure and self.⁴⁹⁷ When looking at Obama's rhetoric and historical depiction, one hears an allusion to Morrison distinctives, which seeks critical engagement different than those conservative critics who lambasted the speech as lies and falsehood. As Morrison notes, negative and positive reviews are far less troubling, "than when that condemnation or that praise is based on criteria from other paradigms."⁴⁹⁸ This figurative focus of identity appeals to the means through which I heard Obama's speech in Diaspora and brings my poetics into view of other critical descriptions of discourse within various articulations of the African Diaspora.

Joining Morrison's description of literature, Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant and Houston Baker each advance visions that they specifically term as poetics.⁴⁹⁹ Each author presents their model of poetics as means to discuss both the affect and effect of Black Atlantic discourse in much the same ways that Morrison discusses the elusiveness in Black American literature.⁵⁰⁰ They incidentally model my own poetics while locating their proposals within historical trajectories. Césaire, whose essay focuses on poetic knowledge [*connaissance*], offers a literary history of French writers from Baudelaire to Breton. Glissant takes transcultural approach by discussing both epic literature such as

⁴⁹⁷ Morrison, "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation."

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:1069.

⁴⁹⁹ Aimé Césaire, "Poésie et connaissance," *Tropiques* 12, no. January (1945): 158–70; Aimé Césaire, "Poetry and Knowledge," in *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean*, ed. Michael Richardson, trans. Krzysztof Fijałkowski and Michael Richardson (New York: Verso, 1996), 133–45; Baker Jr., *Afro-American Poetics*; Baker Jr., *Workings of the Spirit*; Glissant, *Poétique de La Relation: Poétique III*; Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*.

⁵⁰⁰ Césaire, Glissant and Baker represent an intriguing reflection—albeit all male—intersection of the Black Atlantic. Both Césaire and Glissant were Martinican, though Glissant, in addition to being exiled from Martinique from 1961 – 1965, spent decades teaching at American institutions. With Césaire's support of departmentalization, he embarked on a long political career as mayor of Fort-de-France. Glissant's support for independence resulted in his temporary exile from Martinique and restriction to the Metropole. Baker, a Black American, teaches in

the *Illiad* and the Bible in addition to French literature. Baker's focus concentrates on Black American literature as he re-reads the Harlem Renaissance in *Afro-American Poetics* and Black American women writers in *Workings of the Spirit*.

In addition to their contextual historiographical approaches, each theorist views poetics as a negotiation and transformation of figures. Césaire contrasts scientific knowledge to poetic knowledge. Building on images similar to Morrison's invalidation of the binary fact-fiction, Césaire envisions discourse as a world composed of both syntax and semantics. He says that, "Scientific knowledge is a lion without antelopes and without zebras. It is interiorly gnawed away. Gnawed away by hunger, the hunger of feelings, the hunger of life."⁵⁰¹ Science, for Césaire, is an animal while poetics is an ecosystem. Similarly, myth is preferable to science because of its ability to create beauty and truth while science only produces starved, two-dimensional models. Where Césaire signifies poetic knowledge as an ecosystem, Glissant uses the language of Totality and relation to discuss various ways of knowing and existing. He proposes an anthropology of human civilization, errantry and colonization that serves as an etiology of meaning-making.

For Glissant, notions of knowing derive from modes of understanding one's self in relation to other and world. His poetics of relation provides a way of knowing that privileges the collection of multiple trajectories over against single, univocal interpretations. The figure and its signification is a central aspect of Glissant's poetics. Lastly, Baker's poetics, briefly discussed above, also highlights the figurative as it, "can be defined as the emergence of a poetic image...that displaces the causal explanation of

⁵⁰¹ Césaire, "Poésie et connaissance," 159.

investigative “sciences” such as psychology or psychoanalysis.”⁵⁰² Baker, like Césaire and Glissant, sees the figurative dimension as Black American discourse’s primary site of poetics and production. This figurative dimension consists of autobiographical investment, memory and forgetfulness, creation and community tradition. The poetics—i.e. spirit-work or blues—links Baker’s Black American construction to the Black Antillean proposals of Césaire and Glissant. Diaspora discourse and its criticism is means to transcend the univocal, perspectival and two-dimensional urge of Hegelian Colour-blindness.

These approaches to Black Atlantic poetics align well with Toni Morrison’s descriptions of the writing process and its role in the production of both truth and beauty. Morrison’s views of Black American literature and discourse offer a bridge between Du Bois, McKay and Locke. This dissertation, as an analysis that constructs a poetics and employs the poetics in the production of Diaspora discourse, rests upon Morrison’s mediating description of Black American literature.

In the context of discussing the significance of the novel and her own writing she highlights the role of the autobiography:

The autobiographical form is classic in Black Americans or Afro-American literature because it provided an instance in which a writer could be representative, could say, "My single solitary and individual life is like the lives of the tribel it differs in these specific ways, but it is a balanced life because it is both solitary and representative." The contemporary autobiography tends to be 'how I got over—look at me—alone—let me show you how I did it.' It is inimical, I think, to some of the characteristics of Black artistic expression and influence.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰² Baker Jr., *Afro-American Poetics*, 171.

⁵⁰³ Morrison, “Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation,” 2:1067.

Autobiography highlights a recurring theme in descriptions of Black American literature, which is its figurative nature. From the development of Negro slave narratives to the representative character of discourse as Black American cultural expression, the figure is at the heart of how I perceive and at times disagree with Obama's ontological blackness. Scholars of the Black American literary tradition frequently identify the role of the autobiography. The autobiography is one reason why the tradition of Black American discourse has been able to negotiate the politics and diversity of Black American experience. The autobiographical form, "provided an instance in which a writer could be representative, could say, 'My single solitary and individual life is like the lives of the tribe; it differs in these specific ways, but it is a balanced life because it is both solitary and representative.'" My juxtaposition of Black American and Diaspora simply offers an alternative circumstance for contextually imagining concomitant identity alongside gender, class, ethno-cultic practice, and imperial status and allegiance; namely, the ways that Diaspora existence can result in the presumption of metanarratives that differ significantly from those of dominant, non-Diaspora contexts and stimulate interpreters to signify on erasure and silence in creative and diverse ways.

In Morrison's discussion of Black American literature and the novel she speaks of the elusiveness of communication and infers many of the elements presumed in my construction of poetics.⁵⁰⁴ She speaks of literature needing to work; this is the essence of poetics. It does not fix or solve and is fleeting; it is not definite, which is the essence of the semantic character of poetics. The "presence of a chorus" alludes to the collective

⁵⁰⁴ Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature," in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* (presented at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, 1988), 43, http://tannerlectures.utah.edu/_documents/a-to-z/m/morrison90.pdf.

intracommunal debate, dispute, critique that shapes and frames the Black American context of my diaspora poetics. It is reflective of a community and is political. This corresponds to the geopolitically, socio-politically and ethno-racial component of Black American discourse as diaspora discourse. It engages with ancestors, which infers to my poetics figure of negotiating and reinterpreting the past.⁵⁰⁵

It is with this description of Black American poetics that the polyvocality and variety encompassed by the Black American discourse tradition becomes a valuable aspect of my poetics.

It does not 'go without saying' that a work written by an Afro-American is automatically subsumed by an enforcing Afro-American presence. There is a clear flight from blackness in a great deal of Afro-American literature. In others there is the duel with blackness, and in some cases, as they say, 'You'd never know.'"⁵⁰⁶

Yet, even those responses that strategically seek to veil their thematic heritage, "clear flight from blackness" or creatively articulate their self-understanding via new constructs of being provide insight into the meaning-making potential of their discourse. The figurative is a means of negotiating the experienced and imagined world. Though, "you'd never know," engagement of such discourse offers a heuristic that links discursive expression through its poetics instead of its form or ideology. In response to the socio-political realities of Empire, the intracommunal debates over responses to racialization, ethno-racial particularity and perceptions of the past, the figure is a means of (re)presenting discourse as truth. Truth in these instances deal not solely with fact or history. Truth, in this context, revolves around the mimetic process of meaning-making for each interpreter.

⁵⁰⁵ Morrison, "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation."

⁵⁰⁶ Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken," 1091.

Two Readings of Empire:
Can a Poetics of Diaspora “Work” in Alternative Contexts?

Overview

My twenty-first century Black American context provided the occasion for formulating this poetics of diaspora. My memory of listening to Barack Obama’s Selma speech in 2007 provided a personal diasporic setting to reflect on the poetics that shaped my own meaning-making processes. While couched in this contemporary setting the theoretical and discursive framework draws on a diverse Black Atlantic tradition that spans three centuries. Having outlined the theoretical contexts and ideological concerns underlying my poetics of diaspora discourse, the question remains whether this contextual poetics is a beneficial heuristic for analyzing texts from different imperial contexts or Diaspora circumstances. Below, I test the utility of this poetics of diaspora with a cursory inspection of two sample texts. The first text, “With Malice towards None: A Few Words to Dr. DuBois,” is an early twentieth century composed in New Orleans by *l’homme de couleur* [a man of color]. Still positioned within the African Diaspora, this text demonstrates the utility of diaspora poetics for re-reading one’s own past, archive and ideological values. Because this text consists of reading a different imperial era and reading my own community history, I provide a more extensive analysis and consideration of the impact of diaspora poetics on its generative-trajectory. The second text focuses broadly on the Jewish Diaspora during the Achaemenid Persian Empire (550 B.C.E – 330 B.C.E). With a focus on the document Cowley-30 (B19) from Jedaniah’s archive amongst the Elephantine papyri, this sample reading considers the appropriateness of my diaspora poetics for the study and criticism of the Jewish Diaspora

and Ancient Near Eastern studies.⁵⁰⁷ This cursory inspection of diaspora poetics in Achaemenid Persia prefigures the social and cultural context for Jewish Diaspora in early imperial Rome. In much the same way that I read Desdunes as a particular expression of my own Diaspora community, Jewish Diaspora discourse from Achaemenid Persia informs, however loosely or indirectly, the discursive traditions through which auditors engaged the New Testament and other early imperial texts composed or read in Diaspora.

Empire and Imperial Relations

Stephen Howe suggests that all of world history may be a history of Empires.⁵⁰⁸ The difficulty in isolating conceptions of Empire, as noted by Scheidel and Howe, is the terms broad metaphorical usage. Walter Scheidel identifies a “core definition” for Empire as, “a state that is endowed with particular properties.” This definition is insufficient due to the diverse ways describing the political and economic influence of empires.⁵⁰⁹ Scheidel eventually settles on acknowledging the performance of “core-periphery-centered concepts” that recognize the dominance economically and/or politically of a core set of inhabitants/citizens. Gerhard Lenski’s study of social stratification suggests that simple horticulture and agrarian societies cannot develop Empires.⁵¹⁰ Empires requires the economic or military control of other groups by means which are beneficial, particularly for the acquisition of economic surplus. Empires are marked by (at least early examples) centralized control of resources and surplus.

Stephen Howe nuances types of Empires by observing the various ways of colonization, governance and resource management. The two major distinctions of Empires Howe notes are terrestrial and nautical. Additionally, some lands are acquired for settling of the dominant group, while others are governed remotely by military and previously established structures. The scope and size of Agrarian Empires increases the interaction of various ethnic and language

⁵⁰⁷ Two different catalogue systems are used to identify Aramaic texts in the Elephantine archive. An older system, derived by Arthur Cowley continues to be used among scholars. However, Bezalel’s Porten and Ada Yardeni employed a different system. Porten and Yardeni’s late twentieth century editions have greatly advanced research and accessibility. This paper utilizes both systems. I note the Cowley numbering with Cowley-# and place the Porten identification in parentheses.

⁵⁰⁸ Howe, Stephen. *Empire: a Very Short Introduction* (Very Short Introduction Series; NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1, 9.

⁵⁰⁹ Walter Scheidel “Republics between hegemony and empire: How ancient city-states built empires and the USA doesn’t (anymore)” online in “Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics,” <http://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/pdfs/scheidel/020601.pdf>, 2-4.

⁵¹⁰ Gerhard E. Lenski. *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of N. Carolina Press, 1984), 147-9.

groups, and expand due to increased roles of military technological development and reliance. The governance over large expanses of land leads to the establishment of a *lingua franca*, while remote contexts continue to function within their own cultural milieu.

With Malice towards None: Desdunes and Particularity in Black America

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Abraham Lincoln

Imperial Existence 1: The Nadir of American Race Relations

Between the late 1870's and the middle of the 1940's the United States experienced what historian Rayford Logan describes as the "nadir of American race relations." This period was one of the United States' darkest and most violent periods of race relations. Also shaping this period was an explosion of European immigrants to the United States, and series of immigration laws greatly restricting Asian immigration. The nation's newly legislated citizens of African descent had experienced a period of promise during the Reconstruction period that followed the Civil War (1865-1877).

However, the Presidential election of 1876 ended in controversy and a stalemate ensued between Republican, Rutherford B. Hayes and Democrat, Samuel Tilden. In an effort of political expediency, the Republican Party agreed to withdraw federal troops from Southern States. This, Hayes-Tilden Compromise of 1876, virtually ended Reconstruction. Largely viewed as a betrayal by Black Americans of the era, Post-Reconstruction witnessed the festering enmity between emigrated Northerners into the South, ex-Confederates and former-slaves. The emigrated Northerners and White Republicans received the White House; ex-Confederates retrieved their autonomy and political position; and, Black Americans experienced the violent repression of Black rights: disenfranchisement; the promulgation of Jim Crow segregation; legally sanctioned and systemic denial and confiscation of property; tacit indifference to an ever-present threat of the United States' lynching epidemic. In addition to the targeted persecution

and murder of individuals, the mass rioting and systemic dispossession of whole communities occurred not infrequently. A few prominent examples include Greenwood, South Carolina (1898); Wilmington, North Carolina (1898); Atlanta, Georgia (1906); East St. Louis, Missouri (1917); Tulsa, Oklahoma (1921); or Rosewood, Florida (1923). Ironically many of these social and political changes occurred in concert with a growing Black Bourgeoisie class, mass migration from rural to urban areas and the proliferation of secondary schools, colleges, seminaries and universities that provided drastic social and cultural to Black America.

Local Context 1

Rodolphe Lucien Desdunes (1849 – 1928) was sixteen years old when the Civil War ended. A year later in 1866, a violent race riot broke out and left hundreds of Black Civil War veterans dead. Desdunes witnessed one of the city’s finest schools for people of color, the Thomy Lafon School, burned down during another race riot just four years after the Supreme Court used the *Comité des Citoyens*’ efforts to institutionalize “separate but equal” as the ideological framework for Jim Crow discrimination. Fluent in both English and French, Rodolphe Desdunes navigated New Orleans’ increasingly Anglo-centric socio-political and ethno-cultural sphere as a lawyer through legal challenges, as a writer with literature and history and as politician through Republican Party coordination and advocacy.

Born amongst the *gens de couleur libres*, his family descended from Haitian immigrants at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Prominent in Louisiana’s Republican politics, he was a leading figure among New Orleans’ French speaking Creoles of Color. Best known as the author of *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, Desdunes

was an organizing member of the *Comité des Citoyens*. Educated principally through private institutions run by Black Americans, such as the *Couvent Institute* and Straight University (Dillard), by the beginning of the twentieth century Desdunes had witnessed the Anglicization of New Orleans alongside the transition from having a Black governor and congressmen to the denial of the vote. Desdunes viewed himself within a long tradition of civic-minded professionals of African descent in Louisiana that had contributed to the cultural fabric of America. These French descended Catholics had championed the ideals of equality, justice, and full personhood.⁵¹¹ Thus, it is in this context that Desdunes took to pen and negotiated his French, Black Atlantic and American identities in a way that can be viewed as Diaspora discourse.

Desdunes', "A Few Words to Dr. Du Bois: With Malice towards None," takes its place within this diverse and underappreciated tradition of Black American literature. Its provenance from the middle of America's lynching-era provides it with a temporal and intellectual context well suited for analysis. In a current age where discussions of post-racial and multi-racial identity are as prevalent as debates on the communal relatedness of Americans, West Indians, Africans, and Europeans of African descent. Desdunes' discourse is an informative illustration of the discursive negotiation of particularity and relatedness. Its interpretation can thus provide a useful text for the continual (re)formation of Black identity.

Challenging assumptions of Black monolingualism and homogeneity, the sampling of this Black American discourse highlights the role of particularity in Black American discourse within the United States and within the greater Black Atlantic. In

⁵¹¹ Pierre-Aristide Desdunes, *Rappelez-Vous Concitoyens! La Poésie de Pierre-Aristide Desdunes*, ed. Caryn-Cossé Bell (Shreveport, LA: Tintamarre, 2011).

reading Desdunes' treatise, I am reading my own community history as both insider and outsider. Community history often generates self-interest and authority. Consequently, this reading can semantically garner certain autobiographical properties. The consequent formation of my own Diaspora's archive is a discursive (re)forming of the trajectory upon which I conceive poetics and Black America's current place and (be)coming trajectories.

Textual Content, a Description 1

Rodolphe Desdunes', "A Few Words to Dr. Du Bois," is an early twentieth-century treatise that discursively performs a debate between two influential Black American figures.⁵¹² In February of 1907, *l'homme de couleur* Rodolphe Lucien Desdunes (1849-1928) opened the New Orleans Item, a White run newspaper, and found an article prefaced by a series of emboldened large font quotes: "Declares Negro Blood Makes Americans Great"; "Colored Lecturer Places the Present Conditions on the Shoulders of Whites." The article reported a speech that William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1963) had recently delivered to the Society of Ethical Culture in New York City. The Item only contained a short summary and redacted quotes from the speech. Its summary, however, described Du Bois' speech as having:

...placed the burden of the Negro's state squarely upon the shoulders of the whites, and astonished his hearers by declaring that Alexander Hamilton, Robert Browning and Lew Wallace each a strain of Negro blood in their veins.⁵¹³

⁵¹² Rodolphe Lucien Desdunes, "A Few Words to Dr. DuBois: With Malice Towards None," Pamphlet (New Orleans, LA, 1907), A.P. Tureaud Papers, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, New Orleans Louisiana.

⁵¹³ "Colored Lecturer Places the Present Conditions on the Shoulders of Whites," *New Orleans Tribune* (New Orleans, LA, February 24, 1907); It is unclear if Desdunes had other sources of the speech or had previously heard of Du Bois advancing similar sentiments. The speech in question garnered enough attention to be reported in multiple major newspapers. See, ; "Du Bois on Negro Needs: Atlanta University Professor Addresses Carnegie Hall Audience," *New York Daily* (New York, February 18, 1907); "Mixed

Among the quoted portion of Du Bois' speech, he claimed that Southern Blacks were, "lacking in book knowledge, industrial faculty and even unacquainted with the best traditions of family life."⁵¹⁴ Making use of his identity as a speaker, intellectual, and academic Du Bois frequently employed history, stats, and sociological data to bolster his arguments with the mien of objectivity and authority.⁵¹⁵ The social and cultural setting described above outlines the political, ethno-racial and intellectual circumstances in which Desdunes read a review of DuBois' speech.⁵¹⁶

The overarching objectives of Desdunes' treatise are multiple. A chief objective is to challenge the rampant characterization of Southern Black life as homogenous and uniformly unlearned. Through content and performance, Desdunes demonstrates his own mastery of history and rhetoric as he compares his intellectual astuteness to the Harvard trained DuBois. A second objective is to provide a socio-political context for Black Southerners strategies of survival. By highlighting ethno-cultural differences and emphasizing the different social circumstances between Southern and non-Southern Blacks, Desdunes argues that context matters. While DuBois' strategies function in certain settings, *le divers* requires the recognition of similarities and difference. Thus, his third objective, the advocacy of conciliatory and peaceful discourse, is a contextual approach to survival. Having witnessed multiple race riots and the devastating effects of political reform absent ideological transformation or coalition building, Desdunes offers

Blood Aided White Genuises," *New York Times* (New York, February 18, 1907); "Negro Blood; Startling Statement by Colored University Professor," *Washington Post* (Washington, DC, February 22, 1907).

⁵¹⁴ Du Bois, "A Few Words," 1.

⁵¹⁵In fact, many newspapers referred to Du Bois as Dr. Du Bois or Prof Du Bois, and often described him via his position at Atlanta University.

⁵¹⁶ Its publication and circulation statuses are unknown, and the surviving copy is housed in the Amistad Research Center's A.P. Tureaud Papers at Tulane University. See, Desdunes, "A Few Words."

his own perspective as “a” strategy towards both the negotiation of Diaspora and social protest.

While the text itself lacks any internal divisions, I organize it into four separate sections:⁵¹⁷

1. Prologue: (1.1-41);
2. Argument One: Southern Blacks do have book knowledge and industrial faculty (2.1-5.15);
3. Argument Two: Education is not enough; We need wisdom, critical insight, and morality (5.16-11.36);
4. Argument Three and Conclusion: The future is coming, and we must critically deliberate on our complex and diverse political ideologies (11.37-15.9).

In the prologue, Desdunes builds a social context that recognizes Du Bois’ social contributions and celebrity. He then delimits his text through the identification of his source and qualifies his argument upon the accuracy of the source. Desdunes concludes his prologue by outlining assumptions that govern his interpretation.

The particularity of context and the discursive presentation of history are core methods of argument within each of the treatise’s three main arguments. Desdunes’ general argumentative structure is telescoping. Argument one, dealing with Du Bois’ surface argument —both its discursive syntax and discursive semantic character, is a refutation and correction of Du Bois’ basic claim that Southern Blacks are “lacking in book knowledge” and “industrial faculty.” This section addresses the validity of Du Bois’ charge and initiates Desdunes’ systematic attack of Du Bois’ analytical execution that continues throughout. Using New Orleans and various historical examples, Desdunes highlights the regional, class and economic diversity found in the South and

⁵¹⁷ This text only has page numbers. The notation adopted in this paper is page number.line number, i.e.: 1.1 refers to page one, line one. Ibid.

Black America. Through various examples, he illustrates the significance context plays in critical analysis, while portraying Du Bois as a negligent critic.

The discourse's second argument refutes and corrects the idea that the provision of education will bring about progress and liberation for Southern Blacks. Desdunes presents this idea as the underlying premise—fundamental syntax—of Du Bois' initial argument. This section extends Desdunes' interrogation of Du Bois' knowledge, understanding of history, and skill as an analyst and historian. Through the course of this section, Desdunes argues that wise, patient, moral, and critically aware people are more useful than people who have generic book knowledge.

In the treatise's final section, Desdunes provides a refutation and correction of Du Bois' political and ideological strategy. Here, he overtly discusses the contextual diversity of Black America, and its consequential political and ideological variations.⁵¹⁸ Through discursive presentation of history and his early twentieth century context, he offers a cosmological vision of the world that exhorts his readers to strive for justice through the patient transformation of social relationships and civic respect. In this final section, he leaves the choice to his audience exhorting them to employ their agency through a model more conciliatory and personal, than compulsory or combative.

Moving from the treatise's narrative structure, Desdunes' use of John 18:38 anchors the discourse's discursive dimension and coming critique of history. Black Christ(s) introduces further contextual and narrative parallels that shape the subsequent discourse. Principle among these associations is its trial motif. As one reads Desdunes' discourse, numerous trial and legal language enhances this intertextual parallel. The

⁵¹⁸ Noting regional, cultural, and temperamental differences, Desdunes distinguishes between Blacks from Latin and Anglo-Saxon environments.

correlation between 18:38 and Black America is not simply Desdunes' substitution of Black America for Jesus, but Black America embodies this correlation through its constant state of being constantly in the midst of an unjust trial. By opening his first argument by describing Du Bois as "having declared" in a way that generated an unfair "indictment," the trial scene built by Desdunes is not merely one between Whites and Blacks, but between Southern Blacks and Du Bois. Desdunes continues to frame his treatise with a forensic guise with words such as "facts", "self-evident", "fair judgement", "analysis", "the charge," and "evidence in support of the accusation." Over the course of the treatise, the discursive presentation of Du Bois' unjust charge prompts Desdunes' readers to participate in this figurative, semi-autobiographical and intertextual trial. It is this figurative trial that conveys Desdunes' greater deliberative agenda: to encourage Black American leaders to craft their Diaspora discourse by critically considering Black America as an articulation of powerful and transformative community of relatedness-amidst-difference.

Poetics at Work 1

Intra-communal critique

The figure of intra-communal critique is so prominent throughout Desdunes' text that it is difficult to discuss it absent the other figures. Implicit in this text's construction as a critique of W.E.B. DuBois, "A Few Words" outlines negotiates the idea of Black American self-critique at a number of levels. Desdunes critiques DuBois' discursive use of history, his disparaging and homogenous depiction of Southern Blacks—i.e. ethno-cultural particularity—and his ideological engagement with America's dominant socio-cultural and political institutions. Each of Desdunes' critiques of DuBois derive from his initial rebuff: the generalization that Southern Blacks, apparently inclusive of Desdunes,

lack book-knowledge and industrial faculty. Through this comment, Desdunes is able to identify ideological, strategic and historical flaws in DuBois' rhetoric. The subsequently critiques occur in both the form of explicit acknowledgment and discursive performance and will be highlighted in the discussion of the other three figures below.

History and the Narration of the Past

One of the most striking attributes to Desdunes' text is his thorough appeal to and (re)narration of history. He contextualizes his engagement with history within class particularity. His title identifies DuBois as Dr. DuBois, which highlights DuBois' credentials. He then reaffirms these credentials by noting:

The high reputation which Dr. Du Bois enjoys as an orator, scholar and patriot, in the United States, lends to his utterances a certain degree of force not found in the deliverances of other thinkers of the black race, with the exception of Dr. Washington, who has his own peculiar distinction.
(1.5 – 9)

This introduction calls attention to agency and privilege. This is the first point at which Desdunes begins exhorting his audiences to acknowledge and privilege context and the inherent agency found in one's context. Thus, Desdunes critique becomes more complex as he critiques DuBois' reconstruction from his position of privileged. This contextual setting represents DuBois and Desdunes as an intracommunal Black American opposition. DuBois is the world renowned, Harvard graduate and scholar from Massachusetts. Desdunes is a relatively unknown, local figure who attended the thoroughly integrated but financially bereft law school at New Orleans' Straight University. The signification of DuBois as scholar and Desdunes and Southern Negro amplifies his critique of DuBois' uncritical invocation of history.

Desdunes discursive use of the past takes a number of forms. On one level, he simply recounts past events and explains their significance. However, this rote

presentation of the past appears alongside a more integrative approach to the past. Throughout the treatise, Desdunes uses scripture, Shakespeare, philosophers and other seminal people as analogies for the situation of Black America. Consequently, through these appeals to historical figures and thought, Desdunes creatively builds analogy between past and present to integrate Black America and its nineteenth century circumstances in to the intellectual and political context of humanity. Thus, history functions as proof and predictor. I will use a few examples to illustrate the nuanced way history contributes to Desdunes' speech.

The news article on DuBois' speech noted DuBois' invocation of historical figures as proof of Black America's contribution to civilization and therefore humanity. Likewise, DuBois uses history as the primary tool to convince Whites to give Blacks legal recognition. Demonstrating his own facility with history, literature and philosophy, Desdunes delivers a number of backhanded compliments that reveal the uncritical, shallow and problematic means by which Du Bois used history to affirm Black identity. Desdunes gladly corrects Du Bois' use of Haitian and French history and supplements it to explain the importance of critical thought. Desdunes first attacks DuBois' depiction of the past and present world. He then challenges DuBois' understanding and discursive use of the world. Through these combined steps, Desdunes depicts DuBois as having incorrect details about the past and present and an incomplete and flawed understanding of the past. The DuBois presented by Desdunes, thus, is a novice historian. This critique is intriguing in line with McKay's own assessment some three decades later.

Desdunes first invalidates DuBois' claims that book-knowledge is foreign to Blacks in the South by listing the names of lawyers, teachers and doctors in New Orleans

who had attained degrees both in the United States and in France.⁵¹⁹ The presence of these individuals and invocation of their names contradicts DuBois' (re)presentation of Southern Blacks as uniformly unlearned. Secondly, Desdunes attacks DuBois' knowledge and comprehension of history:

We noticed that Dr. DuBois alludes to Alexander Dumas and Toussaint L'Ouverture as names not to be forgotten. True, but there were three persons of that first name. The General, the Romancier, the Academician: all three are equally celebrated, for each one presents a distinct line of emience [*sic*]. We suppose, however, that his allusion has reference to the author of Monte Cristo, because in his opinion, probably, the other two are inferior, and not worthy of remembrance.

This phase of the subject compels us to say to Dr. Du Bois, that Alexander Dumas, fils, although as white as either Hamilton or Wallace, lined up with the black portion of his genealogy in a most remarkable manner, and on a most significant occasion...If Dumas, the father, deserves to be remembered for having written George Munier, Dumas, the son, deserves the same honor, not only as the author of l'Etrangere [*sic*], but as one who gave the prestige of his name to the Negro race by acknowledging his origin ad by helping the crusade against the odious traffic on the Dark Continent. (4.1 – 12, 20 – 28)

Here, Desdunes attacks the ambiguity of DuBois' historical presentation.

Demonstrating facility with history, Desdunes demonstrates the importance of critical historical narration. Simultaneously, Desdunes hints at his own axiological view of Diaspora identity. While all three Dumas' deserve remembrance, Desdunes highlights the valor of Dumas, *fils*, because of his self-identification and Diaspora engagement. A veiled allusion to the Toucoutou Affair, Dumas exemplifies someone that continues to negotiate their particularity and relatedness through Black identity. This identity has material and lived consequences. In the case of Dumas, *fils*, he worked to abolish the

⁵¹⁹ DuBois' assessment of Southern Blacks was likely informed partially by his time at Fisk as a young student and as a researcher and teacher at Atlanta University. Lewis provides an insightful analysis of DuBois' development at Fisk. See, David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Biography* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009), 47–66; James Neyland, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, Black American Series (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1992), 47–58.

“odious traffic” of the slave trade. Desdunes provides both critique and correction, while showing a positive view of Diaspora relatedness.

Continuing in this vein, Desdunes challenges DuBois’ invocation of Toussaint L’Ouverture as naïve and counterproductive. He identifies an incongruence in DuBois’ use of history as argument. Astutely observed, L’Ouverture’s strategies of imperial negotiation were diametrically opposed to both the rhetorical and political approaches advanced by DuBois.

We make no captious objection to Toussaint, but does he represent Dr. DuBois’ ideals? Toussaint was the most conservative statesman of his days in San Domingo. All the efforts of that famous man were directed to the end of keeping the Island as a French colony, with himself as Chief. Toussaint living and in power, France would never have lost the Island, provided his ambition was gratified.

Toussaint was, in a measure, the Booker T. Washington of San Domingo, and saw the salvation of his race in hard work for its members on the colons’ plantation...

If it be necessary to point to one model only, we had better be correct as well as consistent, and give this place of honor to the one, who has earned it—Dessalines—and before Dessalines, to Ogé, Chavanne, Petion, Rigaud, Beàuvais, Pinchant, Lambert, all of whom opened the way to liberty, when Toussaint was yet on the Breda plantation, apparently con[...]ed.

(5.43 – 6.12, 20 – 28.)

Desdunes mastery of the Black Atlantic tradition is poignant. Noting DuBois’ haphazard and sloppy erasures, he supplements DuBois’ (re)narration with multiple names that would have better fit within his discourse. The criticism implores Dr. DuBois to better occupy his socio-cultural space and position. A “Dr.” with such renowned and influence must engage their discourse with more thoughtful argumentation.

Desdunes’ argument rests on the figurative use of history. In and of itself, the inclusion of L’Ouverture is acceptable as the a-contextual observation of a figure in history. However, within Diaspora discourse, the figurative dimension of history

demands that “if it be necessary to point to one model only, we had better be correct as well as consistent.” The discursive intention of history in this context was to extol people of African descent who opened the path of liberty. While ontological Blackness may rest solely on the presence of blackness, Desdunes argues that honor must be correct and consistent. DuBois, in this case, is neither. Thus, according to Desdunes, DuBois invocation of *L’Ouverture* demonstrates a lack of historical knowledge.

In addition to Desdunes inner textual engagement of history, he masterfully (re)narrates the present and past into a historical trajectory through a variety of intertextual maneuvers. His figurative association of *L’Ouverture* with Booker T. Washington is one such example. Given the open discord between DuBois and Washington at the beginning of the twentieth century, DuBois would shrink at the suggestion that of his two self-identifying Black historical figures, one is ineffective because of a lack of specificity and the other symbolizes his opponent. Based on Desdunes’ framework, DuBois has erased himself from history.

The (re)narration of the past can function with both recent history, myth and literary history. “A Few Words,” is littered with intertextual references to scripture, philosophy and Shakespeare. A foundational example occurs at the conclusion of the prologue. Desdunes presents an intertextual allusion to John 18:38 that invoke the figure of Christ as a historical template for Black America. He writes:

We believe the will come when Pilate’s question will be put by thousands of righteous men in the South—“What is the truth?” We believe that the verdict will be about the Negro—“We find in him no fault at all.” If that day is to come, it will not come through the Constitutional Negro, but through the Negro of peace and duty. (1.34-39)

His use of John 18:38 discursively presents “Negroes” as a figure analogous to Christ.⁵²⁰ In the midst of the lynching era, the depiction of Christ—figuratively or literally—as embodied in marginalized or Black American experience contradicted society’s view of Jesus as both historical Caucasian and as the ideological embodiment of White supremacy: master; ruler; judge; victor; conqueror; purifying; consuming.⁵²¹ This figurative use transforms the semantic significance of Jesus as signifier by stressing Jesus as sufferer. This blackened Christ maintains an identity as co-sufferer instead of risen victor; this Jesus’s suffering and work is ongoing through history as opposed to his work having been completed at Easter Sunday. Desdunes has provided a historical frame that correlates Black American’s conceptions the past and present.

One can extend the parallels between lynching era Blacks and Christ to encompass unjust treatment by his geo-political neighbors, negative perception among socio-political elites as an inferior, unwanted, and potential threat to the health and stability of the state, susceptible to crowd and mob violence, and vulnerable victim to swift changes in fortune. This discursive treatment creates an interesting temporal transformation between a reader’s foreknowledge of the *telos* of John and anticipated *telos* for Black America existence. The Christ of John’s Gospel has a completed narrative. Each reading of the Gospel can assume the coming conclusion. Desdunes’ Black Americans, however, were stuck within a particular temporal reality. There had yet not been a resurrection or victory. Thus, Desdunes’ presentation of a Black Christ

⁵²⁰ My initial reading assumed that Desdunes had equally correlated Pilate with “thousands of righteous men in the South,” but the critical exegesis will address that correlation below.

⁵²¹ For a discussion on the racialization of Jesus and scriptural interpretation, See Shawn Kelley, *Racializing Jesus: Race, Ideology and the Formation of Modern Biblical Scholarship*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2002); Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters*.

interrupts John's Gospel, causing Jesus to continue to suffer before Pilate. The Passion narrative for Black Christ is a history to be written; it is on-going and forces reader to (re)conceive themselves as actors within the G*d's unfolding will.⁵²² It is within this historical framework that Desdunes crafts Black American historiography and hope.

Empire

Desdunes imbeds his engagement of the United States as an imperial reality throughout his text. The social and cultural texture presumes the presence of many elements. Three approaches to Empire will sufficiently illustrate its impacts on the text's poetics. Desdunes' initial engagement with Empire revolves on the intertextual use of American culture and history. The second deals with his approach to placing Empire and Diaspora. A third approach centers on his explicit views of the United States as an oppressive regime in need of ideological transformation.

One of the most stark and subtle invocations of Empire in Desdunes treatise is his subtitle, "With Malice to None," which is an allusion to Abraham Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Presidential Address," during the last months of the Civil War in 1865.⁵²³

Lincoln closes his address:

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.⁵²⁴

The juxtaposition of Lincoln's address to a divided nation at critical juncture in the history of race relations with Desdunes' pointed critique to DuBois' ideological vision of

⁵²² As stated above, this interpretive strategy was not new within the Black American interpretive tradition.

⁵²³ Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address: Fellow Country-Men," Library, *Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States : from George Washington 1789 to George Bush 1989*, March 4, 1865, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/lincoln2.asp.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

Southern Blacks and political strategy provides a rich context for Desdunes' entire discourse. Throughout the treatise, Desdunes' highlights aspects of his particularity by appealing to his Southern provenance, French heritage and non-Anglo-oriented political philosophy. Yet, he locates these appeals to the beneficial value in his differentness within the context of national relatedness.

Desdunes' choice to cite Lincoln makes sense. Desdunes was fifteen when the speech was given, and his brother Aristide served in New Orleans' Union-aligned Native Guard. Rodolphe Desdunes would spend the vast majority of his adult life participating in Louisiana's Republican Party. One of the primary strategies Desdunes' advocates is the collaboration with allies. In view of this, Abraham Lincoln, especially his rhetoric, is a sensible model of ally. As an intertextual allusion, Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Presidential Address," acknowledges the fracturing elements in the United States.

The image of the United States that Lincoln appeals to focuses on America in-process and becoming. Lincoln recognizes the inevitability of conflict and the harshness that difference at times produces. This interdependence between conflict, difference and occasional forceful engagement is a part of the maintenance of relatedness and must avoid being reduced to detachment. Desdunes draws on this context to acknowledge the potential for people to perceive hostility in his treatise. The brief citation, "with malice toward none," attempts to assuage these interpretations by modeling himself after Lincoln.

This intertextual use of Lincoln establishes a complex vision of America's future as both hopeful and precarious. This dual-natured image contributes to his later critiques of DuBois, the American legal institution and the American public at large. While a

significant portion of Lincoln's address acknowledges the stain of slavery and racial discrimination, Lincoln's assassination and Desdunes' present context both testify to the limits of legislation and singular power.

As discussed above, Desdunes draws heavily on Black Atlantic history to critique DuBois. This invocation of the Black Atlantic, particularly Black French history, challenges myopic views of Black American identity and American history. By drawing on historical figures from Haitian, French and American heritage, Desdunes challenges the American national project and affirms multiple identities. One pays particular attention to his characterization of L'Ouverture and Booker T. Washington. References to the Haitian revolution have long fed white anxiety about the dangers of the violent overthrow of a racist and oppressive Empire. As a Haitian descendant and Black American that frequently drew on Black Atlantic traditions, Desdunes was aware of the symbolic value of Haiti. Yet, in correcting DuBois' history, Desdunes valorizes Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the leader and first ruler of independent Haiti. This depiction of Dessalines as someone immersed in the quest for freedom and liberty challenges euro-centric approaches to Haitian history. By valorizing Black Atlantic traditions and Diaspora, Desdunes' figurative use of Dessalines negotiates American identity and ideology.

The second mode of Desdunes engagement of Empire is couched in his image of the Black Christ. While Desdunes uses Christ as a figure to frame Black Americans within a particular historical trajectory, the reference to Pilate (re)presents dominant American culture. Pilate, a representative of Rome, asks Jesus, "What is truth?" Within Desdunes frame, American society, as a whole, lacks knowledge of truth. However, he

believes that it is the “thousands of righteous men in the South,” that will raise this question and affirm that there is no fault in their neighbors of African descent. The collective judgement is key to Desdunes’ imagery and argument throughout his text. Desdunes speaks from his context. He lacks faith that legislation alone can protect or secure the rights of people. He doubts that material wealth or hard work alone will generate respect. He rejects the notion that liberty can simply be gifted to Black America.

Freedom, liberty, justice and peace are the corporate consequences of a healthy body. Thus, Desdunes argues that is through the transformation of ideologies that the American public will change. This argument depicts the American system as internally corrupt and institutionally inept. This worldview prompts Desdunes’ strategic pursuit of peace and duty. This form of aggressive civil subversion prefigures the ideological perspective advocated by Martin Luther King, Jr. It is through this assumption of common humanity that Black Americans, in their particularity, will participate in the dismantling of the racist ideologies that result in oppressive legislation, indifference to persecution and a failed promise of liberty. In contradiction to the pejorative racialization of blackness during the nadir of American race relations, Desdunes seizes his identities scholar, historian, American, Latin, Southern and human. It is the last identity that Desdunes claims is most essential. By adopting an identity that valorizes his identities as French, Southern, Black and American, Desdunes resists dominant culture's attempts to denigrate or erase Black Americans from society.

Ethno-Cultural and/or Geopolitical Particularity

In the context of Black America, the notions of ethno-cultural and geopolitical particularity are primarily reflected in the concept of race and racialization. As a figure,

racial difference and particularity permeates Desdunes' text. The social and cultural texture is one where blackness is an ever-present reality that influences one's speech, privilege and resources. Desdunes' call for Black people of "peace" and "duty" take on variant meanings depending on how one evaluates his participation with the *Comité des Citoyens*. Desdunes is neither defending the system nor advocating placation to the system. Alternatively, he recommends the concentrated and aggressive attack of ideological substructures that support racism and discrimination.

In addition to the social and cultural texture, race and ethno-cultural particularity play a prominent place in the inner texture and intertexture of "A Few Words." The speech to which Desdunes replies employs race and racial difference as its subject. Desdunes cites this speech and challenges DuBois' tactless use of *le même*. DuBois, according to Desdunes, constructs rigid racial constructs that appeal to base dichotomies of Negro/White, Oppressed/Victim and Contributing Force/Enemy. Desdunes' negotiation of this figure occurs as more than reference to race and ethno-cultural particularity. He (re)frames notions of blackness and the history of the greater African Diaspora.

Over the course of his discourse, Desdunes makes great use of context and community particularity. Among his explicit references and their implications are "Whites," "righteous men," "Negroes," the "black race", "America," "Southern Negroes," "Northern Negroes," "Latin-Negroes," and "Anglo-Saxon Negroes." None of these categories are static; Desdunes is able to employ them in different ways at different times. While descended from free persons of Color, Desdunes appropriates the identities

of Negro, Black, American, Southern Negro and Latin Negro for himself. Consequently, this text exhibits Desdunes' appreciation of intersectionality of the African Diaspora.

A significant aspect of Desdunes' appeal is for recognition and respect of Black particularity. He expresses concern over the lack of contextual consideration. Desdunes' charge amounts to the description of DuBois as embodying Hegelian Colour-blindness. Desdunes employs DuBois to signify the greater practice amongst "Northern Negroes" and then "American Negroes." He subtly introduces this critique with an obscure reference to the Constitutional Negro. Desdunes predicts the ideological process through which Black Americans will secure social and legal recognition and protection in America: If that day is to come, it will not come through the Constitutional Negro, but through the Negro of peace and duty,"(1.38 – 39). Desdunes infers that DuBois represents this type of "Constitutional Negro," who he later links with "Northern Negroes" and "philosophical Negroes." Desdunes is here critiquing univocal constructs of ontological Blackness and a *le même* epistemology. Supported by his (re)narration of history, Desdunes accuses DuBois of relying on rigid boundaries and uncritical assessments of being.

Invoking his particular racialized social and cultural texture, Desdunes' life experiences with the Supreme Court and race riots perceives the necessity of relatedness with White allies and the dangers of rhetoric. His term constitutional, thus, functions along two registers. In one respect, Desdunes describes DuBois as someone solely focused on a single aspect of Black equality: legal. The constitution, however, fails to protect individuals from mob violence and lacks true impact on the experienced life of Blacks in the South. This reality allows Desdunes to identify the needs of his Louisiana

context: “The Negroes need the friendly sentiment of the American people more than the laws of the American Congress,” (13.22 – 23). The 1866 race riot after the Union won the Civil War and passed the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, the disenfranchisement of Black Americans following the Hayes-Tilden Compromise, and *Plessy vs Ferguson* despite the Constitution’s promise of ‘equal protection under the law,’ each amplify Desdunes recognition that ideological nuance is necessary to combat the racialization of blackness.

Constitutional also points to DuBois’ reliance on homogeneity and sameness. Desdunes implies that DuBois employs the same destructive ideology in his discourse and arguments. While appealing to White America to grant Black Americans agency, DuBois erases difference and discounts alternative experiences in much the same way as the Whites he lambasts. He brings this point to climax on 13.24 – 44:

As little as we may surmise about it, there are two distinct schools of politics among the Negroes: The Latin Negro differs radically from the Anglo-Saxon in aspiration and in method.

One hopes, the other doubts. This we often perceive that one makes every effort to acquire merits, the other to gain advantages. One aspires to equality, the other to identity. One will forget that he is a Negro in order to think that he is a man; the other will forget that he is a man in order to think that he is a Negro.

These radical differences act on the feelings of both in direct harmony with these characteristics. One is a philosophical Negro, the other practical.

These disagreements arise, partly from temperament, and partly from surroundings, just as a difference in the manner of thinking will soon crystalize between the Northern Negroes and the Southern Negroes. Without going into further details we simply remark that is it were possible to convince the American Negro on the established worth of the Latin Negro, there is no example seen in the other races, that could not find a parallel in the history of the black race. It would be a blessing if our faith in the unity of humanity could begin at home.

Desdunes' argumentation consistently refers to the need for peace and duty. It is the duty of Black Americans to be consistent and employ proper models of justice and relationship. Anticipating Womanist critiques of Black American literature's androcentric character, Desdunes calls DuBois to recognize his own Northern, elite, Anglo-centric approach to difference, dispute, history and community.

DuBois symbolizes, for Desdunes, the "Constitutional Negro" that lazily appeals to ontological Blackness in a way that obscures, exploits, others or injures those with whom he co-negotiates his blackness. This "Constitutional Negro" does not represent a single iteration of blackness or ideological perspective. Desdunes does not imply that Washington's or DuBois' views qualify them as "Constitutional." The use of theories that signify the general as univocal or use unilinear historiography to homogenize characterizes one as "Constitutional."

Desdunes' critique calls President Obama's ontological Blackness into question not because of his discursive use of the past. But, because of his position of privilege in a United States of America that continues to struggle make education or legal justice available to people of African descent. Desdunes' critique of the "Constitutional Negro" is a call to view criticism as polyvocal and multidirectional as Black Atlantic history. It is a call to recognize position, place and privilege; to sympathize and recognize how context alters strategy; to include those with whom you dispute into your narratives as related-partners and not just foils. It is in this figurative negotiation of internal critique, history, Empire, and, ethno-cultural difference that Desdunes' "A Few Words" provides insight into diverse and dynamic approaches to diaspora poetics and the analysis of Diaspora discourse.

Cowley-30 (B19):
Jedaniah and the Antiquity of Jewish Particularity and Diaspora in Persian Egypt

Now, our ancestors built this temple in the fortress of Yeb in the days of the kingdom of Egypt; and when Cambyses came to Egypt he found it (already) constructed. They (the Persians) knocked down all the temples of the Egyptian gods; but no one damaged this temple.

(AP 30, trans. K. C. Hansen)

Local Context 2

Elephantine is a small island in the Nile River just north of the First Cataract. In close proximity to Syene (Aswan), this region served as an approximate boundary between the Egyptian and Ethiopian Empires for millennia. The Elephantine Papyri consist of 175 documents that reflect seven different language traditions and covers almost three thousand years.⁵²⁵ In comparison, the fifty-two Aramaic papyri found at Elephantine cover a relatively small era between the late sixth century B.C.E. and the end of the fifth century B.C.E. Coming from the period of “Persian Egypt,” these texts portray Elephantine as an ethno-culturally diverse military colony representative of Persian imperial rule and the inherent complexities that accompany the structural interaction of ethno-culturally diverse, subject peoples.

Biblical scholars have particular interest in these texts because of the discovery of numerous documents that attest to the presence of a “Jewish” military settlement and Temple on Elephantine.⁵²⁶ Identifying as “*Yehuda 'ei*” and conveying an ethno-cultural relatedness that transcended geopolitical boundaries, this community self-identified as

⁵²⁵ Bezalel Porten et al., eds., “Introduction,” in *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change*, Documenta et monumenta orientis antiqui 22 (New York: Brill, 1996), v–ix, 7–8.

⁵²⁶ An earlier version of this chapter reflected my own Hegelian Colour-blindness due to my use of the Hebrew, *Yehudim* [Jews, Judeans] to depict the Aramaic speaking Yahwists at Elephantine. This Hebrew-oriented and ideological bias was involuntary and contributes to the everpresent need for self-reflection and contextual disclosure. The Aramaic, *Yehuda 'ei* [Jews, Judeans] is used throughout this chapter to discuss Elephantine-based Yahwists. When referring to Judea-oriented and Hebrew-writing Yahwists, I retain use of *Yehudim*.

worshippers of YHW and maintained their own Temple. Consequently, these Yahwists of the fifth century B.C.E. complement depictions of Persian-era Jewish identity contained in the Hebrew Bible. The socio-cultural, historical and imperial identities depicted among the Yahwist texts of Elephantine portray a drastically different image than that reflected in the official ethno-cultural memory found in Ezra-Nehemiah. While traditional scholarship frequently engaged these texts as reflection Jewish deviance or flatly denied this community's validity as "Jewish," the consideration of Diaspora, particularly through the lens of Empire, may greatly benefit the analysis and historicizing of both the Elephantine Archive and Ezra-Nehemiah.

The documents surveyed in this sample reading come from the specific collection of Jedaniah. This collection contains texts covering approximately twelve years from 419 B.C.E. to the end of the fifth century B.C.E. Bezalel Portent describes these texts as a "communal archival." Jedaniah was the leader of the *Yehuda 'ei* at Elephantine at the end of the fifth century B.C.E. The documents and correspondences surviving reflect the personal, business, cultic and political interests of Jedaniah and the greater community. Thus, as Jedaniah communicates with local individuals as well as imperial administrators in Judah, Samaria and Egypt, his archive reflects the maintenance and negotiation of Diaspora in Persian Egypt.

Imperial Existence 2: A Nadir in Elephantine Relations

The Achaemenids were an influential dynasty of Persian kings who over the course of three centuries exercised influence over territories ranging from the eastern boundary of modern day Pakistan to Greece and Libya to the west. The Achaemenid Empire (550 B.C.E. – 330 B.C.E.) is associated with Cyrus II (559 B.C.E. – 530

B.C.E.)—i.e. Cyrus the Great—and his absorption of Media (549 B.C.E.), Lydia (547 B.C.E.) and Babylon (539 B.C.E.). His successor Cambyses II (530 B.C.E. – 522 B.C.E.) expanded Achaemenid rule into Egypt (525 B.C.E.). The height of Persian dominance occurred in the fifth century under Darius I. Through a series of wars with the Greek states, the Persian rule spread to Ionia and the Aegean. The Empire’s footprint shrank over the next 150 years. As discussed below, their rule of Egypt (525 B.C.E – 404 B.C.E.) was constantly tenuous, consistently stimulating a variety of alliances and strategic positions.

The influence of the Achaemenid rule is visible in the documentary and archeological testimony of numerous cultures. Greek writers Ctesias, Xenophon and Thucydides recount Greek wars and interactions with Persia and their imperial rule. As such, a critical period of Greek history and cultural development is a reaction to and memory of Achaemenid Persia. Similarly, Achaemenid Persia holds an integral place in the cultural memory and scriptural testimony of Judaism. According to Old Testament narrative, it was Cyrus the Great who ended the Babylonian Captivity, permitting repatriation of their homeland (Ezra 1.1 – 4) in 538 B.C.E.⁵²⁷ The renovation and initial reconstruction of the Second Temple occurs under Darius I’s reign. Consequently, central aspects of the Jewish scriptural narrative are depicted as under patronage of Persia. It is within this imperial context that the Yahwists in Elephantine attempt to rebuild their Temple by framing its destruction as anti-Persian and perpetrated by a subversive ethno-cultural faction.

⁵²⁷ The height of Israel’s imperial influence occurred under the united monarchy of Solomon and diminished with the division of the monarchy into Israel and Judah (1 Kgs 11.33 – 12.19). Israel fell to the Assyrians in ca 722 B.C.E. and Judah to the Babylonians in ca 587 B.C.E.

Because Persia remained in conflict throughout the bulk of their era and took replaced Babylonian imperial rule, they largely relied on pre-established systems of governance. Aramaic had spread throughout a considerable portion of their area of influence, so Aramaic remained the Empire's *lingua franca*. They divided their Empire into Satraps but specific information about their inner workings is sparse. No consensus exists on the precise the administrative relationship between the regions surrounding Jerusalem (*Yehud*) and Samaria throughout the Persian era.⁵²⁸ However, the documentary witness at Elephantine suggests continued interaction and negotiation of identity across these geopolitical boundaries. Cowley-21 (B13) attests to this circumstance in Elephantine. Cowley-21 (B13) is frequently referred to as the “Passover Letter” and consists of a letter sent in ca 419 B.C.E. from an un-identified Hannaniah to Jedaniah and the “troops” at Elephantine. Hannaniah intimates that the *Yehuda'ei* at Elephantine have explicit imperial permission by Darius II to observe Passover. This brief letter illuminates both the Diaspora interaction between Yahwists, the differences between this imperial communication and the official developed ethno-cultic tradition preserved—and crafted—in Jewish scripture. Ethno-cultic identity negotiation was closely aligned with imperial position and the social status of the *Yehuda'ei* at Elephantine as a military colony predating the Persian rule (Cowley-30, B19).

⁵²⁸ John Kessler, “The Diaspora in Zechariah 1-8 and Eazra-Nehemiah: The Role of History, Social Location, and Tradition in the Formulation of Identity,” in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau (Winona Lake, IN, USA: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 137–143, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/alltitles/docDetail.action?docID=10495932>; Etienne Nodet, “Israelites, Samaritans, Temples, Jews,” in *Samaria, Samaritans, Samaritans Studies on Bible, History and Linguistics*, ed. József Zsengellér, *Studia Judaica* 66 (Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2011), 121–72, <http://public.ebrary.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=799443>; Janet Johnson, “Ethnic Considerations in Persian Period Egypt,” in *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente*, ed. Emily Teeter and John A. Larson (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1999), 211–22; Menahem Mor, *Samaritans: Past and Present: Current Studies* (New York: De Gruyter, 2010).

The military provenance of the Elephantine Yahwists is important to the evaluation of its discourse. A longstanding imperial practice was the exportation and repopulation of conquered regions with different subject peoples, particularly with military settlements. Cowley-30 (B19) depicts three interrelated, different imperial communities: Persian imperial officials; Egyptians; and, Yahwistic communities in Elephantine and abroad—i.e. Jewish Diaspora or the Diaspora of Israel. Informing one another, the negotiation of identity, relatedness, ethno-cultural particularity and imperial space shape this text’s communicative potential. Within these groups’ relationship, the privileged status of the Persians places the Egyptians and Yahwists in a potential competition. Composed in 407 B.C.E during the reign of Darius II, Cowley-30 (B19) depicts Elephantine in a volatile state. The text depicts the Persian Satrap of Egypt, Arsames, in positive terms but absent.⁵²⁹ Having left Egypt to reside with King Darius, Arsames was unaware of the events and thus unable to address the concerns in Elephantine. The Chief Official in charge of Elephantine was Vidranga. Unlike the absent Arsames, Cowley-30 (B19) describes Vidranga as wicked and the chief catalyst complicit in the Egyptian unrest and having been recently executed for his crimes.⁵³⁰ With the Arsames absent from Egypt from 410 B.C.E. – 407/6 B.C.E, the *Yehuda’ei of* Elephantine engaged the Diaspora for aid, support and advocacy at the imperial level to rebuild their temple.

⁵²⁹ Arsames is frequently designated as Arshama. There are debates over his rule of Egypt and little is known about him after 407 B.C.E. For a discussion of his absence from Egypt, See, Christopher Tuplin, “Arshama: Prince and Satrap,” in *The Arshama Letters from the Bodleian Letters*, ed. John Ma, Christopher J. Tuplin, and Lindsay Allen, vol. 1, 4 vols., Revised Edition. (Oxford, UK: Arts and Humanities Research Council, 2013), 5–44.

⁵³⁰ James Lindenburger, “What Ever Happened to Vidranga? A Jewish Liturgy of Cursing from Elephantine,” in *The World of the Aramaeans*, ed. Michele Dayjau, John Weavers, and Michael Wiegl, vol. 3 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 314–57.

The Yahwistic communities depicted in the text consist of different geopolitical regions co-narrating a shared ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic tradition. The depiction of shared imperial and cultic interests between Judah, Samaria and Elephantine conveys the presence of a Diaspora consciousness while also providing an image of Yahwist identity and relatedness during Achaemenid rule.⁵³¹

Frequently, Empires instigate the internal conflict between subject groups vying for social resources. This imperial practice suggests that the realities of Diaspora communities are often shaped by the imperial positions of other minority or marginalized communities. Consequently, consideration of the Egyptian imperial circumstance in Elephantine will inform understandings of the Yahwist community.

Recent studies indicate that Egyptians largely occupied inferior social roles under Persian rule. The principal stimulus for Cowley-30 (B19) is in response to hostilities between the *Yehuda'ei* and Egyptian rivals affiliated with the cult of Egyptian deity Khnum. Largely based on extrapolations from the study of slave names, Jane Johnson believes indigenous Egyptians comprised a significant portion of the lower tiers of society.⁵³² Consequently, Johnson believes that “ethnic” social structuring was unnecessary in Egypt largely because the uses of ethno-cultural or geographic heritage

⁵³¹ The most prominent of these communities is the geopolitical region of Jerusalem and Judah. Beyond the scope of this reading, intertextual analysis of Ezra-Nehemiah through diaspora poetics will greatly aid the construction of this imperial existence. Ezra-Nehemiah portrays a drastically different ideology of intra-cultural interactions and community identity. When engaging both the Elephantine papyri with Ezra-Nehemiah, it is important to identify audience and to take such discourse into consideration because as context shifts the figurative representation of history and strategy demand re-signification.

⁵³² Johnson, “Ethnic Considerations in Persian Period Egypt.”

“reflect an organizational scheme imposed by the Persians... [and] some Egyptians, especially High Egyptians... must have resented the Persian takeover.”⁵³³

The recurrence of Egyptian revolts through the fifth century B.C.E. support Johnson’s hypothesis. Significant Egyptian revolts broke out upon the deaths of both Kings Darius (486 B.C.E.) and Xerxes (460 B.C.E.) of Persia. The Greco-Persian Wars serve as a backdrop for continued Egyptian uprisings, as the Libyan Inarus and Egyptian Amyrtaeus led a revolt between 460 – 454 B.C.E (Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* I.4; Ctesias, *Persica* F14 36 – 38; Herodotus, *Histories* 3.15).⁵³⁴ This quest for political autonomy found an ally in Athens. Unrest continued and revolts from 415 – 410 B.C.E. precipitated the eventual Egyptian overthrow of Persian rule in ca 404 B.C.E.

Evaluated in the context of Greek literature, the socio-political and cultural climate in Egypt held significant trans-imperial importance. Though much of this conflict took place in the Delta region of Egypt, it presents a less stable Persian Egypt than is normally presented. The Greek historians identify these Egyptian and Libyan rebels as Persia’s most formidable adversaries. Hyperbole or no, Persia’s other imperial

⁵³³ Janet Johnson. "Ethnic Considerations in Persian Period Egypt" Pages 211-22 in *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente* edited by Emily Teeter and John A. Larson (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1999), 218.

⁵³⁴ Thucydides records the rebellion of Inarus and Amyrtaeus as covering all of Egypt. While Artaxerxes defeated Inarus and regained control of Egypt, Amyrtaeus escaped and continued resistance. When Sparta and Athens formed a truce in 451 B.C.E., the Athenians immediately sent assistance to Amyrtaeus in Egypt. Though the Persians successfully defeated the Athenian naval forces, Egypt and the Nile was contested territory. Through the perspective of Greek sources, Amyrtaeus’ ability to maintain forces between 454 – 451 B.C.E. suggests portions of Egypt were not fully controlled by Persian authority. The description of “Persian” control of Egypt must be also understood as imperial ideology. Herodotus describes the Egyptian rebels, “yet certainly no two persons ever did the Persians more damage than Amyrtaeus and Inarus.” Kahn reviews the literary evidence for the Inarus revolt, and then offers alternative dates based on Egyptian and Aramaic sources. Kahn’s proposed dates are 464-457 B.C.E. Probably less than thirty years passed after Amyrtaeus’ second insurrection when Greeks began fighting among themselves in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE). Interesting, Greek conflict granted Persian Egypt a bit more security. This war prevented Athens from maintaining consistent assistance to the Egyptians. In 412 B.C.E., Persia finally placed their support behind Sparta. For more information, See Dan ’el Kahn, “Inarus’ Rebellion Against Artaxerxes I and the Athenian Disaster in Egypt,” *Classical Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2008): 424–40.

agendas were also contingent on control of the Nile and Egypt. The importance and significance of the military colony in Elephantine becomes even more vital. The Elephantine military colonies existed in the presence of Egyptian quests to overthrow Persian domination. This tenuous context amplifies the trans-imperial nature of Persian Egypt and Elephantine. At the boundaries of Persian influence and Ethiopia's Kushite Empire, the military settlement at Elephantine served an important role as imperial buffer between Egyptian anti-Persian sentiment and the *Yehuda 'ei*'s negotiation of Diaspora identity and imperial position.

In addition to the socio-political conflicts and imperial precariousness of Elephantine, the island provides an image of a rich and diverse area. The Elephantine archive suggests the presence of high degrees of interaction. Documents testify to intermarriage, borrowing of names, invocation of different deities in contracts and an extremely cosmopolitan environment.⁵³⁵ Between the Elephantine and Syene (Aswan), there were Greeks, Egyptians, the *Yehuda 'ei* and Arameans alongside a small number of governing Persians. In addition to the official communication in Cowley-30 (B19), many of the Elephantine Aramaic letters depict integrated and engaged communities of various ethno-cultural and geographical provenance.

Textual Content, a Description: 2

Composed in the fourteenth year of Darius (407 B.C.E.), the letter is a petition to Bagavahya, the imperial governor of Judah. Jedaniah and the Elephantine *Yehuda 'ei* are requesting Bagavahya's aid in securing permission and resources to rebuild the Yahwist's Temple in Elephantine, which had been unjustly destroyed and looted three years earlier

⁵³⁵ Janet Johnson. "Ethnic Considerations in Persian Period Egypt", 216-18; For primary documents and examples see AP43; Hermopolysis B3.b.1;

by Egyptians associated with the Temple of Khnum. The suitability of Cowley-30 (B19) as a sample text for diaspora poetics is due in part to its explicit engagement of geopolitical and ethno-cultural particularity; navigation of Persian imperial rule; invocation and (re)narration of the past as argument and identity formation and reference to a lack intra-Diaspora support. The support that they request is a letter that will inform an unnamed entity [likely the local Egyptians] to permit the reconstruction. Following Porten's framework, Cowley-30 (B19) consists of two primary parts: report and petition.⁵³⁶ Sent as a communal petition, the letter is addressed from Jedaniah who represents the community's socio-political leadership and the collective group of "his colleagues the priests," who represent the community's ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural structure.

The initial portion of the letter provides a number of carefully framed narrative presentations of the past. Jedaniah describes the destruction of the Temple and the socio-political circumstances that permitted such an event to take place. He then provides a brief history of the community of *Yehuda'ei* at Elephantine and the Temple. This (re)narration of the past specifically frames the community within an imperial context.

The latter portion of the letter contains the request for aid and support. It is in this portion of the letter that Jedaniah draws on a Diaspora consciousness by acknowledging both ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic institutions in Judah and Samaria. Similarly, Bagavahya, the letter's addressee, depicts this letter as Diaspora discourse. While Arsames ruled the Persian Satrapy of Egypt, Jedaniah addresses his request to the

⁵³⁶ Bezael Porten et al., eds., *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change*, trans. Bezael Porten, Documenta et monumenta orientis antiqui 22 (New York: Brill, 1996), 139.

imperial governor of Judah. Implicit in this petition is a belief that the interests of the *Yehuda'ei* at Elephantine are connected to the geopolitical regions of Judah and Samaria.

Cowley-30 (B19) is the first of two extant drafts of the same petition. The second draft, Cowley-31 (B20), contains minor changes that have little effect on the present argument. The petition was successful; Bagavahya, governor of Judah, and Delaiah respectively, sent a joint reply that endorsed the temple's reconstruction, which survives as Cowley-32 (B21). When looking at Cowley-30 (B19) and its historical and archival contexts, there are few aspects of Diaspora or imperial existence that escape the breadth of its discursive breadth. Cowley-30 (B19) is the narration of intra-imperial conflict and Diaspora existence.

Poetics at Work 2

Ethno-Cultural and Geopolitical Particularity

Jedaniah negotiates his ethno-cultural and geopolitical particularity in multiple ways throughout the petition. The key points of reference consist of the intentional differentiation with Egyptians, negotiation of relatedness across geopolitical boundaries with other Yahwist communities and resolute identification with Elephantine. The initial framing of the text as community discourse enhances the communal sense of the petition. Instead of making a request on behalf of the elite, Jedaniah presents the letter as community discourse. His reference to the effects that the temple's destruction had on women and children amplifies the corporate feel of the letter. Comparison between Cowley-30 (B19) and Cowley-31(B20) further suggest the author's intention to portray this petition as a community discourse and not just an elite/priestly discourse. While Cowley-30 (B19) names Jedaniah and the priests as the senders, Cowley-31 (B20) names the senders as Jedaniah, the priests and all the *Yehuda'ei*. Over the course of the letter,

Jedaniah has references the male leadership, women and children. This collective represents the general body of a community. The accuracy of this portrayal is of less concern than the intended discursive presentation.

While framing the text as a community discourse, the implied connectedness and interrelated interests with other Yahwist communities appeals to notions of relatedness-amidst-difference. By addressing the letter to the governor and noting the existence of previous letters, Jedaniah negotiates his ethno-cultural particularity as cultic, cultural and political. The insinuation that the governor of a different geopolitical entity would work on behalf of another governor's subjects necessitates the perception of interest. The possibility that Persia encouraged the maintenance of the Diaspora among the *Yehuda'ei*—i.e. Jewish Diaspora—connects Jedaniah's negotiation of geopolitical particularity with his negotiation of Empire.

Just as Jedaniah references males, women and children to signify community investment, his reference to political, ethno-cultic and socio-cultural leaders from Judah and Samaria achieve a similar effect. Further analysis of his reference to Samaria is necessary to discern whether he intentionally omits reference to an existing temple structure or if the Mt Gerizim complex had yet been established or come to Jedaniah's attention. However, the Yahwist temple activity during the fifth century B.C.E. in Samaria, Judah and Elephantine show a shared interest in ethno-cultural expression across their Diaspora.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁷ Mor, *Samaritans*; Alan D. Crown, "Redating the Schism between the Judaeans and the Samaritans," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series 82, no. 1/2 (1991): 17–50; Shimon Dar, "The Samaritans in Caesarea Maritima," in *Samaria, Samaritans, Samaritans Studies on Bible, History and Linguistics*, ed. József Zsengellér, Studia Judaica 66 (Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2011), 225–30, <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=799443>.

The appropriation of Diaspora identity, in my contemporary construction, highlights the fluidity of identity and intersectionality. The Jedaniah archive supports this model of mutable identity. Jedaniah is careful to craft a specific image of imperial allegiance, Diaspora relatedness and antiquity in his petition to Bagavahya. He stresses the community's claim on the geopolitical space in Elephantine. While linked with the Yahwists in Judah and Samaria, Jedaniah identifies the entire community as citizens of Elephantine. He makes this claim as he introduces the petition. The careful and deliberate positioning of this identification sheds light on the mutable, polyvocal identity that Jewish Diasporas have variously and discursively negotiated from Jedaniah and Ezra-Nehemiah to Philo and Josephus to Simon Dubnow and Ahad Ha'am.

The mutability of this identity becomes even more pronounced in Cowley-33 (B22) when Jedaniah and four other leaders sent another petition concerning the temple to an unidentified "Lord." With the Temple rebuild approved, these five individuals offer to fund the rebuilding. What is intriguing is that in this letter, Jedaniah and his colleagues stress their identity as "Syenians." Their identification as individuals with the hereditary right to own property at nearby Syene introduces yet another layer to the particularity of Diaspora identity. While the entire community of *Yehuda'ei* identified as rooted in Elephantine, these five elite figures appear to have dual citizenship. This multidimensional identity, similar in some respects to Rodolphe Desdunes, cautions readers to recognize the figurative and discursive nature of identity construction, particularly in a Diaspora discourse. The question is not if Jedaniah belonged to Elephantine, Syene or Judah. The query revolves around how he expresses and embodies these intersectional identities to enhance the recognition of relatedness with his

community in Elephantine, the imperial governors of the Diaspora regions where he has no claim or the Diaspora individuals he shares relationship with through various class, cultic and discursive dances.

Intra-communal critique

Cowley-30 (B19) reflects less overt notions of intra-communal, Diaspora critique. The lone point of interest in this survey centers on Jedaniah's petition to the governor of Judah and description of his subject's lack of response. The navigation of imperial position is often tenuous and frequently lead to intra-Diaspora conflict and dispute. Jedaniah's engagement with the ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic figures in Judah and Jerusalem highlight his Diaspora consciousness. However, the inclusion of their lack of response to their imperial ruler can be viewed in multiple ways. One possible interpretation is that Jedaniah was attempting to utilize his position with the Empire to shame the ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic leaders in Jerusalem to respond and comply with his request.

Bagavahya's ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic identity is important to this reading. If Bagavahya is a Jerusalem Yahwist, the inclusion of this statement carries less significance. If Bagavahya is a non-Yahwist, then Jedaniah's insertion of this information possibly conveys a political maneuvering against the ethno-cultic leadership in Jerusalem. In this reading, Jedaniah contacts the imperial governor in reaction to Jerusalem's decision to not respond. This strategy views the Persian imperial administration as a mechanism to maintain, sustain or coerce more amenable Diaspora discourse. Immersed in Cowley-30 (B19) is Jedaniah's continued description of his community as ancient, loyal and supportive of Persia. Depicting Jerusalem as nonresponsive to a community that is i) their ethno-cultic peers, ii) the victim of anti-

Persian violence and, iii) loyal Persian subjects could portray Jerusalem as failing to perform societal expectations. The intentional imperial shaming of the ethno-cultic community in Jerusalem would suggest the presence of intra-communal debate. The lack of a Jerusalem response or material support to reconstruct the Elephantine temple makes sense in the context of the official tradition composed in Ezra-Nehemiah. One needs not prove the historical accuracy of Ezra-Nehemiah as long as the narrative reflects the leadership's ideological position. Failing to secure Diaspora support from the ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic leaders in Jerusalem, Jedaniah reached out to the reflects Jerusalem's ethno-cultic ideological position towards the end of the fifth century B.C.E., then the three year lack of response

Traditional readings of Jedaniah's Applying this reading to Cowley-30 (B19) raises an alternative view of Jedaniah's intention in acknowledging communication with the ethno-cultic leaders in Jerusalem. If his appeal to Jerusalem's imperial sought to coerce Diaspora engagement, then Jedaniah's petition exemplifies the competition and political posturing that frequently occurs between various articulations of Diaspora. In terms of coordinating images of late fifth century B.C.E. Elephantine ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic practice with the Jerusalem-oriented Ezra-Nehemiah tradition, reading Jedaniah and the presence of subtle imperial maneuvering between Diaspora articulations is fully compatible with diaspora poetics. While I refrain from advancing this reading as "the" singularly intended structure, this discussion highlights various ways that the inner texture of Cowley-30 (B19) may reflect and negotiate the ethno-cultural particularities of Elephantine Yahwists of the Achaemenid era.

Empire

A number of the discursive negotiations of other figures have already highlighted Jedaniah's negotiation of Empire. An additional observation will suffice. As noted earlier, the letter's Persian provenance is clear in references to Bagavahya, Arsames, Vidranga and the temporal reference to Darius, King of Persia. In the context of Persia's ongoing problems with Egyptian rebellion, Jedaniah aligns the destruction of the Yahwist Temple with Persia's continued experience of Egyptian subversion. Consequently, the experiences of the *Yehuda'ei* in Egypt come to signify Egyptian actions against Persia. Drawing on the socio-political context, Jedaniah presents his community as loyal subjects who have fallen victim to Egyptian violence and unlawfulness. An additional appeal to Empire deals with the text's negotiation of history, and is thus discussed below.

In much the same way that Jedaniah's appeal to Bagavahya may signify conflict between Jerusalem and Elephantine, his petition to other imperial leaders lead some scholars to view this as a move that subverts Arsames' authority. The letter that approves the building of the temple, Cowley-32 (B21), is jointly addressed by representatives from Judah and Samaria and contain instructions to inform Arsames of the decision. Peter Schäfer deduces that Arsames has returned to Egypt.⁵³⁸ His apparent lack of agency in deciding to rebuild the temple prompts Schäfer to argue that Arsames is inferior in rank or prestige to Bagavahya and/or Delaiah, the son of Sanballat.

When contextualized in its geopolitical situation, Cowley-30 (B19) is an excellent example of Diaspora negotiation of Empire. Jedaniah effectively navigates the Persian

⁵³⁸ There is not enough space to respond to Schäfer's Judeophobia, which fails to consider the imperial context of Elephantine. Schäfer uses illustrations from Elephantine and Alexandria to support his hypothesis that anti-Semitism developed in and is indigenous to Egypt Schäfer's most significant weakness is his hesitance to consider violence associated with Jewish military settlements while focusing on the same imperial situations to depict Egyptian violence as fundamentally anti-Semitic. See, Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

imperial world by claiming rootedness and imperial legitimacy to Elephantine. The political (in)stability of Egypt during the fifth century B.C.E. gives Cowley-30 (B19) significance in theorizing on Diaspora and Empire.

History and the Narration of the Past

And during the days of the king(s) of Egypt our fathers had build that Temple in Elephantine the fortress and when Cambyses entered Egypt he found that Temple built. And they overthrew the temples of the gods of Egypt, all (of them), but one did not damage anything in that Temple.

(Cowley-30, B19, *trans* Porten)

The most captivating figure exhibited in Cowley-30 (B19) is its (re)narration of the past. This (re)narration of the past bridges each of the other figures into a vibrant semantic world that places the Elephantine Yahwists in relation to Persia, Egypt and Jerusalem. Cowley-30 (B19) major narrations of the past. The first narrative describes the destruction of the temple. The second narrative serves as a prologue to the actual request and recounts the history of the Yahwist Temple at Elephantine. While conveying useful information, both narratives serve primarily a figurative function that portrays the *Yehuda'ei* of Elephantine as an ancient, loyal and rooted community.

Jedaniah begins this narrative by providing setting and characters. This setting depicts a Persian setting by invokes the names of both Darius, king of kings, and Arsames. The explanation that Arsames left his post in Egypt to be with Darius assuages Arsames' responsibility and culpability. Service to the king supersedes the needs of imperial subjects. Jedaniah bookends this letter with reminders stressing in the opening that Arsames was with the king and in the conclusion that he knew nothing about the temple's destruction. This framing either points to Jedaniah's loyalty and trust in Arsames as a governor or demonstrates his proper performance of imperial respect and shame. The petitioning of another governor carries an inherent risk of being viewed as

subversive or disrespectful. This framing builds Jedaniah's credibility as trustworthy and loyal.

Jedaniah describes the destruction of the temple as a planned and collaborative event coordinated by three entities: the priests of Khnum; Vidranga; and Naphaina. Khnum, the god of the Nile, was an Egyptian deity with a Ram's head whose cultic practice centered at Elephantine. A number of other Elephantine texts note hostilities between the priests of Khnum and the *Yehuda'ei*.⁵³⁹ Vidranga receives the most pejorative description as wicked. Naphaina is Vidranga's son and the leader of the neighboring Syene garrison.

Jedaniah's accusations are extremely specific. They begin with the instigation of the priests of Khnum. There is no background or qualification describing the priests of Khnum's motives yet this competing Elephantine cult seems to have lacked the resources or means to act without imperial approval. The priests of Khnum are depicted as subjects working in collaboration with Vidranga.

Vidranga, on the other hand, has the desire, resources and wickedness to act on the Egyptian's animosity. Cowley-38 contains a complaint against Vidranga. In this instance Vidranga has not yet become Chief administrator of the region but is the troop

⁵³⁹ Porten discusses possible reasons for the hostilities between the priests at Khnum and the Yahwists. One hypothesis mentioned is an ethno-cultural clash over Passover practices. Porten notes this possibility but does not endorse it. The sacrifice of a paschal lamb during Passover may have enraged the priests of Khnum because the deity Khnum has a ram's head. The lamb is believed to be a revered animal. Thus, the ethno-cultic practice of killing the sacred animal of an Island's patron deity could have generated considerable animosity. The problem with this view is there is too little information about Passover practices at the time. A second option not noted by Porten deals with the second narrative. Jedaniah's description of the Achaemenid conquest of Egypt claims that both the Khnum and Yahwist temples co-existed. The Khnum temple, according to Jedaniah, was destroyed while the Yahwist received Persian patronage. Regardless of the pre-Achaemenid relationship between these two cultic centers, the imperial alignment of one with the new regime and marginalization of an indigenous cult could result in considerable antipathy between co-existing groups. Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968).

commander at Syene. In this complain, Vidranga and the priests of Khnum are depicted as collaborating in the unlawful arrest of *Yehuda'ei*. The recurring association of Vidranga and the priests of Khnum is informative for the imperial context at Elephantine.

While the priests of Khnum approach Vidranga with their proposal, it is Vidranga who sends an official letter to his son in Syene to use imperial troops to destroy the Yahwist temple Elephantine. Jedaniah has stressed the fact that the destruction of their temple was neither an impromptu outbreak of violence among various factions at Elephantine nor random mob violence between cultic centers. It was a coordinated and officially sanctioned imperial force that was responsible for destroying the Elephantine temple. The introduction of the ethno-cultural description of Egyptians only occurs when Jedaniah identifies Naphaina's Syene troops with others troops.

As one of the Empire's boundary outposts, the image of an internal invasion while numerous Egyptian rebellions were occurring portrays Vidranga in a very negative light. The official nature of this action may also explain why Jedaniah omits any discussion of the *Yehuda'ei* resisting or combatting the Syene forces. The destruction of the Temple, according to Jedaniah's narrative, appears to be an unhindered demolition and looting of loyal Persian subjects. It is possible that the *Yehuda'ei* continue to depict themselves as loyal subjects that appeal to their imperial rulers and ethno-cultic traditions when faced with persecution.

Jedaniah transitions immediately into the second narrative. This juxtaposition links the two narratives and conflates the temporal gaps. This discursive choice enhances the figurative dimension of the narratives. The physical destruction of the temple structure allows Jedaniah to heighten the sacredness and legitimacy of the space. The

same columns, gates and structure against which Naphaina led Egyptian troops was the same temple that stood when Cambyses entered Elephantine. Cambyses was the Achaemenid ruler responsible for conquering Egypt. Thus, this appeal to Achaemenid history links the Yahwist temple to Persian rule and imperial success.

The first few words of this second narrative, “And from the days of the king(s) of Egypt, our fathers...” invoke memory and give an air of antiquity. On their own, this temporal framing claims, at the very least, a right of presence and being (Cowley-30, B19, *trans* Porten). In their most evocative hearing, they articulate an understanding of nativity and indigenesness to Elephantine. In light of the imperial and diasporic consideration above, the allusion to Cambyses in Cowley-30 (B19) can certainly be read as a claim to a type of rootedness in the land. As Philo would do centuries later, Cowley-30 (B19) identifies the community’s cultural memory without beginning or end. As far official history goes, the Yahwist temple at Elephantine always was. The rhetorical effectiveness of their claim lies in its predating Persia, which supports their claim of indigenesness and antiquity.

According to Jedaniah, the venerated Cambyses destroyed all the Egyptian temples but spared the Yahwist temple. This assertion signifies the Yahwist temple as integral in Persia’s imperial and colonial success in Elephantine. The extent to which Cambyses destroyed Egyptian temples during his conquest is difficult to confirm, though Greek historian Herodotus does recount Cambyses’ killing of Apis, the Egyptian bull-deity, during his invasion of Egypt (Herodotus 3.27 – 29, 37).⁵⁴⁰ It was in this strategic

⁵⁴⁰ Greek tradition also depicts Cambyses extending his campaign into Nubia before turning back. Thus, Jedaniah’s claim of Cambyses’ presence conforms to extant Greek tradition. Jedaniah and Herodotus, however, provide very different depictions of Cambyses. While Herodotus views Cambyses as

expansion of Persia that Elephantine and Egypt came under Persian control. The invocation and careful narration of Persian history situates the Yahwist community in a favorable light compared to ethno-cultic Egyptian communities like the priests of Khnum.⁵⁴¹

Through this careful (re)narration of history, Jedaniah has affirmed the antiquity of the *Yehuda'ei*. They have legitimate pre-Achaemenid claims to the land in Elephantine; they are citizens of Elephantine. He has bolstered the community's credentials of loyalty and fidelity to Persia by submitting to the vile Vidranga's official capacity and by affirming Cambyses' recognition of their presence. The presence of ongoing Egyptian revolts as a result of collaborations between isolated indigenous interests and corrupt local imperial magistrates. These loyal "friends" of the Empire seek justice not only on their own behalf but on behalf of the stability of Achaemenid rule.

Further consideration that the *Yehuda'ei* of Elephantine sent Cowley-30 (B19) to imperial representatives in Judah and Samaria instead of Arsames or Darius increases the relevance of this letter as Diaspora discourse. As Diaspora discourse, Jedaniah's engagement of diaspora poetics was successful, and his engagement with history was particularly convincing. When Bagavahya and Delaiah endorse the temple's

mad, irrational and a ruthless conqueror of Egypt, Jedaniah appeals to an Achaemenid imperial memory of Cambyses.

⁵⁴¹ This narrative may also be partially etiological in its depiction of the antipathy that the Priests of Khnum hold for the Yahwists. Jedaniah has semantically portrayed the temple destruction as a reversal of Persian history. In the context of the number of Egyptian revolts occurring, Vidranga's actions are seditious. The absence of Arsames further suggests that the priests of Khnum's actions were an opportunistic exploitation of the satrap's service to the king. There is also a danger to view the altercation in Cowley-30 (B19) as a blanket indictment against all Egyptians. However, Jedaniah's choice of describing the Priests of Khnum and the Syene-based Egyptian troops as under the sanction of Vidranga and his son particularizes the Egyptian participation. Given the volatile context, allusion to rebelling Egyptians troops and the Priests of Khnum signifies rebellious Egypt, without including all of Egypt. This is a shrewd maneuver capable, in part, due to mutable identities appropriated by Jedaniah and his community.

reconstruction, they specifically invoke Jedaniah's historical frame. Their response, though terse, describes the Yahwists temple as, "the altar-house of the God of heaven which was formerly built in the Elephantine fortress before Cambyses that the wicked Vidranga demolished in the year 14 of King Darius."⁵⁴² Central to the order to rebuild the temple was Judah and Samaria's sanctioning of Jedaniah's narrative as official imperial history. They follow Jedaniah's decision to downplay the importance of the priests of Khnum and omit references to Khnum or Egyptians. They affirm Jedaniah's framing this as an imperial violation and view Vidranga's actions as wicked and in opposition to Cambyses and Persia. Thus, it is in the best interest of the Empire and apparently Judah and Samaria to have the Yahwist temple in Elephantine re-established. This narrative significantly informs notions of imperial and Diaspora identity on its own. It is through the negotiation and maintenance of Diaspora identity with Persia, Judah and Samaria that this justice was attainable.

Concluding a Construction

The above readings of Rodolphe Desdunes' "A Few Words to Dr. DuBois: With Malice toward None," and Jedaniah's petition (Cowley-30, B19), has demonstrated the applicability of my contextually informed poetics of diaspora to texts from different imperial settings. As a trans-imperial framework, my diaspora poetics provides a structured lens through which scholars can investigate a text's polyvocality and meaning-making trajectories. This poetics is useful for considering how alternative contexts could

⁵⁴²Cowley-32 (B21), the above translation is adapted from Porten (1996) and Porten and Yardeni (1986). See, Bezalel Porten, "Aramaic Texts [B1-52]: Introduction," in *The Elephantine Papyri in English: : Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change*, ed. Bezalel Porten et al., *Documenta et monumenta orientis antiqui* 22 (New York: Brill, 1996), 74–88; Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, eds., *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt: Letters*, trans. Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, vol. 1 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1986).

have engaged and perceived the discursive elements within a discourse. It does not, however, predict or determine a text's intention or "true" meaning. While the reading of Desdunes informs my ideological perspective and bolsters the archive of Black Atlantic discourse through which I conceive my intellectual tradition, the reading of Cowley-30 (B19) is equally important as it historicizes the Diaspora dimension of discourse production within the Yahwist tradition(s). It is through the combined consideration of my person subjectivity that I employ this poetics of diaspora to read both the historical setting and literary text of Acts 6.1 – 8.40.

Part III
Acts 6.1 – 8.40 as Diaspora Discourse:
A Socio-Rhetorical and Contextual Reading

Chapter 7
Reading Contexts of Diaspora:
Social and Cultural Textures for Acts in Early Imperial Rome

Overview

My theoretical conception of diaspora and non-linear approach to historiography rely heavily on the notion of *le divers*. The engagement of ancient texts as Diaspora discourse requires the evaluation of relationships that scholars frequently treat as oppositional as related and intersectional. Ancient individuals existed in a complex world conscious of the impact that migration, colonization and citizenship perform on their discourse and material well-being.

Through the lens of Diaspora, my reading envisions a social and cultural texture predisposed to recognize individuals holding multiple identities. Some of these identities, such as Hebrews and Hellenists, Jews and Samaritans, Men and Eunuchs, Christians and non-Christians, frequently receive treatment as contradictory. This (re)presentation of a Diaspora informed ancient social world highlights select ancient considerations that help locate the Acts text within an early imperial Roman context. Among these considerations are the impact of Hellenism, the ideological and strategic impact of the Second Sophistic and the precariousness of conflict and persecution. The relatedness that exists across geopolitical boundaries in Diaspora work counter to the Empire's preference for insider/outsider, πατριά [*patria*, family member] / ξένος [*xenos*, foreigner; stranger] dichotomies. Read as Diaspora discourse, Acts takes place within a (re)constructed ancient context in which a poetics of diaspora informs both the text's logic, thematic focus and figurative significance.

Discussions concerning Diaspora in early Christian and Jewish studies are generally restricted to non-Palestinian Jews and Jewish practice. The breadth and imperial influence of Rome on the entire Mediterranean region had drastic effects on a significant portion of the Roman Empire and, thus, was responsible for producing numerous Diasporas in addition to the

Jewish Diaspora. Between the cultural influence of Hellenism and the socio-political and economic influences of Rome, the concept of diaspora is a useful framework for (re)imagining ancient Diaspora identity, whether Jewish or gentile, as capable of fully embodying, simultaneously, the identities of their provincial or ethno-cultural heritage, Hellenism and its ideals and culture and subject-status to Rome.

The composition of a discourse's social and cultural texture relies on information that is internal and external to the text. When conceiving an ancient social and cultural texture, the inquiry must build more than a single myopic identity and worldview for an author. The social and cultural texture reflects the ideological texture while also providing interpreters with a historical framework for making sense of a narrative's setting and development. As a (re)construction of the interpreter, the social and cultural texture contextualizes texts with respect to their ancient author and audience. This reading of Acts asserts that the lived-reality of Diaspora is an appropriate context to locate Acts' construction or reception in early imperial Rome. This social and cultural texture begins with general descriptions of Roman socio-political setting through which ancient individuals negotiated Diaspora. Following these general descriptions, I use Philo of Alexandria and Josephus to illustrate Jewish Diaspora negotiations of Diaspora existence. Following treatment of the Jewish Diaspora, a discussion of non-Jewish Diaspora responses to the Roman Empire is discussed through analysis of Lucian of Samosata. These Diaspora individuals demonstrate the utility of diaspora as a heuristic for studying early imperial Rome and the discourses produced by its subjects. These persons demonstrate how Diaspora informs discourse production. The responses and strategies performed by Philo, Josephus and Lucian are examples of Diaspora discourse; they are not strict paradigms that

prefigure Luke's identity, ideology or objective; they do, however, open the doors to view Luke's Diaspora.

Broad Influences of Empire on Diaspora

Polytheism, the Imperial Cult and Le Même

The religious and cultic environment of early imperial Rome encouraged the recognition of multiple deities. The significance of cultic and religious practices extends beyond theological constructs because contemporary distinctions between the political and religious did not exist. Religious and cultic activities were inherently social and political. As a consequence, cultic deviance often inferred socio-political deviance. Thus, when considering the significance of Diaspora in early imperial Rome, cultic practices and religious identities could play significant roles in one's social integration or marginalization.

From the perspective of Jewish identity, one's relationship to the Temple system in Jerusalem played various roles on one's life and identity. For individuals with the means and desire, *Pesach* (Passover), *Shavu'ot* (the Festival of Weeks/Pentecost), and *Sukkot* (Festival of Booths) offered opportunities to travel to Jerusalem and participate in the commemoration of these events in Palestine. In addition to cultic participation, one's ability to participate in a synagogue required the presence of ten Jewish males. Depending on the size and location of one's residence, these resources varied. While the Herodians maintained close affinity with Rome and the Temple system, some sects, such as the Esseenes, condemned the Jerusalem Temple system's collaboration with Rome and the Herodian dynasty.

While traditional historiographies of Judaism only acknowledge the presence of a Temple in Jerusalem, the Yahwisht tradition attests to the Jerusalem Temple, the Temple of the *Yehuda'ei* in Elephantine, the Samaritan Temple on Mt Gerizim in Samaria and a Jewish Temple

at Leontopolis in the Egyptian Nile.⁵⁴³ Early imperial Rome allowed for diverse expressions of Jewish identity across a vast range of social classes and statuses.

The interpretation of scripture, particularly the Torah, was instrumental in framing one's identity and modes of imperial negotiation. Three Maccabees and Four Maccabees both use apostasy and transgression of *Torah* observance as social signifiers to highlight the possibility of imperial fidelity alongside Jewish faithfulness. Yet, the interpretations of Torah advanced in 3 Macc and 4 Macc exhort adherents to maintain spiritual fidelity to the Divine through socio-cultural adherence to the Torah. They represent the socio-cultural dilemma faced by Diaspora Jews through narrative. The tyrant in 4 Maccabees appeals to his victims and promises to spare their lives if they violate their Torah-observance by eating pork. This transgression of socio-cultural values is significant for both the mother and her seven sons as well as for the tyrant one's social location. The worship of a single deity places the mother and her sons within the household of G*d but outside the cultic structure of the world. Thus, Diaspora Jews in the early imperial world confronted decisions on scripture, particularity and identity that held great significance on their ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural worldviews.

With respect to the greater Roman Empire, deities, shrines and gods permeated one's daily participation with the social, cultural and political discourse of Empire. Individuals had household deities they would serve as the deities of the specific a household; villages, towns and cities had deities to whom the city was devoted. At every level of society, the pantheon of deities permitted the collective participation of communities around specific deities. At times, the festivals and celebrations would provide individuals among the masses (those non-elites)

⁵⁴³ During the early imperial period, only the Temples at Leontopolis and Jerusalem were in existence and very little is known about the practices at Leontopolis. Yet, in response to Rome's victory during the First Jewish War, Vespasian ordered the Leontopolis Temple to be destroyed to guard against further hostilities (*Jewish Wars* 7.10.2; *Antiquities* 13.3.1).

access to sacrificed foods while the elite members of a society gained honor and recognition for their roles and participation. Thomas Hatina states it simply:

In the ancient world, religion pervaded every aspect of daily life at every social level and every ethnic group. Fundamentally, it was believed that the success, peace, and prosperity of the empire depended on the *pax deorum*, the goodwill of the gods.⁵⁴⁴

The consequence of this polytheistic environment was the close connection between civic participation, cultic identity and social order. Upon the assassination of Julius Caesar, the Senate had him deified (41 B.C.E.) and dedicated a Temple to him at Pergamon. Following the posthumous deification of Caesar, his adopted heir, Octavian—i.e. Augustus Caesar—would become the object of deification (Tacitus *Annals* 4.37; Dio Cassius *Histories* 51.20.5 – 6). This deification of a living emperor evolved into a fully functioning imperial cult that would drastically inform the social, cultural and political landscape of late first century and second century Rome.

The participation in polytheistic cultic systems provided imperial subjects the ability to participate in socio-cultural and political activities in ways inaccessible to Jews and Christians. Writing in the late second to third century, the Roman historian Cassius Dio describes Augustus Caesar as the initial deified Roman emperor of the imperial cult. Initially, the deification and worship of imperial deities was associated with one's ethno-cultural and geopolitical identities and citizenship. Placing emphasis on the deification of Julius Caesar, Augustus ordered the construction of temples to two deities: Roma—i.e. the personified goddess of Rome—and the deified Julius Caesar (*Histories* 51.20). According to Cassius Dio, Augustus located these temples in Ephesus of Asia and in Nicaea of Bithynia for Romans living in—i.e. occupying—

⁵⁴⁴ Thomas R. Hatina, "Rome and Its Provinces," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 566–567.

these regions. Alternatively, he constructed temples in Pergamon of Asia and Nicomedia of Bithynia where Hellenes could worship him. Scholarship disagrees on whether this worship of Augustus during his lifetime constituted deification. He would be officially deified posthumously by Tiberius in 14 C.E.

The Roman senator and historian Tacitus (56 C.E. – 117 C.E.) offers an important perspective on early imperial Roman ideology and history. Tacitus explains that other regions such as Spain followed the behavior of Asia and Bithynia by requesting to build temples to worship Tiberius. Tacitus notes the initial reluctance and controversy over these actions but depicts Tiberius explaining this practice as the worship of the history and spirit of Caesar:

About the same time, further Spain sent a deputation to the senate, asking leave to follow the example of Asia by erecting a shrine to Tiberius and his mother. On this occasion, the Caesar, sturdily disdainful of compliments at any time, and now convinced that an answer was due to the gossip charging him with a declension into vanity, began his speech in the following vein:— "I know, Conscript Fathers, that many deplored by want of consistency because, when a little while ago the cities of Asia made this identical request, I offered no opposition. I shall therefore state both the case for my previous silence and the rule I have settled upon for the future. Since the deified Augustus had not forbidden the construction of a temple at Pergamum to himself and the City of Rome, observing as I do his every action and word as law, I followed the precedent already sealed by his approval, with all the more readiness that with worship of myself was associated veneration of the senate. But, though once to have accepted may be pardonable, yet to be consecrated in the image of deity through all the provinces would be vanity and arrogance, and the honour paid to Augustus will soon be a mockery, if it is vulgarized by promiscuous experiments in flattery. (Tacitus 5.37, *trans.* Ernest Cary, LCL)

Tiberius describes the deification of Augustus and worship of himself as the veneration of the Empire (cf. Tacitus, *Annals* 4.15; Suetonius *Augustus* 51 – 52.). The extant temples attest to the impact of these beliefs on public space. Rome and its subjects marked the imperial space as indebted to Roman imperial and cultic rule. The Temple of Augustus in Pula attests to this with the dedication, "Roma and Augustus Caesar, son of god, father of the fatherland."

What is important in this observation is the ethno-cultural, geopolitical and spatial distinction in the early stages of emperor worship. The imperial cult made claims on both one's cultic and geopolitical identity. For Diaspora individuals who possibly lived in areas with different local deities, customs or practices, the imperial cult provided a space of commonality. The ability to appeal to the imperial regimes through these forms of worship were particularly important for subjects in Asia Minor and Bithynia. During the war between Octavian and Mark Antony, various cities in Asia Minor sided with Mark Anthony.⁵⁴⁵ According to Nicholas Perrin, these regions exhibited their loyalty to Mark Antony by deifying him as the New Dionysius.⁵⁴⁶ This conflation of cultic and political required equal rectification following Octavian's victory. By the time of Caligula, the deification of the emperor could occur during their life and the imperial cult became an integral part of Roman identity and subjection. This imperial cult, however, continued to exist alongside other regional deities, cults and household shrines. Thus, incorporation of the cultic and political and presumption of polytheistic practice became a form of *le même* that unified imperial identities.

Jewish belief in worshipping a single deity introduces conflicts between imperial practice and raised charges and stereotypes that the Jews were antisocial and atheists. Suetonius (41 C.E. – 122 C.E.) and Tacitus offer insider perspectives as to imperial stereotypes against Jews. As evident in their writings, Jewish monotheism and Torah-observance was a signifier that marked them as atheistic and antisocial. After describing Jewish origins as contested and unknown, Tacitus explains that the most accepted narrative views Jews as a cursed community

⁵⁴⁵ After the assassination of Julius Caesar (44 B.C.E.), Mark Antony, Octavius and Lepidus divided the rule of Rome, with rule eventually being split between Mark Antony and Octavius. The era of the Roman Republic virtually ended with Octavian's defeat of Mark Antony (31 B.C.E.). Octavian took the title Augustus in 27 B.C.E. marking the inception of the Roman Empire.

⁵⁴⁶ Nicholas Perrin, "The Imperial Cult," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 125.

of individuals, exiled through a divine command by an ancient Egyptian Pharaoh. This revision of the Exodus 7 – 12 precedes Tacitus' assessment of contemporary Jewish practice. He confirms their antiquity in a way that essentializes Jews as socially and culturally debilitating:

Whatever their origin, these rites [the observation of Sabbath and dietary code] are maintained by their antiquity: the other customs of the Jews are base and abominable, and owe their persistence to their depravity. For the worst rascals among other peoples,⁵ renouncing their ancestral religions, always kept sending tribute and contributions to Jerusalem, thereby increasing the wealth of the Jews; again, the Jews are extremely loyal toward one another, and always ready to show compassion, but toward every other people they feel only hate and enmity. They sit apart at meals, and they sleep apart, and although as a race, they are prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; yet among themselves nothing is unlawful. They adopted circumcision to distinguish themselves from other peoples by this difference. Those who are converted to their ways follow the same practice, and the earliest lesson they receive is to despise the gods, to disown their country, and to regard their parents, children, and brothers as of little account. (Tacitus *Histories*, 5.5, trans. Moore, LCL)

Reflecting a similar perspective, Suetonius describes the beginning of Tiberius' reign as slowly progressing. Tiberius acted in the best interest of the public good and protected the morals of the Empire (Suetonius *Tiberius* 33). Included in the list of Tiberius' accomplishments in service to the defense of society's morals:

He suppressed all foreign religions, and the Egyptian and Jewish rites, obliging those who practised that kind of superstition (*superstitio*), to burn their vestments, and all their sacred utensils. He distributed the Jewish youths, under the pretence of military service, among the provinces noted for an unhealthy climate; and dismissed from the city all the rest of that nation as well as those who were proselytes to that religion, under pain of slavery for life, unless they complied.

(Suetonius *Tiberius* 36, trans. Alexander Thompson)

Additionally significant in Suetonius' above citation is his connection of military service and anti-Judaism. Thus, anti-Judaism, imperial service and potential social advancement combine in an interdependent complex that amplifies the extent of Jewish Diaspora and expression.

The cultic differentness between Jews and dominant society conditions the social and cultural texture in which early imperial Jews and Christians wrote. Under charges of atheism,

Domitian executed his cousin Flavius Clemens and banished Clemens' wife because of their association with Judaism (Suetonius, *Domitian* 15). Cassius Dio's account of Flavius Clemens crystalizes the political and social significance of affiliation with Judaism and Jewish practice. The extent to which cultic practice could signify political allegiance or social antipathy heightens the imperial and social significance of Acts' social and cultural texture. As a narrative focused on the activities of early imperial Jews and their Diaspora identity, Acts of the Apostles draws significantly from this context.

The connections of Judaism and later Christianity with *superstitio* presents these traditions as base forms of magic and superstition that one finds amongst the lower classes. As a *religio licita*—legally sanctioned cultic practice—Jewish identity carried both cultic, social and monetary implications due to the Temple contribution submitted to Jerusalem annually. With the majority of Jews during the early imperial period living outside of Palestine, Diaspora relatedness was a key mode of identity and socio-cultural negotiation. Association with the ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural tradition of Judaism was tenuous from imperial regime to regime. The consideration of Diaspora does not negate a text's religious or cultic dimension. In some degrees it amplifies the strategic and precarious stakes involved in their negotiation.

Preparing Acts: Imperial Cult and Ethno-cultic Particularity

Key Passages

Acts 2.42 – 47; 4.1 – 22; 15.13 -35;
17.15 – 34; 19.8 – 10; 19.21 – 40; 21.17 – 30

Ethno-cultic identity plays an integral role in shaping the social and cultural texture of the Book of Acts. Issues of ethno-cultic identity primarily arise in three forms. The first deals with the relationship between Jewish Christ-followers and the Temple in Jerusalem. The second form concerns the expansion of the Christ-movement to include gentiles and questions concerning

their ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural status. The third form centers on the impact that proclaiming the good-news has on the imperial cult and other non-Jewish ethno-cultic traditions.

A) The Relationship between Jewish Christ-Followers and the Temple in Jerusalem

Acts depicts the earliest stages of the Jesus-movement as located in Jerusalem and the Temple as a central space for teaching and proclamation (2.42 – 47). Luke’s presentation of the post-resurrection Jesus-movement originating in the ethno-cultic center of the Jewish world places issues of ethno-cultic identity at the heart of the Acts narrative. The narrative suggests that the Apostles viewed their message as firmly consistent with the ethno-cultic tradition of Israel. The Jewish members of the Jesus-movement maintain their ethno-cultic identity throughout Acts through the observance of Passover and Pentecost (2.1; 12.3; 20.6, 16), affiliation with synagogues (13.5, 14; 14.1; 15.21; 17.1,10) circumcision of Jewish males (16.3) and participation in ethno-cultic ritual (21.17 - 26).

Luke, however, portrays segments of the Jerusalem elite challenging the legitimacy of their teachings. Luke depicts three trial scenes revolving around the Jesus-movement’s activities in the Temple (4.1 – 22; 5.17 – 42; 21.17 – 22.22). The High Priest and the entire Sanhedrin convene twice and fail to reach a conclusion against Peter and John either time (4.1 – 22; 5.17 – 42). Some of the chief questions engaged were the source of the Apostles’ power, belief in the resurrection of the dead, anticipation of a human Messiah and respecting the sanctity of the Temple. According to Luke’s narrative, Jewish audiences are never capable of reaching a consensus. Luke’s narrative portrays the Jesus-movement as a lightning-rod that prompted debates and questions over the ethno-cultic character of the Jesus-movement.

B) The Expansion of the Christ-Movement to Include Gentiles

Once Luke depicts the inclusion of gentiles into the Jesus-movement, new issues arise revolving around the integration of individuals from different ethno-cultic traditions into the Jesus-movement. Luke initially develops aspect of ethno-cultic negotiation with Peter and the conversion of a gentile soldier named Cornelius (10.1 – 48). This scene unfolds in four stages: an angel visits Cornelius and tells him to seek out Peter (10.1 – 8); Peter resists the message conveyed to him in a vision that declares all foods clean (10.9 – 16); Peter shares the good-news with Cornelius (10.17 – 32); Cornelius receives the Holy Spirit and Peter baptizes him (10.34 – 43). Luke’s depiction of the Cornelius conversion stresses the hesitance of initially expanding the message beyond Jewish ethno-cultic contexts (cf. 11.19 – 21).

Once gentiles entered the Jesus-movement, questions arose as to whether gentiles needed to be circumcised and adopt a Jewish ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural identity. Luke provides three separate scenes where Jerusalem-based Christian councils rule that gentile members of the Jesus-movement should avoid sexual immorality, blood, strangled animals and food sacrificed to idols (11.1 – 18; 15.1 – 35; 21.17 – 26). Luke portrays the Jesus-movement largely as not requiring a particular ethno-cultic heritage or membership. It simultaneously restricted members from maintaining ethno-cultic traditions except for Judaism.

C) The Impact of Proclaiming the Good-News on the Imperial Cult and Other Non-Jewish Ethno-Cultic Traditions

The third aspect of ethno-cultic identity negotiation deals with the implications the Jesus-movement had on non-Jewish ethno-cultic identity. It is necessary to remain conscious of this social and cultural context as the Acts narrative moves outside of Palestine into the regions of Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece and Rome. Luke presents the negotiation of this context as multidimensional. The Jesus-movement’s association with Judaism made them susceptible to

anti-Jewish stereotypes and the intra-communal ethno-cultural debates within non-Palestinian synagogues contextualize a large portion of the middle of the Acts narrative. Paul's preaching in Athens (17.15 – 34) and Ephesus (19.21 – 40) both pull on ethno-cultic identity. In Athens, Paul identifies one of the Athenians idols to an unknown G*d as the G*d of Israel. In Ephesus, Paul's preaching leads to numerous gentiles destroying their statues of Artemis due to the movement's ethno-cultic prohibitions. These actions shape the civic and material structure of the city and a silversmith named Demetrius incited a mob against the city's Jews. Through numerous references, intertextual and intratextual, debates over polytheism and ethno-cultic particularity are important aspects to Acts' social and cultural texture.

Hellenization and Hellenism

Origins and Overview

Greek-oriented culture dominated the eastern portion of the Roman Empire. This Hellenization and consequent Hellenism developed over six centuries and took numerous forms. From use of Greek as the *lingua franca* and pursuit of Greek education [*παιδεία, paideia*, education; training; discipline] and philosophy to the appropriation of Greek myths of origin and identity, Hellenization had a pervasive impact on the ancient Mediterranean. The Hellenism invoked in this social and cultural texture in comports with the Boyarins' understanding of diaspora that allows for the simultaneity of multiple being.⁵⁴⁷ Likewise, this perspective agrees with Martin Hengel's description of Hellenism as, "a complex phenomenon which cannot be limited to purely political, socio-economic, cultural or religious aspects, but embraces them all."⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁷ Boyarin and Boyarin, "Diaspora."

⁵⁴⁸ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period*, 3.

Hengel raises the question as to whether Hellenism is a “cultural permeation” advanced by Macedonian and Greek conquerors or a “cultural fusion” with the East. He summarily rejects the presumed dichotomy between these two options by affirming that the “‘encounter between Judaism and Hellenism’ can therefore be described only in a complex way.”⁵⁴⁹ The complex character of these relationships challenges assumptions of ideological or ethno-cultural homogeneity based on geography or linguistic orientation.

The Hellenization of the eastern Mediterranean initially accelerated with Macedonian conquest and colonialism in the fourth century B.C.E. Its popularity expanded with Alexander’s and later Seleucid influence into Egypt, Asia, Syria and to the boundaries of Parthia and Ethiopia.⁵⁵⁰ The vast influence of Hellenistic culture throughout the East provided Rome with a language and system through which to administer their imperial rule. Rome’s approach to colonization preferred the use of pre-existing structures and administrations. Thus, Hellenism became a useful resource to both maintain and expand Roman influence following Augustus’ seizure of power in 27 B.C.E.

It is equally important to acknowledge the misleading nomenclature of Greco-Roman. Greco-Roman in an obscuring generality that appeals to Western society’s historiographic claim on both Roman and Hellenistic traditions. By conflating Greek and Roman cultures into a single term, speakers utilize notions of *le même* to erase the ancient Mediterranean’s multi-cultural traditions and imperial particularity. Hellenistic and Latin cultures are two separate traditions with long history, with occasional mutual influence. The ancient early Roman Republic modeled

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 2–4.

⁵⁵⁰ For discussions of the literary development of Hellenistic culture during the early Roman Empire, See, Ewen Bowie, “The Geography of the Second Sophistic,” in *Paideia: The World of the Second Sophistic*, ed. Barbara Borg (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 65–84; Onno van Nijf, “Second Sophistic,” in *Paideia: The World of the Second Sophistic*, ed. Barbara Borg (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 203–28; Tim Whitmarsh, “Alexander’s Hellenism and Plutarch’s Textualism,” *The Classical Quarterly* 52, no. 01 (2002): 174–92.

their Law of the XII Tables (ca 450 B.C.E.) on Greek customs. Certain Greeks held citizenship of their indigenous city-state but did not hold Roman citizenship. Roman domination extended Hellenistic and Asian Diaspora communities that often rioted or held great antipathy towards the conditions of Roman subjugation.

During the era of early Christianity and late Second Temple Judaism, the Greek regions and broader Hellenistic world were colonized subjects of Roman imperialism. Hellenistic cultural expression became an early Principate fetish for Roman elite and medium for social advancement for imperial subjects. The Hellenism of the early Roman Empire was the fruit of multiple processes of imperialism. The notion of Greco-Roman blurs the fact that Greeks were subject peoples under Roman domination in much the same way as Jews, Assyrians, Scythians and other ethno-cultural groups.⁵⁵¹ Disputes described in Philo of Alexandria's *Embassy and Against Flaccus* recount the recurring hostilities that Greek-descended inhabitants of Egypt perpetrated against Jews. The hierarchal nature of imperialism still placed these marginal groups in competition and order of privilege. Thus, in Alexandria, both Jews and Greeks enjoyed higher social status than individuals of indigenous Egyptian ancestry. These complex contexts of colonial and imperial identities created a rich, yet often contentious, environment of competing Diaspora communities.

Two differences between the Greeks—i.e. individuals from Greece or those claiming Greek identity—and other colonized groups are i) the prior expansion of the Greek language and Hellenistic culture under Alexander and later Seleucid rulers, and ii) the appropriation of Hellenistic culture and the Greek language by the Roman elite. The commodification of Hellenistic culture allowed individuals of various ethno-cultural backgrounds access to honor

⁵⁵¹ For a description of Hellenistic culture and its relationship to Rome, See Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50-250* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1998).

and social status. However, this commodification for Hellenistic culture should not be confused for equality or socio-political equity between Greeks and Romans. A great deal of the enmity between Jews and Greeks in areas such as Egypt, Syria and parts of Asia Minor are best viewed as conflicts between multiple colonized communities attempting negotiate their place within the imperial hierarchy. Similarly, hostilities between Jews and Samaritans, which I discuss briefly in Chapter Eight, can be viewed within their imperial context.

Hellenism as Hybrid Model and not Dichotomy

In early Christian studies, scholars frequently signify ‘Palestinian Judaism’ against ‘Hellenistic Judaism’ or ‘Diaspora Judaism’ to intimate cultural affinity to Jewish cultic practice and opposition to Christianity. This perspective presumes Palestinian Judaism maintains a level of purity and Torah observance that is absent from Hellenistic expressions. Simultaneously, it connects ideological assimilation and pro-Roman attitudes with Hellenistic Judaism(s). Examples discussed in above treatments of the Black Atlantic raise doubts about the validity of such assumptions about Diasporas.

Considering Du Bois’ concern with America’s discriminatory treatment of Black Americans, this paradigm would not expect Du Bois to be Harvard educated and have grown up outside the South in Massachusetts or descended from free persons of color on his maternal side. Likewise, Marcus Garvey’s intended development of an African Empire sought the colonization of the continent by Diaspora Blacks. In a contemporary example, the American, UCLA alum and Temple professor Molefi Asante is a leading figure in the appropriation of Africa cultures for people in the Diaspora.⁵⁵² His Afrocentricity acknowledges the Eurocentric devaluing of Black persons’ humanity and (re)constructs a set of value systems and cultural concepts through

⁵⁵² Molefi K. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea* (Temple University Press, 1987); Molefi K. Asante, *Afrocentricity* (Africa World Press, 1988).

a macro-study of African culture and ideologies. Neither Asante's educational nor his American context determined his affinity towards dominant American culture.

Similarly, René Maran, educated in the Metropole and employed as a colonial administrator, wrote the highly influential *Batouala*, whose plot centers around African identity and culture. Franz Fanon, also educated in Paris, was a colonial physician in Algeria when he became a stringent critic of French colonialism. In contrast, two of the prominent proponents of the Nègritude movement advocated for separate views of independence. Aimé Césaire advocated for departmentalization and became a French politician while Léopold Senghor supported independence and became Senegal's first president post-French colonization. Throughout the Black Atlantic, neither geography nor facility with dominant culture predetermines one's ideological or axiological system.

The apocryphal work, 3 Maccabees provides comparable insight to the ancient Jewish Diaspora. The narrative of 3 Maccabees centers around a community of Diaspora Jews living in Egypt under Ptolemaic control. The account expresses an extreme anti-assimilation position alongside an anti-independence position. The narrative begins with Ptolemy Philopator desiring to enter the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple. Afflicting Philopator suddenly with great pain, the Lord thwarted his efforts. This experience enrages Philopator against Jews everywhere as enemies and prompts him to initiate anti-Judaic policies. These policies compelled Jews to worship an idol. Those who refused to comply were stripped of their civic rights, registered, branded and eventually transported to Alexandria for execution. Just prior to their execution, two angels appear to all the gentiles present. Moving the king from rage to pity, this vision alters the king's heart as he retracts all of his anti-Judaic orders and proclaims the Jews as faithful subjects.

The narrative portrays Philopator and his regime as impious. It, however, depicts the resident Greek aliens in Egypt in a positive light. They desired to help the Jews and noted that the Egyptian Jews were loyal subjects. A point of emphasis throughout the narrative is the loyalty practiced throughout the Jewish community. They were loyal to Philopator as subjects, even in the face of his unjust acts. They were also loyal to the Lord. Consequently, the narrative lacks an impetus for independent rule or an acceptance of assimilation. Three Maccabees concludes with the Jews requesting that Philopator kill those Jews who assimilated and transgressed in the face of persecution. It is with their deaths that the narrative concludes. Through this narrative, one observes the authors depiction of relatedness between Jerusalem and Egypt. Though the Egyptian-based Jews lived in relative peace, it was the actions that occurred in Jerusalem that prompted their persecution in Egypt. Similarly, these non-Palestinian Jews interpret apostasy and community-betrayal as punishable by death. While this account is fictitious, its role as historiographic narrative challenges assumptions that one's geography or proximity to dominant culture will determine ideology, ethno-cultic practice or view of assimilation. In contrast, Hellenization involved thorough the range of ideas, influences, customs and language that informed the realities of individuals outside of Palestine and inside Palestine.⁵⁵³ In agreement with Hengel, this social and cultural context opposes the practices of using the term Hellenism or Diaspora to uncritically signify deviance from an authentic root.

Whether Jewish or Gentile, Luke pulls extensively from Jewish tradition and narrates a history of early Christianity that builds on perceptions both pre-70 C.E. and post-70 C.E. experience. Luke immerses his narrative within the imperial context of soldiers, governors,

⁵⁵³ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period*; Martin Hengel, *Earliest Christian History History, Literature, and Theology : Essays from the Tyndale Fellowship in Honor of Martin Hengel*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Jason Maston, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Nuen Testament 2 320* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

magistrates and Caesar. Like the Negro spirituals of the late nineteenth century, jazz from the 1940's-1960s and rap, hip-hop, and R&B of the 1980's to the present, a subject group's cultural production is able to expand and transform through its commodification by dominant society. Thus, anthropologically resembling Black America, Luke's Hellenistic context was not a vacuum. It was a matrix informed by geopolitical, temporal and ethno-cultural particularities.

Preparing Acts: Hellenism as Context and Frame

Key Passages

Acts 2.1 – 13; 6.1 – 7; 10.1 – 48; 11.19 – 30; 13.16; 16.1 – 4, 16 – 40; 20.1 – 6; 21.1 – 21

The influence of Hellenism is an essential part of Acts' social and cultural texture. From the text's composition in Koine Greek to the first twenty-seven chapters of the work occurring in the eastern portion of the Roman Empire, the impact of Hellenism is present in every aspect of Acts' narrative. The impact of Hellenism on the social and cultural texture of Acts is most apparent in Luke's presentation of the linguistic diversity in Judaism. The language through which chooses to communicate in carries signifying value and informs cultural, class, political and ideological perspectives. The polylingual context of the first century Mediterranean is a point of emphasis for Luke. Consequently, he highlights the ethno-cultural and ideological dimension of language throughout the narrative.

One of Acts opening scenes depicts the Holy Spirit descending on the male and female Galilean disciples that had followed Jesus during his ministry (2.1 – 5). When the spirit prompted the disciples to speak, devout Jews from around the world who were worshipping in Jerusalem began to hear them speaking, “each of us in the particular dialect in which we were raised,” (2.8).⁵⁵⁴ Here, Luke highlights the geopolitical diversity of Jewish identity and the

⁵⁵⁴ Acts 2.8, “καὶ πῶς ἡμεῖς ἀκούομεν **ἕκαστος τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἡμῶν ἐν ᾗ ἐγεννήθημεν;**” The portion translated above is in bold.

prevalence of multilingualism. Depicting these non-Palestinian Jews as being raised in the dialects and languages of their provenance introduces Diaspora into the narrative but also highlights the importance of Hellenism. The language of Empire frequently served as the language of communication between communities with different mother-tongues.⁵⁵⁵

The cultural significance of language becomes a point of contention in Acts 6.1-7 when Luke depicts the Jesus-movement as consisting of Jews who were either Hebrews [Ἑβραῖος, *Hebraios*, Hebrews; Aramaic-speakers] or Hellenists [Ἑλληνιστής, *Hellēnistēs*, Hellenists; Greek-speakers]. The ability of the Jesus-movement to maintain both Hebrews and Hellenists groups in Jerusalem depicts the Holy City as multilingual. These groups' introduction into the narrative centers on the inequity and neglect of the Hellenists' widows. The impact of language and language-oriented culture on relationships, livelihood, class and social status is a central dilemma for Diaspora existence. Changing language can change one's social position. The ability to change location also impacts the significance of one's language choice.

Paul's negotiation of his Cilician provenance draws from this social and cultural texture. Paul's facility in Greek and familiarity with Hellenistic thought and rhetoric permits him to engage gentiles throughout Cyprus, Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece (13.1 – 20.36). Luke portrays Paul as contextually negotiating his social space through his facility of Greek and Aramaic. His arrest in Jerusalem crystalizes this point. His presence in the Jerusalem Temple causes a commotion that results in his arrest and beating (21.27 – 35). He addresses the tribune who is arresting him in Greek. This linguistic transition is a signifier that clarifies a case of mistaken identity—Paul is not an Egyptian—and indicates that his social station requires special

⁵⁵⁵ Luke hints at the possible utility of Greek, regardless of the historicity of such a claim. Luke, here, does not inform readers what the language non-Palestinian Jews would use to communicate in Jerusalem during Passover or Pentecost. The two best options would be Greek or Aramaic. One cannot presume bilingualism is the sole accurate image of first century Jerusalem.

treatment; Paul’s linguistic shift threatens his jailer and elicits the question, “Ἐλληνιστὶ γινώσκεις; [*hellēnisti ginōskeis?*], which is almost universally translated as, “Do you know Greek? (21.37 – 40).⁵⁵⁶

Excursus: Knowing as Cultural Facility in Hellenistic Culture

While accurate, the traditional translation obscures the nuance in Luke’s language. This two word question consists of the verb γινώσκω [*ginōskō*, to know] and the adverb Ἐλληνιστὶ [*hellēnisti*, in Greek; in the Greek language or culture; in Greek fashion]. The tribune’s question deals less with Paul’s cognitive knowledge of the Greek language and more with qualifying and characterizing how Paul knows. This is a question of culture and status, not knowledge. Two key observations, aside from the grammatical observation, support this reading. Luke’s description of multilingual Jerusalem lessens the likelihood that the mere knowledge of the Greek language would generate such a response from the guard. Secondly, Luke’s frequent use of γινώσκω [*ginōskō*] to indicate perceived, experienced or discerned knowledge. In Acts, the verb γινώσκω [*ginōskō*] frequently accompanies interpretive or insightful knowledge such as:

- The time for the restoration of Israel (1.7);
- The identity of Jesus as Christ (2.36; 19.15);
- The will of the Divine (22.14);
- The Christological meanings of scripture and philosophy (8.30; 17.19, 20;);
- Previously hidden plans or schemes (9.24; 17.13);
- General information gleaned from observation and experience (19.35; 20.34; 21.24, 34; 22.30; 23.6).

This usage is distinct from Luke’s use of the verb οἶδα [*oida*, to know], which with a broader semantic range in Acts includes the majority of the contexts dealing with the acquisition of information (23.5; 24.22; 26.4 cf. 3.16; 5.7; 7.40; 16.3).⁵⁵⁷

Building from these two observations, Luke’s diction suggests that the literary nature of Acts obscures the socio-cultural signifier that the tribune perceives is Paul’s discourse. Whether it is Paul’s accent, diction or syntax, it

⁵⁵⁶ English translations almost universally render this phrase, “Do you know Greek?” Among Bibles references the NRSV, ESV, CEB, LEB, HCSB, KJV, NASB, and NET used this exact phrasing. The NKJV and NIV reflect their dependency on the King James Version by translating it, “Can you Speak Greek” (NKJV), “Do you speak Greek” (NIV) as compared to “Can thou speak Greek?” (KJV). In consultation of the French-language Bibles, *Traduction du Œcuménique de la Bible* (TOB), *La Bible en français courant* (BFC), Louis Segond and Segond 21 each render the phrase with *savoir* instead of *connaître*, thus, “*tu sais le grec ?*” Additionally, it seems a number of Spanish Bibles also employ the verb *saber* instead of *conocer*.

⁵⁵⁷ Luke’s use of the verb οἶδα [*oida*, to know] appears to be broader and more generic, thus, is likely the default term for knowledge. I do not include all examples of οἶδα [*oida*, to know] in Acts. I have highlighted key examples that are more pronounced in their differentiation from γινώσκω [*ginōskō*].

prompts the tribune to ask whether Paul has the ability to perceive or discern by means of Hellenistic language, culture or fashion. It is this signification of the socio-cultural potential of Hellenistic culture that Luke highlights.

Invoking the terminology of Glissant and Césaire, the tribune is inquiring into whether Paul knows *le langage grec* and not Greek, *la langue*.⁵⁵⁸

The text encourages readers, particularly Diaspora-readers, to employ this perspective by depicting Paul's response. His response affirms his concomitant multidimensionality as he informs the tribune that he is: a Jew; a Tarsian from Cilicia; and a citizen of no small city. His tripartite use of the nominative affirms his ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural being, geopolitical and socio-cultural being, and imperial being. Paul, in this portrait by Luke, is a diasporic product of Hellenism.

Luke depicts the political and contextual nature of this reality as dynamic negotiation.

Once his power-play with the tribune affords him the ability to halt the arrest, he turns to address the crowd of his Jewish accusers, “after hearing that Paul was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect they became even more silent” (22.2). Cultural capital is not unidirectional. Just because someone is adept at *le langage* of Empire does not necessitate the positive valuation of such facility. Consequently, Luke portrays Hellenism as part of the social and cultural texture of first century life that privileged those with a two-sided skillset. They needed, in DuBois' terms, double-consciousness, which as consciousness is only a single skillset. They also required the ability to code shift. For consciousness does not equate communicative facility. Hence, this image portrays the social capital of multilingualism at both the imperial and ethno-cultural level.

In addition to creating and framing “differentness” among Jews, the term Hellenist builds relatedness amongst Jews and gentiles that participate in that cultural sphere. The ambiguity associated with Luke's selection of the term Hellenists has generated myriad articles and scholarly debates on the ethno-cultural identity of his characters and the introduction of gentiles into the narrative. The term Hellenist [Ἑλληνιστής, *Hellēnistēs*] is semantically ambiguous in its close association with the use of the Greek language. Hellenist carries more of

⁵⁵⁸ For references to Glissant's use of *la language* and *le langue*, See Chapter 6.

a socio-cultural implication with the use of Greek and is distinct from terms such as Greek [Ἕλληνα, *Hellēn*, Greek; Hellene], Hellenism [Ἑλληνισμός, *Hellēnismos*, Hellenism, imitation of Greek culture] or hellenize [Ἑλληνίζω, *Hellēnizō*, to speak or write Greek; to make Greek]. This choice of terminology both obscures and opens the discursive possibilities available to Luke.

This rich social and cultural texture of Luke's text challenges static notions of identity or language. Thus, as mentioned above, Hellenist describes Greek-speaking Jews (6.1 – 7; cf. 9.29). However, Luke also describes Jewish Christ-followers from Jerusalem that, “went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch speaking the word to no one except Jews [Ἰουδαίος, *Ioudaios*, Judeans; Jews]. But, there were certain men among them, Cyprians and Cyrenians, who after coming to Antioch were speaking with the Hellenists [Ἑλληνιστής, *Hellēnistēs*],” (11.19 – 20).⁵⁵⁹ Here, the term Hellenist is in oppositional position with the word Jews, which indicates their identity as gentiles. Thus, Hellenist describes Greek-speaking gentiles. Luke's use of Hellenist as a socio-cultural and linguistic indicator highlights the appropriateness of *le divers* epistemologies for reading Acts. Hellenist is a notion that builds relatedness and differentness without projecting ethno-cultural absolutism.

The geographical framing restricts the movement of these Jewish Christ-followers to regions i) in close proximity to Judea and ii) with distinct ethno-cultural expressions. Phoenicia, Cyprus and Syria (Antioch) are three regions in the Mediterranean that maintained particular ethno-cultural identities and histories, in relation to Greek and Roman colonization, that parallel Jewish ethno-cultural particularism. Consequently, Luke's use of Hellenist as a socio-cultural and socio-linguistic description is an apt way to point towards the diversity and Diaspora of other

⁵⁵⁹ An alternative translation would highlight the specificity of the Hellenists approached. Thus, I would translate the definite article in, ἐλάλουν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλληνιστάς, as a possessive, rendering it, “and were speaking with **their** Hellenists.”

non-Jewish peoples. Once Luke shifts the narrative scene to Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece the term Hellenist cedes way to Greek (14.1; 16.1,3; 17.4, 12; 21.28),⁵⁶⁰ thus introducing a term with more ethno-cultural and geopolitical connotations. Consequently, Hellenist is a striking signifier for this diaspora-oriented reading to show relatedness between subject persons of different ethno-cultural heritages, to note the trans-geopolitical influence of Hellenism on the world and to hint at the presence of a shared reality of Diaspora-consciousness across different Diasporas.

Hellenism informs other aspects of Acts' social and cultural texture. Among these, its influence on interpersonal relationships is most significant. The often studied and discussed "god-fearers" in Acts as a liminal category of 'Judeophile' gentiles is another example of Hellenism's impact on Acts' social and cultural texture via increased interactions between diverse cultures [Φοβέω ὁ θεός, *phobeō ho theos*, to fear the G*d (10.2, 22); σέβω, *sebō*, to revere; to respect (13.43, 50; 17.4, 17); σέβω ὁ θεός *sebō ho theos*, to revere the G*d (16.14)]. Increased interactions between Jews and gentiles resulted in multidirectional cultural influence. Regardless of the prevalence or historicity of "god-fearers," Luke's depiction of gentiles associating with the synagogue and the various accoutrements of Jewish teaching and ethno-cultural sensibilities without "converting" or adopting Jewish ethno-cultic or ethno-cultural identity speaks directly to Hellenism as a social and cultural texture that increased interactions between diverse individuals. As depicted in Luke's depiction of Timothy as an uncircumcised son of a Greek [Ἑλλήν, *Hellēn*] father and Jewish mother shows how these interactions shaped one's ability to navigate various boundaries and communities (16.1 – 4). These negotiations inform the perception and signification of Acts as diaspora discourse with relevance for

⁵⁶⁰ I have excluded those instances where it seems Luke uses "Greek" as a simple signifier for non-Jew. These instances, 18.4; 19.10,17; 20.21, can be included with the more specific uses of Greek above.

(re)constructing models of early imperial Rome and (re)viewing one's own Diaspora context through first century C.E. literature.

The Second Sophistic as Cultural Phenomenon, Strategy and Worldview

The Second Sophistic is an important component to this reading of social and cultural texture that highlights intersecting importance of discourse, culture and Empire. The Second Sophistic is itself a difficult period and movement to locate. As a concept, Second Sophistic describes a cultural renaissance towards Classical Greek literature, history and identity that spanned approximately from 50 C.E. to 250 C.E. Tim Whitmarsh notes that no scholarly consensus exists as to the specific definition or markers of the Second Sophistic outside of, “a vague sense that it is localized in the Greek culture of the first three centuries.”⁵⁶¹

As a cultural ethos, this movement is most identifiable in its impact on discourse and literature through prominent public displays of epideictic—i.e. demonstrative—rhetoric among social elites and mimicry of Classical Greek vocabulary, grammar, genre and philosophy. Many of these traits fall under the category of Atticism or the creative replication and mimicry of Classical Attic literature and culture.⁵⁶² These Greek elite, still subjects of Rome, wrote in the style and diction of classical Greek authors. Atticism was truly an idealization of the ancients and not pure mimickry.⁵⁶³ Among some of the cursory characteristics observed across the Second Sophistic was increased interest in sophistry and the performance of epideictic rhetoric with appeals to form and structure over-against imagery and emotionalism, a resurgent interest in the composition of fiction in the form of dialogues and gradual reintroduction of the optative mood.

⁵⁶¹ Tim Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Cambridge Univ Pr, 2005), 4.

⁵⁶² Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 7–9; Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic*; See also, Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁵⁶³ Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 7.

While these surface characteristics frequently occur, a number of scholars also note the socio-cultural, economic and ideological impact that the Second Sophistic played on Hellenistic culture.⁵⁶⁴ For Swain, the social and cultural contexts of early imperial writers such as Dio of Prusa differ significantly from late Republican/Augustan era writers such as Diodorus.⁵⁶⁵ The commodification and imperial consumption of Hellenistic culture provided a material benefit to early imperial sophists. The public demand and recognition garnered them social status and resources. The performance and appropriation of Hellenistic identity at times extended beyond individual identity as cities attempted to claim Panhellenic identity in pursuit of Roman imperial honors and accommodations.⁵⁶⁶

Thus, through the proper performance of Greekness one could attain material wealth, social status, elite patronage, citizenship or even an imperial position. Swain illustrates this point with Dio of Prusa (40 C.E. – ca 115 C.E.). Dio of Prusa, also known as Dio Chrysostom—i.e. Dio the Golden Mouth—as an example of the material benefits associated with mastery of oratorical skills and public recognition. As a native of the city of Asia Minor city of Prusa in Bithanya, Dio gained notoriety as both a rhetor and advisor.⁵⁶⁷ Notable cities such as Tarsus, Nicaea and Alexandria brought Dio into their cities and councils to speak on a variety of subjects. In addition to honors and public recognition for his advice and services, the city of Nicaea granted him citizenship and a position on the city's *boulē*—i.e. city council.⁵⁶⁸ Due to Rome's interest and appetite for Atticism, imperial elites and masses encouraged participation.

⁵⁶⁴ Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁶⁶ S. Perlman, "Panhellenism, the Polis and Imperialism," *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 25, no. 1 (1976): 1–30; Ilaria Romeo, "The Panhellenion and Ethnic Identity in Hadrianic Greece," *Classical Philology* 97, no. 1 (2002): 21–40; Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 66–70.

⁵⁶⁷ Simon Swain, *Dio Chrysostom: Politics, Letters, and Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 70–79.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 75–77.

Thus, as argued by C.P. Jones, an important aspect of the public transcript of the Second Sophistic was the ability of Hellenists to welcome Roman occupation and demonstrate proper stewardship of Roman power. A number of Dio's speeches also demonstrate his advocacy for *homonomia* [one-mindedness; like-thought; harmony] and *philia* [friendship; fraternal-love] as a means to secure peace and successful negotiation of Rome.⁵⁶⁹

The satirist Lucian of Samosata provides a later illustration in his satirical dialogue *The Eunuch*. Through the course of the conversation in the classical form of dialogue, readers learn that the Emperor had recently endowed eight chairs [μισθοφορά, *misthophora*, wage or pay; hire] of philosophy in Athens. Four philosophical schools—Stoics, Platonists, Epicureans and Peripatetics—shared the chairs with each having two seats. The appointments were for life and upon the appointee's death a replacement was chosen "by vote of the first-citizens" [ψήφῳ τῶν ἀρίστων, *psēphō tōn aristōn*]. Lucian describes the positions as carrying a salary of 10,000 *drachma* for teaching the city's youth.⁵⁷⁰

The dialogue consists of an arbitrary citizen, Pamphilus, happening across another individual, Lycinus, who is in a fit of laughter. Framed as a casual conversation between normal inhabitants of the city, Lycinus tells Pamphilus about the on-going dispute over a recently vacated seat of the Peripatetics. The two leading candidates for the position debated one another meticulously over their credentials and doctrine. Lucian frames the entire dispute as two Hellenist subjects of Rome vying for Rome's patronage and its corresponding honor. Lycinus metaphorically refers to the chair as the 'Helen' over who the two Peripatetics fought in one-on-one combat [μονομαχέω, *monomacheō*, fight; single-combat]. The notion of Atticism is apparent in that both candidates claimed adherence to Aristotle. The description of the patronage

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., 78–81; Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*.

⁵⁷⁰ A *drachma* was an ancient coin made of silver. It was equivalent to a day's wages.

as Helen, alluding to Helen of Troy, casts this trial as a figurative Trojan War. Couched in Greek myths of origin, the casual insertion of Caesar as the patron provides an insightful view of Atticism. The dialogue is pointed in the description of the material consequences of Atticism during the Second Sophistic. The type of buffoonish behavior often associated with dominant culture's commodification of imperial subjects permeates Lucian's intertextual references.

That [the recently vacated position], oh Pamphilus, is the Helen over which they individually-fight [as gladiators] against one another. And yet until this, there was nothing to laugh at, except perhaps the [situation], that after claiming to be philosophers and to disdain material wealth, they then fought for these things as though for [their] endangered fatherland, ancestor's consecrated sanctuaries or ancestral splendors.

Αὐτή, ὦ Πάμφιλε, ἡ Ἑλένη ὑπὲρ ἧς ἐμονομάχουν πρὸς ἀλλήλους, καὶ ἄχρι γε τούτου γελοῖον οὐδὲν πλὴν ἐκεῖνο ἴσως, τὸ φιλοσόφους εἶναι φάσκοντας καὶ χρημάτων καταφρονεῖν ἔπειτα ὑπὲρ τούτων ὡς ὑπὲρ πατρίδος κινδυνευούσης καὶ ἱερῶν πατρῶων καὶ τάφων προγονικῶν ἀγωνίζεσθαι.⁵⁷¹

Lucian's description of the struggle for Helen initially uses *μονομαχέω*, *monomacheō* to depict the struggle in close proximity to the reference to Helen of Troy. This term, at times, maintains close association with gladiatorial combat. If taken in this vein, which Lucian explicitly does in *Toxaris* 58, the two philosophers figuratively represent slaves rehearsing the Trojan War and Greek heritage. They fight to the death for the entertainment and pleasure of Roman tastes.

In this strategic, possibly tragic, sphere, Lucian's characterizes a circumstance broader than that addressed in his dialogue. Up until this point in the discourse (*Eunuch* 1-3), he has only described a regular practice. The irony of this quotidian act might prompt laughter as two Roman subjects fight over Greek authenticity in pursuit of Roman patronage. This situation of "possible" ironic humor mirrors the identity politics present within Black Atlantic discourse,

⁵⁷¹ Lucian of Samosata, "The Eunuch," in *Lucian*, trans. A. M. Harmon, vol. 5, 8 vols., Loeb Classical Library 302 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 333–334.

particularly evident in Du Bois' critique of McKay's *From Home to Harlem* as appealing to dominant stereotypes of Black Americans.

The possible allusion to gladiatorial one-on-one combat is additionally insightful in its corporate impact. Though this chair pits two individuals in ironic debate, the imperial and material nature of Atticism draws the entire city into involvement. This Trojan War requires the attention of the city's 'best.' The trial (that occupies the city's best and 10,000 *drachma*) digresses into an argument over the identity of one of the candidates as a eunuch. Unable to defeat his competitor, one candidate argues that it is inappropriate for a eunuch to hold high esteem. Again appealing to Greek history, the eunuch appeals to Aristotle and Socrates as he highlights the benefits of his status. In the middle of their debate, an onlooker accuses the eunuch of lying and having appropriated the identity simply to avoid charges of adultery.

Lucian concludes his dialogue by demonstrating the ineptitude and feigned capability of the city elite. When Pamphilus asks what the city decided, Lycinus informs him that the case was sent to Italy because they found no way to evaluate whether the candidate was in fact a eunuch or whether it was appropriate for a eunuch to hold the position. Throughout *The Eunuch*, Lucian weaves notions of identity negotiation and philosophy with the taint of imperial negotiation and hypocrisy. Though considerably later than the period of concern in Acts, *The Eunuch* demonstrates the level to which philosophy and sophistry became commodified and shaped the identity construction of Roman subjects over the first century of Christian discourse.

Ekklesia, Voluntary Association and the Possibility of Christian Atticism

Because of the literary dimension entailed in the Second Sophistic, scholars generally restrict discussions to elite segments of society and individuals with access to elite patronage. However, with the vast influence of the cultural practices associated with the Second Sophistic further exploration of non-elite articulations of Atticism is warranted. One may even consider

the uniqueness of the Christian nomenclature of ἐκκλησία [*ekklēsia*, assembly;] as an articulation of the popular tradition of voluntary associations and *collegia* during early imperial Rome. Two barriers regularly prevent contemporary readers from conceiving the actual significance of *ekklēsia* in early Christianity.

The first barrier centers on English-language Bibles translating *ekklēsia* as church throughout the New Testament. The hierarchal and institutional nature of the Christian church blurs the novel and possible Atticizing nature of such nomenclature. Addressing this tendency, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza describes *ekklēsia* as:

Assembly, gathering or congress of full citizens...Thus the best translation of *ekklēsia* is...either “public assembly” or “democratic congress of full decision making citizens,” or “synagogue” that is congregation of the people of God.⁵⁷²

The second obstacle deals with the unique way that early Christ-followers employed the term. The apparent situation-specific use of *ekklēsia* as a reference to communities of Christ-followers has caused difficulty in identifying the term’s social, cultural, religious or political significance.⁵⁷³ During the Classical age of Democratic Athens, the *ekklēsia* was a special gathering of every citizen in a *polis* [city-state].⁵⁷⁴ Schmidt connects ancient practices to the term’s etymological origin. During the age of Athenian democracy, when a full-citizen’s assembly was needed a herald would walk the streets, calling out to all citizens to retreat to the *agora*. If a citizen failed to attend the assembly would dole punishment and ridicule upon him. Citizen participation was a civic duty and expected honor.⁵⁷⁵ Citizenship dictated one’s rights,

⁵⁷² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Keynote Address: Celebrating the Struggles, Realizing the Visions,” *Journal of Women and Religion* (1998): 17.

⁵⁷³ For a sampling of example uses, See, (Matt 18.17; Rom 16.1, 4 – 5; 1 Cor 1.2; 4.17; 1 Tim 3.5, 15; Heb 2.12, 12.23; James 5.14; Rev 1.4, 11, 20; Acts 5.11; 7.38, 8.1, 3; 9.31; 11.22, 12.1, 5; 13.1).

⁵⁷⁴ The term derives from the verb καλέω [*kaleō*, to call].

⁵⁷⁵ Karl Ludwig Schmidt, “ἐκκλησία,” ed. Gerhard Kittel and Geoffrey W.. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W.. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 506–512.

privileges and social location. Ideally, every citizen had equivalent rights and opportunities to participate in the *ekklēsia*.

Historically, *ekklēsia* alluded to a time when autonomous Greek city-states practiced various forms of democracy. Athenian democracy was similar to a republic. Most *polis* [city-state] governance occurred in elected councils of magistrates, elders or jurists. The *ekklēsia* seldom met; the calling of all participating citizens only transpired for the deliberation of war or for special elections of councils or magistrate positions.⁵⁷⁶ Each *polis* functioned independently. At times of great peril the city-states would work together or engage in war against one another.⁵⁷⁷ Using the terms *boulē*, *synodos*, and *synkletos* to distinguish various types of councils and meetings, the *ekklēsia* was a relatively rare occurrence, even within Classical Greece.

Ideals seldom exist; thus, civic practice likely fell short of the utopic aspirations. Individuals in all likelihood garnered more influence or leverage within an assembly based on property, wealth and honor. However, the system relied on conferred authority and disproportionate influence was the result of practice instead of institutional or systemic intention. Unlike stratified hierarchies, a *polis* leader's authority did not inherently rest in the person's being and the idea of representation was not universal. It is necessary to remember that ancient governments only sought to represent and protect the interests of its citizens who were male. The well-being of the noncitizens (women, children, slaves, foreigners, etc) was sustained in the household (*oikos*), private spheres, councils or at times through peer pressure and legal action among citizens.

⁵⁷⁶ J. A. O. Larsen, "A Recent Interpretation of the Achaean Assemblies," *Classical Philology* 67, no. 3 (1973): 178–79; Schmidt, "TDNT Diaspora," 501–506.

⁵⁷⁷ **Plutarch's criticism of Greek factions** ¹² Larsen, *Achaean Assemblies*, 183-184.

With Greek city-states' transition away from Classical forms of democratic self-governance, the concept of *ekklēsia* lost much of its technical sense and became a general term for an assembly or gathering. In Biblical Studies, scholars frequently locate Christian appropriation of the term within this general sense in the LXX. Septuagint translators use *ekklēsia* to translate the Hebrew קהל [*qahal*, to call; to assemble; to summon to assembly] (Deut 4.10; 23.2 – 9; Judges 20.2).⁵⁷⁸ LXX use of συναγωγή [*synagōgē*, gathering; assembly; synagogue] is far greater than that of *ekklēsia*, which only corresponds to a single Hebrew-root. After inspecting LXX use of *ekklēsia* and *synagōgē*, Schmidt finds technical differentiation of the terms difficult.⁵⁷⁹

The LXX presence of the term *ekklēsia* in LXX lead many scholars to downplay Christian appropriation of *ekklēsia*. It is not my intention to argue that the Christian appropriation of the term *ekklēsia* is solely due to Hellenistic causes. Alternatively, it is the complex relationship between the term's LXX heritage alongside the Second Sophistic's predilection for Atticism that may provide insight into the particular expression of Christ-following communities as *ekklēsiai*.

Introducing Atticism into the discussion of *ekklēsiai* enhances discussions of the sociological and institutional nature of the early 'church.' Studies on the material and institutional nature of the early 'church' often raise parallels between early Christian assemblies and the prominence of voluntary associations and *collegia* throughout the ancient Mediterranean. Voluntary associations and *collegia* were social clubs and organizations that performed a vast array of purposes in the ancient world. For the purposes of this discussion, it is enough to

⁵⁷⁸ Wayne O. McCready, "EKKLĒSIA and Voluntary Associations," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (New York: Routledge, 2002), 59–73.

⁵⁷⁹ Kittel, Vol. 7, 829.

distinguish between public associations and private associations. Public associations frequently include organizations that contribute to the maintenance of a civic entities maintenance such as *gymnasium*, councils and cultic centers.⁵⁸⁰ These public associations were valuable mediums of political training and support of the civic infrastructure. These associations were encouraged and declining participation could have adverse social consequences. The charges against Jews as being antisocial and atheists derived largely from their significant absence from participating in some of public associations due to their monotheism and ethno-cultic particularity. Private associations, on the other hand, were largely voluntary and provided opportunities and resources less accessible through Rome's hierarchal structure or public associations.

There is wide debate concerning the primary purpose of voluntary associations. Harland generally identifies associations' purpose along the lines of the specific needs provided: cultic; burial; or, social.⁵⁸¹ Kloppenborg, Wilson and McCreedy generally present higher complexity in the social activities of these associations. Philosophical schools often performed cultic rituals and late first century cultic clubs began providing moral instruction. Among the services provided by different manifestations of voluntary associations were the provision of burial plots, business networking, antiquity's version of trade unions, indigenous religious practices, social interaction and the ability to attain positions of honor.⁵⁸²

One of the problems scholars encounter when studying ancient clubs and associations is the diverse nomenclature.⁵⁸³ Kloppenborg, thus, identifies three overlapping categories for non-

⁵⁸⁰ Michael S. Moore, "Civic and Voluntary Associations in Teh Greco-Roman World," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 149–55.

⁵⁸¹ Philip A. Harland, *Voluntary Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 86–87.

⁵⁸² Stephen G. Wilson, "Voluntary Associations: An Overview," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (New York: Routledge, 2002), 12–15.

⁵⁸³ *ibid.* 16-18.

senatorial voluntary associations: *collegium tenuiorum* (burial associations), *collegia sodalicia* (religious associations), and professional clubs.⁵⁸⁴ Among the many names associations used, scholars have identified no extant references to an association as *ekklēsia*.⁵⁸⁵

Voluntary Associations and *collegia* played an important role in ancient society because of its ability to function as a social medium that crossed social, class and ethnic barriers. For a member with little social value, the ability to hold office, to ensure proper burial, to participate in commerce decisions regarding your trade and to attain honorific roles constructs an image of social redemption. Regardless of the level of individualized power provided by the associations, the ability to actively participate in aspects of your destiny is significant in the perception of one's empowerment. Associations provided multilateral benefits between classes; affiliation or patronage of an association provided the social elite with an opportunity for continued attainment of honor and material resources to non-elites.

Considering that democracy is indigenous to Hellenistic contexts and a practical antithesis to Rome's imperial domination of once independent Greek city-states, unique allusion to equal citizenship and opportunity could likely appeal to Rome's suppressed subjects. Membership in an organization whose ideal is equal participation for citizens holds great significance.⁵⁸⁶ Membership in an association whose identity differed from all others could present a re-invented religion as the social ideal. Because of their intimate, insular and inherent social provision, Wendy Cotter believes the ruling elites feared the subversive potential.⁵⁸⁷ One

⁵⁸⁴ John S. Kloppenborg, "Collegia and Thiasoi: Issues in Function, Taxonomy and Membership," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 16–18.

⁵⁸⁵ McCready, "EKKLĒSIA and Voluntary Associations," 62.

⁵⁸⁶ Equal opportunity and participation is not to be confused with egalitarianism. Democracies governed with hierarchies; the hierarchies were products of the assembly and offices rotated, and in theory one vote stood for one vote.

⁵⁸⁷ Wendy Cotter, "The COLLEGIA and Roman Law: State Restrictions O Voluntary Associations, 64 BCE-200 CE," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G.

example of such concerns is Julius Caesar's attempt to outlaw all associations that failed to exhibit a claim of antiquity; subsequent Emperors took occasionally took similar actions against the formation of new associations.⁵⁸⁸ Peter Richardson presents the Diaspora *synagogue* as a Jewish articulation of Roman *collegia* pointing to the synagogue's protection during Julius Caesar's banning of new *collegia*. Jewish synagogues were considered ancient institutions associated with an *religio licita* [legally acknowledged cultic/religious practice] and thus were allowed to continue practice.⁵⁸⁹

Cotter further illustrates this concern during the reign of Trajan (98 C.E. – 117 C.E.) when Trajan promptly denies Pliny the Younger's request to establish a fire brigade for public service (*Epistulae* 10.33, 34). Trajan replies:

Whatever title we give them, and whatever our object in giving it, men who are banded together for a common end will all the same become a political association before long. (*trans.* Cotter)⁵⁹⁰

In line with this example, Acts 19.19 – 41 provides a New Testament witness to the potential civil disturbance affiliated with associations. Luke portrays Paul living in Ephesus for two years performing miracles and preaching. His success leads many individuals to convert and burn idols and books of magic. The monetary impact on a silversmith named Demetrius leads to civic unrest. Demetrius depicts Paul's activities as hazardous to the entire city and its cultic practices. This conflict, if viewed through the lens of trade associations, can illustrate the utility of trade associations for workers attempting to secure their livelihood as well as the contextual significance of voluntary associations. Luke's description of Paul's relationship with Aquila and

Wilson (New York: Routledge, 2002), 74–89.

⁵⁸⁸ Cotter, "The COLLEGIA and Roman Law: State Restrictions O Voluntary Associations, 64 BCE-200 CE."

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 82–83.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 86–87.

Prisca (Acts 18.2) alludes to familiarity with a trade association, which further enhances the contextual view of associations in Luke's writings.

While extremely useful on the societal level, associations often maintained a subversive nature that provided material and social benefits that the rigid hierarchal Empire failed to provide. The self-sufficiency of an association undermined dependence on dependence on one's patron. Conceiving voluntary associations as a body of mixed status individuals that perform a ritual or meal and meet for the provision of social needs, then the early Christian *ekklēsia* greatly resembles an association.

Possible parallels between New Testament references to the *ekklēsia* and voluntary associations abound. Philemon 1.1 – 2 witnesses to the *ekklesia's* diverse membership. Paul identifies the presence of Timothy and notes the participation of men and women.⁵⁹¹ Galatians 3.27 – 28 alludes to the diverse class composition of the *ekklēsia* with an allusion to equal standing among male, female, slave, free, Greek and Jew. The allusions in First Thessalonians 4:13 and 18 to deceased members that have fallen asleep introduces the notion of burial associations. Likewise, the pooling of funds and establishment of positions also parallel both *synagogue* and associations in Acts (Acts 5.1 – 6.7) also lend Luke's description of the early Christ-following movement to the context of associations.

The Christian *ekklēsia* took membership inclusiveness and social redemption to a level that resembles many aspects of association membership. Looking at the growth of the Christianity among the eastern portion of the Roman Empire during the beginning stages of the Second Sophistic places early Christian development in the heart of Rome's Hellenizing projects. The purpose of Atticism was to exist within a tradition while idealizing and improving.

⁵⁹¹ While women were rarely members in mixed voluntary associations, but some cultic associations allowed women to participate as non-member priests. Ibid., 82–83.

By basing membership in Christ alongside association membership, *ekklēsia* identity provided an unparalleled opportunity for honor acquisition and social redemption.⁵⁹²

It is the potential subversive and strategic nature of associations that raises questions as to Christianity's choice appropriation of the term *ekklēsia*. In a context of significant Atticism, Christianity's appropriation of a term with pointed ancient democratic Classical meaning fits into the Second Sophistic circumstances of early imperial Rome. The juxtaposition of these cultural contexts with Diaspora existence (re)construct an image of the early *ekklēsia* as a useful medium of identity negotiation and Atticization. An organization that appeals to ancient Athenian practices while transgressing rigid Roman social structures would be an invaluable tool for transitory Diaspora individuals throughout the Empire.

Preparing Acts: Second Sophistic as Cultural Context

Due to the overlap between the social and cultural impact of the Second Sophistic with Hellenism, a few observations will suffice to convey the correlation between the Second Sophistic and Acts' social and cultural texture. These texture are marked by focus on:

- Increased use of the optative by the narrator and characters;
- Narrative focus on societal elites;
- Public speech and discourse as a central mode of proclaiming the good-news;
- A cosmopolitan ethos presented throughout the narrative.

The optative is an ancient Greek grammatical mood generally used to express a wish, desire or possibility. Use of the optative steadily declined during the Hellenistic period as other moods supplanted its need.⁵⁹³ By the early stages of the Roman Empire, the optative had

⁵⁹² A primary difference between within the Christian assembly becomes an issue of who is a member. Membership, within a democratic sense, dictates one's access to participation and recognition.

⁵⁹³ N. Clayton Croy, *A Primer of Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 199; Neil O'Sullivan, "It Would Be the Time to Discuss the Optatives.' Understanding the Syntax of the Optative from Protagoras to Planudes," *Antichthon* 45 (2011): 77–112; Claudia Strobel, "The Lexica of the Second Sophistic: Safeguarding Atticism," in *Standard Languages and Language Standards – Greek, Past and Present*, ed.

virtually fallen out of use until the Second Sophistic, with its imitation of Classical Greek, revived the optative in elite literature and discourse. The optative mood occurs only seventy times in the New Testament with twenty-eight attributed to Luke.⁵⁹⁴ The presence of the optative alone does not indicate Atticism or engagement with the Second Sophistic. Luke's narrative focus on elite members of society and his use of the optative mood for verbs other than the frequently invoked γίνομαι [*givomai*, to come into being; become] point towards his intentionality. In addition to instances of narrative explanation by the narrator (5.24; 10.17; 17.11; 20.16; 21.33), Paul employs the optative when engaged in public oratory with Athenian philosophers (17.27), in nuanced discussion with King Agrippa and his wife Berenice (26.29) and when defending himself by legal minutiae—i.e. forensic—while in private conversation with the Roman Procurator Felix (24.19). Luke reserves Paul's use of the optative for his engagement with the highest registers of imperial Rome. Likewise, the Roman Procurator Festus uses the term in deliberative discussions with Agrippa and Berenice (25.16, 20) and the Ethiopian, regent responsible for the entire treasury of the Ethiopian Empire employs the optative when encountering Philip on the road to Gaza (8.31).⁵⁹⁵ When read observed through the lens of class and Empire, Luke's implementation of the optative mood functions as a socio-

Dr Alexandra Georgakopoulou and Professor Michael Silk (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 160; Urs Breitenstein, *Beobachtungen Ze Sprache, Stil Und Gedankengut Des Vierten Makkabäerbuchs* (Stuttgart: Schwabe and Co, 1978), 52–54.

⁵⁹⁴ Among these uses, a specific phrase, μή γένοιτο [*mē genioto*, may it not be!; of course not!; hell no!], accounts in fifteen of these instances. Croy explains the frequency of this single phrase as rooted in early Christianity's early Jewish context. The LXX regularly translates the Hebrew אָמֵן [amen, truly; surely; let it be; amen] with the aorist, third-person singular of γίνομαι [*givomai*, to come into being; become] in the optative mood. Consequently, the phrase μή γένοιτο [*mē genioto*] expresses more of socio-linguistic expression of ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic identity than participation in Second Sophistic Atticism. Twenty-eight of the remaining fifty-five uses occur in Luke-Acts with seventeen in Acts. Croy, *A Primer of Biblical Greek*, 99.

⁵⁹⁵ In the lone case where Luke portrays Peter using the optative (8.10), it occurs in a negative construction as a curse, which parallels the Jewish ethno-cultural use of μή γένοιτο [*mē genioto*].

cultural signifier that draws on the Second Sophistic as informing Luke's social and cultural texture.

A cursory mention of other factors will complement the above discussion. Significant mention has already been made to Luke's focused narrative portrayal of elite members of the Roman Empire. Three final points will conclude discussion of the Second Sophistic as a social and cultural texture for Acts. The first two, Luke's portrayal of the Assembly [*ekklēsia*] and focus on elite members of society, are brief.

Luke's description of the life and functioning of the Assembly [*ekklēsia*] maintains several possible allusions to voluntary associations of the early Roman Empire as well as to ancient Athenian notions of democracy and citizenship. According to Luke, the Assembly [*ekklēsia*] is egalitarian and self-sufficient with members providing for one-another (2.42 - 47). They pool resources and function largely like a polity selling property and distributing the funds to the group (4.32 - 33). The Holy Spirit provides the Assembly with a unifying ethos, and transgression of that ethos through deceit can result in death [5.1 - 10]. The entire body [τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν, *to plēthos tōn mathētōn*, the great number of disciples] is called together [προσκαλέω, *proskaleō*, to call forth; to call together] to respond to problems (6.1 - 7). The community resolved the dispute between Hebrews and Hellenists by allowing the aggrieved to elect their own representatives. Similarly, the dispute over the inclusion of gentiles was also resolved in the gathering of diverse members and public discussions.

The power the Assembly [*ekklēsia*] relies a great deal on the elite social composition of the Jesus-movement. Throughout Acts, Luke depicts Jews and gentiles as business owners, land owners, synagogue rulers and heads of households [*oikoi*]. It is through resources that Luke depicts his particular narrative within the context of elite, privileged actors that are fully engaged

with local and imperial contexts. While the Acts' narrative is set amongst these social elites, the proclamation of the good-news often occurs in the context of public oratory and debate. The synagogue is the most frequent setting for Paul's debates, and these debates are generally Luke's narrative focal point. In itself, synagogue debate does not have to imply participation in the Second Sophistic. Yet, Luke links Paul's synagogue discourse to elite philosophical discourse by describing Paul's move from synagogue to Areopagus (17.16 – 18). The subsequent portrayal of Paul engaging Stoic and Epicurean philosophers, using the optative, in an ancient Athenian venue evokes numerous allusions to Atticism and the Second Sophistic. Further strengthening use of the Second Sophistic for Luke's social and cultural texture is his subsequent depiction of Paul in Ephesus:

When he left their [his synagogue opponents] midst, he took away disciples and was instructing [διαλέγομαι, *dialegomai*, discuss; examine; discuss via dialectic; argue] daily in the lecture hall [σχολή [*scholē*, group who receives lectures; lecture hall; school; leisure; rest] of Tyrannus. And, this went on for two years. (19.9b – 10a)⁵⁹⁶

Again, Luke frames Paul's activities, this time in the Roman capital of Asia Minor, in the context of Hellenistic education—i.e. *paideia*—discourse and sophistry.

Conflict, Exile, Geography and the Geopolitics of Migration

Overview

The intimate relationship between the concept of diaspora and migration is a result of the role of colonization and Empire in prompting ethno-cultural and geopolitical communities to disperse across various boundaries. A recurring theme in discussions of Empire is the precarious position of subject peoples. Empires frequently have multiple tools at their disposal to compel behavior. Two of the most significant tools are the promises of improvement and threats of destruction. Alongside the growth of the imperial cult, Hellenism and the Second Sophistic was

⁵⁹⁶ ἀποστὰς ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀφώρισεν τοὺς μαθητάς, καθ' ἡμέραν διαλεγόμενος ἐν τῇ σχολῇ Τυράννου. τοῦτο δὲ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ ἔτη δύο... (19.9b – 10a).

Rome's constant threat of annihilation. Subject persons negotiated their social and cultural contexts conscious of the tenuous nature of their position. The station and status of imperial elites was even more precarious as they had more to lose and were more dependent on the particularity of their patronage. The ideology and propaganda of Rome strove to legitimate their presence as the extension of order, stability, peace and justice, and ancient discourse—literature, epigraphy, architecture and graffiti—provide one lens into the mechanisms and ideologies utilized to survive and thrive during the Roman Empire. This last general element of my social and cultural texture describes the significance of conflict, exile and geography in discerning Acts as ancient imperial discourse.

Local Conflict and War

The Roman military provided a constant reminder of Rome's imperial might. Stationed at specific points throughout the Empire, Rome's primary objective was to compel subjection and permit local elites to maintain daily order through their specific institutions. Consequently, the inability of a city-council, imperial governor or client-king to maintain order could lead to imperial intervention via the removal of leadership, the re-drawing of boundaries or the deployment of Roman troops. Thus, civic disorder and chaos was a constant concern for both the masses and the local elites.

At one level, the threat of Roman military action could drastically shape the geopolitical and local organization of a location. The First Jewish War (66-73/4 C.E.) and its consequent destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE is a stark illustration. The destruction of the Temple drastically altered the ethno-cultural composition and administrative institutions. Provoking massive dispersion from Judea, Rome changed the name of Jerusalem to *Aelia Capitolina* and Roman iconography and currency repeatedly reminded local populations of

Rome's victory. The Temple's removal drastically re-oriented Jewish life through its impact on cultic consciousness and practice. Thus, in addition to subduing an imperial threat, the destruction of the Temple served as a symbol to other subject populations about the consequences of resisting Roman authority and to imperial administrators as to the consequences of not maintaining local order. Rome's actions in Judea legitimated colonial paranoia, serving as an ever-present reminder of Roman imperial might.

Exile and Cosmopolitanism

While the First Jewish War added to Jewish diversity exemplifies the impact that conflict and war on ancient social and cultures contexts at the social and community level, it also played a role at the individual level. Because of the strong relationship between a person's place and their identity, exile was long considered a harsh punishment. The central unit of identity and status in the Roman Empire was the household [*oikos*]. The city, province and Empire were each modeled on the household [*oikos*]. *Pater Patriae* [Father of the Fatherland] was one of the most visible identity claims made by the Caesar's. Likewise, the Roman claim of domination over the entire world most often appeared in assertion of their dominance over the οἰκουμένη [*oikoumenē*, inhabited world]. The entire Empire was Caesar's household and he was its father. At the local level, exile was a fundamental alienation from the ancient world's primary institution of identity-making. Exile and its implied detachment from one's homeland, city and household signified the eradication of one's identity and, thus, self. It is because of these connotations that exile, traditionally, was viewed in a pejorative sense.

Philo of Alexandria provides a vivid image of this worldview in his *Against Flaccus* (*Flaccus*, 151 – 191). Discussed in more detail below, Philo discusses what happened to Flaccus, a former procurator of Egypt, once the Emperor Caligula exiled him (*Flaccus*, 151).

Full of misfortunes and dishonor, Flaccus despised his existence in exile. In order to depict the depth of his view of exile, I include a longer excerpt. Philo depicts Flaccus lamenting:

I, Flaccus, who was born, and brought up, and educated in Rome, the heaven of the world, and who have been the schoolfellow and companion of the granddaughters of Augustus, and who was afterwards selected by Tiberius Caesar as one of his most intimate friends, and who have had entrusted to me for six years the greatest of all his possessions, namely, Egypt. What a change is this! In the middle of the day, as if an eclipse had come upon me, night has overshadowed my life. What shall I say of this little islet? Shall I call it my place of banishment, or my new country, or harbour and refuge of misery? A tomb would be the most proper name for it; for I, miserable that I am, am now in a manner conducted to my grave, attending my own funeral, for either I shall destroy my miserable life through my sorrow, or if I am able to cling to life among my miseries, I shall in that case find a distant death, which will be felt all the time of my life...

O King of gods and men! you are not, then, indifferent to the Jewish nation, nor are the assertions which they relate with respect to your providence false; but those men who say that that people has not you for their champion and defender, are far from a correct opinion. And I am an evident proof of this; for all the frantic designs which I conceived against the Jews, I now suffer myself.

I consented when they were stripped of their possessions, giving immunity to those who were plundering them; and on this account I have myself been deprived of all my paternal and maternal inheritance, and of all that I have ever acquired by gift or favour, and of everything else that ever became mine in any other manner. In times past I reproached them with ignominy as being foreigners, though they were in truth sojourners in the land entitled to full privileges, in order to give pleasure to their enemies who were a promiscuous and disorderly multitude, by whom I, miserable man that I was, was flattered and deceived; and for this I have been myself branded with infamy, and have been driven as an exile from the whole of the habitable world, and am shut up in this place (*Flaccus*, 158 – 159, 170 – 172 *trans.* Yonge).

Exile, in this traditional view, is considered a divine punishment and judgement. It is worthwhile considering that Flaccus' exile, according to Philo, only pertained to continental lands, which Philo describes as only the majority of the inhabited world [οἰκουμένη, *oikoumenē*, inhabited world].

While this belief remained prominent during the early Roman Empire, various Second Sophistic thinkers began re-interpret exile. Instead of viewing exile as alienation from home or

cult. they began to view it as an opportunity to enhance their relatedness with the greater cosmos. In Plutarch's (46 C.E. – 120 C.E.) *On Exile*, he specifically addresses and rebuffs prevalent thought that asserted that exile prevented people from making a living, gaining honor, contributing to society, being buried with their family or gaining fame. Through allusion to Classical Greek thinkers, Plutarch re-interpreted Classical Greek tradition as reflecting global citizenship. Building on thinkers such as the Musonius Rufus, of Latin ancestry, Epictetus, born a slave in Asia Minor, and Dio of Prusa, also of Asia Minor ancestry, began re-appropriating discourse about exile, in part because many of lived through periods of exile themselves.

By embracing their relatedness-amidst-difference, these thinkers found alternative models for negotiating their identities. Their depictions of the gods and identity-in-space evolved to incorporate citizenship of the entire world—i.e. cosmopolitanism. These new iterations expressed worldviews that subverted notions of exile as punishment. In his *Discourse* I.9, Epictetus (55 C.E. – 135 C.E.) says:

If these statements of the philosophers are true, that God and men are akin, there is but one course open to men, to do as Socrates did: never to reply to one who asks his country, 'I am an Athenian', or 'I am a Corinthian', but 'I am a citizen of the universe.' For why do you say that you are an Athenian, instead of merely a native of the little spot on which your bit of a body was cast forth at birth? Plainly you call yourself Athenian or Corinthian after that more sovereign region which includes not only the very spot where you were born, and all your household, but also generally that region from which the race of your forbears has come down to you. When a man therefore has learnt to understand the government of the universe and has realized that there is nothing so great or sovereign or all-inclusive as this frame of things wherein men and God are united, and that from it come the seeds from which are sprung not only my own father or grandfather, but all things that are begotten and that grow upon earth, and rational creatures in particular—for these alone are by nature fitted to share in the society of God, being connected with Him by the bond of reason—why should he not call himself a citizen of the universe and a son of God? Why should he fear anything that can happen to him among men? When kinship with Caesar or any other of those who are powerful in Rome is sufficient to make men live in security, above all scorn and free from every fear, shall not the fact that we have God as maker and father and kinsman relieve us from pains and fears? (trans. Matheson)

The identification of relatedness across geopolitical boundaries is an extremely important social and cultural component to early imperial discourse. This shift is extremely important for conceiving the spatial politics of how one relates to migration, exile and civilization.

Preparing Acts: Cosmopolitanism, Conflict and Turmoil

The impact of social unrest and conflict and travel drive Act's narrative. In discussion of each of the above elements of Acts social and cultural texture, conflict and dispute and travel are frequently alluded to. The entirety of the Acts' narrative revolves around travel and dislocation between geopolitical origin and place of existence. As alluded to above, the narrative begins with Galileans in Jerusalem and ends with a Cilician Jew under house arrest in Rome. The cultural tradition of re-valuing space and identity provides a useful setting for understanding Luke's narrative.

With respect to conflict and dispute, Luke includes these debates within the Assembly [*ekklēsia*] (5.1 – 10; 6.1- 7; 15.1 - 23); within Judaism (3.1 – 4.31; 6.8 – 8.4); between Judaism and Rome (18.2, 17), and between the Assembly [*ekklēsia*] and dominant Roman culture (19.21 – 40). The ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural debates over belief in the resurrection and the Jesus-movements relationship to Jewish ethno-cultural identity are foundational to understanding the social and cultural setting of Luke-Acts (3.1 – 4.31). It destabilizes the civic and social space in which the initial Galileans interpret scripture and proclaim Jesus as Christ. Likewise, the expansion of the Jesus-movement beyond the geopolitical boundaries of Palestine is the result of intra-communal dispute among non-Palestinian descended Jews (6.8 – 8.4). Instead of framing the growth of the Jesus-movement as an intentional and imperial mode of conquest, Luke frames this trajectory of the movement's expansion as a scattering into relation. As people move beyond their various spaces they always build new relationships based on other aspects of relatedness. It is in this ironic reality that Luke portrays Paul as incapable of co-existing with

peers. Conflict, turmoil and their imperial consequences continually inform Luke's social and cultural texture. This tenuousness is especially important for persons from Diaspora. Their station, status and survival are often a byproduct of their ability to maintain relatedness and negotiate the geographical and discursive worlds through which they embody their identities.

Individual Articulations of Diaspora via Diaspora Discourse

Overview

The social and cultural texture provided in this (re)construction observes the presence of both Jewish and non-Jewish Diasporas in early Imperial Rome. Because the Roman Empire's imperial program generated migration, numerous ethno-cultural and geopolitical communities experienced the production of Diaspora. Thus, reading Acts as Diaspora discourse can inform the relationships between author and audiences regardless whether scholars identify Luke or his audience as Jewish. Non-Jewish Diaspora individuals, informed by the same diaspora poetics outlined in Chapters Five and Six, had the potential to engage Acts as Diaspora discourse. The present construction of Acts' social and cultural texture positions Luke's narrative broadly into early imperial Rome as Diaspora discourse. It is imperative to remain vigilant against *mal d'archive* and observe the existence of a gap exists among extant discursive productions of ancient Diaspora. The majority of extant early imperial literature comes from elite strata of Roman society that is unrepresentative of the average Roman subject. It is probably that it is equally unrepresentative for the average early imperial Christian. And, while Luke demonstrates skilled familiarity with Greek literary conventions, Philo, Josephus and Lucian are likely

representative of his broader milieu; they unlikely represent Luke's social peers.⁵⁹⁷ The social and cultural dimensions described above only provide a setting.

Because Acts' authorship and provenance are unknown, the latter portion of this chapter looks ancient Diaspora through diverse guises:

- An elite, non-Palestinian Jew (Philo of Alexandria);
- An imperially aligned Jew of Judean origin who interpreted Jewish scriptures to identify Caesar as the Jewish Christ (Flavius Titus Josephus);
- A pseudonymous Jewish text of unknown provenance that places thematic emphasis noble death in the face of imperial injustice while exhibiting facility with Greek sophistic practices and Jewish scriptural interpretation (4 Maccabees);
- An imperially aligned Assyrian of modest origins who utilizes Atticism and Hellenistic culture to negotiate Roman identity and structures (Lucian of Samosata).

With the possible exception of 4 Maccabees, each author reflects different geopolitical places of origin and temporal era. Philo, Josephus and 4 Maccabees offer a glimpse into the diverse discursive strategies and worldviews employed in Jewish discourse of the early Roman imperial era while Lucian of Samosata provides a useful, though later, Second Sophistic writer who reflects a diaspora consciousness outside of the Jewish context. The following discussion moves beyond general descriptions of the ancient world to illustrate specific strategic and discursive approaches that early imperial Diaspora subjects employed.

Philo and Josephus, 4 Maccabees and Jewish Literary Negotiation of Diaspora

Philo and Josephus

Historical Circumstances

Philo of Alexandria (ca 20 B.C.E. – 50 C.E.) illustrates the possible socio-political and economic achievements available to Jews and their families when they successfully negotiate the

⁵⁹⁷ If one views Theophilus as Luke's patron, Philo, Josephus and Lucian may better correspond to Theophilus' peers and social equals. Though, this possibly cannot be presumed because of the privilege and unique social position of these three Diaspora persons.

identity politics of Roman subjugation. Philo, however, shows that social ascension by Diaspora individuals did not require the termination of Diaspora identity. Coming from a wealthy Alexandrian Jewish family, Philo likely inherited his Roman citizenship. Much of what we know about his family comes from Josephus. According to Josephus, Philo was skilled in philosophy and eminent in all respects (*Antiquities* 18.8.1) while his brother Alexander excelled over all his peers in wealth and family esteem (*Antiquities* 20.5.2). Alexander was one of the wealthiest people in Alexandria and served as Alabarch, an imperial administrator that oversaw taxes and public funds.⁵⁹⁸

As a city, Alexandria was the Empire's second city whose status was inferior only to Rome. The city held significant strategic and agricultural importance in addition to being a center for learning, philosophy and rhetoric. Consequently, the imperial appointment to Procurator of Egypt, a position Philo's nephew Tiberius Alexander held between 66 C.E. – 69 C.E., was one of the most prestigious positions in first century Rome. The city was also home to approximately half a million Jews that were lived mostly in two of the city's five districts.

Little is known about Philo's personal life. While Josephus makes more references to his brother Alexander, his writings agree with Josephus' association of Philo with philosophy. Philo's social position and rhetorical skill resulted in him serving as the lead delegate before Caesar Caligula (Gaius) after a riot and pointed persecution of Jews erupted in Alexandria. One of Philo's extant works is his *Embassy to Gaius* and *Against Flaccus* recount the volatile events in Alexandria and defense offered to Caligula. Through successful negotiation of imperial identity, relationships and rhetoric, Philo succeeded in his appeal to Caesar against the Egyptian

⁵⁹⁸ Evans, Katherine G., "Alexander the Alabarch: Roman and Jew," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1995 Seminar Papers*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr., Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 34 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995).

prefect Flaccus. In this instance, the influential and skilled Jewish Alexandrian secured the conviction, exile and eventual execution of Flaccus.

Both the testimonies of Josephus and Philo attest to the prominent position that Philo and his brother Alexander held their Jewish identity its socio-political negotiation. Philo's diverse engagement of Jewish scripture are imbued with Platonic thought and influence. He shows a value and celebration of Jewish tradition and culture. The family also maintained close relationships with Jerusalem and Judea. Alexander's son Marcus, a prominent importer and exporter of goods, was the first husband to Herod Agrippa's daughter Berenice (*Antiquities* 19.5.1) Alexander additionally donated funds to have the Temple gates in Jerusalem covered in gold and silver (Josephus, *J.W.* 5.5.3). And, when Herod Agrippa II was forced to flee arrest because of his massive debt of 300,000 drachmae of silver to Caesar, it is Alexander who provided Agrippa II's wife the money to repay the debt and return to the favor of Tiberius.

Though Philo's family was wealthy, witnesses depict them as different in their negotiation of imperial space. These different strategies responded to the perpetually tenuous nature of early imperial existence. The aggravation and persecution of Jews under the prefectorship of Flaccus exemplifies this state. Philo vividly describes the events that unfolded as his fellow Alexandrian Jews were violently and unlawfully murdered (*Flaccus* 41 – 74). His status and position did not protect him from sudden outbreaks of violence or targeted local attacks. Likewise, Tiberius imprisoned the senior Alexander at some point but it was his imperial relationships with Claudius that resulted in his release upon Claudius' ascension to Caesar.

References to another of Philo's nephews, Tiberius Alexander, contrast his ethno-cultural identity as divergent from both his father and uncle. In an ambiguous passage, Josephus

contrasts Tiberius Alexander to his father by saying that, “[Alexander, the father] differed from his son Alexander with respect to his piety towards G*d, for this [son] did not abide to [their] ancestral customs,” (Josephus, *J.W.* 20.5.1).⁵⁹⁹ The obscure reference highlights the both Tiberius Alexander’s heritage and different means of negotiating his imperial identity. As alluded to above, Tiberius Alexander would rise through the ranks of Rome’s army and the imperial administration and fostered relationships with Claudius, Nero, Titus and Vespasian. These relationships contributed to his rise to Procurator of Judea (46 C.E. – 48 C.E.) and Prefect of Egypt (66 C.E. – 69 C.E.). In each of these cases, the life of Philo and his family members demonstrate the diverse means that Diaspora Jews could express and maintain relationships with both Rome and Judea. Philo’s negotiation of Jewish identity and Diaspora appears incongruent through rigid dichotomies of Roman citizenship and devoted Jew.

Negotiating Jewish Identity with Caesar

This historical presentation displays the mutable and contextual nature of Philo’s family. His writings also attest to this polyvocal nature. Highlighting the discursive nature of Diaspora discourse, Accompanying the perpetual concern for imperial existence, Jewish Diaspora discourse often expressed and negotiated geopolitical particularity and non-Palestinian Jewish identity. Philo of Alexandria both highlights this particularity and illustrates the inherent difficulty and temporality of Diaspora discourse. He discusses the simultaneity of Jewish identity and the related difference that Jews as Diaspora.

⁵⁹⁹ “διήνεγκε καὶ τῇ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εὐσεβείᾳ τοῦ παιδὸς Ἀλεξάνδρου· τοῖς γὰρ πατρίοις οὐκ ἐνέμεινεν οὗτος ἔθεισιν.” Scholars disagree significantly on how to interpret ἐμμένω [emmenō, stay; abide in; cleave to; remain; stand by, stand fast; remain constant]. The traditional reading views Tiberius Alexander as an apostate and deprives him of Jewish identity. Alternate views struggle to discern Josephus’ intended meaning and whether deals with Jewish identity or an evaluation of the rigor with which he complies with ethno-cultural customs and Torah-observance. See, nce. Ibid.; Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria: A Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Karl-Gustav Sandelin, “Philo as Jew,” in *Reading Philo: A Handbook to Philo of Alexandria*, ed. Torrey Seland (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014), 19–46.

In Philo's *Embassy to Gaius*, he defends the responses of Alexandrian and Jerusalem Jews to attempts by imperial administrator to erect idols in the Temple and synagogues. His address appeals to diaspora poetics, in part, to attack malicious stereotypes that depict Jews as socially dangerous, atheistic and antisocial. The below passage portrays Philo's use of diaspora poetics to affirm his relatedness to Jews throughout the world. Noting his personal particularity due to his Roman citizenship, wealth, status and Alexandrian provenance, Philo affirms his relatedness to Jews throughout the Diaspora. Due to his Diaspora consciousness, he understands his past, present and future as intertwined with the entire Diaspora.

Linked with this nation [ἔθνος, *ethnos*, nation; tribe; people], fatherland and temple, I petition on behalf of the entirety of this people [ἔθνος, *ethnos*] lest someone present a view [that is] contrary from the truth: that from the beginning [this people] has disposed itself as the most pious and loyal towards your household [*oikos*]. For, it is in such things that [this people] has set out and strives with laws to perform [their] piety; in regards to [their] prayers, preparations of votive offerings and numerous sacrifices, not only during the designated time of civic feasts but also in their daily fulfillment, [this people] is in no way inferior to anyone, neither among Asians nor Europeans; it is not by mouth or tongue that [they] disclose their piety but rather by the intentions of an unseen soul; these, without saying they are friends of Caesar, are truly thus.

ἔθνει δὴ τοιούτῳ προσκεκληρωμένος καὶ πατρίδι καὶ ἱερῷ δέομαι ὑπὲρ πάντων τοῦ μὲν ἔθνους ἵνα μὴ τὴν ἐναντίαν δόξαν ἐνέγκηται τῆς ἀληθείας εὐσεβέστατα καὶ ὀσιώτατα διακείμενον ἐξ ἀρχῆς πρὸς ἅπαντα τὸν ὑμέτερον οἶκον. ἐν οἷς γὰρ ἐφεῖται καὶ ἕξεσι μετὰ νόμων εὐσεβεῖν οὐδενὸς οὔτε τῶν Ἀσιανῶν οὔτε τῶν ἐν Εὐρώπῃ λείπεται τὸ παράπαν εὐχαῖς, ἀναθημάτων κατασκευαῖς πλήθει θυσῶν οὐ μόνον ἐν ταῖς κατὰ τὰς δημοτελεῖς ἑορταῖς ἀναγομέναις ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ταῖς καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ἐντελεχέσιν· ἐξ ὧν οὐ στόματι καὶ γλώσσει μνηνοῦσι τὸ εὐσεβὲς μᾶλλον ἢ ψυχῆς ἀφανοῦς βουλευμασιν οἱ μὴ λέγοντες ὅτι φιλοκαίσαρές εἰσιν ἀλλ' ὄντες ὄντως. (*Embassy* 279 – 280)

Instead of downplaying his ethno-cultic particularity and the stereotypes associated with it, Philo appeals to his ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural particularity. I translate the verb Προσκληρώω [*prosklēroō*, attach; join] as linked in the above passage. However, I intend this notion of linked to convey relatedness-amidst-diffence. Philo identifies himself in relation to a people (*ethnos*), geopolitical region and tradition (*patris*) and ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural

system (temple, [ἱερόν, *ieron*]). This attached-ness highlights the mutable ways in which Philo can negotiate and build relationship with Jews and non-Jews.⁶⁰⁰ This relatedness permits Philo to speak in generalities. Often when Diaspora individuals defend themselves, they must choose whether to highlight their individuality or their relatedness. Philo demonstrates the autobiographical nature that Morrison connects with Black American discourse. The figurative power of one's own defense is able to counter social stereotypes. In this case, Philo assures Caligula that Jewish ethno-cultic particularity, and thus "being," is an expression of their piety and loyalty to both the Empire and his specific household (*oikos*). This claim continues to function in an imperial context where subject-persons combatted amongst one another for position. Thus, while Philo highlights Jewish relatedness with Rome, he locates the Jewish Diaspora in competition with Asian and European peoples.

Later in *Embassy* 281, Philo begins to specify his ideological view of Alexandria and Jerusalem. This discussion refuses to choose one identity over another and demands the recognition of a polyvocal both/and identity:

Concerning the Holy City...it is on the one hand [my] fatherland and on the other, a mother-city [μητρόπολις, *metropolis*, mother-city; metropolis] not of a single Judean country but also of the many who, on account of colonization which has over time sent [them] out into bordering Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria, both it and the part called Coele, and towards the further [area] living apart in Pamphilia, Cilicia, the more distant [areas] of Asia until Bithynia, even the recesses of Pontus; in like manner also into Europe, Thessaly, Boeotia, Macedonia, Aetolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, the parts best and richest portions of Peloponnesus. And, not only are the lands replete with Jewish settlements but even the most esteemed of the islands [such as] Euboea, Cyprus and Crete.

περὶ δὲ τῆς ἱεροπόλεως...ἐμὴ μὲν ἐστὶ πατρίς μητρόπολις δὲ οὐ μιᾶς χώρας Ἰουδαίας ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν πλείστων διὰ τὰς ἀποικίας ἃς ἐξέπεμψεν ἐπὶ καιρῶν εἰς μὲν τὰς ὁμόρους Αἴγυπτον Φοινίκην, Συρίαν τὴν τε ἄλλην καὶ τὴν Κοίλην προσαγορευομένην εἰς δὲ τὰς πόρρω διωκισμένας Παμφυλίαν Κιλικίαν, τὰ πολλὰ

⁶⁰⁰ Προσκληρώ [*prosklēroō*] occurs only once in the New Testament (Acts 17.4). The term describes the outcome of Paul's speaking in a synagogogue in Thessalonica. Thus, this "relatedness" or "attachment" generated by Paul's teaching intimates these individuals association with more than their absorption and erasure into Paul's circle.

τῆς Ἀσίας ἄχρι Βιθυνίας καὶ τῶν τοῦ Πόντου μυχῶν τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ εἰς
Εὐρώπην, Θετταλίαν Βοιωτίαν Μακεδονίαν, Αἰτωλίαν τὴν Ἀττικὴν Ἰαργὸν
Κόρινθον τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ ἄριστα Πελοποννήσου καὶ οὐ μόνον αἱ ἥπειροι μεστὰὶ
τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν ἀποικιῶν εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ καὶ νήσων αἱ δοκιμώταται Εὐβοία Κύπρος,
Κρήτη. (*Embassy* 281-282a)

Philo's assertion that Jerusalem is his fatherland [*πατρίς, patris*, fatherland, homeland or native land] and Jerusalem his mother-city [*μητροπόλεις, mētropleis*, major city; metropolis] appeals to my construct of diaspora as relying on the negotiation of a common myth of origin or migration. Appealing to notions of the Jewish Diaspora's cosmopolitan and global nature, Philo recounts the areas, *ad nauseam*, where Jews resided. Careful to depict this dispersion as positive, Philo frames dispersion in terms of imperial conquest and colonization. After depicting Jewish existence as steeped in loyalty, Philo further constructs his image of Jewish diversity. This appropriation and (re)narrative of the past informs his diaspora poetics and appeal. With less detail, Philo assures Caligula that Jews exist in regions beyond Rome's boundaries because they are found in most lands beyond the Euphrates. Stretching the cosmographic image of the Jewish Diaspora Philo mentions Babylon to the east and Libya to the south.

Philo utilizes his notion of connectedness to depict a positive verdict as having trans-regional effects. Because Jerusalem is the mother-city *of a global people*, a positive judgement for a single geopolitical region results in citizens and inhabitants of the entire world praising the decision. These appeals to cosmopolitanism allow Philo to alter the axiological judgements of Jewish Diaspora. Philo counters pejorative depictions of Jews as nation-less and transforms their identity into a means of conjuring favor and honors around the world: to grant justice to Jerusalem is the provision of justice to the entire world [*οἰκουμένη, oikoumenē*] (*Embassy* 283 – 284).

The figurative nature of Philo's discourse cannot be underappreciated. Employing similar language in *Flaccus* 44 – 49, he slightly alters his presentation of the signifiers fatherland

and mother-city. Employing much of the same rhetoric, he valorizes and legitimates Diaspora existence as beneficial both to the Diaspora and to Empire. This value is visible in his characterization of Jews as closely associated with peace, justice and patience. However, when discussing Diaspora identity and the relationship between place of birth and one's point of Diaspora negotiation, he affirms the identification of Jerusalem as the mother-city of the Diaspora. In this instance, instead of a tripartite cultural framework of people, land and cult, he portrays the Temple to the Most High as the central figure that mediates Diaspora relatedness through a shared mother-city. Instead of giving Jerusalem the double-identity of mother-city and fatherland, Philo argues that different articulations of the Diaspora have different fatherlands. In an attempt to highlight to dualness of Diaspora identity, Philo argues that Jews claim their place of residence and/or birth as their fatherland. Their place of birth and physical-origin is the geopolitical space where "their fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers, and more ancient ancestors were born and raised." (*Flaccus* 46) Philo's discursive transformation of the mother-city and fatherland increases the recognition of Diaspora as mutually balancing relatedness-amidst-differentness. Through this careful imagery, Philo (re)presents Diaspora individuals as products of a common mother that conveys ethno-cultural, ethno-cultic and cosmopolitanism and different fathers, who integrate them into the greater Roman Empire and local regions as fully functioning, whole beings. In this instance, he continues to identify Jerusalem as central to their identity.

In line with Philo's portrayal, Josephus supports this perspective in a stinging critique of a gentile Egyptian named Apion. Acknowledging the long-standing presence in Jews in various geopolitical spaces, Josephus explains that Jews in Ephesus consider themselves Ephesians, and those in Antioch, Antiochians (*Ag.Ap.* 2.39). This discussion is essential to Josephus' rejection

of anti-Judaic stereotypes. Josephus takes his claim further through discussion of legal rights and the semi-autonomous rights afforded Jews in various Diaspora settings. Consequently, neither Philo nor Josephus view Diaspora identity as necessitating alienation or fragmentation. Yet, for both individuals, particularity and differentness still matter.

The emphasis on internal differentness is a key portion of Josephus' writings. His autobiographical *The Life of Josephus* depicts internal Jewish identity as extremely diverse, consisting a various sects [αἵρεσις, *haireisis*, sect; party] such as Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and an unnamed ascetic group in the Judean desert (Josephus, *Life* 10) and prone to internal critique and dispute. Luke employs a similar semantic-world when referring to Sadducees (Acts 5.17), Pharisees (Acts 15.5; 26.5), and the Way (Acts 24.5, 14; 28.22) as variant articulations of thought and practice within Jewish diversity.

Josephus begins *Life*, by describing himself as a youth experimenting with the three main Jewish sects, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. After hearing of another group based in the desert, he spent three years also studying with them (Josephus, *Life* 10). Josephus' life as a young adult illustrates a heterogeneous and competitive aspect of first century Jewish life that also conveys the potential fluidity of internal sect boundaries and membership. Add to these three groups, Sicarii, the Qumran community, followers of John the Baptist, followers of Jesus of Nazareth, along with numerous movements surrounding various failed Messianic movements and the polyvocal context of Jewish ideological and religio-political diversity becomes readily visible. These particular articulations of the Jewish Diaspora are restricted to traditional geographic confines of Palestine.

The diversity depicted in Josephus' narrative is not restricted to sectarian groups but political and pragmatic differences were also important to navigate. Josephus describes taking

refuge with a group of priests and Pharisees during the early stages of the First Jewish War (*Life* 21-23). Strikingly similar to Destines' justification for Black soldiers joining the Confederacy, Josephus explains that at times one needed to feign support in order to preserve survival. Living amongst a group of priests and Pharisees, Josephus uses these intra-Diaspora groups to signify a greater presence of Jewish loyalty to Rome and excuse such participation. Instead of claiming uniqueness, Josephus depicts this as a necessary reality amongst various loyal Jewish subjects living in Palestine during the war. Yet, the reality of intra-communal dispute necessitated his participation.

Not only did Josephus' literary career occur after Rome's destruction of Jerusalem, but also it was under Roman patronage. Thus, Josephus is no impartial writer. Additionally the lack of sources makes it difficult to verify whether Pharisees and priests ever collaborated or the extent to which they shared a concern over Roman response to local sedition. However, both Josephus and Luke construct narratives of a pre-70 C.E. world within a post-70 C.E. setting. Likewise, both authors detail the particularity of Jewish difference, history and internal dispute. The narrative given by Josephus raises questions of sincerity and political expediency. Writing his autobiography under Roman patronage, years following Rome's destruction of Jerusalem, Josephus' performance of (re)narration of the past illustrates the symbiotic nature of the figures of diaspora poetics. Josephus presents himself as a discursive figure that symbolizes the majority of faithful, loyal Jews who support Roman occupation. His narrative explores the diversity of intra-Jewish dispute and depicts various groups as negative foils. Whether Josephus' primary interest was in personal acquisition of honor or communal defense of Jews, his discursive performance exemplifies the dual nature of both acts.

Both Philo and Josephus model diverse approaches to the discursive practice of self-identifying in Diaspora. Each author illustrates the potential utility of diaspora poetics when evaluating the meaning-making trajectories of ancient Diaspora discourse. Reflecting different imperial positions and different articulations of the Jewish Diaspora both individuals bring attention to the pragmatic reality of negotiating socio-political circumstances and strategic approaches from the side of Roman allegiance.

Four Maccabees as Second Sophistic Strategy

Four Maccabees is an informative example of Hellenistic Jewish literature that exhibits the roles that Hellenism and Atticism played on Jewish Diaspora discourse while also offering a useful parallel to Josephus, Philo and Lucian. With unknown provenance, the author of 4 Maccabees negotiates issues of ethno-cultural identity, Jewish historiography and imperial critique all while negotiating cultural accoutrements of early imperial Rome. Its author, like Josephus, frames Jewish cultural expression as philosophy. Composed in the form of an epideictic treatise, 4 Maccabees exhibits many of the traits of the Second Sophistic. It opens:

I am about to demonstrate the most philosophical subject, whether pious reason [*eusebēs logismos*] is the absolute ruler [*autodespotos*] of the passions. I would [like to] advise you rightly so you might cling zealously to [this] philosophy. For the subject is necessary for anyone [in pursuit of] knowledge [*ēpistēmēn*] and especially concerns praise of the greatest virtue, I am speaking clearly about prudence [*phronēseōs*].

Φιλοσοφώτατον λόγον ἐπιδείκνυσθαι μέλλων, εἰ αὐτοδέσποτός [*autodespotos*, sole-master] ἐστὶν τῶν παθῶν ὁ εὐσεβῆς [*eusebēs*, pious, devout] λογισμός [*logismos*, reasoning; calculation; argument; reasoning power], συμβουλεύσαιμι ἂν ὑμῖν ὀρθῶς ὅπως προσέχητε προθύμως τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ. καὶ γὰρ ἀναγκαῖος εἰς ἐπιστήμην παντὶ ὁ λόγος καὶ ἄλλως τῆς μεγίστης ἀρετῆς, λέγω δὴ φρονήσεως [*phronēseōs*, practical wisdom; thought; prudence; intellect] περιέχει ἔπαινον.

(4 Macc 1.1-2)

This text is thoroughly informed by Greek rhetorical and philosophical traditions and exhibits an affinity towards Stoic thought. The philosophy to which this treatise exhorts auditors

to zealously cling is a socio-culturally conservative embodiment of the Torah. Hellenism greatly influences this text by shaping the language, thought world and analogies through which the author seeks to exhort Torah adherence and ethno-cultural pride. The author presents Jewish particularity as fully compatible with Hellenistic culture and thought. This epideictic demonstration challenges rigid binaries between Hellenistic and Jewish cultural traditions while invalidating axiological assertions that would associate Hellenistic expressions of Jewish culture as assimilationist, passive or prone to apostasy. The principal of *le même* that undergirds such presuppositions is one of the author's chief objects of critique.

Implicit in the author's presentation is a critique of individuals that forgo pious reason and prudence. Members of the Diaspora who, for various reasons, fail to properly understand the past as a testimony to the supremacy of piety over physical power or material comfort. Over the course of the treatise, the author exhorts the audience to adhere strictly to the Law, including dietary restrictions. Stereotypically, scholars would anticipate a liberal assimilated worldview to follow such a sophisticated work. *Four Maccabees* deviates from this assumption. Utilizing various rhetorical tools, *4 Maccabees* narrates the persecution of a priest, Eleazar, seven sons and their mother. Refusing to transgress their notions of Torah-adherence, the Seleucid tyrant, Antiochus Epiphanes, attempts to compel compliance from each person through methodical tortures. The pain and suffering undergone by Eleazar and the seven sons fail to convince them that adherence to the tyrant is more beneficial than adherence to the law. The logic and reason conveyed to them through the Torah, cultural memory and experience convince them that pious reason is more valuable than material position. Consequently, each protagonist resists the tyrant to the point of death, thereby proving the author's point: that pious reason is able to control one's emotions.

The author's use of the term πάθος [*pathos*] highlights the discursive creativity exhibited in this text. However, the discursive significance of *pathos* loses semantic value in English translation. The notion of *pathos* encompasses a semantic range in English that includes experience, emotion, passion and suffering. Thus, when the treatise opens querying the ability of pious reason to control and rule over *pathos*, the Greek infers each of these semantic dimensions. Subsequently, the narrative draws on Jewish colonial history by using signifying the experience [*pathos*] of Eleazar, the mother and her seven sons with other experiences [*pathē*] of Jewish imperial existence, persecution and survival. Similarly, the narrative account details πάθος [*pathos*] suffering doled out on each protagonist via torture. The conclusion of 4 Maccabees focuses on the strident, emotion-laden passion [*pathos*] between a mother and her children. As epideictic demonstration, the author additionally uses rhetorical structure, scriptural citation and detailed imagery to rhetorically appeal to the audience's interpretive emotion [*pathos*].⁶⁰¹

The author further imbeds the treatise within the context of Hellenistic and Roman imperial ideology. The identified primary subject revolves around the Roman virtues and cardinal principals of reason [λογισμός *logismos*, reasoning; calculation; argument; reasoning power] and prudence [*phronēseōs*, practical wisdom; thought; prudence]. Further, extrapolating on this subject, the author introduces other cardinal principals through an explanation of the nature of and powers associated with reason:

For reason does not govern its own passions, rather those opposing justice [*dikaioṣunēs*], courage [*andreias*] and self-control [*sōphrosunēs*], and these [it governs] not to destroy them but so it does not succumb to them.

οὐ γὰρ τῶν αὐτοῦ παθῶν ὁ λογισμὸς κρατεῖ, ἀλλὰ τῶν τῆς δικαιοσύνης [*dikaioṣunēs*, justice; righteousness], καὶ ἀνδρείας [*andreias*, courage; bravery; manhood] καὶ σωφροσύνης [*sōphrosunēs*] ἐναντίων, καὶ τούτων οὐχ ὥστε αὐτὰ

⁶⁰¹ This aspect of 4 Maccabees frequently lead scholars to denigrate the literary quality by associating the style with Asiatic discourse over-against Atticism.

καταλῦσαι, ἀλλ' ὥστε αὐτοῖς μὴ εἶξαι

(4 Macc 1:6)

Consequently, the semantic and discursive world of 4 Maccabees is thoroughly Hellenistic. The subject and topic of interest is resolutely centered on Jewish existence and experience. Four Maccabees is neither hybrid nor assimilationist; it is polyvocal in its articulation of a Diaspora consciousness of an individual who is simultaneously both/and.

A final point of comparison between Josephus and Philo deals with the geopolitical identity appropriated by the author. The author of 4 Maccabees could be Palestinian or non-Palestinian in origin. It is necessary to remember that one's ideological perspective does not determine geopolitical provenance. Insight from sophisticated and critical approaches to Black Atlantic discourse caution one from linking geopolitical location univocally with ideology and strategy. This observation works with Hengel's suggestions that the pervasiveness of Hellenism during the Roman imperial era and the prominence of travel and migration permit Hellenistic expressions of the Jewish Diaspora to occur both within and outside of Palestine. The level of sophistication suggests an advanced *paideia*, which increases the probability that the author had access to considerable means with the ability to travel beyond the boundaries of their place of birth.

Four Maccabees employs the praise of fatherland in relationship to noble death. Resembling Menander's description of praise of the fatherland and Lucian's *My Native Land*, 4 Maccabees discusses the significance of the fatherland without specifying an actual geopolitical space (4 Macc 1.11; 4.20; 17.21; 18.4). As demonstrated below in the discussion Philo and Josephus, this reference is likely to the geopolitical space of Judea or ethno-cultural signifier Israel. Thus, the cultural facility of Hellenistic rhetoric and language is at least partially detached from one's ethno-cultural and geopolitical identity. Through various modes of

discourse, 4 Maccabees is a model example of how Jewish Diaspora discourse could creatively counter dominant culture's stereotypes, subvert notions of *le même* imbedded in imperial ideology and negotiate the poetics of diaspora at multiple levels of communication.

Notions of *le même* often lead to the disregard of imperial and colonial contexts. Their (re)constructions through the presumptive detachment of the religious, political, and secular. By erasing difference, or failing to hold the complexity of self in full view, interpretations prejudge a text's ideological texture, and often presume that text's advocate social homogenization. By differentiating between the religious sphere and the political sphere and recognizing the dynamism of geopolitical and ethno-cultural identity, the social and cultural texture remains open to diverse ways in which texts represent their narrative worlds. It is this tenuous and dynamic nature that this social and cultural texture for Acts conceives ancient Diaspora discourse within a Jewish context.

Summation

The connectedness between one's homeland, residence, civic status and ethno-cultural identity can be complex and tenuous, but they are also political. While political, both authors, at their core, make materially relevant and ethno-religious claims about the validity and legitimacy of Jewish cultic life, and the divine sanctioning of Roman rule. Josephus elicits Jewish prophecy and argues in the *Judean Wars* 6.310-315 that Emperor Vespasian, then general responsible for razing the Jerusalem Temple, is the divine appointed Christ. He critiques the Jews who revolted against Rome as parochial in their understanding of prophecy:

Someone considering these things will find that G*d, on the one hand, cares for humanity, even foretelling the means of salvation to this specific people by many different ways, but those who are destroyed are done so on their own accord people through ignorance and wickedness; hence, the Jews, having it written in their sayings that the city and the temple would be destroyed whenever the temple became four-sided, made their temple four-sided with the destruction of the

Antonia. But, the thing that most especially enticed them into war was an ambiguous oracle, also found in their holy writings, concerning that season when someone from their country will rule over the inhabited world.

So they understood this as a reference to one of their one, and many of their wise were deceived with respect to this judgment. But, it is clear that the saying was pointing towards the rule of Vespasian, absolute ruler over Judea. towards The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea.

While Josephus interpreted Jewish scripture in terms of Roman fortune, Philo oriented

Jewish particularity to cosmopolitanism and Roman loyalty and the author of 4 Maccabees critiqued imperial tyranny as unjust. In these discourses through *le divers*, Josephus need not be viewed as solely Roman, or antagonistic to all Jews. As such, Philo's particular approach to Diaspora discourse and imperial negotiation offers a social and cultural context for envisioning early imperial auditors engaging Acts as Diaspora discourse. Josephus, in like manner, simultaneously embodies political, religious and cultural sensibilities attempting to navigate the precarious threat of Rome and ethno-cultural particularity of their identity. Capable of critiquing interpretations and political views of Jews who engaged in behavior they disavowed, neither Philo, Josephus nor the author of 4 Maccabees forfeited their Jewishness through their creative (re)narrations of the past, diverse views of scripture or political disputes. As such, these particular expressions of the Jewish Diaspora provide a useful social and cultural texture for envisioning diverse invocations of diaspora poetics in reading and contextualizing Acts of the Apostles.

Lucian and non-Jewish Diaspora in Rome

Complex Identity in the Roman East

Samosata

When considering Diaspora in early imperial Rome, Lucian of Samosata (ca 120 C.E. – 180 C.E.) is an interesting combination of archetype and exceptionalism.⁶⁰² Born of modest origins on the edges of the Roman Empire, Lucian became a leading model of classicizing during the Second Sophistic. The extensiveness of his extant corpus has led to significant interest in his life and career. Galen, albeit contested, offers the sole contemporary extant reference to his life. While there is great interest in his identity, only Galen provides a contemporary, albeit contested, extant reference. Consequently, information about Lucian's life must be gleaned from his work.

Samosata (near modern day Samsat, Turkey) was a city on the Euphrates River in the eastern fringe of the Roman Empire. A part of the Roman province of Syria during Lucian's life, Samosata was the gateway to two competing empires: Rome and Parthia. One of two important commercial and military points for crossing the Euphrates was located at Samosata. While Greek was the language of the eastern portion of the Roman Empire, and the likely the tongue of the elite members of Samosata, a dialect of Aramaic was likely Lucian's first language.

Historically, Samosata was the capital of the Kingdom of Commagene that was completely annexed by Rome in 72 C.E. The royal family claimed ancestry from Mesopotamia, the Greek Seleucids and Commagene. After abdicating their throne, the royal family left Commagene and became incredibly successful. The last heir to the Commagene throne, Philopappos (65-116 C.E.), became a prominent figure in Athens and Rome, which is apparent by his ability to become archon of Athens and consul at Rome. Prior, however, to the annexation in 72 C.E., Commagene had carried on extensive relationships with Rome and its leaders since Pompey's campaign in 64 B.C.E. The first 140 years of the Roman empire saw at least four

⁶⁰² Lucian has one of the most extensive extant corpuses among ancient Greek literature from the Roman imperial period; approximately eighty of his works survive. His corpus consists of comic prose, satirical dialogue, essays and fantastic travel narratives.

transfers of power between Rome and Commagene. Samosata's location requires constant reminder of the approximately three hundred years of on and off fighting between Parthia and Rome. With Vespasian's incorporation of Commagene into the Empire, there was constant military presence in Commagene through the time of Lucian's life. As a city of Roman Syria, Samosata continued to play strategic roles for the Roman Empire. Marcus Aurelius' reign was beneficial for both Samosata and Lucian. The two hundred year history of Samosata preceding Lucian's life was in constant interaction and seeming collusion with Roman political institutions.

Lucian, Diaspora and Community Responsibility

Withstanding the progress made in Classical studies, there still remains occasions when scholars simplistically identify Lucian as:

[A] Syrian in the sense of the Greeks who have settled in Syria, not one of the native ones (*autochoones*), a speaker and writer of Greek."...He presumably did not live by the Syrian customs, but by those of the Hellenistic cities. His subject was life in Greece and in the capital, and his own position there. We do not even know whether he would call himself a "Syrian" if he was not writing satire. He was Greek by Choice. His works are relevant for us insofar as they depict the position of a Greek-speaking Syrian in contemporary Greek and Roman society and in particular the attitudes of that society towards someone like Lucian...⁶⁰³

Isaac contends that Lucian is embarrassed and apologetic with respect to his Syrian background. Though he states that Syrian and Hellene identities are not necessarily contradictory, he goes on to reify Western stereotypes of the barbarian/Other. In Isaac's perspective intimates that Lucian's participation in the Second Sophistic and facility with Atticism indicates the transformation of identity and condemnation of his past. In Isaac's words, Lucian's affinity to Hellenism is a "choice" to be Greek.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰³ Benjamin H. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton University Press, 2006), 342.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 342–345.

Isaac initiates his argument with an evaluation of Lucian's self-identification in *The Ignorant Book-Collector* (*Ind* 19). This text is a useful point of departure for observing the heuristic benefits of diaspora poetics. *The Ignorant Book-Collector* is in an epideictic speech composed in the form of deliberative discourse. The narrator addresses the reader in the second-person singular. However, the implied audience is an unidentified book-collector of Syrian heritage (*Ind* 19). This stylistic approach draws readers into Lucian's harsh criticism as readers have to constantly navigate the interstitial space introduced with each use of "you." It is between the text, themselves and their embodiment of the fictive book-collector that Lucian's poetics navigate the socio-cultural reality of Roman imperial ideology.

Lucian's speech centers on you—i.e. the book-collector's—penchant to purchase expensive books that are never read or understood. The speech oscillates between direct address and a variety of demeaning analogies. Over the course of the discourse, Lucian accuses you—i.e. the book-collector—of being unknowledgeable, stingy, prideful, naïve and susceptible to false praise. Implicit in Lucian's presentation is the assumption that you—i.e. the book-collector—have considerable resources, wealth and proximity to other wealthy individuals and true "men" of learning.

Isaac focuses on Lucian's stark and pejorative assessment. After likening you—i.e. the book-collector—to people he believes deserve scorn such as a double-amputee spending exorbitant amount of money on shoes (*Ind* 6 – 7) and a talentless novice-musician who purchases jewel-laden clothes and expensive instruments (*Ind* 8 – 10), Lucian asserts that your—i.e. the book-collector's—behavior is as unalterable as, "one attempting to scrub clean an Ethiopian," (*Ind* 28). Because the narrator identifies both he and the book-collector as Syrian, Isaac asserts Lucian's universal scorn for Syrians and rejection of Syrian identity. Isaac addresses Diaspora

identity as singular and omits consideration of the presence of intra-communal critique among Diaspora discourse.

The application of diaspora poetics recognizes both the expectation for intra-communal debate and the heterogeneity of Diaspora existence. The invocation of Syrian identity as insightful suggests that Syrian identity is particular and not assumed. Thus, a non-Syrian location for this exchange makes sense. Additionally, Lucian intimates more than an ethno-cultural relatedness but an actual familiarity. He should have known about you—i.e. the book-collector's—true character (*Ind* 22) and recalls that he had recently vehemently defended the man from libel (*Ind* 25). This relationship heightens the relatedness and risk involved in these vices. Functioning within a Diaspora consciousness, much like Philo's address in *The Embassy*, Lucian notes the interrelatedness that Empire places on Diaspora.

Through this altered lens, Lucian is seen going out of his way to convey a transgressed relationship and misguided ideology. In a culture where natal affiliation contributed to the construction of social identity, *The Ignorant Book-Collector* gives an impassioned example of Syrian discourse and socio-cultural negotiation. Lucian's critique is not ethno-cultural; it is ideological. Similar to many of Lucian's other satires, he castigates the valoration of material wealth. Material wealth is a delusion. At multiple points of the discourse, Lucian argues that individuals without material resources can attain true honor and knowledge through learning. In fact, Lucian's critique focuses less on the lack of knowledge and more on the pursuit of status through improper strategies and the squandering of resources.

Lucian defends the validity of his judgement through confirming contextual relatedness. He asserts that, "as for me I know, being that I, too am a Syrian," (*Ind* 19). This statement conveys no ethno-cultural self-hatred but intensifies his intra-communal critique and socio-

cultural susceptibility. It is through Diaspora relatedness that Lucian claims to know the truth behind the façade. This appeal to “insider” knowledge and contextual consideration is another discursive negotiation of diaspora poetics. This relatedness connects the scorn that you—i.e. the book-collector—garner to Lucian’s ethno-cultural identity. In line with Desdunes’ defense of Lanusse, DuBois’ critique of McKay, Philo’s defense of the entire Diaspora, Lucian recognizes the interrelated nature of Diaspora. Throughout the speech Lucian appeals to self-interest and reputation; yet, in his conclusion he abruptly shifts his critique to a communal assessment.

It is this move that indicates the figurative nature of Lucian’s insertion of his personal ethno-cultural identity. Your—i.e. the book-collector’s—obsession with individual status equates to selfishness and the deterioration of community. For the self-interested Diaspora individual whose primary strategy is material consumption has never lent anyone a book. Here, the book signifies both the acquisition and waste of material resources and Lucian’s critique highlights a failure in corporate responsibility. Thus, the your—i.e. the book-collector’s—ideology functions as a material poetics, where, “you fashion [*poieō*, do; make; fashion; create] like the bitch lying in the manger who neither eats from the grain herself nor allows the horse, who has the ability, to eat of it,” (*Ind* 30).⁶⁰⁵ For Lucian, Diaspora identity entails material consequences, necessitates the negotiation of relatedness and demands intra-communal debate.

Lucian and Invocations of the *Patris*

My Native Land as Intertext

The Ignorant Book-Collector provides insight into Lucian’s views of corporate responsibility and relatedness-amidst-difference with respect to other Diaspora individuals. His *My Native Land* provides insight into Lucian’s discursive depictions of his views to the land and

⁶⁰⁵ τὸ τῆς κυνὸς ποιεῖς τῆς ἐν τῇ φάτνῃ κατακειμένης, ἢ οὔτε αὐτὴ τῶν κριθῶν ἐσθίει οὔτε τῷ ἵππῳ δυναμένῳ φαγεῖν ἐπιτρέπει. (*Ind* 30)

geopolitical region that he identifies as the fatherland [*patris*]. Lucian's *My Native Land* receives very little scholarly attention. It stands out in his corpus because of its apparent lack of satire or hyperbole. In opposition to Second Sophistic claims of Greek heritage and ancestry, Lucian's consistent self-identification as a Syrian and barbarian subverts traditional Greek and Roman cosmographies. In his appropriation a universalizing act, praising one's fatherland, Lucian conveys a laudatory attitude about his distinct Syrianness. Additionally, Lucian's commentary on travel, fame and death within the *My Native Land* demonstrate:

- An understanding of displacement/separation;
- Perpetual connectedness/identity with his natal land;
- The valorization of his irreversible distinctness and Diaspora consciousness.

Appealing to Hellenistic rhetorical forms that draw on epideictic traditions, Lucian's *Encomium* engages in the Greek rhetorical tradition of praising one's fatherland [*patris*]. Third century Menander Rhetor lists praise of one's fatherland as an appropriate rhetorical strategy when performing an encomium of the emperor (Menander II.369.18, 370.5) or performing a *lalia* (II,392.1-9).⁶⁰⁶ Menander's discussion of the *lalia* is situated with respect to:

- Praising a governor or official;
- Returning home from a long journey;
- Performing a funeral oration.

In either instance of an encomium for the emperor or in a *lalia*, praise of fatherland is a figurative process of praising one's people. Fatherland functions largely as a metonym that integrally links a people to a land of origin. Lucian's autobiographical insertion into *My Native Land* slightly differentiates his encomium from the rote expectations described by the third-century B.C.E. Menander.

⁶⁰⁶ Merging aspects of deliberative and epideictic the *lalia* is form of rhetoric whose origin appears to date to the Hellenistic period of Menander. The *lalia* is an informal "talk" or "chat."

In addition to structural form, fatherland [*patris*] contains great signifying value due to its connection to Roman imperial ideology. One of the chief descriptions claimed by Caesar was *Pater Patriae* [Father of the Fatherland]. Eva Lassen argues that from 44 B.C.E. onwards Rome appropriated images of the fatherland, and denoted Caesar as *Pater Patriae* in monuments and on coins.⁶⁰⁷ The competing notions of fatherland among Roman imperial claims, socio-cultural appeals to Atticism and Greekness and the subjugation and marginalization of ethno-cultural peoples as barbarian subjects, encomiastic discourse relating to one's fatherland was forced to navigate a complex social and cultural reality.⁶⁰⁸ It is through this lens that Lucian's *My Native Land* is viewed as the negotiation of Diaspora consciousness.

It is difficult to discern the occasion for Lucian's composition of the *My Native Land*. As demonstrative discourse, Lucian could have composed *My Native Land* as an early exercise in *paideia*. Likewise, a trip home could have been the occasion for its composition or a performance abroad that sought to extol the virtues of *paideia*. The reference to death and burial in *Native Land* 9 could suggest this text's inclusion as part of a funeral oration. In each of these circumstances, *Native Land* negotiates Lucian's Hellenized culture and ethno-cultural origin as successfully informing one another.

His decision to open the *Native Land* with an intertextual allusion to Homer mirrors one of Menander's rhetorical recommendations for composers that, "nothing sweeter than one's fatherland" (Odyssey 9.34; cf. *Native Land* 1). Instead of using this citation to appeal to Greek history, Lucian utilizes the quote to initiate a critique against a common object of Lucian's scorn:

⁶⁰⁷ Eva Lassen, "The Use of the Father Image in Imperial Propaganda and 1 Corinthians 4:14-21," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42, no. 1 (1991): 127–36 cf. Suetonius, Jul. 88.

⁶⁰⁸ For discussions of identity negotiation by non-Roman identity, See Greg Woolf, "Beyond Romans and Natives," *World Archaeology* 28, no. 3 (1997): 339–50; Benjamin H. Isaac, "Attitudes Toward Provincial Intellectuals in the Roman Empire," in *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Erich S. Gruen (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2011), 491–519.

the superficial person seeking fame and wealth. This critique mirrors the same critique identified in *The Ignorant Book-Collector*. Lucian's emphasis remains on genuine behavior and expression of praise because of propriety and not consumption. Though inequalities exist among places and peoples, Lucian asserts that one's fidelity to the fatherland is greater than any honor associated status or place. It is incumbent that people praise the fatherland [*patris*] because it is the fatherland and not because of its stature.

Lacking specific reference to Samosata or Syria, *My Native Land* universalizes pride and attachment to one's homeland by generalizing the fatherland [*patris*]. The fatherland [*patris*] is a figure that Lucian models after the household. As the most basic social unit in Roman ideology, the household [*oikos*] served as a model for the city and the Empire. It is through this imagery that Lucian depicts the *fatherland* as a reflection of one's relationship with a parent. Just as it is proper to pay respect and honor to one's parents, praise of the fatherland is an expression of the same natural process. Extrapolating on the figure of the fatherland as household [*oikos*], Lucian describes travel and migration as a natural process. Migration neither terminates one's relationship to the fatherland nor erases one's fidelity. This vision of geopolitical translation reflects the cosmopolitan views expressed through various Second Sophistic authors. Lucian's encomiastic *My Native Land* organizes Diaspora relatedness within the frameworks of nature and household [*oikos*]. This thematic presentation of Diaspora comports with the communal expectations and recurring critique of self-interested ideologies.

The Dream via My Native Land

Lucian's *The Dream* is a semi-autobiographical discourse that describes the internal tension Lucian experienced when deciding whether to continue into the traditions of his family or to pursue a life of letters and Hellenization. The psychological angst depicted in Lucian's narrative possibly parallels the struggle Tiberius Alexander underwent as he embarked on a

career of imperial service. Faced with critiques like Josephus' assertion that Tiberius Alexander "did not continue in his ancestral traditions," (*Ant.* 20.8.5), Lucian's *The Dream* depicts Diaspora consciousness from the perspective of identity politics and fear of inauthenticity. In the context of Diaspora discourse that depicts the fatherland as a natural entity and communal responsibility as vital, Lucian's *The Dream* employs diaspora poetics to model, share and process this process. Additionally, Lucian's narrative differs significantly from Josephus' *Life*. Josephus' narrative is more explicitly auto-biographical and historical. Lucian's narrative is more figurative in its articulation of truth and beauty as experienced internally. Additionally, Lucian depicts a geopolitical and class transformation that Josephus does not. Because Lucian derived from a more modest family his transformation and identity negotiation introduces a number of elements absent—or obscured—by Josephus.

The Dream's narrative begins as Lucian completes his basic education and was expected to begin apprenticeship training. Lucian gives the impression of being performed in his hometown of Samosata (*The Dream* 1-2). Set in Samosata, Lucian builds rapport with his audience by describing experiences with which people of modest origins would identify. Though unique among early imperial literature, Lucian repetitively valorizes individuals with modest origins.

The ideology reflected in young Lucian mirrors the Syrian book-collector's worldview in *The Ignorant Book-Collector*. Acting like a self-interested, ends-oriented individual, youthful Lucian was like the pseudo-sophists and historians he disdains in so many of his writings. He merely sought to quickly learn a trade and impress his compatriots (*The Dream* 3). First apprenticing with his uncle in sculpting, he was discouraged from this path after receiving a

severe beating on his first day. Following this beating, Lucian had a dream that he recounts through the remainder of the narrative.

The dream presents two personified professions, Paideia and Sculpture fighting for Lucian's interest. Sculpture represents Lucian's ancestral traditions while Paideia represents a life of education and Hellenization. Sculpture entices him to approach her through appeals to swift material benefit and safety. Quickly earning a living, Lucian would never need to leave home. Lucian connects Sculpture with *barbarizousa* [using bad grammar]. Related to the word barbarian, Sculpture enhances Lucian's association of his family with modest origins and provides, via Sculpture's relationship to Lucian's family, another connection between Lucian and barbarian identity.

Lucian describes the struggle between Paideia and Sculpture as strenuous. This tension carries intertextual allusion to his encomium in *My Native Land* where he asserts:

If one was fated from such a fatherland that he was required [to go] for a higher education, let him thus be happy for those early educations: for he would not even know the name of a city except that he learn what a city is by through his fatherland... (*My Native Land* 6).

This passage reflects the potential hesitance one might have to leave their fatherland for education. But Lucian says, let it him be happy. The tension depicted in *The Dream* corresponds to the extended portion of *My Native Land* that discusses one's departure from the fatherland [*patris*]. He identifies multiple approaches to travel abroad: those who fail abroad (Marcus Garvey?); those who become citizens of other cities (Josephine Baker? James Baldwin? Claude McKay?), those who become extremely wealthy abroad (Victor Séjour); those who live in the fatherland and own little property (Aimé Césaire? Arthur Carter?). For each and every one of these, Lucian argues that respect for the fatherland is essential.

These images of departing the fatherland provide a window to Paideia's speech in the *The Dream*. One of the most peculiar and telling aspects of Lucian's *The Dream* is when *Paideia* begins her speech by affirming that, "I, O child, am Paideia, already familiar and known by you," (*The Dream* 9). Lucian, the Syrian who depicts himself as barbarian in speech and a kaftan in *Double Indictment* now presents his indigenous being as already familiar with Paideia. Inferred in this argument between Paideia and Sculpture that both entities already have valid claims on Lucian; neither profession is foreign to him. This dual claim on the adolescent Lucian signifies Lucian's socio-cultural double-consciousness as a young member of the Syrian Diaspora within the Roman Empire. Lucian's negotiation of his intersectional identity claims that his selection of Paideia marks neither his rejection of his Syrianness nor a transformation into a Greek. It simply indicates the completion of one experience and the strategic engagement of another.

The following observations continue to find intertextual parallels between *My Native Land* and *The Dream*. The model outlined in *My Native Land* suggests that Lucian's decision should correspond to communal and corporate consideration. Lucian's adheres to this model as he describes the rest of Paideia's speech. Opposed to the self-interested benefits offered by Sculpture, Paideia promises to give wisdom, knowledge of the old things and to make Lucian's family proud. This generation of family honor is important in the context of ancient dyadic personalities. These benefits, wisdom, knowledge of antiquity and family honor, are less tangible than material wealth and the security of home. However, they better correlate with the growing interest in cosmopolitanism and *My Native Land's* description of travel abroad as making one's father and fatherland enviable.

After choosing *Paideia*, Lucian accompanies *Paideia* in a cart and travels over the world sowing “something.” *The Dream* lacks reference to Lucian identifying as Greek, and thus, contains little reason to suspect Lucian sowing “Hellenization.” Rather, due to the text’s trajectory, his sowing of his own culture is possible. Lucian’s influence and prominence in the realm of *Paideia* is established by Double Indictment. Rather than mimicking Greek culture, Lucian saw himself changing and improving upon the Greek tradition. He left his mark, and just as no one ever knows the exact imprints they leave on another context, Lucian recognizes the role his fatherland and indigenous Syrian identity play in this task. Regardless the object Lucian sows, the image of seeding the world with *Paideia* is central to an understanding of dispersion.

The last connection I want to raise between *The Dream* and *My Native Land* is the identification of a double travel cycle within *The Dream*:

“The reason, I suppose, for which men amass *paideumata* (education] and learning is that they may thereby make themselves more useful to their native land, and they likewise acquire riches out of ambition to contribute to its common funds.” (*My Native Land* 7, trans. Harmon, LCL).

The purpose of *Paideia* is to contribute to the fatherland. Invoking an image of Diasporic personality, Lucian makes return a necessary desire. *The Dream* contains two travel cycles. Lucian’s strong identification of the goal of life. Lucian’s mini-travel follows conventional form and depicts him stepping onto the cart with *Paideia* and “returning” with *Paideia*. Again mirroring the cycle described in *My Native Land*, Lucian’s *The Dream* 17 – 18 portrays Lucian departing Samosata with Culture and returning with Culture. Culture was not found in the foreign lands but imparted in Lucian by the fatherland [*patris*]. *The Dream* 17 and 18 transforms the entire work into an elaborate travel cycle. *Paideia* sparks his departure but it is his speech that allows him to “return” and give back to his fatherland [*patris*]. Lucian portrays himself in opposition to the book-collector; Lucian gives back.

Summation

Lucian displays tremendous respect for his homeland and ethnic identity across a number of his works. This identity does not preclude his acquiring *paideia*. In fact most Diaspora groups contain segments of its society that learn the skills of social mobility and survival. Thus, the attentive consideration of *The Dream* and *My Native Land* as Diaspora discourse provides an alternative reading of the social and culture texture. Lucian is a non-Jewish Diaspora individual that consistently attends to his imperial, ethno-cultural and ideological subjectivities.

Paideia is an indigenous trait that is non respcter of class or space. It does not require mutation, transformation, departure or becoming someone else. By appealing to a Diaspora consciousness, Lucian describes the results of *paideia* as bringing praise and envy to one's father and fatherland. Moreover, the engagement in Paideia was to articulate an aspect of self that was already present in his being. Imperial existence provided numerous methods of discursive negotiation that did not require an Athens-centric or Rome-centric cosmography. Diaspora existence within the Lucian's context required openness, experience, exposure and devotion. Read through diaspora poetics, *My Native Land* and *The Dream* are expressions of second century Diaspora negotiation. Attempting to exist as Syrian under Rome was a significant task. Roman commodification of Greek tastes and culture gave Lucian access to the possibility of subverting class boundaries. This reading has placed Lucian's social and cultural texture alongside his discourse. As a Diaspora Assyrian, Lucian reflects the various pillars of Diaspora poetics.

Reading the Social and Cultural Texture: Diaspora and Geopolitical Particularity as Emphasized Context in Acts

In an era when Josephus lambasted the Galilean Jews that he once co-served with during Judea's revolt against Rome and brazenly invoked Jewish scripture to identify Vespasian as

Israel's divinely appointed Messiah, is it possible to read early Jewish and Christian discourse through a lens of Diaspora? Acts, written in this same post-70 CE context, appeared amid a diverse polyvocal Jewish-world, the political and geopolitical reality of which had been drastically shaped by Empire and Diaspora. Though traditional approaches to Acts produce diverse interpretations, they largely reflect reliance on a linear paradigm that resembles dominant Western metanarratives of the nation-state. This metanarrative's representation of history is a contextually legitimate and useful way to read Acts as discourse that legitimates, defends, and emphatically centers Christianity upon Gentile identity. However, because metanarrative selection is always contextually situated, readings dependent on any one metanarrative should only be understood as a reflection of possible patterns and logics.

When engaged from the perspective of a Black American that self-identifies as diasporic, Luke's thematic concentration on Gentiles becomes an issue of Diaspora existence. By invoking a metanarrative situated within the logics of Diaspora, the Jewish and Cilician Paul's pronouncement in 28.28 need no longer be conceived as Luke's declaration of THE univocally expressed Way nor as the hegemonic call to eradicate expressions of the Way articulated by Peter, Barnabas, Phillip, Apollos, or even Timothy. With Acts no longer restricted to being the self-evident twin history of Gentile Christianity and Anti-Judaism from root to blossom, this contextual reading attends to numerous textual signs that prompt that respond my own Diaspora context. Luke's thematic focus on Gentiles can indeed function as a historicized *apologia* of Diasporic existence in the midst of diverse disputes about Jewish memory, Jewish authenticity, and Israel's future. Like reading Nat Turner, the invocation of alternative metanarratives can situate both history and Diaspora as complex matrices characterized by countless roots, routes,

ruptures, self-critique, and generations. This exercise, thus, is my first sighting of Luke's Acts as a perspectival story of diaspora acts.

Chapter 8 A Concluding Overture: Acts 6.1 – 8.40 as Site of Diaspora

Introduction

As illustrated in the “Preparing Acts” sections in Chapter Seven’s presentation of the social and cultural texture, the inner texture of Acts of the Apostles reflects many of the concerns inferred by my diaspora poetics. Conflict, travel and cross-cultural interactions drive an Acts narrative that uses references to imperial elites (Luke 2.1 – 2; 3.1 – 2; Acts 11.28; 12.20 – 25; 18.2; 23.26; 24.27 – 25.1; 28.19) to frame the activities of early followers of Jesus both temporally and socio-politically. As the sequel to a story about a Galilean Jew killed as a political enemy of Rome while visiting Jerusalem, Acts gives focused recognition to characters who constantly navigate the identity politics inherent in their shared ethno-cultural and cultic identities. These characters negotiate their ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic relatedness across geopolitical boundaries. Luke gives specific geopolitical provenance to many of his Jewish characters. These Jewish actors descend from Galilee (Peter and the Apostles), Jerusalem (John Mark), Caesarea Maritima (Philip), Cyprus (Barnabas), Tarsus of Cilicia (Paul), Pontus (Priscilla and Aquila), Alexandria (Apollos) and Lystra (Timothy).

Luke accompanies these geopolitical allusions to Diaspora-existence with inferences to multilingualism as a mode of negotiating both Diaspora and Empire (2.6 – 8). The assembled Jews in Luke’s Pentecost scene (2.1 – 13) come from every part of the world. In addition to geopolitical references and multilingualism, Luke highlights the linguistic-oriented cultural differences between the apparent binary: Hebrews (6.1) and Hellenists [Ἑλληνιστῆς, *hellēnistēs*] (6.1; 9.29). Luke immerses his narrative with prominent immigrant and transplant characters who negotiate the implicitly complex identity politics of Jewish identity. Further texturizing this Diaspora context, many of these characters have multiple names that reflect their multi-

culturalism. Among these dual-named characters are Joseph (Justus), Barnabas (Joseph) and Paul (Saul). These negotiations of Jewish and imperial existence includes Timothy, a Lycaonian of Jewish and Greek, multi-ethnic heritage. Luke's narrative draws on the diversity of Jewish experience to use Diaspora as a mutable center that at times may better be expressed as Israel (1.6; 2.22, 36; 3.12; 4.10, 27; 5.21, 31, 35; 9.15; 10.36; 13.16, 17, 23 – 24; 21.28; 28.20) to fully reflect its dynamic, contested, mutable and diverse imperial pasts.

Jewish Diaspora, in Luke's presentation, is cosmopolitan in its myriad articulations and maintains relatedness across multiple streams that draw continually from negotiations of memory, discourse and experience. In many of these streams of relatedness, Diaspora must navigate the consequential torrents of imperial existence and geopolitical dislocation informed by epistemologies of *le même*. Yet, it extends beyond Rome's οἰκουμένη [*oikoumnē*, inhabited world; whole-world (Luke 2.1; 4.5; Acts 17.6; 19.27; 24.5)] through Parthia and Ethiopia (2.9; 8.27 - 28) until the end of the earth (1.8). As a text from the margins and read in Diaspora, Acts' narrative reflects and responds to the inevitability of chaos and dispute. Instead of demonstrating how to establish or fix relationships—e.g. by dam or boom—Luke composes a narrative that signals the utility of relatedness and particularity in assuaging the all but certain dilemmas attendant to life, especially life in Diaspora.

These socio-cultural and ideological concerns help situate this contextual exegesis of Acts 6.1 – 8.40 within the social and cultural texture of early imperial Rome and the ideological texture privileged by my Black American context. The integration of my poetics of diaspora on with the Acts' social and cultural texture takes serious the identity politics often associated with Diaspora. As previously outlined in the general and individual illustrations of Acts' social and

cultural texture, Diaspora was integral in negotiation of early imperial Rome and thus developed for some an acute attentiveness to the identity politics of difference.⁶⁰⁹

Building on the ideological texture outlined in my diaspora poetics and the social and cultural texture developed in Chapter Seven, this chapter executes a Black American cultural critical exegesis of Acts 6.1 – 8.40. Discussed in more detail below, Acts 6.1 – 8.40 functions as an integral transition in Luke’s narrative. The events narrated in 1.12 – 6.7 occur in Jerusalem with the Galileans Peter and John as the central protagonists. Acts 6.1 – 8.40 rapidly transforms the narrative with respect to its geographical setting, geopolitical composition of its focal protagonists and temporal development. Luke introduces three Hellenist Jews, Stephen, Philip and Saul (Paul) whose stories occupy the significant bulk of Acts’ narrative program.

Luke uses 6.1 – 7 as a bridge pericope to introduce Stephen and Phillip into the narrative and link the Apostles with the seven Hellenists—i.e. Diaspora—appointed to ensure the proper provision to their widows and other Hellenists. Acts 6:7-8:3 contains the entirety of Stephen’s ministry. Beginning with a squabble between Hellenists and Hebrews and ending with the mob-compelled exodus of non-Judean Christ-followers following Stephen’s lynching, this pericope reflects the Diaspora realities of both intra-group and inter-group conflict. This text is particularly useful in this study, not only because of the presence of conflict and violence, but because it introduces Paul to Acts’ narrative while providing an example of successful conflict resolution as well as the escalation of conflict to murder.

⁶⁰⁹ In much the same way as other subject-positions, each individual varies in their transference of this “double-consciousness” into other spheres and domains. Womanist criticism has highlighted the danger of ignoring intra-group particularity in the name of community advancement. Insightful contextual awareness—i.e. dual-consciousness—provided Feminist critics and male Black American critics the ability to reveal and challenge the discriminatory practices and oppressive ideologies that accompany constructs of gender and race. Yet, large swaths of these critical communities failed to apply this insight to their own communities. In like manner, Diaspora individuals may at times be acutely aware of the identity politics, racialization, economic or religious dynamics prompted by Diaspora yet employ *le même* strategies of discourse in other areas or contexts.

Acts 8:4 – 40 includes two narrative accounts of Phillip’s ministry. Linked to Stephen’s lynching, 8.4 – 40 includes his preaching in Samaria, collaboration with the Jerusalem-based Galilean Apostles and Baptism of a man of Ethiopian royalty.

Through the application of an epistemology of *le divers*, my diaspora-oriented reading of Acts 6.1 – 8.40 engages the narrative first through the observation of differentness.⁶¹⁰ In each narrative unit I identify a central site/locus of differentness that both activates elements of my poetics of diaspora and engages Acts’ ancient socio-political context—i.e. social and cultural texture. Through the epistemological privileging of *le divers*, sites of differentness require the observation and acknowledgement of relatedness-amidst-difference. In praxis, this perspective is visible in my initial observations—i.e. sightings—of differentness and my acknowledgement of each site. The central sites of differentness for my reading of 6.1 – 8.40 are:

Sites of Differentness

Narrative Unit	Particularity	Relatedness
6.1 – 7	Hebrews and Hellenists	Jewish Disciples of Jesus
6. 8 – 8.3	Jesus-followers and non-Jesus followers	Hellenists
8.4 – 25	Jews and Samaritans	Israel
8.26 – 40	Subject to Caesar (Philip) and Subject to Candace (Ethiopian)	Worshippers of G*d
9.1 – 31	Saul and the Disciples	Devotion to Lord

After situating the greater inner texture of Acts within my reading of Diaspora, the remainder of this chapter develops a cultural critical exegesis of 6.1 – 8.40. My privileging of *le divers* and interpretive attentiveness to diaspora poetics directs this reading. Due to spatial limits, this reading is only an introductory consideration of Acts of the Apostles as Diaspora

⁶¹⁰ I continue to use the term of differentness when discussing an epistemology of *le divers* in order to place stress on the relatedness amongst two particular entities. The goal is to impede my natural impulse to signify particularity as opposition and thus different.

discourse and serves as both a conclusion and overture. As a conclusion, it is an articulation and demonstration of the contextual and theoretical insights evaluated in the preceding chapters. As an overture, this chapter merely initiates my use of diaspora, diaspora poetics and *le divers* to engage critically New Testament and early Christian Studies, Black Atlantic studies and my own twenty-first century Black American identity and context. Thus, certain aspects of this exegesis merely preview future iterations of my engagement with Acts as diaspora discourse; it is both temporal and incomplete in the scope of its execution. What follows, then, are:

- A general description of Acts' inner texture;
- A summary of the narrative subunits: 6.1 – 7; 6.8 – 8.3; 8.4 – 25; 8.26 – 40; ;
- A diaspora-oriented reading of 6.1 – 8.40;
- A concluding reflection on Acts as Diaspora Discourse.

An Inner Texture Description of Diaspora Acts

Overview

Because identity politics and relatedness are integral to the figurative dimension of Black American discourse, the inner texture is a platform through which Luke informs a reader's experience with the text.⁶¹¹ From the perspective of diaspora discourse, the inner texture is an important medium to attend to the various aspects of the narrative upon which other textures can generate interpretations and signify. The following description highlights components of the inner texture that relate to my use of diaspora poetics.

At the most basic level, Acts' narrative opens in the vicinity of Jerusalem approximately forty days after Jesus' crucifixion under Pontius Pilate (1.3 – 4, 12) and conclusion in Rome

⁶¹¹ It is imperative to remember that my (re)construction of an inner texture for Acts is distinct from the articulation of an interpretation (or the assigning) of a specific historical context. Both the generation of meaning—i.e. interpretation—and claim of a specific historical setting are the results of engaging multiple textures. Here, I focus on Luke's textual presentation with minor intertextual observations. The use of historical and anthropological interpretive models at times obscures certain textual observations. By providing a separate inner texture, the delineation of my contextual and ideological presumptions and judgements is more apparent. Both the identification of the inner texture and the subsequent "exegesis" are interpretive. For discussion of my understanding of exegesis, see Chapter, Two

(28.11 – 16, 30) a few years after Festus became the Roman Governor of Judea (24.27 – 25.3; 26.32 – 27.1). The events narrated in Acts cover a virtual lacuna of early Christian history. Many readers, thus, draw on their pre-knowledge of late second and third century Christianity in order to understand Acts as the syllogistic and intermediate step connecting Jesus' ministry to an orthodox gentile Christianity. Through the use of intertextual sources and secondary scholarship, these markers suggest that the Acts' narrative covers a time period between ca 30 C.E. and ca 62 C.E.⁶¹²

Luke's narrative, however, has numerous dissident points that impede this direct projection. Three points of dissidence frame my presentation of key aspects of Acts' inner texture. They are:

- Acts' nonlinear pathways as developed by characters traveling within the narrative and Luke's strategic narrative framework.
- Characters otherwise associated with Jewish identity consistently receive descriptions of geopolitical and ethno-cultural particularity;
- The insertion of "We" passages to enhance Acts' literary style and engagement with identity politics.

***Plot Progression, Geographic Movement and Travel:
Acts as Non-linear Narrative***

Migration and travel are central components to the narrative development of Acts.

Scholars frequently depict the narrative progression found in Acts' as linear. Luke Timothy Johnson describes the contents of Acts: "The prologue [Acts 1.1 – 5] briefly recapitulates the first volume [the Gospel of Luke]...Acts then continues the story of Jesus into the story of the early Church, from its birth at Pentecost to its success among the Gentiles all the way to Rome."⁶¹³ In reference to Acts' narrative, Shelly Matthews is more definitive in her interpretation of this particular narrative description as the text's ideological objection. She

⁶¹² For a summary of debates on Acts' chronology, See Witherington, *Acts: Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 77–97.

⁶¹³ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1.

refers to, “the seeming inevitability of the linear progression emplotted in Acts, from the Jews to the Gentiles, from Jerusalem to Rome.”⁶¹⁴ This macro-description of Luke’s narrative rests on a specific reading of Acts 1.7 – 8 and organization of Acts’ broader socio-rhetorical textures.

Shaping this traditional reading’s ideological texture is a presumption that Luke is representative of gentile Christians and writes in defense of gentile Christian interests.⁶¹⁵ These readings identify and privilege aspects of Luke’s inner texture that situate its meaning-making elements in oppositional relationships such as: Jews – Christians; Jews – gentiles; Jewish Christians – gentile Christians; and Roman Empire – Christianity. Through considerations of the social and cultural texture, interpreters identify the ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic importance of geography in the ancient world and employ synecdoche—appropriately in my estimation—to associate and signify place with people. This association with place and space revolves around the West’s predilection for “Greco-Roman” culture and Christianity’s Jewish origins and their geographical signifiers: Athens; Rome; Jerusalem. Thus, conflation of Acts’ social and cultural texture with its ideological texture anticipates the oppositions, Jewish – gentile or Jewish Christian – gentile Christian, to have comparable geographical articulations such as Jerusalem – Rome or Jerusalem – Athens. This interpretive context then informs their subsequent engagement with the text. Through a variety of interpretive steps, readers expect Luke to address the historical transition of salvation from Jews to gentiles. Anchoring these traditional analyses is the application of a specific reading of Acts 1.7 – 8 to the remainder of Acts’ inner texture.

Scholars almost universally identify 1.7 – 8 as Luke’s programmatic verses:

And he [Jesus] said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that

⁶¹⁴ Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*, 95.

⁶¹⁵ For discussion on traditional approaches to Luke-Acts and the Hegelian Colout-Blindness, see Chapter 1.

the father has established by his own authority, but you will receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, even unto the end of the earth.

εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς· Οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστὶν γινῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς οὓς ὁ πατὴρ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ, ἀλλὰ λήμψεσθε δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐφ' ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες ἐν τε Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ καὶ ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

The syntactic pattern of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and ‘end of the earth’ provides a neat linear program when read with the dominant metanarrative of the nation-state. Using this reading, Jerusalem functions as a historical point of origin that signifies provincialism, dysphoria and minority-status. In contrast, Rome is associated with the ideal *telos* and transcendent success of Christian mission. Such readings of Acts quickly find parallels between 1.7 – 8 and the broader narrative:

- 1.12 – 8.3: Activities in Jerusalem;
- 8.4 – 25; 9.1 – 43: Activities in Judea and Samaria;
- 8.26 – 40; 10.1 – 28.31: Activities to the ends of the earth.⁶¹⁶

While the traditional perspective follows logical argumentation within certain interpretive trajectories, the proposed diaspora-oriented reading perceives Luke’s inner texture as emphasizing nonlinear geographic development. I continue in the scholarly tradition of identifying 1.7 – 8 as Luke’s programmatic verse. But its utility as an inner textual guide does not presuppose Luke’s appropriation of linear narrative development. Key observations that direct this plotting of Acts’ inner texture are how Luke:

- Alternates which protagonists are the narrative’s focal point;
- Varies descriptions of missionary activities and results throughout the narrative;

⁶¹⁶ Strict adherence to 1.7 – 8 is difficult because of Luke does not signify on place and space in the same way traditional ideological textures function. The ministry in Jerusalem in 1.12 – 8.3 is geographically situated in Jerusalem but consists of Galileans, Judeans and non-Palestinian Jews. While missionary activity occurs in Samaria the narrative never claims a geographical setting in a region capable of signifying the ends of the earth. Scholars attempt to stress geopolitical identity by looking at the Ethiopian but do so in an inconsistent manner. “Ends of the Earth” often comes to signify gentile which alters the intertextual application of 1.7 – 8 once Cornelius converts.

- Avoids constructing a linear path from Jerusalem to Rome by allowing the narrative to return to locations, particularly Jerusalem and Antioch;

Discussions of these three aspects of Luke’s narrative help frame this reading’s inner texture as Diaspora discourse.

Changing Faces: Luke’s Use of Multiple Subjects

The narrative subjects and protagonists change throughout Acts. The narrative begins with the Apostles, who were a part of Jesus’ earthly ministry (1.1 – 14). These individuals are no longer a part of Luke’s narrative when Acts concludes in Rome with Paul (28.11 – 31). The transitional narrative focus from the original Apostles to Paul gradually takes place through overlapping stories and sudden departures. The narrative program focuses primarily on the activities of the Apostles from 1.1 – 6.7. Each narrative event revolves around characters first introduced in Luke’s Gospel. While the narrative recounts the activities of multiple characters, Luke depicts Peter most often speaking on behalf of his collaborators (1.15; 2.14, 37; 3. 4 – 7, 12; 4.8; 19; 5.1 – 11, 29).

From Acts 6.1 – 8.40, the narrative focus shifts to events prompted by the actions of characters introduced in chapters six and seven: Stephen and Phillip, introduced in 6.5, and Saul, who enters the narrative in 7.58). Discussed in more detail below, it suffices to note at this point that Luke associates these three characters with Diaspora Jewish communities. Stephen and Phillip are selected from among the Ἑλληνιστῆς [*Hellēnistēs*, Hellenists or Greek-Speakers] in contrast to the Hebrews that comprised the early Jerusalem church (6.1, 3). Likewise, Luke associates Saul, who is called Paul from 13.9 onwards, with “certain Cyrenians and Alexandrians out of the Freedmen Synagogue, as it was called, and some from Cilicia and Asia.” (6.9; 9.11; 21.39).

The focal transition from the original Apostles to these Diaspora Jews residing in Jerusalem is neither an immediate nor a linear move. Peter's character enters and exits the narrative at various times as an assisting collaborator (8.4 – 25; 15.1 – 35) and other times as the primary actor (9.33 – 11.18; 12.1 – 19). While Phillip is responsible for initiating missionary activity in Samaria (8.4 – 25), Luke introduces Peter and other Jerusalem church representatives into the narrative well after Phillip's success. Upon ending the scene in Samaria, Luke's narrative returns to Phillip's activities, this time unimpeded by Peter's contributions (8.26 – 40). Yet, Peter maintains a number of narrative scenes after this transition.

In addition to a gradual shift from Peter to Paul, Luke constantly introduces changes to the ministry cohort that serves as each scene's co-protagonist. For instance, Barnabas occupies an important place as a leader and ancillary character throughout Acts. He, however, first enters the narrative in 4.36 when the narrative focuses on Peter and the Apostles. Barnabas' presence stretches beyond the Apostles' narrative as he becomes closely associated with Paul from 13.1 – 15.39. One of the most intriguing points in the narrative is when Luke introduces Priscilla, Acquilla and Apollos (18.1 – 2, 24 – 28). This brief excursus shifts the narrative for the first time to individuals not connected to Jerusalem or its Assembly. While brief, Apollos precedes Paul's work in Ephesus, which becomes an important venue for his activities in Asia Minor. Through each of the shifts, Luke disrupts the geographical and temporal setting. He informs the audience that some of the events narrated coincide with developments elsewhere. Thus, he exhorts his audience to resist readings of cause-and-effect or to perceive that his narration is the complete history of the early Assembly. Consequently, Luke's use of multiple protagonists uses narrative shifts and turns to disrupt the narrative's appearance of linearity.

Inconsistent Outcomes and Unexpected Audiences

It is equally difficult to use the inner texture to support a view of Acts as the linear movement of the “church” from Jerusalem to Rome. Luke uses a number of terms to denote “insiders” within the Jesus-movement: assembly/church [ἐκκλησία, *ekklēsia*]; believers [οἱ πιστεύοντες, *hoi pisteuontes*]; the Way, [ὁ ὁδός, *ho hodos*, the way; the path]. The majority of Acts’ narrative revolves around the teaching and spreading of the good news. The first public preaching or evangelistic action is Peter’s sermon during Pentecost (Acts 2.1 – 36). This scene offers an interesting parallel to Acts’ closing narrative (28.18 – 31). Both scenes occur in or around a house, and Luke depicts both audiences as entirely Jewish. The Pentecost speech, however, is successful while Paul’s speech has mixed results. Additionally, Peter’s speech is addressed to Jews, native born and proselytes, from around the world, including Romans. In Paul’s final scene, he speaks solely with the influential Jews of Rome who visit him. The similarities and differences between these two scenes lack the natural connection a linear trajectory may suggest. Additional investigation of the narrative progression over Acts further problematizes descriptions of the inner texture as linear.

From Peter and the Apostles’ activities during Pentecost (Acts 2) through the work performed by Paul, Timothy and Silas in Macedonia and Ephesus (19.1 – 20.38), much of the narrative centers on the evangelistic activities of teams of individuals.⁶¹⁷ However, neither Silas (18.5) nor Timothy (20.4) reappears in the narrative following Paul’s final departure for Jerusalem (Acts 21). The narrative scenes that Luke provides following Acts 20 depict the events as occurring in rapid succession over a matter of days and weeks. These rapidly unfolding events primarily consist of Paul’s arrests, defenses and journey to Rome. The narrator,

⁶¹⁷ The mission activities of Philip on the road to Gaza (8.26 – 40) and Peter in Lydda and Joppa (9.32 – 43) are exceptions. Paul’s activities while under house arrest (28.17 – 31) is another possible example the narrator’s presence is discounted.

however, connects these scenes by summarily stating that Paul spent two years imprisoned in Caesarea and two years under house arrest in Rome.

While traditional descriptions of the Acts narrative highlight the movement's growth and infer Paul's contributions, Luke's narrative actually presents Paul's influence as diminishing. His footprint in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21 – 28) are significantly smaller than when he traveled alongside Barnabas and then Silas throughout Greece, Macedonia and Asia Minor (Acts 13 – 20). A significant portion of Paul's missionary activities from his commissioning in Antioch (13.1 – 3) and final departure for Jerusalem (20.16 – 38) occur in predominately gentile locales: Cyprus; Pisidian Antioch (Province of Galatia); Iconium and Lystra; Philippi; Thessalonica; Athens; Corinth; Ephesus. His exposure to gentile audiences drastically decreases following his return to Jerusalem. This occurs primarily because of his imprisonments in Jerusalem, Caesarea and Rome. These captivities occupy the final half decade of Acts' chronology.

Over this period, the narrative consists of Paul interacting with five captors whose primary affiliation is with Rome: Claudius Lysias, the tribune in Jerusalem (21.33 – 23.30), Claudius Lysias, governors Felix and Festus in Caesarea (22.31 – 26.32); the centurion, Julius, who transfers Paul to Rome (27.1 – 28.15); and an unnamed centurion and soldier who, respectively, stayed with Paul during his imprisonment in Caesarea and house arrest in Rome. (24.23; 28.16 – 31). The narrator omits descriptions of these interactions as evangelistic; they primarily fall under the purview of legal defense. The lone depiction of Paul advancing the good-news is when, en route to Rome, and they become shipwrecked on Malta (28.1 – 10). His interaction with the indigenous population is the last interaction Paul has with gentiles that the narrator stylizes as missionary.

The narrative presentation of these years depict Paul interacting almost exclusively with fellow Jews. Luke's portrayal of Paul after his return to Jerusalem additionally reduces his access to gentiles. Beginning in Acts 21, the narrative events shift from evangelistic activities in the service of the greater Jesus-movement to the isolated activities of an imprisoned Paul. Paul has little contact with non-Jews besides his captors, the tribune Claudius Lysias and governors Felix and Festus (Acts 21-22). Despite the fact that Paul emphatically identified himself identifying as sent by the Divine to gentiles, Luke concludes Acts without Paul having contact with any gentiles, though he does speak about them (9.15; 13.47 – 48; 22.21). Luke closes Acts by highlighting Paul's isolation. He enters Rome with the narrator, but once there, "it was permitted for Paul to stay by himself with the soldier who was guarding him." (28.16). Paul has smaller audiences, no mobility and primarily engages people outside his target audience. Consequently, Luke constructs the Acts narrative by describing different missionary strategies, different people, varied audiences and a mix of results. These aspects of the inner texture suggest a cautious approach to overly simple descriptions of Luke's inner texture as demonstrating linear growth of the church. The cause for caution becomes more apparent when dealing with a narrative that begins with the corporate and successful public proclamation of Jesus to Jews from the entire inhabited world.

Geopolitical and Ethno-Cultural Diversity among Luke's Jewish Actors

When approached from a diaspora-oriented perspective, Luke's emphasis on Second Temple Judaism's geopolitical diversity becomes glaring. In addition to his consistent acknowledgement of character's geopolitical places of origin, he often depicts these individuals with supplemental information such as their citizenship status, sectarian affiliation or parentage. Part of the narrative contribution that these particularities perform is the characterization of the Jesus-movement as perpetually away from home. In line with Second Sophistic notions of

cosmopolitan citizenship, Luke's narrative follows pilgrims, itinerants, migrants, escapees and prisoners. This particularity becomes a central element in the negotiation of place, space and community harmony.

Luke begins Acts by highlighting the geopolitical particularity of Jesus, his ministry and disciples. As the Apostles watch Jesus ascending into heaven, two angels instruct the group that Jesus will return in the same way they saw him depart. These angels address the group in geopolitical terms as, "Men, Galileans" (1.11). While meeting in Jerusalem during Pentecost, the onlookers who heard them speaking in various native dialects ask in astonishment, "Look, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" (2.7). Luke juxtaposes this question with the presentation of the geopolitically diverse Jews who happened upon these Galileans while visiting Jerusalem for Pentecost (*Shavu'ot*). The astonished crowd self-identified through geopolitical and ethno-cultural identity by attesting:

Parthians, Medes, Elamites and those who settle Mesopotamia, both Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, both Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Libya by Cyrene, even the Romans who were staying in town, Jews but also proselytes, Cretans and Arabs, we are hearing in our own languages them tell [of] the great things of G*d.

Πάρθοι καὶ Μῆδοι καὶ Ἑλαμίται, καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν, Ἰουδαίαν τε καὶ Καππαδοκίαν, Πόντον καὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν, ¹⁰ Φρυγίαν τε καὶ Παμφυλίαν, Αἴγυπτον καὶ τὰ μέρη τῆς Λιβύης τῆς κατὰ Κυρήνην, καὶ οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες Ῥωμαῖοι, ¹¹ Ἰουδαῖοί τε καὶ προσήλυτοι, Κρήτες καὶ Ἄραβες, ἀκούομεν λαλούντων αὐτῶν ταῖς ἡμετέραις γλώσσαις τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ. (2.9 – 11)

This scene serves a few contextual needs for Luke. First, it introduces the narrative's focus on Jewish Diaspora geopolitical identity. Second, it interrupts stereotypes of Jewish homogeneity. The group of onlookers speaks in unison affirming differentness as they embodied particular articulations of Israel. An additional step deals with the specific regions and peoples

depicted. Considerable scholarly debate focuses on the source or model of this list of nations.⁶¹⁸ This diaspora-oriented reading highlights Luke’s oscillation between ethno-cultural identities (Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Romans, Arabs and Cretans) and those settlers from specific geopolitical regions [Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappodocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphilia, Egypt and a portion of Libya]. These two approaches to geopolitical and ethno-cultural identity reflect the strategies available to Diaspora persons without enforcing any one identity politics. With respect to ancient imperial Rome, as reflected in both Philo (*Flaccus*, 46) and Josephus (*Against Apion*, 2.29), certain Jews were capable of negotiating these identities in mutable ways. In certain instances, they could invoke their geopolitical identity, in others an ethno-cultural one while at times they could allude strictly to citizenship or all three.

Luke returns to this very strategy with Paul. When Paul and Silas are arrested in Phillipi (16.25 – 40) Paul invokes their Roman citizenship without allusion to any other identity markers; Paul and Silas are people of Rome [ἄνθρωπος Ῥωμαίου, *anthōpous Rōmanous*] (16.37), which results in the officers identifying them as Romans. Yet, as discussed above, when arrested in Jerusalem, Paul invokes a tripartite identity without reference to Rome. He is a, “Jewish person, a Tarsian from Cilicia and a citizen of no small town” (21.39). Note in both cases Luke has Paul emphasize his “humanity” by identifying substantively as a ἄνθρωπος, [*anthrōpos*, person, human; man] as opposed to the more status-oriented, gender-constructed ἀνὴρ [*anēr*, man;

⁶¹⁸ Witherington, *Acts: Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*; Mikeal Carl Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 36–40; James M. Scott, *Geography in Early Judaism and Christianity: The Book of Jubilees* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1st ed., Anchor Bible 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 240; A. Francis Carter Jr., “Reflecting Discourse of a Social-World: Images of ‘Africa’ in Luke-Acts” (University of Manchester, 2007); Marguerat, *Les Actes Des Apôtres (1-12)*; James M. Scott, “Luke’s Geographical Horizon,” in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*, ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad H. Gempf, vol. 2, 6 vols., *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 483–544.

husband]. Likewise, his Tarsian identity and citizenship receive substantive qualifications in the nominative, while Roman and Jewish, in these instances, are adjective.

The different types of regions included in Luke's list provide further insight into Act's geopolitical framework and invocation of history. Parthia, Media and Elam were Empires associated with various aspects of Jewish history. While Media and Elam are anachronistic references to Empires that were no longer extant for Luke's audiences, Parthia was a contemporary adversary of Rome. Parthia, Elam and Media can function, then, as imperial contrasts to Rome. Luke has opened the Acts narrative by inferring the presence of Roman and non-Roman subjects, portraying an image of Diaspora more expansive than Roman authority.

This narrative emphasis on geopolitical and ethno-cultural particularity continues throughout the narrative with primary characters and minor characters. Luke's trend is to depict individuals living away from home. Thus, Acts begins with Galileans worshipping and preaching in Jerusalem. Barnabas, one of Acts' most significant non-Palestinian characters, enters the narrative in 4.36 – 37.⁶¹⁹ Luke describes Barnabas as a Levite, property-owner and Cypriot γένος [*genos*, 'nationality', people, 'race']. The individuals responsible for prompting the Jesus-movement's diaspora-scattering [] from Jerusalem are specifically connected to an isolated persecution perpetrated by a synagogue geopolitically comprised of Alexandrians and Cyrenians in associations with people from Cilicia and Asia (6.9). And by way of contrast, Luke only records the geopolitical identity of the disciples who initiated the Antioch Assembly's engagement with Hellenists (11.20). Geopolitical and ethno-cultural particularity is a central

⁶¹⁹ While not engaged in this analysis, Barnabas is essential to the Acts narrative. In addition to being the first non-Palestinian Jew of significance in Acts, he is depicted as largely responsible for Paul's development. Barnabas is a foil for Annias and Sapphira, the couple who lied to the spirit and fell dead. Also, Barnabas is responsible for trusting Paul and then serving as his reference and introduction in Jerusalem (9.20 – 31). Additionally, it is Barnabas who hears of the events in Antioch and then journeys to take Paul to Antioch so he can study with their leadership. Barnabas is also Paul's first travel companion and acts as his liason in Cyprus ad else where.

piece of the polyvocal identities of Luke's character. Read as Diaspora discourse, Luke's inner texture affirms one's ability to identify with their place of provenance and maintain that identity while living [πορεύομαι, *poreuomai*, walk; go; travel; 'live'] across geographical boundaries.

Mirroring elements of the Second Sophistic that appeal to non-terrestrial based identities, Jewish Diaspora, in Acts, affirms worldviews that embrace intersectionality and geopolitical diversity. One is neither Jewish nor Roman. One is Jewish and cherishes the *patris* but makes a life elsewhere. The continued presentation of geopolitical diversity located in spaces that are away-from-home link Luke's orientation towards diaspora with Second Sophistic expressions that subvert notions of exile or alienation:

So, observe, according to reason, from what things you have been distinguished; You've been made distinct from wild beasts. You've been made distinct from sheep. Over these things, you are a citizen of the cosmos and a part of it, not one amongst its subordinate [parts] but a principal [part]. For you are perceptive in regards to divine governance [διοικήσις, *dioikēsis*] and prudent in its calculation.

Σκόπει οὖν, τίνων κεχώρισαι κατὰ λόγον. κεχώρισαι θηρίων, κεχώρισαι προβάτων. ἐπὶ τούτοις πολίτης εἶ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ μέρος αὐτοῦ, οὐχ ἐν τῶν ὑπηρετικῶν, ἀλλὰ τῶν προηγουμένων· παρακολουθητικός γὰρ εἶ τῇ θείᾳ διοικήσει καὶ τοῦ ἐξῆς ἐπιλογιστικός. (Epictetus *Discourses* 2.2 – 3)

As ethno-cultural Jews whose geopolitical particularity is valued, Luke's characters and their cosmopolitanism are rooted neither in philosophy nor in imperial position. Their cosmopolitanism is evidenced in their lived reality of Jewish Diaspora. Through his understanding of divine governance [διοικήσις, *dioikēsis*, internal administration, housekeeping; governance] and prudent calculations, Luke constructs this Diaspora reality largely as a partial reflection of a theological vision of the Jewish Diaspora's supreme and geographically unbounded G*d.

Luke uses two major speeches, one by Stephen (7.1 – 8.3) and one by Paul (17.22 – 32), to narratively present Israel's G*d as the transcendent creator of the cosmos. The cosmos

[κόσμος, *kosmos*, cosmos; universe; world] consists of material and immaterial creation: the heavens and the earth (Luke 9.25; 11.49 – 50; Acts 17.24). Stephen’s speech, discussed in more detail below, addresses a group of Hellenist Jews while Paul’s speech occurs amongst philosophers in the Athenian agora. Luke links these two speeches inner textually through the use of similar language and imagery, particularly the reference to χειροποίητος [*cheiropoiētos*, fashioned-by-hand] and κατοικέω [*katoikeō*, to reside].

And, Solomon built for him an *oikos* [household; home], but the Most High does not **reside in** [those] **fashioned-by-hand**. Just as the prophet says, “**Heaven** is my throne and **earth** is a footstool for my feet; What type of *oikos* [household; home] will you build me, says the Lord, what place for my rest?”

Σολομῶν δὲ οἰκοδόμησεν αὐτῷ οἶκον. ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὁ ὕψιστος ἐν χειροποιήτοις κατοικεῖ· καθὼς ὁ προφήτης λέγει· Ὁ οὐρανός μοι θρόνος, ἡ δὲ γῆ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν μου· ποῖον οἶκον οἰκοδομήσετέ μοι, λέγει κύριος, ἢ τίς τόπος τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου; οὐχὶ ἡ χεὶρ μου ἐποίησεν ταῦτα πάντα; (Acts 7.47 – 50)

G*d, the one who fashioned the cosmos and all things in it, this Lord, ruler of **heaven** and **earth**, neither **resides** in temples **fashioned-by-hand** nor is served in worship by the hands of humans [as if] needing something. The same one gives to everyone life, breadth and all things. [G*d] fashioned from out of one, all nations of humanity **to reside** upon the entire face of **the earth** having determined [their] assigned seasons and the boundaries of their dwelling place.

ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας τὸν κόσμον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ, οὗτος οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὑπάρχων κύριος οὐκ ἐν χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς κατοικεῖ οὐδὲ ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων θεραπεύεται προσδεόμενός τις, αὐτὸς διδούς πᾶσι ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα· ²⁶ ἐποίησέν τε ἐξ ἑνὸς πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ παντός προσώπου τῆς γῆς, ὀρίσας προστεταγμένους καιροὺς καὶ τὰς ὁροθεσίας τῆς κατοικίας αὐτῶν... (Acts 17.24 – 26)⁶²⁰

Both speeches center on ethno-cultic tradition and (re)narrations of their audiences past.

While Paul interprets the presence of Athenian idols and philosophical traditions, Stephen’s statement follows his invocation of King Solomon, who built the first Jerusalem Temple. These

⁶²⁰ The bold has been added to highlight common words. Words underlined mark terms that share semantic connection either through imagery or shared root.

speeches position ethno-cultic interpretive traditions among gentiles and Israel as in relation to one another. Each tradition has the potential to generate flawed ideologies or glimpses of truth. Included in these critiques of ethno-cultic space, Stephen and Paul highlight the cosmological nature of G*d as creator and ruler of heaven and earth.

Bolstering the contrast with Caesar's subjugation of the οἰκουμένη [*oikoumnē*, inhabited world; whole-world] by wars over land and sea, Luke overtly frames the Jewish Diaspora as an expression of geopolitical regions and imperial histories that exceed Roman geopolitical boundaries, imperial history, claim to antiquity or a mixture (2.9 – 10, cf. Mesopotamia, Media, Elam, Parthia, Crete, Egypt). Luke's list of nations locates Rome and its peoples within a greater cosmographical framework than that advanced by Caesar. As such, Luke's cosmos is in contrast to Caesar's οἰκουμένη [*oikoumnē*, inhabited world; whole-world] (the term used in *Res Gestae Augusti Divi*, 3).

The Identity Politics of “We” Passages

Narrator

The inner texture of Acts of the Apostles contains numerous elements that can readily be used as diaspora discourse by Luke’s narrative.⁶²¹ As a composition, Acts employs a narrator to recount this story, thus the narrator is an additional character that Luke uses to highlight the mutable polyvocality of identity. The majority of the Acts’ narrative is told through third-person narration. The narrator opens Acts using the first-person singular alongside a reference to Theophilus. This use of “I” links Acts with the Gospel of Luke while also claiming Acts as his own composition (1.1).⁶²² At the narrative level, the text portrays Theophilus as the audience for whom Luke composes Acts. Scholars read the reference to Theophilus in multiple ways; some identify him as a historical person and likely the patron that commissioned Luke-Acts. Other interpreters identify Theophilus as a compound name that means friend or lover [φίλος, *filos*] of god [θεός, *theos*]. In this reading, Theophilus is a metaphor for the entire *Ekklēsia* of Christ-followers. One’s position on the historical view of Theophilus is very informative in the formation of an intertexture, ideological texture and social and cultural texture. Particularly for scholars interested in historical critical and social-scientific readings of Acts, the historicity of Theophilus guides how one locates Acts’ within ancient socio-economic structures such as patron/client and socio-cultural relationships such as honor/shame. This identification, however, has little effect on Acts’ inner texture. Whether Theophilus is a historical individual or metaphor for the church-universal, Luke’s narrative frames the text as addressed to a single entity. Thus,

⁶²¹ Reading Acts as diaspora discourse does not presume Luke belongs to any particular Diaspora community.

⁶²² This use of “I” contributes to Acts’ intertexture by building an intertextual connection between the two works. Significant to the inner texture, this allusion invokes the prologue in Luke, which describes the objective of the work being to convey truth regarding all the subjects in which he and his audience were instructed. The work itself is described as being the result of Luke, “investigating everything from the beginning in a careful and orderly manner.” (Luke 1.2)

Luke's Theophilus is an inner textural sign that organizes the entire Acts narrative, whether intended to signify a historical person or corporate entity, as communication to a single figure.

In addition to the prologue, Acts contains five episodes where the narrator integrates himself into the narrative through the use of the first-person plural; these scenes are commonly referred to as the "we" passages (16.10 – 17; 20.5 – 21. 1 – 18; 27.1 – 28; 28.1 – 16). The "we" passages occur in travel narratives that take place in the latter third of Acts. At the level of inner texture, the use of the first-person plural reincorporates the narrator into the narrative plot as more than an investigator and compiler of information. These passages depict, for the first time in Luke or Acts, the narrator as a participating with Paul and other early Christ-following figures. The interpretation of "we" passages plays a large role in the interpreter's negotiation of each of the four socio-rhetorical textures and subsequent interpretations.

Since Irenaeus in the second century CE, a group of interpreters have associated the narrator's "we" with the author's "I" in Acts 1.1. In this view, the presence of "we" signals the historical author's claim to have been a first-hand witness to Paul's ministry. Claims that the author was a companion of Paul bolster theological and historiographical credibility and legitimacy among certain circles of readers.⁶²³ Alternatively, two camps argue that these passages enter the narrative abruptly and are restricted to the travel narratives. One group, thus, believes that the use of the first-person plural is a form of verisimilitude intended to draw the audience into the narrative. As a Lucan literary creation, the passages should not be read as the author's claim of presence but a call to envision themselves within the developing church.⁶²⁴

⁶²³ If the author of Acts was a travel companion with Paul, the youngest one would expect him to be in the early 90s is sixty. That dating presumes he was active in missions in his early twenties. Thus, viewing the "we" as a reference to Luke drastically limits possible dates for the work's composition. Both Witherington and Johnson advocate this reading of the "we" passages. See, Witherington, *Acts: Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*.

⁶²⁴ For examples of this approach, see Daniel Marguerat, *Les Actes des Apôtres (13-28)*, vol. 2, 2 vols., 1st

Along similar lines, a third group believe that the “we” material is the product of Luke’s sources that he left in the material to enhance the narrative quality.⁶²⁵ The narrator informs Acts’ inner texture in ways that necessitate attentive observation.

Excursus:
Reading the “We” Passages to See Diaspora

The first “we” passage interrupts the narrative abruptly in 16.10 as Paul responds to a vision encouraging him to travel to Macedonia. This narrative unit begins in 15.36 with a dispute between Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas comprised a missionary team that had preached the good news as a team throughout Syria, Cyprus, Cilicia and other parts of Asia Minor. Their dispute (15.36 – 40) stemmed from Barnabas wanting John Mark to accompany them and Paul preferring to travel without him. Without finding resolution, Barnabas travels to Cyprus with John Mark, and Paul travels with Silas towards Syria and Cilicia. This conflict marks Barnabas’ final exit from the narrative.

Following this dispute, Paul and Silas travel first to Derbe and Lystra, where they have successful encounters. Following their activities around Lystra they experience a period of unproductive activity as they pass through Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia and Troas (16.6 – 8). It is in Troas that Paul has a vision that instructs him to leave for Macedonia (16. 9 – 10).

From 16.6 - 8, the narrator uses participles in conjunction with the third-person plural verbs to describe Paul, Silas and their entourage’s movement through Asia Minor. The narrator suddenly appears within the group that responds to Paul’s vision, ““concluding that G*d had called us forth to proclaim the good-news to them,” (16.10). The narrator’s subsequent presence in the travel scenes are sporadic throughout the remainder of Acts with him frequently disappearing once Paul causes social unrest, is arrested or simply engages in vitriolic discourse.⁶²⁶

The narrator then describes Paul’s travel from Derbe and Lystra. It is here where Paul meets Timothy (16.1 – 3). The narrator provides the audience with information about Timothy’s background. His mother was Jewish and member of the Jesus-movement. His father was Greek. Timothy, though uncircumcised, had an excellent reputation amongst the believers in Lystra and Iconium (16.3). While the narrator does not explicitly state the reason for

ed. (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2015); Samuel Byrskog, “History or Story in Acts—A Middle Way? The ‘We’ Passages, Historical Intertexture, and Oral History,” in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse*, ed. Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 257–84; Pervo, *Acts*.

⁶²⁵ For a discussion of these views, See Pervo, *Acts*.

⁶²⁶ The scene in Philippi exemplifies this pattern (16.16 – 24). The narrator is accompanying Paul and describes the events in the first person plural, recounting how she, “encountered us” and “followed us,” (16.16). However, in 16.24 the magistrate put, “them in the inner prison and bound their feet.” A shrewd maneuverer and likely of lower social status, Luke frequently disassociated from Paul’s more controversial behavior.

Timothy's uncircumcision, the juxtaposition of Timothy's mixed background, geographic upbringing in the Diaspora and positive reputation among believers suggests that his Diaspora context and mixed ethnic identity were most responsible for his uncircumcision.

The next comment is extremely informative for this diaspora-informed reading. The narrator says that Paul desired that Timothy travel with him. Consequently, Paul took Timothy to be circumcised. The narrator explained this action as being, "because of the Jews who were in those places, for everyone knew his father was Greek" (16.3). Following the narrative to this point, the narrator explicitly states that Timothy's circumcision was, at least, in part due to Paul's desire to travel with him and that people knew Timothy's father was Greek. Following Timothy's circumcision, the narrative depicts the group successfully traveling from town to town and sharing, specifically, the Jerusalem Church's ruling on gentile believers and Torah observance. The narrator summarizes the results of this trip: "so, the churches were strengthened in belief and grew in number each day."

The observation of relatedness brings a few aspects of the inner texture to the forefront. The identity of Paul as a Torah observant Jew becomes central for the events that lead to Paul's arrest. Beginning with his circumcision of Timothy (16.3), Paul separates from his companions while observing Passover (20.6) and embarks for Jerusalem hoping to arrive in time for Pentecost (20.16). His arrest occurs after he participated in a Nazarite vow of four associates of James (21.17 – 26). The inner texture significance is best viewed through the discussion of two minor comments found in the "we" passages (20.2 – 6; 21.27 – 29).

While preparing to return to Syria, Paul's group plans to travel via Troas. The narrator shifts his communal language. When discussing his and Paul's travel plans he uses the first-person plural "we," (20.5 – 6). Yet, when describing a list of travel companions he specifically says these individuals were accompanying 'him [Paul].' These travel companions of Paul are each associated with Greek and Asian cities. The ethno-cultic heritage of these individuals is ambiguous and Luke's use of geopolitical particularity prevents simple assumptions. The narrator later identifies Trophimus as a gentile (21.29) and with the exception of Timothy the other identities are obscured.⁶²⁷

Context clues suggest Luke's insinuation that these figures in 20.4 are gentile. In addition to this shift in terminology, the narrator notes that the group, though having accompanied Paul, departed with Paul (20.4 – 5). Paul and the narrator remained in Philippi until the completion of Passover (20.6). Thus, the narrator has linked Timothy with a group of likely gentiles who are linked with Paul but not linked with him. Since the key difference in their travel plans is the observation of Passover, the narrator as hinted at his preference for the audience to identify him (the narrator) as an ethno-cultic Jew.

⁶²⁷ For a discussion of attested Jewish names in Antiquity, See Margaret H. Williams, "Palestinian Jewish Personal Names in Acts," in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, ed. Bauckhaum, Richard, vol. 5, 5 vols., Logos Edition., *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting 4* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans, 1995).

The second passage revolves around Paul's arrest in Jerusalem (21.27 – 29). The narrator established Paul's intention to arrive in Jerusalem by Pentecost (20.16), which frames the narrative along ethno-cultic lines. The narrator accompanies Paul to Jerusalem and on the visit to James (22.17 – 26). What is intriguing is the narrator's description of his arrest. According to the narrator, Jews from Asia accused Paul of bringing a gentile into the Temple. The narrator specifically identifies the specific gentile Ephesian, Trophimus, who was in the city with Paul. The definitive ability of the narrator to identify "the" gentile with whom Paul had associated with in the city subtly re-affirms the inner texture support for the narrator identifying as both spending Passover with Paul and traveling to Jerusalem with Paul without his gentile identity causing any problems. Consideration of these points aid in organizing aspects of the inner texture and narrative but not in verifying the identity of the historical author. It provides a framework for perceiving Acts as Jewish Diaspora discourse, or at least, being framed as a composition of the diverse Jewish Diaspora.

Summary Finding

Through consistent narrative disruptions and the emphatic identification of his character's geopolitical particularity, Luke's use of ambiguity enriches Acts and provides Diaspora readers with the possibility to engage the myriad interstitial spaces through which Luke's narrator alludes to points of relatedness and differentness. Luke provides a window for Diaspora persons in the early Rome period to self-identify. His narration of the events of the early Jesus-movement display numerous models and strategies of identity politics and community negotiation throughout the narrative. Collectively, they construct an organized image of the Jesus-movement and good-news well-positioned within the experiential framework and discourse informed by my description of the concept of diaspora, poetics of diaspora and constructed social and cultural texture for early imperial Rome.

Prolegomena to Diaspora Acts: Acts 6.1 – 8.40

The previous portions of this chapter point to the legitimacy of reading Acts' narrative as Diaspora discourse within the early imperial Roman Empire. Through an initial implementation of diaspora poetics I read the various textures of Luke's narrative to contextually construe

diaspora a legitimate and plausible framework for (re)conceiving the imperial, material and discursive worlds of Acts. This chapter, thus far, has observed multiple intratextual characteristics that situate Acts' narrative within an early imperial, Diaspora-oriented setting. The insights provided by this inner texture and Chapter Seven's social and cultural texture position interpreters at the precipice of the meaning-making process. But, it has yet to transform this discursive world into meaning. Recognition of a text's diaspora-orientation or status as Diaspora discourse merely shapes and prepares a reader to engage particular components of a text. It still requires further engagement.

Luke's narrative suggests a sensitivity to this multi-stepped process. He says that devout Jews from the world over encountered the disciples on Pentecost speaking in their native tongues (2.8 – 11); they deciphered the message because they knew the language (*la langue*). Yet, Luke depicts their response, "What intended-meaning is this to have?" [τι θέλει τοῦτο εἶναι; *ti thelei touto einai?*] (2.12).⁶²⁸ The message, which they had deciphered, had yet produced meaning. While some pondered whether this message meant they were drunk, it was only after experiencing Peter's sermon that others were pierced to the heart with understanding (2.37). In another instance, Saul hears Stephen's testimony (7.1 – 60) but fails to understand his relatedness to Christ until an encounter on the road to Damascus (9.1 – 31). Still again, Luke depicts an Ethiopian official reading from the Prophet Isaiah but when asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" [Ἄρα γε γινώσκεις ἃ ἀναγινώσκεις; *ara ge ginōskeis ha anaginōskeis;*]. The Ethiopian wisely retorts, "So, how might I become able, less someone guideth me?" [Πῶς γὰρ ἂν δυνάμην ἔαν μή τις ὀδηγήσει με; *pōs gar an dunaimēn ean mē tis odēdēsei;*] (8.31). The official understands an encounter with a text and knowledge of a language does not presuppose the

⁶²⁸ The Nestle-Aland (28) and SBL Greek texts contain the present active indication, θέλει [*thelei*], of the verb θέλω [*thelō*, to wish, to desire, intent]. Codex Sinaiticus, however, reads in the optative, θέλοι [*theiloi*].

transference or acquisition of meaning. Consistently throughout the Acts narrative, Luke distinguishes between one enountering a text and generating meaning from said text.

In like fashion, this presentation of Acts' potential diaspora-orientation is a Black American scholar's Diaspora act of conditioning Luke's narrative—i.e. inner texture and intertextures—ancient settings—i.e. social and cultural texture—and ideological and axiological concerns—i.e. ideological texture—to be encountered as diaspora discourse. The use of my poetics of diaspora, to this point, has only addressed one side of the interpretive process: the contextually-predicated deciphering of Acts. The production of meaning requires readers to now activate their own subjectively-conditioned poetics and perform the “spirit work” of exegesis and cultural production. I conclude this work with a series of *prolegomena* for a diaspora-oriented exegesis of Acts 6.1 – 8.40. These *prolegomena* intend to outline key aspects of 6.1 – 8.40 that appeal to my sense of Luke's signification of ancient Diaspora existence. It, however, stops short of executing a definitive reading of the passage in question. It appears more as a proposal to my readers to accompany me in diaspora-oriented readings of Acts 6.1 – 8.40.

I began this work contemplating a proposal, not quite asking permission and not exactly demonstratively informing one of my unilateral decisions. Now, I close with these *prolegomena* as an actual proposal to corporately engage the diaspora-oriented world that I have presently outlaid. Consequently, this proposal-setting consists of four strategically positioned prongs—6.1 – 7; 6.8 – 8.3; 8.4 – 25; 8.26 – 40—each a *prolegomenon* for future reading engagements and contexts. For each pericope, I give:

- An outline of the pericope oriented towards the identification of differentness;
- A brief discussion of prominent signifiers of differentness that appeal to my own diaspora-oriented gaze;
- A summary description of the text's narrative progression.

***A Prolegomenon to Reading Acts 6.1 -7:
From Diaspora Discord to Representation
Outline***

Setting and Introduction (6.1):

Luke implies relatedness and introduced differentness (6.1):

This scene revolves around individuals linked by their location of residence (Jerusalem), ethno-cultic identity (Jewish) and Ekklēsia membership. However, socio-linguistic and ethno-cultural distinctions between Hebrews and Hellenists exist in the Jesus-movement. These distinctions are important aspects of members' identity politics.

The narrator describes material consequences of difference (6.1):

Hellenist widows—i.e. the marginal among a minority group—is neglected and community discord and conflict arise;

Narrative Interactions: Within and Across Identity Groups (6.2 – 6):

The Apostles address the conflict (6.2 – 4):

The Twelve call together all the disciples and recommend that they elect seven men full of spirit and wisdom to attend to the daily distributions while they focus on prayer and proclamation;

The Community responds to the recommendation (6.5 – 6):

The community gladly accepts the recommendation and elects seven Hellenists, two of which are Stephen and Philip;

Summation of Outcome (6.7):

The movement prospers in Jerusalem gaining significant new members. This growth include Jews from every aspect of Jewish society, including priests.

Differentness

Through the lens of Diaspora, the Hebrews and Hellenists in Acts 6.1 – 7 signal Luke's valorization of multidimensionality within the Jewish Diaspora. Previous discussions have already noted the importance of language in Diaspora communities and will not be repeated here. However, Luke discursive insertion of language and its attendant cultural signifiers are key aspects to this reading. Univocal readings often privilege sameness and attempt to decrease the expressions through which "insiders" are able to articulate themselves. In Acts 6.1 – 7, Luke introduces the identity-groups Hebrews and Hellenists without indicating a preference for one group over the other. Over the course of Acts, images of Hellenists increase in narrative prominence, largely because of Luke's geographic focus. This development is in contrast to the

preceding chapters in Acts and of course the Gospel Luke, where the Apostles and other Hebrews are the focus.⁶²⁹

As a signifier, Hebrews and Hellenists indicate Luke's acknowledgement of diversity within early Christ-following groups. Locating Luke's audience in a post-70 C.E. context, the dislocation and scattering of Palestinian and non-Palestinian Jews likely increased negotiations of Diaspora and imperial identity. With imperial writers like Josephus affirming their Jewish identities while interpreting Caesar as Christ, the communal questions of authenticity and community reflection significantly inform Diaspora identity construction.

The scene in 6.1 – 7 introduces socio-linguistic and ethno-cultural differentness as important aspects of first century Judaism's daily existence. The majority of Acts' narrative prior to 6.1 – 7 highlights the popularity of the Jesus-movement and its success over-against other "philosophies" or "sects." Consequently, while the relatedness between the Sanhedrin (6.12, 15) and the Jesus-movement continue to be linked in their Jewishness, according to Luke, including its Roman imperial context. Luke, however, is strategic in his depiction of these boundaries and uses elements of the Sanhedrin and High Priesthood to function as ideological foils—as in the preceding passage, 4.1 – 5.39. It is not so much individuals who are critiqued for their views, but groups that receive Lukan censure for demanding a univocal expression of identity (4.1 – 5.39). In that passage, Luke associates socio-cultural and ethno-cultural identity with disparity and communal discord. Consequently, Luke depicts individuals, such as Apollos with divergent views on baptism (18.14 – 19.7), in a positive light. While the Acts narrative expresses a preference in cases for specific articulations, he presents socio-linguistic and ethno-

⁶²⁹ The nonlinear narrative in Luke cautions readers from interpreters from assuming that a shift in narrative prominence indicates a lack of influence or accomplishments. This view becomes more prominent as Luke locates Paul in prison and house-arrest. The narrative suggests the Gospel and *Ekklēsia* continue to exist and spread apart from Paul's ministry.

cultural differentness as an aspect of identity through which the *Ekklēsia* could have a positive strategic impact.

Acts 6.1 – 7 introduces the ethno-cultural and socio-linguistic identity-marker Hellenist [Ἑλληνιστής, *Hellēnistēs*] into the narrative. This identity marker serves as the central generative catalyst for Acts' overall progression. In addition to revealing an underappreciated aspect of ancient identity politics, Luke's use of Hebrews and Hellenists disrupts his depiction of a harmonious *Ekklēsia*. Attending to the figure of intra-communal discourse and debate, Luke opens 6.1 by linking the group's growth and success (6.1a) with its failure to acknowledge its own internal diversity (6.1b). Consequently, the notion of "complaint" [γογγυσμός, *gongusmos*, grumbling; murmuring; complaint] functions as a signal for the need of introspection and self-critique.

Narrative Description

The narrative in Acts 6.1 – 7 occurs immediately after the public and successful proclamation of the good-news by the Galilean Apostles in both homes and the Temple (5.42). Within this backdrop of success, Luke juxtaposes the increasing number of disciples with a "complaint" [γογγυσμός, *gongusmos*] made by the Hellenists against the Hebrews. The foundation for the Hellenists' complaint against the Hebrews is due to their widows being overlooked in the community's daily distribution [διακονία, *diakonia*, service; support; aid; distribution] (6.1). This distribution draws on the *Ekklēsia*'s correlation with voluntary associations and collegia. On multiple occasions, Luke has discussed how disciples pooled all their resources and distributed to people based on need (2.44 – 45; 4.34 – 35).

The grumbling elicited the response of the Apostles (the Twelve), who called a meeting of the entire community. Appealing to notions of harmony and egalitarianism, Luke uses

conflict to offer two different perspectives of the Apostles. On one hand, he describes their behavior and actions. On the other hand, he also includes speeches that portray their values. In this instance, Luke suggests that when intra-communal conflict arose, the Apostles communicated as a collective and sought to have the entire body present. This mode of governance appeals to comparisons between the early Jesus-movement and voluntary associations or the Classical ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*). Addressing the community as a collective, the Apostles assert:

It is not fitting for us to neglect the word [λόγος, *logos*, word; topic; subject; reason] in order to service [*diakoneō*, to serve; wait on; minister] tables. Brothers and Sisters, find for yourselves men from amongst you, seven, having witnesses attest that they are full of the spirit and wisdom. [These] we will appoint over this need. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and service of the word [λόγος, *logos*].

Οὐκ ἄρεστόν ἐστιν ἡμᾶς καταλείψαντας τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ διακονεῖν τραπέζαις· ἐπισκέψασθε δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἑπτὰ πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας, οὓς καταστήσομεν ἐπὶ τῆς χρείας ταύτης. ἡμεῖς δὲ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου προσκαρτερήσομεν. (6.3 – 4)

This speech [λόγος, *logos*] conveys both the Apostles' priorities and values. They pointedly distinguish the tasks that they value as most important. The Apostles distinguish between “service” [διακονέω, *diakoneō*] of tables (6.2) and “ministering” [διακονέω, *diakoneō*] to the “word” [λόγος, *logos*] (6.4) and prayer. Their statement pertaining to the role of the Seven becomes important in discerning an overarching trajectory for Luke's discourse.

The Apostle's recommendation pleased the entire community. In addition to communicating their values, this speech presents a model of community governance by having the community select individuals to administer the daily distributions. The community selected Stephen, Philip, Nicanor, Prochorus, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolaus, each with Hellenistic

names.⁶³⁰ The election of these Seven are in direct response to the needs of the community. Luke's depiction of the Seven highlight Stephen, who full of faith and the Holy Spirit, becomes a key figure in the development of the early Jesus-movement. It also establishes another form of differentness. While members of the same community and appointed for the distribution of goods, the Apostles have created a perceived bifurcation of material resources. Hellenists are enabled for ministry. After the Seven's presentation before the Apostles, the community prayed and laid hands on them.⁶³¹ Following the resolution of this intra-community dispute, "G*d's "word" [λόγος, *logos*] grew and the number of disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly and many from among the priests began submitting to the faith," (6.1 – 7).

The narrative provides no information about the structure or mechanism by which early members of the Jesus-movement administered daily distribution. Yet, the insinuation is that there was either no one over the distribution to the Hellenists or no one responsible for administering resources to the Hellenists. The systematic neglect of the Hellenist widows speaks to the dangers of myopia. While the Hellenist landowners (4.36) contribute to the community's resources, their resources are disproportionately distributed to the majority group. Even Luke's narrative struggles to acknowledge internal tensions prior to 6.1 – 7. While the majority of Luke's narratives from 2.1 – 5.42 focus on the proclamation of the good-news and intra-Jewish sectarian and theological differences, 6.1 – 7 shifts questions about identity discussions to class, space and culture. Luke uses the identity-groups Hebrews and Hellenists as an arena of early Roman Jerusalem to delve closer into the complex lived-reality of Jewish identity politics and the Jesus-movement. In addition to introducing Stephen and Philip, the Apostles present their

⁶³⁰ Williams, "Palestinian Jewish Personal Names in Acts."

⁶³¹ Luke obscures the subject in 6.6, so it is uncertain whether the community lays hands on the Seven or if it was just the Apostles.

view of ministry as waiting tables. But two of the seven figures who were appointed to the service of tables become essential actors in the Act's development from a Jerusalem-centered institution to an institution of Diaspora.

The introduction of Hellenists as an identity-group is a discursive mode of self-criticism and reflection. The oversight of the Hellenist widows contradicts Luke's earlier portrayal that claimed, "For, there was no one needy among them, for as many of those who were owners of land or households, were selling them...and it was distributed to each according to the need each had," (4.34 – 35 cf. 2.44 – 45). Acknowledging the socio-linguistic differentness among the participants to the early *Ekklēsia* introduces an aspect of Diaspora-existence into the narrative that univocal narratives often erase. The presentation of socio-linguistic difference is a central turning point that the Acts narrative valorizes as an aspect of daily-living, which the early Jesus-movement negotiated and to which it responded. The questions of language and communication are integral to the formation of identity and expression. The negotiation of this "complaint" [γῳγγυσμός, *gongusmos*] between Hebrews and Hellenists provide Luke with a discursive platform to discursively inform debates over the ideology of the *Ekklēsia* while also acting as a model for conflict resolution and the navigation of differentness.

By introducing Hebrews and Hellenists into discussions of the *Ekklēsia*, Luke has shown concern for the recognition of the margins and commented on the negative consequences of singular vision. The "complaint" [γῳγγυσμός, *gongusmos*], while acknowledging the failure of community, welcomes individual perspectives and thus challenges the univocal and dominant culture project as the lone means of expression. For Luke, proper conflict resolution can advance one's cause. Yet, by the healthy maintenance of relatedness, alternative relationships can be sustained. In Acts 6.1 – 7, identity in Christ provides a healthy model of relation-building

that relates to and responds to Diaspora. Luke’s presentation of intracommunal conflict resolution proposes an approach to relation-building and identity negotiation that is comparable to the discursive strategies in other diaspora discourses composed during the early Roman Empire (see Chapters Six and Seven) as well as Black American discourses of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (see Chapter Five).

***A Prolegomenon to Reading Acts 6.8 – 8.3:
Minority Mess and the Politics of Authenticity***

Outline

Setting and Introduction (6.8 - 11):

Luke implies relatedness and differentness in 6.8 – 9.

The narrator describes a group of non-Palestinian descended, Hellenist Jews (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia) who were members of the Freedmen’s Synagogue in Jerusalem. These individuals, therefore, share with Stephen ethno-cultic (Jewish) and ethno-cultural (Hellenists) identity markers as well as a present place of residence (Jerusalem, since they belonged to the Freedmen Synagogue; they were *τινες τῶν ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς* [*tines tōn ek tēs sunagōgēs*]). This depiction of ethno-cultic, ethno-cultural and geopolitical identities, thus, strongly marks the relatedness between these non-Palestinian Hellenist Jews and Stephen. But Luke also introduces difference. The primary differences between Stephen and the members from the Freedmen synagogue center on Stephen’s *Ekklēsia* affiliation and growing popularity among the people. As a member of the *Ekklēsia*, installed as one of the Seven (6.5), Stephen is presented as having an additional “cultic” marker: he is “charismatic” –full of the *χάρις* [*charis*, charisma] and power [*πλήρης χάριτος καὶ δυνάμεως*, 6.8a, *plērēs chariotos kai dunameōs*, 6.8a) and performing great wonders and signs among the people,” (6.8b).⁶³² Alternatively, Stephen spoke with superior “wisdom” because his discourse was inspired by the Spirit (6.10).

Narrative Interactions: Within and Across Identity Groups (6.11 – 7.60):

Stephen’s opponents address difference and illustrate the relational consequences of difference (6.9 – 14):

Luke presents a regression in strategic engagement with particularity as

⁶³² This correspondence *χάρις* [*charis*] as informing cultic particularity was raised by Daniel Patte. Also see Luke’s description in 6:5. “The translation of *χάρις* by “grace“ hides the charismatic character of Stephen.” Daniel Patte, interview by Arthur Francis Carter Jr., January 5, 2016.

difference. The non-Palestinian Hellenists from the Freedmen synagogue engage Stephen directly in vigorous discussion (6.9 – 10). They then launch a four-pronged attack against Stephen’s character and teachings indirectly through public smearing, which culminates in their challenging his ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic allegiance before the Sanhedrin (6.11 – 14). Central in this series of encounters is the initial response to Stephen’s teachings. Members from the Freedmen Synagogue engage Stephen in debate and are unable to resolve differences (6.9 – 10). Luke indicates the recognition of relatedness between the members from the Freedmen Synagogue and Stephen by describing the two sides engaged in careful debate [συζητεῖ, *suzēteō*, examine together with; dispute]. While a *le divers* epistemology would enhance relatedness and pursue increased self-consciousness, this agonistic engagement While engaging cultic, and at least ἁίρεσις, *haireisis*, sect; school], difference, the narrative depicts the members from the pursuit of *le même* leads the Freedmen Synagogue members to first achieve sameness through rhetorical subjugation and then by social character assassination and final to the physic and literal annihilation of difference.

The Sanhedrin asks for Stephen’s perspective (6.15 – 7.1):

Once presented before the Sanhedrin, the narrative introduces an additional form of relatedness between Stephen and his accusers out of the Freedmen synagogue. The dispute between a group of Hellenist, non-Palestinian descended Jews increases the significance of their Hellenist, non-Palestinian identities. A Sanhedrin, as a central ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural ruling body among Jews living in Palestine, is in a privileged position to evaluate ethno-cultural identity and authenticity. This appeal to root-based judgements of authenticity place both Stephen and his accusers in a tenuous situation. Similar to the Toucoutoo Affair, the material consequences of such an appeal are considerable.

Stephen addresses the conflict with a speech (7.2 – 53):

Stephen responds to his accusers by delivering a speech that (re)narrates the history of Israel and locates his accusers firmly within Jewish history as opponents of the Prophets. Instead of erasing his opponents from Jewish history, he depicts them as ever-present and intimately in relation with the tradition.

Stephen’s opponents respond to his Speech (7.54 – 60):

The Sanhedrin does not give a ruling against Stephen or the *Ekklēsia*.⁶³³ A mob, composed of members of the Freedmen Synagogue, interrupt the trial and drag Stephen out of the city and stone him to death.⁶³⁴

⁶³³ The geopolitical association of Cilicia both with Saul (9.30; 21.39) and members of Stephen’s accusers (6.8 – 9) in conjunction with Saul’s presence at Stephen’s stoning (8.1 – 3) suggests this is not a mob of the Sanhedrin but continues to be an intra-Hellenist conflict.

⁶³⁴ Certain scholars argue that Luke’s depiction of a riotous Jewish mob while Stephen meekly asks for

Summation of Outcome (8.1 – 3):

Stephen asks for forgiveness on behalf of his accusers. Looking on as Stephen is murdered, Saul agrees with the mob's actions. He begins a persecution against the *Ekklēsia*. Everyone except for the Apostles are scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Differentness

Scholars traditionally refer to Acts 6.8 – 8.3 as the martyrdom of Stephen.⁶³⁵ In 6.1 – 7, the unifying identity is the *Ekklēsia* which seeks to recognize and respond to material inequalities with respect to ethno-cultural and socio-linguistic difference. The conflict portrayed in 6.8 – 8.3 invokes the same categories of Hebrews and Hellenist and *Ekklēsia and non-Ekklēsia*. Luke inverts their roles in the narrative of Stephen and his Sanhedrin speech. Hellenist identity is the intra-communal unifying identity in this pericope while the *Ekklēsia* had this role in 6.1 – 7.

While participation in the *Ekklēsia* is the primary signifier of differentness in this pericope, the intra-communal context for the Hellenists acts is important for understanding the strategic approach to differentness. Approaches to conflict are paradigmatic in approaches for this narrative and indicate the presence of difference and groups. The narrative's principal conflict only subsides upon the murder of Stephen. Though the resolution of the conflict between Stephen and his accusers prompts another conflict between Saul and the *Ekklēsia*, Luke's story can support an understanding of conflict resolution as the performance of *le mēme*

their forgiveness is a discursive attempt to build Christian identity by engaging in anti-Jewish rhetoric and constructing Jews as a negative foil. These readings, at their heart, conflate the diverse Jewish particularities presented in the text into a single binary opposition of Stephen versus Jews. Within the Black American discursive tradition, similar readings could interpret Frederick Douglass' presentation of his youthful stand-off with his master, Mr. Covey, in a similar vein. However, Douglass' depiction of Mr. Covey does not simply build Douglass' blackness, manhood, humanity and consciousness at the expense of Mr. Covey. Alternatively, the depiction of his cruel and heinous treatment advances a critique of slavery that argues that the institution is destructive to both the humanity of master and enslaved.

⁶³⁵ For detailed analyses of this pericope, See Earl Richard, *Acts 6:1-8:4 : The Author's Method of Composition*, Dissertation series Society of Biblical Literature 41 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978); Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*; Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*.

ideologies. When reading 6.1 – 7 alongside 6.8 – 8.3, one begins to see Luke’s ideological call for *le divers* (differentness) approaches to identity negotiation as requiring the removal of difference. By reading the members of the Freedmen Synagogue as engaging in *le même* modes of identity politics, the entire unit of 6.1 – 8.3 transforms into a discursive appeal to the reformation of Diaspora discourse. Using this reading intertextually allows individuals at least three alternatives to generate μιμήσεις [*mimēseis*] within the interpretive process:

- Conflict understood as the inevitable byproduct of groups and difference. Destruction and discord is the natural product of conflict. Thus, conflict is intrinsically negative.
- Conflict, understood as a type of pursuit of unity and eradication of difference, is negative. The essence of conflict centers on desires to suppress, conquer or eradicate. Conflict is still negative.
- Conflict requires one to identify with a side. It is the result of difference and a means of identifying outsiders. Conflict can be either positive or negative.

The first option understands conflict as the primary cause of Stephen’s death. An interpreter can read either as an outside observer or by identifying with Stephen, his accusers, or Luke. Rather than the specific actions of any character, the observation that there are groups and that there is a difference among them implies conflict. Both Stephen and his accusers are pawns within a greater system that fails to recognize the destructive nature of difference. This undesirable process can only lead to death.

The second option reads conflict as an attempt to remove difference and bring conformity of thought. Deeming Stephen’s opponents as negative actors, their pursuit of uniformity, which Saul’s later actions continue (8.1 – 3), represents a negatively perceived desire. Conflict and disputes, thus, symbolize someone’s dissatisfaction with difference and forced attempt to bring conform “the Other” into conformity.

The third reading option depends on a reader's self-identification either with Stephen or with his accusers. Because difference implies opposition, individuals perceive difference as the basis for severing ties and relationship. Implicit in this semantic world is the observation that sameness and the absence of difference are the principal bonds tying communities together. Conflict presumes binaries and divides the world into protagonists and antagonists. This division assigns value to the characters and consequences associated with the conflict. Whether applied in religious, racial, or political contexts this reading is a hallmark of liberal and conservative fundamentalism.

Diaspora communities are frequently confronted with questions of authenticity. The attempt for the members of the Freedmen Synagogue to appeal to "root" systems to evaluate the authenticity of Stephen's articulation of Jewish identity cautions Luke's Diaspora audience members. In each of these three paradigmatic approaches to difference, the result is an antagonistic approach to particularity. It is in this vein that I suggest Luke depicts the members from the Freedmen Synagogue. Their vision of the *Ekklēsia* employs a paradigmatic view of particularity as difference. Consequently, when they engage Stephen in discussion, their intentions are not to negotiate identities but to neutralize their difference. This signification of differentness identifies 6.8 – 8.3 as paired with 6.1 – 7. Acts 6.1 – 8.3 contains very little discourse on Jesus. The majority of the speeches revolve around the negotiation of Jewish history and resolution of fractured community. In 6.1 – 7, the fracture is rooted in socio-linguistic particularities. In 6.8 – 8.3, it deals with understandings of proper identity negotiation.

Narrative Description

The opening of this pericope provides a positive description of Stephen that performs two roles. At one level, this positive description works in tandem with Luke's previous description

(6.5). When he was elected as one of the Seven, Luke described Stephen as, “a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit,” (6.5). This initial description, to start Stephen’s dispute with the other Hellenists is reinforced by and offers the later description of Stephen as, “full of grace and power...doing great wonders and signs amongst the people,” (6.8).

Luke’s presentation of Stephen preaching and performing mighty deeds provides an intertextual contrast to the Apostle’s speech in 6.2 – 4. According to the expectations of the Apostles, the service of tables prevents proper dedication to prayers and preaching. This service juxtaposes Stephen to a group of Jews of diverse geopolitical provenance. Implicit in this presentation is a relatedness between Stephen, who was associated with the Jewish Hellenists of the *Ekklēsia*, and the members of the Freedmen Synagogue themselves from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia and Asia. This setting contrasts 6.1 – 7, where the *Ekklēsia* serves as the principal intracommunal identity-group steeped in dissension. In the previous scene, Hellenist is a marginal identity-group with a particular articulation of Jewishness that maintains solidarity in order to survive and improve their particular social-communal standing in the *Ekklēsia*. The following scene in 6.8 – 8.3 demonstrates the mutability of identity and how diaspora-oriented peoples constantly and contextually negotiate their multiple identities through various strategies of identity politics. By shifting the nature and privileging of one’s intracommunal identity, this narrative portrays Hellenists as the principal intracommunal identity-group riddled with conflict. *Ekklēsia* affiliation, however, functions as the particular articulation of Jewish identity.

The narrative sequence builds to a climax as the members affiliated with the Freedmen Synagogue execute a five step program to neutralize their differences with Stephen: discuss with him; secretly misrepresented him incited people against him; seized and delivered him; officially

perjured themselves. Each of their actions is community-oriented and point towards the ongoing relatedness that Luke envisions between Stephen and his opponents.

They first engage Stephen in detailed examination and debate [συζητέω, *suzēteō*, examine with, dispute, discuss] (6.10). When the individuals from the Freedmen Synagogue stand up against Stephen, they engage him in detailed examination [συζητέω, *suzēteō*]. Luke informs readers that they, “were not strong enough to oppose the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke,” (6.10). Providing another parallel with Hebrews and Hellenists, Luke depicts both the Twelve and the members of the Freedmen Synagogue engaging initially across identity markers. With speech with speech: calling together [προσκαλέω, *prosaleō*, 6.2] and speech [λόγος, *logos*, 6.5] for the Apostles and detailed examination [συζητέω, *suzēteō*, 6.10] by the members of the Freedmen Synagogue. However, the nature and strategy of the discourses differ. The members of the Freedmen Synagogue ceased direct engagement following their initial discussions. This termination of engagement signifies the erosion of relatedness and the generation of “otherness.”

This termination of direct engagement corresponds to their next strategy of attacking Stephen. In this situation, they secretly instigated [ὑποβάλλω, *upoballō*, throw under; whisper; secretly instigate] people to accuse Stephen of blasphemy against Moses and G*d (6.11). This charge points directly to the identity politics of ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural interpretation. Luke intentionally depicts this strategy as a clandestine form of character assassination. Instead of engaging Stephen directly, the group has moved to characterizing and interpreting his theology for the greater Jerusalem public. They next moved towards public attacks by inciting [συγκινέω, *sugineō*] the Jerusalem community—legal experts, elders and the people—against Stephen (6.12a). Luke depicts this group of Hellenist and immigrant Jews as engaging the

entirety of the Jerusalem community against Stephen. The concern has moved from the specificity of his views and preaching to its signifying value in Jerusalem.

Their attacks moved from discursive to physical once they seized Stephen. While the initial differences between Stephen and the Hellenists are obscure, by the time they incite the community, the issue revolves around Stephen's identity politics of "Israel," in its various articulations. Insistence on adherence to consensus perspectives is a form of social and diaspora destruction. The escalation of this scene to the level of physical coercion again contrasts the dispute between the Hebrews and Hellenists in 6.1 – 7. Whereas this situation regressed from private discussion to violent seizure, the Hebrews and Hellenists conflict deescalated from open discourse within an entire community to the laying on of hands and prayer.

Once before the Sanhedrin, Luke says that they brought forward false witnesses [μάρτυς ψευδής, *martus pseudēs*] to testify against Stephen and say that he spoke against the Temple and Torah (6.13 – 14). Repeating these claims of ethno-cultic deviance portray Stephen as disloyal, dangerous and working against the maintenance and survival of their community. Likewise, these claims and their theological significance signify Stephen as antagonizing the Divine. They amplify the accusations when before the Sanhedrin. Prior to the Sanhedrin setting, the attacks focused on Stephen. Before the Sanhedrin, his opponents introduce Jesus, the Nazarene as the source of Stephen's deviance. With this association, they have placed Stephen in a geopolitical, ethno-cultic and imperial context. Including Jesus' geographic provenance from a rural Galilean village pulls on stereotypes of prestige and honor. Likewise, Jesus was crucified as a political prisoner by Rome. Yet, one is unaware whether these men of the Freedmen Synagogue know that the Sanhedrin had heard multiple cases over Peter and John's teaching and proclamation of Jesus.

Luke performs two tasks in this latter stage. He includes another allusion to 1.8. The invocation of the false witnesses is an inner textual allusion to Jesus' command to be witnesses unto the ends of the earth. Consequently, Luke uses the group from the Freedmen Synagogue to frame his understanding of Stephen's role in the early Jesus-movement while also responding to over generalizations of early teaching. The false witnesses reported that, "this man was speaking utterances against this Holy Place and the Law, for we have heard it when he said that this Jesus, the Nazarene, will destroy this place and barter [*ἀλλάσσω*, *allassō*, change; alter; take in exchange; replace] its customs, which Moses handed down to us" (6.14). The false witnesses appeal to the history of Israel to further buttress the arguments against

Deviating somewhat from traditional English translations, my use of barter for *ἀλλάσσω* [*allassō*] emphasizes the implicit economic connotation of the term. More so than "change" (NRSV, ESV, LEB, HCSB), barter locates this false testimony more pointedly within the framework of ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural identity politics. The sectarian and theological diversity found among expressions of Jewish identity during early imperial Rome attest to the general acknowledgment that Jewish identity and belief was diverse. Thus, a "change" in one's ethno-cultic or ethno-cultural tradition at times dealt with nuances of interpretation and ideology or imperial place and status. This reality is particularly appropriate for Acts' post-70 C.E. text.

At the conclusion of the presentation against Stephen, the Alexandrians, Cyrenians, Cilicians and Asians who opposed Stephen had laid out an elaborate attack against the Jewishness of Stephen and indirectly against the Jesus-movement's good-news. Luke informs readers that while staring at Stephen, the members of the Sanhedrin perceived his face to be that of an angel. Then, the same council that failed to arrive at judgements against Peter and John (4.21 – 22; 5.39 – 41), sought to hear Stephen. Once the High Priest ambiguously asked

Stephen, “whether, with respect to these things, is it thusly so?” (7.1), and Stephen replied by (re)narrating the history of Israel and the nature of G*d as creator of the cosmos (7.2 – 53).

One can divide Stephen’s response into three major sections:

- Retelling of the History of Israel (7.2 – 47);
- Discussion on the Lord’s Dwelling place (7.44 – 50);
- Counter-accusation against his accusers (7.51 – 53).

Stephen’s directly engages in the ethno-cultural and ethno-cultic accusations slandered against him. By affirming his Jewish identity and demonstrating his mastery of their ethno-cultic history, he attempts to prove his piety through demonstration rather than cognitive transmission. His history recounts Israel’s past from Abraham to Solomon (7.2 – 47).⁶³⁶ He gives extensive attention to the Moses narrative (7.17 – 44) with cursory discussion of David and Solomon. This final section of the history acts as a transition and relates Moses, David, and Solomon to one another through their attempts to provide dwelling places for the Lord (7.44 – 47). This conclusion moves Stephen’s response from history to a theological assertion about G*d’s residing place.

After asserting that the Lord does not live within things made by hand (7.48), Stephen launches into a caustic charge against the people he views as adversaries. The group to whom Stephen addresses this denunciation is obscured by the scene’s semi-public Sanhedrin setting and plural ‘you’. The narrator does little to clarify the situation by ambiguously employing the plural pronoun ‘they’ (7.51 – 53). It is the responsibility of interpreters to discern to whom Stephen addresses his charge. Without a definitive textual key, readers can view Stephen denouncing everyone present, just the Sanhedrin, or just his accusers. Stephen’s denunciation re-introduces

⁶³⁶ The narrative unfolds from Abraham (7.2 – 8) to the circumcision of Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs (7.8) to Joseph’s enslavement and eventual reunification with his father in Egypt (7.16) to an extensive rendering of Moses and the Exodus (7.17 – 44) to an exposition on the tent of witness (7.44 – 45) which leads to Joshua (7.45), David (7.45-46), Solomon (7.47).

Israel's history by locating his addressees firmly within Jewish tradition as those ever-present insiders that persecute the prophets and oppose the Lord's will. Concluding this counter-accusation, Stephen reverses the charges of the false witnesses by accusing his opponents as consciously refusing to follow the Law.

The stoning of Stephen unfolds quickly. Stephen stands before the Sanhedrin to respond to his accusers (7.1 – 53). Stephen's speech infuriates his opponents; the narrator locates this fury within the hearts of his opponents (7.54 – 57). Stephen, on the contrary, is full of the Holy Spirit and able to see Jesus standing in heaven with G*d. Refusing to listen to Stephen's pronouncement these opponents quickly become a mob that drives Stephen out of the city, places their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul and proceeds to stone Stephen. Stephen's final words are a request for the Lord to forgive the executioners. (7.57 – 8.1).

In the aftermath of Stephen's death, Saul approves of the execution (8.1) and begins to hunt down and imprison male and female Christ-followers throughout Jerusalem. In the midst of this persecution, devout men lamenting Stephen's death attend to his burial. Because of these events, Luke says that the entire *Ekklēsia* except the Apostles in Jerusalem scattered [διασπείρω, *diaspeirō*] across Judea and Samaria (8.1 – 3). It is with this scattering—i.e. diaspora—that Luke returns to inner textual allusion to 1.8.

***A Prolegomenon to Reading Acts 8.4 – 25:
Bridging Boundaries and Inclusion of the Other-Us***

Outline

Setting and Introduction (8.4 – 8):

Luke introduces differentness and implies relatedness (8.4 – 5):

Luke locates Philip working in Samaria, which has ethno-cultic, geopolitical and historiographical identities distinct from Judea and Galilee. . Philip's preaching about Christ in Samaria draws on the historical and ethno-cultic "relatedness" between Jews and Samaritans. The proclamation of Christ draws on Judean's and Samaritan's identity claims as Israel. This

invocation of a geopolitical entity that negotiates the same identity claim to Israel and association to the G*d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob places the interactions of this pericope in a multidimensional discursive world. Representations vary from a shared deistic claim, distinct cultic claims and related yet distinct experiences of colonization. Judea's role in the destruction of Samaria's temple makes the ethno-cultural proclamation of good-news from Jews to Samaritans steeped with imperial and cultural signifiers

Luke describes material consequences of relatedness (8.6 - 8):

Through Philip's emphasis on his relatedness with the Samaritans, they develop a positive and useful relationship in which the Samaritans engage Philip in solidarity. The consequences are healings, miracles, joy and the baptism of believers.

Luke describes differences between Philip and Magician (8.9 – 13):

Luke introduces Simon the Magician and depicts him as a competing miracle worker that the Samaritans revered in similar but distinct ways from Philip. After encountering Philip, Simon joins the *Ekklēsia*.

Narrative Interactions: Within and Across Identity Group (8.14 – 24):

Peter and John visit and contribute to Samaritan Ministry (8.14 – 17):

Upon hearing about the success in Samaria, Peter and John arrive in Samaria. With the laying on of their hands, Samaritan believers began receiving the Holy Spirit.

An ideological difference arises between Peter and Simon (8.18 – 24):

Simon the Magician offers Peter and John money for the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit on believers. Peter rebukes Simon but Simon asks for forgiveness and their prayers.

Summation of Outcome (8.25)

After witnessing and speaking the word of the Lord, Peter and John turned back for Jerusalem and proclaimed the good-news to many Samaritan villages.

Differentness

Following Luke's critique of *le même* practices in 6.1 – 8.3, he challenges stereotypical notions of Jewish identity politics by depicting the *Ekklēsia* moving into Samaria. If utilizing notions of self-critique and relatedness, one begins to understand Luke's depiction of Samaria as Israel's Diaspora. As a signifier, Samaria was a complex signifier. Binary notions of gentile and Jew collapse in the face of Samaria because of the implied differentiation between Jew and gentile. While notions of Judean/Jew and Samaritan are geographical in their ethno-cultural

denotations, both groups alternatively claim Israel identity. On the Greek island of Delos, portions of a second century B.C.E. synagogue have been excavated. Some of the epigraphic evidence identifies the synagogue community as Israelites who worship at Mt Gerizim—the sacred mountain of the Samaritans.⁶³⁷

With negotiations and competition for recognition, the ethno-cultic aspect of Samaria has significant bearing. Consequently, the signifying value of Samaria derives from both literary, popular and scriptural connotations. Texts such as 2 Kings 17.24 – 41 claim that the Northern Kingdom of Israel was repopulated by Assyria with captives from diverse nations such as Babylon and Cutha. From these scriptural claims, individuals would reject Samaritan claims to Israel identity or ethno-cultic validity. Josephus provides numerous examples that exude the pejorative and negative view of Samaritans. In his *Antiquities* 9.14.3, Josephus engages in Diaspora discourse as he (re)narrates Jewish and Samaria history to portray Samaritans as landless, cowards and opportunistic (cf. *JW* 1.63; *Antiquities* 11.4.6):

When the Samaritans saw the Jews under these sufferings, they no longer confessed that they were of their kindred; nor that the temple on Mount Gerizim belonged to Almighty God. This was according to their nature, as we have already shown. And they now said that they were a colony of Medes and Persians: and indeed, they were a colony of theirs. (*Antiquities* 12.5.5, trans. Whiston)

In stark opposition to the polyvocal identity that I am tracing in Acts, Josephus does not extend this possibility to the Samaritans.

Josephus cannot be singled out for his views of Samaritans. A number of New Testament texts reflect knowledge of these traditions. While the Gospel of John depicts the evangelization

⁶³⁷ L. Michael White, “The Delos Synagogue Revisited Recent Fieldwork in the Graeco-Roman Diaspora,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 80, no. 2 (1987): 133–60; A. T. Kraabel, “New Evidence of the Samaritan Diaspora Has Been Found on Delos,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 47, no. 1 (1984): 44–46; Peter Richardson, “Early Synagogues as Collegia in the Diaspora and Palestine,” in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (New York: Routledge, 2002), 90–109.

of Samaria, at the beginning of an encounter between Jesus and a Samaritan woman, the narrator includes an aside, “for Jews and Samaritans do not have any dealings together,” (John, 4.9). In similar manner, Luke’s Gospel depicts Jesus traveling to Samaria and sending a messenger ahead. When the messenger does not have a positive response, James and John ask Jesus, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven to destroy them,” (Luke 9.54). The presence of ancient stereotypes frame texts in ways that alter individual’s perceptions of self and space while informing their strategies towards identity politics.

From a geopolitical perspective, Samaria connotes a long period of imperial negotiation with Judea. Geographically, Samaria occupies the region of land between Judea to the south and Galilee to the North. During the ancient biblical period, the combined region of Galilee and Samaria constituted the Northern Kingdom of Israel, whose capital was at Samaria. After falling in 722 B.C.E. to the Assyrians, Samaria became an imperial subject to the Babylonians, Persians and Seleucids. It was likely under the Persians in the fifth century B.C.E. that the Samaritans built their temple at Mt Gerizim. However, in 110 B.C.E., the Hasmonean King, John Hyrcanus invaded Samaria and destroyed their Temple and drastically devastated the cities of Samaria and Shechem. It was at this point that Samaria was absorbed into the Judea’s Hasmonean kingdom. After the death of Herod the Great (4 B.C.E.) and the removal of his son Archealus (6 C.E.), Samaria became a constituent part of the Roman province of Judea. Consequently, Judean presence in Samaria can signify imperial presence.

Luke’s strategic development of *le divers* relatedness amongst Israel—Judeans, Hebrews and Hellenists, and Samaritans—he figuratively (re)constitutes the Davidic Monarch through the creation of diaspora—i.e. via *diaspora*-disciples. This reconstituted Israel does not exist under a single ideology but through relatedness and the proclamation of the good-news concerning the

“Reign” [βασιλεία, *baieilia*, kingdom; reign; dominion] of G*d (8.12). Luke adds another point of differentness upon the arrival Peter and John by describing the different skillsets and ministry strategies reflected by the efforts of the Galilean, Jew Peter, who was chosen by Jesus (Luke 5.7 – 9), and the Hellenist Jew, Philip, who was endorsed by the *Ekklēsia* (Acts 6.6 – 7). The notions and strategies of relatedness as viewed in 8.4 – 25 lead to two opposing strategies of mission and ministry. Again, Luke’s preferred strategy is difficult to discern. Yet, his insistence on acknowledging ideological approaches to identity negotiation is key to tracing this aspect of Acts’ Diaspora discourse narrative.

Narrative Description

In 8.4, Luke shifts Acts’ narrative focus towards the acts of Hellenist Jews outside of Jerusalem. Saul’s persecution [διωγμός, *diōgmos*] of the *Ekklēsia* largely inverted its nature as the calling forth of all citizen-membership into assembly. Instead of calling forth, Luke says that all the members of the *Ekklēsia* “except for the Apostles” (8.1) are scattered [διασπείρω, *diaspeirō*] away from Jerusalem and into Judea and Samaria.⁶³⁸ This scattered portion of the *Ekklēsia* can figuratively be understood as diaspora-disciples—those who were scattered. While not the designation of an ethno-cultural or ethno-cultic identity, this description by Luke portrays their geographical transition as maintaining relatedness across multiple levels. It generally develops over two stages. The *Ekklēsia* that exists outside of Jerusalem, which develops and thrives in diverse environments as *diaspora*-disciples first take the good-news beyond the limits of Jerusalem (8.4 – 13; 11.19 – 21). Following this first organic stage, the Jerusalem *Ekklēsia* sends out its own emissaries to observe and participate in the movements of the *diaspora*-disciples (8.14; 11.22; 15.23 – 29).

⁶³⁸ It is worth noting that Luke never returns the movement to its point of origin in Galilee. The Apostles “settle” in Jerusalem and other areas, but a return to Galilee is outside the scope of Luke’s narrative.

Luke uses Philip, another one of the Seven, to figuratively represent this dislocation of the *Ekklēsia*. Philip represents the *Ekklēsia*'s presence in from Samaria (8.4 – 25) then towards Gaza and Caesarea (8.26 – 40). As a response to Paul's persecution, Philip's ministry is also linked with the activities of Cypriot and Cyrenian Jews who share the "word" [*logos*] with gentile Hellenists (11.19 – 20). Thus, Philip's ministry is a specific articulation of these scattered *Ekklēsia* that Luke depicts in two separate blocks: 8.4 – 40 (Judea and Samaria) and 11.19 – 30 (Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch). The continued efforts at negotiation and engagement characterize Luke's *Ekklēsia* as a construction that seeks to build pathways of relatedness. It is the continued maintained of relatedness-amidst difference and identity negotiation across geopolitical boundaries that models the non-Jerusalem *Ekklēsia* as an expression of Diaspora-consciousness.

Samaria is an ethno-cultic and ethno-cultural signifier that introduces notions of "other" and "difference" into the narrative. Philip's preaching drew crowds, and Luke describes the Samaritans as drawn [*προσέχω*, *prosechō*, hold to; turn to; devote oneself; pay close attention] to him with one accord [*ὁμοθυμαδόν*, *homothumadon*, one accord; one mind] (8.4 – 6). Among Philip's activities, he performed exorcisms of unclean spirits, healings of people with physical ailments and baptisms.

Following a description of Philip's activities, Luke introduces Simon the Magician into the narrative as a contrast to Philip's activities. Simon preceded Philip in Samaria and had garnered great acclaim. He astonished the entire Samaritan 'people' [*ἔθνος*, *ethnos*] and provides Luke's audience with a lens through which to evaluate Philip's activities. Luke stresses that the entire ethno-cultural community of Samaria, "from the smallest to the greatest," (8.10)

were drawn [προσέχω, *prosechō*] to Simon because they thought he was, “the Power of G*d, which is called Great,” (8.9 – 10).

Luke differentiates the Samaritan’s response to Philip from their response to Simon by explaining how the Samaritan has identified Simon as the “Power of G*d” based on the magic he performed. By contrast, they were drawn [προσέχω, *prosechō*] to Philip because of Christ’s message: “When they believed in the good-news proclaimed by Philip about the Kingdom of G*d and the name of Jesus Christ, he began baptizing both men and women,” (8.12). The success of Philip’s activities resulted in Simon’s joining the Jesus-movement: “Simon himself believed and having been baptized was, after attaching himself to Philip and observing both signs and great powers, astonished,” (8.13).

However, the narrative shifts in 8.14 when the Apostles in Jerusalem learn of Philip’s success and that the Samaritan’s were receiving G*d’s word [λόγος, *logos*] (8.14). This news revives the proclamation-duo of Peter and John (cf. 3.1 – 4.31). When they arrive from Jerusalem, they pray that the Samaritan believers might receive the Holy Spirit. It is at this point that Luke informs the audience that the Samaritans, though believers, had not yet received the Holy Spirit. The Samaritan believers begin receiving the Holy Spirit once Peter and John lay hands on them. Luke’s step by step description of this scene also suggests that Peter nor John previously assumed a relationship between the laying on of hands and the Holy Spirit. This observation brings greater attention to Luke’s depiction of Stephen as being full of faith and the Holy Spirit prior to his appointment or the *Ekklēsia* laying hands on him (6.5).⁶³⁹

⁶³⁹ This observation leads me to question Luke’s association of laying of hands and the receipt of the Holy Spirit. The initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred at Pentecost as tongues of fire (2.3). The descent of the Holy Spirit following Peter and John’s arrest occurs after corporate prayer (4.31). The Spirit in 8.26 – 40 is present and the primary agent in the encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian. Likewise, Cornelius receives the Holy Spirit without baptism or the laying on of hands. Thus, the association of the Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands is textually weak.

The ability of Peter and John to act as conduits for the giving of the Holy Spirit amazed Simon the Magician. Signaling the difference between belief and ideology, Luke uses this scene to depict the diverse responses to the good-news. Approaching Peter, Simon offered to give Peter and John money in order that he might have the authority [ἐξουσία, *exousia*] to give the Holy Spirit to anyone on whom he laid his hands (8.19). Upon hearing this request, Peter, invoking the optative, intimates what is analogous to a curse: “May your silver, with you, go to hell that you reckoned that the gift of G*d could be purchased,” (8.20)⁶⁴⁰. While Luke attributes these words to Peter, they conjure thoughts of his partner John’s desire to call down fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village (Luke 9.51 – 56).

Continuing his vindictive against Simon, the Magician, Peter says:

For, there is no part or share for you in this word [λόγος, *logos*]. For, your heart is not right before G*d. So, repent from this wickedness of yours and petition of the Lord that perhaps the thoughts of your heart may be forgiven. (8.21 – 22)⁶⁴¹

Peter’s response prompts Simon to beg for their prayers, but Luke abruptly closes the narrative. He summarizes the events of Peter and John’s activities describing them as solemnly witnessing and speaking the word of the Lord as they were “turning back” [ὑποστρέφω, *upostrophō*, return; turn back] towards Jerusalem. In contrast to the scattering of the *diaspora*-disciples, Peter and John return to Jerusalem.⁶⁴² The model of conflict management and resolution in this Samaritan setting is strikingly different from Peter’s meeting with the

⁶⁴⁰ Τὸ ἀργύριόν σου σὺν σοὶ εἶη εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὅτι τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνόμισας διὰ χρημάτων κτᾶσθαι (8.20)

⁶⁴¹ οὐκ ἔστιν σοι μερίς οὐδὲ κληρὸς ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ, ἡ γὰρ καρδία σου οὐκ ἔστιν εὐθεῖα ἐναντι τοῦ θεοῦ. μετανόησον οὖν ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας σου ταύτης, καὶ δεήθητι τοῦ κυρίου εἰ ἄρα ἀφεθήσεται σοι ἡ ἐπίνοια τῆς καρδίας σου.

⁶⁴² There are at least two reasons for the return. The return could indicate their hesistance to go out and cover more ground. It also could deal with their northern movement towards their orginal home, Galilee. Thus, to maintain their “alien” or sojourner identity, they turned back to Jerusalem.

community in 6.1 – 7 as well as with Jesus’ engagement with Peter in Luke 22.3 – 32. It, however, does remind readers of Peter’s role in the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (5.1 – 11).

***A Prolegomenon to Reading Acts 8.26 – 40:
Diaspora Sites as Imperial Discourse***

Outline

Setting and Introduction (8.26 – 40):

Philip receives a Divine command (8.26 – 27a):

The Angel of the Lord appears to Philip and tells him to travel towards Gaza; Philip follows these instructions;

Luke introduces differentness (8.27):

Luke describes an Ethiopian who Philip encounters on the road and identifies him as a royal official (Potentate) of the Candace—i.e. Queen-Regent—of the Ethiopian Empire. In Roman imperial contexts, Ethiopians often signify the “other.”

Luke presents relatedness (8.28):

Luke informs readers that the Ethiopian is returning from worshipping in Jerusalem and in the process of reading scripture.

Narrative Interactions: Within and Across Identity Group ():

Philip engages differentness (8.29 – 30)

After instructed by the Spirit to attach himself to the Ethiopian’s retinue; Philip approaches and hears the Ethiopian reading from Isaiah. Philip asks whether the Ethiopian understands the text’s meaning;

Ethiopian engages Philip (8.31 – 38):

The Ethiopian welcomed Philip to share his understanding of scripture. After hearing about Jesus, the Ethiopian asks what prevents him from being baptized, and Philip commences to baptize the Ethiopian official;

Summation of Outcome (8.39 – 40)

As they come out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carries Philip away to Azotus and he proclaimed the good-news unto Caesarea;
The Ethiopian came out of the water and went off rejoicing.

Differentness

The principal marker of differentness employed in my diaspora-oriented reading of 8.26 – 40 is Empire. Empire is an ever-present force that constructs relationships and informs both material and ideological realities. Roman claims over the identities of its subjects permeated the

public space.⁶⁴³ In a similar fashion, the perpetual threat of Roman domination became acutely real for Jews and Christ-followers following the First Jewish War. The narration of Philip encountering an elite imperial figure from Ethiopia conjures imagery from Greek and Jewish traditions. The presence of Candace's treasurer traveling freely across the Roman Empire is a symbol of transgressed boundaries. Yet, through his study of Isaiah and his inviting demeanor, this Ethiopian offers an alternative image of ideology, power dynamics and relationship.

From the historical perspective, references to Candace are associated with the Meroitic Empire. Candace refers to the Queen-Regnant title, *kandake*, that was employed by at least four Queen-Regnants between 50 B.C.E. and 40 C.E.⁶⁴⁴ Amanierenas is most likely the *kandake* referenced in Strabo's description of a Roman and Ethiopian battle on the boundaries of Egypt (Strabo, *Geographies*, 17.1.54). He briefly describes her as, "The *Kandake* of the Ethiopians, who ruled during our time, was a masculine woman, having lost one of her eyes."⁶⁴⁵ Strabo, then, describes a series of skirmishes between Gaius Petronius, prefect of Egypt (24 B.C.E. – 21 B.C.E.) and the *Kandake*'s armies; Strabo recounts a Roman victory. Following the supposed victory, Petronius informs the Ethiopians that they must pay tribute to Caesar but they tell him that they have never heard of Caesar (Strabo, *Geographies* 17.1.53 – 54; cf Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 6.35.181 – 182).⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴³ Laura S. Nasrallah, "Empire and Apocalypse in Thessaloniki: Interpreting the Early Christian Rotunda," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13, no. 4 (2005): 465–508.

⁶⁴⁴ Joyce Haynes and Mimi Santini-Ritt, "Women in Ancient Nubia," in *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile*, ed. Marjorie M. Fisher et al. (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 181.

⁶⁴⁵ "...Κανδάκης, ἥ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἦρξε τῶν Αἰθίοπων, ἀνδρική τις γυνή πεπηρωμένη τὸν ἕτερον τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν..." (*Geographies* 17.1.54)

⁶⁴⁶ Snowden notes the contradictions in Strabo's account. Snowden's work is foundational in his study of images of Africa in ancient times. Gay Byron's work informs this study by looking at the discursive use of color and geopolitical differentiation in early Christian literature. Frank M. Snowden Jr., *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 132–133.

Petronius arranges for *Kandake Amanierenas*' delegates to travel through Rome to meet directly with Augustus Caesar. Strabo describes the results of this meeting:

They [the delegates] arrived at Samos, with Caesar about to go from there into Syria, having sent Tiberius into Armenia. But, everything they happened to want he gave to them and terminated for them the tribute which he had established.

καὶ ἦκον εἰς Σάμον, ἐνταῦθα τοῦ Καίσαρος ὄντος καὶ μέλλοντος εἰς Συρίαν ἐντεῦθεν προΐεναι, Τιβέριον εἰς Ἀρμενίαν στέλλοντος. πάντων δὲ τυχόντων ὧν ἐδέοντο, ἀφῆκεν αὐτοῖς καὶ τοὺς φόρους οὓς ἐπέστησε

(Strabo, *Geographies*, 17.1.54)

While Strabo claims a Roman victory, he notes that the negotiations resulted in Rome paying Ethiopian everything that they desired. Withstanding the imperial propaganda, this image of Ethiopia, led by a *kandake* who directs them in battle and governs her territory provides a stark contrast to the gendered, patriarchal language of Rome. The recognition of the Ethiopian's imperial differentness provides Luke with a means of subverting Rome's imperial claim and their military claim.

Caesar Augustus also built a temple in southern Egypt on the Ethiopian border at Dendur. This temple, now housed at the New York Metropolitan, depicts Caesar dressed in Egyptian clothing paying homage to a series of Egyptian and Ethiopian deities. Built in 14 B.C.E., two of the Ethiopian deities to whom Augustus Caesar pays homage and tribute are recently deceased and deified Ethiopian princes: Pihor and Pediese.⁶⁴⁷ These images are striking as the temple repeatedly shows Caesar carrying various offerings to both traditional gods such as Isis and Osiris as well as recently deified princes. Cyril Alexander suggests that these princes were not aligned with Meröe but were sons of a local client-king who was a Roman ally.

⁶⁴⁷ Cyril Aldred, "The Temple of Dendur," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series 36, no. 1 (1978): 1–80; ROBERT S. BIANCHI, "AUGUSTUS IN EGYPT: The Temple of Dendur Is Rebuilt at the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Archaeology* 31, no. 5 (1978): 4–11; D'Auria, Sue, "Dendur," in *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile*, ed. Marjorie M. Fisher et al. (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 387–89.

In addition to Ethiopia's significance as an opposing Empire, Greek and Hellenistic traditions had signified the Ethiopians as existing at the ends of the earth but also as the epitome of piety, beauty and rooted to one's land. Many of these invocations of mystical and mythic Ethiopia are visible in both Hellenistic and Jewish.⁶⁴⁸ Hans-Josef Klauck asserts that during the early Principate, "interest in Ethiopia had become so intense that a whole literature came into being to satisfy it."⁶⁴⁹ In Homer's *Iliad*, which was foundational for both Greek and Hellenistic literature and myths of origin, depicts Zeus leaving Mount Olympus to retreat with the blameless Ethiopians at the borders of the world (Homer, *Iliad* I.420). Speaking about the origin of Greek gods, Herodotus relays a story where Zeus took Dionysius to Ethiopia as soon as he was born (Herodotus, *Histories* 2.146). Informed by these traditions, first century B.C.E. writer Diodorus Siculus crystallizes many Hellenistic perceptions of Ethiopians in the during the last century B.C.E. and first century C.E.:

The Historians relate that the Ethiopians were the first humans, and they say that there is clear evidence for this claim. Nearly all sources agree that the Ethiopians did not arrive from elsewhere, but being born from the land they are justly called autochthonous....They add further that these people were the first to discover and reveal the honoring of gods and making of sacrifices, the holding of processions and festivals, and the rest of the ways mortals honor the divine. For this reason, everyone has heard of this people's piety, and it is assumed that sacrifices in Ethiopia are the most pleasing to divinities.

(Diodorus Siculus, *Histories*, 3.1, 2, *trans.* Max Goldman)⁶⁵⁰

By invoking both images of Ethiopia and Candace, Philip's encounter enhances notions of differentness and relatedness. Differentiated by culture, location and color, the Ethiopian held

⁶⁴⁸The literary use of Ethiopians as units of geographic measurement is widely acknowledged; they live at the, "ends of the earth," and therefore a reference to Ethiopians designates location and distance, see Gay L Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002), 30–32.

⁶⁴⁹ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, 25.

⁶⁵⁰ Kennedy, Roy, and Goldman, *Race and Ethnicity in the Classical World*, 186.

vaulted status in the literary and mythic world of Hellenistic tradition. Consequently, the signifying value of the Ethiopian appealed to notions of differentness as opposed to difference.

The literary and mythic appeal would have greater significance in the Hellenistic Jewish context because of the place of Ethiopia in both traditions. Accompanying Luke's portrayal of the *kandake*, the Queen of Sheba is frequently associated with Ethiopia (1 Kgs 10.1 – 13; cf. 2 Chr 9.1 – 12). Through her association with King Solomon, the Queen of Sheba is linked with the height of ancient of Israel's political influence. She validates Solomon's grandeur and thus carries connotations of wisdom, wealth and piety toward the Lord of Israel. In a strikingly similar image to Strabo's description of *Kandake Amanierenas'* delegates, 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles say that when she left Solomon gave her everything that she desired of him (1 Kgs 10.13, cf 2 Chr 9.12).

The Queen of Sheba is explicitly within Luke's discursive and literary framework. He includes this tradition in his Gospel (Luke 11.29 – 32). When crowds begin surrounding Jesus, he invokes the "Queen of the South" as a judge of the people:

This generation is an evil generation. You seek a sign, yet no sign will be given except the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the Nineveh, likewise the son of humanity will also be to this generation. The Queen of the South will be resurrected at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them because she came from the boundaries of the earth to hear the Wisdom of Solomon and behold, [something] greater than Solomon is here." (11.29b – 31).

In addition to drawing on images of Ethiopian Queens and their wealth and wisdom, the juxtaposition of the Ethiopian's maleness and eunuch status additionally appeals to Jewish scripture. The loss of genitalia fundamentally altered the identity and social worth of an individual in antiquity. Deuteronomy 23:10 lays the foundation for the exclusion of eunuchs from participating in the community of worship. The Deuteronomic tradition prohibits castration

because it deals with the mutilation of the body and destroys, “sexual potency,” thereby undermining a central image of the divine.⁶⁵¹

Yet, the tradition is polyvocal and ambiguous. Luke’s depiction of the Ethiopian Eunuch elicits notions of polyvocality in the inability to identify his ethno-cultic status or gender status. In Asia Minor and the east, the term εὐνοῦχος [*eunuch*, eunuch] evolved into type of military or regal title.⁶⁵² Divergent from the Deuteronomistic conception of permanent exclusion, alternate texts infer the inclusion of eunuchs (cf. Isa 56.3 – 7). In Isaiah 56.3 – 7, the writer alludes to eunuch’s no longer concerned about barrenness but knowing in the sight of G*d they will be better than sons or daughters. With these understandings the social-world, inter and inner-textual clues must discern Luke’s intended meaning.

An important inter-textual parallel is Jeremiah 38.4 – 39.18. Here, King Zedekiah’s officials arrange to kill the Prophet Jeremiah. However, an Ethiopian eunuch named Ebed-Melech (i.e. Servant of the King) rescues Jeremiah. As a result of Ebed-Melech’s actions Jeremiah lived, proclaimed the words of the Lord and G*d promised to save Ebed-Melech. The polyvocality in this tradition is intriguing when comparing the LXX to the Hebrew text. While the Masoretic Text designates this Ethiopian as, “Ebed-Melech, the Cushite man, a eunuch”

[עֶבֶד-מֶלֶךְ הַכּוּשִׁי אִישׁ סָרִיס], *Ebed-Melek hacushi ish saris*, Jer 38.7, MT). The LXX,

however, renders this description as, “Abdemelech, the Ethiopian” [Ἀβδεμελεχ ὁ Αἰθίοψ,

⁶⁵¹ Mathew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), 31–33.

⁶⁵²Eunuch can designate someone’s status as castrated or someone’s position in a royal court. The LXX uses various words to translate the Hebrew סָרִיס (*saris*)(Jer 34:18); Johannes Schneider, “εὐνοῦχος,” ed. Gerhard Kittel and Geoffrey W.. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W.. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 765–766.

abdemelech ho aithiops, Jer 45.7, LXX]. The LXX tradition elides the eunuch status from this Ethiopian who is praised as a protector of the Divine's prophet.

The presence of a "faithful," figure in the Jewish literary tradition that is both an Ethiopian and a eunuch demands comparison to the protagonist in Acts 8.27 – 40. Negotiating notions of differentness and relatedness, these appeals to Jewish tradition destabilize the production of a single discursive image of the Ethiopian. The Ethiopian official embodies ambiguity, polyvocality and the mutability of language. He is a signifier within the Greek, Hellenistic and Jewish traditions that refuses to be rooted in any single semantic register or identity class.

Narrative Description

Following Peter and John's arrival in Samaria, Philip fades from Luke's discussion of the *Ekklēsia* in Samaria. Luke returns to Philip's activities through the description of a Divine encounter and bookends this pericope with sightings of an angel of the Lord and the Spirit of the Lord. Luke interrupts the geographical and narrative precision with which he composed the first eight chapters of Acts. Contrasted to the precise geographical location (Samaria) and identifiable geopolitical and ethno-cultic people (Samaritans) of Philip's first non-Jerusalem ministry (8.4 – 25), Philip now travels to an ambiguous geographical setting (somewhere in route to Gaza) and engages someone with ambiguous ethno-cultic (Jewish or gentile?) and gender (eunuch as in castrated or as in military official?) identities. Ambiguity and obscure meaning highlight this scene as Luke heightens his appeal to intertextual figures and polyvocal meaning. The encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian develops over the following trajectory:

Specific reference to an angel of the Lord [ἄγγελος κυρίου, *angelos kuriou*] occurs in four scenes in Acts (5.17 – 20; 8.26 – 40; 12.6 – 11; 12.20 – 23). In the other three appearances

it facilitates two of Peter's prison escapes (5.17 – 20; 12.6 – 11) and kills King Herod Agrippa I for receiving praise as a god without honoring the Lord. In this narrative sequence, the angel appears abruptly and speaks to Philip telling him:

Get up and go southward on the road that goes down from Jerusalem into Gaza, this one is desolate.

Get up and go at midday on the path that goes down from Jerusalem towards Gaza, this [road] is deserted.

Ἀνάστηθι καὶ πορεύου κατὰ μεσημβρία ἐπὶ τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν καταβαίνουσαν ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ εἰς Γάζαν· αὕτη ἐστὶν ἔρημος. (8.27)

Luke has subtly introduced polyvocality into the narrative through the composition of vague instructions. The phrase κατὰ μεσημβρίαν [*kata mesēmbria*] means both “towards the south” and “at noon.” Similarly vague, an ancient town named Gaza was destroyed in 96 B.C.E. by Alexander Jannaeus and rebuilt nearby.⁶⁵³ Likewise, the adjective ἔρημος [*erēmos*, deserted, wilderness, desolate] could be intended to modify Gaza or road. Through this seemingly simple divine-sanctioned encounter, an auditor is left to discern the angel's instruction with various interpreters understanding differently.

Philip followed the angel's instructions and then saw a man that embodied Roman and Hellenistic notions of the “other.” He beheld:

A man, an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a royal official of Candace, Queen-regnant of the Ethiopians, who was over her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, sitting upon his chariot, reading the Prophet Isaiah.

ἄνθρωπος Αἰθίοψ εὐνοῦχος δυνάστης Κανδάκης βασιλίσσης Αἰθιόπων, ὃς ἦν ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς γάζης αὐτῆς, ὃς ἐληλύθει προσκυνήσων εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ, ²⁸ ἦν τε ὑποστρέφων καὶ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ ἅρματος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεγίνωσκεν τὸν προφήτην Ἡσαΐαν. (8.27 – 28)

⁶⁵³ C. K. (Charles Kingsley) Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 423.

As a subject of the Queen-regnant Candace, this official resided beyond Caesar's *oikoumenē* [οἰκουμένη] in Ethiopia, a land that signified the ends of the Earth. With this encounter, Luke's programmatic verse in 1.8 has brought the ends of the earth to the *Ekklēsia* to fulfill Jesus' command. Likewise, Luke has highlighted notions of relatedness and differentness. Philip and the Ethiopian occupy different somatic, imperial, geopolitical, ethno-cultural and socio-linguistic differences. Discussed later, Luke's description leaves questions open as to whether they occupied similar gender identities and ethno-cultic identity. However, both figures meet as travelers away from home. They share reverence for Jewish tradition and scripture, had recently been in Jerusalem and spoke Greek. In the midst of these socially construed differences, Luke provides points of contact and relatedness.

Upon seeing the Ethiopian, Philip received instructions from the Spirit to go attach [κολλάω, *kollaō*, to unite, to fix to; to attach] himself with this chariot.⁶⁵⁴ Philip hears the Ethiopian reading from the Prophet Isaiah and inquires whether the official understands the text. After a humble exchange, the Ethiopian invites Philip to sit with him and discuss the scriptures. The official asks for Philip's understanding of Isaiah, which provides Philip with the opportunity to tell proclaim the good-news about Christ. The encounter between these two individuals, who occupy drastically different class statuses, construct a striking image of relatedness across differences. Luke's portrayal of the Ethiopian embodying imperial authority, wealth and power is a striking contrast to Roman imperial constructs of honor, shame and power, which are largely predicated hierarchy, the rigid maintenance of social-roles and the demonstration of domination and force.

⁶⁵⁴ Based on the class difference between Philip and the imperial official of Ethiopia, this notion of attaching oneself suggests Philip hiring himself out to the Ethiopian.

The final portion of this exchange occurs when the Ethiopian sees water and inquires about baptism. Once the Ethiopian orders the chariot to stop, Philip takes him to the water and baptizes him. Withstanding the various forms of difference and differentness between these two travelers, Luke depicts the Ethiopian as perceiving Christ and baptism as another means of relatedness. After his baptism, the Spirit of the Lord snatches Philip and miraculously transports him to Azotus. The Ethiopian went on his path [ὁδός, *odos*] rejoicing (8.39).

Open Proposal:
Reading Acts 6.1 – 8.40 as Diaspora

The preceding *prolegomena* to a diaspora-oriented reading of Acts 6.1 – 8.40 have highlighted the recurrent presence of Luke’s narrative negotiations of differentness. The progression found in 6.1 – 8.40 depicts an early Jesus-movement that undergoes significant transition and transformation. This presentation has prefigured Acts of the Apostles for new encounters. Through a diaspora-oriented reading of Acts as diaspora discourse, the narrative in Acts consistently provides readers with points of entry that remind them that the narrative reflects a single trajectory and its contextualized intersections. It is a particular articulation amongst many. As one follows Luke’s narrative in Jerusalem (2.1 – 8.3), there is no awareness of the developments and activities taking place in Alexandria (Apollos), Rome (Priscilla and Aquila) or Lystra and Iconium (Timothy). As Luke disrupts his narrative, he reminds audiences that the good-news is a witness to the activities and individuals working and preaching in diverse ways. Luke dismantles the illusion of a unilinear *Ekklēsia*, and uses non-Palestinian Jews embedded in the negotiation of diaspora to unfold his narrative. In its outward observation of Diaspora-particularity, Luke’s narrative is self-reflective in its acknowledgement of one’s own flaws and susceptibility to the ideologies of institutional systems. Acts as Diaspora discourse

welcomes new readings to better discern the message and meaning of such a work for the historiographical (re)construction of early Christianity or as scripture for twenty-century readers.

From 6.1 – 8.40, the Acts narrative introduces Hellenists and non-Palestinian Jews into the narrative in a progressive manner that highlights the consequences of ideologies and epistemologies of *le même* (sameness) and *le divers* (differentness). It is in this framework that I invite readers to produce alternative readings and historical reconstructions for early Christianity. This structure and preparatory presentation of Acts 6.1 – 8.40 has utilized my own voice and reading strategy to explore the significance of diaspora. Through alternative notions of identity construction, one is able to engage the past, themselves, their community and texts through creative means that seek relatedness over alienation. While this relying strategy is an isolated expression of my Black American identity, it has found resonance with Luke's narrative.

Over the course of this project, I have critically engaged my intellectual and contextual settings and (re)assessed the archival resources that I used for construing notions of self and relation. I then employed those insights in the construction of a poetics of diaspora. While informed by my own interpretive framework, this poetics of diaspora is an attempt to participate in the Universal: to contribute the “spirit work “of my own interpretive and historiographic practices to the fields of Diaspora Studies and New Testament Studies while simultaneously responding to the present realities faced by a perpetually evolving Black America, which must negotiate its own growing intracommunal diversity, increased accessibility to institutions of power and influence alongside a continued struggle against Hegelian gazes.

These Hegelian gazes are cosmological sites of life and death that too often in 2016 generate discursive death, social death, spiritual death and actual death. It is possible that this dissertation only provides an archival revision of the key terms poetics and diaspora while

outlining diaspora as an underappreciated *Sitz im Leben* for analysis of Acts of the Apostles and early Roman imperial history in general. But, perhaps, the contextually constructed diaspora poetics developed above may be read and interpreted in ways they generate alternative sights and sites of discourse. It ends here as a proposal for future engagement.

Appendix

Appendix A

Equations, Functions and Mathematics as Analogy

Introduction

I find the mathematical linear equation ($y = mx + b$) a useful analogy for understanding the nature of Diaspora Studies; I frequently use it to map what I identify as the characterizing elements and practices of Diaspora Studies and further understand how different scholars interrelate them in their work. Though this analogy, whether explicit or not, is constantly at work, underlying my thought, an understanding of my analysis and argument does not require proficiency in mathematical terminology. But for those who do not and who want to fully grasp my brief allusions to it, an excursus may prove beneficial. As, “the branch of science concerned with number, quantity, and space,” mathematics provides systematized ways to describe how entities exist and interact in relationship to one another; it provides repeatable and reproducible means of organizing and interpreting the world.⁶⁵⁵ Within my discussion of Diaspora Studies, especially its consistent predilection towards the univocality and unilinearity of Hegelian Colour-blindness, mathematics provides an apropos vernacular to perceive Diaspora Studies and its scholarship as a material system whose constituent parts are comprised of number, quantity and space. Once viewed materially, one can imagine the system in question, in this case Diaspora Studies, as an expression of the fixed relationships and ritualized—i.e. repetitious and ideological—interactions of its constituent parts.

The Constituent Parts of Equations and Functions

Operators

⁶⁵⁵ Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., “Mathematics,” *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Within this analogy, the concepts of equations and functions are pivotal. Both equations and functions can consist of operators, constants and variables. Operators are processes and actions that describe and dictate the relationships and interactions between the constants and variables that comprise an equation or function. Common operators consist of:

- Combining/adding/finding the sum: indicated by (+);
- Subtracting/removing/finding the difference: indicated by (-)
- Dividing/separating/finding the quotient/over: presented either as a fraction ($\# / \#$), ration ($\# : \#$) or indicated by (\div);⁶⁵⁶
- Amplifying/multiplying/finding the product: indicated by (\times) or by the immediate juxtaposition of two constituent parts.⁶⁵⁷

Certain operators have an inverse relationship with one another, such as, addition and subtraction, multiplication and division, or derivatives and integrals. Performing such operators can undo or reverse their opposition. Thus, the manipulation of operators permits equations and functions to be re-interpreted and re-arranged without altering the fundamental natures or relationships within the system.

In addition to dictating the relationality and interactions among constants and variables, operators are paradigmatic in that they infer the order and sequence by which operations/interactions occur. Operators that occur inside parentheses and brackets take priority for execution, with the execution of exponents then occurring, followed by multiplication and division, and concluding with addition and subtraction. Due to these characteristics, operators prevent one from understanding equations or functions as the indiscriminate and simplistic collection of its parts. Because operators inform determine

⁶⁵⁶ The number .333 can be expressed as $1/3$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $1:3$ or $1 \div 3$.

⁶⁵⁷ The statement 2 multiplied by X can be written as $2 (x) X$ or as $2X$.

syntax and sequence, they characterize equations and functions as paradigmatic analogies that are defined and specified by the specific relationships and interactions of their constituent parts.

Constants

Constants are predetermined and fixed entities that never change, regardless of context or perspective. They can be known or unknown. If unknown, one can represent a constant symbolically with an arbitrary letter, while if the constant is known they can simply insert the number. In the mathematical problem, $2 + 3 = 5$, all three numbers are constants. One could alternatively see the statement, $A + 3 = 5$. In this scenario, the expression still consists of three constants; however, one of the constants is unknown. Though unknown, A cannot vary, because there is only one value that could satisfy the statement. Thus, all three values, regardless of circumstance or perspective are constant.

Variables

Variables are those constituent entities that inform a system, but whose value and influence can vary and change based within a specific context based on perspective or circumstance. When expressing equations or functions, variables are generally represented by letters or symbols. Take the statement, $A + B = 5$. Here, A and B can vary based on circumstance. When A is 1, B is 4, but if A is 5, then B is 0. Thus, the expression $A + B = 5$ consists of one operator (+), two variables (A and B), and one constant, 5.

If illustrating this terminology through discourse, one can consider Benjamin Franklin's quote, "Our new constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency, but in this world nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes." In this statement, Franklin makes a statement about the composition of the

world. The world is composed of multiple things, including the Constitution, death and taxes. The constitution the potential for permanency, but is lumped in with all other experiences in the world other than death and taxes. Thus, world experience, according to Franklin, consists of death and taxes and All Other Entities. Implicit in this collection is the operator (+). The totality of world experience, in this framework, is at least partially the sum of Death + Taxes + All Other Actions/Entities. Franklin has described death and taxes as the world's sole ever-present and predetermined constants. In contrast, Franklin implies that though he hopes the Constitution garners permanence, it, like the rest of human experience, is variable. Their presence, impact and nature across time, context and circumstance will vary and consequently, alter one's experience of the world. Thus, within Franklin's implied world-system consists of two constants (Death and Taxes), two variables (Experience of the World and All Other Actions/Entities) and at minimum two operators (+).

Equations and Functions: Statements, Analogies, and World-Systems

Equations: an Overview

Equations are little more than mathematical analogies that define the totality of a closed-system—i.e. world-system—by asserting and fixing the relationships of its constituent parts. An equations occurs in the form of a statement that asserts that the totality of entities and operators on the left side of an equal sign (=) are equivalent to those entities and operators on the right. Like any world-system, a single equation can be viewed from various perspectives and articulated in a number of ways. Thus, the statement, $2A = 3 + 2$, can also be expressed as:

$$3 + 2 = 2A$$

$$3 = 2A - 2$$

$$5 = 2A$$

$$A = 5/2$$

Each of these are articulations of the same set of relationships and thus world-system. Because equations represent a world or reality as a closed-system, they can be as specific or generic as one desires, and need not characterize any overarching truth, other than the particular set of relationships of defined and organized by its operators and syntax.

The re-arranging of equations, at times, occurs based on the observer's skill-sets and preferred relationships—i.e. operators. Consider the expression, $2 \times A = B$ where A and B are variables. This equation contains two variables—A and B—and one constant—2—placed in relationship by the multiplication operator— \times). But, based on preferred perspective, this same equation can be expressed using the division operator either as, $A = B \div 2$ or $2 = B \div A$. If someone is uncomfortable dealing with multiplication or division relationships, they may prefer to express the equation solely in terms of addition where, $A + A = B$ is an alternative expression of the same system.

Utilizing this terminology, we can reconsider the linear equation, $y = mx + b$ as a closed-system that consists of four constituent parts—y, m, x and b—related to one another via two operators— multiplication (\times) and addition (+). Each constituent part's nature is predetermined, thus, by definition, y and x are variables and m and b are constants. Other articulations of the same equation can include:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{y} &= \mathbf{m} \times \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{b} \\ \mathbf{x} &= (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{b}) \div \mathbf{m} \\ \mathbf{b} &= \mathbf{y} - \mathbf{m} \times \mathbf{x} \\ \mathbf{m} &= (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{b}) \div \mathbf{x} \\ \mathbf{y} - \mathbf{b} &= \mathbf{m} \times \mathbf{x} \end{aligned}$$

One may prefer some of the above forms over others based on the information to which they have access or their comfort level with the operators. The utility of these

formal representations of the linear equation is that they each i) define any straight line that could ever exist as a set of systemic relationships between two constants and two variables, and ii) relate all straight lines to one another via their ability to be reduced to a single equation—i.e. all straight lines belong to the same world-system.

Functions: an Overview

A function, on the other hand, is a specific way of expressing and/or talking about an equation. A function is an equation presented as the definition of one of its constituent variables:

A Chosen Variable = Rest of the System

As a result, functions are a type of mathematical synecdoche, where one variable (a context-dependent constituent part) is expressed in terms of the equations other variables (context-dependent constituent parts) and their relationships and interactions.

In terms of presentation, functions are generally denoted with a titular letter of the observer's choice followed by a parenthesis that contains the remaining variable(s).

Among the alternative articulations of the linear equation listed above, only $y = m(x)x + b$ and $x = (y - b) \div m$ contain the necessary form for being expressed as a function.

Thus, one could present the linear equation as:

- $y(x) = m(x)x + b$
 - which means: when the variable-y can is expressed from the perspective of x, it is equal to the product of a constant-m multiplied by a variable-x and then added to a constant-b;
 - Alternately expressed: any value of y, in terms of x, is the sum of b and the product of m and x.

or:

- $x(y) = (y - b) \div m$
 - which means: when the variable-x is expressed from the perspective of y, it is equal to taking the difference of a variable-y minus a constant-b and dividing it by a constant-m;
 - Alternately expressed: the function x, viewed in terms of y, is the quotient of the difference between y and b, divided by m.

The presentation of an equation as a function is a means of organizing the equations variables for simplification, manipulation and perspective-dependent analysis. If an equation represents a specific world or reality as closed-system, a function is the chosen perspective or language by which that world can be coherently discussed or analyzed.

Reading Acts 27 with Math:
Pauline Destiny as a Linear Function

I offer Acts 27.21-26 as a biblical illustration. The narrative scene for this passage takes place onboard a ship during a violent sea storm where Paul is a Roman prisoner being transferred from Caesarea to Rome (27.1-28.16) in order to appeal his case before Caesar (cf. 25.6-12). Paul assures his fellow travelers that everyone on the ship will survive the storm. Speaking in that specific context of feared peril, Paul encapsulates the entire world in terms of everything that mattered at that specific moment: survival. His speech (re)presents the world as a quantifiable and predictable closed-system, materially predicated upon the Divine prediction given to him by an angel who said, “Do not fear, Paul. It is necessary for you to stand before Caesar, and behold, G*d has cast favor because of you to everyone sailing with you” (27.24). Paul, then, reframes his shipmates’ world as an analogy equating his prediction to their future: “Men, take courage, for I believe, by G*d, that [the future] will thusly be in a manner just like it was told to me. But, it is necessary for us to run aground into some island” (27.25-26). Implicit in this analogy, is Paul’s assurance that their present predicament was simply a contextualized articulation. Consequently, one could express this specific world-context and reality as a relationship of between two constants: the angel’s prediction (P) which is invariable; and Paul’s ultimate future (U), which is also invariable. Thus:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Angelic Prediction (P)} &= \text{Paul's Ultimate Future (U)}, \\ P &= U \end{aligned}$$

This ultimate future can also be expressed as the sum of two other constants: Paul standing before Caesar (PbC); and all Paul's shipmates surviving their journey (S).

Consequently:

$$\begin{aligned} U &= \text{Paul before Caesar (PbC)} + \text{Shipmates Safety (S)} \\ U &= \text{PbC} + S \\ P &= \text{PbC} + S \end{aligned}$$

Considering these equations as expressions of a single world-system or reality, one can also rearrange them by changing the operator from addition (+) to subtraction (-). Thus, the difference between Paul's ultimate future and his shipmate's safety is Paul standing before Caesar: $U - S = \text{PbC}$. In other words, if you remove the Paul's shipmates' safety from his ultimate future, you are left with only him standing before Caesar.

Up to this point, I have only expressed the reality expressed by Paul in terms of constants. This world system can, based on preference and perspective, be understood as consequence of other relationships, constants and variables. In 27.26, Paul says that it was necessary for them to run aground upon some island. The island upon which they will run aground is unknown, and thus can be expressed as a variable. Additionally, when looking at the beginning of Acts 27.9 – 11, one observes Paul advising his captors to with regards to the variable travel routes that can choose. The decisions they make determine their consequent travel experiences. Implicit in Paul's recommendations in 27.9 – 11 is the implication that the circumstances they experience in 27.21 – 26, and those that they make after Paul's declaration are variable outcomes and consequences of the crew's choices. These observations allow the world-system and reality expressed by

Paul in 27.21-26 as the combination of their circumstances (C) and impending travel experiences (TE) where their circumstances (C) vary, and their impending travel experiences is the product of their upcoming travel decisions (D) amplified and moderated by Divine grace/will (G). The Divine's grace in this system is unchanging, and is thus a constant. Thus, the reality of this world-system consists of two variables—their particular circumstances (C) and their impending travel decisions (D)—and two constants—an ultimate future (U) comprised of Paul before Caesar and his shipmates safety, and the Divine's grace (G). If one understands the relational interaction of moderated amplification as multiplication (\mathbf{x}), then Paul's world-system can be represented as an equation expressed:

Present Circumstances (C) + Travel Experiences (TE) = Paul before Caesar (PbC) + Shipmates Safety (S)

$$C + TE = PbC + S$$

Because, Impending Travel Experiences (TE) = Divine Grace/Will (G) (\mathbf{x}) Impending Decisions (D), the world-system can also be expressed:

$$C + G (\mathbf{x}) D = U$$

Re-articulating this equation to define present circumstances with respect to the rest of the system—i.e. placing C alone on one side of the equal sign—allows us to express this world-system—i.e. equation—as a function of the variable decisions (D) made by Paul and his shipmates:

Expressed as an equation solved for C:

$$C = U - G (\mathbf{x}) D$$

Or

Expressed as a function of D:

$$C(D) = U - G (\mathbf{x}) D$$

Thus, Paul and his shipmate's circumstances (C) is a function—i.e. paradigmatic expression—of their decisions, where any circumstance that they find themselves in can be viewed as a relationship between their ultimate future and the product of their

decisions being amplified and moderated by their decisions. Within this world-system and reality, Paul asserts that while his and his shipmates' destiny is set, the experiences and circumstances that they find themselves in enroute to their destiny are not set. Not only are these travel experiences not set, but, they are the direct consequence of their co-working with the divine. Their experiences (TE) are the product of their own decisions interacting with divine grace, and their circumstance is the difference—i.e. distance—between the destiny and their current experiences.

Without attempting to further complicate things, a few observations about this Pauline world-system is useful. It is important to remember that functions are contextual world-systems and realities. They do not define or give information universally about all potential world-systems or realities. They only provide insight into the specific context given. Thus, while one could argue that the above circumstance function depicts Paul's universal worldview, that Paul always deemed circumstances as the difference between one's destiny and the product of their decisions being moderated by divine grace and will. If this was Paul's fundamental view, then this equation is applicable to all persons. One, however, merely needed to gain access to their Ultimate reality or understand how the Lord was engaging them. With access to these constants, one could attempt to optimize their future decisions, and evaluate their current circumstances in relationship to their destiny. For instance, traditional readings of Luke's salvation-history apply this very equation to Acts as a whole. Luke's narration of the Divine's soteriological plan interprets the circumstances of the church as a function of the church's decisions. The teleological destiny of the Christ event was, according to these interpretations, the establishment of a Gentile-inclusive church establishing the reign of G*d throughout the

earth. Any person's specific circumstances, thus, is the difference between this destiny and the ways in which their choices are amplified by divine will. Paul's speech in Acts 27, thus, becomes a representation of Luke's soteriological world-view and pedagogical agenda.

Yet, just because Paul presents this world-system and reality in Acts 27 does not prove that Luke held this view, or that the narrative character Paul felt that this function was universally applicable to all situations and all people. The lone circumstance that one can claim a function describes, is the world-system presented by the interactions and constituent parts within that function. Thus, the assertion in Acts 27, that circumstance is a function of decision making is a contextual claim. As a contextual claim, Paul uses his received prediction to establish the ship's destiny, and claim that G*d's grace would be constant. Alternative world-systems—i.e. contexts—could very well transform either of these constants into constantly changing variables. In those cases, instead of strategically moving closer to one's predetermined destiny, one's decisions and G*d's interaction with those decisions could garner very different relationships, causing one's *telos* to be conditional upon decisions, obedience or circumstances.

The circumstance function developed in my reading of Acts 27 resembles, the linear equation.

$$y(x) = m (\mathbf{x}) x + b$$

$$C(D) = U - G (\mathbf{x}) D$$

In fact, with a little mathematical manipulation the circumstance function of decision can be re written:

$$C(D) = - G (\mathbf{x}) D + U$$

The lone difference, thus, between the linear function and the circumstance function is the presence of a minus—i.e. negative sign—in front of $G (\mathbf{x}) D$. After recalling that: the product of 1 multiplied by any number results in that number—i.e. $1 (x)$

3 = 3; and that, the product of -1 multiplied by any positive number results in the negative of that number—i.e. $-1 \times 3 = -3$: one can re-view $-G(x)D$ as $-1 \times G(x)D$. As a number, -1 will never change in this equation. Thus, -1 is a constant. This re-vision means that $-1 \times G(x)D$ is actually two constants multiplied by the variable-D. Two constants multiplied by one another will always result in a constant. Thus, $-1 \times G$ represents some other constant, which we can signify by any random letter, say, M. Though the circumstance function of D is specific to Paul's world-system, it can still be generically rendered as:

$$C(D) = -1 \times G(x)D + U,$$

Since, $-1 \times G$ could be any constant, M:

$$C(D) = M(x)D + U$$

Thus, the above generic version of the circumstance function is actually a specific-type of linear equation. The significance of this identification means that, according to Paul's world-system in Acts 27, the circumstances that he and his shipmates encountered, when expressed through the perspective of their decisions, form a straight line toward their destiny. This Pauline perspective suggests that the interactions and relationship between life's varied circumstances and possible decisions is a linear, teleological path.

Conclusion

In Chapter Four, I utilize the linear equation to assess the Diaspora Studies and its engagement with diaspora. I assert that Diaspora Studies functions as a world-system and reality that is paradigmatic in its negotiation of two constants and two variables. I find that scholars produce varied articulations and understandings of the concept of

diaspora, and employ the concept of diaspora in numerous ways to study various subjects. Thus, the variables that I identify are:

D: Concepts and understandings of diaspora,

x: The subjects and research areas scholars to which scholars apply the concept of diaspora scholars use diaspora to research

Withstanding these variables, I observe that the majority of Diaspora Studies scholarship begins by asserting the existence of a single original meaning and use of diaspora. They additionally, invoke a paradigmatic trajectory that is a singular and univocal interpretation of ancient Jewish experience and history. This paradigmatic trajectory appears as constant metanarrative that undergirds and prefigures scholarly perceptions of human migration, the LXX and Jewish history and experience in general. The metanarrative additionally legitimates scholarly constructions of diaspora and informs how theorist build analogy between their subject of research and the word's paradigmatic meaning. These observations lead me to identify Diaspora Studies as consisting of two constants:

b: a single retrievable point of origin and meaning of diaspora rooted in Jewish history;

m: The paradigmatic metanarrative found in the LXX that explain the original meaning and its use throughout history until the advent of Diaspora Studies.

This analogy allows me to express the concepts of diaspora present within Diaspora Studies, as a function of scholarly focus. Thus, within the context of Diaspora Studies, understandings of diaspora (D) are a function of scholars' specialties (x), where scholars begin with a univocal point of origin (b) and then initiate a trajectory governed by the amplification of their specific area of research (x) by its interaction the predominant metanarrative (m). Thus: $D(x) = m(x)x + b$.

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