The Power of a Hybrid Community:
A New Look at the Gentile Women in Matthew

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I. Introduction

Postcolonial theory arose out of the break-down of empires in the 19th and 20th centuries and the emergence of independent nations. This transition created a growing awareness of the ways in which dominant empires had defined "the other," that is, the subject peoples, in order to justify their subjugation. Postcolonial theory has made a vigorous impact on biblical scholarship by opening up a new way of reading the Bible as well as by revealing colonial assumptions that have been embedded in the biblical interpretative enterprise.[1] However, most postcolonial theories have focused on European colonialism not on the multiple colonialism in East Asia, as Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Kim insightfully point out: "This elision skews our understanding of gender in the colonial and post-colonial context, centering and even privileging European colonialism as a universalized subject of intellectual inquiry."[2] Then, as a member of the Korean postcolonial generation, what does postcolonial biblical study mean to me? Linda Hutcheon regards postcolonial narrative as a form of trauma narrative whose function is to reclaim agency by remembering belatedly as well as by trying to heal and undo the trauma by recalling in a public venue – but in the mode of the personal – the violence of

*An earlier version of this article was presented at New York Theological Seminary Conference in 2008.

[1] R.S. Sugirtbarajah ed., *The Postcolonial Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

[2] Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi eds., *Dangerous Women: Gender & Korean Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 1.

nation formation.[3] As a Korean-born but western-educated metropolitan hybridist who is aware of the double-ness of borderhood, I intend my postcolonial reading of the Bible to promote a psychic healing among readers living with their hyphenated identities. "Border-work, as undertaken by the in-betweeners, who both belong and unbelong, can offer crucial perspectival shifts and have liberatory potential, because it can undo binaristic and hierarchal categories of opposition, offering useful critique and reconceptualization of either side of opposition."[4] Yet the conceptualization of border crossing is problematic in that border crossing does not preclude "the concomitant enactment of other forms of violation and victimization," which remains invisible under "the rubric of a more generalized celebration of borderhood."[5]

Indeed, it is not difficult to find the problem of border crossing in Matthew's Gospel, where the Gentile women end up embodying the margin, so Matthew can construct his own border position at their expense. Matthew gets caught in his ambivalent attitude towards Gentile women, fettered by his own inability to cross the boundaries of class and ethnicity in relation to gender. In this essay, I would like to challenge the centrality and exclusivity of Matthew's male-oriented narrative by shifting its narratival perspective to the Gentile women. In so doing, this essay aims to reveal the subversive power of hybridity that hybrid women in the text as well as in our contexts can contribute to building hybrid community through the destabilization they bring to society. For this goal, through examination of three Gentile women in Jesus' genealogy

[3] Linda Hutcheon, "Interventionist Agendas: Postcolonial Challenges to Literary History." Keynote Address, 7th Annual British postcolonial and Commonwealth Studies Conference. University of South Georgia. Statesboro, Georgia, May, 8 1998. quoted in Ambreen Hai, "Border Work, Border Trouble: Postcolonial Feminism and the Ayah in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Craking India*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 46 (2000), 388.

[4] Hai, "Border Work, Border Trouble," 381.

[5] Ibid., 383-84.

(1:1-6), I will first argue that Matthew utilizes the three women in order to emphasize Jesus' Jewish but hybrid ancestry, whose kingship is confirmed by the Queen of the South as something greater than Solomon, the great King of Israel (12:42). Secondly, I will show that Matthew is expanding his community toward the Gentile world by entering the contact zone where Jesus meets the Canaanite woman who had heard about the power of Jesus (15:21-28). By forming an "in-between" space where Jesus begins to embrace the Gentile subaltern, Matthew confirms that Jesus is the chosen servant who proclaims justice to the Gentile world (12:18-21), which is finally given a seal of approval by the Roman imperial female, Pilate's wife (27:19). Lastly, I would like to underscore that the subversive power which Matthew proclaims at the expense of Gentile women should be equally shared by all persons living in our global hybrid community.

II. Jesus' Jewish but hybrid genealogy

In the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew uses Hebrew biblical names as well as dreams as evocative references to Genesis,[6] and condenses the long history of Israel into a genealogy that prominently includes Gentile women (1:3-6). Then in the middle of his Gospel, Matthew briefly mentions the Queen of the South so that he can announce that Jesus is greater than Solomon (12:42), and then introduces another Gentile woman, the Canaanite woman, who calls Jesus the Son of David (15:21-28). With the introduction of Pilate's wife at the end of his Gospel (27:19), Matthew completes his inclusion of Gentile women. Only when we simply follow this narrative development without paying attention to Mt 8:5-13, 10:5-6, and 15:24 can we accept the popular view that Matthew

[6] God communicates with both Joseph son of Isaac and Joseph the husband of Mary through dreams. Robert Gnuse, "Dream Genre in the Matthean Infancy Narratives," *Novum Testamentum* 32 (1990), 119.

includes Gentile women for the purpose of Gentile mission. Also, a close reading which focuses on Matthew's socio-political context does not necessarily support this. Matthew lived and wrote at a time when Jews and Christian Jews were parting ways as a result of inner-group conflict. The split was not amicable; we find plenty of cursing and recrimination on both sides (Mt 23, 27). However, there is also ample evidence that Matthew was defining the ethos of his group not only against the Jews but also against the Gentiles (5:47). Considering that Matthew and his community were living in the aftermath of the Jewish War when the Gentile hostility toward the Jews was heated, the impact that the Roman empire had made on Matthew and his community should not be overlooked. The possibility that Matthew might have struggled to locate his community in the midst of either side of oppression might plausibly explain Matthew's inclusion of Gentile women in Jesus' genealogy.[7]

The inclusion of Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth in Matthew's genealogy has received much scholarly attention because of their Gentile ethnicity. After the deaths of his first two sons, Judah fears for the life of his third son, so he sends his daughter-in-law Tamar

[7] The popular view that Matthew includes the four women because all were Gentiles, however, presents its own problems. Strikingly enough, the mother of the great king Solomon is not named but introduced merely as the wife of Uriah (evk th/j tou/ Ouvri,ou). Nevertheless, Bathsheba is usually considered to be a Gentile woman, probably because she was the wife of a Gentile soldier. The simple fact that Bathsheba married a Hittite, however, does not necessary mean that she was a Gentile woman. Rather, when we read carefully 2 Sam 23:34 (which includes the name of Eliam, probably the father of Bathsheba) and Josh 15:51 (which informs us that Eliam was a Judahite), we discover that Bathsheba was not a Gentile woman, but a Judahite. Matthew seems to intentionally pass over her name, Bathsheba (Mt 1:6; 2 Sam 11-12; 1 Kgs 15:5), through which he does not give credit to Bathsheba as David's wife or as the mother of Solomon. Heather A. McKay, "'Only A Remnant of Them Shall Be Saved': Women From the Hebrew Bible in New Testament Narratives," in Athala Brenner ed., *The Hebrew Bible in the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 42-45. Mark R. J. Bredin, "Gentiles and the Davidic Tradition in Matthew," in *The Hebrew Bible in the New Testament*, 96-97. Also, if Matthew includes Gentile women in the genealogy as an expression of his Gentile mission, why does Matthew not include other Gentile women like Judah's wife ["The daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua" (Gen 38:2; 1 Chr 2:4)], and why does he include Mary, a Jewish woman, in his genealogy?

back to her father. In so doing Judah turns Tamar into a social misfit.[8] She returns as a widow without being guaranteed her sexual right to give birth to an heir. To regain her right, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute and finally succeeds in producing a male heir for her husband's house by tricking Judah who has primary sexual authority over her (Gen 38:11-15, 24). Through her unconventional sexual behavior, Tamar not only survives the death of two husbands but is also rewarded by producing a male heir Perez, through whom she is linked to another border-crossing widow, Ruth. Ruth is a Moabite woman, but she identifies herself with her Israelite mother-in-law, just as Tamar was determined to stay within her Israelite in-law-family. Ruth's story also resonates with Tamar's in that they both behave like a bride in the night by deceiving their sexual partner (cf. Gen 29:21-20).[9] When she secures a future for herself and her ex-mother-in-law by marrying Boaz, the Israelite, she simply becomes Ruth, not "Ruth the Moabite." The tension between kinship and ethnic difference seems to be the focal point of Ruth's story. Her Moabite identity is nullified as she willingly allows herself to be absorbed into the Bethlehem community. Then her persistence finally earns her a place in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew's Gospel, as the mother of Obed.

Unlike Tamar and Ruth, who are widows belonging to nobody who willingly try to belong to their Israelite in-law families, Rahab is an independent woman who does not belong to anybody. When the Israelites are about to invade Canaan, Moses' successor sends two spies to the Canaanite city of Jericho, and right after they arrive there they enter the house of *zonah* named Rahab (Josh 2:1). *Zonah* in the Hebrew Bible is a

[8] Susan Niditch, "The Wronged Women Righted: An Analysis of Genesis 38," *HTR* 72(1979), 146.

[9] Cf. Tamar is called *zonah* (Gen 38:15, 24) but Ruth is never called *zonah*, possibly because Ruth does not cause Boaz to prostitute himself in an alien temple (cf. Exod 34:15-16; Num 25:1). For the use of *qedeshah* (a temple prostitute) and *zonah* (a secular sex worker), see Gail Corrington Streete, *The Strange Woman: Power and Sex in the Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 44-51, 71.

woman whose sexuality is not owned by any one man and who is not dedicated to reproduce heirs within a patrilineal family.[10] Yet the fact that she lives on the margin of society, and that her house is open to everybody, also implies that she can belong to anybody. In other words, Rahab provides her house and body as border spaces on the city wall where sexual, political, and cultural capital is traded and lines of division are crossed.[11] Rahab, by collaborating with the spies, becomes a part of Israel's discourse. The narrator concomitantly embraces her with a hope to penetrate and take Canaanite territory by distinguishing her sexual work as secular sex work, not as temple prostitute's work, as well as by showing that she is loyal to Israel and YHWH.[12] In so doing, Rahab also earns herself a place in the genealogy as a glorious contributor to preserve the Jewish male line (cf. Heb 11:31; Jam 2:25).[13]

In that all of these three Gentile women, regardless of their different ethnicities and classes, contribute to restore the Jewish male line leading to Jesus according to Davidic biblical tradition,[14] these women all seem to play similar roles as incubators of the Jewish seed (**evk th/j** Qama,r(**evk th/j** ~Raca,b(**evk th/j** ~Rou,q). If such is the case, it is likely that Matthew includes these Gentile women in Jesus' genealogy to insist that even David was not of pure Israelite stock, thus

[10] Ibid., 43.

[11] In this she resembles Lalun, the female character in Rudyard Kipling's short story *On the City Wall*. Rudyard Kipling, "On the City Wall," in Louis Cornell, *The Man Who Would be King and Other Stories* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[12] Neither Tamar or Rahab is called *qedeshah* but simply *zonah* .

[13] These women can be seen "as interchangeable pawns within a male-dominated political economy that confers power on men who do the exchanging." Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in Rayna Reiter ed., *Toward Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 174.

[14] "And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever and ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam 7:16).

justifying his hybrid community against the exclusive Davidic tradition which was anti-Gentile.[15]

III. Jesus enters into a contact zone

The construction of a hybridized "Other" subtly puts the purity of the so-called orthodox identity into question.[16] After establishing Jesus' Davidic hybrid blood line, Matthew introduces the Queen of the South in the middle of his Gospel where the Pharisees are opposing and conspiring against Jesus (Mt 12:1-50). Against the Pharisees who accuse Jesus' disciples of being unlawful, Jesus defends his disciples who ate grain on the Sabbath by referring to David who ate the consecrated bread in the house of God (12:1-8). He then cures a demoniac who was blind and mute (12:22). As a response, the crowds are amazed and say, "Can this be the Son of David?" (12:23). Then the Pharisees again interfere the crowds by accusing Jesus of being Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, and the Pharisees and the scribes ask Jesus to show a sign after a long argument about Beelzebul (12:24-38). As an answer to their challenge, Matthew introduces another Gentile woman, but this time it is the royal woman who praised the wisdom of Solomon. As Rahab had heard about YHWH, the Queen of Sheba had heard about the fame of Solomon due to the name of YHWH (1 Kgs 10:1-13; 2 Chron 9:1-12),[17] and she visits to test Solomon's wisdom as a foreign ruler on a state visit who applies a standard and assesses the wisdom of another king (1 Kgs 3-10; 5:10-14). She is portrayed as a critic but later she becomes admirer of Solomon, not only by giving strong support to

[15] Bredin, "Gentiles and the Davidic Tradition in Matthew," 106-11.

[16] Daniel Boyarin and Virginia Burrus, "Hybridity as Subversion of Orthodoxy? Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity," *Social Compass* 52 (No.4, 2005), 432.

[17] Since the Queen of the South is also known as the Queen of Sheba, I use them interchangeably.

Solomon's legitimate throne (1 Kgs 3:6; 5:19; 8:2-25; 9:5) but also by confirming that Solomon is among the greatest of kings.[18] Matthew, who was well-versed in Scripture, announces that something has arrived which is greater than Solomon, the son of David, through the authoritative voice of the Queen of the South (12:42). By proclaiming that Jesus is the Son of David who is even greater than Solomon, Matthew boldly responds to the Pharisees and the scribes who are against Jesus.

Then Matthew introduces the Canaanite woman, who is possibly connected with Rahab and Tamar through the designation Cananai,a (15:22). The Canaanite woman, like the centurion (8:5-13), also comes to Jesus with the hope that Jesus would be able to cure her daughter. Most scholars have interpreted this story as being connected with Jesus' Gentile mission: the Canaanite woman becomes a proselyte who helps Jesus opens his eyes toward the Gentiles. Then what about the Gentile centurion's role in Matthew? Does he also play an important role in opening Jesus' Gentile mission after Jesus praises his great faith? If the healing of the Canaanite's woman's daughter has to do with Jesus' Gentile mission, Jesus' healing of the centurion's boy should do so also. Why then does Jesus give the Twelve the instruction not to go anywhere among the Gentiles but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:6) after he heals the Gentile centurion's boy? Also, why does Jesus break his own rule by entering the district of Tyre and Sidon after he has forbidden his disciples to go to the Gentile area? Matthew's narrative flow does not seem to support a Gentile-mission-oriented interpretation (10: 5-6). On the other hand, some scholars have offered the interpretation that Jesus' rebuff is

[18] Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, "'She Came to Test Him with Hard Questions': Foreign Women and Their Vow on Israel," *BI* 15 (2007), 136-42.

intended to test the woman's faith.[19] This interpretation also cannot withstand criticism: why does Jesus test only the woman's faith – not the centurion's – and at the expense of her public humiliation? Against these interpretations which spin a Jewish story into a Christian one, Glenna S. Jackson interestingly insists that the Canaanite woman's story is not a historical story about Jesus opening up his eyes to the Gentile world through her clever argument, but a Matthean story about how one becomes a member of his Jewish community.[20] Since Jackson's thesis is also based on a dichotomical relationship between the Judaism and Christianity, however, Matthew's much broader socio-political setting as well as Matthew's systematic engagement with the Gentile/Roman world should be considered for a better understanding of the Canaanite woman's story.[21]

Unlike the centurion, the Canaanite woman does not simply explain her daughter's situation but desperately begs Jesus to have mercy on her. Surprisingly, Jesus, far from offering to go with her, does not even answer her. After being bothered by her persistent appeals, Jesus' disciples ask Jesus to send her away, and he, as an indirect response to her request, answers that he is not available for the Gentiles. The tone of suspicion and antagonism reaches its climax when Jesus calls her a dog in public. When Jesus speaks such hostile words against the woman, we are reminded of the hostile attitude toward the Gentiles that Jesus had shown earlier (10:5-6). However, Matthew has the woman put right before Jesus by cleverly twisting the whole debate around: "yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table" (15:27). Then Jesus

[19] J. Julius Scott Jr., "Matthew 15:21-28: A Test-Case for Jesus' Manners," *JSNT* 63 (1996), 21-44; idem, "Gentiles and the Ministry of Jesus: Further Observations on Matt 10:5-6; 15:21-28," *JETS* 33/2 (1990), 161-69; Roy A. Harrisville, "The Woman of Canaan," *Interpretation* 20 (1966), 274-87.

[20] Glenna S. Jackson, "Enemies of Israel: Ruth and the Canaanite Women," *HTR* 59 (2003), 779-92. Cf. Sharon Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story," in Letty M. Russell ed., *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminister, 1985), 71-72.

[21] See Warren Carter, "Matthew and the Gentiles: Individual Conversion and/or Systematic Transformation?" *JSNT* 26 (2004), 259-82.

praises the woman, who calls him "the Lord, Son of David" in front of his disciples. In so doing, Matthew utilizes the story of the Canaanite woman as literary vehicle to confirm not only that Jesus is the Son of David (12:22-42) but also that Jesus is ready to expand his community beyond his comfort zone to proclaim justice to the Gentile and even the Roman imperial world (12:15-21).

Matthew has to face Jewish humiliation at the hands of the Romans and Gentile hostility toward the Jews living in the aftermath of the Jewish War.[22] In the midst of building up his community by recruiting members, Matthew needs to develop a coherent world view and belief system. In order to change the social order, Matthew has to challenge the Jewish conventional standards by which his community members are judged by delegitimizing Jewish religious leadership.[23] The inextricability of Jewish and Gentile identities is thus interwoven into the very staging of Matthew's Gospel as it moves from the first chapter to the end. Matthew subtly delineates the friction between an older notion of Jewishness and a newer one of mixed identity, and he furthermore develops the friction between these two notions by expanding his community into an "in-between" space[24] where his community meets Imperial as well as cosmopolitan Roman-ness at Jesus' trial scene. After Matthew identifies the governor as Pilate, he brings Pilate's wife into the trial scene. Without being physically present, she sends a message to her husband who is about to proceed with Jesus' trial. "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him" (27:19).

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[22] John K. Riches, "Introduction," in John K. Riches & David Sim eds., *The Gospel of Matthew in its Roman Imperial Context* (London: T & T Clark Pub. Ltd., 2005), 1-6.

[23] Anthony Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 111-12; idem, "Boundaries and Polemics in the Gospel of Matthew," *BI* 3/3 (1995), 239-65; D. Micahel Cox, "The Gospel of Matthew and Resisting Imperial Theology," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 36 (2009), 25-48.

[24] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 1-2.

This is the message that Pilate's wife sends her husband while Pilate is sitting on the judgment seat. In this trial scene, which is located between the foretelling of Jesus' return (24:27-31) and Jesus' resurrection (28:18), Matthew presents the Roman governor who asks Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" (27:11). Matthew then places his decolonial project in the trial scene, which depicts the life-and-death tension between colonizer and colonized, by revealing internal fissures within the colonizer through his deployment of Pilate's wife.

Postcolonial feminists have shown that family, sexuality, gender, nation, and imperialism are inseparably intertwined. During the British Empire, the presence of memsahib completed the imperial triangle by introducing a middle term in the opposition between colonized and colonizer. The memsahib's position in the imperial triangle makes her a rival to other masculine figures through her accession to masculine forms of privilege, and it is a domesticity that has undergone significant reorganization, in which active feminine desire plays a subversive role.[25] We can posit a similar situation through the works of Roman historians as they observe a new type of Roman woman who dared to exercise her power in the public area.[26] Tacitus contrasts the masculine virtue of open aggression on the battlefield with the feminine scheming behind the scenes that he regards as embodying the worst aspects of dynasty rule (*Ann*. 1.69; 2.71-72; Juvenal, *Sat*. 6.617). Then he warns his readers against the danger of this new type of Roman woman

[25] Jennifer L. Otuski, "The Memsahib and the Ends of Empire: Feminine Desire in Flora Annie Steel's *On the Face of the Waters*," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 24 (1996), 1-29.

[26] Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: William E. Eerdmans, 2003); Richard A. Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge, 1992); Jasper Burns, *Great Women of Imperial Rome: Mothers and Wives of the Caesars* (London: Routledge, 2007); Susan E. Wood, *Imperial Women: A Study in Public Images, 40 BC – AD 68* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999).

by reporting that women feminize and weaken the courage of the men, and goes on to express horror that a woman could even preside at a military exercise (*Ann*. 3.33).

The conflict between private/domestic and public/military duty has thus been an ongoing dilemma of empire. In light of this, how does Pilate's wife figure in Matthew? Pilate's wife's dream is located between the foretelling of Jesus' return and Jesus' resurrection. In 24:27-31 which describe Jesus' *Parousia* by echoing Roman imperial rule, Matthew alludes to the doomed destiny of the Roman empire, and pronounces the final salvation of "his people from their sins" at the end of his Gospel through the resurrected Jesus who is endowed with God's authority over heaven and earth (28:18).[27] Just like Joseph, who is informed that Jesus will save his people/Israel from sin through his dreams (1:21; 2:6), [28] Pilate's wife also learns something about Jesus' identity through her dream.[29] Then she takes action. It is an action of disturbance and of disapproval. In a decolonizing context, decolonial desires of colonized males often take the form of "a fantasy of territorial displacement" as they seek to occupy the master's place, which can be called "a politics of substitution." When the colonial power is too strong to be

[27] For more discussion of Matthew' Eschatology and Rome, see Warren Carter, "Are there Imperial Texts in the Class? Intertextual Eagles and Matthean Eschatology as 'Lights Out' Time for Imperial Rome (Matthew 24:27-31)," *JBL* 122 (2003), 467-87; David C. Sim, "Rome in Matthew's Eschatology," in *The Gospel of Matthew in its Roman Imperial Context*, 91-106.

[28] Intertextual reading of Joseph's dreams with Hebrew Bible (Ps 130; Sir 46:1; Isa 7-9) shows that Jesus' saving from sin concerns not only moral sin but also religio-political sin due to the oppressive imperial structure in Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001), 75-90; Matthew's infancy narrative is thoroughly political in the expectations it raises concerning the liberation/salvation pretended by the Christ [Richard A. Horsley, *The Liberation of Christmas* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 39-60].

[29] As contrasted to Joseph's dream about Jesus' birth, this dream connected with Jesus' approaching death appears very briefly, and has rarely drawn scholarly attention. When noticed at all, the dream has been traditionally interpreted as a literary device which serves to give enough time to the Jewish religious leaders to persuade the Jews to choose Barabbas instead of Jesus, or a device to declare Jesus' righteousness through Pilate's wife's faithful response, which leads into the Roman soldier's confession of Jesus as God's Son (27:54).

disturbed, however, this fantasy of displacement becomes "a politics of appropriation," [30] which is made possible through the access to colonial females. In order to resist the Roman imperial power, Matthew utilizes Pilate's wife, the imperial female, to shame Pilate,[31] who was himself once humiliated by Tiberius because of his mishandling of Jewish customs (Jos. *Ant*.18.55-62; *War* 2.169-77). Unlike the three Gentile women who subjected themselves to Jewish custom by using their sexual reproducibility, Pilate's wife stands in a category by herself in that she is not simply a Gentile woman, but the wife of Roman imperial governor and therefore much more attention should be paid to her imperial class than to her gender or ethnicity. In this regard, Pilate's wife's role does not seem to be limited to declaring Jesus' righteousness. Rather, Pilate's wife's action can be better understood as Matthew's act of appropriating her for his side.[32]

This politics of appropriation at the expense of Pilate's wife finally develops into a politics of substitution as the Roman soldiers' arrogance and mockery are transformed into terror and confession of the highest order, which implies that they replace their emperor with Jesus as holder of imperial title "Son of God" (27:54; cf. Mk 15:39).[33] Not only by substituting Jesus for the Herod and the Roman governor but also by expanding the nationalistic titles, Son of David (15:22) and king of the Jews (27:11, 29, 42) into the

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[30] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 362.

[31] Pilate, the most powerful man in Palestine, becomes powerless to do the right thing that he knows. Rather, Pilate revels himself as the puppet of the Jewish crowds whom he purports to govern: "whom they wanted" (27:15); "Whom do you want me to release for you?" (27:17); "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" (27:21). Dorothy Jean Weaver, "Power and Powerlessness: Matthew's Use of Irony in the Portrayal of Political Leaders," *Seminar Papers, 1992* (SBLSP 31; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1992), 465.

[32] A great pagan king becomes the protector of the Jews by means of a divinely inspired dream, and the honor of the Jews is greatly increased as a result. In this sense, Pilate's wife's dream, like the dreams of Alexander (Jos. *Ant.* 11.325-39) and of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4:4-27), functions as a propaganda dream for Jesus. For an analysis of Alexander's dream, see Tae Hyun Kim, "The Dream of Alexander in Josephus *Ant*. 11.325-39," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 34 (2003), 423-42.

[33] R. L. Mowery, "Son of God in Roman Imperial Titles and Matthew," *Biblica* 83 (2002), 100-10.

cosmopolitan title, Son of God (14:33; 27:43, 54), Matthew envisions the beginning of the end of Roman imperial dominion, and finally expresses his ultimate decolonial desire when Jesus is endowed with all authority in heaven and earth (28:18).[34]

IV. Conclusion: A vision for a healthy global community

When Israel's self identity is embattled, it swings between two opposing tendencies: "relating to the nations in hospitality or radically separating itself from the nations in xenophobia."[35] Likewise, Matthew's ambiguous attitude toward the Gentile women appears in his imaginative genealogy as well as in his shifting relations with the Gentiles.[36] In order to give hope to his community surrounded by hostile Jews and Gentiles, Matthew first posits himself as a *in-betweener* who invites both the Gentiles and the Jews into his hybrid community so that all of them can connect to Jesus' hybrid genealogy. Then he shares his decolonial desire that Jesus will save his people along with his community, which is undergoing a traumatic experience,[37] by appropriating royal power [the Queen of the South] and colonial power [Pilate's wife]. The subversive power of Matthew's hybrid community against the two sides of opposition has eventually transformed his minority discourse into a metanarrative, which has been used throughout

[34] According to Matthew, Jesus is the only legitimate king of the Jews and the real ruler. C. L. Blomberg, "The Liberation of Illegitimacy: Women and Rulers in Matthew 1-2," *BTB* 21 (1991), 145.

[35] Eunny P. Lee, "Ruth the Moabite: Identity, Kinship, and Otherness," in Linda Day and Carolyn Pressler eds., *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 89.

[36] "Rahab and her family are spared because she has spared the Israelite spies, but they are still treated as a marginal group, literally "set outside the camp of Israel" (Josh 6:23), and while the text says that Rahab's descendants have lived in Israel to this day (Josh 6:25), they are not spoken of as integrated into Israel in any part of the Tanakh, nor is Rahab herself mentioned again in it. Rabbinic commentators, feeling this lack, turned her into the exemplary convert to Judaism and married to Joshua" in Streete, *The Strange Woman,* 48.

[37] Border works arising from the heterogeneity of multiple cultural effects must be understood as a mode of operation since it promotes in their readers a "psychic healing." Emily Hicks, *Border Writing: The Multidimensional Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), xxiii-xxxi.

the centuries.[38] However, we need to ask how the female hybridists are poised in Matthew. Throughout Matthew, gender runs like multiple fissures: splitting, displacing, and forming hybridity. It is a scandalous hybridity, since it is formed by various female collaborators across forbidden boundaries. But it is also a problematic hybridity, since Matthew's decolonial desire is "typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope."[39] Whether they are Gentile or Jewish, prostitutes or aristocrats, colonized or colonizer, they, as hybridists, only contribute to presenting Jesus as the real leader to Matthew's community by entering into their contradictory relations with Israel. Once Matthew achieves his decolonial goal, the female hybridists, regardless of their race and class, disappear from Matthew. The power of hybridity is not equally shared by women.

The female body, as a site of transgression, simply becomes the embodiment of a border that is crossed by men of all sorts. Women suffer the most from political upheavals: victory is often celebrated by males whereas vengeance is taken on women's bodies. After Korean independence from Japanese imperialism, the two ex-superpowers struck a bargain to crack Mother Korea's body into North and South Koreas, and the outbreak of the Cold War ideology was accompanied by neocolonialism. During these chaotic periods, the Korean female body has been used as an economic tool or as a vehicle of communication between men.[40] On the one hand, in the Korean postcolonial

[38] According to Elian Cuvillier, Matthew develops a radical form of Jewish Messianism, which will later be called a Christology. See Elian Cuvillier Elian Cuvillier, "Torah Observance and Radicalization in the First Gospel. Matthew and First-Century Judaism: A Contribution to the Debate," *NTS* 53(2009), 159. See also Boyarin and Burrus, "Hybridity as Subversion of Orthodocy?"

[39] Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 14.

[40] See novels written by Jung-hyun Nam, *Bunji* 糞地 (Seoul: Hangyure, 1987); Jung-hyo Ahn, *Silver Stallion: a novel of Korea* (New York: Soho Press, Inc., 1990); Jung-mo Yun, *Nose Ring* (고삐)1&2 (Seoul: Pulbit, 1988, 1993).

context where the issue of comfort women and military brides has become a discomforting issue, the dismemberment of the discomforting female into empty space has been replaced with the issue of the Kosian.[41] International marriage has grown rapidly in South Korea since the late 1990s, and most brides come from China, Vietnam, and the Philippines.[42] The use of the word Kosian became popular in the early 2000 as interracial marriage became more common in rural farming areas. On the other hand, in the United States, popular imagination and mainstream histories have represented the military bride as a "determiner of inclusion" into the mainstream sociocultural and legal political milieu of the U.S. nation state. Huey-li Li problematizes hybridity - since the formation of hybridity in a colonial context is not based on reciprocal interactions between the Self and Other - by observing that "in the United States there has been an undiminished effort to 'homogenize' and 'racialize' the heterogeneous populations of Asians and Asian-Americans as imported 'foreigners'."[43] From the American point of view, however, military brides are still outsiders whom "red-blooded American" soldiers have inexplicably married, whereas for their own ethnic group they are impure women because they married foreigners.[44]

[41] The term "Kosian" was first coined in 1997 to refer to intercultural family. The term Kosian is the combination of Korean and Asian, and is mostly applied to children born of a Korean father and a South-Asian mother. The term "Kosian" is considered offensive by some who prefer to identify themselves or their children as Korean. Moreover, the Korean office of Amnesty International has claimed that the word "Kosian" represents racial discrimination.

[42] In addition, a smaller number of South Korean women marry foreign husbands; with husbands from China, Japan, and other South Asian contries.In 2005, there were 31,180 marriages between South Korean men and non-Korean women; there were 11,941 marriages between South Korean women and non-Korean men. Together, these account for more than 10% of the total number of marriages in 2005: 316,375. See also Sung–mi Lee, *Multicultural Code: A Solution of the Korean Dream* (Seoul: Itreebook, 2010).

[43] Heuy-li Li, "From Alterity to Hybridity: A Query of Double Consciousness," *Philosophy of Education* (2002),138-40.

[44] Bok-Lim C. Kim, "Asian Wives of U.S. Servicemen: Women in Shadows," *Amerasia* 4 (1971), 91-115; Ji-Yeon Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

The Gentile women in Matthew managed to be part of the Israelite discourse. And their otherness has been incorporated into mainstream discourse, generating an ongoing self-interrogation and transformation on the part of Israel to the extent that Matthew places them in the lineage of Israel's ideal king. Julia Kristeva states: "If David is also Ruth, if the sovereign is also Moabite, peace of mind will never be his lot, but a constant quest for welcoming and going beyond the other in oneself."[45] The Gentile women might have been adopted into Israel's discourse, but we need to recall that they, not Matthew, are the real hybridists who invited Jewish men into the "Third Space" out of their Jewish comfort zone. Like the Gentile women in Matthew, women with hyphenated identities living in diaspora, whether they are Asian-American, Eurasian or Kosian, not only challenge the validity of a monolithic ethnic identity but also open up spaces for a hybrid community by destabilizing the comfort zone. Just as Jesus accepted the Canaanite woman's challenge and responded to her request by walking into the contact zone where he could expand his vision of mercy, we need to hear the hyphenated women's invitation so that we all can enjoy holistic life as members of a global hybrid community.

[45] Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (trans. by Leon S. Roudiez; New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 76.

Abstract

This essay argues that Matthew deploys the Gentile women (Mt 1:3-6; 12:42; 15:21-28; 27:19) for a dual purpose: to confirm that Jesus is the chosen servant who proclaims justice to the Gentiles, and also to expand his community toward the Gentile world by forming hybrid community only after he deploys the Gentile women. Yet the conceptualization of a hybrid society can be problematic when it is performed in a decolonial context, especially from a male-oriented perspective. Once Matthew achieves his decolonial goal, the female hybridists, regardless of their race and class, disappear from Matthew. The power of hybridity is not equally shared by women. By drawing a parallel between the Gentile women in Matthew and women with hyphenated identities (e.g. Kosian, Koslim, Eurasian etc.) living in a global community, this essay not only challenges the validity of a monolithic ethnic identity but also opens up spaces for a hybrid community by destabilizing a homogeneous community's comfort zone, just as Jesus yielded to the Canaanite woman's challenge by walking into the contact zone where he could expand his vision of mercy.

Key Words

Matthew and the Gentile Women, Hybridity, Decolonialism, Postcolonial Feminism, Global Migrants

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