Challenging Boundaries in Acts 8:26-40: Toward seeing "othered bodies" through Decolonial Feminist Eyes

Miranda Pillay[i]

SHORT BIO

[i]Miranda Pillay is a Senior Researcher at the University of the Western Cape, affiliated with the Desmond Tutu (SARCHI) Chair in Religion and Social Justice which is jointly supported by the Lund Mission Society and the National Research Foundation of South Africa (Grant number 118854). The author acknowledges that opinions, findings and conclusions expressed are those of the author alone, and the NRF accepts no liability whatsoever in this regard.

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION
Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice, University of the Western Cape
mpillay@uwc.ac.za

ORCID
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3335-2232

SUBMISSION DATE
20/10/2025

ACCEPTANCE DATE
08/12/2025

DOI
https://doi.org/10.36615/z6cg6x91

ABSTRACT

Cartography, the scientific name for "mapping", sets boundaries that separate people and places. As a metaphor, it is "another name for stories told by winners", which may also refer to the politics of knowledge production captured in biblical texts. As such, stories mapped by hegemonic powers ignore the presence, knowledge, and insights of the marginalized "othered". Reception history of the story mapped in Acts 8:26-40, and by implication sermons preached on this biblical text, primarily lends itself to the advancement of the Christian missionary task – proselytization. The story of the Ethiopian eunuch has generally served as a literary prop to "proclaim the *Good News*". Explicit references to racial and sexual identity markers in the text are generally "glossed over" and the unnamed character is seen as the "other" in need of salvation. This paper explores how, when seen from a decolonial feminist perspective, a different picture of the unnamed Ethiopian eunuch emerges. The argument made here is that when hegemonic understandings of the biblical text are questioned, boundaries that separate people and places are challenged to reveal a theological map of radical inclusivity.

KEYWORDS:
Feminist; Decolonial; Acts 8:26-40; Ethiopian; Eunuch; Knowledge; Agency, Good News

Introduction: On Mapping Boundaries

> Go South to the road – the desert road – that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. (Acts 8:26).

An internet search for maps relating to the bible story about the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-40 yields one with the caption "Philip's Journeys" with two arrows both pointing South and labelled "To Egypt and Ethiopia". One arrow points towards Gaza from Samaria, and the other points further South,

ISSN 2707-2991

away from Gaza.[1] Turkish novelist, Elif Shafak, says that cartography, the scientific name for mapping, sets boundaries that separate places and people. She poignantly states that a map represents arbitrary signs and carves lines that "decide who is to be our enemy and who is to be our friend, who deserves our love and who deserves our hatred and who, [deserves] our sheer indifference"[2].

Scholarship on Acts 8:26-40 increasingly engage the text as an interpretive site where ambiguity is purposeful and embodiment is contested. Burke frames this ambiguity as a literary strategy in Luke-Acts. He argues that the ambiguity functions as a literary device that justifies the application of reception-by-analogy as a critical methodology. However, such analogical interpretations are always applied responsibly with an awareness of their limits.[3] Yii-Jan Lin's 2020 textual-critical work examines Greek manuscript traditions of Acts 8:32-37, and shows how boundaries emerge from the instability of the written tradition itself, rather than from identity claims projected onto the character. In disability-focused receptions, Anna Rebecca Solevåg's 2016 article, "No Nuts? No Problem!", reads the baptized eunuch as a body marked by stigma, whose inclusion unsettles inherited assumptions about ability, gender, and belonging. Taken together, these scholars exemplify the major interpretive debates on Acts 8, demonstrating a deepening and widening literature that treats ambiguity, social exclusion, stigma, and narrative agency as fully embedded textual questions.
The story mapped in Acts 8:26-40 centers around Philip who had fled persecution after Jesus' crucifixion. Now in Samaria, Philip follows the instruction from "an Angel of the Lord" to "Go South to the road – the desert road – that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza" where he would meet an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-27).

Acts 8:26-40 is read in many churches on the fifth Sunday of Easter as set out in Year B Cycle of the Common Lectionary. While the text often bears the heading "Philip and the Ethiopian", the pericope begins and ends with

1 See https://www.thebiblejourney.org/biblejourney1/7-journeys-of-jesuss-followers/philips-journeys/, accessed 15 July 2025.
2 Elif Shafak. *The Island of Missing Trees.* (Dublin: Penquin Books), 1.
3 Sean D. Burke. Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch: Strategies of Ambiguity in Acts. (Augsburg Fortress, 2013) https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22h6s0c. Also see Sean D. Burke. "Reading the Bible with Eunuchs," in *Mapping New Terrain in Queer Religious Scholarship*, ed. B. Schlager (Abingdon: Routledge, 2025, 207-211.

Philip.[4] Over the years, I have heard many sermons preached on this story and cannot recall any that mentioned the Ethiopian's racial or sexual identity. As Nadar et al. point out, traditional interpretations of Acts 8:26-40 tend to "gloss over the actual body of the eunuch" and focus instead on the salvation of his spiritual body.[5] The invisibilization and spiritualization of the character's actual body have shaped interpretations of the text.

I argue that the salvific message of the Good News about Jesus (Acts 8:35) and the focus on proselytization eliminate the Ethiopian eunuch as a leading protagonist in the story. Placing exclusive emphasis on the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch for salvation dismisses the character's ethnographic identity as *non est tanti*, a Latin phrase that means "of no great importance".[6] Martin links such interpretations to the pervasive problem in contemporary societies where the significance, contributions, and lived experiences of marginalized groups are persistently dismissed, ignored, deemed irrelevant and regarded as being of no great importance.

Almost half a century later, Martin's observation still rings true. Two examples come to mind, namely, the genocide in Gaza[7] and the exclusion or conditional inclusion of LGBTQI+ members in Christian communities.[8] Ironically, while Martin calls attention to the racially marked body of the Ethiopian, the character's sexuality remains "of no great importance" in her writing.[9]

---

4 The *English Standard Version* (ESV) and the New King James Version (NKJV) capture the story under the heading "Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch" while the caption above Acts 8:26-40 in the *New International Version* (NIV) reads "Philip and the Ethiopian".

5 Sarojini Nadar, Paulo Ueti and Johnathan Jodamus, "Toward Gender Justice: Reimagining Religion, Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Acts 8:26-40," The Ecumenical Review 75, no. 1 (2023): 107.

6 Clarice Martin. "A Chamberlain's Journey and the Challenge of Interpretation for Liberation." *Semeia* 47 (1989): 105-135. *Roughly translated in legal terms, Non est Tanti means "does not exist".*

7 Sarojini Nadar. *Gender, Genocide, Gaza and the Book of Esther: Engaging Tests of Terror(ism)*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2025).

8 Miranda Pilay "Re-membering Community: Towards Unconditional Inclusion of LGBTQI+ Members." South African Council of Churches, WC. Verde Hotel, Cape Town, 25 June 2022.

9 Understandably, at that time, the issue of racial discrimination was of greater importance to her and other African Americans. It was also the case in apartheid South Africa when

In South Africa, where 85% of the population claims to have some Christian identity or church affiliation, the Bible remains relevant.[10] It is not surprising that some South African Christians continue to turn to ancient biblical texts to justify religious superiority, white supremacy, and heteronormative patriarchy. However, the work of many South African liberation theologians, including feminist theologians, illustrate that the same Bible can also be a tool of liberation to challenge racism, classism, sexism, and genderism in contemporary contexts.[11] Musa Dube, amongst other feminist theologians, points to the connection between the Bible and colonial oppression.[12] She argues that hegemonic power has been, and continues to be, "effected through the biblical text".[13]

Thus, one cannot read the story mapped in Acts 8:26-40 and its explicit reference to Gaza without calling to mind the wars waged by the state of Israel against the people of Palestine. Recently, our televisions flash life-and-death stories of those for whom this strip of land on the map is home; their humanity and dignity appear to be of no consequence. As pointed out

opposition politics was dominated by the objective "to mobilise women for the national liberation struggle" against racism, while sexism prevailed (Shireen Hassim. "Gender, Social Location and Feminist Politics in South Africa." *Transformation* 15 (1991): 65-82). See also Kumari Jayawardena. *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*. (Zed Books, 1986).

10 See South African Population Census (2022: 24).

11 Sarojini Nadar. "Barak God and Die!' Women, HIV and a Theology of Suffering," *in Grant me Justice: HIV/AIDS & Gender Readings of the Bible*, ed. M. Dube, and R. Kanyoro, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2004). 63-67; Miranda Pillay. "See this Woman? Toward a Theology of Gender Equality in the Context of HIV and AIDS." *Scriptura* 89 (2005)*:* 441-455; Denise Ackermann. "Tamar's Cry: Re-reading an Ancient Text in the Midst of an HIV/AIDS Pandemic," in *Character Ethics and the Old Testament: Moral Dimensions of Scripture,* ed. D. Caroll and J. Lapsley (John Knox Press, 2007) 200-219; Elna Mouton. "Human Dignity as Expressions of God Images? Perspectives from in 1 Corinthians 24 and Ephesians 5." *Neotestamentica* 45, no. 2 (2011):.275-279; Nontando Hadebe. "Can Anything Good Come from Nazareth? Come and see!': An Invitation to Dialogue Between Queer Theories and African Theologies." *Concilium* 5 (2019): 85; Madipoane J. Masenya. "Without a voice, with a violated body: Re-reading Judges 19 to challenge gender violence in sacred texts." *Missionalia* 40, no. 3 (2012): 206.

12 Musa Dube. *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000).

13 Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation,* 17. Postcolonial biblical scholar, Sugirtharajah, explains that the colonized within early Christianity articulated "their identity, self-worth, and empowerment" in a context where dominant religion colluded with empire building (2002: 11).

earlier, the mapping of stories embedded in biblical colonialism, imperialism, and religious superiority ignore and obliterate the legitimate presence of persons "othered" by those in power.14 In a 2025 op-ed in the Mail & Guardian, South African feminist theologian, Sarojini Nadar, points out how Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, use "biblical allusions" to justify war against the Palestinian people of Gaza. She argues that in his speech at the UN General Assembly on 26 September 2025, Netanyahu invoked God's help as if Israel's war in Gaza is a divine instruction.[15]

Therefore, to read the divine instruction given to Philip to "Go South to the road – the desert road – that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza" in contemporary Christian communities without any mention of Israel's occupation and expansionism is to ignore the dead and mutilated bodies that lay strewn in the roads of Gaza. While such oblivion raises serious questions about the justification of blatant expansionism, it falls outside the scope of this paper.[16] However, this observation, together with the observation that LGBTQI+ members in Christian churches continue to be excluded, provide the backdrop for the premise of this paper. That is that to "gloss over" the racially and sexually marked body of the Ethiopian eunuch in the reading of Acts 8:26-40 today is to be complicit in racism, classism, sexism, and genderism inherent in global nationalism.

However, the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 is a first-century narrative written within the overlapping social worlds of Roman empire and the early Christ-movement. In this period, difference was not primarily organized through the modern identity markers familiar today. Instead,

---

14 As Palestinian Christian theologian and activist Mitri Raheb. "Land, People and Empire: The Bible through Palestinian Christian Eyes," in *A New Critical Approach to the History of Palestine*, ed. I. Hjelm, I. Taha, and T. Thompson (Abingdon; Routledge, 2019) argues, Christian Zionist belief systems, backed by particular readings of the Bible, provide the "theological software" that legitimizes the use of military weapons and sanctifies settler colonialism.

15 See Sarojini Nadar, "The theft of prophecy: Why religion matters for all social justice struggles," *Mail & Guardian*, 7 October 2025, https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/opinion/2025-10-07-the-theft-of-prophecy-why-religion-matters-for-all-social-justice-struggles/

16 See Nadar, *Gender, Genocide, Gaza, x*. Nadar recalls that when Gaza was about to be invaded by Israeli forces in October 2023, Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu invoked the biblical character, Amalek. This she says, "gestures toward a legacy of ethnic and colonial violence".

status, belonging, and exclusion were socially-coded through class positioning, imperial proximity, temple access, and ritual purity regulations.[17] Eunuchs, as a category, were recognized socially and politically, often linked to imperial systems that sought to regulate bodies, loyalty, lineage, and access to assemblies of power and worship (cf. Leviticus 21:20; Deuteronomy 23:1). Though the biblical text does not assign sexual identity to the eunuch, the first-century audience would have recognized him as a figure whose body already sat at the intersection of empire, piety, social stigma, and only conditionally included in Jewish temple assemblies within Roman provincial space.[18] Mickel reminds us that, locating the eunuch "requires an intersection of multiple identities that include his geography, social status, ethnicity, gender and religious affiliation".[19] It is from this historically implied and textually situated world that I move toward examining the story's reception, rhetoric, and interpretive life.

My decolonial feminist rereading of Acts 8:26-40 is offered with full appreciation of the exegetical labor already undertaken by scholars of Luke–Acts who have long noted that the encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch sits at a crucial point in Luke's literary and theological mapping of the gospel "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).[20] This scholarship has raised questions about how outsiders are narrated into the story of God. Brittany Wilson, for example, reads the eunuch as an ambiguous figure whose repeated designation as "eunuch" and "Ethiopian" exposes the entanglement of status, gender, and ethnicity, and embodies the boundary-

17 See, for example, Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "Ethnocentrism and Research on the Historical Jesus," in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, eds. Bruce J. Malina, Woldfang, Stegemann and Gerd Theissen (Fortress Press. 2002), 36. for an illustration of the social structure in the Herodian period as it relates to power, privilege and honor.

18 See Brittany Wilson, *Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts. (*New York: Oxford University Press, 2019) for a discussion of Luke's audience with particular reference to Acts and the intersection with gender constructions in the Greco-Roman world.

19 Steve Mickel, "Cross-Cultural Leadership Complexities: A Study of the Ethiopian Eunuch and Philip's Interaction in Acts 8:26-40," in *Biblical Cross-Cultural Leadership: Principles from the New Testament,* eds. Suzana Dobrić Veiss, Elizabeth K. Hunt, and Joshua D. Henson (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 155. See also, Sean D. Burke, "Queering Early Christian Discourse: The Ethiopian Eunuch," in *Bible Trouble: Queer Reading at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship*, eds. Teresa J. Hornsby and Ken Stone, (Society of Biblical Literature, 2011).

20 See, for example, Mickel, "Cross-Cultural Leadership Complexities".

crossing nature of the gospel itself.[21] Andrew Mbuvi revisits the translation of εὐνοῦχος and Aἰθίοψ, arguing that the figure should be understood as an African royal official and possibly an African Jew and foregrounds the significance of both the LXX background and Isaiah traditions for Luke's narrative framing.[22] In his PhD dissertation, Joshua Seokhyuny Yoon reads the eunuch as a "representative outsider", tracing how Luke's use of the Isaianic suffering servant in Acts 8:32-33 intersects with themes of exclusion and the inclusion of outsiders in God's reign.[23] Others have explored in detail how Isaiah 56:1-8 reworks Deuteronomy 23:1 and purity-based exclusion, offering a vision in which foreigners and eunuchs who "keep the sabbath" and "hold fast the covenant" are gathered to God's holy mountain. A tradition that many see as echoing beneath Luke's portrayal of the eunuch's journey from temple exclusion to baptismal inclusion.
[24]

Textual critics such as Yii-Jan Lin have shown how the contested presence of Acts 8:37 in the manuscript tradition opens further questions about confession, agency, and the shaping of the eunuch's voice in the reception of this passage.[25] Drawing on disability and crip theory, Solevåg foregrounds how the eunuch's marked body, stigma, and non-procreative status complicate purity and belonging.[26] My reading is in conversation with these literary, historical and theological dynamics in Acts but shifts the center of gravity to the ways in which "othered bodies" continue to be mapped, regulated, and erased in contemporary contexts of empire.

Considering these introductory remarks, I make three observations about the traditional mapping of the story in Acts 8. First, the focus is usually on the faithfulness of Philip who obeys the command of the angel of the Lord to

---

21 Brittany Wilson, "'Neither Male nor Female': The Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8.26–40." *New Testament Studies* 60 (2014): 403-422.

22 Andrew Mbuvi, "Revisiting Translation and Interpretation Issues in the Story of the African Royal Official (Ethiopian Eunuch) in Acts 8:26-40: The Hebrew Bible (LXX) Background." *Old Testament Essays* 34, no.2 (2021): 478-82.

23 Joshua Yoon, "A Representative Outsider and the Inclusion of the Outsider in Acts 8:26-40" (PhD Diss. Duke University, 2016): 74-78.

24 Raymond de Hoop. The Interpretation of Isaiah 56:1-9: Comfort or Criticism? *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 4 (2008): 671-695.

25 Yii-Jan Lin, "The Multivalence of the Ethiopian Eunuch and Acts 8:37," *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 25 (2020): 103-110.

26 Solevåg, "No Nuts? No Problem".

"Go South to the road – the desert road – that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza". Second, the understanding is that this act of faith and obedience is what leads to the conversion and baptism of the Ethiopian. Third, the most common understanding of this ancient text in contemporary contexts is that Philip's obedience is in keeping with the call to spread the "good news about Jesus" (Acts 8:35) "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

In this article, I challenge this "traditional" mapping of the biblical story of the Ethiopian eunuch. To this end, I drop pins to mark three spots to interrupt the reading of the biblical text: (i) Recognize the socially marked body of the Ethiopian eunuch; (ii) Reflect on the agency of the unnamed character in the story; (iii) Review the ways in which the *Good News* is exhibited in the story.[27] It is with this re-mapping in mind that I offer a decolonial feminist reading of Acts 8:26-40.

Feminist Epistemology and Decoloniality: On seeing from the "othered" side

> Feminist epistemology is not […] the study or defence of feminine intuition, of "women's ways of knowing", of subjectivism; it is not an embrace of irrationality or of Protagorean relativism.[28]

The above quote highlights the burden placed on feminist scholars to always explain "what we mean".[29] Critics of feminist scholarship do not simply offer academic critique but, in many cases, also reinforce the very hierarchies that critical enquiry seeks to question. Pushback against feminist perspectives and questions about whether, or how, it aligns to mainstream philosophical epistemology and its foundational assumptions are not the issues I seek to address here. Suffice to say that such pushback limits the horizon of

[27] This pinpoints the feminist biblical scholar's task to uncover/unearth/reveal characters "who are normally hidden" or ignored in biblical texts (Miranda Pillay, "Through the Eyes of a Mother: Re-reading Luke's Mary as a Resource for Gender Equality in the 21st Century?" in *Ragbag Theologies: Essays in honour of Denise M Ackermann - A Feminist Theologian of Praxis*, eds. M. Pillay, S. Nadar, & C. Lebruyns. (Stellenbosch: SUN Press, 2009), 223.

[28] Helen E. Longino, and Kathleen Lennon. "Feminist Epistemology as a Local Epistemology." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 71 (1997): 19.

[29] Longino and Lennon, "Feminist Epistemology as a Local Epistemology", 19.

meaning and ensures that the power "to know" is maintained within the hierarchical meaning-making justified by patriarchy.

It is also not my intension, here, to discuss feminist epistemology as a branch of philosophy.[30] Rather, I want to highlight the inter-relatedness between feminist epistemology and decoloniality as a grounding for the argument developed in this article. To this end, I foreground two interrelated aims of feminist epistemology. First, it seeks to debunk sexism and destabilizes androcentric thinking in the humanities as well as the social and natural sciences.[31] Thus, feminist epistemology investigates "the influence of socially constructed conceptions and norms of gender and gender-specific interests and experiences on the production of knowledge".[32] Second, feminist epistemology not only incorporates a "commitment to the liberation of women" but also a commitment to the "social and political equality of all persons".[33] In this regard, the feminist theologian's task is to "recognize the distortions of the Christian message created in the church's patriarchal socialization, and to reconstruct its social patterns, language, and theology to affirm the full humanity of both women and men".[34] Thus, consisting of both critical and constructive dimensions, feminist epistemology not only aligns with decoloniality in its critique of Eurocentrism, imperialism, colonialism, and patriarchalism, but also aims to reconstruct epistemic practices that maintain systemic structures.[35]

As I have noted elsewhere, there is no univocal feminist voice.[36] Historically, calls for liberation by the economically advantaged Western, Eurocentric, heterosexual feminists have often rendered the experiences of African, Indian, Asian, and Latino women (amongst others) as being "of no great

---

30 For more insight on this topic, see "Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science" (Anderson 2024) and "Knowing the Difference: Feminist Perspectives in Epistemology" (Lennon and Whitford 1994) for insights on key points in this field of study.

31 Helen E. Longino. "Review: Feminist Standpoint Theory and the Problem of Knowledge." *Signs* 19, no 1 (1993): 201.

32 Elizabeth Anderson. "Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense." *Hypatia* 10, no. 3 (1995): 54.

33 Andreson, "Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation", 54

34 Denise Ackerman, "Feminist Liberation Theology." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 62 (1988): 33. See also Pillay, "Through the Eyes of A Mother", 222-223.

35 Longino and Lennon, "Feminist Epistemology as a Local Epistemology", 20.

36 Pillay, Miranda. "The Anglican Church and Feminism: Challenging the historic Patriarchy of our Faith*." Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa* (2013): 5-22.

importance".[37] Harding recognizes that "people of European descent", like herself, ought to think more extensively about the cost of racism and imperialism in the lives of people "of Third World descent in which they [who benefit from systemic racism and imperialism] are so often complicitous".[38] Furthermore, decoloniality is not just another tool to theorize about diversity and inclusion.[39] As Stein et al. remind us, "Merely articulating or aligning with an intellectual critique of colonization does not immunize one from reproducing modern/colonial desires and habits of being".[40]

Thus, Nadar and Maluleke warn against foregrounding of perspectives that ignore positionality, power, and privilege.[41] They argue that the process of producing and validating what is regarded as knowledge in the academy, for example, can also in itself be a colonial exercise. Thus, Nadar and Maluleke reiterate that the task of decolonial scholarship is to expose the pervasiveness of coloniality to "control, produce and disseminate knowledge".[42] Such decolonizing of knowledge production would require "thinking from and with subalternized racial/ethnic/sexual spaces and bodies".[43] It is to "speak of space, boundaries, time, difference, our bodies, cultures, traditions, ideologies and beliefs" says Ackermann.[44] Though, such

---

37 See Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?". In *Reflections on the History of an Idea: Can the Subaltern Speak*, ed. Rosalind C. Morris, (Colombia University Press, 2010). Spivak argues that, in most cases, mainstream feminisms come from women who work within the privilege of dominant social groups.

38 Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives.* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991): 215.

39 Eve Tuck and Wayne K. Yang, "Decolonization is not a metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no.1 (2012): 2.

40 Sharon Stein et al., "Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures: Reflections on Our Learnings Thus Far," *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education* 4, no. 1 (2020): 49. In this collaborative research project Stein et al. map the different approaches to decolonialization and synthesize critiques of modernity that they note have been "mobilized in Indigenous, Black, decolonial, post-development, post-colonial studies" (2020: 49).

41 Sarojini Nadar and Tinyiko Maluleke, "Of Theological Burglaries and Epistemic Violence: Black Theology, Decoloniality, and Higher Education." *The Ecumenical Review* 74, no. 4 (2022): 541.

42 Nadar and Maluleke, "Of Theological Burglaries", 548.

43 Ramon Grosfoguel, "The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond the political-economic paradigms." *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (2007): 221

44 Denise Ackermann. (2000). "Lamenting Tragedy from 'The Other Side'". In SAMENESS and DIFFERENCE: Problems and Potentials in South African Civil Society, eds. James Cochrane, and B. Klein (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000), 216.

thinking and speaking are not always evident in the academy or the church where "the contributions of Indigenous intellectuals and activists to theories and frameworks of decolonisation" are often ignored.[45]

In their argument against using decolonization as a metaphor, Tuck and Yang's article warns against merely "dressing up" decolonization in the language of transformation. They argue that such "dressing up" often serves to account for decoloniality as theoretical framework without taking seriously the materiality inherent in the concept itself.[46] As Nadar and Maluleke point out, such imprudent, performative "dressing up" is counterproductive to decolonial theory and praxis. It is a dangerous form of inclusion which "domesticates" the radical, transformative potential of decolonization. Indeed, "[d]ressing up the language of decolonization" is also foreclosure.[47] "Foreclosure", according to Tuck and Yang allows for "the settler to return and *repossess that which did not belong to them in the first place"* (emphasis mine). This, according to Nadar and Maluleke, is "epistemic burglary", a subtle, insidious form of coloniality.[48]

Colonization, explains Dube, is connected to "the coming of the white man" to Africa and "his use of the Bible".[49] She argues that a "postcolonial reader" cannot ignore that hegemonic power has been "effected through the biblical text".[50] In this regard the "burglary" is not so subtle, especially when one considered how the story about Jesus and his brown ancestors have been painted white by colonists. This picture results in the "good news about Jesus" (Acts 8:35) being whitewashed.

---

45 Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization", 3; Nadar and Maluleke "Of Theological Burglaries", 545-548.

46 I am aware that there are different theoretical nuances between decoloniality, postcolonialism and decolonization. Where the terms are used interchangeably, the intension is not to conflate the concepts. The connection is (hopefully) made clear in the way the different concepts are used.

47 Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization", 3.

48 Also see Othman Barnawi. "Epistemological theft and appropriation in qualitative inquiry in applied linguistics: lessons from Halaqa." *Applied Linguistics Review* 16, no. 1 (2024): 1-13.

49 Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation*, 3.

50 Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation*, 17.

Interrupting coloniality and patriarchy in ancient biblical texts is key in decolonial, feminist biblical scholarship.[51] Dube argues that a decolonial reading of biblical texts is an act of resistance – resisting colonial and hetero patriarchal stereotypes that mark marginalized individuals and groups as being helpless, backwards, and "in need of instruction".[52] Thus, to read from a decolonial feminist perspective is to recognize how the burden carried by "othered" bodies in biblical texts translate to the colonizing of bodies, knowledge and meaning making in contemporary contexts. However, the task of the feminist biblical scholar cannot be to solely expose how the text is patriarchal or colonial, but also to reimagine what it might mean to tell the story from a decolonial, depatriarchalizing point of view.[53] In other words, any decolonial feminist reading of biblical texts requires deconstructing oppressive norms that justify the exclusion of bodies and knowledge "othered" by hegemonic power, as well as reconstructing the narrative from the "othered" side. Ackermann argues that, to see "the other", is to also speak of space, boundaries, our bodies and difference.[54]

Acts 8:26-40: Toward seeing the "othered"

Decolonizing knowledge requires taking seriously the epistemic perspectives and insights of scholars who think "from and with the subalterized racial/ ethnic/ sexual spaces and bodies", says Grosfoguel.[55] The story of "Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch" can be seen as a "Colored" woman who has experienced blatant, overt racism and sexism during South Africa's apartheid regime and as one who continues to experience covert, insidious forms of racism and sexism in colonial and patriarchal embedded cultures of the academy and the church.[56]

---

51 Pillay, Miranda. "Women, Priests and Patriarchal Ecclesial Spaces in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa: On 'Interruption' as a Transformative Rhetorical Strategy." *HTS Theological Studies* 76 (2020): 1-12.

52 Musa Dube, "Toward a Post-Colonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible." *Semeia* 78 (1997): 16.

53 Mercy Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, (Pilgrim Press, 2001), 16.

54 Ackermann, "Lamenting Tragedy", 213.

55 Grosfoguel, "Epistemic Decolonial Turn", 212.

56 I use the term colored with sensitivity mindful that "colored" might be an offensive, derogatory racial marker for African Americans. However, as a South African, I use the term with the intention to subvert the label of inferiority placed by the apartheid government.

Though, as a university professor and a lay leader in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, I also see myself as being in positions of privilege. In my research and advocacy as a theo-ethical feminist biblical scholar, I am aware that the ways in which contemporary scholars talk about religion remain steeped in the ongoing legacies of European colonialism and assumptions of white supremacy and patriarchy.[57] It is from this positionality and the socio-cultural, political, and religious complexities of a racialized and gendered body, as one who is both privileged and disadvantaged, that I see the unnamed Ethiopian Eunuch from the "othered side". To see from the "othered side" is to read against the imperializing agenda of traditional interpretations that "gloss over the actual body of the eunuch".[58] Such "seeing" is to recognize the knowledge and agency of the unnamed character in the story.[59]

I now turn to the three pins dropped on the story mapped in Acts 8:26-40. In offering a decolonial feminist reading of the text my intention is (i) to *recognize* the socially marked body of the Ethiopian eunuch; (ii) to *reflect* on the sexual ambiguity of the unnamed character in the story; and (iii) to *reconsider* the ways in which the Good News about Jesus is exhibited when the agency of the Ethiopian eunuch is affirmed.

Recognize: Nobody or Somebody?

As mentioned before, the racially and sexually "marked" body of the unnamed Ethiopian is generally "glossed over" to serve as a literary prop for the advancement of the *Good News* "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The story of "Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch" happens after the stoning of Stephen (Acts7:56-60) when the followers of Jesus were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria as Saul "began to destroy the church" (Acts 8:1-3). We are told that Philip had a successful ministry in Samaria where he was baptizing both men and women (8:12).[60] However, after Peter and John arrive on the scene to do

[57] See Malory Nye, "Decolonizing the Study of Religion," *Open Library of Humanities* 5, no. 1 (2019): 2; Nadar and Maluleke, "Of Theological Burglaries"; Pillay, Miranda. "The Anglican Church and Feminism: Challenging the historic Patriarchy of our Faith*." Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa* (2013): 5-22.

[58] Nadar et al., "Toward Gender Justice", 107.

[59] Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation.*

[60] It is clear that the Good News had reached Samaritans who were excluded and despised by the Jews, such as Paul.

what Philip seemingly could not do, the angel of the Lord instructs Philip to "Go south to the road – the desert road – that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza" (8:26).

On the road to Gaza, Philip meets an Ethiopian eunuch whom, we are told, was an important official, "in charge of all the treasury of the Candace queen of the Ethiopians". Returning home after worshipping in Jerusalem, the Ethiopian eunuch was reading the book of Isaiah the prophet, when Philip caught up with him (8:27-30a). With such detailed description, it is impossible for me to gloss over the unnamed traveler's body or to see his Africanness as being of "no great importance". Moreover, I cannot ignore the explicit textual reference to the unnamed traveler's gendered body. Eunuchs were the marginalized "other" because of their mutilated genitalia and ambiguous sexuality. It is likely that the implied readers of this text would have known that, as a eunuch and foreigner, the traveler's access to the temple was restricted. Because of their cut, mutilated genitalia, eunuchs were considered ritually unclean and excluded from the Jewish temple-worshipping community (Lev. 21:20; Deut. 23:1).

We are not told *how* the Ethiopian traveler came to be a eunuch. It is very likely that he was castrated to control his sexuality and ensure loyalty to the royal household. As such, slave eunuchs were usually castrated before puberty. Not only was castration a sign of a valuable slave in economic terms but, with his sexuality under colonial control, the royal lineage was protected. Thus, the primary purpose of castration was to take control of the slave's body and being, rendering the eunuch incapable of engaging in sexual relations and procreation. As a colonized, "othered" body, with no prospects of having children, the eunuch would be a loyal subject. Traditionally, the eunuch in Acts 8 is recognized in terms of his class, being an important official in service of the queen of the Ethiopians. Glossing over the sexualized body of the loyal, royal servant deepens inherent gender biases. Spiritualizing the Ethiopian eunuch's body can render readers ignorant to stereotypical beliefs, attitudes, and actions. This, argues Dube, reflects the colonial ideology embedded in such readings.[61]

Reflect: On being betwixt and between

[61] Dube 2000, 80

The "betwixt and between" spaces in the lives of differentiated persons and groups can appear ambiguous in hegemonic cultures.[62] However, it can also be spaces of liminality that hold transformative potential. First used by anthropologists, "liminality" has been adopted and applied across disciplines in a variety of ways to expound on the understanding of transformation.[63] Conceptually, "liminality" has been used as a metaphor to describe a change of perspective to see new possibilities. As such it refers to a threshold and portal for possibilities to perceive and act differently. Mouton notes that, when "liminality" is used as a theological metaphor, it can refer to the ambiguous, "betwixt and between" life of differentiated persons and groups.[64]

By recognizing the unnamed traveler in the story as "somebody", four manifestations of ambiguity about Ethiopian eunuch's identity emerge. First, the Ethiopian holds a high status as a court official to the Candace (Kandake) of Ethiopia, yet, he is also likely to be a slave. Second, the traveler is identified as a man (Acts 8:27b). However, as a eunuch, he is emasculated and effeminized. Third, according to the text (Acts 8:27) the Ethiopian is described as a temple-worshipper. Yet, as a eunuch he would also have been restricted from worshipping in the temple. Fourth, the unnamed Ethiopian eunuch reads from the book Isaiah. Yet, he does not understand.

We are told that the Ethiopian Eunuch read "this passage of Scripture" (Acts 8:32):

> "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
> and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
> so he did not open his mouth.
> In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
> Who can speak of his descendants?
> For his life was taken from the earth."

62 Elna Mouton, "Christian Theology at the University: On the Threshold or in the margin?" *HTS Theological Studies*, *64*, no. 1 (2008): 436.

63 Maja Maksimović, Insights from Liminality: Navigating the Space of Transition and Learning." *SISYPHUS Journal of Education*, 11, no.1 (2023): 150.

64 Mouton, "Christian Theology", 436.

This text in Acts 8:32b-33 echoes Isaiah 53:7-8, which is about a man who, having no choice, was cut/slaughtered. Like a muted child groomed to be cut, the lamb is silent before its shearers. The eunuch, who was "reading the book of Isaiah the prophet" (Acts 8:28b) sees one who, silenced by systems of power, suffers humiliation.

Who is this person? The eunuch questions whether the prophet Isaiah is talking about himself or someone else (8:34). Beginning with "that very passage of Scripture", Philip "told him the good news about Jesus" (8:35). But is there a possibility that the Ethiopian saw a reflection of his context in the text? The passage from Isaiah seems to fit the description of someone who has experienced what is familiar to the eunuch – being unnamed, silenced, humiliated, and cut. As a eunuch, the Ethiopian is doubly cut off. Not only is his genitalia cut, which cuts him off from the possibility to procreate, but, as a man with mutilated genitalia, he was also cut off from the Jewish worshipping assembly. According to Deuteronomy 23:1, "No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the Lord". If, however, the eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, according to the text (Acts 8:27) he would have been excluded from full participation on account of his identity as a foreigner and eunuch.

Regarding the centrality of Isaiah in the reading of Acts 8:26-40, it is appropriate to consider that the exclusion of eunuchs according to the Deuteronomic law is also contested in Isaiah (56:3-7), where there is a promise from God to include eunuchs in the community of worship. Isaiah 56 speaks of the foreigner who will be invited into the congregation of God's people with the promise that eunuchs will be given an "everlasting name" (Isa 56:5). While Isaiah 56:3-7 is not quoted as being read in Acts 8, it is alluded to through the many likenesses between the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts and the eunuchs in Isaiah 56. Moreover, it is not unlikely that the unnamed foreign traveler read further than the passage quoted in Acts 8 given the references to eunuch, foreigners and the unnamed. It is also not unlikely for readers to explore the creative tension of the liminal space between the dynamics of the text and their lived reality.[65] Moreover, according to Acts 8:28b the man was "reading from the book of Isaiah the prophet". Therefore, even though it is not explicitly stated in the text, it seems likely that in his reading, questioning, and reasoning, the unnamed foreign

[65] Pillay, "See this Woman", 446.

eunuch found himself betwixt and between. This is a liminal space where certainty of "the way things have always been" is questioned. Deconstructing the hegemonic power yielded over "othered bodies" is an important concept and praxis in a decolonial feminist approach. It offers a space of liminality to step into new possibilities and see different ways of being.

Reconsider: Agency to step out

As the conver(t)sation about the Ethiopian eunuch's understanding of Scripture continues, Philip, now a fellow traveler, explains the reading from Isaiah with reference to "the good news about Jesus" (Acts 8:35). However, it is the eunuch who sees the opportunity to question the system of exclusion as they travel together along the "desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza" (8:26).

"Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptised?" (8:6-37). This is a rhetorical question as the unnamed Ethiopian eunuch does not wait for an answer from Philip. Realizing that, despite his cut body, there is no need for him to remain cut off and emboldened by his understanding of what he had read in the book of the prophet Isaiah in the context of his lived reality as a foreign, unnamed, eunuch, he "gave orders to stop the chariot" (Acts 8:38a). "Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him" (8:38b).

While it is Philip who was on a divine mission, it is the unnamed Ethiopian eunuch who, by reading Scripture from the "othered" side, produces new knowledge and meaning making about God's mission. In a sense, the spiritual embeddedness of the materiality of water in the physical world and his physical, embodied self, allowed the unnamed Ethiopian eunuch to step out of the socio-cultural religious chains of exclusion. However, claims to exclusive access to God's favor tightened the chains of perceived racial, sexual and religious superiority. As Tuck and Yang warn,[66] the material possibilities for justice require continued critical inquiry, unmasking of complicity, and challenging the deep roots of coloniality in knowledge production and institutional power.

[66] Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is not a metaphor", 3.

A decolonial feminist reading reveals that Philip, the one who had knowledge and experience about baptizing, is challenged to expand his own understanding of the good news about Jesus. It is Philip who must adjust his understanding to include insights from the eunuch. Philip learns that the racially and sexually marked body of the Ethiopian eunuch is not a justification for exclusion from, or conditional inclusion in, the kin-dom of God. In the last scene of the story Philip is suddenly taken away by the "Spirit of the Lord" and re-appears at Azotus, now a small village less than 30km north of Gaza.[67] We are told that the eunuch went on his (own) way, rejoicing. This self-awareness of inclusion marks the unnamed Ethiopian eunuch's presence as being of great consequence. Seeing the "othered" in the mapping of the story provides a cartography of dignity and inclusion of all.

Concluding remarks

Truth be told, the Bible reflects an imperialist history of expansionism based on perceived divine favor. Thus, the challenge is "to become decolonizing readers".[68] A decolonial feminist reading of Acts 8:26-40 reveals that traditional readings also reflect its colonizing history, especially since the text is generally understood as a call to be obedient to the "Word of the Lord" and bring "the other" to salvation. Such readings remain a colonizing tool when the explicitly marked body of the Ethiopian eunuch is seen only to be marked and invisibilized and subalternized as "the other". A decolonial feminist reading resists the glossing over and invisibilization of the Ethiopian eunuch's body and character in the story. Reading the text from the "othered" side reframes the unnamed Ethiopian eunuch as a subject and protagonist with insight, knowledge, and agency.

Moreover, a decolonial reading of Acts 8: 26-40 exhibits the agency of the Ethiopian eunuch who questions the boundaries that mark his understanding as being of no consequence. While the text is descriptive of hegemonic power, starting and ending with Philip, the text also exhibits the Ethiopian eunuch's resistance to such power, when the unnamed character questions Philip in ways that demonstrate his own understanding. The questioning is not mere rhetoric in service of hegemonic powers. On the contrary, the Ethiopian eunuch's question, "Why shouldn't I be baptised" upon seeing

67 https://bibleatlas.org/azotus.htm, accessed 5 July 2025.
68 Dube, "Toward a Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation", 23.

water, reconfigures the map that marks a black, sexually ambiguous body as being incapable of understanding. Instead, the Ethiopian eunuch's voice and action allow the reader to see the story from the "othered" side. His instruction to stop the chariot and stepping out without waiting for an answer from Philip reframes Philip's perspective and understanding of the instruction he received to "Go South to the road – the desert road – that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza" (Acts 8:26).

Remapping the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch creates spaces for "othered" bodies to claim their legitimate presence in dominant heteronormative patriarchal cultures that dismiss their presence as irrelevant and of no consequence. Hopefully this, and other decolonial, feminist readings of the text will open avenues for seeing differently in contemporary contexts where the bible is used to exclude and invisibilize people based on their race, class, gender, age, ability.

References

Ackermann, Denise. “Feminist Liberation Theology.” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 62 (1988): 14-28.

Ackermann, Denise. “Lamenting Tragedy from ‘The Other Side’”. In *Sameness and Difference: Problems and Potentials in South African Civil Society*, edited by James R. Cochrane, and Bastienne. Klein, 213-242. Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000.

Ackermann, Denise. “Tamar's Cry: Rereading an ancient text in the midst of an HIV/AIDS Pandemic.” *In Character Ethics and the Old Testament: Moral Dimensions of Scripture*, edited by M. D. Caroll, and Jaqueline. Lapsley, 191-220. Louisville: Westminister John Knox Press, 2007.

Anderson, Elizabeth. “Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense.” *Hypatia* 10, no. 3 (1995): 50–84. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1995.tb00737.x.

Barnawi, Othman. “Epistemological theft and appropriation in qualitative inquiry in applied linguistics: lessons from Halaqa.” *Applied Linguistics Review* 16, no. 1 (2024): 1-13.

Burke, Sean. “Queering Early Christian Discourse: The Ethiopian Eunuch.” In *Bible Trouble: Queer Reading at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship*, edited by Teresa Hornsby, and Ken Stone, 179-189. Atlanta: SBL, 2011.

Burke, Sean. *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch: Strategies of Ambiguity in Acts.* Augsburg Fortress, 2013.

Burke, Sean. “Reading the Bible with Eunuchs.” In Mapping New Terrain in Queer Religious Scholarship, edited by Bernard Schlager, 207-211 Abingdon: Routledge, 2025.

de Hoop, Raymond. (2008). “The Interpretation of Isaiah 56:1-9: Comfort or Criticism?” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 4 (2008): 671-695.

Dube, Musa W. "Toward a Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible." *Semeia* 78 (1997): 11–26.

Dube, Musa. *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000.

Grosfoguel, Ramón. "The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond the political-economic paradigms." *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (2007): 211-223. doi:10.1080/09502380601162514.

Hadebe, Nontando. "Can Anything Good Come from Nazareth? Come and see!': An Invitation to Dialogue Between Queer Theories and African Theologies." *Concilium* 5 (2019): 81-90.

Hall, Stuart. "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity*." Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10, no. 2 (1986): 5-27.

Harding, Sandra. *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives.* New York: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Hassim, Shireen. "Gender, Social Location and Feminist Politics in South Africa." *Transformation Journal* 15 (1991): 65-82.

Jayawardena, Kumari. *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*. London: Zed Books, 1986.

Lin, Yii-Jan. (2020). "The Multivalence of the Ethiopian Eunuch and Acts 8:37." *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 25 (2020): 103-110.

Longino, Helen. "Review: Feminist Standpoint Theory and the Problem of Knowledge." *Signs* 19, no. 1 (1993): 201-212.

Longino, Helen., and Lennon, Kathleen. "Feminist Epistemology as a Local Epistemology." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 19 (1997): 19-54.

Lugones, Maria. Toward a Decolonial Feminism. *Hypatia* 25, No.4 (2010): 742-759.

Maksimović, Maja. “Insights from Liminality: Navigating the Space of Transition and Learning.” *SYSYPHUS Journal of Education* 11, no.1 (2023): 147-166.

Martin, Clarice. “A Chamberlain's Journey and the Challenge of Interpretation for Liberation.” *Semeia* 47 (1989): 105-135.

Masenya, Madipoane. “Without a voice, with a violated body: Re-reading Judges 19 to challenge gender violence in sacred texts.” *Missionalia*, 40, no.3 (2012): 205-214.

Mbuvi, Andrew. “Revisiting Translation and Interpretation Issues in the Story of the African Royal Official (Ethiopian Eunuch) in Acts 8:26-40: The Hebrew Bible (LXX) Background.” *Old Testament Essays* 34, no.2 (2021): 474-484.

Mickel, Steve. “Cross-Cultural Leadership Complexities: A Study of the Ethiopian Eunuch and Philip’s Interaction in Acts 8:26-40.” In Biblical Cross-Cultural Leadership. Principles from the New Testament, edited by Suzana Dobrić Veiss, Elizabeth K. Hunt, and Joshua D. Henson,155-177. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024.

Mouton, Elna. “Christian Theology at the University: On the Threshold or in the margin?” *HTS Theological Studies*, *64*, no. 1 (2008): 436.

Mouton, Elna. “Human Dignity as Expressions of God Images? Perspectives from in 1 Corinthians 24 and Ephesians 5.” *Neotestamentica* 45, no. 2 (2011): 275-292.

Mouton, Elna. “Reimagining Ancient Household Ethos? On the Implied Rhetorical Effect of Ephesians 5:21-33.” *Neotestamentica* 48, no.1 (2014): 163-185.

Nadar, Sarojini, Paulo Ueti and Johnathan Jodamus, “Toward Gender Justice: Reimagining Religion, Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Acts 8:26-40,” *The Ecumenical Review* 75, no. 1 (2023): 107.

Nadar, Sarojini. "Barak God and Die!' Women, HIV and a Theology of Suffering." In *Grant me Justice: HIV/AIDS & Gender Readings of the Bible*, edited by Musa Dube and Rachel Kanyoro, 60-79. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2004.

Nadar, Sarojini. *Gender, Genocide, Gaza and the Book of Esther: Engaging Tests of Terror(ism).* Abingdon: Routledge, 2025.

Nadar, Sarojini. and Maluleke, Tinyiko. (2022). "Of Theological Burglaries and Epistemic Violence: Black Theology, Decoloniality, and Higher Education." *The Ecumenical Review* 74, no.4 (2022): 541-560.

Nye, Malory. "Decolonizing the Study of Religion." *Open Library of Humanities*, 5, no.1 (2019): 1-45.

Oduyoye, Mercy. *Introducing African Women's Theology*. Pilgrim Press, 2001.

Pillay, Miranda. "See this Woman? Toward a Theology of Gender Equality in the Context of HIV and AIDS." *Scriptura* 89 (2005): 441-455.

Pillay, Miranda. (2009). "Through the Eyes of a Mother: Re-reading Luke's Mary as a Resource for Gender Equality in the 21st Century?" In *Ragbag Theologies: Essays in honour of Denise M Ackermann - A Feminist Theologian of Praxis*, edited by Miranda. Pillay, Sarojini. Nadar, and Clint. Le Bruyns, 205-218. Stellenbosch: SUN Press, 2009.

Pillay, Miranda. "The Anglican Church and Feminism: Challenging the historic Patriarchy of our Faith*." Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa* (2013): 5-22.

Pillay, Miranda. "Women, Priests and Patriarchal Ecclesial Spaces in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa: On 'Interruption' as a Transformative Rhetorical Strategy." *HTS Theological Studies* 76 (2020): 1-12.

Pillay, Miranda. *Re-membering Community: Towards Unconditional Inclusion of LGBTQI+ Members.* Cape Town: South African Council of Churches, 2022.

Raheb, Mitri. “Land, People and Empire: The Bible through Palestinian Christian Eyes.” In *A New Critical Approach to the History of Palestine*, edited by Ingrid Hjelm, Hamdan Taha, Ilan Pappe, Thomas L. Thompson, 317-325. Abingdon: Routledge, 2019.

Rohrbaugh, Richard. “Ethnocentrism and Research on the Historical Jesus.” In *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, edited by Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce Malina, and Gerd Theissen, 27-44. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002.

Statistics South Africa. *Statistical Release: Census 2022.* Republic of South Africa, 2022. Retrieved from https://census.statssa.gov.za/assets/documents/2022/P03014_Census_2022_Statistical_Release.pdf

Stein, S., Andreotti, V., Susa, R. and, Amsler, S. “Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures: Reflections on our Learnings thusfar.” *Nordic Journal of Comparative International Education* (2020): 43-65.

Shafak, Elif. *The Island of Missing Trees.* Dublin: Penquin Books, 2021.

Solevåg, Anna R. “No Nuts? No Problem!” *Biblical Interpretation* 24 (2016): 81-99.

Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?". In Reflections on the History of an Idea: Can the Subaltern Speak, ed. Rosalind C. Morris, 21-78. Colombia University Press, 2010 .

Sugirtharajah, R. S. (2002). *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Tuck, Eve, and Yang, Wayne K. “Decolonization is not a metaphor.” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1-40.

Wilson, Brittany. "'Neither Male nor Female': The Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8.26-40." *New Testament Studies* 60, no.3 (2014): 403-422.

Wilson, Britanny. *Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Yoon, Seokhyun. "A Representative Outsider and the Inclusion of the Outsider in Acts 8:26-40." PhD diss. Duke University, 2016. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/10161/12924.