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Deification or Demonization: Jesus' Post-Resurrection Body in Luke 24:36-40

Cover Page Footnote

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Introduction

There has been much scholarly debate about the lens through which one reads the Lucan portrayal of Jesus. Authors discussed throughout this paper take stances that seem to fall into two camps: apotheosis or a closer reliance on cultural categories, such as ghosts. This paper will examine Greco-Roman ghost stories, apotheosis narratives, and academic work from both sides of the debate pertaining to Luke 24:36-40¹ to better understand why the passage resists categorization. This resistance may mean that we need a new reading lens to view the complexity of the Lucan portrayal of Jesus. The introduction of two theories, liminality and anomy, will be used to grapple with the resistance to categorization and provides a standpoint for creating this new reading lens. The final aim of the paper is to conclude that Luke 24 is neither clearly a ghost story nor a deification story. Instead, the overlap in characteristics renders the narrative anomic, perhaps intentionally, and the theory of anomy can create a new reading lens to deal with the uncomfortability created by the uncategorizable.

The Context of Luke

At the outset, it is essential to analyze and contextualize the period, author, and intended audience of Luke. Analyzing is a necessary step as it will ground the research in a specific cultural setting. According to Joseph A. Fitzmyer, the book of Luke has a possible date of c. 80-85 CE; however, there is not a final consensus from scholars on the dating of Luke.² One reason the author proposes the date is Luke's dependence on earlier books, such as Mark.³ Another argument states the author of Luke had access to a larger body of knowledge because he incorporated metaphors from Greek and Roman literature and oral tradition.⁴ Some scholars, like François Bovon, do not try to date an 'original' Luke. Instead, he notes that four copies of Luke circulated simultaneously, all of which differed slightly. The earliest of these dates to the second century, and the latest is the Caesarean text with a possible date in the fourth century.⁵ The notion of Luke being dated to the second century CE is gaining more traction, as is evident in Vincent's book

¹ All biblical quotes will come from the NRSV unless otherwise stated.

² For further discourse on scholarly positions, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 53-57 and Markus Vincent, *Christ's Resurrection in Early Christianity And the Making of the New Testament*. (Farnham: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011): 84-99.

³ Ibid., 82-89 for further discussion on the plausible sources used in Luke.

⁴ The argument is more present in François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 6-8, but it is the most present in Israel Muñoz Gallarte, "Luke 24 Reconsidered: The Figure of the Ghost in Post-Classical Greek Literature." *Novum Testamentum* 59 (2017): 131-146.

⁵ Bovon, *Luke 1*, 1.

Christ's Resurrection in Early Christianity and the Making of the New Testament. Vincent argues that it would make sense if the gospels were written in a similar timeframe and location, Rome, due to overlapping details. However, this notion does not argue for an earlier dating. Instead a later dating of Luke would be appropriate because he claims it is hard to conceive the same idea across six places and arrive at a similar form.⁶ Due to the concerns addressed in the gospel, scholars assume the intended readers for the book of Luke to be Gentile Christians.

Textual Analysis

36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” **37** They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a *ghost* [πνεῦμα]. **38** He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a *ghost* [πνεῦμα] does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.” **40** When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.

Scholarly analyses are essential to grapple with current interpretations of the passage to understand this debate further. Therefore, what follows will be different scholarly interpretations and analyses of the passage in question. François Bovon starts his examination of this passage by saying the meaning of the section is to establish the identity of the one who manifested himself, i.e., Jesus, and his acceptance among the living. Verse 37 depicts the disciples as terrified because they think they have seen a ghost. Bovon points out that “the biblical tradition forbids necromancy not because the dead do not show themselves but because, on the contrary, they do appear when they are invoked, and then they are all the more dangerous.”⁷ This explanation shows a legitimate reason to be terrified by spirits, especially those conjured by necromancy. Discussing v. 39, Bovon continues that there was an effort to reclaim Jesus’ identity by showing the mark on his hands and feet from crucifixion. This identification style also shows up in the *Odyssey* when Odysseus’ nurse identifies him by a scar on the leg and stories of Heracles where he can show his scars at will. This method of identifying is essential because the worship of Heracles was still occurring during this period.⁸ According to Fitzmyer, the term used for spirit in the text implies the disembodiment of the spirit, indicating that they are gazing

⁶ Vincent, *Christ's Resurrection in Early Christianity And the Making of the New Testament*: 92

⁷ Bovon, *Luke 3*: 390

⁸ For more discussion about the worship of Heracles in the time of Jesus see: David Litwa, *Jesus Dues: The Early Christian Depiction of Jesus as a Mediterranean God*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014.)

at the spirit of the deceased Jesus. The challenge to show the hands and feet is to establish the physicality of Jesus.⁹ Finally, I. Howard Marshall states that the start of the passage, v. 36, is primarily included to link the episode with previous passages. Marshall addresses the portrayal of Jesus' hands and argues that verse 40 may be evidence of a pre-Johannine tradition or a later addition resulting from the circulation of multiple versions of the text.¹⁰ The use of the pre-Johannine tradition theory is to clarify why showing his hands and feet establishes physicality because there are similar challenges made in the book of John. All these avenues for examining the text are essential to grasp the author of Luke's intention because there is a lot of source material to serve as inspiration.

Apotheosis or Ghost Story?

One of the materials the author of Luke had was ghost stories. The argument that follows will review literature describing how the Roman world separated the categories of god and ghost. This categorization is important to the structure of this paper as it attempts to hint at classification. Ancient Romans categorized gods and ghosts similarly to the boundaries that separated the natural world from the divine.¹¹ Despite these boundaries, Levene argues that the classification "human" was sometimes surpassed through processes such as apotheosis or heroic myths depicting the transference from humanity to godhood. Levene concludes that despite the occasional apotheosis of high-status individuals, "it was commonplace at Rome to conceive of divinity as an absolute rather than a relative category."¹²

In some contrast, the category of ghosts was quite flexible. Ghosts were broken into four categories in the Greco-Roman world: those dead before their time, those dead by violence, those dead before marriage, and those deprived of burial.¹³ Due to the different classifications of the dead, this paper will also look at revenants or briefly resurrected persons.¹⁴ An example of this is the

⁹ This makes for an interesting comparison as there is scholarly debate over whether Paul may or may not have influenced passages throughout Luke. J. A. Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*. (Garden Day, NY: Doubleday, 1985).

¹⁰ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, (Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1978).

¹¹ D.S. Levene, "Defining the Divine in Rome," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 142 (2012) 41-81. Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002).

¹² Levene, "Defining the Divine," 72.

¹³ For further discussion on the categorization of ghosts see Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 146, 149.

¹⁴ Revenants were often resurrected heroes.

resurrection of a soldier by a necromancer in the *Pharsalia*.¹⁵ However, revenant is a modern category, as there was no such category in the ancient Greco-Roman world; instead, they were a category of ghosts. This diversity of categories is important because it determined how or if the spirit would return or live out their afterlife. Deborah Thompson Prince uses Greek and Roman texts, like the *Aeneid*, *Book of Marvels*, *The Odyssey*, and *The Iliad*, to divide ghosts into disembodied spirits, heroes, revenants, and translated mortals, categories which we consider for this paper.¹⁶

Gallarte describes ghost stories by Greek and Latin authors, highlighting common characteristics that tie Luke 24:36-43 to ghost narratives. Gallarte argues that the typical ghost story includes an apparition appearing during times of high stress and describes the apparition taking place after dusk. Recognition by the living can occur, and/or there is a message from beyond the grave. Gallarte concludes that the author of Luke had a vast knowledge of Hellenistic literature and the Old Testament. However, he does not come to a firm conclusion addressing the extent to which the genre of ghost stories was influential in this particular text.¹⁷ Similarly, Prince concludes that the author of Luke can only describe Jesus using the literary models available to him; however, she also concedes that Jesus, in Luke's portrayal, does not occupy any one category. Instead, the categories she discusses overlap in the Luke 24 narrative. This conclusion seems similar to the aim of this paper, i.e., the narrative in Luke is ambiguous, but neither Prince nor Gallarte considers the possibility that the ambiguity was intentional. Nor do they engage critical theory that could help explain the function of ambiguity.

Apotheosis is the raising of a person to a god or godlike state. The process took the approval of the Roman Senate, as the deification of emperors needed a ratification process in the Senate. Therefore, apotheosis was a political and religious process. Nevertheless, Larry Kreitzer also sees an impact on the development of New Testament approaches to Jesus. He traces the lineage and thought around apotheosis through art and coinage, concluding that, "I hope it is clear that the apotheosis of the Roman emperor, and its attendant implications, were very much a part of the religious heritage of many peoples of the early Roman Empire. Such a heritage must take its proper place in any attempt to trace the development of New Testament Christological thought."¹⁸

¹⁵ Ogden, *Magic*, 193-98.

¹⁶ Prince, "The 'Ghost' of Jesus," 287-301.

¹⁷ Israel Muñoz Gallarte, "Luke 24 Reconsidered: The Figure of the Ghost in Post-Classical Greek Literature," *Novum Testamentum* 59 (2017): 131-146.

¹⁸ Larry Kreitzer, "Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor," *Biblical Archaeologist* 53/4 (1990): 216-17.

Some Scholars, such as David Litwa, argue for a sort of cultural apotheosis, one not recognized by the Roman Senate. He argues for the divinity of Jesus by claiming that “Jesus might be taken as a paradigmatic example of a deceased individual who became a god or godlike figure in his post-mortem state.”¹⁹ He highlights the powers Jesus has after death and notes that the depiction of Jesus retains his wounds to establish a continuity of identity. The trait of post-resurrection wounds is not exclusive to Jesus, as Heracles could also show the scars he received during his mortal life. A point the author uses to establish the divinity of Jesus as Heracles had worshippers during the period of the Lucan narrative. Litwa concludes that Jesus’ disciples started to worship him as a god after his ascension, a common thread throughout immortalization stories. However, the same vocabulary used in accounts of resurrection and ascension is not the same as other apotheosis accounts; the concept is the same as they achieve the same function: raising a mortal being to a godlike state.²⁰ Robyn Whitaker notes that the description of Jesus’ ascension uses the verbs ἀναλαμβάνειν (assume, receive) or ἀναφέρω (carry, offer up) combined with heaven as the destination.²¹ She also notes the use of ‘Jesus’ as the object for the verb ‘worship’ and the statement made in Luke 4:8 that only God can be worshipped. Whitaker concludes that the Lucan scenario has to be considered an apotheosis narrative, partly because of the presence of witnesses, as is the case in other apotheosis literature describing the emperor.

In summary, scholars who focus on apotheosis tend to choose texts describing Jesus’ ascension more so than his post-resurrection, pre-ascension existence. Scholars focusing on ghost stories tend to choose texts concentrating on Jesus’ post-resurrection body. While the ghost theory does not fit the data neatly, neither does the apotheosis theory account for certain aspects of the way Jesus is described after the resurrection but before ascension. This framing of Jesus’ ascension raises the question of whether the author of Luke 24 is remaining intentionally ambiguous.

Theories to Address Ambiguity

One way we can address this ambiguity is through the use of *The Sacred Canopy* by Peter Berger. He describes how people create their realities by grouping or categorizing the world into “nomoi,” or orders.²² External nomoi,

¹⁹ David Litwa, *Jesus Deus*, 143-144.

²⁰ The assertion of Jesus being worshipped as a god comes from the adaptation of Luke 24:52.

²¹ Robyn Whitaker, “From Cross to Ascension: The Surprising Locus of Salvation in Luke-Acts,” *Australian Biblical Review* 65 (2017), 54.

²² While discussing nomos, I will be using the Greek plural “nomoi” to differentiate between one nomos and multiple nomoi.

such as language, and internal nomoi, the processes through which external nomos becomes socialized into a person and shapes how they categorize their personal experiences.²³ For a nomos to be considered adequate, the person should take the nomos for granted. The opposite is a lack of categorization or “anomy.” Berger often compares anomy to chaos, for it is the “irreality” in the “reality” that we have been socialized to exist.²⁴ From this perspective, the ambiguity of the Lucan portrayal, such as the vocabulary used, of Jesus’ time between death and ascension (post-resurrection but pre-ascension) may be a response to his inherent lack of a category, the definition of anomy.

Alternatively, we could investigate the account of Luke 24 from the perspective of Victor Turner’s liminality, the inbetween state of a ritual where norms no longer apply. Suppose the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus was essentially a rite of passage. In that case, Jesus’ body in Luke 24 is in the liminal phase of the ritual, after resurrection but before apotheosis. In Turner’s theory, the first phase of the ritual is separation, characterized by behaviors that signify detachment.²⁵ The next phase is the liminal period when the characteristics of the ritual subject are ambiguous as the subject “passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state.”²⁶ In this model, the first phase would be the death of Jesus. The second would be the resurrection and the actions he takes before ascension. The final phase would be ascension as he is reintegrated into the community but in a higher status than previously. The theory also proposes a community called *communitas*, where those who go through the ritual together form a community bond, including the disciples on the Emmaus Road or the divine (i.e. God).

Making Way for a New Reading of Luke

To address which, if any, of these theories is the most salient, the paper must return to the relationship between Roman mythological categories and Jesus in Luke 24:36-40.²⁷ Within which Roman mythological categories, if any, does Jesus fall?²⁸ Are there links between the narrative models of apotheosis or ghost

²³ Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, (New York, Doubleday and Company Inc.: 1967) 19-20, 22-24.

²⁴ Berger, *Scared Canopy*, 24, 27, 50

²⁵ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, (New York, Cornell University Press: 1997) 94.

²⁶ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*.

²⁷ To further answer this question, I have decided to also pull from Greek sources as they had an impact on Roman mythology.

²⁸ The main categories this paper will deal with are ghosts and gods due to the vast corpus of options when it comes to the mythological landscape of Greco-Roman mythology.

stories compared to Luke 24:36-40? Is there a purpose to the language used to describe Jesus as a ghost in Luke 24:36-40?

The first step to understanding this passage is to evaluate the terms used to describe ghosts in the Greek text of Luke. The Greek word used in Luke 24:37,39 is *pneuma* (πνεῦμα).²⁹ However, πνεῦμα does not have a standard definition that always refers to one type of spirit.³⁰ Πνεῦμα is a general term that is applied to many different kinds of spirits. Tables 1-2 show the amount and percentages of occurrences that refer to human essence, divine essence, and references to demons.³¹ As is apparent below, the use of πνεῦμα refers to the “Holy Spirit,” Jesus’ post-resurrection body, spirits sent or affiliated with God, and evil spirits. As a reference to harmful spirits, it is far less common than δαιμόνιον (demon). Looking only at instances of the term πνεῦμα alone, it appears concerning God’s essence only three times more than it refers to a harmful or unclean spirit. When using πνεῦμα to describe humans, it refers to Jesus. The only exception is Luke 1, which refers to the spirit of Elijah and Mary, as well as Jesus as a child.

Table 1: References to Πνεῦμα in Luke in comparison with Δαιμόνιον and φάντασμα

Πνεῦμα as human essence	Πνεῦμα as the divine essence	Πνεῦμα as references to demons/harmful or unclean spirit	References to Δαιμόνιον	Reference to φάντασμα
1:17, 1:47, 1:80, 8:55, 23:46, 24:37, 24:39	1:15, 1:35, 1:41, 1:67, 2:25, 2:26, 2:27, 3:16, 3:22, 4:1, 4:14, 4:18,	4:33, 4:35, 6:18, 8:2, 8:29, 9:39, 9:42, 10:20, 11:24, 12:12, 13:11	4:33, 4:35, 4:41, 7:33, 8:2, 8:26, 8:27, 8:29, 8:30, 8:32, 8:33, 8:35, 8:36,	24:37 (in one outlying ms)

²⁹ I say πνεῦμα is mostly likely to have been used; however, there is one manuscript, Codex Bezae, cited in Bovon, *Luke 3* which uses the word *phantasma* (φάντασμα),

³⁰ Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968). 1424

³¹ Demons are sometimes referred to as a spirit or unclean spirit, and it seems to be used interchangeably with *daimonion* (δαιμόνιον), even though there are usages for δαιμόνιον in the text.

	10:21, 11:13, 12:10		8:38, 9:1, 9:42, 9:49, 10:17, 11:14, 11:15, 11:18, 11:19, 11:20, 13:32	
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Table 2: Percentage of Total References to πνεῦμα in Luke

	Πνεῦμα as human essence	Πνεῦμα as the divine essence	Πνεῦμα as references to demons/harmful or unclean spirit	References to Δαιμόνιον ³²	Reference to φάντασμα
% of occurrence of all terms	12.24 %	25.74%	18.94%	41.04%	2.04%
% of occurrence for πνεῦμα	21.2%	45.5%	33.3%		

Codex Bezae has a different word in place of πνεῦμα in Luke 24:37, which is φάντασμα (*phantasma* or phantom).³³ Including the use of φάντασμα in Luke 24:37, there are three uses of φάντασμα in the New Testament; however, Matthew 14:26 and Mark 6:49 should be regarded as a singular instance as they come from the same story. In both cases, verbs denoting fear were found in the same sentence with the word φάντασμα. In Luke 24:37, the word ἔμφοβοι is used, roughly translating to ‘filled with fear,’ but in the other instance, the word ἐταράχθησαν is used which approximates to ‘they were troubled.’³⁴

The last term, δαιμόνιον, can be translated to ‘demon,’ but is used interchangeably with unclean spirit (πνεῦμα ἀκαθάρτου lit. ‘spirit uncleaned’).³⁵ This interchangeability complicates the word πνεῦμα. So, even when dealing with spirits that may inflict harm, such as in Luke 4:36, they are not given a separate

³² See further in this paper for the argument of δαιμόνιον as a term for spirit.

³³ See Bovon, *Luke* 3, 390 for further analysis of the use of φάντασμα.

³⁴ Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968)

³⁵ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*

classification to describe them. In contrast, δαιμόνιον and πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων are only used to refer to spirits that are causing damage or making an obstacle for Jesus and his followers.³⁶ However, one could include πνεῦμα as well, as indicated by the interchangeability of δαιμόνιον, πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων, and πνεῦμα in passages such as Luke 4:33-36:

33 In the synagogue there was a man who had the *spirit* of an *unclean demon*, and he cried out with a loud voice, **34** “Let us alone! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” **35** But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” When the *demon* had thrown him down before them, he came out of him without having done him any harm. **36** They were all amazed and kept saying to one another, “What kind of utterance is this? For with authority and power he commands the *unclean spirits*, and out they come!”

The categories δαιμόνιον, πνεῦμα ἀκαθάρτου, and πνεῦμα are used interchangeably in this passage, suggesting πνεῦμα is ambiguous and betrays a lack of cohesive and coherent categorization in the gospel’s approach to spiritual entities, which may necessitate a cultural response.

To flesh out cultural versus linguistic categories, we need to return to apotheosis. As Whitaker points out, the steps for apotheosis may be represented in the ascension account of Luke 24:50-52. However, apotheosis is as much a function of the state as it is an ascension ritual. As Kreitzer notes, it was usually predicated on the individual’s high economic and political status. Often, coins were minted to commemorate the ascension through official currency. An example of politicized apotheosis is Augustus, who reigned from 24 BCE to 14 CE; coins circulated in his honor, often depicting his temple and the inscription “ROM ET AVGVSTUS Rome and Augustus.”³⁷ The deification of an emperor was also ratified through the Senate, which is another essential facet indicating the apotheosis model may not strictly apply. Nor does apotheosis usually have a period between resurrection and ascension or describe a physical body of the apotheosized as described in vv 36-40.

Considering apotheosis may not be a stable category for the Lucan Jesus, we need to turn back to ghost stories. In Luke 24:36, both Gallarte and Prince highlight Jesus as an apparition when he appears after disguising himself and disappearing in Luke 24:31.³⁸ This trait is similar to the category of disembodied

³⁶ Luke 10:17-20.

³⁷ Kreitzer, “Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor,” 214.

³⁸ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

spirits who can appear and disappear at will. However, the attempt to establish physicality by showing his hands and feet links better with two other categories: heroes and revenants (Luke 24:39). Still, the category of hero does not fit perfectly either. As Prince points out, heroes had established followings, their gravesite was known and worshipped, and they had temples erected in their memory.³⁹ Additionally, the ghost narrative model has a critical failing: the time of day is not established in Luke, nor is Jesus recognized unless he chooses to be (24:31-33). In Gallarte's model, the action of recognition was not typically in the hands of the ghost. Another weak point includes Jesus not disappearing until the ascension. Apparitions disappear after either recognition or passing along their message from beyond the grave in Gallarte's model.

Neither apotheosis nor ghost stories helped us pinpoint the category, so it is time to look at Religious Studies theories to discover a new way to understand the text. The theory of liminality may help us further analyze downfalls to placing the Lucan Jesus into a cultural or linguistic category. Looking at Jesus as a liminal being, between death and apotheosis, gives spaces to analyze the actions and special permissions assigned to Jesus towards the end of Luke (i.e., instant apparition). Jesus was not exactly dead, nor did he ascend right after death as in the typical apotheosis narrative. Liminality could explain the extra abilities Jesus has that he uses in Luke 24, such as disappearing and shapeshifting, to distort his identity as Turner's theory does rely on the liminal subject being granted special permissions. Anomy, however, could provide a better explanation. Due to the lack of a classifiable category, Jesus would fall into an anomic category, a non-category. The language used to describe Jesus, such as *πνεῦμα*, does not have a stable definition or usage in Luke. According to the analysis in the charts, 54.5% of the time, *πνεῦμα* refers to a human spirit or a spirit set out to harm a living body. When the term is employed, it is equally likely that Luke's author refers to a divine essence as a human or harmful essence. The use of *πνεῦμα* brings up the question of the author of Luke trying to separate Jesus as something different, thus anomic. Due to the post-resurrection, pre-ascension body of Jesus inhabiting a non-category, it is best to use anomy as a helpful reading tool.

Conclusion

When trying to explain the holes in other arguments and the ambiguity of *πνεῦμα*, one can conclude that Jesus has to assume an anomic status. The reliance on anomy becomes more tangible due to the failings of liminality. The evidence to support this is everywhere present but never stated as previous *nomoi* are insufficient in the categorization of in 24:36-40.

³⁹ Prince, "The 'Ghost' of Jesus," 293-94.

One can also postulate that the author of Luke purposefully wrote using vague terms and that, as a narrator, the author tries to connect Jesus somehow to the Holy Spirit (one of the most common uses of πνεῦμα). However, it is also possible that πνεῦμα, outside of references to the Holy Spirit, is used because the author does not know what category Jesus' post-resurrection body would occupy in the minds of the disciples. The author only uses δαιμόνιον and πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων to distinguish between an apparition and an apparition with intent to cause harm, typically through possession. However, πνεῦμα also appears in similar passages. Interestingly, the author did not portray the disciples as mistaking Jesus for a 'demon' or an 'evil spirit,' but instead chose the most ambiguous and multifaceted of his terminological options.

Therefore, we should employ anomy as a helpful reading tool while reading the book of Luke from an academic perspective. It will allow us, as scholars, to read it without the categories we have placed on the Lucan Jesus, such as being divine every step of the way and other modern designations. Using anomy will also allow us to evaluate other ambiguities throughout Luke, such as Luke 4:33-36 and 24:36-40 because we no longer read passages using our categories.

In summary, this paper aims to identify whether Luke's portrayal of Jesus falls into any Roman mythological category, namely apotheoses or ghost stories, and to evaluate whether liminality or anomy provided a more helpful theoretical model. An investigation of terms from 24:36-40 demonstrates the use of ambiguous language, combining words for fear that are typical responses to ghosts or evil spirits (cf. Mark 6:49 and Matthew 14:26) but using πνεῦμα (rather than 'demon' or 'evil spirit'), which can refer either to the Holy Spirit or a spirit wishing harm. Finally, there is some speculation about the purpose of the anomic Jesus in Luke. The anomy of language seems to be purposeful, either to put Jesus in a category closer to God or to avoid classifying Jesus, or the disciples' perception of Jesus, as a ghost. This seems interesting due to modern conceptions of Jesus, which lie closer to the opinion of David Litwa, where he is treated as divine at every step of the story. This paper has pointed out that that is not the case when considering the Lucan narrative in 24:36 – 40. The anomic Jesus is everywhere present but nowhere categorized.

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