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Introduction

David G. Horrell

Ethnicity, race, religion: these are not merely prominent categories of human identity and affiliation; they also signal some of the most complex, contested, and controversial aspects of human social relationships. Indeed, among the most pressing challenges to peaceful coexistence in the contemporary world are those that are depicted and perceived in terms that lie precisely at the fuzzy points of intersection between these categories. Some of the points of conflict, both historical and contemporary, might be seen primarily as issues of race – such as the exploitation of black Africans by white Europeans during the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century ‘scramble for Africa’,¹ or the contemporary Black Lives Matter Movement, provoked by the killing of black Americans by police. Other conflicts might seem to be predominantly conflicts of religion – such as the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European ‘wars of religion’, or the increasing harassment of religious minorities in many countries in the contemporary world.² But in many cases, though by no means uniformly or necessarily, religion and ethnicity or race are somehow bound together in forms of categorization and causes of conflict. One can hardly understand anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany, for example, without considering how Jewish identity was racialized within a broader ideology of racial types and racial superiority. In Northern Ireland, Catholic and Protestant serve as one marker of ethnic identity – though, as Claire Mitchell has shown, these religious identities should not be seen as *merely* markers of ethnicity, but rather as substantively contributing to people’s constructed sense of identification, group-categorizations and boundaries.³ Contemporary Islamophobia, like anti-Semitism, cannot properly be understood as an issue purely of religion – nor, on the other hand, purely one of ethnicity or race. Rather, these are issues in which perception and construction of identity – of self and other, in-group and out-group – frequently blend together aspects of religion, physical appearance (especially skin

¹ See, for example, M. E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa*, 3rd edn (Seminar Studies in History; Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2013).

² For example, a Pew Research Center report (‘Religious Hostilities Reach Six-Year High’, 14 January 2014) documents markedly increased levels of hostility and abuse towards religious minorities around the world: ‘Incidents of abuse targeting religious minorities were reported in 47% of countries in 2012, up from 38% in 2011 and 24% in the baseline year of the study’ (2007). Available online: <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/01/14/religious-hostilities-reach-six-year-high/> (accessed 23 June 2017).

³ Claire Mitchell, ‘Behind the Ethnic Marker: Religion and Social Identification in Northern Ireland’, *Sociology of Religion* 66, no. 1 (2005): 3–21; *eadem*, ‘The Religious Content of Ethnic Identities’, *Sociology* 40, no. 6 (2006): 1135–52.

colour), culture, language, dress, and so on. Indeed, contributors to a recent special issue of *Ethnic and Racial Studies*,⁴ edited by Nasar Meer, argue for the need to integrate much more closely the study of race and racism, on the one hand, and anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, on the other.⁵ To take a different example to illustrate the connections, a recent Pew Research Center survey revealed that in some of the predominantly Christian countries surveyed, being Christian was felt by a significant proportion of the population to be 'very important' in order truly to share the national identity – Greek, Polish, American, and so on.⁶

Such intersections are, in one sense, unsurprising, since religion – along with culture, language, and so on – is among the commonly recognized facets of ethnic identity (often closely related to perceptions of national identity) and is indeed often constitutive, in part, of such an identity. Race perhaps evokes different associations, linked as it has long been with phenotypical characteristics, particularly skin colour. But all of these terms – 'ethnicity', 'race', 'religion' – are contested. None of them should be taken to capture some essential, ubiquitous, or clearly definable feature of human identity – as if it were simply a fact, as it were, that humans can all be categorized in, say, ethnic terms. Rather, as we shall see in more detail below, and in the essays that follow, these concepts are themselves social constructions, with their own particular histories and associations, which people invoke, in varied ways, to identify themselves, sometimes over against others, to create or maintain a sense of group, and to organize the social world in ways that are meaningful – if sometimes destructively so.

1 Ethnicity, race, religion: Concepts and theories

Any moderately attentive reader will already have noticed that I have used the terms 'ethnicity' and 'race' somewhat interchangeably, as if they were more or less equivalents. Yet that is one of the first areas of controversy we must consider. Up until the 1940s, 'race' – which (in this sense) came into the English language only in the sixteenth century – was the standard term to refer to the various divisions

⁴ Nasar Meer, ed., *Racialization and Religion*, special issue of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 3 (2013), 385–515. Also published as an edited book: Nasar Meer, ed., *Racialization and Religion: Race, Culture and Difference in the Study of Antisemitism and Islamophobia* (Ethnic and Racial Studies; London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁵ See, esp., Meer's introductory essay: Nasar Meer, 'Racialization and Religion: Race, Culture and Difference in the Study of Antisemitism and Islamophobia', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 3 (2013): 385–98.

⁶ Fifty-four per cent of Greeks, 34 per cent of Poles, and 32 per cent of Americans interviewed agreed that 'being a Christian is very important for being truly (survey country nationality)'; the figure rose to 57 per cent for white, evangelical Protestants in the United States. Other countries – such as Spain (9 per cent), the Netherlands (8 per cent), and Sweden (7 per cent) – exhibited much lower levels of conviction on this point. See Pew Research Center, 'What It Takes to Truly Be "One of Us"', 1 February 2017, 21–22. Available online: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/02/01/what-it-takes-to-truly-be-one-of-us/> (accessed 23 June 2017). For a more micro-scale ethnographic analysis of these intersections in a northern English town, see Ingrid Storm, 'Christianity Is Not Just About Religion': Religious and National Identities in a Northern English town, *Secularism and Nonreligion* 2 (2013): 21–38.

of the human race, which had been classified in what turned out to be pseudo-scientific and Eurocentric terms, concurrently (and not merely coincidentally) with the era of European colonialism.⁷ Some of the essays that follow – particularly those by Gregory Cuéllar, Kathy Ehrensperger, Halvor Moxnes, Denise Kimber Buell, and Wei Hsien Wan – explore in more detail the implications of this for the emergent shape of modern critical biblical studies, which developed in Europe during the same historical period.

The term ‘ethnicity’ appears to have first been used in 1941 (though previous discussion in the 1930s had begun to talk of ‘ethnic groups’)⁸ and became established in modern English-language usage during the 1940s and 1950s, in part as a deliberate alternative to the language of race at a time when the latter was perceived to have become ‘deeply compromised by “racism”’.⁹ For example, in the 1950 UNESCO statement on ‘the race question’, one key reason ‘ethnicity’ is preferred to ‘race’ is what the report describes as ‘the injustices and crimes which give such tragic overtones to the word “race”’: ‘It would be better when speaking of human races to drop the term “race” altogether and speak of *ethnic groups*’.¹⁰ It is unsurprising, then, that the term ‘race’ (and, even more so, its German equivalent *Rasse* – for reasons Ehrensperger details in her essay in this volume (Chapter 5))¹¹ has been replaced by ethnicity in much academic discussion in the humanities and social sciences.

However, this remains a contested area, and one in which – as the following essays illustrate – different (national and linguistic) contexts profoundly shape a sense of the implications of particular terms: *Rasse* remains a highly problematic term in the German context, but ‘race’ is a standard term in American discussion, without which the crucial bifurcation of white and black would seem hard to grasp. While some contemporary social scientists do not see any meaningful distinctions between the concepts of ethnicity and race,¹² or seem to use the two terms more or

⁷ On these historical developments, see, for example, Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Washington, DC/Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center/Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁸ See David M. Miller, ‘Ethnicity Comes of Age: An Overview of Twentieth-Century Terms for *Ioudaios*’, *Currents in Biblical Research* 10 (2012): 293–311, at 296.

⁹ Werner Sollors, ‘Foreword: Theories of American Ethnicity’, in *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: New York University Press, 1996), x–xliv, at xxix; and see p. x on the origin of ‘ethnicity’ in the United States in 1941–2.

¹⁰ UNESCO, ‘The Race Question. Text of the Statement Issued 18 July 1950’, 1 and 6 respectively (italics original). Available online: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001282/128291eo.pdf> (accessed 16 December 2015). See also Hannaford, *Race*, 386.

¹¹ Although it is a crude indication, a Google Ngram survey of the use of *Rasse* in German literature between 1700 and 2008 clearly shows this trend: frequency of the word’s appearance rises from around 1840, most rapidly after 1929, reaching a peak in 1940, then declines very sharply between 1941 and 1951, remaining low in frequency thereafter. Tool available online: <https://books.google.com/ngrams/> (accessed 10 November 2015).

¹² Cf. Thomas H. Eriksen, ‘Ethnicity, Race, Class and Nation’, in *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford Readers; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 28–31.

less interchangeably,¹³ others offer distinct but related definitions of each.¹⁴ When it comes to the study of antiquity in general, and biblical texts in particular, there is widespread agreement that the pseudo-biological racial definitions of post-Enlightenment Europe should not be retrojected onto ancient understandings of people-groups, but disagreement about whether the term 'race' can legitimately or valuably be employed. One of the reasons given for not using the term is that it unhelpfully invokes the later pseudo-biological theories and their ideological framework, lending cogency to a concept that is both anachronistic and pernicious.¹⁵ On the other hand, those who argue for retaining the language of race do so partly on the basis that other concepts (gender, ethnicity, religion, etc.) are also modern constructions and that avoiding the language of race may allow interpreters simply to evade, rather than confront, issues of racism.¹⁶ Handling these intersections between the ancient world of the texts and the modern contexts of interpretation is an issue discussed in a number of the essays that follow.

But whether one uses the language of race or of ethnicity, the direction of discussion in recent decades may be summarized as a move away from the idea that race or ethnicity refers to innate or biologically determined human groups towards an increasingly widespread acceptance that such identities are instead social constructions, 'generated by ... people's beliefs and practices'.¹⁷ Even the latest advances in genetics, and the widely available DNA-based ancestry tests, lend no support to the notion that humanity can be divided up into genetically defined racial groups. As geneticist Steve Jones bluntly insists, 'The genes do show that there are no separate

¹³ For example, Rogers Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); *idem*, *Trans: Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016).

¹⁴ See Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World* (Sociology for a New Century; Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge, 2007), 15–40. See their summary table of 'definitional distinctions' between ethnicity and race on 36.

¹⁵ See, for example, Calvin J. Roetzel, 'No "Race of Israel" in Paul', in *Putting Body and Soul Together: Essays in Honor of Robin Scroggs*, ed. Virginia Wiles, Alexandra Brown and Graydon F. Snyder (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 230–44; Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 40, 55; Kathy Ehrensperger, 'Paulus, sein Volk und die Rasseterminologie: Kritische Anfragen an den "Race"-Diskurs in neuerer englischsprachiger Paulus-Forschung', *Kirche und Israel* 27 (2012): 119–33 (and see further the discussion in her essay).

¹⁶ Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 13–21. Cf., similarly, Sara Ahmed, 'Declarations of Whiteness: The Non-performativity of Anti-Racism', *borderlands* 3, no. 2 (2004): 'We cannot do away with race, unless racism is "done away" ... Thinking beyond race in a world that is deeply racist is a [sic] best a form of utopianism, at worse [sic] a form of neo-liberalism' (para. 48). Also insisting on the relevance of 'race' language to the study of antiquity is Denise Eileen McCoskey, *Race: Antiquity and its Legacy* (Ancients and Moderns; London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012).

¹⁷ Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, 48; cf. *idem*, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 17: 'Ethnicity, race, and nationhood are fundamentally ways of perceiving, interpreting, and representing the social world. They are not things in the world, but perspectives on the world.' See also Mark G. Brett, 'Interpreting Ethnicity: Method, Hermeneutics, Ethics', in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark G. Brett (Biblical Interpretation; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 3–22: 'Although *ethnie* can be exceptionally durable once formed, they are also symbolic constructions which have to be maintained by reiterated practices and transactions' (10).

groups within humanity' and that 'the idea of pure races is a myth'.¹⁸ Indeed, the kind of ancestral profiling offered through DNA analysis might more plausibly be taken to demonstrate what Rogers Brubaker refers to as 'universal mixedness' – that we are all, one might say, multiracial.¹⁹

The recognition that ethnic or racial identities are matters of social construction – or, as Max Weber classically put it, based on *belief*²⁰ – has led to attempts to identify what characteristics typically form the basis for a sense of shared ethnic identity. Richard Schermerhorn, for example, offers a concise and influential definition: An ethnic group is 'a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood'.²¹ Schermerhorn's definition is adapted and extended in Anthony D. Smith's influential list of the characteristics of ethnic identity, first laid out in his 1986 work on the ethnic origins of nations, and later summarized in a collaborative work with John Hutchinson as follows:

1. a common *proper name*, to identify and express the 'essence' of the community;
2. a myth of *common ancestry*, a myth rather than a fact, a myth that includes the idea of a common origin in time and place and that gives an *ethnie* a sense of fictive kinship, what Horowitz terms a 'super-family'...;
3. shared *historical memories*, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration;
4. one or more *elements of common culture*, which need not be specified but normally include religion, customs, or language;
5. a *link* with a *homeland*, not necessarily its physical occupation by the *ethnie*, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples;
6. a *sense of solidarity* on the part of at least some sections of the *ethnie's* population.²²

¹⁸ Steve Jones, *The Language of the Genes: Biology, History and the Evolutionary Future*, rev. edn (London: Flamingo HarperCollins, 2000), 255, 266.

¹⁹ Cf. Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, 73: 'Autosomal tests ... reveal that virtually everyone derives genetic ancestry from a variety of ancestral populations. This emphasis on universal mixedness undermines typological forms of racial thinking.' See further 48–84 for Brubaker's overview of the findings of recent biology and, in light of these findings, a reiteration of the case for a constructionist view of race/ethnicity.

²⁰ Weber defines ethnic groups as those 'which cherish a *belief* in their common origins of such a kind that it provides a basis for the creation of a community'; Max Weber, 'Race Relations' [1922], in *Max Weber: Selections in Translation*, ed. W. G. Runciman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 359–69, at 364.

²¹ Richard A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations: A Framework for Theory and Research* ([1970] Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 12. Schermerhorn's definition is adopted, for example, by Cornell and Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race*, 19–20.

²² John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, 'Introduction', in *Ethnicity*, ed. Hutchinson and Smith, 3–14, at 6–7, summarizing the more extended discussion of the 'foundations of ethnic community' in Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 22–31, for whom the roots of modern nations are to be found in a model of ethnic community (x). Love L. Sechrest, *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race* (LNTS 410; London and New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 48–50, also presents this definition of an ethnic group, drawing on Smith's work.

Also significant is a broader criterion noted by Schermerhorn: that there must be 'consciousness of kind among members of the group', that is, some shared sense of being a 'people'.²³

More recent work, notably by Rogers Brubaker, has pressed the case for a subjectivist and constructionist perspective still further: Lists of characteristics such as Smith's should not be taken to imply that ethnic groups exist as a clearly defined and consistent category of human groups.²⁴ For a start, Brubaker is critical of what he terms 'groupism', that is, 'the tendency to take bounded groups as fundamental units of analysis'.²⁵ Instead, he insists, the focus of study should be on how various kinds of potential basis for 'groupness' are invoked and claimed in different circumstances. Rather than see the identification of a certain group as 'ethnic' as having achieved any kind of explanation, Brubaker therefore argues that 'ethnic common sense – the tendency to partition the social world into putatively deeply constituted, quasi-natural intrinsic kinds ... – is a key part of what we want to explain, not what we want to explain things with'.²⁶ Rather than ask 'what is race?' or 'what is an ethnic group?'; Brubaker suggests that we should instead 'ask how, when, and why people interpret social experience in racial, ethnic, or national terms'.²⁷

A second point Brubaker stresses is that ethnic or racial groupings are enormously diverse, such that it is much more important to investigate the specific forms and practices through which a group identity is constructed than to invoke a standard model to classify groups as 'ethnic' or not.²⁸ This helps us to see why any one of the features Anthony Smith lists – including religion, and other features of cultural practice and way of life – may be more or less significant in sustaining a sense of identity as a people. Indeed, features such as religion or language, as well as notions of shared descent, history, and territory, cannot be separated off from the study of ethnicity, for it would then be hard to see what residual substance might be left to constitute the notion of ethnic identity.²⁹

Another issue of conceptual and definitional controversy is indeed religion itself. It is now widely accepted that 'religion', at least in the modern sense of the word, is an anachronistic concept for the ancient world. There is no word in Greek or Latin that corresponds exactly to the modern notion of religion – though there are various words that overlap in some way with this broad domain (εὐσεβεία, δεισιδαιμονία, θρησκεία, *religio*, *pietas*, *supplicatio*, etc.). What we might identify as religion (*religio*), it is often pointed out, had more to do with cultic practice and dutiful obligation than allegiance to a set of beliefs and doctrines, as the modern

²³ Schermerhorn, *Ethnic Relations*, 12.

²⁴ See, for example, Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, 48–84, esp. 48–49, 81–84.

²⁵ Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 2.

²⁶ Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 9.

²⁷ Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 87.

²⁸ Cf. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 27: 'It may be that "ethnicity" is simply a convenient – though in certain respects misleading – rubric under which to group phenomena that, on the one hand, are highly disparate, and, on the other, have a great deal in common with phenomena that are not ordinarily subsumed under the rubric of ethnicity.'

²⁹ Cf. Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, 88.

notion might be taken to imply.³⁰ Moreover, as Paula Fredriksen has stressed, in antiquity ‘religious’ practices and devotion are often intimately bound up with what we might call an ethnic sense of being a people: ‘Gods also attached to particular peoples; “religion” ran in the blood ... ethnicity expressed “religion” (acknowledging the anachronism of both terms for our period), and religion expressed “ethnicity.”’³¹ As Brent Nongbri has recently emphasized, the modern category of ‘religion’ has a particular history that reflects its historical and cultural context of production in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: ‘The idea of religion is not as natural or universal as it is often assumed to be. Religion has a history. It was born out of a mix of Christian disputes about truth, European colonial exploits, and the formation of nation-states.’³²

It is also worth stressing that this is not only a difficulty that applies to antiquity. Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s classic study from 1962, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, which spends a considerable number of pages arguing that the modern notion of religion is inappropriate and ill-suited to the ancient world, also has as one of its central arguments the claim that ‘religion’ as a (specifically modern, Western, Christian) concept is confusing and inappropriate in the modern world too: ‘The word “religion” has had many meanings; it ... would be better dropped. This is partly because of its distracting ambiguity, partly because most of its traditional meanings are, on scrutiny, illegitimate.’³³ Abandoning the term altogether may be too drastic a move, however, not least because we would probably need to invent some other (equally questionable, flexible) term to replace it in order to denote the particular aspects of human behaviour we wish to specify. As Jonathan Z. Smith notes, having surveyed the complex history and varied definitions, “‘Religion’ is not a native term; it is a term created by scholars for their intellectual purposes and therefore is theirs to define’ – but, as such, is crucial, he insists, in ‘establishing a disciplinary horizon.’³⁴

These discussions of categories and terminology should alert us to the complexities of talking about ethnicity, race, and religion, and to the risk of pretending that any of these terms refers to a clear and well-defined category. On the contrary, these are overlapping, blurry, and contested categories, whose dominant definitions often reflect particular historical and cultural contexts, not least those of the modern Christian West.

³⁰ See, for example, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* ([1962] Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 20–1.

³¹ Paula Fredriksen, ‘What “Parting of the Ways”? Jews, Gentiles, and the Ancient Mediterranean City’, in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (TSAJ 95; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 35–63, at 39. Cf. also *eadem*, ‘Judaizing the Nations: The Ritual Demands of Paul’s Gospel’, *NTS* 56 (2010): 232–52, at 234–40; *eadem*, ‘Mandatory Retirement: Ideas in the Study of Christian Origins Whose Time Has Come to Go’, *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 35 (2006): 231–46, at 232; Larry W. Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 78–9.

³² Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 154. See also the overview of the term’s history and complexities in Jonathan Z. Smith, ‘Religion, Religions, Religious’, in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 269–84.

³³ Smith, *Meaning and End*, 194. On the point that ‘religion’ is not an ancient category, but a modern, Christian one, see 15–50.

³⁴ Smith, ‘Religion, Religions, Religious’, 281.

2 Aims of the volume and summary of the essays

This brief outline of conceptual complexity and the influence of particular historical contexts should help to indicate why this volume takes its particular aims. The overall goal of the essays is to explore and illuminate how ideas and ideologies of ethnicity, race, and religion contribute to the construction and interpretation of Jewish and Christian identities in biblical and early Christian texts and in the traditions of scholarship dealing with those texts. There are three more specific aims, which correspond to the three groups of essays that follow, though these are overlapping and closely related aims, linking together to form a logical progression. The first such aim is to explore the ways in which, around the time of Christian origins, notions of, or appeals to, ethnicity/race and religion may be understood to feature in the construction of 'Jewish' and 'Christian' identities – set in the context of ethnic identities in the ancient Greek world. The second aim is critically to explore the ways in which scholarly (and popular) perceptions of these identities – and the use of the terminology of ethnicity, race, and religion in these perceptions – reflect particular historical, religious, and ideological contexts. The third aim is both critical and constructive: to show how dominant traditions of biblical interpretation continue to be enmeshed in the racial and religious assumptions of the white, Christian West, and to offer possibilities for alternatives, and for moving beyond this long-established situation.

2.1 Ethnicity, religion, and identity in antiquity: Jews and Christians in the Hellenic world

The first section of the book therefore focuses on the intersections of ethnicity and religion in ancient constructions of identity – though the contemporary implications of interpretative decisions are also at issue, particularly in relation to the translation of the term Ἰουδαῖος. In the opening chapter, Teresa Morgan provides a broad historical context for the discussion of ethnicity in relation to Jewish and early Christian identities, by examining how ethnic identifiers were assigned, claimed, and deployed in the early Greek and Hellenistic periods. Her essay offers both an overview of recent scholarship on the subject – with ample bibliographical information – and plentiful illustrations from the primary sources to exemplify her observations. One thing that emerges prominently is the complexity and fluidity of notions of ethnicity, and the ways in which identities were deliberately claimed or acquired, such that, as Morgan puts it with regard to classical cities such as Athens, 'shared descent, history and territory were never sufficient arbiters of identity' (p. 28). Alexander the Great likewise illustrates how multiple identities may be invoked and presented, in different times and contexts (p. 29). In the Hellenistic period, the malleability and flexibility of identity continues to be evident. For example, ethnicity, Morgan shows, was often an assigned identity, related to tax or legal status, or to citizenship or occupation. Moreover, the evidence indicates that individuals could acquire a new (ethnic) identity, without losing their old identity, in a process Morgan refers to as accretive; they could thus retain multiple identities, between which they could switch, as circumstance or context required. Morgan invokes the notion of 'code-switching' (p. 34) to illuminate this phenomenon.

She summarizes the complexity of ancient ethnicity by referring to it as ‘the “queer” of its day: A set of labels designed to define, differentiate, and discriminate, which are taken over by those to whom they apply, and then resisted, subverted, reworked, embraced, abandoned and celebrated in a conversation that ranges far beyond what states or dominant social groups control’ (p. 38). This flexibility also means, as Morgan illustrates in her final section (Section 2.4), that culture, philosophy, religion, and magic are all relevant to our consideration of what ethnicity means in the ancient world, even if the boundaries of any such categorization are inevitably fluid. For example, Stoic cosmopolitanism may be viewed as a certain kind of alternative ethnicity, and one that might be relevant to understanding ‘how early Christians might think of themselves in ethnic terms’ (p. 39). Most of all, Morgan’s essay powerfully shows how ethnicity in the Greek and Hellenistic world was a fluid and flexible field of identity-making, one in which multiple identities could be assigned or claimed, displayed or invoked, and negotiated through modes of code-switching. This fluidity and flexibility – of both the term or category of ethnicity, and of the identities to which it relates – is a crucial theme which connects other essays in the volume, and on which I shall comment further below.

Addressing an issue that is currently the subject of significant debate, John Barclay explores the nature of the label Ἰουδαῖος, considering on the one hand both its ancient context and the ways in which ‘ethnicity’ and ‘religion’ might be related to this identity-designation, and also, on the other hand, the modern scholarly debates about appropriate translation, which in part reflect precisely the issues of distinguishing ethnic and religious identities. Beginning with Josephus’ use of ethnic labels, Barclay highlights the complexity and ambiguity of ancient ‘ethnic’ terminology, arguing that ethnicity must be seen as a polythetic concept, ‘inherently malleable’ (p. 56), in which various characteristics may feature, none of them essential. To explore and illustrate these proposals Barclay turns to examine in some detail Josephus’ account of the ‘conversion’ of the royal house of Adiabene (*Ant.* 20.17-96). Crucial is the claim, concerning Izates’ ‘conversion’, that ‘it makes little sense to describe this change as “religious” as opposed to “ethnic”’ (p. 51). The narrative also illustrates the polythetic nature of Josephus’ understanding of what it meant to be Ἰουδαῖος: while ancestry could feature in claims to Jewish/Judean ethnic identity, the Izates story shows that it need not do so, and need not be essential to one’s identity as Ἰουδαῖος. As Barclay remarks, ‘Judean ethnicity was a cluster-formed polythetic category that did not depend on shared ancestry’ (p. 53). These historical findings lead to reflections on the contested question about the translation of Ἰουδαῖος. Given the preceding arguments it is no surprise that Barclay insists that both of the main options, ‘Jew’ and ‘Judean’ – which are in any case ‘terms with partly overlapping meanings’ that need ‘to be spelt out carefully in each case’ (p. 56) – may need to be used ‘together and interchangeably’ (p. 56). Not only is ethnicity such a diverse and malleable phenomenon, but religion is complexly woven into it, not least in the case of ancient Judaism.

In an essay that explores one particular example of the ways in which early Christian texts deploy both ‘ethnic’ and ‘religious’ language in their discursive strategies of identity-making, Judith Lieu returns to the *Letter to Diognetus*, the text that provided her initial entry into what became an extensive consideration of the making of early

Christian identity. In particular, the question posed at the opening of the letter, concerning the ‘*genos* or practice’ that has entered ‘as new’ (so Lieu), has invited reflection on the categorization of Christian identity that is implied and invoked in this text. Through a detailed reading of the early chapters of the letter, Lieu shows how the author’s depiction of the Christian way of life, juxtaposed with that of Jews and Greeks, both does and does not construct ‘Christian’ identity in comparable terms: In some sense, this is an exercise in what Denise Kimber Buell has called ‘ethnic reasoning’ (p. 69), yet the author’s deployment of terminology, Lieu suggests, ‘neither affirm[s] nor denie[s] the categories of “race and way of life”’ but transfigures and defers such categories (p. 71). In such a discourse, it makes little sense to try to make either/or decisions as to whether Christian identity is constructed in ethnic or in religious terms, or in local or universal categories; but it is equally clear that the discourse plays with – evokes and invokes – many of the established facets of the discourse of ethnic identity, while leaving tantalizingly unclear how the Christian’s (new) identity was to be performed.

2.2 Ethnicity, race, and religion in European traditions of biblical scholarship

The second group of essays focuses on various European traditions of biblical scholarship, since it was in post-Enlightenment Western Europe that the modern critical discipline of biblical studies developed (on this, see also Wan’s essay in Part 3). Taking specific examples located in specific national and linguistic contexts, these essays illustrate some of the particular ways in which ideologies of race and religion shaped approaches to biblical interpretation and how such interpretative endeavour is thus more closely bound up with these contemporary ideologies than is often recognized.

In the first of these essays, Gregory Cuéllar turns to the late nineteenth century and the sometimes fierce debates in the Church of England about the use of ‘Higher Criticism’ in biblical studies. Beginning with a report of the arguments made during a Church Congress meeting held at Exeter in 1894, Cuéllar focuses in particular on the work of Samuel Rolles Driver, renowned and still influential scholar of Hebrew language and the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Cuéllar shows how the Higher Criticism espoused and defended by Driver had, woven into it, Orientalist assumptions about the superiority of Western European culture, race, and intellectual achievement. These assumptions, along with contemporary theories concerning human races and languages, Cuéllar goes on to show, then came to be embedded in Driver’s interpretation of Genesis (particularly of chapters 10–11). Without in any way denying the enduring value or quality of Driver’s work as a whole, Cuéllar’s research shows how the assumptions of the racial science of Driver’s era are replicated in his work, and in that sense indicate something of Driver’s own racialized location as a scholar. Cuéllar concludes by calling for critical interrogation both of such critics’ racialized identities and also of the ways in which their scholarship perpetuates – even if unknowingly or unintentionally – forms of racial oppression.

Taking as her starting point the recent interest in the language of ethnicity and race to explore the identity of the earliest Christians, Kathy Ehrensperger offers a critical

perspective on this development by tracing some of the main contours of German-language discussion, from the nineteenth century to the present day. She turns first to Johann Gottfried Herder's notion of the *Volk*, which, she suggests, was not itself initially or necessarily racist, but was later linked with racist ideologies – before and not only in the era of German National Socialism. Her focus then turns to Adolf von Harnack, and specifically his discussion of Christians as *das dritte Geschlecht* – the third entity. As Ehrensperger shows, despite the tendency to translate this phrase into the language of race ('the third race'), Harnack himself avoided this terminology, even though it was clearly available to him. Finally, Ehrensperger considers the most recent German-language discussion, where interest in the concept of ethnicity in relation to early Christian-identity is much less evident than in English-language scholarship. German scholarship avoids entirely the application of the language of race (*Rasse*) to early Christian identity, for reasons to do with both the associations of that language in modern German history and the sense that such a term would be inappropriate and anachronistic for the ancient world: The idea of referring to the early Christians as a 'race' (*Rasse*) would be virtually unthinkable and certainly objectionable. The notion of ethnicity is more readily discussed in relation to ancient Judaism and formative Christianity, particularly in terms of the integration of different ethnic groups into the early Christ-communities; but the idea that the early Christian groups might themselves be seen as ethnic in character is either not considered or explicitly rejected. Both the history of German-language scholarship and the most recent discussion thus raise critical questions about the use of 'race' language in English-language discussion and highlight the crucial considerations bound up in the choice of terminology to describe the earliest Christ-following groups. Ehrensperger's essay also helps to illustrate the broader point that terms such as ethnicity and race (and their equivalents in other languages) have particular histories and ideological associations that unavoidably shape their resonances in contemporary discussion.

In an essay that traverses different national contexts, time periods, and both scholarly and popular perspectives, Halvor Moxnes examines the 'continuities in racial stereotypes of Muslims and Jews' (p. 113) in the work of the nineteenth-century French philologist and historian Ernest Renan and the twenty-first-century Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik. His study thus examines how such stereotypes are reproduced not only across significant periods of time but also across the divide between academic scholarship and popular views. With regard to Renan, Moxnes stresses how his (negative) views of ancient Jews were shaped not only by his historical and philological work but also by his encounters with Arab Muslims in his own time, during his travels in Syria and in Jerusalem. Renan contrasted what he saw as Arab/Muslim rejection of science, rationality, and progress with the European ideal, with its desire for human freedom. This stereotypical contrast between Arab/Muslim and European also underlies Breivik's manifesto, which continues to reproduce similar oppositions, dependent on an essentialized view of both Islamic and European (specifically Norwegian) identities. Moreover, while Breivik's views are extreme, they form part of a continuum of negative attitudes towards Muslims that may be traced among both politicians and the wider public in Norway (as well as elsewhere). In a concluding postscript, which addresses the problems that arise from such essentializing views, Moxnes notes how the images

of Jesus established in historical scholarship have shifted over time, not least under the pressure of contemporary events – such as the emphasis on Jesus’ Jewishness that emerged in the wake of the Second World War and the Holocaust. Moxnes suggests that we need a new image of Jesus that does more justice to the ‘cultural complexity’ of his ancient setting and, at the same time, to our own need to grapple with and appreciate the ‘complexities and hybridities of societies’ (p. 128). Such an image may help us to break with the damaging stereotypes reproduced by figures as different and distant as Renan and Breivik.

Turning to the British context, James Crossley offers a critical analysis of the constructions of Judaism and Jewishness in more recent New Testament scholarship on Jesus and Paul, focusing in particular on the work of the British scholar N. T. Wright. Crossley sets his critical analysis in the wider context of the shifts in perspective on Jesus and Paul that took place in the wake of E. P. Sanders’ groundbreaking work in the 1970s and 1980s, notably in the New Perspective on Paul developed by James Dunn, along with Wright and others. Crossley also, crucially, sets these scholarly perspectives into the wider sociopolitical context of neoliberalism and contemporary ideologies of race, arguing that despite the apparent shift of scholarly perspective on Judaism, there remains an ‘essentializing’ tendency that, particularly in Wright’s work, presents a monolithic and static Judaism as a backdrop to the positive achievements of Jesus and Paul. Thus, despite the changes in tone, and even ‘anti-racist’ intentions, such academic discourse can continue to perpetuate ‘unconscious and implicit racializing distinctions’ (p. 136). More broadly, this kind of discourse, and the categories it uses, can, Crossley argues, ‘be used in malign ways ... for monitoring and surveillance of minority groups by the liberal capitalist state ... thereby perpetuating difference and the potential for discrimination’ not least in ‘racial’ or ‘racist’ ways (p. 143).

2.3 Challenging white, Western traditions of interpretation: Critique and alternatives

Having considered some of the ways in which ethnicity and religion could feature in constructions of identity in early Christian and Jewish texts, and the ways in which some of the established traditions of biblical scholarship reflect the historical contexts and racial ideologies of Western Europe, the task for the third and final group of essays is both to develop a critique of these traditions and to illustrate possible alternatives.

In the first of these essays, drawing on the work of Sara Ahmed in particular, Denise Kimber Buell explores the notion of ‘whiteness’ and its relevance to a critical engagement with New Testament and early Christian studies. She does this via three particular ‘nodes’. First, Buell considers the ‘white’ orientation of contemporary New Testament and early Christian studies, not primarily in terms of the statistical dominance of those of European descent – evident though that is – but more in regard to the orientation of the field, its perspectives and approaches, and the ways in which students are trained. Secondly, Buell explores briefly how, from its origins in Germany and its developments in Europe and North America, scholarship on Christian origins is enmeshed with contemporary concerns about race, and with the relationship between the dominant ‘white’ (and Christian) people(s) and the ‘others’

whom they encounter. Thirdly, and most distinctively, Buell illustrates how the lens of whiteness might be applied to an ancient Christian text, presenting two examples focused on Clement of Alexandria's writing. In the first case, Buell compares Clement's concern with the habituation of Christian bodily action with the kind of habituated bodily practices Ahmed associates with whiteness. In the second case, she considers the construction of Christian boundaries over and against that which is deemed to be heretical or untrue, suggesting that this is both an intrinsic feature of the earliest Christian writings and also a problematic legacy that requires ongoing critical probing. Finally, in drawing together her conclusions, Buell briefly indicates, referring to policy at her own institution, what a 'reorienting away from whiteness in New Testament and Early Christian studies' (p. 164) might require in practice. This kind of consideration finds echoes in the essays that follow in this section.

Musa Dube's essay begins by revisiting anthropologist Laura Bohannan's classic account of her sharing the story of *Hamlet* with the Tiv of Nigeria. Just as the Tiv engaged actively in the process of interpreting, retelling, and reshaping the story, so Dube examines the ways in which the first Batswana readers responded to the Setswana Bible, first translated between 1840 and 1857 by Scottish missionary Robert Moffat. Published letters enable us to see Batswana objections to various aspects of the ways in which their language was adapted for the biblical translation, in ways that rendered it a kind of 'English-Setswana', imposing infantilizing errors and misunderstanding upon its users. The archival material also makes clear that the missionaries' concerns were given more weight in responding to such objections than those of the people for whom the language was their mother-tongue. Yet as well as these written objections, there is also evidence of other modes of resistance to the missionary translation: In the oral forms it was read aloud, which subverted and avoided some of the difficulties of the official printed translation. Another example of the ideological implications of the translation process is the decision to render 'demons' with the word *badimo*, meaning ancestors. This is both exposed as a form of cultural colonialism and also seen as another site for resisting readings. Finally, Dube highlights the importance of studies of biblical translation – and their striking neglect in programmes of biblical studies – as an archival site for the understanding of cultural and racial encounter and emerging forms of decolonial community resistance. This appeal for more focus on critical analysis of biblical translations within academic departments where biblical studies is taught constitutes one proposal for reshaping and extending the focus of the discipline.

Writing explicitly from her perspective as a lowland Filipina Catholic scholar, Ma. Marilou S. Ibita explores the relations and tensions between the notion of a 'trans-ethnic' Christian identity that is promoted both by Catholicism and in biblical studies on the one hand, and the specific ethnic identities and locations of its members, on the other. She notes, with particular reference to the context of the Philippines, various ways in which a trans-ethnic (Catholic) identity is fostered, and how this contributes to the invisibility of ethnic identities and specificities. She also observes how the ethnic identities referred to in the biblical texts – including that of Jesus and other Jews of his time – are often obscured or invisible to contemporary Filipino Christians. Particularly problematic is the depiction of 'the Jews' in the *Pasyon* – a narration of

Jesus' life and passion that remains popular in the Philippines to this day – which depicts Jews resolutely as the enemies of Jesus, effectively transposing the opposition between Spanish colonizers and the indigenous colonized in the Philippines onto the depiction of the Jews and Jesus. Nonetheless, levels of anti-Semitism in the Philippines are comparatively low. Ibita then turns to issues affecting the discipline of biblical interpretation, which indicate how, despite its promotion of a 'trans-ethnic' perspective, it is shaped by Western identity and values. These issues range from the pragmatic matters of languages, timings of conferences, journal policies, and so on, to the more ideological issues of Western bias and questions about whether Western scholars are as ready to learn from their non-Western colleagues as is the expectation vice versa. Finally, Ibita turns to the dialogical approach advocated by the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference and by the Filipino biblical scholar and theologian Carlos Abesamis, along with the 'Dialogue School' pedagogy developed for Catholic schools in Belgium and Australia at the Catholic University of Leuven, as a potential way to hold together the solidarity of a shared (trans-ethnic, and religious) identity alongside recognizing and treasuring specific ethnic identities. She also proposes 'that historically-informed and inculturated ways of doing narrative criticism' (p. 196) might be especially fruitful for both exegetes and the wider ecclesial communities, resonating with 'the Asian and Filipino's preference for storytelling' (p. 196). Rather than reject the existing tools in biblical studies, Ibita sees fruitful potential in a weaving together of old and new, integrating diverse perspectives.

Setting her study within the field of African-American biblical interpretation, and specifically highlighting the use of analogy as a hermeneutical resource, Love Sechrest examines the use of the Bible in one of Martin Luther King Jr's speeches, showing the various ways in which King draws analogies between the characters in Luke's parable of the rich man ('Dives') and Lazarus and the situation of his own time both within the United States and internationally. One of the features Sechrest identifies is the way in which King used this analogy to address both intra-racial and interracial challenges, national and international relations. Sechrest then presents her own African-American reading of the parable of the Good Samaritan, finding in it similar resources for considering both intra-racial and interracial relationships. This is because, unlike many interpreters, she argues that part of Jesus' point in the parable is that the Samaritan is an Israelite, an 'insider', who rightly acted as such, embodying 'intra-racial' concern. This, she suggests, may be placed alongside (not to replace) the more established focus on interracial dynamics. As in King's speech, her reading of the parable draws analogies to enable its fruitful appropriation in the contemporary context, for example, in relation to the tendency among Americans to treat people of colour as 'forever foreign' or as a challenge to some within the middle-class black community 'to eschew the respectability politics that inhibits many of them from direct ministry to the black casualties of the prison-industrial complex' (p. 215). Her interpretation of the parable and the attempts to find fruitful analogies at various levels of scale are thus, fundamentally, an attempt to continue to develop African-American readings of scripture 'in the tradition of Martin Luther King Jr.' (p. 217).

Wei Hsien Wan begins his essay, which helpfully resonates with a number of the preceding contributions, by revisiting Audre Lorde's influential speech in which she

made her now-famous remark that ‘the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.’ This provides a way of entry into a discussion about the dominant tools in the discipline of biblical studies, which clearly – based on such evidence as a recent SBL survey – has a ‘race problem,’ disproportionately dominated as it is by those of white, European descent. Wan examines briefly the early origins of the discipline in Reformation Europe, thereby showing how its central methods and concerns were defined both by the religious conflicts of Europe and also by Europe’s colonial expansion into the wider world. Wan proposes that these defining characteristics continue to shape the discipline today, illustrating this claim with two examples. First, there is the assumed canon of scripture that dominates biblical studies, with its primarily Protestant focus, and its corresponding lack of attention to texts included in the Armenian, Ethiopian, Syriac, or Coptic canons. Second, there is the goal of objectivity. Despite recognition that this cannot be fully claimed or attained, Wan suggests that the goal of much biblical studies continues to embody an epistemology rooted in a particular subject–object conception and an implicit claim that the knowledge acquired is not fatally compromised by, or constrained within, the context of the researcher. What is required as a first step, Wan argues, is a due recognition of the extent to which the discipline remains Eurocentric in its ideologies, outlooks, and practices. Only then might we proceed to consider a solution to biblical studies’ race problem, a solution that might, drawing again from Lorde, entail a radical embracing of difference, a recognition of interdependence, as essential for escaping the current forms of mastery.

3 Emerging themes

It would be neither appropriate nor accurate to pretend that these essays, varied as they are in both topic and perspective, combine to produce a single coherent argument, or even a clear programme for the future of biblical studies. However, there do seem to be some themes that emerge across the collection, and that are significant for our ongoing reflection.

The first such theme is that of *fluidity* – the fluidity of identities in general, of ethnic identities in particular, and of the place of ‘religion’ in such identities. Whether we think of Teresa Morgan’s depiction of the multiple, flexible, and accretive deployment of ethnic identifiers in the Hellenic world, Judith Lieu’s examination of the use of ethnic and religious language in *Diognetus*, or John Barclay’s argument that ancient Jewish ethnicity was polythetic, with no one essential criterion, and inextricably bound up with what we call religion, there is clear fluidity in the category of ethnicity, and the diverse ways in which identity can be claimed, presented, contested, and changed. While this theme thus emerges in those essays whose focus is primarily on the reading of ancient texts, it is also important to point out how it is, in a sense, also a product of – and an emphasis in – the modern context of interpretation (a context that is explicitly in view in Barclay’s discussion of the translation of Ἰουδαῖος). It is no coincidence that it is now that we are discovering the fluidity of (ethnic) identity in antiquity, precisely at a time when we are increasingly conscious of the fluidity and flexibility of our own

identity categories – a time, as Halvor Moxnes points out, of cultural complexity. Such fluidity, while it may be celebrated and affirmed in some circles, can, however, be potentially disturbing to our sense of who we are in the world. Indeed, as Moxnes' essay highlights, attempts to insist on the preservation and protection of notions of essentialized identity, fictional though these are, carry popular appeal in such an age of flexible and unsettled identities. Moreover, this flexibility is policed in all sorts of ways, official and unofficial, that contain and conceal it.³⁵ Yet it seems hard to avoid the conclusion that, however much it is depicted or perceived as stable and fixed, identity in general, and ethnic or racial identity in particular, is fluid and malleable, socially constructed with definitions and lines that are the product of specific sociopolitical (and religious) contexts.

A second theme, closely connected with the idea that ethnic or racial identity is socially defined and constructed, is the importance of specific histories and contexts. For example, as already noted above, Kathy Ehrensperger's essay illuminates aspects of the history of German scholarship which help to show why the word *Rasse* ('race') has such a negatively loaded resonance in that context. By contrast, Love Sechrest's essay on African-American biblical interpretation is one in which the language of race plays a central part, rooted as it is in the context of the United States, where the black/white binary has exerted, and continues to exert, such social force. Observing that such language has different roots and resonances in different national or social contexts does not mean that we cannot debate appropriate terminology for the earliest Christians or for contemporary interpretative contexts. But it does at least help us to appreciate the contexts which shape our perceptions of the terminology we use, and our convictions as to what its importance and force might be. Indeed, several of the essays in the volume show how deeply the language and perceptions of ethnicity, race, and religion that shape biblical interpretation are the products of particular socio-historical contexts, even if the influence of that context is unacknowledged and potentially hidden beneath the aspirations of ('objective', 'scientific') historical exegesis, whether this be the early scholarship of the nineteenth century or much more recent work. It is often easier to see how scholarship of the past was enmeshed in the racial and religious ideologies of its time than it is to appreciate how far our own present work continues to be shaped by such ideologies. But the attempt to cast the same kind of critical spotlight onto the present, difficult and controversial though it may be, is an important part of the ongoing task of critical reflection on scholarship itself, as James Crossley's essay shows. Moreover, while it may be uncomfortable – at least for those of us who are raced as white – to reflect critically on how 'whiteness' shapes the perceptions and practices of biblical scholarship, such critical probing is, as Denise Kimber Buell demonstrates, essential if we are to grapple with the ongoing impact of race and racism in our discipline (and beyond).

³⁵ See, for example, Brubaker, *Trans*, who uses the notion of 'trans' to think through issues relating to gender and race, seeking, among other things, 'to explain why changing sex or gender is understood as more legitimate than changing race or ethnicity, even though biological differences between the sexes are deeper and more socially consequential than the superficial biological differences between socially defined racial and ethnic groups' (11).

A third and final theme that connects a number of the essays, particularly in the third part of the volume, is that of the developments that might be necessary to help move biblical studies beyond its traditional Eurocentrism, beyond whiteness, as it were, and further towards being a truly global discipline. As a number of the essays in this volume detail, biblical studies as a modern critical discipline is bound up with the religious history and racial ideologies of Western Europe. This raises difficult questions, as Marilou Ibita discusses, about how students and scholars from other cultures and contexts, of other racial and ethnic identities, should enter the discipline, without simply absorbing – or being expected to replicate – the established training, methods, and underlying ideological biases of that discipline, with its historical location and its specific contextual roots.³⁶ Ibita also mentions (as do Buell and Wan) some of the more practical and institutional barriers that continue to constrain the participation of scholars not from the traditionally dominant centres of the discipline. But the essays in Part 3 also contain various constructive proposals, whether implicitly or explicitly: Musa Dube's argument for more focus on issues of biblical translation (and their production in contexts of colonial occupation), and of the languages into which the Bible was translated; Buell's indications as to the thoroughgoing changes of process and perspective that are needed to break the hold of whiteness; Ibita's promotion of a dialogical approach as one way to weave together old and new methods in biblical studies, for example. In this connection, one significant observation, noted by Buell and Wan, among others, is that these newer approaches – particularly from 'minority' scholars – are often labelled in ways that mark their specificity, whereas traditional historical-critical exegesis remains unmarked as simply 'biblical studies', despite its particular origins and methods and, as Buell and Wan note, its predominantly white practitioners.³⁷ Doing more to acknowledge the particularity of that approach might be one move that would help to equalize the status and value of the range of perspectives currently brought to the task of biblical interpretation, including the African-American perspective presented by Love Sechrest – also the product of a particular history, and acknowledged as such.³⁸ Indeed, the kind of use of analogy that Sechrest discusses as a significant aspect of that particular hermeneutic might perhaps be interestingly juxtaposed with the kinds of analogy that operate – but often implicitly rather than explicitly – in much traditional historical exegesis. All this brings us to the point with which Wan concludes his essay, and the volume as a whole, referring to Audre Lorde and her appeal for a true appreciation and celebration of difference. This would mean, it seems to me, not simply welcoming a diversity of approaches into the field of

³⁶ On this issue, see also, Musa W. Dube, 'Introduction. The Scramble for Africa as the Biblical Scramble for Africa: Postcolonial Perspectives', in *Postcolonial Perspectives in African Biblical Interpretations*, ed. Musa W. Dube, Andrew M. Mbuvi, and Dora R. Mbuwayesango (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 1–26, at 17–20, on 'Unthinking Eurocentrism'.

³⁷ Cf. the comment of Richard Dyer, *White* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 4: 'It has become common for those marginalised by culture to acknowledge the situation from which they speak, but those who occupy positions of cultural hegemony blithely carry on as if what they say is neutral and unsituated – human but not raced ... there is something especially white in this non-located and disembodied position of knowledge, and thus it seems especially important to try to break the hold of whiteness by locating and embodying it in a particular experience of being white.'

³⁸ See, for example, Emerson B. Powery and Rodney S. Sadler Jr., *The Genesis of Liberation: Biblical Interpretation in the Antebellum Narratives of the Enslaved* (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2016), for the early slave narratives as the early forms of African-American biblical hermeneutics.

biblical studies, and arranging these as ‘minority voices’ around a stable and unlabelled core, but rather recognizing the particularity of our epistemological locations – products of our particular bodily locations, with all the various facets of our identity (ethnic/racial, religious, etc.) – and therefore recognizing too that a diversity of perspective and insight, representing the range of embodied locations, is necessary for rich, full, and relevant insight. Yet that would also mean addressing the dynamics and differentials of power that continue to structure the field, without which celebration of difference remains a patronizing gesture on the part of the gatekeepers of our discipline. If, as well as a range of historical insights into texts and interpretation, this volume can contribute something to the ongoing critical conversation through which such restructuring of the discipline can continue, then it will have served a valuable purpose.

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