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RACE AND ETHNICITY DISCOURSE IN BIBLICAL STUDIES AND BEYOND

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Abstract: This paper aims at foregrounding race and ethnicity discourse in Biblical Studies and beyond in order to undermine transhistorical and transcultural racism and ethno-centrism in religious discourse. It is my argument that matters of race and ethnicity should be approached as analytical categories in an interdisciplinary manner, albeit in a specific context, Hellenistic, Roman, Jewish, or Christian. In doing so, I first examine the works of Steve Fenton as well as Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown in order to look closely at race and ethnicity discourse in the ancient Mediterranean world, especially from a sociological perspective. Then, I indicate how Jonathan Hall and Shaye Cohen examine Hellenic and Jewish identity, respectively, with a focus on ethnic identity in the Greco-Roman world. Finally, I consider how Judith Lieu and Denise Buell analyze early Christian identity as a racial or ethnic discourse in the Jewish, Hellenistic, and Roman matrix. Hence, I contend that identity in general and racial-ethnic identity in particular are by no means stable and static in essentialist terms, but rather they are fluid along the ostensible axis of fixed identity.

Key Words: Race, Ethnicity, Discourse, Hellenic, Roman, Jewish, Christian, Identity, Essentialism, Constructivism, Fixity, Fluidity.

Introduction

The present study aims to investigate the discourse of race and ethnicity in Biblical Studies and its related fields in a sociological perspective. I claim that one should approach matters of race and ethnicity as analytical categories in an interdisciplinary manner in order to undermine transhistorical and transcultural racism and ethnocentrism, albeit in a specific context, Hellenistic, Roman, Jewish, or Christian. It is my hope that this study will provide an interpretive framework for considering racial-ethnic or ethnic-racial discourse as a dynamic sociocultural construct in religious discourse, biblical or otherwise.¹

To do so, I will outline six different models in three fields of sociology, while considering Classical/Jewish Studies and Biblical/Early Christian Studies as single units, employing two models for each discipline.² First, I examine the works of Steve Fenton as well as Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown to look closely at race and ethnicity discourse in the ancient Mediterranean world, especially from a sociological perspective. Before exploring race and ethnicity issues in antiquity, one must be alert to their connotations in modern parlance as ancient texts must also be seen through the lens of the present. In this regard, a sociological framework serves as a critical lens to explore race and ethnicity discourse in the ancient world. Second, I highlight how Jonathan Hall and Shaye Cohen deal with Hellenic and Jewish identity, respectively, in relation to ethnic identity in the ancient Mediterranean world. I deliberately combine Classical and Jewish Studies into a single unit since Jewish identity ran a parallel to Hellenic identity in antiquity. It can be observed that Hellenicity and Jewishness as ethnic identities were developed into cultural and religious identities. Last, I examine how Judith Lieu and Denise Buell analyze early Christian identity as a racial and ethnic discourse in the Jewish, Hellenistic, and Roman matrix. In earliest Christianity, racial-ethnic identity, as a dynamic, dual discourse, operated rhetorically along in early Christian discourse. In the final analysis, I conclude that identity in general and racial-ethnic identity in particular are by no means stable and static in essentialist terms, but rather they are flexible and fluid along the ostensible axis of the fixity of identity.³

Ethnicity and Race in Sociological Studies

Steve Fenton

In my judgment, a significant contribution of Steve Fenton's *Ethnicity* is that it clarifies the convergence of and divergence between ethnicity, race, and nation, at the core and at the peripheries.⁴ At the core, all three

concepts have in common “descent and culture” within the modern world’s semantic systems.⁵ All these are “communities” that see themselves and are seen by outsiders as connected through descent, more precisely, through shared ancestry and culture. As they share descent and culture, all three concepts—ethnicity, race, and nation—demonstrate more detailed convergences. At the peripheries, however, the divergence between race, nation, and ethnicity comes to fore.⁶ First, race relates to abstractly envisioned categories of humanity with special reference to phenotypical differences. Second, the nation indicates a state or state-like organization at the political level. Third, ethnicity signifies subdivisions within a nation-state, typically based on cultural differences and often-times referred to as a minority group with respect to a society as a whole. Therefore, I affirm that the categories of ethnicity, race, and nation are interrelated at the core but distinguishable at the peripheries.

Furthermore, I observe that Fenton shifts his attention from primordialism to constructivism in his understanding of ethnicity. Primordialism, as developed by Clifford Geertz, suggests that ethnic identity is closely connected to social “givens” such as blood, language, religion, and custom.⁷ However, in contrast to primordialism, Fenton considers ethnicity as a social and cultural product: “ethnicity refers to the social construction of descent and culture, the social mobilization of descent and culture, and the meanings and implications of classification systems built around them.”⁸ As a corollary, Fenton does not regard ethnicity as an inherently and socially given entity but rather as a socially and culturally constructed identity. Now, it would be more interesting to investigate the discourse of race in connection with that of ethnicity.

Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown

In a similar vein to Fenton, I notice that, in *Racism*, Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown define racism as a social construction of ideology: “We therefore retain tenaciously the conception of racism as an ideology because it represents human beings, and social relations, in a distorted manner while never denying that, qua ideology, racism can be simultaneously deeply embedded in the contemporary *Weltanschauung* and the focus of struggle on the part of those who challenge its hegemony.”⁹ Ideologically and discursively produced, racism is a malleable feature vulnerable to historically mutable social circumstances.¹⁰ Within the constructivist trend in racism and race analysis in the social sciences, Miles and Brown even go so far as to analyze “race” as a socially constructed, contested concept, in sharp contrast to the illusion that races exist in accordance with differences in biological attributes (e.g., phenotypical features mostly characterized as skin color) and cultural attributes (e.g., diet, dress, language, religion, etc.).¹¹ In addition to racism and race, Miles and Brown elucidate terms such as “racialization” and “institutional

racism,” which are related to those concepts. Considering racism as an ideology in interaction with social phenomena, they focus on the dynamic of racism as a process of racialization to indicate “those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectives.”¹² Moreover, Miles and Brown highlight that racism is a racialization process that operates on the social level, beyond merely the individual level. Thus, all types of racism can be referred to as institutional.

In addition, Miles and Brown establish concepts such as “ethnicity” and ethnicization in correspondence to “race” and racialization. They construe ethnicity as a cultural construction by refusing to impose an “inherent” cultural attributes, not to mention putatively biological attributes, upon it.¹³ Thus, ethnic groups should be culturally distinguishable in a relational setting.¹⁴ Therefore, the ethnicization process is a “process of cultural differentiation,” whereby racialization is understood as a sub-type of ethnicization.¹⁵

What is interesting for me is the framework of a “dialectic of representational inclusion and exclusion” operative in the categories defined above.¹⁶ Miles and Brown indicate a dialectic mechanism in which the boundary between the Self and the Other is constructed. To put it simply, the Self constructs a clear-cut boundary to differentiate itself from the Other by attributing positive features to the former and negative features to the latter.¹⁷ For instance, the Europeans, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, portrayed themselves as white and cultured but the Africans as black and barbaric.¹⁸ In the process, this doubled, inverted classification of representations leads to both the annihilation of the Other with positive Self-images and the domination of the Other with negative images.¹⁹ Here, I want to emphasize the fact that the dialectic mechanism of inclusion and exclusion is conditioned on and embodied in the specificity of the historical context. With this dialectic mechanism in mind, I reconstruct “race,” racism, “ethnicity,” and ethnocentrism in the ancient Mediterranean world as below.

Concluding Remarks

I highly evaluate the above-mentioned works of Fenton as well as Miles and Brown in that they provide a foundation for beginning an analysis of race and ethnicity. I can thus draw a conclusion in what follows. (1) The “race” discourse in the twentieth century was conflated with the “ethnicity” discourse.²⁰ The demise of “race” and its subsequent replacement by “ethnicity” led to the fusion of “race” and “ethnicity.” As the biological characteristics establishing the “race” discourse became recognized as pseudoscientific, a steady trend appeared in the scholarship in which the term “ethnicity” was preferred to “race.” However, scholarly

discourse leans towards a constructivist perspective, viewing race and ethnicity as social constructs, demystified from the illusion that “race” and “ethnicity” are inherent identities grounded on biological or cultural features.²¹ The alleged distinction between race and ethnicity thus becomes blurry and indistinguishable. As a consequence, I consider it appropriate to hyphenate the concepts in question as racial-ethnic or ethnic-racial with much of the focus being on the conjunction between them.²²

(2) The dialectics of inclusion and exclusion entail the racial-ethnic or ethnic-racial discourse. I would go further to add that the boundary between the Self and the Other is fluid and flexible and depends on the social context. Crudely put, the extension of the Self or “Us” and that of Other or “Them” varies according to the historical context. To illustrate, a certain ethnic group may be included in a majority group in some contexts, while it may be excluded from it in other contexts. In the history of American immigration, for example, there was a shift in classifying Jews as a racial-ethnic category from nonwhite to white people.

(3) Racial-ethnic or ethnic-racial discourse is contextualized in the social and cultural milieu. As such, the representational dialectic as a framework may be transhistorical and transcultural, but it should be situated in a specific time and place. My claim is that racial-ethnic discourse is a specific society’s ideological production, thus leading to sensitivity regarding the difference in configuration of racial-ethnic discourse across history and culture. In particular, this leads to another question concerning how relevant the sociological perspective really is to a racial-ethnic discourse in the ancient world. With this in mind, I delve into racial-ethnic discourse in antiquity from a sociological perspective.

Hellenicity and Jewishness in Classical and Jewish Studies

Jonathan M. Hall

In the first place, I explore Jonathan M. Hall’s *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture*, using the sociological imagination. This work is undoubtedly one of the most monumental works related to racial-ethnic studies in the ancient Greek world. In this study, Hall explores the historical development of Hellenic identity in antiquity. In chapter 1, he outlines a methodological and theoretical foundation, an analytical tool for the study of Greek antiquity. He reaches the conclusion that Hellenic identity was transformed from ethnic to cultural concerns in the fifth century BCE, particularly in response to the Persian War of 480–479 BCE.²³ From a constructivist perspective, Hall views ethnicity as a social construction, which “denotes both the self-consciousness of belonging to an ethnic group and the dynamic process that structures, and is structured by, ethnic groups in social interaction with one another.”²⁴

According to him, ethnic identity is a putative, collective self-ascription to fictive common ancestry and kinship, an association with a specific geography, and a sense of shared historical experience.²⁵ It is important to remember here that ethnicity is dynamically constituted in correspondence with the particular historical context.

Let me briefly summarize the main points in the rest of the chapters of the book. Hall in chapter 2 argues against the claim of an ethnic unity, such as Greekness, in the Bronze Age.²⁶ The third chapter contends that a Hellenic identity in general was nonexistent, despite the existence of the four principal subdivisions of Hellenic ethnic groups, namely, the Akhaians, Ionians, Aeolians, and Dorians, as early as the eighth and seventh centuries BCE.²⁷ The fourth chapter shows the paucity of evidence regarding the notion that colonization in the eighth century BCE and, consequently, the encounter between the Greek and indigenous population on the periphery elicited a collective sense of Hellenic identity.²⁸ In the fifth chapter, Hall maintains that the term “Hellenes,” an abridged form of “Panhellenes,” referred to ethnic identification as Hellenicity revolving around the institution of the Olympic Games during the sixth century BCE.²⁹ The final chapter asserts that the Persian War brought the Greeks into contact with the Persians, thus giving them a Hellenic identity, that of an ethnic singular entity, in the fifth century BCE.³⁰ With the discovery of the barbarians, the Greeks defined a Hellenic identity as against the “barbarian” others. Most importantly, Hellenicity was increasingly constructed in the light of cultural criteria (*paideia*) rather than ethnic criteria (*ethnos*).

Among other things, I pay special attention to the invention of barbarian others in the Hellenic world. It is interesting that Hall renders the distinction between Greeks and barbarians as less diametric and more blurry so as to allow for extensive differences and crossover between them.³¹ Contrary to a “digital” categorization system, in which a stark, diametric opposition is drawn between the Self and the Other, he champions an “analogic” categorization system to construct a porous, malleable continuum between the two. When seen from a sociological perspective, Hall thus opens up the possibility of redrawing the boundary between the Self and the Other in a malleable fashion.

Shaye J. D. Cohen

In the second place, I investigate Shaye Cohen’s *Beginnings of Jewishness* as a parallel to Hall’s work in pursuit of a Hellenic identity. In this work, Cohen seeks to trace the historical development of Jewish identity construction in the Greco-Roman period, which was fluid and fluctuating. This indicates that Jewish identity underwent through a semantic shift from Judeanness (in the function of ethnicity and geography) before the middle or end of the second century BCE to

Jewishness (in the function of religion, culture, and politics) in the Maccabean period.³² In particular, in chapter 3, Cohen points out that the Greek term *Ioudaios*, which is equivalent to English “Jew” in a religious sense, originally referred to a “Judaean—that is, a member of the Judaean people or nation (*ethnos* in Greek, or a similar term) living in the ethnic homeland of Judaea (*Ioudaia* in Greek)” in ethnic-geographic terms.³³ It was in the second half of the second century BCE that the ethnic-geographic term *Ioudaios* was applied to non-Judeans, who became “Jews” in religious and cultural terms by worshipping the God in a Jerusalem temple or following the Jews’ way of life, or they became “Judeans” in political terms by joining the Judean state as citizens or allies.³⁴ Thus, Cohen rightly shows the fluid semantic borders of Jewishness in antiquity.

Providing a detailed analysis of the semantic shift of Jewishness in antiquity, Cohen reconstructs the permeable boundaries between Jews and non-Jews: “In their minds and actions the Jews erected a boundary between themselves and the rest of community, the non-Jews (“gentiles”), but the boundary was always crossable and not always clearly marked.”³⁵ In my opinion, the dialectic mechanism proposed by Miles and Brown can be found even in ancient texts, albeit in a flexible manner. In brief, Cohen stresses on the “thin” boundary between Jews and non-Jews (gentiles) in antiquity.³⁶ In this vein, he focuses on the matter of boundary crossing in part 2 (chapters 4 through 7). For instance, in chapter 4 Cohen shows that Jewish identity in the Hasmonean period shifted from ethnic identity to religious, cultural, and/or political identity: “But by investing Judaean identity with political or cultural (religious) content, the Hasmonaeans were able to give outsiders an opportunity to attain membership in Judaean society.”³⁷ Taking this a step further, Cohen undertakes the redefinition of Jewishness, modifying it from an ethnic to an ethno-religious identity. In chapter 5, he continues to explore ways of crossing the boundary and becoming Jewish by demonstrating the multifarious degrees from simply venerating Judaism to converting to Judaism. Here, it is interesting to note that converting to Judaism involves religious, cultural, and social elements. Cohen remarks: “Conversion to Judaism entails three elements: practice of the Jewish laws; exclusive devotion to the God of the Jews; and integration into the Jewish community.”³⁸ In chapter 6, Cohen discusses the varying connotations evoked by the Greek verb *ioudaizein* in Jewish, Christian, and pagan texts. In chapter 7, he deals with the conversion ceremony established under the rabbis, interpreting it in the sense that Jewishness meant being incorporated into a religious community. Therefore, boundary crossings, as exemplified above, address ethno-religious identity in the construction of Jewish identity, transcending ethnic identity.

In his analysis, Cohen, interestingly, starkly contrasts ethnic-geographic identity and religious/cultural/political identity in that the first is unchallengeable, whereas the second is changeable.³⁹ He argues

that ethnic-geographic identity remained constant even in diasporic situations, in which the Judeans had no choice but to live in lands other than Judea, regardless of whether narrowly or broadly defined. In contrast, he contends that religious, cultural or political identity was flexible as non-Judeans could become Jews through religious, cultural, or political transformation. I, however, claim that the imaginary boundaries of ethnic, geographic, religious, cultural, and political identities themselves are permeable, assuming that one can construe ethnic identity in antiquity as a social construct including religious, cultural, and political criteria within it.⁴⁰ More specifically, Cohen's use of the term "ethno-religious" suggests that the relationship between ethnicity and religion in antiquity—apropos of the intermarriage in the Mishnah and Talmud—was more ambiguous than we moderns imagine. Nonetheless, I argue that, as the sociological model suggests, Jewish identity, operating through the mechanism of the representational dialectic, could be formulated afresh, in a more flexible and dynamic manner.

Concluding Remarks

Although Hall and Cohen individually pursue different topics such as Hellenicity and Jewishness in antiquity while constructing Hellenic and Jewish identities, I observe that they have a similar penchant for ethnic discourse: (1) Both of them argue that a semantic shift of Hellenicity and Jewishness was observed from ethnic and/or geographic identity to cultural, religious, and political identity with varying degrees of emphasis. Hellenic identity, according to Hall, changed from ethnic to cultural criteria during the Persian War (480–479 BCE). In contrast, Jewish identity, according to Cohen, was extended from ethnic to religious, cultural, and political criteria under Hasmonean rule. It can be assumed that, during the Hellenistic period, especially in the Hasmonean period, Jewishness was reconfigured as a cultural, religious, and political identity rather than simply being an ethnic identity, partly by adopting Hellenicity, which had been modified from ethnic to cultural identity.⁴¹ According to the sociological model, I thus conclude that the semantic of Hellenicity and Jewishness in antiquity was fluid and flexible in the particular historical context.

(2) In this connection, I also notice that Hall and Cohen deem that the boundaries between Greeks and non-Greeks and those between Jews and non-Jews were permeable. Hall views the difference between Greeks and barbarians as less diametric and more ambiguous to analogically varying degrees. Hall argues that the boundaries between them could be crossed at all times. Similarly, the boundaries between Jews and gentiles were, for Cohen, so blurry that they could always be crossed and really crossed in a particular context. In the light of the representational dialectic as proposed by Miles and Brown, I therefore assert that the boundaries in

antiquity were not static, but they were dynamic, depending on the specific context.

(3) In spite of all this, I draw my attention to the fact that the theoretical boundary between the concept of ethnic and cultural (for Hall) or religious (for Cohen) identity is, for these scholars, highly likely to be too neatly drawn and furthermore, diametrically opposed. In practice, ethnic and cultural/religious identity in antiquity might well have overlapped with and supplemented with each other.⁴² In theory, however, Hall and Cohen both understand the abstract imagined notions of ethnic and cultural/religious identities as being mutually exclusive. In other words, they seem to assume that in antiquity, the realm ethnic (or ethnic-geographic) identity realm excluded itself from the cultural/religious identity realm. It is important to remember, however, that, according to the sociological approach, the concept of ethnicity may entail cultural as well as biological indicia. If it is correct to construct ethnic identity as cultural, to some extent, in antiquity as well as modernity, one cannot draw such a clear-cut boundary between ethnic and cultural/religious identity in antiquity as well. Rather, cultural/religious identity should be, to some degree, interconnected with ethnic identity such that the latter is not separated from the former at all. Now I have no choice but to consider the intersectionality of ethnicity, culture, and religion as available to the ancient literatures as well as the modern ones.

Race and Ethnicity in Biblical and Early Christian Studies

Judith Lieu

Along the lines of Hellenic and Jewish identities as constructed by Hall and Cohen, respectively, I revisit in depth the matter of Christian identity from a racial-ethnic perspective. The titles of Judith Lieu's works—*Neither Jew nor Greek: Constructing Early Christianity* and *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*—suggest that she explores ways in which Christian identity was constructed within the Jewish, Hellenistic, and Roman contexts. It is interesting that in these volumes Lieu attempts to bring to light the construction of Christian identity with special reference to race and ethnicity. Before delving into the racial-ethnic dimension of Christian identity, it is worthwhile to consider how Lieu understands identity in general as well as Christian identity in particular. According to the sociological model, she sees identity as a social construct, opposing the notion of primordialism in essentialist terms.⁴³ Furthermore, she argues that the construction of the Self and the Other is to be found in reciprocal interaction: "the discovery of the self is inseparable from that of 'the other.'"⁴⁴ Most importantly, Lieu points to the exercise of power hidden in the boundary making between the Self and the Other as a process of labeling or exclusion based on a "purely"

binary opposition.⁴⁵ As Miles and Brown suggest, she also stresses that the boundary between the Self and the Other is always a site of compromise, given that it is incessantly shifting. Drawing on identity theory, Lieu goes on to reiterate that Christian identity is subject to negotiation, contestation, and mutual interaction with “Jews,” “Greeks,” “Romans,” and “barbarians.” Consequently, Christian identity turns out to be fluid, elusive, and fragile.⁴⁶

The most important point to be considered is that texts establish and are established by identity formation, here understood as Christian identity, thereby becoming a “site of identity formation.”⁴⁷ That is, texts indeed function to create Christian identity: “Texts play a central part not just in the documentation of what it meant to be Christian, but in actually shaping Christianity.”⁴⁸ To borrow Lieu’s words, Christian identity tends to be internalized or embodied in texts, while the latter constructs the former simultaneously. Assuming that most of the population in antiquity was uneducated, she goes even so far as to presuppose that, in particular, even illiterate individuals had a higher chance of hearing textualized Christian identity re-performed orally in their daily lives.⁴⁹ Thus, Lieu puts emphasis on the performativity of textual (Christian) identity in and through texts.

With this in mind, Lieu explores ethnic identity in the context of diaspora in antiquity. As she explains, geography, particularly, a sense of belongingness to a particular space, real and fictive, is closely connected to ethnic identity as one of its indispensable components.⁵⁰ In other words, at the symbolic level, ethnic identity can be gained by belonging to a specific space in the labeling process. In addition, an envisioned geography within the diasporic context is metaphorically a “spatiality that draws on connections across oceans and continents,” when it comes to the articulation of ethnic identity.⁵¹ For instance, the Temple of Jerusalem might simultaneously embody a failure in the past and a vision for the future in the diasporic milieu. Ethnic minorities in diasporic contexts, for Lieu, maintain a translocal identity by adjusting to mutable circumstances, wherein the boundary between insiders and outsiders is in an unceasing flux.⁵² This ambiguous boundary enables ethnic minorities to sometimes interconnect with others, and other times distinguish themselves from them as a strategic maneuver for survival within the dominant culture. This means that power relations implicate boundary marking, considering that acts of identity construction betray acts of power. Hence, Lieu indicates a closer relation between ethnic identity and geography, especially in the diasporic context.

For the moment let me consider how Lieu reexamines the racialization of Christians as a “third race” in earliest Christianity. As the following examples illustrate, the *Epistle to Diognetus* demonstrates that Christians constituted a new, third race in distinction from both Greeks and Jews as they worshipped divinity differently than both Greek polytheism

and Jewish monotheism. In a similar vein, Clement of Alexandria defines Christians as those “who worship (fear) God in a new way and third type” or “as a third race,” to differentiate them from the old practices of both Greeks and Jews (Clement, *Strom.* VI. 5.41). Problematising a “third race” (*tertium genus*), Tertullian, in contrast, regards it as an insult by the opponents of Christians and discards this label for them (*ad Nat.* I.8; *Scorp.* 10.10). Suetonius designates Christians as a “race (*genus*) of men holding a new and mischievous (*malefica*) superstition,” who threaten the state (*Vita Neronis*, 16.2).⁵³ According to the sociological perspective, I would like to underscore two points: first, racial identity correlates with religious practices and, by implication, religious identity and second, a “third race” reflects the rhetoric of racializing a religious group with some nuances.⁵⁴

Denise Kimber Buell

To my mind, Denise Buell engages more directly in the race and ethnicity discourse in the New Testament and early Christian literature than Lieu does. Observably, she continuously wrestles with the racist and anti-Jewish tendency that was veiled in the reconstruction of early Christianity, a modern habit by which Christianity can be constructed as universal and all-inclusive, and, conversely, Judaism as particular and ethnic.⁵⁵ This harmful habit runs the risk of providing a loophole through which whites may escape being suspected of racism by camouflaging Christianity as distinct from race and ethnicity.⁵⁶ To make matters worse, this current habit idealizes Christianity as a racially/ethnically inclusive religion at the expense of Judaism as a racially/ethnically exclusive religion. Struggling with her desire to create an interpretive framework for challenging the detrimental habits of racism and anti-Judaism, Buell undertakes the scrutiny of the commonly held modern assumptions about race, ethnicity, and religion.⁵⁷

In accordance with the sociological approach, Buell deliberately employs terms such as race and ethnicity interchangeably, opposing the view that sees race as unchallengeable and, therefore, suitable for the analysis of antiquity and ethnicity as changeable and, therefore, anachronistic in it.⁵⁸ As Buell convincingly notes, “By using the terms race and ethnicity interchangeably I signal my view that neither term has a one-to-one counterpart in antiquity; moreover, this choice indicates that these terms cannot be neatly distinguished even in the modern parlance.”⁵⁹ Simply put, she alerts us to the fact that race and ethnicity as modern analytical categories are interchangeable with each other. To take the analysis one step further, she approaches race and ethnicity in light of a “dynamic social construct” or a “dual discursive construction,” which comprises both the discourse of fixity and fluidity.⁶⁰ In this respect, Buell refers to the relation between race/ethnicity and religion, arguing that, as discrete cultural constructs, they are interconnected and reciprocally

constituting.⁶¹ Buell bluntly claims that religious practices generate, maintain, or transform race/ethnicity and that, inversely, the latter can use the former for its own fixity or fluidity.⁶² Thus, Buell demonstrates that race, ethnicity, and religion all stand in mutual interaction as cultural constructs.

Most importantly, Buell advocates what is called “ethnic reasoning,” a mode of persuasion that employs terms related to peoplehood in the rhetorical situation of early Christianity in order to convince readers about what supposedly constitutes being a Christian, that is, Christianness.⁶³ As Buell clarifies, “Early Christians used ethnic reasoning to legitimize various forms of Christianness as the universal, most authentic manifestation of humanity, and it offered Christians both a way to define themselves relative to ‘outsiders’ and to compete with other ‘insiders’ to assert the superiority of their varying visions of Christianness.”⁶⁴ Crudely put, one can analyze the rhetorical strategies of ethno-racial discourse in ancient texts to examine early Christian self-definition.

According to Buell, Paul make the most of “ethnic reasoning” by using both the rhetoric of fixity and fluidity across the boundaries between race/ethnicity and religion. For example, despite seemingly fixed ethnic differences between Judeans and gentiles, they can also become fluid through religious practice such as baptism into Christ, through which gentiles undergo ethnic transformation as “sons of God” (Gal 3:26-29).⁶⁵ Furthermore, such a “ritual of adoption” can enable gentiles to gain a new ancestry to Abraham. This demonstrates that even genealogy, a core of ethnic fixity, can become flexible and malleable through religious practice: “Gentiles in Christ have thus shifted components of their identities that change them from gentile ethnoreligious ‘others’ to gentiles affiliated with Israel.”⁶⁶ From this it follows that race and ethnicity discourse, which seems to depend heavily on the rhetoric of fixity, a “real” rhetoric, can also act as the rhetoric of fluidity, a “fictive” rhetoric, in interaction with religious discourse. Alternatively, race and ethnicity discourse rhetorically serves as a dual discourse.

Let me conclude this section by asking a basic question about whether or not the use of modern notions, say, race, ethnicity, and religion, is relevant to Christianity in antiquity.⁶⁷ It is controversial that this interpretive enterprise may lead the historical analyses of ancient texts in the wrong direction. In spite of all this, however, it is undeniable that “we have no choice but to interpret the past within the limits of such modern notions in order to render our analyses understandable and convincing to modern readers.”⁶⁸

Concluding Remarks

Thus far, I have investigated the ways in which Lieu and Buell explore early Christian identity in general and racial-ethnic identity, in particular, in relation to it. I draw a conclusion as follows. (1) One can observe that there existed little, if any, distinction between the concepts of race and ethnicity in antiquity, as also observed in modern sociological theory. As Buell adamantly argues, the ideas of race and ethnicity in antiquity by no means correspond to those in modernity. Moreover, in antiquity, the conceptual distinction between them was ambiguous and flexible. For us, moderns, little difference in meaning exists between race and ethnicity in antiquity. Therefore, race and ethnicity could and should be interchangeable in both modernity and antiquity.

(2) Assuming that Christianity is construed as a discourse, it can be suggested that Christian identity in antiquity and its racial-ethnic identity contained its own rhetoric as a mode of persuasion.⁶⁹ In this light, Buell's "ethnic reasoning" is convincing. Yet, according to the sociological model, I would like to slightly modify it into racial-ethnic reasoning to encompass a broader sense. For instance, the term "third race," an epithet to Christians in earliest Christianity, demonstrates that the rhetoric of racializing and ethnicizing them to a certain extent also existed. Such racial-ethnic reasoning leads us to scrutinize the rhetoric of identity embedded in texts.

(3) Ancient texts, in line with Lieu, rhetorically performed Christian identity, whether racial or ethnic. As noted above, ancient texts per se were an embodiment of ancient Christian identity because the latter was incorporated into the former. Through reading or hearing, texts served to convince the audience of alleged Christianness. In addition, I would go further and say that texts play a rhetorical role in performing Christian identity as a sociocultural construct.

(4) Racial-ethnic identity in antiquity is heavily interdependent on religious practices and, by extension, religious identity. As both Lieu and Buell suggest, religious practices in antiquity, such as worship and baptism, were symbolic markers of racial-ethnic identity. In contrast, racial-ethnic groups practiced and were expected to practice certain types of religious observances. Thus, race and ethnicity in antiquity were associated with religion and its practices.⁷⁰

(5) Racial-ethnic identity in ancient times was related to geography. While Hall suggests this association between ethnicity and geography in antiquity, Lieu specifies in depth a case in diasporic contexts. Ethnic minorities in diaspora would have had a fluid and malleable geographical connection. In other words, they created an envisioned geographical space in which to establish their racial-ethnic identity. In addition, ethnic minorities in diasporic contexts molded a global identity on the basis of the notion of plastic territory.⁷¹ This calls for a consideration of both the

fixity and fluidity of geographical association in connection with racial-ethnic identity.

(6) I contend that the racial-ethnic dimension of earliest Christian identity was ultimately ambivalent, as it was simultaneously both fixed and fluid, such that it used a dual discourse made up of the discourses of fixity and fluidity. While maintaining a fixed, racial-ethnic identity, gentile Christians, for instance, could gain Jewish ancestry and thus reveal a fluid, racial-ethnic identity. As a consequence, the fixity and fluidity of racial-ethnic identity in early Christianity functioned in an ambivalent manner. A double discourse of racial-ethnic identity demonstrates the ambivalent identity of the earliest Christians from a racial-ethnic perspective. As seen below, one is now in a position to undertake the establishment of grounds for an interpretive framework apropos of racial and ethnic discourse in antiquity through the modern lens.

Instead of Conclusions

Until now, I have seen how race and ethnicity discourse can be explored in Biblical Studies and its related fields in a sociological perspective. It is noteworthy that race and ethnicity discourse is transhistorical and transcultural, albeit in a particular context, Hellenistic, Roman, Jewish, or Christian. In the first area, Sociological Studies, Fenton as well as Miles and Brown articulate the connotations of race and ethnicity as analytical categories. In the second area, Classical/Jewish Studies, Hall and Cohen ensure that Hellenic and Jewish identity, mostly as ethnic identities, were developed alongside cultural and religious identities. In the third area, Biblical/Early Christian Studies, Lieu and Buell demonstrate that racial-ethnic identity in earliest Christianity acted as a dynamic, dual rhetoric in interaction with religious practices and geography. By and large, it is suggested that any identity, whether racial-ethnic, geographical, religious, or cultural, is fluid along the ostensible fixity of identity in a transhistorical and transcultural manner. In what follows, I conclude the paper by recapitulating the observations outlined above, which can lead to the creation of an interpretive framework for the analysis of the racial-ethnic relation in Biblical Studies and beyond.

(1) The “race” discourse in modern times has been conflated with the “ethnicity” discourse, thereby creating the terms racial-ethnic or ethnic-racial.

(2) Embedded in racial-ethnic or ethnic-racial discourse is the dialectic of inclusion and exclusion.

(3) Racial-ethnic discourse is to be contextualized in a specific sociocultural milieu.

(4) In antiquity, Hellenicity and Jewishness were malleable, depending on the particular historical context.

(5) Racial-ethnic boundaries in antiquity fluctuated in a specific context.

(6) Racial-ethnic, religious, and cultural identities in antiquity were mutually integrative with each other.⁷²

(7) Race and ethnicity could and should be interchangeable in antiquity as well as in modernity.

(8) Racial-ethnic identity in antiquity served as rhetorical reasoning and therefore as a mode of persuasion.

(9) Ancient Christian texts rhetorically performed Christian identity, whether racial or ethnic.

(10) Racial-ethnic identity in antiquity was heavily interdependent on religious practices.

(11) Ethnic minorities within the diasporic context had a malleable connection with an envisioned geographical space.

(12) From a racial-ethnic perspective, the earliest Christian identity as a dual discourse was ambivalent, mediating between the discourses of fixity and fluidity.

In conclusion, race and ethnicity discourse calls for an interdisciplinary approach in Biblical Studies and beyond. It is my conviction that such an interdisciplinary method will be conducive to a closer examination of race and ethnicity discourse in religious discourse, biblical or otherwise, with a view to destabilizing racism and ethnocentrism across spatial and temporal constraints.

Notes

¹ As an example, see Sung Uk Lim, "Josephus Constructs the Samari(t)ans: A Strategic Construction of Judaeans/Jewish Identity through the Rhetoric of Inclusion and Exclusion," *Journal of Theological Studies* 64.2 (2013): 404-431. This work would be of interest to those readers interested in interpreting a racial-ethnic or ethnic-racial discourse in ancient Jewish texts in interdisciplinary manners.

² Cf. Love L. Sechrest, *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race* Library of New Testament Studies. (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2009). Sechrest approaches race and ethnicity in New Testament scholarship, modernity, and antiquity consecutively. My approach is related to hers, but it is slightly distinct in that I begin with race and ethnicity in modernity, developing them in terms of what is at stake in antiquity and modernity. Regarding the matter of race and ethnicity, I consider it more appropriate to first determine the modern assumptions about them and then apply them to antiquity and biblical scholarship. I believe that mapping out is of primary importance before jumping into ancient texts without it.

³ I understand the fixity of identity as what Pierre Bourdieu terms "doxa," that is, the taken-for-granted truth underneath our conscious awareness. In this sense, the fixity of identity is an understanding "misrecognized" as the truth. Moreover, this suggests that there is not such a thing as the fixity of identity in reality. For

this, see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990); Craig Calhoun, "Pierre Bourdieu," in *The Blackwell Companion to Major Contemporary Social Theorists*, ed. George Ritzer (Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 291. On the advanced discussion of identity in sociological analysis, see Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" *Theory and Society* 29.1 (2000): 1-47. Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper conclude: "To criticize the use of 'identity' in social analysis is not to blind ourselves to particularity. It is rather to conceive of the claims and possibilities that arise from particular affinities and affiliations, from particular commonalities and connections, from particular stories and self-understandings, from particular problems and predicaments in a more differentiated manner. Social analysis has become massively, and durably, sensitized to particularity in recent decades; and the literature on identity has contributed valuably to this enterprise. It is time now to go beyond 'identity'—not in the name of an imagined universalism, but in the name of the conceptual clarity required for social analysis and political understanding alike (36)." Brubaker and Cooper point to a split between essentialist and constructivist approaches to identity in contemporary sociological studies. Rather, they offer a new approach to identity beyond the split by suggesting some alternative set of terms: identification and categorization, self-understanding and social location, commonality, connectedness, and groupness. When seen from this light, my present study uses a constructivist, rather than essentialist, approach, but with the clear awareness that identity, especially in religious discourse, is deeply rooted in group (identity) formation. Also see Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004)

⁴ Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity, Key Concepts* (Cambridge, UK; Oxford; Malden, Massachusetts: Polity; Blackwell, 2003), 23.

⁵ Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 23.

⁶ Fenton, 23, 109.

⁷ Steve Spencer, *Race and Ethnicity: Culture, Identity and Representation* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 77.

⁸ Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 3.

⁹ Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown, *Racism*, 2nd ed., Key Ideas (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 9.

¹⁰ Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 6, 8.

¹¹ It is important to note that Miles and Brown distinguish "race" from race. Put simply, the former shows a misrecognition presupposing the existence of such a thing as race "out there" based on phenotypical attributes. In marked contrast to this illusion, the latter is an attempt to demystify race in such a way as to circumscribe it in the ideological realm. In brief, "race" refers to a mystified state, whilst race refers to a demystified state. Likewise, Miles and Brown draw a significant boundary between "ethnicity" and ethnicity. The former is a primordialist conceptualization, but the latter is a constructivist conceptualization.

¹² Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 101.

¹³ Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 95.

¹⁴ Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 96.

¹⁵ Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 99. Given that "scientific" racism, on which race heavily relies, is discredited and that the cultural attributes of "race" are

emphasized, a new trend that comes into play is one which “ethnicity” is preferable to race and, furthermore, “ethnicity” is conflated with “race.” In this context, “race” becomes construed as part of “ethnicity,” the result being that racialization is considered as a subtype of ethnicization.

¹⁶ Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 51. Cf. Sung Uk Lim, “Josephus Constructs the Samari(t)ans: A Strategic Construction of Judaeans/Jewish Identity through the Rhetoric of Inclusion and Exclusion,” 410, esp. n. 15.

¹⁷ Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 86.

¹⁸ Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 86.

¹⁹ Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 85. Applying the inclusion and exclusion dialectic to racialization, Miles and Brown distinguish between autoracialization, or an “attribution of the ‘radically’ defined Self-‘US’-with positive characteristics,” and heteroracialization, or an “attribution of the ‘radically’ defined Other with negative characteristics.”

²⁰ Fernando F. Segovia, “Toward Latino/a American Biblical Criticism,” in *They Were All Together in One Place?: Toward Minority Biblical Criticism*, ed. Randall C. Bailey, Tat-Siong Benny Liew, and Fernando F. Segovia (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 193-226.

²¹ Spencer, *Race and Ethnicity: Culture, Identity and Representation*, 85.

²² Segovia, “Toward Latino/a American Biblical Criticism,” 205.

²³ Jonathan M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 7.

²⁴ Hall, 9.

²⁵ Hall, 10.

²⁶ Hall, 55.

²⁷ Hall, 56.

²⁸ Hall, 121.

²⁹ Hall It is important to note that “the term ‘Panhellenes’ is formed not from Hellenes but from Hellas. The pan- prefix then actually emphasizes not the unity but the diversity of the various population groups inhabiting the common land of Hellas” (132).

³⁰ Hall, 175.

³¹ Hall, 179-80.

³² Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 70.

³³ Cohen, 71.

³⁴ Cohen, 79-82.

³⁵ Cohen, 13.

³⁶ Cohen, 67.

³⁷ Cohen, 136. It is important to remark that Cohen draws a neat parallel between Hellenicity and Jewishness while constructing Hellenic and Jewish identities. He claims that in the Hasmonean period Jewishness was redefined from an ethnic or ethnic-geographic term, similarly to Hellenicity in the fourth century BCE, which was rendered more cultural than ethnic with the rise of the Hellenistic empires (pp. 127, 132).

³⁸ Cohen, 156.

³⁹ Cohen, 109. Cohen deftly defines ethnicity as follows: “Ethnicity is closed, immutable, an ascribed characteristic based on birth” (136).

⁴⁰ Sung Uk Lim, “Josephus Constructs the Samari(t)ans: A Strategic Construction of

Judaean/Jewish Identity through the Rhetoric of Inclusion and Exclusion,” 409.

⁴¹ Lim, 127. This phenomenon, in the words of Homi Bhabha, can be called “colonial mimicry” in the sense that, despite their resistance to Hellenism in the political plane, the Hasmoneans embraced it consciously or unconsciously. Cf. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge Classics (London; New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁴² Regarding the controversy over the relationship between ethnic identity and religious identities, see Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*; Steve Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problem of Categorization in Ancient History,” in *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins: Methods and Categories*, ed. Steve Mason and Michael W. Helffield (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 141–84; David Goodblatt, *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Cohen highlights the ambiguous boundary between ethnicity and religion (and by implication, culture) by saying that there was a shift in the connotations of *Ioudaioi* from ethnic identity to “ethnoreligious” identity around the end of the Second Temple. In contrast, Mason bluntly argues that neither was there any such thing as, what we moderns call, religion per se in antiquity, nor even Judaism in modern terms. Moreover, he goes still further by saying that there is nothing other than ethnicity or ethnic identity. Relatedly but differently, Goodblatt adamantly argues that it was hard to separate ethnic identity from national identity—as a “belief in a common descent and shared culture available for mass political mobilization (26)” —in ancient times. He goes on to say that nationalism, defined as “the invocation of national identity as the basis for mass mobilization and action (27),” is applicable to Jewish antiquity. Thus, there is still vigorous scholarly debate over the relationship between ethnicity, religion, and culture.

⁴³ Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 13.

⁴⁴ Lieu, 269.

⁴⁵ Lieu, 15. Lieu goes further by saying that the formation of identity, which exercises the power of exclusion, runs a risk of demonizing the “excluded other.” Cf. Judith Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World. (Edinburgh; New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 7, 209.

⁴⁶ Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity*, 7.

⁴⁷ Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*, 21. Cf. Sung Uk Lim, “Josephus Constructs the Samari(t)ans: A Strategic Construction of Judaean/Jewish Identity through the Rhetoric of Inclusion and Exclusion,” 411.

⁴⁸ Lieu, 7.

⁴⁹ Lieu, 29.

⁵⁰ Lieu, 211. Here, it is of great importance to distinguish space from place. Space as a key concept in geography is a disinterested container, like an empty canvas. In contrast, place is a part of geographical space constellated with meanings, where identity is constituted, in interaction with social relations and collective memory.

⁵¹ Lieu, 212.

⁵² Lieu, 101.

⁵³ Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity*, 186–87. Lieu states: “Indeed, if such a binary mode of thought is fundamental to human thinking and identity, this is why ‘third race’ is perceived as subversive. In practice this is also

how the rhetoric of the third or new race or kind works in early Christian writers; it is characterized not by its inclusiveness of earlier dichotomies but by its exclusiveness.”

⁵⁴ Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*, 309.

⁵⁵ Denise Kimber Buell and Caroline E. Johnson Hodge, “The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123. 2 (2004): 236. Cf. Cynthia M. Baker, “‘From Every Nation under Heaven’: Jewish Ethnicities in the Greco-Roman World,” in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies*, ed. Laura Salah Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2009), 79-99. Most interestingly, in this paper, Baker, quite to the contrary, envisions Jewishness as multiethnic and multiracial through an interpretation of Philo’s *Flaccum* 46 and *Legatio ad Gaium* along with Acts 2. I deem this approach as radically challenging to a racially/ethnically-biased imagination, to see Judaism and Christianity as particularism versus universalism, with a view to problematizing and disrupting it.

⁵⁶ Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 12.

⁵⁷ Buell, 13. However, a historian like Benjamin Isaac argues that what he calls “proto-racism,” an earlier form of racism was prevalent in the Greco-Roman world and that it, in turn, functioned as a prototype of modern racism. Cf. Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁵⁸ Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity*, 14. For Buell, the Greek terms associated with the concept of peoplehood, for example, *ethnos*, *genos*, *phylos*, and *laos* are exchangeable for modern readers. Regarding this, see Denise Kimber Buell, “Rethinking the Relevance of Race for Early Christian Self-Definition,” *Harvard Theological Review* 94. 4 (2001): 456.

⁵⁹ Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity*, 21.

⁶⁰ Buell, 8. Cf. Denise Kimber Buell, “Ethnicity and Religion in Mediterranean Antiquity and Beyond,” *Religious Studies Review* 26. 3 (2000): 246; On ethnicity as a social product, see Denise Kimber Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 105.

⁶¹ Buell and Hodge, “The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul,” 243.

⁶² Buell, “Rethinking the Relevance of Race for Early Christian Self-Definition,” 466-67; Buell and Hodge, “The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul,” 243.

⁶³ Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity*, 2. Cf. Gay L. Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002), 19. Influenced by both Averil Cameron’s Christian rhetorics and Elizabeth Fiorenza’s “politics and rhetorics of othering,” Byron features her theoretical framework as “ethno-political rhetorics of othering.” Furthermore, she connects Christian ethno-political rhetorics to gender and color differences.

⁶⁴ Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity*, 2.

⁶⁵ Buell and Hodge, “The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul,” 245-6.

⁶⁶ Buell and Hodge, 249.

⁶⁷ Denise Kimber Buell, “God’s Own People: Specters of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

in Early Christian Studies,” in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies*, ed. Laura Salah Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2009), 159-74, 88-89. Buell employs the “haunting” concept to escape the “trap of anachronism.” To take this a step further, she rejects the agenda of the historical-critical interpretive approach in search of a text’s original meaning by using “haunting” that may “disrupt the assertion of linear temporalities and of neat distinctions between temporalities (188).”

⁶⁸ Sung Uk Lim, “Josephus Constructs the Samari(t)ans: A Strategic Construction of Judean/Jewish Identity through the Rhetoric of Inclusion and Exclusion,” 408. Cf. Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity*, 5. As Buell puts it, “We cannot avoid reckoning with modern ideas about race, ethnicity, and religion, so the problem is not that modern ideas are distorting historical analysis, since we can only interpret the past from the vantage point of the present.”

⁶⁹ On this, see Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse*, Sather Classical Lectures. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). Both Lieu and Buell agree with Cameron in that they all consider Christianity as a discourse. Cameron, in Michel Foucault’s terms, claims that Christianity developed a “totalizing discourse (2).” She defines discourse as “all the rhetorical strategies and manners of expression that I take to be particularly characteristic of Christian writing (5).” Like her, I do not understand rhetoric in the technical sense; rather I consider it as “denoting the manner and circumstances that promote persuasion (20).” Simply put, rhetoric can be referred to the strategies of rhetoric (28).”

⁷⁰ On the semiotic approach to Judaism and Christianity, see Daniel Boyarin, “Semantic Differences; or, ‘Judaism’/‘Christianity,’” 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 (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2007). Boyarin construes both Judaism and Christianity as invented constructs. Interestingly, he argues that Judaism did not exist as a religion until Christianity was produced as a religion, given that they were a set of semantic oppositions.

⁷¹ Tim Whitmarsh, *Local Knowledge and Microidentities in the Imperial Greek World*, Greek Culture in the Roman World. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5-6. Cf. Sung Uk Lim, “Josephus Constructs the Samari(t)ans: A Strategic Construction of Judean/Jewish Identity through the Rhetoric of Inclusion and Exclusion,” 419.

⁷² Regarding the intersectionality of race, gender, and sexuality in early Christianity, see Laura Salah Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2009). As the subtitle suggests, the volume emphasizes the intersectional phenomena between, race, ethnicity, gender, and status in the New Testament and early Christian literature. In particular, it is highly significant to note that racial-ethnic identity often goes hand in hand with gender identity. In addition, race, ethnicity, and gender indeed matter among minority groups in a dominant culture. In this connection, Fernando Segovia, for instance, advocates minority biblical criticism. Cf. Fernando F. Segovia, “Poetics of Minority Biblical Criticism: Identification and Theorization,” in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies*, 279-311.

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