Transparency in Early Christian Texts: A Postcolonial Reading

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Abstract:

In this dissertation, I propose an alternative approach to applying postcolonial theory to early Christian texts than that presently operative in the field of Early Christian Studies. Current postcolonial methodologies, following a pattern established in the arena of Biblical criticism, focus on Homi Bhabha's idea of mimicry as they seek to locate resistance to hegemonic exercises in early Christian texts.

But mimicry analyses tend to lead to a reading of early Christian texts in which strikingly similar discourses receive very different treatments depending on whether the author is a pre-Constantinian Christian (thus occupying an analogously colonized position), or a post-Constantinian Christian (thus occupying the space of the colonizer). The discourses of the latter are criticized for their hegemonic operation, while the former are treated as resistors of hegemony, suggesting mimicry analysis only ever touches the person speaking, but not the speech itself.

Bhabha has argued, however, that his thought is oriented towards intervention in discursive conditions of dominance, and he criticizes colonial resistors who adopt the discursive habits of the colonizer in resisting colonial subjugation. Thus, a postcolonial reading of early Christian texts, especially one predicated on Bhabha's work, should not treat similarly dominant discourses differently based on who is speaking.

Analyzing early Christian texts in light of what Bhabha calls transparency—the way particular and localized values become invisible (transparent) within discourses, masquerading as objective norms that justify hegemonic outcomes—allows for a more effective intervention in hegemonic aspects of early Christian discourses, especially where self-definition is concerned. A transparency analysis also allows us to unite two streams currently operating separately in early Christian studies: the problem of essentialism in Christian self-definition, and the question of whether race is an organizing principle in early Christian self-definition.

Transparency in Early Christian Texts: A Postcolonial Reading

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For Camille,
tú eres mi querida perfección.

"Solon, Solon, you Greeks are ever children; there is no such thing as an old Greek."
—Plato's Timaeus[1]

Introduction: An Illustration from Plato's Timaeus

So the old Egyptian priest chides Athens' legendary law-giver in the introduction to Plato's *Timaeus*. After echoing a familiar, and for the Greeks somewhat sensitive, Egyptian critique of relative Greek youth as a polity,[2] Plato's priest tells Solon of a hidden history of Athens.

Though the Egyptian priest appears to be cast as something of a guide for Solon, that is not quite his function in the dialogue. Rather than standing in a superior position with respect to some piece of wisdom or knowledge that enables him to guide Solon, the Egyptian priest serves to confess Athenian primacy and superiority by way of its divine founding and hidden greater antiquity.

> [Y]ou do not know that the finest and best race of men that ever existed lived in your country . . . For before the greatest of all destructions by water, Solon, the city that is now Athens was pre-eminent in war and conspicuously the best governed in every way: its achievements and constitution . . . the finest of any in the world of which we have heard tell. . . . I will gladly [tell you this lost history of Athens], Solon . . . in gratitude to the Goddess to whom it has fallen to bring up and educate both your country and ours – yours first . . . ours a thousand years later.[3]

The superiority of the Greeks, which here is more or less proxy for the Athenians, is established and legitimized by the testimony of an Egyptian, a non-Greek ethnic other. The critique of Grecian novelty turns out not to be a critique at all, but rather the presentation of an argument which the priest's narrative is set to counter. By placing the narrative of Athenian superiority in the mouth of an Egyptian priest, Plato cleverly dissociates himself, or the account, from any semblance of Greek bias: "Athens is not great because we say so, but because those who could suggest that they are greater and

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[1] Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, trans. T.K. Johansen and Desmond Lee (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), (*Timaeus*) 22b.

[2] See Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 3. On the role of a polity's antiquity in Hellenistic rhetoric, see G.R. Boys-Stones, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy: A Study in Its Development from the Stoics to Origen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[3] Plato, *Timaeus*, 23b-d.

more ancient than us say so."

That Plato would engage in such a celebration of Athenian greatness in this Socratic dialogue is not surprising considering his teacher was put to death for the corruption of Athenian youth, accused of teaching those youths to reject traditional Athenian religious norms. Indeed, the introduction of the *Timaeus* ends with Socrates' pious insistence that, before continuing their discussion, "the customary invocation to the gods"[4] be made.

But beyond serving as a subtle defense of Socrates's high esteem for Athens, not to mention Socrates's piety, this introduction engages in a problematic representation of an *other*, the *Egyptian* priest, by limiting this *other* to the function of telling us something about the Greeks who are both the narrator and audience of this dialogue. The priest is nothing more than a set piece, a prop with the auxiliary function of emerging from the background when something about the Greeks themselves needs to be emphasized—here, their supremacy. Indeed, once the priest explains to Solon the primacy and superiority of Athens, he never again appears; his voice is no longer necessary. Once he has served his limited purpose, the Greeks can take it from there. Timaeus is the only necessary voice for the remainder of the dialogue.

Despite this, however, the priest is not your standard foil. This Egyptian does not emphasize the virtue and superiority of the Greeks by posing as its opposite, but rather by embodying Greek superiority and serving as the link to a greater antiquity. Plato does not directly descend Athens from Egypt, but by linking an ideal Greek constitution to a more ancient Egyptian civilization by way of divine descent, and then having the Egyptian representative establish an even greater Athenian antiquity, Plato establishes the superiority of the Athenian position on divine and antique grounds.

But the establishment of Greek superiority and priority relative Egypt by way of the representation of the Egyptian priest is part of a larger problematic within the text.

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[4] Plato, *Timaeus*, 27b.

This representation of an Egyptian *other* cannot occur without some sense of a self from which an *other* can be distinguished.

For knowledge of who this self is, we can again turn to the priest, whose function in the narrative is to bring this self into sharper relief. Any virtue this priest can attribute to his own country is simply an example of a more ancient Athenian virtue. For example, in discussing "what great attention our [Egyptian] law devotes to wisdom",[5] the priest explains that,

> in the study of the cosmos, [our law] has traced all our knowledge from these divine [cosmic] beings down to human affairs, including divination and health-giving medicine, and it has acquired all other related branches of knowledge. The Goddess [Athena] founded this whole order and system when she framed your society. She chose the place in which you were born with an eye to its temperate climate, which would produce men of high intelligence; for being herself a lover of war and wisdom she picked a place for her first foundation that would produce men most like herself in character. So you lived there under the laws I have described, and even better ones, and excelled all men in every kind of accomplishment, as one would expect of children and offspring of the gods.[6]

Note how the priest narrates the Athenian self in terms of the potential for high intelligence and resemblance to divine character. The Athenian, from the lips of this Egyptian, comes into sharper relief, emerging as a divinely privileged being, established in a location whose characteristics would ensure the intelligence and character of this particular Greek.

Additionally, the virtue of this Egyptian priest's own laws lies in their Athenian content. The reader can recognize the value in the priest's customs and knowledge because they are principally Greek—given by Athena, initially, to the Athenians. The result is that the value of this *other* is determined on the basis of correspondence to familiar Greek notions.

This value on the basis of correspondence is not limited to the laws of Egypt, as understood to be descended from the Goddess. The value of Egyptians as persons are

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[5] Plato, *Timaeus*, 24b.
[6] *Ibid*.

also mediated on the basis of correspondence to similarly identifiable and particular (Greek) values in the form of *Timaeus's* anthropological formulations. What is relevant here is the priest's assertion, in the previous citation, that Egyptian laws and customs are descended from cosmic principles (themselves derived from the study of the cosmos), and Plato's discussion of the tripartite division of the soul. In *Timaeus*, the divine children of the demiurge, Plato's creator figure,

> took over from [the demiurge] an immortal principle of soul, and, imitating him, encased it in a mortal physical globe, with the body as a whole for vehicle. . . . And since the gods shrank from polluting the divine element with . . . mortal feelings more than was absolutely necessary, they settled the mortal element in a separate dwelling in the body . . . The part of the soul which is the seat of courage, anger and ambition they located nearer the head between midriff and neck, so that it would be well-placed to listen to the commands of reason and combine with it in forcibly restraining the appetites . . . The part of the soul that desires food and drink and other natural needs of the body they located between the midriff and the region of the navel . . . and they secured this part of the soul there like a wild beast, which must be fed with the rest of us if mortals were to exist at all. And they put it in this position in order that it might continue to feed at its stall, but be as far as possible from the seat of deliberation, and cause the least possible noise and disturbance, so leaving the highest part of us to deliberate quietly about what benefits us all collectively and individually.[7]

This account begins with the immortal and divine element of the soul encased in the skull. The basest part of the soul is placed furthest away from this divine element, for otherwise the gods would have run the risk of the appetites overwhelming the man,[8] "so rendering the entire species incapable through gluttony of philosophy and culture, and unwilling to listen to the most divine element in us."[9] Men are thus divinely ordered for philosophy and culture, and we have here elevated to divine and cosmological necessity the intellectual pursuit of a particular group of Greek elites.

Speaking of the immortal and divine element of the soul (reason),[10] Plato writes,

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[7] *Ibid*., 69c-71a.

[8] In *Timaeus*, humans are first created as men. According to Plato, "The men of the first generation who lived cowardly or unjust lives were, in accordance with the likely account, reborn in the second generation as women." *Ibid*., 90e-91a.

[9] *Ibid*., 73a.

[10] See *ibid*., 29d-30c, as well as translator's comments in the headings in *ibid*., pp. 65-6. See also, D. Frede, "The Philosophical Economy of Plato's Psychology: Rationality and Common Concepts in the

> We should think of the most authoritative part of our soul as a guardian spirit given to each of us by god, living in the summit of the body, which can properly be said to lift us from the earth towards our home in heaven . . . If therefore a man's attention and effort have been centred on appetite and ambition, all his opinions are bound to have become mortal, and he can hardly fail, in so far as it is possible, to become entirely mortal, as it is his mortal part that he has increased. But a man who has given his heart to learning and true wisdom and exercised that part of himself is surely bound, if he attains to truth, to have immortal and divine thoughts, and cannot fail to participate in immortality as fully as is possible for human nature; and because he has always looked after the divine element in himself and kept his guardian spirit in good order he, above all men, must be happy. There is of course only one way to look after anything and that is to give it its proper nourishment and motions. And the motions that are akin to the divine in us are the thoughts and revolutions of the universe. We should each therefore attend to these motions and by learning thoroughly about the harmonies and revolutions of the universe . . . restore our understanding, in accordance with its original nature, to its likeness with the object of understanding. When that is done we shall have achieved the goal set us by the gods, the life that is best for this present time and for all time to come.[11]

The life that is best is that which properly utilizes reason toward the contemplation of the heavens. It is best not because Plato finds it to be the most rewarding, but because it conforms to the nature of men as stated in seemingly objective terms by Plato and defined in terms of a rational soul with divine origins.

The pursuit of philosophy and wisdom is transformed from a pastime to an anthropological necessity by way of a discourse that establishes a particular activity of some persons (philosophers, among whom is Plato) into a natural or objective, and therefore necessary, aspect of the human animal. While defining the idea of the human would seem to require a broad reckoning with all of human experience, Plato's rhetoric of the human sees it fit to enshrine the perspective and activity of those who happen to sit in a very particular social location.

Once that particular perspective is made objective by way of an appeal to human nature, it becomes the measuring stick for judging *others*, as when Plato writes of the first generation of men, saying,

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Timaeus," in *Rationality in Greek Thought*, ed. Michael Frede and Gisela Striker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 29-58.

[11] *Ibid*., 90a-d.

> anyone who lived well for his appointed time would return home to his native star[12] and live his accustomed happy life; but anyone who failed to do so would be changed into a woman at his second birth. And if he still did not refrain from wrong, he would be changed into some animal suitable to his particular kind of wrongdoing, and would have no respite from change and suffering until he allowed the motion of the same and uniform [reason] in himself to draw along with it all that crowd of riotous and irrational feelings that have grown onto it . . . and with reason thus in control returned once more to his original and best condition.[13]

Here, the values that determine the "original and best condition" of humanity are particular, not universal. They belong to a particular wealthy and educated Greek elite who then speak for all by way of an ostensibly objective description of humanity. Those values become invisible as values, as perspectival choices about what is better or worse, and become norms.

Woman and animal life are mediated on the basis of those norms, deviation from which come to define women and animals. In the case of our Egyptian priest, those norms become the measure of both his country's laws and mores, as well as his own person. Correspondence to the values woven into Plato's rhetoric of the human ground the ability of the priest to guide the legendary Greek lawmaker Solon within the dialogue. More fundamentally, it is correspondence to Greek values that informs the relevant judgment of the person of the priest.

I begin with this illustration from the *Timaeus* because it speaks to a phenomenon that early Christian scholars have begun to touch on in the arena of Patristic thought. J. Rebecca Lyman has sought to apply insights gleaned from postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha and others to the question of Christian self-description.[14] Lyman argues that

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[12] In *Timaeus*, when souls were first created they were assigned to a particular star, from which vantage point the soul learns "the nature of the universe and . . . the laws of their destiny." *Ibid*., 41d-e. If one has lived in accordance with the dictates of reason, and thus in accordance with the dictates of human nature which sets reason above all other parts of the human soul, one returns to their star at death.

[13] *Ibid*., 42b-d.

[14] See J. Rebecca Lyman, "Natural Resources: Tradition without Orthodoxy," *Anglican Theological Review* 84:1 (2002): 67-80; *eadem*, "2002 NAPS Presidential Address: Hellenism and Heresy," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11:2 (2003): 209-22; and *eadem*, "The Politics of Passing: Justin Martyr's Conversion as a Problem of 'Hellenization,'" in *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing*, ed. Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2003): 36-60. These articles will be analyzed more fully in the next chapter.

such self-descriptions have historically been premised on a vision of orthodoxy, deviation from which cannot be tolerated, and that this insistence on conformity to a particular vision or understanding of Christianity has led the religion down a path of temptation toward hegemonic speech to a place where violence against the non-Christian *other* becomes acceptable.[15]

As an alternative to this practice of self-description, Lyman has held up the example of Justin Martyr. Applying Bhabha's idea of mimicry[16] to Justin's discourse of truth, Lyman suggests that Justin's understanding of truth sees truth as derived from the Logos, and locates truth in both Christian and non-Christian sources. Because all truth comes from the Logos, then, Justin can stand as both a Christian and a mimic of a non-Christian Hellenist, finding value in both cultural strands and their intellectual sources, while possessing no reason to oppose the two (Christianity and Hellenism) since both derive their truth(s) from the same source, the divine Logos.[17]

In this reading of Justin Martyr, Lyman sees a path to Christian self-understanding that avoids the descent into hegemonic tendencies she sees as internal to the practice of defining Christian identity on the basis of a vision of orthodoxy. But for the Christian's *other*, I would suggest, the path Lyman has opened up, largely on the basis of Bhabha's idea of mimicry, does not strike me as less hegemonic.

My reason for saying this is evident in what was said in the illustration from the *Timaeus* which opened this introduction. Justin's account of a logocentric truth may not require him to abandon or oppose his Hellenism, but the value of that Hellenism is established on the basis of correspondence to what are cast as explicitly Christian values or norms (the Logos, after all, being the revealed source of Christian thought and worship).

What follows here is just a summary of Lyman's argument.

[15] Lyman, "Resources," 77.

[16] Bhabha lays out this idea in the fourth chapter of his book *The Location of Culture*. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Classics, 1994), 121-131.

[17] See Lyman, "NAPS;" and *eadem*, "Passing." I will lay out Lyman's views in more detail in the next chapter.

What happens to the non-Christian Hellenist who is not seen to conform to Christian norms? Does one trust, on the basis of the same problematic Christian history of violence toward the *other* to which Lyman has alluded, that such a non-Christian will be met with a non-hegemonic orientation? Does one trust that the non-Christian will be embraced in her non-Christianness, or does one expect her to be understood along lines akin to the devolved sense that Plato ascribed to women and animals?

Where Christianity is the relevant norm against which an *other* is measured, one would expect non-Christianness to function as a deviation from that norm. Lyman's approach would attempt to mediate the *other* on the basis of some Christian norm (e.g., logocentric truth), but it is unclear how this leads to the acceptability or validation of the *other's* non-Christianness, the very thing which requires she be validated or found acceptable for the Christian in the first place. To the extent the non-Christian conforms to Christian norms, she may consider herself secure, but the spectre of non-Christianness will always hover over the relationship between the Christian and this *other*, ensuring the grounds of a historically hegemonic orientation toward the *other*, which Lyman has alluded to, remain preserved.

While I find that Lyman's reliance on Bhabha's notion of mimicry has fallen short of her stated aim of developing an approach to Christian self-description that avoids the temptation toward hegemonic speech of Christianity's past, I believe she has identified an excellent methodological option for the project she has sought to undertake. This is true in terms of her reliance on postcolonial theory generally, as well as her specific selection of Bhabha.

Postcolonial theory is informed principally from the experience of being a non-Western (and sometimes, non-Christian) *other*, and is explicitly concerned with the deconstruction of discourses that define the self and the *other*. Bhabha's work in his seminal *The Location of Culture* deals thoroughly with the way the colonial self, imbued with the values and norms of the colonialist, functions as a (self-)definition that imposes

otherness on the colonized subject, an otherness mediated through racial stereotypes that supposedly describe a culture inherent to the *other* and which drives the justification for colonial intervention in the affairs of the *other*.

What is meant by that will be laid out in chapter two, where I will discuss Bhabha, and some of his methodological forbears, in detail. Here let me just say that Bhabha's focus on the way a particular and particularized vision of the self informs both otherness and authority (with Lyman, we might say 'hegemony') over the *other* provides a better grounds of intervention in discourses of dominance than Lyman's gleaned-from-mimicry approach.

Mimicry inevitably becomes focused on the position relative hegemonic power that a speaker possesses.[18] Justin, for example, in his second century context is, as a Christian, an oppressed minority. He thus stands in an analogously colonized position for Lyman, who casts Justin as a colonized subject mimicking his Hellenistic masters. The limitation is that this analogy touches Justin's person but never his discourse. The casting of Justin's discourse as one of a colonized subject allows that discourse to go uninterrogated for its own internal problematics. And those problematics rear their heads when the outcome of this postcolonial reading of Justin results in a proposed solution that reinscribes rather than disrupts hegemonic tendencies by positing Christian norms as the only relevant measure of an *other's* value.

Bhabha's work being rather explicitly concerned with interrogating discourses of dominance with indifference to the question of political power should not be used to develop a methodological approach that fails to more thoroughly engage the way self-definitions are formed and function discursively. I propose that a methodological approach gleaned from Bhabha's notion of transparency, as also developed in *The Location of Culture*, would be better suited to the task Lyman has pursued than the

[18] I will unpack this claim in my discussion of Lyman and those who have followed her lead, beginning on p. 30, of chapter one.

mimicry analysis she has adopted.

I lay out both Bhabha's understanding of transparency, as well as the prongs of an analysis based on the idea of transparency, in chapter two. Chapter three and the first part of chapter four will contain the analysis itself. The second part of chapter four will detail the implications of my analysis for projects of self-definition like Lyman's, and some recommendations for conversation partners, some operating explicitly within contemporary Christian discourse, whose visions for Christianity trend in the direction Lyman seems intent on moving toward.

Because I will not return in earnest to a discussion of transparency until chapter two, let me note here that the term 'transparency' in Bhabha means something rather different than what the term has come to mean in contemporary American and British political discourses. In contemporary politics, calls for transparency are generally appeals to the idea that the actions of government ought to be open and transparent, with the public having full access to the rationales behind decisions as well as any information relevant to the practices and effectiveness of government through policy. The idea, in this discourse of transparency, is that a democratic government should itself be transparent, hiding nothing from the public.

This is a vision of transparency that, like Lyman's mimicry analysis, is concerned with the person of government (or the embodiment of government in the persons who carry out the business of governing). In Bhabha, transparency is concerned with discourses, not actors, and the notion speaks to the way particular and localized values that inform the discourse become invisible (and thus transparent) as particular and localized values within the discourse itself.

Those values do not disappear however, they are invisible only with respect to the fact that they are particular and localized. As a result, they operate within discourses as though objective premises that the conclusions of any given discourse must conform to.

The discussion of *Timaeus* that opened this introduction illustrates this well.

There, the philosophical pursuit of a particular group of Athenians was presented as an objective dictate of human nature. On the basis of that objectivity; what might otherwise be viewed as a particular and local value possessed by a limited population (Athenian philosophers, and perhaps just those who patronized Plato's vaunted Academy); and which ought to have no bearing on how we perceive anyone outside that limited population; became a measure by which *others* could be judged; and from which otherness could be attributed (note how Plato defined women).

Note that my analysis does not suggest, however, that there is a conspiratorial intent behind the objectification of those particular values. What I observed regarding the *Timaeus* speaks to the operation of the discourse, but not the intention of the author. Indeed, other than to note that the values encapsulated in the *Timaeus's* ostensibly objective view of human nature happen to parallel Plato's own social location, Plato as an actor is irrelevant (to the extent this is not about seeking blame).

The claim is not that Plato has taken his values and intentionally woven them into a self-understanding that allows him to dominate an *other*. What we observe in *Timaeus* is Plato's inability to see that his social location does not establish self-substantiating norms, which is to say that the values he upholds as objective are rather transparent (invisible to even Plato) as particular and localized values that Plato happens to possess.

In contemporary politics, transparency means that the government itself should be transparent. The person of government should disappear where the public seeks information regarding the actions of government.

In Bhabha, transparency refers to discursive elements or values that shape a discourse's conclusions on the basis of an objectivity that obscures (makes transparent) the particular location of their origin. Those elements or values, rather than become invisible, become immediately visible. That is, their transparent objectivity grants them instant validity as norms that shape outcomes and conclusions. The value remains

visible, but to the extent that value is taken as objectively true, it is also transparent as *somebody's* value.

For Lyman, the value that has come to operate transparently in Christian self-descriptions is the particular vision of orthodoxy that becomes the norm for judging not only those who would call themselves Christians, but anyone at all.[19] My analysis in chapters three and four will suggest that it is not orthodoxy that functions transparently within Christian discourses of self-description, but anthropological formulations woven into those descriptions that then form the basis of otherization along the lines of racial stereotyping that Bhabha has demonstrated in his discussion of transparency in the Modern[20] colonial setting.

This distinction is important because it illustrates a further reason for why Bhabha is so useful in the direction Lyman has sought to go in her engaging of Patristics with postcolonial theory. There is a separate strand of early Christian scholarship focused on the question of whether early Christian self-understanding was constructed, at least in part, on the basis of race.

A number of scholars, including Gay Byron, Aaron Johnson, Denise Kimber Buell, and J. Kameron Carter have argued that either race or the concept of ethnicity is present in early Christian discourses of the self and *others*, with Carter and Buell making the most forceful cases that the concept of race specifically shows up in early Christian discourses.[21]

Bhabha's discussion of transparency details how self-description can inform a process of otherization by way of racial stereotypes. Those stereotypes, forming the contours of how the relevant race is understood, are derived on the basis of perceived deviations from particular values operating transparently as norms. Those

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[19] This will be made clearer by my analysis in chapter one.

[20] I will capitalize 'Modern' where the term refers to the historical era, as opposed to its more colloquial understanding where the term is generally taken to mean something like 'contemporary,' 'the latest,' or 'cutting edge.'

[21] My discussion of these scholars begins on p. 55, of chapter one.

transparencies, then, not only become the basis for asserted hegemony or authority over an *other*, but the basis of mediating that *other* through a racial category as well.

My use of Bhabha, opened up by Lyman, allows us to combine two streams operating in the realm of early Christian studies. The concern over the hegemonic capacities internal to Christian self-definitions when made essentialist by way of an appeal to orthodoxy, as well as the question of whether race is a notion present in early Christian thought, come together in my transparency analysis. This analysis will posit that anthropological norms woven into Christian self-definitions in certain early Christian authors are the grounds for both the claim of authority over that *other* on the basis of that *other's* difference, as well as the racialization of the non-Christian *other* (and therefore that race is indeed present in early Christian thought).

Lyman approaches her concern with the consequences of Christian self-description by way of an engagement with a long-standing question in early Christian scholarship and theology: whether Christianity ought to be understood in essentialist terms (hence the emphasis on the exactitude demanded by 'orthodoxy'). This question is generally raised within the context of discussions about the relationship between early Christianity and Hellenistic thought. I will thus open my engagement with Lyman in chapter one by setting out the basic contours of the debate over essentialism in the Christianity-Hellenism binary. From there I will consider Lyman's own thoughts on the question, her application of Bhabha to the matter, and the limitations of that application of Bhabha. Before moving on to describe how I will use Bhabha differently in my own analysis, a discussion that constitutes more or less the entirety of chapter two, I will conclude chapter one with a discussion of that second stream touching on the appearance of race in early Christian discourses.

Chapter two will lay out my understanding of Bhabha's notion of transparency, with reference to a number of Bhabha's methodological forebears. Bhabha's prose is

dense, to say the least,[22] while those Bhabha has relied upon are often simpler in the presentation of their ideas. Beginning with some of the shoulders on which Bhabha stands allows me to ease into Bhabha's more difficult prose, and makes explaining that prose far more straightforward. Chapter two will conclude with an outline of my suggestion for how an analysis based on transparency might look, consisting of four prongs to be applied to two early Christian texts in chapters three and four.

Those two texts are Origen's *Contra Celsum* and Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica*, both selected because they are focused on the nature of the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism, and because they employ discourses about the *other* in order to articulate that relationship. The first three prongs of the analysis will be applied to *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio* in chapter three. The final prong will be applied in the first section of chapter four.

I think it can be fairly said that my analysis in chapters three and four places the Patristic material secondary to the postcolonial analysis (with the analysis itself centered on Bhabha because Lyman has already opened the door to him within the realm of Patristic studies). In this sense, my dissertation perhaps fits more comfortably within the realm of religious studies, but with an eye to both ancient Christian theology with respect to the analysis, and contemporary Christian theology with respect to the implications derived from the analysis.

The implications of my analysis in chapters three and four will be laid out in the second and final section of chapter four, along with some concluding thoughts. Beyond allowing for the combining of two separate streams currently operating in early Christian scholarship, my analysis will suggest that the best way to obviate the potential for racialization and hegemonic tendencies from operating in Christian self-description is to

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[22] Postcolonial Biblical critic R.S. Sugirtharajah, in a discussion of the development of postcolonial scholarship, puts it thusly: "To the writings of Edward Said, one could add the works of Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak who were in a way responsible for providing a theoretical and much less readable framework." R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: History, Method, Practice* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 12.

keep close guard against the possibility of particular and localized anthropological formulations being woven into that self-description, where they can parade as objective values necessitating the aforementioned racializing and hegemonic tendencies.

I also suggest some conversation partners for someone who shares Lyman's concerns about the hegemonic tendencies that can emerge in exercises of Christian self-definition. Early Christian scholar John Rist provides a possible way of thinking about the term 'human' that could prove useful in light of what my analysis says about anthropological formulations and their role in Christian self-description. Italian political philosopher Gianni Vattimo, who feels Christianity's future viability rests on its ability to move away from objective claims about nature and focus on its ethical content, centered around the idea of charity, also appears to me as someone who has opened a potential avenue that might suit Lyman's concerns about Christian self-definition.

I now turn to my consideration of Lyman's use of Bhabha, beginning with a discussion about the Christianity-Hellenism binary that is Lyman's own entryway to the application of Bhabha to Patristic thought.

The influx of Hellenism, of the Greek spirit, and the union of the Gospel with it, form the greatest fact in the history of the Church in the second century, and when the fact was once established as a foundation it continued through the following centuries.

—Adolf Harnack, *What is Christianity*[1]

1

Contemporary Early Christian Studies and Late Antique Scholarship on the Relation of Hellenism and Christianity, and Racism in Antiquity

With this dissertation, I am seeking to conduct an analysis of early Christian self-definitions from a postcolonial lens. Early Christian scholar J. Rebecca Lyman has opened the door to the application of postcolonial theory to early Christian texts (and specifically to the problem of Christian self-definition) through her engagement with Homi K. Bhabha, and other postcolonial thinkers. Lyman enters that discussion of Christian self-definition, and the applicability of postcolonial thought to the problem, by way of a reconsideration of the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism as presented in early Christian texts.

In this chapter, I will first lay out the two traditional positions on the question of early Christianity's relationship to Hellenism (or Hellenistic thought), by outlining the positions of two theologians who have come to represent the two basic sides in the debate, Adolf Harnack and Alfred Loisy. The views of Harnack and Loisy revolve around the question of whether Christian thought can be considered to develop, or whether any perceived development is actually a corruption of a true Christian essence. Then, using a recent debate between early Christian scholars Khaled Anatolios, Lewis Ayres, and John Behr, I will show how the basic positions staked out in Harnack and Loisy continue to operate in debates among early Christian scholars on Christianity's relationship to Hellenism in antiquity.

From there, I will introduce Lyman, and show how she has approached the question of the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism via an alternative path to

[1] Adolf Harnack, *What Is Christianity* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), 200.

the issue of development or essence, by way of her application of postcolonial theory. Through that application, Lyman has pointed out that the question of the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism is ultimately a question of Christian self-definition. Further, Lyman has also noted how historical commitments to a necessary 'orthodoxy' as part and parcel of Christian self-understanding have at times led to problematic binary constructions of Christian self-definitions, setting up oppositions that have historically devolved into violence against non-Christians.

Lyman has sought to harness postcolonial theory to propose a path for Christian self-definition that avoids that tendency toward oppositional binaries with its concomitant commitments to essentialist formulations of Christianity. However, I find that Lyman's reliance on Bhabha's idea of mimicry as the basis of her analysis tends to reinscribe the essentialist and binary problematics she seeks to avoid, and I illustrate the limitations of this mimicry approach with reference to Lyman's own analysis and that of other scholars who have followed in her footsteps.

I propose that an analysis based on Bhabha's idea of transparency[2] would be a more fruitful approach to the question of Christian self-definition in light of Lyman's goal of seeking a non-essentialist, non-oppositional, and—in keeping with Lyman's own language—non-hegemonic definition. How a transparency analysis should unfold is the task of chapter two, but before I move on to that discussion, I will demonstrate how Lyman's pointing to the problem of Christian self-definition also points to a related problem: the way the *other* emerges implicitly within the contours of (early Christian)[3] self-definitions.

This relates to an issue present in early Christian self-definitions that a number of scholars have touched upon, the way those self-definitions and the otherizations they

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[2] Recall that 'transparency,' in Bhabha, has a rather different meaning than the same term has come to possess in contemporary British and American politics. See my discussion on p. 10, of the introduction.

[3] As we will see with Bhabha in the next chapter, this is a problem of self-definition more generally, not just early Christian ones.

effect operate along racialized lines, defining Christians and non-Christians as distinct races (or ethnicities), a practice which lends itself to the problem of oppositional self-definition that Lyman seeks to avoid. I will conclude this chapter, then, with a discussion of scholarship on the problem of early Christian self-definition and race, as well as a summary of scholarly positions on whether it is possible to speak of race—which some would argue is a Modern concept—as being present in the ancient world and its discourses. With this discussion I will seek to show that the problem of racialization is present in the practice of Christian self-definition by way of anthropological formulations that are woven into that definition. My hope is that this study will thus help contemporary Christians wishing to break with that racializing tendency as they think through the problem of self-definition.

By the end of this chapter, I will have traced a path from the question of the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism; to the question of Christian self-definition and the applicability of postcolonial thought to those definitions by way of Lyman; to the question of whether Christian self-definitions have operated in a racialized way; to the question of the basis for such racializations, which, following J. Kameron Carter, seems to be anthropological formulations woven into Christian self-definitions.

It is those anthropological formulations, contained within Christian self-definition and operating in a way that racializes the non-Christian *other*, that most lend themselves to the transparency analysis whose contours I will describe in the next chapter, and which I will apply in chapters three and four. I begin, then, with my discussion of Harnack and Loisy on the problem of the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism.

I. The Continued Relevance of Harnack and Loisy to the Question of the Relationship between Christianity and Hellenism in Early Christian Thought.

Harnack stands at one of the traditional poles with respect to the problem of

interpreting early Christianity's relationship to Hellenism. For him, the church that emerges from the Greek Christian tradition "*takes the form, not of a Christian product in Greek dress, but of a Greek product in Christian dress*."[4] The content of this church represents

> The development of the Christian faith into an all-embracing theosophy, and the identification of faith with theological knowledge[,] . . . proofs that the Christian religion on Greek soil entered the proscribed circle of the native religious philosophy and has remained there.[5]

Harnack is well known for his notion of the kernel, defined as the essential and necessary features of the gospel which fundamentally and substantially define true Christianity. The above quotation—as well as the one with which I opened this chapter—similarly demonstrate a commitment to an essentialized sense of Christianity and, subsequently, an essential separation between Hellenism, defined above as *the Greek spirit*.

These two essentialities may be combined in some form, but any such combination represents an alteration (or corruption), since the two are, in their essence, foreign to one another. Any addition to the Christian kernel that may be made by way of Hellenistic, or any other, thought is so much husk that must be discarded if one is to possess the kernel itself. Harnack's concern is with the question of what may be viewed as legitimate Christian tradition, and whether we should accept the appearance of any development in that which is understood as *the Gospel*.

Generally situated as the alternative to Harnack on this question is Alfred Loisy, whose *The Gospel and the Church*[6] is a response to Harnack's account of Christianity's kernel. Loisy, refusing to cede any fertile soil to Harnack, enlists his own botanical analogy in combating Harnack's position. Loisy finds Harnack's insistence that essence be understood necessarily as an unchanging thing, rather than present in the life of a

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[4] Harnack, *Christianity?*, 221.
[5] *Ibid*., 229.
[6] Alfred Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

concept, arbitrary,[7] and asks,

> Why not find the essence of Christianity in the fulness and totality of its life, which shows movement and variety just because it is life, but inasmuch as it is life proceeding from an obviously powerful principle, has grown in accordance with a law which affirms at every step the initial force that may be called its physical essence revealed in all its manifestations? Why should the essence of a tree be held to be but a particle of the seed from which it has sprung, and why should it not be recognized as truly and fully in the complete tree as in the germ? Are the processes of assimilation by which it grows to be regarded as an alteration of the essence present potentially in the seed, and are they not rather the indispensable conditions of its being, its preservation, its progress in a life always the same and incessantly renewed?[8]

That the essence of Christianity, for Loisy, is to be found in the germ of the seed as well as in the growth which naturally progresses therefrom is a consequence of an understanding of history's relation to the essence that differs sharply from Harnack's. For Harnack, the intermingling of Christianity with Hellenism

> is the transformation which history effects in a religion by "natural" means, and, as was here the case, was bound to effect between the third and the sixth century. In this sense [Greek Christianity] is *a natural religion*. The conception admits of a double meaning. It is generally understood as an abstract term covering all the elementary feelings and processes traceable in every religion. . . . [But] may be better applied to the growth which a religion produces when the "natural" forces of history have ceased playing on it. At bottom these forces are everywhere the same . . . They mould religion until it answers their purpose; not by expelling what is sacred, venerable, and so on, but by assigning it the place and allowing it the scope which they consider right. They immerse everything in a uniform medium,—that medium which, like the air, is the first condition of their "natural" existence. In this sense, then, the Greek Church is a *natural* religion; no [one] has arisen in its history since the third century to disturb the ordinary process by which a religion becomes naturalised into common history.[9]

Thus, for Harnack, a religion's progression through history is the occasion for its corruption, as ideas and motives external to it bend religion to their purpose. Another way of putting this, which Harnack refers to as the process of naturalising Christianity into 'common history,' is to say that, for Harnack, Christianity is pure to the extent it shows no sign of human authorship. For Loisy, on the other hand,

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[7] *Ibid*., 15-6.
[8] *Ibid*., 16.
[9] Harnack, *Christianity?*, 221-2. Unless otherwise stated, emphasis in the original.

> It is not indispensable to the authority of belief that it should be rigorously unchangeable in its intellectual form and its verbal expression. Such immutability is not compatible with the nature of human intelligence.[10]

This is to say that Christian belief can only be communicated to and by the contingent historical human being, and can thus only be articulated in terms of the language and knowledge contemporary with that articulation.

> The conceptions that the Church presents as revealed dogmas are not truths fallen from heaven, and preserved by religious tradition in the precise form in which they first appeared. . . . Though the dogmas may be Divine in origin and substance, they are human in structure and composition.[11]

Thus, the Hellenization of Christianity was not the result of philosophy wresting Christianity from its essence, but the result of Greek Christians, "imbued with Greek culture," who "felt the need of interpreting their new faith to themselves."[12] How else, but within the context of their own knowledge and language, could they have interpreted that faith? This is not the corruption of the Gospel's essence but the human communication of that essence.

> Our most certain knowledge in the domains of nature and of science is always in movement, always relative, always perfectible. It is not with the elements of human thought that an everlasting edifice can be built. Truth alone is unchangeable, but not its image in our minds. Faith addresses itself to the unchangeable truth, through a formula, necessarily inadequate, capable of improvement, consequently of change.[13]

Further, it is the Gospel's journey alongside human language and knowledge that constitutes its development, that progress and growth that is the seed and tree of Christian truth.[14] For this reason,

> a distinction must be drawn between the material sense of the formula, the external image it presents, related to ideas received from antiquity, and its proper religious and Christian significance, its fundamental idea, which can be reconciled with new views of the constitution of the world and the

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[10] Loisy, *The Gospel*, 217.
[11] *Ibid*., 210-11.
[12] *Ibid*., 192.
[13] *Ibid*., 217-18.
[14] According to Loisy, Catholic dogma "were not contained in primitive tradition, like a conclusion in the premises of a syllogism, but as a germ in a seed, a real and living element, which must become transformed as it grows, and be determined by discussion before its crystallization into a solemn formula. They existed as more or less conscious facts or beliefs, before they were the subject of learned speculations or of official judgments." *Ibid*., 214.

nature of things in general.[15]

While we may oppose Loisy's position to Harnack, as Loisy himself certainly did, I would suggest that, with respect to the question of Christianity's relationship to Hellenism, the difference between the two thinkers is more a matter of degree than substance. At bottom, neither disagrees with the idea that there is an essence of Christianity, though they differ on how to define that essence (what *the* essence is) and on how essence should be understood to function (*what* essence is).

For Harnack, the essence is a fundamental insight that moves through history fully formed, fending off intrusion from foreign ideas that would claim a place equal with it. Thus, any philosophical apparatus, Greek or otherwise, attached to this essence constitutes an envelopment of the kernel in a non-essential husk. For Loisy, the essence is not altered by its presentation in philosophical attire, it is simply communicated in the only flawed and contingent manner that humans have available to them.

Regardless, both Harnack and Loisy confess an essence of Christianity. And while Loisy rejects the notion that the articulation of Christian dogma by Greek Christians is necessarily a corruption, he does not reject the idea that Greek philosophy and Christianity are essentially distinct objects. That such an essential separation exists is internal to the statement that,

> philosophy was not introduced into the Faith as such, nor entirely, but only in so far as an explanation or a learned formula was borrowed, or rather stolen, from it to give value to tradition. . . . It is, therefore, permissible to say that Christian theology undertook a work of selection from Greek philosophy. But if it is true, in a sense, that it absorbed philosophy, seeing that it took the place of it, after assimilating a good part of its elements, it is certain that primitive Christian tradition was never exchanged for philosophy, nor Greek science substituted for the gospel, nor Plato taken for master in place of Christ and the apostles.[16]

Christians may borrow from Plato, but they do not confound him with Christ. The essential distinction between Christianity and Hellenism is thus maintained.

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[15] *Ibid*., 216.
[16] *Ibid*., 194-5.

It may seem odd to begin a study on the insights that postcolonial thought lends to the problem of early Christian self-definition with a discussion of the debate between Harnack and Loisy. But the basic contours of the problem, as developed in Harnack and Loisy, of the rightful place of development in our understanding of historical Christianity, itself a variation of the problem of the relationship of Hellenism and Christianity, are still very much present in more contemporary discussions in the field of early Christian thought, particularly at the intersections of history and theology. And the application of postcolonial thought to the problem of Christian self-definition in the Patristic arena of early Christian studies emerges within the context of this ongoing debate.

That this debate continues is illustrated well by a recent discussion between Khaled Anatolios, Lewis Ayres, and John Behr, on Ayres's *Nicaea and its Legacy.*[17] Ayres's response to the critiques of Anatolios and Behr is particularly informative, but let me first locate that response within the context of the critiques.

Behr criticizes Ayres for what Behr perceives to be Ayres's "unexamined presuppositions"[18] about Christian theology, citing Ayres's understanding of the way the term *God* functions, in the fourth century theologies of Athanasius and the Cappadocians, as one of his examples.

> Yet, for whatever reason, we have become so accustomed to speaking of "the triune God" or "the trinitarian God"—the one God who is three—that we find it difficult not to think of the Trinity whenever we read the word "God." So, when expounding the theology of Athanasius or one of the Cappadocians in his book, Ayres frequently, and without comment, refers to the "the triune God" or "trinitarian God," despite the fact that these terms are nowhere to be found in their writings (and the former cannot even be rendered in Greek). These theological formulations . . . affect his words about their works, introducing unspoken assumptions about what they are talking about[.][19]

Behr accuses Ayres of projecting Ayres's own voice onto Gregory Nazianzen in

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[17] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*.
[18] John Behr, "Response to Ayres: The Legacies of Nicaea, East and West," *Harvard Theological Review* 100:2 (2007): 146.
[19] *Ibid*., 147.

reading Nazianzen as having a “trinitarian” understanding of God,[20] a critique that, at first blush, should strike the student of early Christianity as odd. Of all the early Christian thinkers whose works are yet preserved, are we to stake a claim of improperly imposed trinitarian bias in the interpretation of the thought of one of the three Cappadocian champions of the Holy Spirit as full member of the Godhead?

This is not the only curious element of Behr's critique, however. I am at a loss to explain the “for whatever reason” sentence in the passage, cited above, from Behr's critique. Is John Behr, one of the foremost scholars of early Christian theology, really at a loss as to why “we have become so accustomed to speaking of the ‘triune God’ or the ‘trinitarian God’”?

The only way to make sense of this, to my mind, is to locate the key of Behr's critique not in the difficulty of interpreting Gregory Nazianzen's Greek,[21] or those nuances of the term θεός that turn on the presence of a definite article,[22] but in the phrase, from the passage cited above, “and the former cannot even be rendered in Greek.” The hermeneutical relevance to Behr's critique of this phrase is made clear when we consider Behr's later statement that

> Whether God as Trinity originates in the West with Augustine or not, certainly now it characterizes the language of Western theological discourse and, because of its familiarity, becomes an unexamined presupposition in the activity of reading others.[23]

The words “originates” and “now” particularly call attention to themselves in this statement and their implication is clear when combined with the aforementioned ‘cannot be rendered in Greek’ phrase. When and wherever the Western (not Christian) notion of God as Trinity originates, it is not with the Greek of the Cappadocians. It is a later development, and to read it into the Cappadocians is to impose this later—and for the West, contemporary—understanding on the *Christian* theology of the Cappadocians.

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[20] *Ibid*., 147-9.
[21] See *ibid*., 147-8.
[22] A centerpiece of Behr’s argument. See *ibid*., 146-7.
[23] *Ibid*., 149.

The Cappadocian articulation of the Godhead, in this critique, emerges not simply as orthodox, but as essential (in form and content, as is made clear by Behr's insistence on the importance of our descriptions corresponding to any limitations of Hellenistic Greek vocabularies). That trinitarianism which Behr perceives as Western and Augustinian represents a development and alteration of the Greek, Cappadocian doctrine.

Behr certainly does not phrase his critique in these terms, instead claiming that his concern is that the Greek Fathers be understood on their own terms.[24] But his claim that, "There is, then, a very real sense in which our [Behr's and Ayres's] distinct ecclesial traditions have given us different ears to hear the texts of antiquity differently", raises the suspicion that more is at work here than a simple concern with the accurate representation of the vocabulary and discourses of the Cappadocians.[25]

After all, Behr's argument is not that Ayres hears these texts differently, but incorrectly. Further, Behr's invocation of 'ecclesial tradition' suggests that only one of the two, distinct, traditions corresponds to the accurate meaning of Cappadocian theology, which is to say that the distinctiveness of one of those traditions (Behr's) lies in its being correct (or, at least, accurately reflecting the Cappadocians . . . who are correct).

I do not think it a leap to conclude that Behr sees in the Cappadocians an articulation of an essential Christian truth that has been preserved without the Augustinian husk that Ayres's Western ecclesial tradition has burdened this truth with. Thus, the concern with the issue of what relationship one should have to the possibility of development vis-à-vis Christian theology, and how that informs one's understanding of who one is as a Christian ("distinct ecclesial traditions"), seems to be the driving force of Behr's critique.

Anatolios's critique of Ayres also seems to concern itself, in part, with the issue of development—certainly Ayres perceives this to be the case,[26] though Anatolios himself

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[24] See *Ibid*., 150, 151.
[25] *Ibid*., 149.
[26] Lewis, Ayres, "A Response to the Critics of *Nicaea and Its Legacy*," *Harvard Theological Review* 100:2

denies it.[27] However, the issue of development seems to be at the core of Anatolios's statement that

> it is simply a basic hermeneutical rule, from Hellenistic literary theory to modern criticism, that the meaning of parts of a text are discerned through a view of the whole. By extension, the meaning of a given theologian's position with regard to a specific aspect of doctrine becomes intelligible through reference to the whole of his or her theological vision.[28]

This presentation of theological method hinges on the phrase "by extension," but it is not clear that there is any connection to be made between the interpretation of a single text and the interpretation of a thinker's entire canon. The two interpretive matters seem completely indifferent to one another unless you first accept the premise that the theologian's whole vision is present and fully formed from the instance of her first work to her very last.[29]

Here, the term "theologian" is key. Anatolios is not speaking simply about theologians, but those Christian theologians that are held to articulate orthodox doctrine, or, one might say, the essential truths of Christianity. Ayres himself notes that Anatolios seems to be concerned with "what it means to present a figure from Christian tradition as a saint".[30] While Behr would seem to want to preclude the possibility of any development of doctrine being conceived of as legitimate, Anatolios seems reluctant to even grant legitimacy to any perspective that would suggest that a theologian's own thought perhaps matures with time. The saint, for Anatolios, is no Loisian tree.

To Anatolios's critique, Ayres replies that "one of the most significant implications of modern historical approaches for the presentation of figures such as Athansaius is that their theologies are best described against the background of narratives

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(2007): 164-5.

[27] John Behr and Khaled Anatolios, "Final Reflections," *Harvard Theological Review* 100:2 (2007): 174.

[28] Khaled Anatolios, "Yes and No: Reflections on Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*," *Harvard Theological Review* 100:2 (2007): 155.

[29] As Ayres points out, this is untenable with regard to the trinitarian thought of Athanasius. Ayres, "A Response," 165.

[30] *Ibid*.

of development."[31] More significant, however, is Ayres's response to Behr. Referring to Athanasius, Ayres notes that the Alexandrian bishop's accounts of creation, the Word, and evil

> occur[] through a participation in and engaging of discussions about the ordering of the universe, the nature of evil, and the nature of God that are essential to both early Christian and non-Christian thought in late antiquity. . . . In such engagements with different traditions of discourse one must of course remain faithful to the way in which Christians confess that the Word is Jesus Christ and vice versa, but I do not see why discussion of such topics in itself starts one down a slippery slope. It is perfectly possible for us to maintain discussion of the Word *in se* alongside appropriate attention to the manner in which our knowledge of the incarnate Christ shapes our talk of the Word *in se*.[32]

With reference to Gregory Nazianzen, Ayres notes that

> The early Christian writers whose texts we study certainly entered into the practice of their faith through their initial introduction into Christian liturgy, community, and creed in ways that revealed Christ as the summation and completion of the law and the prophets. But these same writers also entered a highly traditioned faith, insofar as it participated in many traditions of reflection and speculation deeply rooted in the ancient world. When Gregory Nazianzen appears to assume the perfect qualities of a Godhead that finds its unity in being three, of course he assumes that our understanding of this Godhead is shaped by our awareness that the Word is the savior Jesus Christ, but he also participates in and contributes to a long-standing ancient discourse. It seems important to me that we interpret him as both within and without that ancient philosophical tradition; our skill as interpreters depends on our ability to grasp his very Christian relationship to the materials he appropriates.[33]

Again, we see that the Harnackian-Loisian dichotomy is very much alive in contemporary early Christian scholarship. Whether foundational Christian truths must be understood to be present, fully-formed, without external influence, in the Christian confession is at the core of both Behr's critique and Ayres's response. As with Harnack and Loisy, there is an extent to which this concern with development is ultimately a concern with the role of human agency in the articulation of truths that the scholars in question believe to be divine.[34]

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[31] *Ibid*.
[32] *Ibid*., 167-8.
[33] *Ibid*., 170.
[34] Harnack's statement, cited above (see note 9), that "the Greek Church is a *natural* religion; no [one] has arisen in its history since the third century to disturb the ordinary process by which a religion becomes

This concern is grounded, in large part, in a confessional commitment to the historical material under consideration. The question of development is, thus, intimately related to the question of how one defines Christianity, and, as Behr's reference to "distinct ecclesial traditions" strongly implies, how one defines oneself as a Christian (in other words, Christian self-definition).

Does the creedal articulation of Christian doctrine in terms of ὁμοούσια, φύσις, πρόσωπον represent a Greek philosophical imposition on the gospel; the divine essential form of that truth; or is it simply the human articulation of divine truths, couched within the limits of contemporary knowledge and discourse (i.e., what is Christianity)? And further, how is the ecclesial tradition one claims impacted by the basis of her orientation toward this question of the role of development in Christian theology (i.e., what is a Christian?)?

This framing of the question is largely grounded in an overarching theological meta-narrative in which the divine is revealed in history. From here, the question is whether the revelation of the divine is a radical, historical disruption, or a gradual revelation tempered by the limitations of humans as contingent, temporal beings.

Ayres would likely be reluctant to accept so Hegelian a reading of his position, considering his rejection of what he sees as the pervasive tendency in systematic theology toward a Hegelian pneumatology in which the divine Spirit (*Geist*) comes "to full realization *through* interaction with the world."[35] Indeed, Ayres's position on the centrality of the "plain sense of Scripture" makes clear that he has no room for a Hegelian view of the divine in which the divine itself develops through its phenomenological involvement with the world.

Recovering a sense of the plain sense of Scripture as read in the history of

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naturalised into common history," speaks to Harnack's insistence that if the kernel of the Gospel is truly divine, then there is no room for human authorship. One could easily change "natural religion" to "human religion," and the term "naturalised" to "humanized" without changing the meaning of what Harnack is asserting about Greek Christian theology.

[35] Ayres, *Nicaea*, 406.

> the Church and through the lens of the Church's authoritative statements will also radically condition the tendency to view the history of the Church as the history of an inevitable progress demanding further translation into the present. On the one hand, this is so because if the plain sense of Scripture is the focus of our attention then readings of it are to be ranked and considered as part of a Christian conversation over time not simply as stages in a historical narrative of progression.[36]

While Christian doctrine, or Spirit, may not be a matter of "a historical narrative of progression" for Ayres, the insistence that we understand doctrine to be "part of a Christian conversation over time;" that we focus on "the plain sense of Scripture as read in the history of the Church;" and that we understand Christian thinkers as both "within and without" their contemporary philosophical traditions; still points to a largely phenomenological understanding of the history of an absolute Christian essence. The essence itself may not develop, but human articulation of that essence, limited by its historicity, certainly does.

Again, we see that the basic contours of the question of Hellenism's relationship to Christianity, as presented in the opposing views of Harnack and Loisy, continue to operate in early Christian scholarship, particularly where that scholarship is self-consciously an act of theology as well as history. That sense of Christian essentialism remains firm on all sides, but how one understands the relationship of contingent humans to the articulation of that essence largely dictates the interpretation of Christianity's relationship to Hellenism and any other thought considered to be external to Christianity.

Here we have returned to the issue, posed by Ayres, with respect to Gregory Nazianzen, concerning "his very Christian relationship to the materials he appropriates."[37] In this statement, we see maintained a strict distinction between Gregory's Christianity and the philosophical material he appropriates (Hellenism). Recently, however, J. Rebecca Lyman has advocated for a different approach to the

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[36] *Ibid*., 422.
[37] Ayres, "A Response," 170.

problem of Christianity's relationship to Hellenism, an approach grounded in how ancient Christians themselves articulated this relationship, and which rejects the validity of thinking about the problem in terms of the relationship of two distinct, not to mention opposed, essentialities.[38] It is to Lyman's contributions to this debate that I now turn.

II. Lyman's Application of Postcolonial Thought to the Question of the Christian-Hellenism Binary, and the Limitations of Mimicry Analysis.

Invoking the work of Edward Said, Lyman notes that "centuries of scholarship [on the question of ancient Christian identity] have been based on comparison and opposition, usually linked to the institutional self-identity of a single normative Christianity."[39] Lyman rejects this narrative, suggesting that we not only need to "conceive of Hellenism more broadly" than we currently do, but also "reevaluate our assumptions concerning Christianity."[40]

I noted above how the debate between Ayres and Behr was as much about Christian self-defintion as it was about the problem of development, as the latter is really an issue that arises with respect to the former. In calling us to "reevaluate our assumptions concerning Christianity," Lyman has shone a spotlight on this question of self-definition, and in so doing has noted that the question of Christianity's relationship to Hellenism is less about theological debates than it is about how Christians understand (define) themselves. Lyman has thus entered the problem of Christian self-definition by way of the problem of the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism, and I, in this dissertation, am opting to follow her lead.

In analyzing this relationship and its role in Christian self-definition, Lyman has

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[38] As I will argue shortly, however, I do not think that Lyman fully escapes the tendency towards essentialism. See my discussion beginning on p. 34, below.

[39] J. Rebecca Lyman, "Passing," 36.

[40] *Ibid*., 41.

enlisted the notion of hybridity, as developed by postcolonial scholar Homi K. Bhabha.[41] Applying an analysis based on Bhabha's discussion of mimicry to the case of Justin Martyr, Lyman argues that, in defending the authority of Christianity on the basis of appeals to the antiquity of Hebrew Scripture and to truth, which is derived from the Logos, Justin was not acting on the assumption or acceptance of an essential distinction and incompatibility between Hellenism and Christianity. Instead,

> Justin's construction reflected his own interpretation of multiple cultures and one truth, drawing on Numenian transcendent Pythagoreanism and Hellenistic Judaism, rather than being a translation of *a priori* exclusive Christian belief into philosophical clothing. . . . At this point "Hellenism" is not an external tradition to be regulated by decisions of "assimilation" by a defined community or tradition, rather, Justin as a Hellenist portrays the unity and limits of the diverse contemporary culture to give voice to the transcendent claims and spiritual vibrancy of a second-century Christian.[42]

Justin is not only a Hellenist, but his argumentative approach for establishing the superiority of his own philosophical tradition—Christianity—are mimicries of Hellenism.[43] That is, the basic contours of Justin's argument on behalf of Christianity follow the same lines other Greek philosophical systems used in defending their own authoritativeness, suggesting that for Justin, his own identity was both Christian and Hellenist (hybrid), and that his Christian identity did not require him to drop any traces of Hellenism in his own thought.

Mimicry is also on display in Justin's definition of heresy, where heresy is understood as a "diabolical error", "a wrong opinion or perversion of truth", but not the same as philosophy.[44]

> [Justin's use of *hairesis*] is not the demonization of philosophy, but rather the explanation for the persistent distortion of truth in human history and religious practice. Philosophy appeared to be true, as did heresy, but they were only imitations of the original Logos . . . However, heresy by origin as well as content is alien and demonic; philosophy is imperfect,

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[41] See *ibid*., 37; Lyman, "NAPS," 219. These two articles largely parallel each other and thus I will draw from both in presenting Lyman's argument with respect to Justin, the problem of the Hellenism/Christianity binary opposition, and mimicry.

[42] *Ibid*., 219-20.

[43] Lyman, "Passing," 45-6.

[44] *Ibid*.

> yet ultimately inspired by the one Logos. Heresy is therefore not equated with philosophy or necessarily Hellenism, but is external "error" in comparison to both Justin's true Christianity and imperfect philosophy. The demonized and apocalyptic opposition is between truth and falsity, not Christianity and culture or "Hellenism" and "Judaism."[45]

Here lies what I consider one of Lyman's most important contributions. Justin, in narrating Christianity's relation to what we generally refer to as Hellenism (non-Christian Greek philosophy),[46] does not oppose them on the basis of one having truth and the other consisting of falsity. Rather than false, philosophy is simply imperfect to the extent that, though it derives truth from the Logos (all truth being derived thusly), it does not reveal the Logos itself, as Christianity does.

Thus, the question of the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity is not determined on the basis of which one is true, nor can the appearance of Hellenistic truths in Christianity be a corruption of Christian truth. All truth is derived from the Logos, the value of a doctrine, whatever its provenance, lies in whether it is true (thereby deriving from the Logos), not whether its provenance is Christian or Hellenistic.

> Heresy may be alien to truth, but in Justin's heresiology truth itself is diffuse; error and truth may appear internally or externally to all traditions as a means of discord or evidence of the Logos. Justin's "orthodox" Christianity therefore encouraged distinction, discernment, and exegesis of varied cultural texts as part of the teaching and recovery of the ancient universal truth of the one Logos. Succession or origin alone could not regulate authenticity or authority in such an understanding of universality and demonic mimesis. Transcendent truth may be discovered in various sources external to "Christianity," and error may be discovered within.[47]

This acceptance, by the Christian Justin, that there is truth within Hellenistic philosophy, even if not all truth is located there, is common to a number[48] of late antique

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[45] Lyman, "NAPS," 218.

[46] On this definition of Hellenism as non-Christian Greek philosophy, see note 164, below.

[47] *Ibid*., 219.

[48] Indeed, Lyman only refers to Justin here, and herself argues that the essentialist truth-based distinction and opposition between Hellenism and Christianity is a product of 4th century Christianity. Lyman, "Passing," 40. My extension of Lyman's point on Justin to "many" early Christian thinkers is grounded partly in my analysis in chapter three, where we will see Origen claim that non-Christian philosophy is an important preparation for receiving divine truths. See my discussion beginning on p. 110, of chapter three. The second century Christian Clement of Alexandria also holds that non-Christian Greek philosophy possesses truth, if not the ultimate truth of God. See Clement of Alexandria, *The Exhortation to the Greeks, The Rich Man's Salvation, and the Fragment of an Address Entitled To The Newly Baptized*, trans. G.W. Butterworth (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,

Christian authors who addressed the issue of Christianity's relationship to Hellenism. Truth and doctrine did not form a primary ground for distinction between Christianity and Hellenism for many late antique Christians, and thus, in thinking about the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism, we have to look elsewhere than some essentialist distinction between true Christianity and false Hellenism.

Lyman has thus set forth an important methodological principle, in addition to this highly important observation about that lack of a truth-based opposition between Hellenism and Christianity for a number of early Christian thinkers: If we want to think about what the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity was in late antiquity, and what the implications of that relationship are for Christian self-definition, it may be better to avoid an overarching metanarrative about orthodoxy *versus* development and instead ask simply how early Christians themselves understood that relationship. In my own analysis of early Christian authors, I have applied this methodological principle and concerned myself simply with the question of how Christians articulated the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity, and what the implications are of that articulated understanding for Christian self-definition.

Lyman's work is also important because, in its utilizations of Said and Bhabha, it has opened the door to the application of methodologies derived from postcolonial

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1919), 153-67. On Clement's views of Greek philosophy's possession of, and relationship to, truth, see Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria: Eight Lectures Preached Before the University of Oxford in the Year 1886* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1970), 47-8; John Ferguson, "The Achievement of Clement of Alexandria," *Religious Studies* 12:1 (1976): 63-4; Salvatore R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Chrstian Platonism and Gnosticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 10-11, 31, 232; J.T. Muckle, "Clement of Alexandria on Philosophy as a Divine Testament for the Greeks," *Phoenix* 5:3/4 (1951): 80 ; E.F. Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 122, 125, 128; *eadem*, *Clement of Alexandria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 197-203; and Albert C. Outler, "The 'Platonism' of Clement of Alexandria," *The Journal of Religion* 20:3 (1940): 238-9. In the *Contra Academicos*, Augustine writes, "[N]o one doubts that we're prompted to learn by the twin forces of authority and reason. Therefore, I'm resolved not to depart from the authority of Christ on any score whatsoever: I find no more powerful [authority]. As for what is sought out by the most subtle reasoning (subtilissima ratione)—for my character is such that I'm impatient in my desire to apprehend what the truth is not only by belief but also by understanding (non credendo solum sed etiam intellegendo—I'm still confident that I'm going to find it with the Platonists, and that it won't be opposed to our Holy Writ." Augustine, *Against the Academicians and The Teacher*, trans. Peter King (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1995),91-2; Augustine. *Aurelii Augustini Opera, Pars II: Contra Academicos; De Beata Vita; De Ordine; De Magistro; De Liber Arbitrio* (Turnhout: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1970), 60-61.

thought to early Christian thought. Certainly I have also followed Lyman in this respect.

But I diverge from Lyman on the specific mode of application of postcolonial thought to the problem of Christian self-definition (by way of mimicry analysis) because I see in this approach a tendency towards reinscription of the essentialist and oppositional problematics Lyman has sought to avoid. That said, I believe postcolonial theory still provides a useful methodological outlet for deconstructing and avoiding the essentialist problematic, particularly by way of Bhabha's development of the idea of transparency.

I will lay out Bhabha's notion of transparency and how my analysis based on it will proceed in the next chapter. But first, in order to demonstrate what I perceive to be the limitations of mimicry analysis, let me discuss Lyman's perspective on the implications of her analysis for contemporary Christian practice. According to Lyman,

> Justin's Christian theology of the universal Logos . . . demonstrates infinite possibilities for the assimilation and distinction of divergent traditions in second-century Hellenism. On the one hand, he includes various traditions within authentic revelation, since one Word is the source of all knowledge: "Whatever has been said correctly by all, belongs to us Christians."[49]

I leave off the "on the other hand" only because the above suffices to make my point. For Lyman, Justin's narration of a Logocentric truth available in many different traditions allows for a more meaningful, not to mention peaceful,[50] engagement with other, non-Christian traditions and perspectives. It is for this reason that Lyman could say, as we saw above, that "Justin's 'orthodox' Christianity therefore encouraged distinction, discernment, and exegesis of varied cultural texts as part of the teaching and recovery of the ancient universal truth of the one Logos."[51]

Lyman, in an article that stems from the same period as her work on Justin Martyr,[52] has lamented that even contemporary Christians are beset by

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[49] Lyman, "NAPS," 218-19.
[50] This concern will be more fully borne out in what follows.
[51] See note 47, above.
[52] At least with respect to publication dates, roughly between 2002-3. I note that these works appear in

> the old cognitive and emotional binary landscape of orthodoxy: to avoid extinction or dilution, Christianity must define itself as the one true faith, and how can our particular group define itself as best of all?[53]

Again, Lyman reminds us that we are operating in the realm of self-definition ("how can our particular group define itself"). She also points out that the drive to establish a version of orthodoxy and Christian unity on the basis of a single shared truth has, historically, "define[d] difference itself as opposition,"[54] and is at the root of "routine violence against Jews and other non-Christians."[55] Indeed, the drive for orthodoxy has even been the cause of violence against others who would call themselves Christians, a violence enabled by the claim to possess truth.

> The violent enforcement of orthodoxy in Christian history is the necessary and logical consequence of seeing an institution as the agent and protector of transcendent truth. Let us be clear. This righteous violence is not merely unfortunate. It is a blasphemy, the replacing of God by the Church. "Everyone knows Christians are non-violent, except Christians," commented Gandhi. The sins of ideological violence and genocide which are justly laid at the feet of modern secular totalitarian states must also be traced back to our own religious passions to protect and enforce the truth.[56]

Christianity must take responsibility for its past as well as learn from it.

> "Orthodoxy" is no mere chapter of our past, perpetrated by a lot of old white guys who have nothing to do with me or my Jesus, but in fact a living legacy of sacralized hegemonic speech, exclusive practices, and minimal tolerance for those who disagree with us. This is the persistence of our singular, ideological identity, which of course can be used by the right or left who wish to enforce either conformity or diversity.[57] To dismiss our coercive past as "accidental" is to construct yet another idealized version of faith which has the potential to be subject to the same totalitarian passions.[58]

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chronological proximity because I acknowledge that one should not view the work of any thinker, contemporary or ancient, in terms of an overarching system. Scholars change their views and evolve, but because the articles referred to here are produced around, roughly, the same time, I suggest there is likely congruence with respect to the views and motivations expressed in each.

[53] J. Rebecca Lyman, "Natural Resources: Tradition without Orthodoxy," *Anglican Theological Review* 84:1 (2002): 70.

[54] *Ibid*., 71.

[55] *Ibid*., 72.

[56] *Ibid*., 77.

[57] Denise K. Buell has also made this observation. See Denise K. 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 Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 162-3.

[58] *Ibid*.

Lyman has seen, in Justin's opposition of truth and falsity, as opposed to Christianity and Hellenism, the potential for the engagement of other cultures and traditions without violence. If truth comes from God, then we need not be reactionary toward other perspectives as though they could not possibly be true simply because they do not emerge from our own Christian tradition.

But, Lyman has failed to see the way in which Justin's claim that "Whatever has been said correctly by all, belongs to us Christians"[59] itself represents an instance of "a living legacy of sacralized hegemonic speech, exclusive practices, and minimal tolerance for those who disagree with us," even if in a far more subtle way than, to use one of Lyman's examples, genocide does.

Justin is hardly the only early Christian thinker to make the case that non-Christians possess truth but that all truth belongs to Christians by way of the Logos, the font of truth. But this is no discourse of tolerance, inclusion, or engagement.

This is a transfer discourse that runs parallel to, and is no less hegemonic than, that transfer discourse relating to Jews whose historical consequences we are more familiar with. Rather than the divine promises of the Hebrew scriptures, what is transferred here is the philosophy, knowledge, truth of Hellenism.

Certainly, it is accurate to say that there does not exist the history of violence against Greeks, or perhaps Greek philosophers, of the sort that has been occasioned by the Christian transfer doctrine with respect to Jews. But lest we forget the fifth century lynching of Hypatia, we cannot pretend this sort of rhetoric did not itself demean non-Christians, and justify acts of violence. Indeed, the only reason this sort of rhetoric largely goes unnoticed as a parallel transfer discourse is that those populations of the ancient world that we think of as Greek we also largely think of as Christian during those periods of antiquity in which Christianity enjoyed a hegemonic position, and thus ignore the violence internal to this sort of rhetoric, a violence that has played out much more

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[59] See note 49, above.

regularly—not to mention proximately—in the case of Jewish persons.

Thus, I cannot help but feel that Lyman's casting of Justin as postcolonial mimic is not wholly effective where her aim of producing a non-hegemonic approach to Christian self-definition is concerned. Justin may be seen to intervene in the asserted hegemony of Hellenistic thought in making use of Hellenistic approaches for establishing the authority of his philosophy, but such a perspective would itself only be valid to the extent that we can think of Hellenistic thought as a monolith opposed to Christianity (and would be thus willing to endorse an essentialist premise). Otherwise, it is not clear whose hegemony Justin is disrupting.

Further, and perhaps more to the point, Justin cannot be at the same time a mimic of Hellenism and a Hellenist.[60] Lyman casts him as both, and thus we are left to wonder whether Justin should really be conceived of as an imperial subject, using mimicry to challenge imperial hegemony, or whether he is simply participating in the particular normativities of his time, normativities which he does not challenge despite the fact that they themselves buttress a hegemony that, in its Roman imperial form, was anti-Christian.

Lyman argues that, "To be followers of Jesus, Christians in the end must refuse the temptations of hegemonic speech."[61] But Justin's speech is only less hegemonic to the extent it does not coincide with actual political power. His is still a discourse of supersession and appropriation, effecting a normalization of Christian perspectives that grounds a Christian supremacy that would later enact the acts of violence Lyman has decried above. A postcolonial methodology simply should not legitimize that sort of

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[60] Let me nuance this statement as the first impression it leaves is far too essentialist. If the claims of imperial hegemony have only a cursory relation to Hellenistic accounts of what truth is and how one possesses it, then Justin could very well be both a mimic and a Hellenist. However, if the claims of imperial hegemony are based on a Hellenistic model of truth and epistemological access to it, then the only difference between the Empire's claim and Justin's is that the former has an actual army behind it. The underlying values that inform the claim to the possession of truth are the same, in which case Justin is not mimicking an imperial tendency, he is simply participating, as a Hellenist, in a Hellenistic tendency that has the capacity for violent oppression when attached to broader political sovereignty with a police or military wing.

[61] Lyman, "Resources," 78.

normalization, lending it the guise of inclusiveness.

Also problematic, Lyman's account ultimately preserves an essentialist account of Christianity despite her opposition to an essentialized oppositional binary whose terms are Christianity and Hellenism. Lyman defines orthodoxy as "the human construction to defend the teaching core of Christianity,"[62] and "the public, disciplinary discourse of Christian identity—a totalized binary discourse resting on collective statements given a divine power."[63] Lyman, thus, articulates her own binary, a difference that is oppositional: Orthodoxy *versus* Christianity.

Lyman's argument boils down to the need to abandon Orthodoxy for Christianity.

> Orthodoxy is not the language for the stoic raging grandmothers. I cannot believe that even as "progressive," "dynamic," "radical" or "repentant" it can engender adequate humility, openness, renewal, and surprise. Orthodoxy as ideology has concealed its own human process—out of anxiety, out of love, and out of passion for the truth. But the temptation to replace a living God by an enforceable code for all the best reasons continues to violate the justice, the graciousness, and the true mystery of the Holy.[64]

This opposition of *the true mystery of the Holy* with a humanly constructed *Orthodoxy* seems to replace one essentialism (Orthodoxy) with another (the Holy). Because postcolonial thought is largely focused on challenging essentialist claims that can then function to ground hegemonic activity,[65] I cannot countenance a postcolonial methodology whose outcome is another essentiality, even if I find this particular essentiality more palatable (which I do).

However, there is one final weakness that emerges in light of Lyman's postcolonial narrative of Christian truth as engaging and inclusive of other cultures, and her articulation of a non-hegemonic Christianity. This particular weakness lies at the

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[62] *Ibid*., 73.
[63] *Ibid*., 75.
[64] *Ibid*., 78.
[65] Said, for example, in a 1995 Afterword to his seminal *Orientalism*, described this work as "explicitly anti-essentialist, radically skeptical about all categorical designations such as Orient and Occident". Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 331. On Bhabha, see my discussion in Roberto E. Alejandro, "Christology and Hybridity in Nemesius of Emesa," *Studia Patristica* 52 (2012), 266-7.

heart of what I understand the postcolonial critique to be, but at the same time points the way to what I consider a more useful utilization of postcolonial thought in the reading of early Christian texts.

The problem to which I refer is Lyman's regular invocation of the term 'human' and her use of this term in a totalizing sense despite the very circumscribed and particular way in which she defines it. This term, appearing twenty-two times in the article "Natural Resources: Tradition without Orthodoxy", is defined, by Lyman, as "embodied, individual creatures of God",[66] and used synonymously with "children of God" and "God's children".[67] Lyman extends this definition of human to non-Christians with the statement that, "The only way to understand how we may be connected and in relation to the rest of God's children in our world is to recover our own interior diversity, and remember that we ourselves are not one."[68]

But here Lyman runs the risk of falling into the problem I observed in the introduction with respect to Plato and his Egyptian priest. Does the value of non-Christians lie in the fact that, like Christians, they too are children of God (in other words, in correspondence to a set of explicitly Christian values)? What room does that leave the non-Christian to exercise agency in their own construction, or to be known on her own terms rather than Lyman's Christian ones. A non-Christian, for example, may very well have no interest in being described as a child of an explicitly Christian God.

Lyman defines the term human in explicitly Christian ways ("children of God") but then applies it in a totalizing way by attributing that children-of-Godness to non-Christians. This strikes me as no less an example of "a living legacy of sacralized hegemonic speech, exclusive practices, and minimal tolerance for those who disagree with us."[69]

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[66] Lyman, "Resources," 70.
[67] *Ibid*., 72, 80.
[68] *Ibid*., 72. See also Lyman's reference to that "basic justice the children of God owe to each other." *Ibid*., 80.
[69] See note 58, above.

Lyman, and this I will happily concede, is well intentioned here. Her attempt at universalization by way of the totalizing "children of God" is an attempt to address the violence and intolerance that she has observed rise from the practice of Christian self-definition and which so shock her conscience. Further, this article addresses an expressly theological concern and is directed at other, believing Christians, and it must be acknowledged that Lyman's Christian-centric human totalization is in part due to the context of her intended audience.

But this speaks to an aspect of what Lyman refers to as hegemonic speech that does not emerge in mimicry analysis, but which transparency analysis (as we shall see in the next chapter) does: the fact that the hegemonic functioning of any given speech is often a result of an identity between speaker and audience. In speaking to her Christian audience, Lyman uses a Christian-centric definition of the human in order to impart the importance of not allowing a commitment to a particular narrative of Christianity to devolve into violence against non-Christians. But in positing that Christian-centric solution, Lyman may be inadvertently reinscribing the idea that it is precisely from a Christian standpoint that the world ought to be defined and understood, thus reinscribing the hegemony she seeks to dissolve.

And while that potential reinscription of hegemony causes me to pause with respect to taking up Lyman's mimicry analysis, it must be pointed out that Lyman proposes a series of questions at the end of "Natural Resources" that not only point to that deconstruction of hegemonic speech which she has sought to undertake, but which open the door to the transparency analysis I will present in the next chapter. Having shared a story of her mother challenging a racist statement made by her grandmother, Lyman recounts that

> my world cracked open at the unexpected passion in my mother's voice as she exposed this violation of divine and human hospitality, of what women offer to other women, and what basic justice the children of God owe to each other. "What were you doing?" she seemed to ask my grandmother; "Who did you think you were?" What are we doing? Who

do we think we are?[70]

With the question "who do we think we are?", Lyman again reminds us that the problem we are dealing with is ultimately the problem of Christian self-definition, and that one's focus must remain here if one is to engage in the deconstruction of what she has referred to as hegemonic speech.

Thus, in Lyman, I locate at least three very important contributions to the investigation of the problem of the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity. The first is her introduction of the application of postcolonial theory to the question. The second is her methodological focus on letting early Christians themselves narrate their relationship to Hellenism, rather than becoming embroiled in the question of overarching metanarratives about doctrine, essence, and development. The third is that the question of the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity, because it speaks to who Christians understand themselves to be, is ultimately a problem of self-definition, and it is here where focus must remain.

Though following Lyman on these points, I diverge with respect to her application of a mimicry analysis to early Christian thought, and a brief review of scholarly attempts that have followed in Lyman's footsteps will help make clear what I perceive to be the limitations of this approach. Following Lyman, Virginia Burrus applied Bhabha's notion of mimicry to the *Acts of Paul and Thekla*, *Kleitophon and Leukippe*, *Ethiopian Story*, and *Joseph and Aseneth*.[71] For Burrus, all are ancient romances in which virginity becomes a hybrid site of resistance against Roman cultural hegemony, particularly in light of the imposition of gender and family norms.

Thus, when either Christian, Jewish, or non-Roman pagan authors operate within Hellenistic discourses, they are all engaged in (often subversive) acts of mimicry.[72] Besides its interesting and probing readings of the texts under consideration, perhaps the

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[70] Lyman, "Resources," 80.
[71] Virginia Burrus, "Mimicking Virgins: Colonial Ambivalence and the Ancient Romance", *Arethusa* 38 (2005):49-88.
[72] *Ibid*., 49, 52-3, 84-5.

most important contribution of this article lies in its observation that "reading resistance"[73] in the literature of the Hellenistic world cannot be limited only to Christians and Jews, but that other non-Roman Hellenists were equally the subjects of a hegemony that, for them, was hardly autochthonous.

However, while I find Burrus's reading of the texts very thought provoking, I cannot help but feel that the resistance to gender norms Burrus locates in the text is her own, and not that of the ancient texts themselves. As much as I would like to find in ancient Christianity and Judaism a resistance to (imperially imposed?) gender norms, the history of neither religion strongly suggests a serious interrogation of those norms and their accompanying oppression of women.

Here we have reached a limitation I also observe in Lyman. In attempting to cast her authors (not all of whom are Christian) as resistors of imperial norms engaged in subversive acts of mimicry, Burrus seems to be seeking to locate in the past a critique of norms that she finds problematic and which are still operating in the present. This too was Lyman's project, holding up Justin Martyr as a historical example of someone who, operating within the Christian tradition, pursued a non-oppositional Christian identity vis-à-vis Hellenism.

But there is no reason why either scholar could not pursue the same critique of an ongoing problematic norm by using the historical material as an illustration of the limitations of historical rhetoric or paradigms that continue to operate today. By insisting that the critique of an ongoing norm itself is actually located in the past, both Burrus and Lyman are engaging in their version of crafting an orthodoxy, which we saw Lyman describe as

> no mere chapter of our past, perpetrated by a lot of old white guys who have nothing to do with me or my Jesus, but in fact a living legacy of sacralized hegemonic speech, exclusive practices, and minimal tolerance for those who disagree with us. This is the persistence of our singular, ideological identity, which of course can be used by the right or left who

[73] See *ibid*., 53.

wish to enforce either conformity or diversity.[74]

By insisting that one can locate in the past some social critique relevant to today, even when it is less than clear that our ancient voices really resisted the norm at issue (e.g., the subordination of women to male authority by way of marriage—one of the norms deconstructed by Burrus), one fails to heed the critique Lyman herself made, that "To dismiss our coercive past as 'accidental' is to construct yet another idealized version of faith which has the potential to be subject to the same totalitarian passions."[75]

Because I agree with Lyman that "Christians in the end must refuse the temptations of hegemonic speech"[76]—or anyone for that matter—I worry that trying to locate in the far past a critique that might not otherwise be there simply serves to craft a new orthodox canon of thought that will be held up as potentially above reproach and thus "subject to the same totalitarian passions" Lyman has warned us against, and which we saw earlier can be facilitated by a level of identity between speaker and audience (again, lending itself to the crafting of a new canon on the basis of that identity if one is not careful).

An approach that better resists the "temptations of hegemonic speech" is one that simply looks to our past to consider whether we are inheriting its problematic values,[77] yet failing to interrogate or reconsider them. We need not reach into the past for the solution itself, except to the extent we actually are committed to being part of "a <u>living</u> legacy of sacralized hegemonic speech."

And, it should be noted, that with respect to the question of orthodoxy itself, letting the past serve principally as illustration of a problematic is exactly the path Lyman has set out on. It is her use of Justin Martyr as a source for an alternative path that bends Lyman back into a hegemonic practice she rejects, and which perhaps made it

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[74] See note 58, above.
[75] *Ibid*.
[76] See note 61, above.
[77] Denise K. Buell has referred to this process of the past informing the present as "haunting," which she says is a notion that "enables us to think about how ancient texts have variously helped produce, resist, and transform contingent modern forms of human classification." Buell, "God's Own People," 165.

harder to perceive the way Justin's insistence that all truth is ultimately a Christian possession is itself fairly hegemonic (at least if you are a non-Christian who was under the mistaken impression that your own tradition developed or produced some particular truth).

Lyman's use of mimicry analysis thus obscured Justin's own hegemonic practices, and thus ended up operating to prevent a critique of the early Christian thinker. This insulates Justin from some of the problematic consequences of his theology, and we see a similar occurrence of this sort of insulation in Andrew S. Jacobs's *Remains of the Jews*.[78]

In this work, Jacobs reads a number of early Christian texts through a postcolonial lens in order to demonstrate how Christian discourse about Jews is a mode of Christian self-identification and how this insight creates a space for resistance.[79] As part of this work, Jacobs looks at two authors—Origen and Eusebius—who also happen to be the authors I will analyze in chapters three and four.

In Jacobs's own Bhabhan interpretation of the *Contra Celsum*, Origen is cast as a colonial mimic. As a Christian faced with the hegemony of both the Roman Empire and the more established Judaism of his day,[80] Origen adopts the Jewish voice as an act of resistance.[81] Thus, when Origen speaks "Jewishly", using Jewish knowledge against Greek or Jewish opponents, Origen is engaging in an act of mimicry that allows him "to resist Jewish control of the text" (in the case of the Septuagint) and to establish a level of legitimacy for Christianity that would serve as the grounds for genuine dialogue between Christianity and the more powerful Judaism.[82]

This portrait of Origen as mimic stands in stark contrast with Jacobs's depiction of Eusebius's orientation towards Jews. According to Jacobs,

What we see in Eusebius . . . is a new epistemic totality that strives for an

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[78] Andrew S. Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian Empire in Late Antiquity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).
[79] *Ibid*., 12.
[80] See *ibid*.,61, 62-3, 65.
[81] *Ibid*., 62-3.
[82] *Ibid*., 64-6.

> absolute and comprehensive historical vision of Christian identity and Jewish difference. Historical construction, and totalizing absorption of difference (that is, the Jew), becomes a towering structure, almost (but not quite) too unwieldy for the Christian historian to master; the achievement of control over this enormous history (and the others within it) thus demonstrates Christian cognitive control in a grand sense. The objects of historical reconstruction become the objects of Christian imperial knowledge and control.[83]

The problem is that if one takes, for example, Origen's *Contra Celsum* and Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica*, the two primary texts analyzed in this dissertation, and compares their depictions of Jews and Judaism, the two treatments are hard to distinguish. In both authors, Jews are depicted as incapable of understanding the spiritual sense of scripture, and on that basis as being inferior to Christians, who have in the meantime intercepted the inheritance once promised to Jews by God.[84]

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[83] *Ibid*., 28-9.

[84] For Eusebius's depiction of Jews in the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, see my discussion beginning on p. 129 of chapter three. In book five of *Contra Celsum*, Origen writes, "For from those in Sion a spiritual law has come forth and changed from them to us," going on to explain that, "the reason why we [Christians] do not live like the Jews is that we think the literal interpretation of the laws does not contain the meaning of the legislation. We maintain that 'when Moses is read, a veil lies upon their heart' because the meaning of the Mosaic law has been hidden from those who have not eagerly followed the way through Jesus Christ. We know that 'if anyone shall turn to the Lord (now the Lord is the Spirit), the veil is taken away" and "with unveiled face he reflects' as it were 'the glory of the Lord' which is in the thoughts hidden in the text." Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 5.33 (p. 290), 5.60 (p. 310-11). See book five of *Contra Celsum* for Origen's treatment of Jews more generally within that text. On Origen's attitude toward Jews, see also R.C.P. Hanson, *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition* (London: S.P.C.K., 1954); Jean Daniélou, *Origen*, trans. Walter Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1955); N.R.M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976); David Rokeah, *Jews, Pagans and Christians in Conflict* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1982); Paul M. Blowers, "Origen, the Rabbis, and the Bible: Toward a Picture of Judaism and Christianity in Third-Century Caesarea," in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); Roger Brooks, "Straw Dogs and Scholarly Ecumenism: The Appropriate Jewish Background for the Study of Origen," in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); Peter J. Gorday, "Moses and Jesus in *Contra Celsum* 7.1-25: Ethics, History and Jewish-Christian Eirenics in Origen's Theology," in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); McGuckin, "Origen on the Jews," *Studies in Church History* 29 (1992): 1-13 in *Recent Studies in Early Christianity, a Collection of Scholarly Essays: Christianity in Relation to Jews, Greeks, and Romans*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999); Léon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism, Vol. 1: From the Time of Christ to the Court Jews*, trans. Richard Howard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews* (2004); Joseph S. O'Leary, "Judaism," in *The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology: The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. John A. McGuckin (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004); and Jacobs, *Christ Circumcised* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012). For an analysis of the problem of early Christian representations of Jews informed by postcolonial thought, see also Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Much of this extant scholarship on the question of Origen's relation to Jews focuses on the question of his use of Rabbinic sources and his relationships with contemporary Jews. McGuckin's treatment is perhaps

Thus, it would be hard to seriously contend that Origen and Eusebius engage in substantively distinct projects with regards to their depictions of Jews. In both authors, Jews are not only knowable by the Christian but inferior to the Christian (and for similar reasons related to their failure to perceive the spiritual sense of scripture). Yet, we are asked to view one author as colonial resister, and the other as imperialist anti-Jewish oppressor.

What side of a particular date in the fourth century you happen to be on should not enact so great a distinction between rather similar perspectives.[85] To pretend that Origen is an oppressed Christian resisting authority in his anti-Jewish comments excuses Origen's role in furthering anti-Jewish norms in the Christian context, and places him outside the reach of any potential criticism we may have for those aspects of his thought, thus insulating him.

Not only does this fall short of Lyman's call to "refuse the temptations of hegemonic speech," it also falls short of Bhabha's own example of criticizing colonial subjects when they engage in the same problematics as their oppressors (Bhabha being the principal postcolonial thinker informing the works of Lyman, Burrus, and Jacobs which I have been discussing).

Bhabha hardly casts every colonial subject as a noble resistor of hegemony, and he criticizes both colonial authorities and colonized nationalists alike for engaging in oppositional binaries.[86] But in their application of Bhabha's concept of mimicry to early Christian texts, early Christian scholars have neglected this aspect of Bhabha's thought.

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the most enlightening of those accounts, showing that Origen's use of Hebrew Scripture is largely Pauline and that there is little evidence that Origen had any real interpersonal relationships with Rabbinic contemporaries, at least not any that would engender exegetical cooperation. My own analysis does not at all touch upon the question of Origen's relation to his Jewish contemporaries as this is hardly something one can glean from the text of the *Contra Celsum*.

[85] Jacobs' more recent work, *Christ Circumcised*, repeats this tendency to view pre- and post-Constantinian Christians as engaged in distinct projects in their appropriation of the "Jewish voice". See Andrew S. Jacobs, *Christ Circumcised: A Study in Early Christian History and Difference*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 54-5, 59-61, 122-5.

[86] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 54-5, 171.

Participation in a problematic normativity does not become heroic simply because one is a colonial or imperial subject. The simple fact of being colonized does not excuse, nor render innocuous—or even less, render a resistance—this sort of participation.

In fairness to my predecessors, however, I must note that the theological bent in the Patristics wing of early Christian studies makes this a field where non-traditional methodologies like postcolonial theory can often encounter a less than welcome reception. To this extent, the methodological application of mimicry has helped to ease the way for acceptance of postcolonial critiques within early Christian scholarship, and in particular their application to "the Fathers."

Mimicry is an idea that has already been applied in the arena of Biblical criticism, and it would seem that Patristic scholars have largely followed the trends in that field, where resistance to empire has often been set as the focal point of postcolonial readings of Biblical texts. While discussing the evolution of postcolonial thought, R.S. Sugirtharajah, a prominent voice in postcolonial Biblical criticism, has said,

> In the initial stages Homi Bhabha, one of the triumvirate who were at the forefront in shaping the theory,[87] wrote that the aim of postcolonialism was to "intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic 'normality' to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, peoples. . . ." A later definition brings out the larger agenda of postcolonialism which embraces political ideals of transnational social justice and its praxiological nature.[88]

This transition from theoretical framework to praxiological one that Sugirtharajah reads in the development of postcolonial thought has resulted in an approach to Biblical criticism whose "primary aim . . . is to situate empire and imperial concerns at the center of the Bible and biblical studies."[89]

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[87] Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak. Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*, 12.

[88] *Ibid*., 13-4. For more on the trajectory of postcolonial thought and how it has influenced Biblical criticism, see also the first two essays in Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia, eds., *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

[89] *Ibid*. 46. The collection of essays edited by Sugirtharajah and Fernando Segovia in *A Postcolonial*

Sugirtharajah has criticized early postcolonial thinkers for not sufficiently considering the way colonized persons used theology in explicitly anti-colonial ways,[90] attributing this to a secular bias internal to the theoretical sources that informed postcolonial thought.

> Postcolonial criticism which was influenced by Marxism, poststructuralism, and psychoanalysis, and which is now thriving in modern, secular, and liberal cultures, has sadly paid little attention to the potency of religion and theology among Third World peoples. The secular bias and assumptions of postcolonial discourse have not only increased the gap between the theory and religions, but have also failed to acknowledge alternatives rooted in religion. There is a considerable distance between the theoretical interest of postcolonialism and the hermeneutical interests of postcolonial societies. Religion and religious symbols have been used successfully both in colonial and postcolonial societies as a way of surviving, subverting, and challenging colonialism and Christendom.[91]

Sugirtharajah has helped usher a transition away from theory in the direction of acknowledging and reading the practice of resistance to colonialism both in Biblical texts, as well as in the theologies formed by non-Western modes of Biblical interpretation. But moving in this more practical directions has had some unintended consequences, suggests Korean theologian Namsoon Kang.

In an essay titled, "Who/What is Asian," Kang argues that postcolonial theory in Asian theological contexts has often operated to create an essentialized notion of *Asian* that ignores Asia's diversity, and is itself a participation in problematic Western intellectual habits.

> When Asian theologians reject traditional theology as being specifically Western and culturally inadequate to the Asian context, they ironically ascribe the same homogeneous cultural essence to Asia that Orientalists utilize to contrast Asia with the West's self-portrait. They change the evaluative connotation of this essence from negative to positive but retain its cognitive content unchanged. For an Asian identity they look to the stereotype that Orientalists imposed on Asia to establish a superior

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Commentary on the New Testament Writings, not surprisingly, reflects this perspective of what postcolonial Biblical criticism ought to look like. Fernando Segovia and R.S. Sugirtharajah, eds., *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009).

[90] R.S. Sugirtharajah, "Complacencies and Cul-de-sacs: Christian Theologies and Colonialism," in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, ed. Catherine Keller et. al. (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 35-6.

[91] *Ibid*., 36.

> Western identity. In favor of a kind of unity as *Asian* against the West, Asian theologians themselves tend to erase the diversity and complexity of Asian peoples and cultures and to overlook the very fact that the West is as heterogeneous and hybrid as Asia.[92]

Kang says that, while rallying around what is effectively a stereotype (here, the Asian writ large)[93] might be an effective strategy of resistance where a colonized people are demanding equality, it nonetheless has other, more concerning, effects as well.

> To the deep-seated Orientalist prejudice [against Asians], the Asian theologians' attempt to increase their self-esteem offers an analogous response: *Asia is beautiful*. This rhetoric has a healing effect on people's self-esteem. Their legitimate claim to equal respect with the West turns into an ironic affirmation of the imposed Asian identity. Although understandable and effective, this inverse use of the imposed Asian identity can easily turn into a tyrannical imposition of the proper ways of being Asian and of the proper image of Asia. Moreover, it represses the recognition of Asia's internal diversity and potential for endogenous transformation, and tempts one to discourage and even to oppress and dismiss Asian demands for emancipatory movements—for example, women's liberation movements—on the grounds of their "foreign" origin.[94]

As a counter to this tendency, Kang proposes a return to a more theoretically informed premise, and suggests that an understanding of Homi Bhabha's notion of cultural hybridity might address something she has identified as a shortcoming of those theological interpretations whose impetus is the energy of resistance.

> Bhabha argues that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the "Third Space of enunciation." . . . The Third Space is not a fixed space, but an indeterminate one, which occurs with cultural hybridity. All forms of culture are, according to Bhabha, continually in a process of hybridity, and hybridity is the third space that enables other positions to emerge. . . . The monolithic categories of gender, class, race, or ethnicity are re-situated in terms of borderline-crossings and *in-between* spaces—the Third Space of hybridity.[95]

Here hybridity stands as the negation of "monolithic categories" like culture, race, or gender. I propose that hybridity could similarly stand as a source for the negation of similarly monolithic categories like orthodoxy, which Lyman has challenged. But that

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[92] Namsoon Kang, "Who/What Is Asian? A Postcolonial Theological Reading of Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism," in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, ed. Catherine Keller et. al. (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 103-4.

[93] See *ibid*.

[94] *Ibid*., 104-5.

[95] *Ibid*., 114-5.

hybridity is better understood in terms of transparency, not mimicry.

My reason for suggesting this can be illustrated by reference to an essay by Joseph Marchal, in which Marchal applies mimicry in conjunction with other theoretical sources to 1 Corinthians.[96] Marchal describes Bhabhan hybridity by way of mimicry in the following manner.

> Since the colonized's mimicry creates a hybridized version of the apparently superior and pure colonial culture, the colonized do not become like the colonizer, but inhabit a third "in-between" space. This hybrid phenomenon fractures the founding dualism that asserts inherent difference and stable identity for both groups. (Indeed, the colonizer's demand for imitation implies that the inferior race can become like the supposedly superior race.) When colonizing discourse calls for imitation, it contradicts itself, since the superiority of the colonized is based on the premise of inherent ethnic, racial, or cultural status.[97]

I agree with Marchal that hybridity disrupts the terms upon which claims of superiority are made, and on that basis, the claim of superiority itself. But as we can see in Marchal's description, thinking in terms of mimicry tends to focus on the relationship between colonized and colonizer. That relationship is defined by the claim of superiority of the colonizer, and the resistance of the colonized.

But as Kang pointed out, this focus on the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized often results in commitments that seem all too familiar, and not in a good way. Rallying around a stereotype, says Kang, imposes its own rigidities on those historically conceived by the West as *other* in much the same way the origination of the stereotype by a colonial presence does. This is mimicry, but it is not resistance.

Kang has suggested a stronger emphasis on theory could resolve this, and Bhabha himself has pointed out that the importance of theory is precisely that it guards against the re-essentializing, even if in a more palatable direction, that Kang has observed in thinking about who or what the Asian is.

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[96] Joseph A. Marchal, "Mimicry and Colonial Differences: Gender, Ethnicity, and Empire in the Interpretation of Pauline Imitation," in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies*, ed. Laura Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009): 101-27.

[97] *Ibid*., 107.

> [Frantz] Fanon's moving metaphor [of occult instability] - when reinterpreted for a theory of cultural signification - enables us to see not only the necessity of theory, but also the restrictive notions of cultural identity with which we burden our visions of political change. For Fanon, the liberatory people who initiate the productive instability of revolutionary cultural change are themselves the bearers of a hybrid identity. They are caught in the discontinuous time of translation and negotiation, in the sense in which I have been attempting to recast these words. In the moment of liberatory struggle, the Algerian people destroy the continuities and constancies of the nationalist tradition which provided a safeguard against colonial cultural imposition. They are now free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous intertextual temporality of cultural difference. The native intellectual who identifies the people with the true national culture will be disappointed. The people are now the very principle of 'dialectical reorganization' and they construct their culture from the national text translated into modern Western forms of information technology, language, dress.[98]

Bhabha is here interpreting a passage he cites from Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*,[99] in which he reads Fanon's description of liberatory struggle as a theoretical source for thinking not only about the fiction of essentialized culture, but the identical demands imposed by political projects that place a rigid, essentialized self at the center (whether this self revolves around the notion of the nation, as in the passage just cited, or in the sort of broader yet similarly erasive 'Asian' identity Kang has challenged). In resisting their colonizer, those Algerians are not resisting some essential notion of West, a resistance that would then take the form of rejecting anything viewed as Western: "information technology, language, dress".

The use of these Western forms shows that Algerians, in resisting, do not conceive of themselves as essentially Algerian and in a fight for that essence, the way the nationalist might. Instead, the Algerian use of those Western forms shows how elusive any essentialized sense of the Algerian as Algerian might be, regardless of whose mouth (the colonizer or the nationalist) we find the discourse in.

A theoretically informed application of postcolonial thought, at least one based on Bhabhan ideas, should not result in the sort of re-essentialized (cultural) identities that

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[98] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 55.
[99] *Ibid*., 51.

Bhabha has explicitly said are undermined by the sort of work he is trying to do in his theory. Those essentialized cultural identities are part and parcel to the discursive problematics that inform the colonial claim of superiority. They should not be the product of a critical framework concerned with the basis of superiority claims and their real life consequences as they have played out in the experience of colonized peoples.

As I have outlined above, we have not escaped the problem of essentialism in Lyman's use of Bhabhan mimicry, nor in the analyses of other Patristic and late antique texts undertaken by those who have followed Lyman's lead. Kang has suggested that Biblical studies itself is still wrestling with this limitation in its current application of postcolonial thought to Biblical texts, and so it should hardly be a surprise that we see a similar issue emerging in the Patristic realm, where engagement with postcolonial theory is a more recent phenomenon than in Biblical studies.

Kang has proposed a way around the problem of re-essentialization that she sees in some postcolonial applications to theology, saying,

> in a postcolonial approach of Asian theology, the question, *What is the Asian?* yields to the question, *Who is the Asian?* Although the "what" question is the search for the unchanging, essential core of the Asian, the "who" question is the search for the ever-changing nature of the Asian as hybrid, decentered, multiple selves.[100]

Lyman has pointed towards a similar idea in her suggestion that Christians need to better recognize their own interior diversity, a notion that would seem to focus on the (hybrid, decentered, multiple) "who" of Christianity more than the "what." In a way then, Lyman has attempted what Kang has suggested, yet has not escaped the essentialist problem. But there is an important difference that might make a move in the direction that Kang suggests more difficult for someone like Lyman to execute without falling back into the habit of essentialization.

Kang's *Asian* is a product of being colonized, but Lyman's work is a product of Lyman's discomfort with being the colonizer. For the Asian person, the label of

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[100] Kang, "Who/What is Asian?", 116-7.

"Asian" is an essentialism—at least initially—imposed from without. For Lyman, as a Christian, and especially as a White Christian operating in an Anglo-American context, the label of "Christian" has been imposed from within, rendering a very different relationship to the problem of essentialism (since the Christian has historically identified precisely as Christian in some explicitly defined way). That is, abandoning the what may not be quite as easy for Lyman where the term "Christianity" is involved, as for the Asian theologian where the term "Asian" is.

Lyman's project, I suggest, would be strengthened by focusing on how Christians formed the what of Christianity in a way that erased the who of non-Christians. Transparency analysis lends itself to this, because Bhabha, in his discussion of transparency, notes that colonial self-definitions form an identity that imposes essentialized otherness by reference to transparent discursive elements that form an ostensibly objective basis for ascribing that otherness.

Thus, because I find mimicry analysis a less than convincing refusal of the temptations towards hegemonic thinking, a hegemony often mediated by way of essentialist categories—whether "orthodox" or "Asian"—which mimicry analysis has not proved particularly effective at avoiding, I propose transparency analysis as a more effective way of applying Bhabha to early Christian thought, and in particular to the problem of self-definition (and its tendency towards hegemonic speech) which Lyman has focused us on through her invaluable work.

Laying out my understanding of transparency is a task for the next chapter, but before I do that I would be remiss were I to fail to observe that the course Lyman has set out upon meets up with another important stream currently operating in scholarship touching on the problem of early Christian self-definitions: the appearance of the racial problematic within early Christian self-definitions. It is to this other stream, and its relation to what I have outlined so far, that I now turn.

III. Race, Its Emergence in Christian Self-Definitions, and the Debate over the Concept's Appearance in the Ancient World.

It may seem abrupt to attempt to connect what has preceded on the issue of Christian self-definition with the issue of race, but concern with the latter has been implicit to what I have laid down so far. Lyman's introduction of Bhabha's idea of hybridity, by way of mimicry analysis, in the field of early Christian studies was an extension of a project to recover what Lyman called Christianity's interior diversity as an explicit means of reducing hegemonic and violent tendencies toward Jews and other non-Christians.

And indeed, just as Jacobs noted in his work that Christian discourse about Jews (an *other*) is really a mode of self-identification, Lyman's focus on the issue of Christian self-definition, not to mention her fight against that definition devolving into a totalizing vision of orthodoxy from which no deviation is acceptable, is explicitly oriented towards the problem of the *other* and the way Christians come to define the *other* as some version of not-orthodox (whatever the relevant parameters of orthodoxy may be). In other words, in both Lyman and Jacobs, we have seen that the *other* emerges implicitly from the project of Christian self-definition.

As I will show in the next chapter, this is what Bhabha refers to as an agonistic mode of authority, in which a speaker's claim about themselves acts as a sign of difference where it touches the *other*.[101] The authority of the colonial speaker's claim lies not in what it says about herself, but in how it casts the colonial *other* as different, allowing the speaker to then fix the identity of that *other* as difference itself, by way of the racist stereotype.[102]

Thus, what Lyman and Jacobs have noted about the way self-definitions function

[101] See note 41 in chapter two.
[102] My discussion of Bhabha's treatment of the racist stereotype begins on p. 92, of chapter two.

to produce otherness, has been cast by Bhabha specifically in terms of the colonial project to fix the identity of non-Europeans by way of racial categorizations. Further, let us not forget that Lyman's 'who do we think we are?' was inspired by her mother's reaction to a racist statement made by her grandmother.[103] But other scholars touching specifically on issues of Christian thought have noted the way historical Christian self-definitions have lent themselves to the production of racial (and ethnic) categories.

Theologian J. Kameron Carter has argued that "modernity's racial imagination has its genesis in the theological problem of Christianity's quest to sever itself from its Jewish roots."[104] This Modern imaginary, Carter has noted, is intimately tied to colonialism, since

> modern racial discourse and practice have their genesis inside Christian theological discourse and missiological practice, which themselves were tied to the practice of empire in the advance of Western civilization.[105]

For Carter, the Modern theological exercise of separating Christianity from its Jewish roots is a christological practice, in which Christ is abstracted from Jesus in order to separate the Christian from the Jewish elements, creating a de-Orientalized Christian essence separated from any Jewish materiality.[106] Additionally, Carter notes that central to the problem of racism is the problem of anthropological classification.[107]

Carter then locates a similar project of anthropological classification in what he describes as the prototypically racist theology of ancient gnostic Christians, which divided humans into hylic, psychic, and pneumatic categories as it sought to separate Christian thought from the material realm. Carter contrasts that gnostic theology with that of the early Christian thinker Irenaeus, whom Carter reads as avoiding the problem of rejecting Christ's Jewish materiality and thus as theologically opposed to the

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[103] See my discussion on p. 40, above.
[104] J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.
[105] *Ibid*., 3. See also, *ibid*., 29, 229-30.
[106] *Ibid*., 4, 6-7. See also, *ibid.,* 29-30, 34-5, 240-1, on the centrality of Christology to the problem of racial hierarchization.
[107] *Ibid*., 13-14, 20, 22-3.

prototypical racism present in gnostic thought.[108]

A brief consideration of Carter's reading, however, reveals a limitation we saw previously in Lyman, whose commitment to Christianity's interior diversity seemed to reinscribe the very normativity of Christian perspectives she sought to interrupt. In Carter, Irenaeus' gnostic opponents are cast as protoracists in their theological articulation of three distinct classes of human beings (the pneumatics, psychics, and hylics).[109] Irenaeus responded to the way gnostic thought "deeply concerned . . . anthropology and the justification of a superior 'race' inside the discourse of Christian theology,"[110] with a non-hierarchical approach to anthropology.[111]

That non-hierarchical anthropology is present in Irenaeus' counter-narration of the new Israel, which, rather than sever Christianity's Jewish roots, insists on the Logocentric unity of the Old and New Testaments, thus avoiding the supersessionism of other Christian discourses (and presumably that of the gnostics).[112]

But again we have the same problem which we encountered, above, with Lyman's account of Justin (and with Plato's Egyptian priest). Are we really to pretend that an account of the unity between the Old and New Testaments, constructed on the premise that the same Word of God is present in both, is not a supersessionist narrative? The entire Old Testament is narrated in explicitly Christian terms and thus subsumed under a Christian theological redemption narrative, not to mention a self-authorized Christian perspective.

This is our inclusive anthropological narration? Would a Jewish person, finding his Judaism granted validity only when presented in a Christian guise, appreciate this recasting of the Hebrew scriptures?

Again we see the limitation of insisting that historical Christianity itself provide

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[108] *Ibid*., 11-36, 229-51, 343-69.
[109] *Ibid*., 22.
[110] *Ibid*., 20.
[111] *Ibid*., 22-3.
[112] *Ibid*., 27.

the means for problems internal to Christian theology that we observed in Lyman and some of the scholars who followed her. But Carter has nonetheless pointed us in the direction of an important aspect of exercises in self-definition.

In honing in on the gnostic division between hylic, psychic, and pneumatic persons—and describing it as protoracist—Carter is, on the one hand, highlighting an issue of anthropological classification that appears in both the problem of race and the gnostic self-definition he sets aside for consideration. But on the other hand, Carter is also highlighting the way self-definition is tied to anthropological formulation, since the hylic, psychic, and pneumatic refer to classical elements of many ancient anthropological formulas (i.e., the human consists of a material/hylic part, a soul/psyche, and a spirit/pneuma).[113]

As I observed above, Carter has also highlighted the fact that contemporary racial discourse has Christian theological roots, and Carter's own work stems from a desire to see Christianity wrestle with the role its theology has played in the problem of "whiteness".[114] Carter has made another important observation to this end, noting that it is from Whiteness that other racial identities are generated,[115] thus extending his observations about the way self-definitions, and their concomitant anthropological formulations, still inform a process of otherization in the present.

As I will show in the next chapter, Bhabha's own discussion of the racist stereotype also touches on the problem of anthropological formulation,[116] so Carter remains important for highlighting this aspect that operates internally to ancient—and, depending on how one wishes to treat ancient gnostic thought, Christian—practices of self-definition (as well as contemporary ones). But, to my mind, Carter falls short of the full potential impact of his observation in failing to address the supersessionist

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[113] See Robert M. Berchman, *From Philo to Origen: Middle Platonism in Transition* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1984); and Jacques Dupuis, *"L'Esprit de l'Homme": Étude sur l'Anthropologie Religieuse d'Origène* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1967).

[114] See *ibid*., 4, 6, 230.

[115] *Ibid*., 20-1.

[116] See my discussion beginning on p. 92, of chapter two.

aspects of the Irenaean view he posits as an alternative to gnostic practice.

This is a limitation driven, in part, by the issue of identity between speaker and audience I observed above, which can operate to preserve a commitment to ancient Christian source material as the principal font of solutions to problems that emerge to contemporary sensibilities (and which may inadvertently suggest a commitment to the idea that 'development' should play a limited role in our understanding of best praxis). Thus, by adopting early Christian thought as his palliative,[117] Carter potentially undermines his attempt to interrupt a long-standing (theological) practice of weaving anthropological formulations into self-definitions that also informs the contemporary problem of whiteness.

But Carter's position also suffers from one more flaw, namely his limiting the phenomenon of race strictly to the Modern era (which is why he describes the gnostics as protoracists). In doing so, Carter is largely echoing what has come to be the conventional position since at least World War II, when 'racism' as a phenomenon was beginning to be studied in earnest and both race and racism were cast as Modern phenomena.[118] But a number of authors, mostly in fields related to history, have challenged this premise.

For example, George Fredrickson, acknowledging the role of Christianity in the production of racial categories and racialized thinking, has seen it fit to extend Christianity's role in the problematic of racism to the late Middle Ages as well as Modern periods, though not as far back as late antiquity.[119] In Fredrickson's view, Christian racism has to be distinguished from what is otherwise simple religious intolerance. And so, for Fredrickson, where the possibility of assimilation or conversion are extended to

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[117] Lyman also did this, and with similar consequences.

[118] See especially the works by Ruth Benedict, Ashley Montagu, and Gunnar Myrdal cited in note 46, of chapter four.

[119] George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 6, 11, 46.

non-Christians, racism is not present even if religious intolerance is.[120]

In this telling, there is no concept of race in early Christianity.[121] The Christian anti-Judaism present in such disparate examples as the works of Augustine or anti-Jewish Christian mobs in the 10th-12th centuries are not examples of racism because both Augustine and the mobs extended the possibility of conversion to Jews as a means of avoiding further vitriol (and in the latter example, murderous violence).[122] It is not until the 12th-15th centuries that anti-Judaism begins to congeal into racism, as it is then that the Jews begin to be left out of the human definition and their narrated deficiencies become immutable characteristics.[123]

I would suggest, however, that this account of racism goes too far in privileging a Modern contingency: the attribution of immutability to those narrated inferiorities in Modern racist discourse. For Fredrickson, this immutability is determinative for whether a particular ideology or viewpoint is racist,[124] a perspective that one can also locate in the work of Benjamin Isaac, another scholar who extends the phenomena of race and racism beyond Modernity.

Isaac does this through an account of what he has termed *proto-racism*, which he locates as present in the ancient world from the fifth century, B.C.E., onward, and identifies as the prototype for the more Modern, scientific manifestation of racism with which we are more familiar.[125] Isaac defines racism as "an attitude which denies the individuality of human beings. It regards them exclusively in terms of a collective and does not allow for individual differences."[126]

But while extending the phenomenon of racism to the ancient world, Isaac, like Fredrickson, also makes immutability central to his understanding of both race and

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[120] *Ibid*., 6-7.
[121] *Ibid*., 17.
[122] *Ibid*., 18-20.
[123] *Ibid*., 20-5.
[124] *Ibid*., 5-6.
[125] Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1, 13, 15, 102.
[126] *Ibid*., 18.

racism.[127] I consider this a flaw, and I agree with Denise Buell, whose work I will discuss shortly, that the absence of 'immutability' from ancient perspectives on race does not render those perspectives necessarily about something other than race.

However, while I find Isaac a bit too Moderno-centric in his defining of racism, his work is important in extending to antiquity the phenomenon of racism, a notion to which there is still resistance among scholars of antiquity.[128] For example, Erich S. Gruen has opposed any "blanket characterization" of the ancients as racists,[129] noting that, while prejudice certainly existed in antiquity, ancients manifested a strong tendency towards defining themselves in terms of connections to other groups or cultures.[130]

That said, Gruen's study strikes me as a bit of a curiosity. To begin with, it is not clear that anybody is making a *blanket characterization* of the ancients as racist. But more importantly, Gruen's argument that racism is absent in antiquity seems premised on a failure to understand racism in the first place. For example, Gruen claims that the ancients did not assign moral values to skin color, going on to give a series of examples of supposedly non-racist color judgments. But all the examples smack of that White normativity that informs color racism.

Is the "Ethiopian slave who declares . . . that he was deep black in life, as if burnt by the rays of the sun, but his soul, ever covered with white flowers, gained the benevolence of his wise master, for beauty is secondary to a good soul which thus crowned his black form,"[131] really an example of non-racist color valuations? Not only is Black[132] skin contrasted to Whiteness of soul, the latter signifying virtue of some sort, but the slave's Black form is contrasted with that beauty which is, presumably, White.

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[127] *Ibid*., 23, 34-5.

[128] One soft exception is Christian Delacampagne, who locates the beginning of racism in the thought of Aristotle, but suggests it does not congeal into proper racism until the Modern era. Christian Delacampagne, *L'Invention du Racisme: Antiquité et Moyen-Age* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1983), 177-84; *eadem*, "Racism and the West: From Praxis to Logos," in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. by David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 83-8.

[129] Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 3.

[130] *Ibid*., 3-5, 253, 265-6, 302.

[131] *Ibid*., 206.

[132] Where they refer to racial categories, or racialized elements within a discourse, I will capitalize the terms 'Black' and 'White.'

Consider also Gruen's example of Queen Candace's claim that "Ethiopians are not to be judged by the color of their skin but by the whiteness of their souls, more splendid than those of the best of the Greeks."[133] This is hardly an example of non-racist discourse. Rather, it is emblematic of the way Whiteness becomes normative, where the virtue of the Ethiopian can only be conceived in terms of its correspondence with an explicity non-Black concept: White-normative Greekness.

Further, Gruen suggests that to read the negative depictions of Blacks in Petronius and Juvenal as slurs is to fail to note the satirical nature of the authors' works.[134] He also argues that the reason divine or heroic Ethiopians never appear Black in Greek and Roman visual representations is due to the fact that

> For Greek and Roman artists and audiences, divinities or heroes could take no other form than the conventional one. Anything else would be incongruous or incomprehensible. Which is not at all the same as repugnance or aversion to blacks.[135]

Perhaps this is not "the same as repugnance or aversion to blacks," but Gruen has failed to note the normalization of Whiteness internal to the perspectives of those two authors that then allows the non-Whiteness of *others* to function as a comedic premise in the first place. Gruen has also failed to recognize that the depiction of divinities and heroes as always White, or the incomprehensibility of the heroic as anything other than White, reinscribes that sense of 'Black' as the opposite of virtue noted in the example of the Ethiopian slave and queen, previously cited.

Gruen's account thus insulates from critique the racist normalization of Whiteness in his chosen texts with the suggestion that such normalizations occur on value-neutral grounds, as if such a process were natural and/or inevitable. And while I hardly view Gruen as intentionally seeking to participate in the normalization of Whiteness, Gruen's

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[133] Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 206. On similar notions present in the early Christian texts regarding Ethiopian Moses, see Kathleen O'Brien Wicker's more aware comments. Kathleen O'Brien Wicker, "Ethiopian Moses (Collected Sources)," in *Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook*, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 334-5.

[134] Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 207-8.

[135] *Ibid*., 215-16.

example should nonetheless put us on guard against arguments that posit a value-neutrality to problematic normalizations.

Much as Gruen has claimed that divine and heroic depictions could only conform to that familiar Whiteness possessed by Greeks and Romans, it may be argued against my critique of Lyman, Burrus (to a lesser extent), Jacobs, and Carter—the critique that, in insisting Christianity serve as its own font of solutions to problems internal to Christian theology, they have tended to reinscribe the very problem of hegemonic Christian thinking they have sought to disrupt—that there is none other but a Christian perspective and tradition from which they can address issues since they, and their hearers, are Christians.

And that may be an acceptable position to take, at least if you disagree with Lyman that hegemonic speech operating within Christian theology has led to violent consequences and is something therefore to be avoided. But if you agree with Lyman that this is neither a necessary or acceptable state of affairs, then one must also learn from the limitations of her attempt—not to mention Jacobs's or Carter's—to intervene in hegemonic speech and notice that when one insists that their particular location also serve as the primary well from which you can draw ideas, you will tend to reinscribe the hegemony of that particular location, thus normalizing it while also insulating it from (outside)[136] critique.

But getting back to the main reason for my discussion of Gruen, his attempt to exclude the problem of racism from our understanding of phenomena operating in antiquity ignores the history, extending to antiquity and earliest Christianity, of race (and its incumbent anthropological formulations and classifications) in Christian self-definition. Luckily, a number of early Christian scholars have demonstrated the appearance of the racial problematic (or its close cousin, which we might call the ethnic

[136] Lyman, Burrus, Jacobs, and Carter are not outsiders, but the inspiration behind their critiques is a perspective (postcolonial thought) that does not originate within Christianity.

problematic) not simply in antiquity, but in early Christian thought itself.

Gay Byron has analyzed what she terms *ethno-political rhetorics*, "discursive elements within texts that refer to 'ethnic' identities or geographical locations and function as political invective."[137] Byron demonstrates how early Christian authors used ethnic and color language to symbolize opponents, and notes that the cumulative effect of this sort of rhetoric has extended to the present in the way Black women are racialized and portrayed in our own time.[138] For Byron, this demonstrates the limits of early-Christianity's oft-narrated universalism.[139]

Aaron Johnson[140] has developed a similar analytical methodology which he has termed *ethnic argumentation*, and which he has used to analyze Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica* with an eye towards the way in which Eusebius narrates Christian identity in terms of a distinct *ethnos* or *genos* relative other, inferior ethnicities (specifically the Greeks and the Jews).[141] Johnson notes that Eusebius constructs ethnic boundaries based on language, theology, and piety, but downplays the necessity of biological links to ethnic status.[142]

This, for Johnson, is evidence of how, in light of the constructed nature of ethnic identity,[143] "boundaries can be made more or less permeable as the social or polemical

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[137] Gay L. Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 2.

[138] See *ibid*., 78, 127-8.

[139] This conclusion may be contrasted with the view of Charles B. Copher, who locates negative attitudes toward Blacks in ancient Judaism but not early Christianity. See Charles B. Copher, *Black Biblical Studies, An Anthology of Charles B. Copher: Biblical and Theological Issues on the Black Presence in the Bible* (Chicago: Black Light Fellowship, 1993), 120. It also challenges Frank M. Snowden, Jr.'s position that ancient Greeks and Romans, as well as ancient Christians, held an inclusive attitude toward Blacks. See, Frank M. Snowden, Jr., *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970), 216-8; *eadem*, *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 99-108.

[140] See Aaron P. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius'* Praeparatio Evangelica (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); *eadem*, "Greek Ethnicity in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*," *American Journal of Philology* 128:1 (2007): 95-118; *eadem*, "The Blackness of Ethiopians: Classical Ethnography and Eusebius's *Commentary on the Psalms*," *Harvard Theological Review* 99:2 (2006): 165-86.

[141] Johnson, *Argument*, 10, 23, 220-1, 232-3. *eadem*, "Greek," 105.

[142] Johnson, *Argument*, 43-5, 105-6, 224-5.

[143] *Ibid*., 25, 28.

situation dictates."[144] Despite this permeability, Johnson notes how this ethnic language undermines attempts to think of Christianity in universalist terms, as a religion that transcended the ethnic (and other) social boundaries of the ancient world.[145] Johnson has preferred to speak of *ethnic argumentation* but has noted that the concept of ethnicity, despite its conscious construction as a way "to speak about biologically defined people groups without the negative connotations or assumptions that clouded the category of 'race' framed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,"[146] has "seem[ed] unable to escape the conceptions of race."[147]

Denise Buell,[148] whom we may contrast to Johnson,[149] has insisted that, in reading the discourses of early Christian self-definition, we should not attempt to escape

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[144] *Ibid*., 170.
[145] *Ibid*., 7, 16-7, 198-9, 200, 216.
[146] *Ibid*., 26.
[147] *Ibid*., 27.
[148] See Denise K. Buell, "Rethinking the Relevance of Race for Early Christian Self-Definition," *Harvard Theological Review* 94:4 (2001): 449-476; *eadem*, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); *eadem*, "God's Own People."
[149] Johnson has largely focused on the notion of *ethnicity* in his work, but has touched on race more, though not to a significant extent, in "The Blackness of Ethiopians". Johnson, "Blackness," 165-6, 177-8, 185-6. In this article, and in an analysis reminiscent of Byron's with respect to Origen and the language of *color symbolism* (see Byron, *Blackness*, 72-5), Johnson opposes to Origen's practice of employing color symbolism in his interpretation of Ethiopians in Hebrew scripture, making the Ethiopian's black skin, at times, a type of the Black soul of the sinner, and, at others, a type of that soul which is beyond redemption or as a type for demonic forces; Eusebius's "repeatedly positive" portrayal of the Ethiopians as the representation of the kingdom of God's universal reach to all nations, an allusion to Ethiopia's geographical remoteness. *Ibid*., 172, 174-5, 179-80, 183, 185. Johnson's analysis touches on race more than the other works cited above, but race is not a central focus of the article. While I consider the majority of Johnson's analysis in this piece to be solid, there are a couple of moments where a more deliberate engagement with the problem of race could have benefited his analysis. The first of these moments is Johnson's suggestion that Origen's analysis of the Black bride of *Song of Songs* is "a somewhat positive conceptualization of Ethiopians inasmuch as the souls blackened by sin were nonetheless beautiful because of the impress of the image of God." *Ibid*., 172. While this is indeed more positive than Origen's portrayal of Ethiopians as demonic or beyond redemption, the comparative *more* is operative, rendering the *Song of Songs* interpretation more positive than the other interpretations, but not necessarily positive. It is clear from Origen's treatment, as well as Johnson's summary of that treatment, that the Blackness of the bride is contrasted with the beauty of her converted soul. Thus, the bride is not Black *and* beautiful; she is Black *but* beautiful, beauty being external to Blackness. The second of these moments is Johnson's claim that Eusebius's portrayal of the Ethiopians as a type of all the nations that enter God's kingdom is "repeatedly positive". *Ibid*., 185. From a Christian viewpoint, this may indeed be positive, to be a nation that comes to the kingdom of God. But as Johnson notes, the coming to the kingdom of God represents "a racial move on the part of the convert." *Ibid*., 186. Thus, in this typology, being an Ethiopian is something one should move away from in order to join the race of the Christians. To be Ethiopian is to be of an inferior race relative the Christian, and thus, from a non-Christian viewpoint, or, more importantly, from an Ethiopian viewpoint, it is difficult to locate any positivity in Eusebius's portrayal. In this, Johnson inadvertently exemplifies the importance of interrogating the discursive normativities in which we participate. It is the normalization of a Christian perspective that allows Eusebius's analysis to function positively for Johnson.

race but accept its presence in those early Christian attempts at self-description. Buell elaborates three reasons for why scholars of early Christianity should not exclude race as a category for interpreting early Christian self-descriptions.

First, she notes that the language of ethnicity has served to obscure racism, particularly when one distinguishes Jews from Christians, in antiquity, on the premise that the former are an ethnic group, while Christians are a more inclusive, universalist, religion. Second, it is untenable to make one Modern concept (ethnicity) an appropriate interpretive category for early Christian scholarship, while excluding another concept (race) on the grounds of its ostensible Modernity. Lastly, religion is no less a Modern concept than race or ethnicity, and thus describing Christianity as a religion does not avoid the supposed anachronism that accompanies the latter two concepts should they be used to analyze ancient discourses.[150]

Buell has argued for the centrality of the concept of race to early Christian self-understanding using a methodology she has termed *ethnic reasoning*.[151]

> [E]thnicity and race *have* in fact been central to formulations of early Christian self-definition . . . [A]ncient ideas about race and ethnicity were valuable for early Christians in their varying attempts to define Christianness; many early Christians defined themselves using ethnic reasoning, that is, by using language that their contemporaries would have understood as racial or ethnic.[152]

Buell has noted that early Christian authors often described Christianity's universality as a culmination of a human ideal, a universality grounded in the ability of Christians to consist of many races: Greeks, Jews, or other barbarians.[153] The contrast here is between a more fluid Christian race, set apart particularly by piety,[154] in contrast to other, more fixed races (e.g. Greeks or Jews).

This apparent fluidity does not undermine the early Christian notion of

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[150] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 14-18.
[151] *Ibid*., 2. Though less central to its main argument, Buell has also commented on the use of ethnic language in Christian self-understanding in *Making Christians*. Buell, *Making Christians*, 106.
[152] Buell, "Rethinking," 449.
[153] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 74-5, 81, 110, 151-2, . Buell, "Rethinking," 462, 464, 469-73.
[154] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 35-6, 74-5, 81, 95-6; *eadem*, "Rethinking," 451, 461.

Christianity as a race, since, as Buell has noted, race in the ancient world was not marked by the immutability and fixity that more Modern constructions of race are endowed with.[155] Further, this articulation of Christianity as one race over and against other, inferior races, undermines the narrative of Christianity as a race-transcending religion, a narrative at the heart of very different theological claims, stemming from both sides of the theological spectrum, both premised on an idealized, pure Christianity.[156]

Buell has made two other observations which I consider valuable. First, she has noted that a number of early Christian authors narrate their race in terms of not just an ethnic ideal, but a human one.[157] Second, she has noted that attempts to cast aside the germaneness of race in early Christian discourses results in a reinscription of the forms of racism and anti-Judaism that scholars who wish to cast Christianity as race-transcending often wish to combat.[158]

Like Byron and Johnson, Buell too rejects the notion of a universalist Christianity inclusive of all races, though she recognizes that this narrative is part of early Christian attempts at self-definition. Further, Buell also rejects that there is anything like a Christian essence, the sort of thing scholars appeal to when they narrate Christianity as transcending race.[159]

We may recall that Lyman introduced into the consideration of the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity the position that Logocentric truth-narratives undermine the essentialist opposition of the two categories. In focusing on the presence of race and ethnicity in early Christian self-descriptions, Buell, in particular, has added yet another consideration: the idea that, rather than as a fixed essence, Christianity needs to be understood as a constantly negotiated and crafted identity, one that conceives of itself along ethno-racial lines, at times opposed to *other* ethno-racial groups (whether

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[155] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 130, 138; *eadem*, "Rethinking," 462. Further, it may be noted that Christians are not the first to conceive of their race as a universal ideal. See *ibid*., 469.
[156] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 11, 26-8; *eadem*, "Rethinking," 452-3.
[157] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 74, 78; *eadem*, "Rethinking," 470-1.
[158] Buell, "Rethinking," 457-8, 474, 476.
[159] *Ibid*., 473-4.

Greeks or Jews), while at other times inclusive of those groups (when Christianity is narrated as a human ideal), depending on the contextually fluid argumentative goal.

The relationship between Hellenism and Christianity, in these readings, is not a matter of essential differences internal to the categories of Hellenism and Christianity. Rather, this relationship is a function of self-definition and thus a matter of constructed identities, not essence. We are, at this point, a fair ways from Harnack and Loisy.

But, I diverge from Buell slightly in that I perceive the articulation of both fluid and fixed racial boundaries as less a function of the argumentative goal—though that certainly applies, since we are in the realm of rhetoric when thinking about these early Christian discourses of self-definition and the aim of discourse is part and parcel to the deployment of its terms—and more a function of the way ancients perceived the make-up of the human being.

I have already mentioned Buell's observation that race in the ancient world was not particularly marked by immutability, as well as Johnson's observation that, for Eusebius, ethnic boundaries were more based on language, theology, and piety, than biological links. Johnson has preferred to speak of ethnicity operating in the early Christian thought, preferring not to go as far as Buell in also locating the concept of race in Christian antiquity. But I find Buell's argument, that if ethnicity is a valid concept to apply to the ancient world then so is race, persuasive, and find that Johnson's observations about ethnicity equally come to bear on the question of the operation of racial categories in antiquity, particularly in light of the fact that, like Johnson with respect to ethnicity, Buell also notes that what defined the more fluid racial category of Christian was piety.[160]

That is, race in early Christian thought also has boundaries shaped more by language, theology, and piety, than biology. And the reason for this is simple, as we will see in the two authors whose works I analyze in chapters three and four (Origen and

[160] See note 153, above.

Eusebius), the seat of humanity (or humanness) within the human animal is the rational soul, not the physical body (which is treated largely as an obstacle to be overcome by the real human being who is within).

As Carter noted above, race has to do with anthropological classification, and to the extent our early Christian authors conceived of the human principally in terms of the rational mind, one would expect them to divide humans into groupings or classifications that are less oriented toward physical characteristics (which were not considered essential to the human animal) than they are towards products of the rational mind (language, theology, piety). Thus, the fixity and fluidity of racial boundaries in early Christian thought is less a function of the argumentative goal, and more a function of early Christian anthropological formulation (particularly in light of the extent to which progress and ascent are closely tied to the idea of human rationality in Christian antiquity, making being human itself something of a fluid process that can be marked by lesser and greater rationalities).

Buell has already noted that the fluid racial boundaries operate in the rhetoric of Christianity as the culmination of a human ideal, which is another way of saying that human ideals were understood in terms of rational processes like belief or theology rather than by way of physical or biological characteristics. The fixity of racial boundaries apply mainly to groups who can be lumped together on the basis of some shared product of the rational mind. For both Origen and Eusebius, to give an example, the Greek is marked by her worship of idols and other representations of the physical world (which is not real, just as the physical body is not essential to humanness), while the Jew is marked by her literal interpretation of scripture.[161] In other words, the racial boundary (and classification) is drawn on the basis of rational processes, conforming to the anthropological formulation operative in early Christian thought.

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[161] On Origen's views on Jews see note 84, above; for Origen's views on Greeks, see pp. 113-4, of chapter three. For Eusebius's views on Greeks and Jews, see pp. 128-31, of chapter three.

Here we have returned to what I pointed out is present in Carter,[162] namely the connection between anthropological formulation and classification. That is, the classification of humans into racial categories is made on the basis of the terms of anthropological formulation. It is no surprise that the version of race that emerges as of the 19th century, in a world that by then was being aggressively shaped by empirical sciences, is tied to biology and genetics, the anthropological understanding du jour.

The ancient world possessed a very different anthropological understanding, and so race cannot be thought of with reference to a Modern anthropological formulation, but with view to an ancient one. Thus, Buell is absolutely correct in fighting for the acceptability of race as an interpretive category in early Christian studies, and in noting that immutability (tied as it is in the Modern conception to genetics) need not touch upon the ancient operation of race as a concept.

But I diverge from Buell slightly, noting that while the argumentative goal certainly shapes the presentation of ideas, the fixity and fluidity of racial boundaries is principally a function of the relationship between anthropological formulation and anthropological classification which I glean from the work of Carter. I believe this position strengthens Buell's assertion, above, that "ethnicity and race *have* in fact been central to formulations of early Christian self-definition."[163] Thus, a fruitful engagement with the problem of self-definition in the direction that Lyman has set out upon (to refuse the temptations of hegemonic speech by way of disrupting essentialisms) should also disrupt this racializing problematic in Christian practices of self-definition, and thus provide lessons applicable beyond the context of Christian faith: that any attempt to disrupt the process of racialization must also target anthropological formulations that can be woven into self-definitions and which help form the basis of those racializations (not to mention essentialist definitions of Christianity). Further, this

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[162] See my discussion on p. 55, above.
[163] See note 151, above.

understanding of the connection between anthropological formulation and classification is more consistent with Bhabha's own observations in his discussion of transparency—discussed in the following chapter[164]—about the racist stereotype, which itself highlights the connection between racial classifications and anthropological formulations.

With these observations out of the way, I can now lay out Bhabha's notion of transparency, the notions that inform it, and the outline of the analysis I will conduct in chapters three and four. Before turning to that work in the next chapter, let me conclude by summarizing what I have done in this chapter and my goals for the next, as well as adding a few words about my selected texts to be analyzed in the final two chapters.

IV. Conclusion.

I began this chapter by laying out the basic poles of the question of development that has been so central in the field of early Christian studies with respect to the issue of the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism. I showed how this question of development continues to inform contemporary early Christian scholarship with reference to a recent debate between Khaled Anatolios, Lewis Ayres, and John Behr.

I then introduced the work of J. Rebecca Lyman, who has approached the question of the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism through a postcolonial lens, and argued that the relationship is more hybrid than essentialist, and is ultimately a problem first and foremost of the way Christians define themselves, and how those self-definitions can then devolve into oppressive orientations toward non-Christians.

From there—and following an analysis which demonstrated some limitations to Lyman's approach (mimicry analysis) to her stated goal of refusing the temptations of hegemonic speech and which suggested a transparency analysis may better fulfill her

[164] Beginning on p. 88.

aim—I moved to another issue related to the problem of Christian self-definition and the oppressive practices produced as a result: the issue of race as internal to the practice of early Christian self-definition.

On this point, I have principally followed Denise Buell, who has been the scholar most outspoken on the need to locate race specifically in the context of early Christian discourses. But I have diverged from Buell slightly, and followed an insight gleaned from the work of J. Kameron Carter, noting that the racializations Buell has highlighted are intimately tied to anthropological formulations, suggesting that any attempt to disrupt that process of racialization also has to be oriented towards those anthropological formulations woven into early Christian self-definitions and which inform the process of racialization.

The link between anthropological formulation, self-definition, and anthropological classification by way of racialization is also present in Homi Bhabha's presentation of transparency and its relationship to the racist stereotype. In the next chapter, I will begin by laying out a number of considerations that come to bear on Bhabha's notion of transparency. From there I will lay out Bhabha's notion of transparency before concluding with an outline of how my transparency analysis will play out in chapters three and four, where I will apply that analysis to Origen's *Contra Celsum* and Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica*.

My reasons for selecting these two texts are as follows. To begin with, both texts are consciously oriented toward the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity.[165] Further, both texts explicitly deal with who Christians say they are.

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[165] Any consideration of the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity ought to define those two terms in order that it be clear what is being compared. But as the above review makes clear, they are both terms that are still being negotiated in contemporary early Christian scholarship. Thus, I do not wish to propose any normative definition of Hellenism, preferring instead to allow the early Christian authors under consideration to set the limits of the term. As such, Hellenism can be summarized as non-Christian Greek piety and philosophical thought. Hellenism may certainly be understood in broader terms than this, but it is with non-Christian Greek piety and philosophical thought that our two authors are concerned when they speak about Hellenism, or what distinguishes Greeks from Christians—at least in *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio Evangelica*. I also do not wish to propose any normative definition of Christianity, and certainly do not want to endorse any particular notion of

Thus, both texts highlight the point raised by Lyman that the problem of the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity is one of Christian self-definition.

Both texts also present self-definitions with anthropological formulations woven into them and which function to impose otherness on two distinct groups (Greeks and Jews) who become racialized—fixed in their collective identities, following both Isaac on racism[166] and what we will shortly see Bhabha say about fixed identities as the fantasy of difference[167]—on the basis of those anthropological formulations.

These two texts thus touch upon all the issues I have highlighted in this chapter as present in contemporary scholarship on the problem of early Christian self-definition, and are thus ripe for an analysis which deals with all these issues—connected as they are—at once.[168] I believe transparency analysis best achieves this aim, and it is to Bhabha's notion of transparency, and the analysis I have derived from it, to which I now turn.

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orthodoxy. Thus, I am content to accept the Christianity of these authors on the basis of their self-identification as Christians. That said, I do not want my analysis easily dismissed by contemporary Christians on the grounds that the authors analyzed here are not orthodox and that thus the analysis is irrelevant for an orthodox Christian tradition. As such, both authors considered are figures from the early Church whose orthodoxy is not generally in question, and whose thought cannot be readily dismissed as external to the Christian intellectual canon. That said, Origen has historically had something of an ambivalent relationship with notions of orthodoxy, but most major contemporary Christian traditions that I am familiar with grant him the imprimatur of orthodoxy and that suffices for my purposes here.

[166] See note 126, above.

[167] That discussion begins on p. 90, of chapter two.

[168] Certainly other texts and authors could be included, but an earlier version of this dissertation which analyzed four texts burdened the analysis with tedious repetition. Two texts will suffice to make my point in the final two chapters. I will also note that these texts will be analyzed within the contexts of the individual texts themselves, and not with an eye to where a particular text fits into the broader theological vision of the author in question. On my reasons for this, see the portion of my discussion of Anatolios's critique of Ayres that begins on p. 25, above.

"Cleaning a land" is best done by White Men in delicate concert with each other . . . Behind the White Man's mask of amiable leadership there is always the express willingness to use force, to kill and be killed. What dignifies his mission is some sense of intellectual dedication; he is a White Man, but not for mere profit, since his "chosen star" presumably sits far above earthly gain. . . . [C]ertainly a great number of [White Men] must have been puzzled as to how the color of their skins gave them superior ontological status plus great power over much of the inhabited world. Yet in the end, being a White Man . . . was a self-confirming business. One became a White Man because one *was* a White man; more important, "drinking that cup," living that unalterable destiny in "the White Man's day," left one little time for idle speculation on origins, causes, historical logic. Being a White Man was therefore an idea and a reality. It involved a reasoned position towards both the white and the nonwhite worlds. It meant—in the colonies—speaking in a certain way, behaving according to a code of regulations, and even feeling certain things and not others. It meant specific judgments, evaluations, gestures. It was a form of authority before which nonwhites, and even whites themselves, were expected to bend. . . . Being a White Man, in short, was a very concrete manner of being-in-the-world, a way of taking hold of reality, language, and thought.

—Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*[1]

2

Methodology: Transparency Analysis

In the previous chapter, I traced a path from the long-standing theological debate about the relationship of Christianity to Hellenism (still a live issue as seen in the debate over Ayres's work on Nicaea), through Lyman's critique of the essentialisms central to that question, which she unpacked using a hybridity analysis based on Bhabha's notion of mimicry. Though appreciating Lyman's overall aim, I suggested that mimicry analysis tended to preserve essentialisms more than disrupt them, and that this preservation is on display when Lyman is then left to construct an inclusive theology that mediates the non-Christian *other* through the filter of Christian anthropological doctrines (humans as 'God's children').

We are now back at the problem highlighted in the introduction by Plato's Egyptian priest, where the value of that Egyptian *other* is recognized only in correspondence to Greek ideals, never touching the question of whether the Egyptian might have value as an end in himself. Lyman, in seeking a more inclusive Christian

[1] Said, Orientalism, 226-7.

self-understanding, as revealed in the question 'who do we think we are,'[2] still ends up with an exclusively Christian measuring stick.

But in posing the question 'who do we think we are?', Lyman correctly points out that the (essentialist) superiority historically assumed by many Christians is precisely a matter of who Christians say they are, their self-definition. And as we saw in the works of Buell and Carter, in particular, the problem of race is central to the problem of Christian self-definition in late antiquity (Buell and Carter), something we see echoed in the way Modern racial categories are forged out of self-definitions of Whiteness (Carter).

In thinking about Christian self-definition, then, we are also talking about the formulation of racial categories. Through my analysis in chapters three and four, I will illustrate the way in which problematic otherizations in *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio Evangelica* follow the contours of the racist stereotype, as discussed by Bhabha, and are the product of anthropological formulations that have been woven into the Christian self-definitions of Origen and Eusebius. Any attempt, then, to disrupt the process and consequences of racialization must also target problematic anthropological formulations that can be woven into self-definitions and which help form the basis of those racializations. In other words, the question of essentialism in Christian self-definition is closely related to the question of racialization as internal to that same definition that scholars such as Buell have touched upon.

Though following Buell, I diverge slightly in light of what I have gleaned from Carter. I follow Buell on the point that race was part and parcel of Christian self-description, but rather than read the 'ideal humanity' that Buell identifies as a more inclusive, alternative race doctrine, I read it as the grounds for the more problematic racializations she locates in the fixed boundaries of racial categories like Greeks or Jews which emerge implicitly within Christian self-definitions. I follow Carter on his position that race was itself a function of the anthropological formulations implicit in

[2] See note 70, in chapter one.

Christian self-definitions, and in doing so bring us back to Lyman's important contributions with respect to locating Christian exclusivity in those self-descriptions as well.

With that, I have set up a basic premise of this study: I am interested in investigating the anthropological formulations that may emerge in late antique Christian self-definitions, and how those anthropological formulations form the basis for describing the *other*.

As a corrective to the limitations I find in mimicry analysis vis-à-vis Lyman's project of articulating a more inclusive Christian self-understanding, I propose pursuing an analysis informed by Bhabha's notion of transparency as better suited to Lyman's concerns. By thinking about the transparent aspects of early Christian rhetoric, we can move beyond a reading of hybridity that preserves essentialisms, inadvertently forcing one back into self-definitions that function exclusively (or, as Lyman might say, hegemonically).

Further, by analyzing early Christian thought through a transparency lens, we avoid the phenomenon observed in the previous chapter of treating substantially identical rhetorical or theological positions as though qualitatively distinct based on whether it occurs before or after Constantine (a problem most evident in the work of Jacobs). This lends more consistency to our reading of early Christian thought as well as opening up a better path to a self-critical understanding of Christian theology for those whose project it is to see a Christianity "made to the measure of the world,"[3] if I may borrow a phrase from postcolonial thinker Aimé Césaire.

In this chapter, I will lay out Bhabha's notion of transparency, how it relates to the issue of hybridity, and outline the manner in which my transparency analysis in the final two chapters will proceed. Transparency, in Bhabha's hands, speaks to the way values

[3] Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Reveiw Press, 2000), 73.

internal to discourses 'conceal their human process'[4] of construction in order to appear as something more objective.

Bhabha's development of transparency leans on a number of theoretical sources which I will discuss prior to delving into Bhabha's own work. Bhabha's prose is dense and often difficult to parse,[5] while many of the theorists his work is based upon are more clear (or at least simple) in the presentation of their thought, making direct access to those theoretical sources a great aid for understanding what Bhabha is communicating.

In some instances, Bhabha represents a mere rearticulation of what others have said before him, which might raise the question to some observers of whether Bhabha's own thought is necessary for the analysis I present in chapters three and four. However, I believe Bhabha is useful for at least two reasons.

First, unlike some of the theoretical sources he relies upon, Bhabha has applied his analysis in a postcolonial direction, one that deals specifically with how questions of self-definition operate to impose otherness on vulnerable populations, often by way of racialization. In talking about transparency, Bhabha is dealing specifically with discourses about the *other* that justify hegemonic authority over that *other*, and do so on the basis of claims about the race or culture of that *other*.

Thus, Bhabha has particular relevance to the sort of intervention in hegemonic tendencies operating in Christian self-description that Lyman has suggested is necessary if Christianity is to avoid the violence against non-Christian *others* that has often marked the history of the religion. As I will demonstrate in chapter three, the non-Christian *other* is cast in the discourses of Christian self-definition here under consideration in much the same way the colonial subject emerges as racially stereotyped in Bhabha. This makes Bhabha an important methodological source for deconstructing the relationship between self-definition and otherization, and for showing how certain

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[4] To borrow from my citation of Lyman in the previous chapter. See note 64, in chapter one.
[5] See note 22, in the introduction.

aspects of the former lead to the latter. Further, by marshaling Bhabha's ideas about transparency, we are able to combine two separate streams currently operating in early Christian thought—discussions on whether Christian self-definition should be understood historically along essentialist or more fluid (Lyman, following Bhabha, would say hybrid) lines, and whether race is a facet of early Christian self-definitions.

The second reason Bhabha is useful is that Lyman has already opened the door to the application of Bhabha's thought in early Christian studies. What follows is my suggestion for how his work might be more fruitfully utilized for the sort of project Lyman seems interested in, but which appears undermined by her mimicry analysis. Lyman's mimicry approach works on the basis of an analogy of the early Christian context to the Modern colonial one, but falls short of the direct intervention in oppressive discourses that strikes me as being at the center of Bhabha's thought, and which is necessitated by Bhabha's reliance on Foucault's notion of the truth regime (to be discussed shortly).

Lyman's choice of a mimicry approach avoids the more theoretical elements present in Bhabha's thought, but those are the aspect of Bhabha's work that speak directly to the need to intervene in the assumptions or positions internal to a given discourse that themselves inform the hegemonic operation of that discourse. Lyman's analysis, in not making use of the more theoretical—and especially Foucauldean—elements of Bhabha, falls short of fully disrupting the problematic undergirding the hegemonic tendencies she would like to be rid of.

That said, Lyman has opened the door to Bhabha's application to early Christian thought with an eye specifically to how that analysis might inform contemporary Christian self-definition. Much as Kang has advocated a more theoretically informed approach in the field of postcolonial Biblical criticism and theology,[6] my suggestion is that a better incorporation of the theoretical aspects of Bhabha's thought will yield a

[6] See my discussion of Kang, beginning on p. 48, in chapter one.

more fruitful analysis in the direction Lyman seems to want to take early Christian thought and contemporary Christian praxis.

I will now begin my discussion of the theoretical background informing Bhabha's own thought as a means of easing into Bhabha's notion of transparency, and his generally more challenging prose.

I. Postcolonial Premises Informing My Analysis.

I begin here by unpacking the lengthy quotation from Said with which I prefaced this chapter. Said is one of Lyman's postcolonial sources,[7] and this particular passage touches on all the relevant considerations I want to lay down prior to delving into Bhabha directly. In the passage, Said presents a reading of Rudyard Kipling's account (or self-description) of the *White Man*, making a number of important, if at times subtle, observations along the way.

In the first sentence, Said notes that the mission of White men—cleaning a land—'is best done in concert with each other.' With this observation, Said touches on an important aspect of discourses that can serve to facilitate their functioning transparently, and one which I noted reared its head in Lyman's attempt to mediate the non-Christian through an explicitly Christian filter:[8] namely that transparency is enabled by a level of identity between the speaker and her audience.

We saw this previously in the way Lyman's Christian identity, within the context of a conversation directed at other Christians ('who do we think we are?'), led to Lyman's adoption of an explicitly Christian standard for describing the personhood of non-Christians ('the rest of God's children'), and her failure to notice that this was no less hegemonic a practice than those she located in historical attempts to define Christian

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[7] See note 39, in chapter one.
[8] See my discussion on p. 38, in chapter one.

orthodoxy.[9]

Harking back to my discussion of Plato's *Timaeus* in the introduction,[10] one might wonder whether the conversation between Plato's interlocutors in the dialogue would have gone rather differently if an actual Egyptian had been present. Would someone actually from Egypt have raised an eyebrow about the way Egyptian beliefs and political organization were described, in all their seemingly Greek contours, by Plato's priest to Solon? One can only speculate, but the identity between the author (Plato) and the audience (whether the interlocutors in the dialogue or those we might have expected to read Plato at the time) makes the question moot.

After all, and as we have seen in what was said in the previous chapter about the construction of the *other* as ultimately oriented toward an understanding of the self,[11] the Egyptian priest is not present in the *Timaeus* to elucidate something about Egypt (or Egyptians), but about Greece. Plato's use of the priest to this end is for the benefit of other Greeks. And so we have here a basic element of transparent discourses: identity between speaker and audience.

Said fleshes out the relevance of this aspect of colonial discourses, when he writes:

> [W]e need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Orient and the Orient itself, not so much because the language is inaccurate but because it is not even trying to be accurate. What it is trying to do . . . is at one and the same time to characterize the Orient as alien and to incorporate it schematically on a theatrical stage whose audience, manager, and actors are *for* Europe, and only for Europe. Hence the vacillation between the familiar and the alien; Mohammed is always the imposter (familiar, because he pretends to be like the Jesus we know) and always the Oriental (alien, because although he is in some ways "like" Jesus, he is after all not like him). . . . [S]uch categories as imposter (or Oriental, for that matter) imply, indeed require, an opposite that is neither fraudulently something else nor endlessly in need of explicit identification. And that opposite is "Occidental," or in Mohammed's case, Jesus.[12]

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[9] See my discussion on pp. 39-40, in chapter one.
[10] See pp. 1-6, in the introduction.
[11] See pp. 17, 40-1, in chapter one.
[12] Said, *Orientalism*, 71-2.

In saying that colonial descriptions of the Orient are not trying to be accurate, Said makes two observations at once. First, in thinking about descriptions of an *other*, it must be acknowledged that the descriptions serve the rhetorical purposes of the speaker. The point is not to tell us something about the *other*, but to further some aim of the speaker, one that is often connected to the speaker's self-understanding (and, by implication, self-definition).

Second, descriptions of an *other* often serve to tell us something about the speaker herself, not the *other*, which is to say that these descriptions are part and parcel of projects of self-definition. This is important, because in both of the works we will analyze in the following chapters, descriptions of the *other* are generally marshaled to make a point about Christians themselves. Much like the Egyptian priest in *Timaeus*—or Mohammed in the passage just cited—the *other* is there to bring the self (whether the Westerner in Said, or the Christian in the texts we will analyze later) into sharper relief.

And that sharper relief is achieved, in part, by organizing the relevant players (the self, the *other*) on a stage that is itself for the narrator. In the two chapters that follow, I will endeavor to show that in both *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio*, the relevant stage is the broader historical purpose the Christian achieves simply by being a Christian, the fully-realized intention of God for humanity who on that basis also has authority and power over what remains on the stage.[13] It is a purpose itself woven into Christian self-definition.

As Said writes in the passage that opened this chapter, being a White man is a self-confirming business, and the dignity of the White man's mission is grounded by "intellectual dedication," the pursuit of a star that "sits far above earthly gain." 'Intellectual dedication' speaks to the idea that the White man is engaged in a project larger than himself through his colonial activity, one requiring a level of contemplation

[13] See my discussion beginning on p. 144, of chapter four.

fitting a grand and necessary mission. And that larger project is not something the White man simply happens to be engaged in, but is built into the definition of the White man itself (the White man pursues the project of cleansing lands because he is self-understood to be the best suited to the task).

But as we have already observed that descriptions of the *other* serve some rhetorical purpose of the speaker—rather than being actual attempts to describe something—so too, it must be said, do self-definitions. As with Kipling's White man, the relevant end (there, cleansing lands) is often taken for granted, decided beforehand and presented as though it has already been established as necessary. By weaving that aim into the self-definition of 'White man,' it is tacitly incorporated as though an objective property of the White man, allowing the aim to disappear as an aim, and function transparently as a simple, given, objective principle.

Here I am reminded of Nietzsche's critique of moral philosophers, which speaks to this problem of aims being taken for granted.[14] In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes:

> What the [moral] philosophers called "a rational foundation for morality" and tried to supply was, seen in the right light, merely a scholarly variation of the common *faith* in the prevalent morality; a new means of *expression* for this faith; and thus just another fact within a particular morality; indeed, in the last analysis a kind of denial that this morality might ever be considered problematic—certainly the very opposite of an examination, analysis, questioning, and vivisection of this very faith.[15]

Here, Nietzsche is arguing that moral philosophers had neglected to consider whether there is such a thing as morality before providing it a rational foundation. This

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[14] As I will show shortly, Bhabha's notion of transparency leans a lot on Foucault's discussions of truth and the truth regime. See my discussion of 'transparency', beginning on p. 88, and especially note 34, below. Because the basic premise of Foucault's 'truth regime' seems to subsist in a stream of thinking to which Nietzsche is an important contributor, and Foucault's own work on ideas like essence or truth has explicit Nietzschean influences (cf. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Essential Foucault: Selections from the Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, ed. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (New York: The New Press, 2003): 351-69), I have thought it useful to briefly refer to Nietzsche in order to illustrate this point about aims being taken for granted, which is a basic idea contained within Bhabha's notion of transparency (see the discussion of a 'discriminatory sense of order,' beginning on p. 93).

[15] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Beyond Good and Evil" in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 288.

is like the project of cleansing lands in Kipling's account of the White man, seemingly assumed as necessary. This assumption is made possible by the transparency effected in weaving the aim into the definition of the White man (which, in Kipling, is a self-definition).

Nietzsche takes the moral philosophers to task on the grounds that "the conclusions that *ought* to be the result of their most rigorous reflection were always settled from the start".[16] But rather than focus on what these thinkers ought to have done, a more useful question might be *why* they never reflected on the problem Nietzsche identifies as paramount. What is the mechanism that allowed morality itself to go unconsidered in the work of the moral philosophers?

Assuming the moral philosophers would describe themselves by that term, then we again see what we observed previously in Said's analysis of Kipling, that the larger project (in Kipling it is land cleansing, in Nietzsche morality or being moral) is woven into the self-definition of the relevant agent (in Kipling the White man, in Nietzsche the moral philosopher). Morality goes unmolested as it disappears transparently through its being woven into a self-definition (e.g., the moral philosopher is a philosopher of the moral, and thus the idea that there is such a thing as the moral is already present in the self-description of the moral philosopher, and thus the question of morality itself is rendered unnecessary).

Once woven in, the larger project seems to appear as a natural or objective property of the self, turning something that Nietzsche argues should be a matter of "rigorous reflection" into something that exists on its own, independently of any human process. Here we have arrived at a problem that Marxist thought, one of the principal sources for postcolonial theory,[17] provides a useful term for: reification. Let me take a few moments to describe reification as it is a helpful way of thinking about that process

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[16] *Ibid.*, 291.
[17] See note 91, in chapter one.

of weaving a larger project into a self-definition.

Marx speaks of reification in the context of his discussion of the *Fetishism* of the commodity—the term 'commodity' referring to any useful product, produced by human labor, that is transferred to others by means of an exchange.[18]

A commodity has use-value to the extent it has some utility for the owner, but since that use-value is ultimately a qualitative consideration,[19] something objective that is common to all commodities, and that can be quantitatively measured, is necessary for the purpose of establishing exchange rates between different commodities. According to Marx, that which is common to all commodities is human-labor.[20]

As Marx puts it,

> we put out of sight both the useful character of the various kinds of labour embodied in [commodities], and the concrete forms of that labour; there is nothing left but what is common to them all; all are reduced to one and the same sort of labour, human labour in the abstract.[21]

In other words, we are no longer informed by human considerations like whether the laborer had to struggle through a learning or physical disability before being able to produce the commodity, a fact which might alter our appreciation or valuation of that labor. Instead, labor becomes a homogenized abstraction in order to allow for a rate of exchange between commodities with unrelated use-values.[22]

This abstraction of human labor is a process of reification in which "the social character of labour appears to us to be an objective character of the products themselves."[23] Labor has now been woven into the description of the commodity, going from a product of human activity to an objective or natural property of the commodity. Hence Marx's description of reification as an analogy

> to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed

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[18] Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers Co., Inc., 1967), 41.
[19] *Ibid*., 36, 37-8.
[20] *Ibid*., 37-8.
[21] *Ibid*., 38.
[22] *Ibid*., 38-40.
[23] *Ibid*., 74.

> with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities.[24]

Fetishism is simply the acceptance of the proposition that labor is an objective property internal to the commodity. It is the failure to see that the 'labor,' through reification, has become transparent—rather than remain a product of human activity, it has become an objective property of the commodity. As Lukács, who further developed the idea of reification in the Marxist paradigm, puts it,

> The essence of commodity-structure . . . is that a relation between people takes on the character of a thing and thus acquires a 'phantom objectivity', an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people.[25]

Reification, then, is a first step in rendering something transparent. For my purposes in this study, this is a reminder that one must be aware of what reifications might be implicitly taking place within the descriptions that emerge in self-definitions. But there is another important implication of reification for this study, which Berger and Luckmann point to when they observe that a reification is "apprehended as an inevitable fate, for which the individual may disclaim responsibility."[26] Indeed,

> reification is the apprehension of the products of human activity *as if* they were something else than human products—such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will. Reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world, and further, that the dialectic between man, the producer, and his products is lost to consciousness. The reified world . . . is experienced by man as a strange facticity, an *opus alienum* over which he has no control rather than as the *opus proprium* of his own productive activity.[27]

In setting down the path of a more inclusive Christian self-understanding, Lyman, it could be said, has sought to unforget the human authorship of the human world. I see this as internal to the question 'who do we think we are?', as well as Lyman's

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[24] *Ibid*., 72.
[25] Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1971), 83.
[26] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 91.
[27] *Ibid*., 89.

observation, cited in the previous chapter,[28] that "Orthodoxy as ideology has concealed its own human process."

In identifying reifications that might be internal to self-definitions, then, we are also creating space to accept responsibility for their problematic—and perhaps unwanted—implications. We are exposing aspects of what Nietzsche called our "common faith" and in so doing engaging in the examination, analysis, questioning of that faith which Nietzsche lamented was absent in the moral philosophers. And we are responding to Lyman's commission, also cited in the previous chapter, that "To be followers of Jesus, Christians in the end must refuse the temptations of hegemonic speech."[29]

Here it is useful to return to Lukács, who noted that while reifications often find their expression in the ordering of society,[30] they are also the grounds from which one may "rebel against its disastrous effects and liberate themselves from the servitude to the 'second nature' so created."[31] In other words, reifications open the door to what Said, in our opening passage, called idle speculation (and, as we will see shortly, what Bhabha calls the grounds of intervention).[32]

So long as the reifications remain unnoticed, wondering why or whether the White man (for example) should cleanse lands is a wholly idle exercise. Cleansing lands is part and parcel of the definition of White men, after all, and so we might as well ask whether a White man should be White. As long as the reifications are intact and effecting transparency, the appropriate response to such a seemingly asinine inquiry is that the White man has no choice in the matter (cleansing lands is an objective property

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[28] See note 64, in chapter one.
[29] See note 61, in chapter one.
[30] "The divorce of the phenomena of reification from their economic bases and from the vantage point from which alone they can be understood, is facilitated by the fact that the [capitalist] process of transformation must embrace every manifestation of the life of society if the preconditions for the complete self-realisation of capitalist production are to be fulfilled. Thus capitalism has created a form for the state and a system of law corresponding to its needs and harmonising with its own structure." Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, 95. See also, ibid., 95-101.
[31] *Ibid*., 86.
[32] See note 59, below.

of the White man), and the White man simply is White (a self-confirming business).[33]

By being on the lookout for reifications, we make Lyman's question (who do we think we are?) a basic principle of our analysis of self-definitions. When we apply that question to the sort of "common faith" referred to by Nietzsche above, we put ourselves in a position to deconstruct the aspects of that common faith whose authority rests mainly in its being held in common (after reification has made them transparent). This then clears a potential path for a more inclusive self-definition by removing elements that are reified rather than necessary, and that are placed there, in part, because we forgot who we are, and all the concomitant limitations of our human contingency.

In taking our cue from Lyman and unforgetting the human authorship of our world, we bring to light what Foucault called our "decentered position." In calling that decentered position forward, we make possible a reconsideration of that decentered position rather than demand it function as a basic premise of our self-understanding without further reflection.

Foucault describes that decentered position as follows:

> [T]he subject who speaks . . . who says "I" or "we," cannot, and is in fact not trying to, occupy the position of the jurist or the philosopher, or in other words the position of a universal, totalizing, or neutral subject. In the general struggle he is talking about, the person who is speaking, telling the truth . . . is inevitably on one side or the other: he is involved in the battle, has adversaries, and is working toward a particular victory. Of course, he speaks the discourse of right . . . But what he is demanding and asserting is "his" rights—he says: "We have a right." . . . it is a right that is both grounded in history and decentered from a juridical universality. And if this subject who speaks of right . . . is speaking the truth, that truth is no longer the universal truth of the philosopher. . . . it is always a perspectival discourse. It is interested in the totality only to the extent that it can see it in one-sided terms, distort it and see it from its own point of view. The truth is, in other words, a truth that can be deployed only from its combat position, from the perspective of the sought-for victory and ultimately, so to speak, of the survival of the speaking subject himself. . . . In a discourse such as this, being on one side and not the other means that you are in a better position to speak the truth. It is the fact of being on one side—the decentered position—that makes it possible

[33] This is similar to the point I raised in the previous chapter towards the end of my consideration of Gruen's work, on the problem of positing a value-neutrality to problematic normalizations. My discussion of Gruen begins on p. 59, of chapter one.

to interpret the truth.[34]

The texts I will analyze in the next two chapters are decentered in the way described by Foucault. Their truths are deployed from their combat position, and that position is laid out in the basic issue underlying the texts: the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism. Our authors are Christians, and so what they speak of as true regarding either Christianity and Hellenism must be understood within the context of this decentered position. The truth of what is said in the *Contra Celsum* or *Praeparatio* is not the truth of the disinterested observer (or philosopher), but rather the truth of one who already has skin in the game and has decided at the outset what the conclusion of the investigation ought to be (recall Nietzsche's critique of the moral philosophers).

What emerges in the text, then, is the sort of truth Foucault is referring to when he writes that,

> Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth—that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements . . . "Truth" is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements.[35]

This system, or mechanisms, that Foucault refers to are the shared and basic premises between speaker and audience, values that have been reified so as to operate transparently, parading as objective propositions rather than as little more than somebody's particular values by happenstance. But just because these values function transparently, does not mean they are not explicitly articulated (Bhabha would say "enunciated"). That articulation implicitly discloses a sorting of potential values that informs the given discourse but which are presented in a way that disguises the sorting process, suggesting something of an inevitability to the values ultimately selected.

Bhabha refers to this sorting as a process of discrimination internal to

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[34] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collége de France*, trans. David Macey (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 52-3.

[35] Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *The Essential Foucault: Selections from the Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, ed. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (New York: The New Press, 2003), 316-7.

transparency, and thus with these observations we have arrived at Bhabha's discussion of transparency itself. Let me now turn to that discussion in Bhabha, entering by way of his analysis of a passage from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. After my discussion of transparency, I will conclude with an outline of how my analysis will proceed in the final two chapters.

II. Transparency in Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*.

Bhabha presents the notion of transparency in his discussion of the authority of the "English book,"[36] quoting Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*[37] and focusing on a scene in which "Conrad's Marlow . . . comes upon Towson's (or Towser's) *Inquiry into some Points of Seamanship*":[38]

> [A]t the first glance you could see there a singleness of intention, an honest concern for the right way of going to work, which made these humble pages, thought out so many years ago, luminous with another than a professional light. . . . I assure you to leave off reading was like tearing myself away from the shelter of an old and solid friendship. . . . 'He must be English,' I said.[39]

Here we are presented with something already observed in our discussion of Said, the identity between speaker and audience that enables transparency. Because of the identity between Marlow and Towson, what was contained in the pages of this text on seamanship, even "at the first glance," communicated what was "right." Since Marlow recognizes its approach to work as "right," the text has managed to communicate the author's own identity ("He must be English"), one in which the audience (here, Marlow) participates ("an old and solid friendship").

Bhabha explains that,

> [t]he discovery of the [English] book [by Marlow] installs the sign of appropriate representation: the word of God, truth, art creates the

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[36] Bhabha, *Location*, 145-74.
[37] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Paul O'Prey (New York: Penguin Classics, 1984).
[38] *Ibid*., 148.
[39] *Ibid*., 148.

> conditions for a beginning, a practice of history and narrative. But the institution of the Word in the wilds is also an *Entstellung*, a process of displacement, distortion, dislocation, repetition – the dazzling light of literature sheds only areas of darkness. Still the idea of the English book is presented as universally adequate: like the 'metaphoric writing of the West', it communicates 'the immediate vision of the thing, freed from the discourse that accompanied it, or even encumbered it [*sic*].[40]

The "immediate vision of the thing, freed from the discourse that accompanied it" is practically itself a definition of transparency. The phrase speaks to the idea that once values—which themselves have undergone a process of sorting and selection—have also been reified, the decentered position from which they were sorted disappears, and with it the project or aim (what Foucault called "the combat position," above) that informed the sorting itself. This allows for the 'immediacy' of the vision of the thing, the immediacy standing-in as an ostensible objectivity that the thing would otherwise be denied if still accompanied by the discourse from which it emerged.

Here let me just note an important aspect of transparency: it is enabled, if not effected, by the long held acceptance of a given idea (or definition). That is, what allows for the immediate vision of the thing is not the thing itself, but the fact that the thing has been constructed in a particular way and thus described for so long that even the speaker is not necessarily aware of the combat position her particular vision carries with it. This is important in thinking about texts like *Contra Celsum* or *Praeparatio Evangelica*, because many of the rhetorical elements that function transparently seem to be transparent to the speakers (Origen and Eusebius) themselves, operating with a level of objectivity that goes unquestioned by our two early Christian authors. In thinking about conducting a transparency analysis, one must preserve an awareness of the fact that what is being analyzed is a given discourse itself, and just with an eye to those aspects that are operating often beyond the awareness of speaker and audience, but which can nonetheless (and perhaps for precisely that reason) lead to hegemonic tendencies.

That said, and returning to my previous citation of Bhabha, once transparent

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[40] *Ibid*., 149.

aspects of a given discourse appear as seemingly objective propositions, rendering them immediately visible, the discourse itself comes to function as "a practice of history and narrative," a part of the sort of larger project or mission I noted as having a tendency to be woven into self-definitions in my discussion above. That larger project can be thought of as the "combat position" which Foucault referred to, and which is necessary to the identification of truth within the sort of rhetorical (or discursive) truth that I am concerned with in this dissertation.

Bhabha is here offering his own interpretation of the Foucauldean truth regime.[41] The English book—the English perspective—communicates an "immediate vision" to the extent that those who encounter it also participate in its truth regime (are also English). Thus when Marlow comes upon Towson's manual, the manual's "honesty" about the "right way" is immediately recognizable ("an old and solid friendship"). This is that transcendent light which is "other than professional." It is that truth made immediate by the fact of a shared truth regime operating transparently.

That immediacy (one might say "transparency") of the thing is a consequence of the identity between speaker and audience. But the process that enables that immediacy also has consequences for those who do not share that identity. And for those outside that identity between speaker and audience, the immediacy of this vision is instead "a process of displacement, distortion, dislocation, repetition."

As Bhabha puts it,

> the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference. It is a disjunction produced within the act of enunciation as a specifically colonial articulation of those two disproportionate sites of colonial discourse and power: the colonial scene as the invention of historicity, mastery, mimesis or as the 'other scene' of *Entstellung*, displacement, fantasy, psychic defence, and an 'open' textuality. Such a display of difference produces a mode of authority that is agonistic (rather than antagonistic). Its discriminatory effects are visible in those split subjects of the racist stereotype – the simian Negro, the effeminate Asiatic

[41] See *ibid*., 156-7.

male – which ambivalently fix identity as the fantasy of difference.[42]

With this, Bhabha is noting the way that "the representation of colonial authority depends less on a universal symbol of English identity than on its productivity as a sign of difference."[43] Let me remind the reader that since this dissertation is focused on the analysis of two early Christian texts, we are not broadly discussing the representation of (Modern) colonial authority. However, what is referred to by "colonial authority" is the problem of colonial self-definition (since the authority is an extension of how the colonialist understands who she is in the world), and it is self-definition with which I am concerned in this study.

Where the person outside the identity between speaker and audience (the *other*) is concerned, the self-definition of the speaker/audience 'fixes one's identity as the fantasy of difference.'[44] In other words, in defining the self, that definition then becomes the basis for defining the *other* and thus fixing the *other's* identity.

For the *other*, that is an experience of displacement and distortion. As we saw in Foucault's discussion of the truth regime above, the speaker of 'truth' (again, we are dealing with 'truth' in the context of rhetorical aims) "is interested in the totality only to the extent that it can see it in one-sided terms, distort it and see it from its own point of view."[45] The *other* is defined on the basis of the speaker's self-definition, and in the process becomes distorted and seen only from the speaker's point of view (seen as *other* vis-à-vis the speaker).

This is what postcolonial thinker Frantz Fanon seems to have in mind in his seminal *Black Skin, White Masks*, when he writes,

> Ontology—once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside—does not permit us to understand the being of the black man. For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man. Some critics will take it on themselves to remind us that this proposition has a converse. I say that this is false. The black man

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[42] *Ibid*., 153.
[43] *Ibid*., 154.
[44] See note 41, above.
[45] See note 34, above.

> has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man. . . . His metaphysics, or, less pretentiously, his customs and the sources on which they were based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that he did not know and that imposed itself on him.[46]

With "ontology," Fanon is not referring to a philosophical exercise in which a basis for (talking about) existence is given, but precisely to the identity imposed on an *other* ("his customs and the sources on which they were based, were wiped out") that Bhabha is describing in his discussion of transparency. The definition of the self comes to function agonistically (one might say, "combatively"), looking outward and casting difference in whatever direction it is oriented. This is what we saw Bhabha refer to as 'the dazzling light that sheds only areas of darkness,' above.[47]

In this agonism, in this casting of darkness which is an establishment of the self as the basis of a fantasy of difference, the other can be defined and have its identity fixed in such a way as to have no ontological resistance vis-à-vis the speaker who is doing the self-defining. The speaker defines the other and we are not to notice that this tells us something only about the speaker. This is what Said referred to as the 'incorporating of the alien on a stage whose audience, manager, and actors are for Europe,' above.[48]

What emerges, inevitably, is an *other* that is more caricature than person: the racist stereotype. And the stereotype, being the identity of the *other* as formulated from the agonistic self-definition of the speaker, functions to bring the identity of the speaker into sharper relief (hence a stage that is *for* the speaker).

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[46] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 82-3.

[47] See note 39, above. Gayatri Spivak, in her seminal "Can the Subaltern Speak?", makes a similar point in explaining her notion of 'epistemic violence,' which she defines as the "project to constitute the colonial subject as Other. This project is also the asymetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subject-ivity." Gayatri C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg and Carl Nelson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 280-1. That project, termed 'epistemic violence' because of the stripping of agency/subjectivity effected in conceiving of the *other* as other (an epistemic object of the Subject-self), is violent in "the persistent constitution of Other as the Self's shadow," (*ibid*., 280.) a constitution that denies this 'Other' any subjectivity through an exclusion of her voice. For Spivak, who precedes Bhabha, the colonial definition of the self is also a light that casts darkness on those constructed as *other*, since the one thus constructed has no say in her depiction, and so she emerges only as a shade version of the colonial self. A shadow. The sort of thing Bhabha—as I will touch on momentarily—seems to have in mind in his discussion of the racist stereotype. Said, Spivak, and Bhabha, then, all touch on this idea that the *other* emerges as a consequence of self-definitions, and that the definition of the *other* functions ultimately to bring the definer herself into sharper relief.

[48] See note 12, above.

That is, the 'Negro' is simian in that his physical form is not-White, and, in being defined as simian, the 'Negro' thus tells us something about the physical norms of the White speaker who thus defined her. The Asiatic male is effeminate in that he acts in a way other than the White man, and thus the definition of the Asiatic male tells us something about how a White man is supposed to act (recall Said's allusion to the authority of Whiteness that even Whites must bend to). As I proceed in my analysis in the next two chapters, one of the things it will be important to keep watch for is whether any given definition of an *other* is actually really just a definition of the speaker.

But here we have also arrived at the problem of anthropological formulations internal to self-definitions and the way they form the basis of racial categories—a notion we came across in our discussion of Carter and Buell in the previous chapter.[49] The description of the 'Negro' as 'simian' speaks to this in an obvious way. The White colonialist's appearance is taken for a human norm, and the 'Negro,' in his not-Whiteness, is described by reference to an animal ('simian' referring to apes or monkeys).[50] The idea that the Asiatic male is effeminate also speaks to an underlying anthropological formulation, in which humans are divided into male and female on the basis of both appearance and behaviors. Since the norms informing the process of discrimination between male and female behaviors are that of the White colonist, the Asiatic male's different behaviors are then defined precisely with respect to the failure to conform to White maleness: as effeminate.

In both cases, of course, the inscription of White colonialist norms as the standards of universal human behavior or construction is arbitrary. Thus, in speaking of transparency,[51] Bhabha writes that,

> Transparency is the action of the distribution and arrangement of differential spaces, positions, knowledges in relation to each other,

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[49] See discussion begining on p. 55.

[50] See simian. Dictionary.com. *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/simian (accessed: October 03, 2015).

[51] Bhabha also uses the terms "discursive transparency" (Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 155), and "transparency of reference (Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 154) to refer to transparency.

> relative to a discriminatory, not inherent, sense of order. This effects a regulation of spaces and places that is authoritatively assigned; it puts the addressee into the proper frame or condition for some action or result. Such a mode of governance addresses itself to a form of conduct that equivocates between the sense of disposal, as the bestowal of a frame of reference, and disposition, as mental inclination, a frame of mind. Such equivocation allows neither an equivalence of the two sites of disposal nor their division as self/other, subject/object.[52]

Transparency, then, is a function of the norms determined on the basis of "a discriminatory, not inherent, sense of order." 'Discriminatory' here simply means that the order of the relevant arrangement is made on the basis of choosing (discriminating) between certain possible values. For example, with reference to the effeminate Asiatic male, certain forms of acting are assigned the value of masculine while others are viewed as feminine (or effeminate). But the basis of that discrimination between masculine and feminine is simply how English men happen to act, and thus it hardly refers to an inherent (or objective) sense of order.

As with Foucault's truth regimes and Nietzsche's moral sciences, the arrangement of "differential spaces, positions, knowledges" are made with an eye to values that already happen to be held (a common faith). No consideration is first given to those values, even though they would seem to require the sort of rigorous reflection Nietzsche referred to if they are indeed to function as the basis of objective understandings. But as Said pointed out, objectivity (Said used a variant of 'accuracy')[53] is not the aim. The stage is for the speaker and the audience with whom she shares an identity, and thus Bhabha notes that there can be no division between self and *other*.

Self and *other* are neither equivalent (the *other* is defined as alien in some way), nor are they fully distinct (divided), since the *other* is defined in a way that ultimately serves to bring the self of the speaker into sharper relief, to tell us something about the speaker (as we saw with Plato's Egyptian priest in the introduction).[54]

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[52] *Ibid*., 155-6.
[53] See note 12, above.
[54] Of course, a basic presumption of my reading of Bhabha is that his discussion of transparency (and hybridity) rejects the sort of essentialist reading of culture that would then require a full division

Of course, as long as the speaker's self and *other* are being incorporated on a stage that is for the speaker, the narrated difference of the *other* functions as true, because

> the field of the 'true' emerges as a visible sign of authority only after the regulatory and displacing division of the true and the false. From this point of view, discursive 'transparency' is best read in the photographic sense in which a transparency is also always a negative, processed into visibility through the technologies of reversal, enlargement, lighting, editing, projection, not a source but a re-source of light.[55]

This is, essentially, a rearticulation of what Foucault said above with respect to the functioning of truth in discourses.[56] But what Bhabha adds here is this notion of the negative transparency. The phrase 'negative transparency' speaks to the idea that while the hiding of a speaker's discriminatory organization of values through reification

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between self and *other*. But whether Bhabha is truly anti-essentialist has been a point of contention. Robert Young, Talal Asad, and Richard King have all argued that to speak of hybrid cultures requires some sense of preexisting 'pure' cultures. Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 150. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 263; Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'the Mystic East'* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 204. Spivak has been cited for making the same critique at p. 361 of A Critique of Postcolonial Reason, but does no such thing. See Lyman, "NAPS," 216, note 28. On the contrary, Spivak praises Bhabha for keeping in mind "the hybridity of the colonized." Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward A History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 200, note 4. While Spivak herself certainly takes issue with different manifestations of essentialism, she does not critique Bhabha or Bhabhan hybridity, here, for being essentialist. *Ibid*., 259, 264, 282-3. On the other hand, Lyman has read Bhabha as anti-essentialist, while Boyarin, ambivalent about whether Bhabha himself is anti-essentialist, has noted that some postcolonial discourses preserve this sense of 'pure' original cultures. Lyman, "NAPS," 216; Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 15-16. See especially note 65 in ibid., 16. I have argued that Bhabha locates hybridity in the enunciations of authority themselves, enunciations that are ambivalent in that they both assert authority and undermine that assertion. Roberto E. Alejandro, "Christology and Hybridity in Nemesius of Emesa," *Studia Patristica* 52 (2012): 268-9, 273-4. That said, I must admit that I do not find Bhabha's relation to the problem of cultural essentialities entirely consistent. For example, Bhabha's critique of nationalist intellectuals who articulate their nationalism "into modern Western forms of information technology, language, dress" (Bhabha, Location, 55) seems to preserve an essentialized West towards which the adjective Western points. It could be that Western forms points to something that is contingently, not essentially, so, but Bhabha nowhere makes such an argument. It could also be suggested that the nationalist referred to by Bhabha is the one who has essentialized the West in her nationalistic discourse, but undermined herself by participating 'culturally' in habits that would seem to belong to that West which she rejects. Bhabha does not raise this point either, but I bring it up only to note that Bhabha need not necessarily be read, at least in this instance, as an essentialist. Ultimately, however, there is some measure of difficulty in adequately addressing the extent of Bhabha's own essentialism. Indeed, Robert Young, in a later publication, though noting the essentialist critique of the concept of hybridity, no longer locates it in Bhabha. Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 22-5. Thus, if there is an essentialist strand in Bhabha, I put it aside. It would be hasty, I think, to reject Bhabha's methodological utility on account of any undiagnosed essentialism on his part. His anti-essentialist strands, as noted in this analysis of his notion of transparency, are simply too important and useful to let go to waste simply because Bhabha may not always be perfectly consistent with respect to the problem of essentialism.

[55] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 157.

[56] See note 34, above.

renders the speaker's decenteredness transparent, that very transparency is also an opportunity to intervene in the problem it effects (e.g., the racist stereotype), thus allowing the transparency to be "processed into visibility."

> Such a bringing to light is a question of the provision of visibility as a capacity, a strategy, an agency. This is the question that brings us to the ambivalence of the presence of authority, peculiarly visible in its colonial articulation. For if transparency signifies discursive closure – intention, image, author – it does so through a disclosure of its *rules of recognition* – those social texts of epistemic, ethnocentric, nationalist intelligibility which cohere in the address of authority as the 'present', the voice of modernity. The acknowledgement of authority depends upon the immediate – unmediated – visibility of its rules of recognition as the unmistakable referent of historical necessity. In the doubly inscribed space of colonial representation where the presence of authority . . . is also a question of its repetition and displacement, where transparency is *technē*, the immediate visibility of such a regime of recognition is resisted.[57]

This recalls an observation I made with respect to Lyman earlier in this chapter. In asking who Christians think they are, Lyman has sought to unforget the human authorship of the human world which was disguised through reification (what Bhabha refers to as the "disclosure of its rules of recognition") and which Lyman herself described as a process of concealment where orthodoxy operates as ideology.[58] In so doing, Lyman takes responsibility for that forgetting by intervening and working towards a new self-definition that will avoid the exclusivity of certain historical Christian self-definitions which Lyman rejects, and even possibly lay bare the process which developed the rules of recognition of that rejected self-descriptive discourse.

In this passage, Bhabha is noting that a transparency operates to obscure the process which produced its rules (or regime) of recognition by presenting those rules as the "unmistakable referent of historical necessity." That is, once a regime's human authorship is forgotten, and the regime transforms from perspectival to objective knowledge (reification), that regime becomes the boundary of what can be true in the discourse, and thus the referent of what must be so by necessity.

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[57] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 157.
[58] See note 28, above, and note 64, in chapter one.

Bhabha refers to this as the immediate visibility of the regime. Once the regime is rendered objective, the truths or conclusions that function on the basis of the regime's rules appear to the hearer as obviously, or immediately true. They conform to the truth regime, and if the hearer participates in that regime, they conform to the hearer. That is why Marlow could encounter Towson's manual and conclude, "he must be English."

But for those who's experience of a given regime has been oppressive, their orientation towards that regime is one of resisting "the immediate visibility of such a regime of recognition." But it is important to note that:

> Resistance [to the visibility of the regime of recognition] is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or exclusion of the 'content' of another culture, as a difference once perceived. It is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and reimplicate them within the deferential relations of colonial power – hierarchy, normalization, marginalization and so forth. For colonial domination is achieved through a process of disavowal that denies the chaos of its intervention as *Entstellung*, its dislocatory presence in order to preserve the authority of its identity in the teleological narratives of historical and political evolutionism. The exercise of colonialist authority, however, requires the production of differentiations, individuations, identity effects through which discriminatory practices can map out subject populations that are tarred with the visible and transparent mark of power.[59]

That is, as a regime of recognition comes to agonistically impose difference on a colonized population and thus effect control over that population, an ambivalence is produced in that the *other*, defined by way of racial stereotypes within this regime, does not see herself in this agonistically imposed definition. That inability to see herself in the otherized fiction of the regime of recognition calls into question the broader objective claims (such as the anthropological norms marshaled to serve as the base from which the *other* is racially stereotyped) that ground the supposed authority of colonial powers within the discourse shaped by that regime, not to mention the authority to define the colonized as *other*.

This creates an awareness of the regime of recognition upon which otherization

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[59] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 157-8.

has been based, an awareness that the stage has been set only for those who see themselves in that regime of recognition (who participate in this particular regime). Thus, the immediate visibility of the regime—which is an insistence that one immediately conform to the regime's underlying discriminations, that one forget its human authorship, human authorship being a fact that would make one accept the regime less immediately—is resisted in noting that the discursive conditions demanded by the regime are the source of otherization and oppression for the colonial subject. Resisting that regime, then, consists of intervening in the regime itself, in the discursive elements reified into objective premises that then push outward agonistically to impose necessary (natural or objective) difference on the *other*.

Lyman pursued a mimicry analysis because she saw, in the Helleno-Christian identity this method suggested was present in Justin, a cultural hybrid that, stripped of its essentialism via its hybrid, would thereby have to avoid hegemonic tendencies. Such a Helleno-Christian identity, effectively, would be an implicit rejection of the idea that one cultural strand can be superior to another.

But this, I would suggest, is a departure from what Bhabha understands hybridity to indicate. Hybridity does not mean that culture is negotiable, but that, to the extent culture has been defined objectively within colonial discursive regimes, culture is a fiction. That is, culture has been defined as an objective notion, and the culture of the colonized subject has been defined by the colonizer as objectively inferior on the basis of decentered anthropological norms (as seen in the racist stereotype), creating a necessity for colonial intervention and authority. But outside the need to ground an interventionist authority, such a vision of culture seems wholly out of touch with reality, where the customs and practices of any given grouping of people are just as likely to incorporate foreign elements as reject them. The discourse of culture, as colonially constructed and then imposed on the colonized world in order to fix that world as permanently in need of outside intervention, is seen from this lens as far from objective,

and largely just a rhetorical tool to justify acts of often violent oppression.

Culture, as an objective concept, emerges as hybrid in that it both makes an objective claim, and in so doing has the very objectivity of that claim undermined. Hybridity, then,

> is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic and narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power. For the colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory – or, in my mixed metaphor, a negative transparency. . . . The ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority enables a form of subversion, founded on the undecidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention.[60]

Lyman has started us on a path of this intervention in asking who Christians think they are, and with that question demanding that the human authorship of the Christian world be laid bare. She has intervened by virtue of the grounds of intervention opened up by Christian self-definitions themselves, and in so doing has exposed the hybrid nature of those definitions (at once a claim of authority and the undoing of that authority).

This is not a view of hybridity present in Lyman's mimicry analysis, however, but in her reminder that orthodoxy as ideology tends to conceal its human process,[61] which highlights the way a claim of orthodoxy, often presented as objective, is far more contingent than its presentation would suggest: thus both a claim and simultaneous undoing of a claim of authority. This is where Bhabha seems to be taking his understanding of hybridity, which, informed by Foucault's development of the truth

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[60] *Ibid*., 159-60.

[61] See notes 28 and 57, above, and note 64, in chapter one.

regime, locates hybridity not in the things discourses touch upon (e.g., culture), but in the claim of authority inherent in any discourse that claims to know or describe something.

Any intervention based on Bhabha, then, ought to intervene directly in the discursive conditions of dominance, something Lyman's mimicry analysis does ineffectively since it preserves those very conditions in pre-Constantinian Christian discourses (as we saw in my analysis of both Lyman's and Jacobs's work in chapter one). This requires holding on tightly to the more theoretical—and especially Foucauldean—aspects of Bhabha's thought and intervening directly in the norms woven into self-definitions that function agonistically to create otherness, otherness itself then forming the basis for hegemonic authority over the other. Such an intervention seeks to demonstrate the way certain norms are hybrid moments, suggesting an authority (authority being what allows it to function as a norm), and undermining that authority at the same time should one notice the truth regime operating tacitly underneath.

This is a view of hybridity that side-steps the problem of essentialism altogether. This has nothing to do with navigating multiple cultural strands (e.g. Hellenist and Christian), something that requires two distinct essences we can then weave together in some way (or bring into dialogue with one another). Bhabha rejects such a view of hybridity when he writes that hybridity "is not a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures."[62]

Instead, hybridity for Bhabha is located simply and solely in the articulation of the self-definition itself as an objective (by way of transparency) worldview. That articulation both asserts something and undermines that assertion, and is thus a hybrid moment: true yet not true, authoritative yet without authority.

By focusing on a transparency analysis, then, we can set down the path that Lyman has opened for us while avoiding the tendency of mimicry analysis to force us back into essentialist positions. This opens a space for a project of self-definition

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[62] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 162.

outside the context of "the politics of binary opposition."[63] I believe transparency analysis will also better address the problematic anthropological formulations internal to self-definitions that we saw Lyman fall back into (humans as 'God's children'), and which I locate in Carter's analysis of early Christian authors.

In the next two chapters, I will conduct my transparency analysis of *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio Evangelica*. I will now outline the contours of this analysis.

III. Conclusion: Selection of Texts and Outline of Analysis.

In this dissertation, I am interested in investigating the anthropological formulations that emerge in late antique Christian self-definitions, and how those anthropological formulations come to form the basis for describing the *other* in a racialized way. In so doing, I wish to open up potential avenues for practices of self-definition that are less likely to function like dazzling lights that cast darkness where that *other* is concerned.

This is a project opened up by the work of Lyman, both in her application of Bhabhan hybridity to the problem of the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity, and in her observation that Christian self-definition was never as essentialist as some engaged in the question of Hellenism vs. Christianity make it out to be. This observation has opened a door to reformulating Christian self-definition in a postcolonially informed direction with hopefully less violent consequences for the Christian's *other*.

As such, I have selected for analysis in the following chapters two texts engaged in the exercise of defining Christianity in the context of discussing the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism. Origen's *Contra Celsum* is explicitly concerned with how Christians address anti-Christian arguments from Hellenists, and involves

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[63] *Ibid*., 256.

formulations of both the Christian and the Hellenist. Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica* is intended as a primer for those we might term Hellenists, and who recently converted to Christianity. *Praeparatio Evangelica* thus touches extensively on what makes Christians and Hellenists different.

In analyzing the two texts I will be looking to keep an eye on any anthropological formulations internal to the Christian self-definitions of Origen and Eusebius that then form the basis of fixing the identity of non-Christians as *other*, and in so doing describing them along the same contours of the racist stereotype that Bhabha outlined (and thus adding further evidence to support the idea, which I glean from what was said by Carter, that anthropological formulations are part and parcel to the construction of racial categories).

As I have said throughout this chapter, I will be conducting a transparency analysis of *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio*. I have touched on a number of factors that inform the operation of transparencies, and these are the factors whose presence I will be seeking within these two texts, and which make up the prongs of my analysis.

The first prong of the analysis, then, will be considering whether there exists that identity between speaker and audience that might allow for common faiths to go unnoticed, and for aspects of discourses to function transparently. What is the relationship of the author to the intended audience, and is there an identity between them that might obscure the decentered nature of certain 'objective' claims?

The second prong is to consider the broader aims of the speaker (author) within the texts, and whether these aims do not ultimately tell us something about the speaker herself. What are the commitments my selected authors are intent on upholding? Why is the author addressing these issues to this audience? What is the combat position of the author?

The third prong involves looking at how our authors depict themselves and their *others*, and asking whether there are any reifications involved. Are there ostensibly

objective premises of the descriptions that are actually just decentered elements that require further consideration (or which are missing a preliminary consideration to begin with), and are thus hybrid moments that both assert something and undermine that assertion?

Because I am interested in how anthropological formulations emerge in self-definitions as the basis of racializing (or fixing the identity of) *others*, I will be focused on reifications touching on anthropological formulation. Once identified, these then can become grounds of intervention for those interested in taking responsibility for problematic consequences stemming from projects of self-definition, and who want to pursue a practice of self-definition that does not result in this form of racialized otherization.

These three prongs will form the basis of my analysis in chapter three. But there is one other factor that I mentioned above that must be considered: the tendency for discourses about the *other* (and the self, for that matter) to organize the relevant players on a stage that is for the speaker alone.

In chapter four, I will consider whether the self-definitions and descriptions of the *other* in *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio Evangelica* ultimately function to allow the setting up of a stage that is for the speaker alone, what that stage is, and what the consequences are of this for the *other*. I will then conclude chapter four with a summary of my analysis and some thoughts on its implications for the project of Christian self-definition, and propose some considerations that might help address some of the more problematic consequences of that project that we saw Lyman allude to in chapter one.

I will now turn to my analysis of *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio Evangelica*,[64] following the analytical road map I have just laid out. In doing so, I am again reminded of Foucault, who writes:

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[64] From here forward, I will refer to this work simply as *Praeparatio*.

> A critique does not consist in saying that things aren't good the way they are. It consists in seeing on what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based. . . . To do criticism is to make harder those acts which are now too easy. . . . Whatever the project of reform, if its basis has not been thought working in itself; and if ways of thinking—which is to say, ways of acting—have not actually been modified, we know that it will be phagocyted and digested by behavioral and institutional modes that will always be the same.[65]

[65] Michel Foucault, "So Is It Important to Think?", in *The Essential Foucault: Selections from the Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, eds. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (New York: The New Press, 2003), 172-3.

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Transparency in *Contra Celsum* and *Praepartio Evangelica*

In the previous chapter, I laid out the four prongs of the transparency analysis I have proposed to conduct of Origen's *Contra Celsum* and Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica*. The first prong of the analysis asks whether there exists an identity between speaker and audience that could allow common faiths—elements of a discourse that are presumed without being established in any meaningful way—to go unnoticed, and thus to function transparently.

The second prong asks about the broader aims of the speaker (author) operating within the texts, and whether these aims do not ultimately tell us something about the speaker herself more so than the ostensible subject at hand. What are the commitments Origen and Eusebius are intent on upholding? Why are they addressing these issues to this audience? What is their respective combat position?

The third prong then takes a look at how our authors depict themselves and their *others*, asking whether there are any reifications involved in those depictions. Are there ostensibly objective premises of the discourses that, if looked at carefully, actually emerge as hybrid moments that both assert an authority while also undermining that very assertion?

The fourth prong asks whether the discourses contained in *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio* ultimately serve to organize the relevant players (the Christian and the Christian's *other*) on a stage that is for the Christian alone, what Jacobs referred to as "a new epistemic totality that strives for an absolute and comprehensive historical vision of Christian identity and Jewish difference" in his discussion of Eusebius[1], itself an observation that need not be limited to 'Jewish difference,' but which can be abstracted

[1] See note 83, in chapter one. Sugirtharajah has also described the knowledge produced of the *other*, in a colonial context, as "totalizing." Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*, 10.

more generally to something in the vein of 'the difference of the *other*.'

This fourth prong will be the focus of the analysis in the next chapter, while here the analysis will be limited to the first three prongs. In a sense, the fourth prong speaks to a consequence of the first three, and so my various prongs lend themselves to the division I have pursued in this and the next chapter.

In this chapter, I will first analyze *Contra Celsum* followed by *Praeparatio*. This will be followed by a brief concluding section that will set up the discussion in chapter four. It is to *Contra Celsum* that I now turn.

I. Origen's *Contra Celsum*.

1. Identity between Speaker and Audience.

Contra Celsum, written in the third century, is Origen's response to Celsus's anti-Christian text, *The True Doctrine*.[2] In a brief preface to *Contra Celsum*, Origen addresses "God-loving Ambrose,"[3] the patron who apparently requested Origen draft a response to *The True Doctrine*, after noticing that a number of his (Ambrose's) local, fellow Christians had been shaken by its contents. Of those who had been affected by Celsus's arguments, Origen writes,

> I have no sympathy with anyone who had faith in Christ such that it could be shaken by Celsus . . . or by any plausibility of argument. I do not know in what category I ought to reckon one who needs written arguments in books to restore and confirm him in his faith after it has been shaken by the accusations brought by Celsus against the Christians. But nevertheless, since among the multitude of people supposed to believe some people of this kind might be found, who may be shaken and disturbed by the writings of Celsus, and who may be restored by the reply to them if what is said is of a character that is destructive of Celsus' arguments and clarifies the truth, we decided to yield to your demand and to compose a treatise in reply to that which you sent us. . . . [T]his book is not written at all for true Christians, but either for those entirely without experience of faith in Christ, or for those whom the apostle calls 'weak in

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[2] Celsus's text may be dated to the latter half of the second century. See Kofsky, *Eusebius Against Paganism* (Boston: Brill, 2000), 9.

[3] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, *P*.1 (p. 3).

faith'; for he says this: 'Him that is weak in faith receive ye.'[4]

Origen's tack of distinguishing between "true Christians" and 'weak-at-best-Christians' in identifying his target audience is informative. It would seem Ambrose did not share Origen's perspective on the matter, however, considering he requested Origen write a reply to Celsus specifically for the benefit of those for whom Origen claims to have no sympathy.

Those persons were Christians to Ambrose, if only weak Christians to Origen. But Origen's somewhat harsh description of those taking Celsus's arguments seriously speaks to Said's contention that

> Being a White Man . . . meant—in the colonies—speaking in a certain way, behaving according to a code of regulations, and even feeling certain things and not others. . . . It was a form of authority before which . . . even whites themselves, were expected to bend.[5]

That is, what Origen is expressing is less a belief that those who might be swayed by Celsus are not "true Christians," but a reminder that, as Christians, we are not swayed by persons like Celsus. Origen is engaged in a didactic act that simultaneously polices the boundaries of Christianity while also reminding the Christian that there is a certain way to speak, behave, feel as a Christian. In engaging Celsus's arguments and thus validating them, those Christians, whose subsequent distress caught Ambrose's attention, had failed to bend to the authority Christianity is expected to have over the Christian.

In saying that no true Christian would be swayed or affected by Celsus's arguments, Origen is saying, 'As my audience, you are Christians, and remember that Christians are not swayed by persons like Celsus.' Origen's admonishment is thus also an identification with his audience: you and I are Christians.[6]

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[4] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, *P*.4-6 (p. 5-6).

[5] See note 1, in chapter two.

[6] Hanson, de Lange, Feldman, and McGuckin all suggest that Origen's *Contra Celsum* had an at least partially pagan audience. Hanson, *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition* (London: S.P.C.K., 1954), 30; de Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 69, 73. Lewis H. Feldman, "Origen's *Contra Celsum* and Josephus' *Contra Apionem*: The Issue of Jewish Origins," *Vigiliae Christianae* 44:2 (1990): 106; Fr. John A. McGuckin, "Origen on the Jews," 27. Jacobs, in suggesting that the *Contra Celsum* is an attempt to advocate for the legitimacy of Christianity, seems to think that this text had a non-Christian audience since, presumably, a struggle for legitimacy is waged with someone else. Jacobs, *Remains of the*

Thus, in thinking about Origen's arguments in *Contra Celsum*, one would do well to be on the lookout for aspects of the discourse that may function transparently on account of that identity between speaker and audience. This is particularly so because even within his brief preface to *Contra Celsum*, Origen has already implied that his immediate intended audience has failed to see things Christianly,[7] thus his assertion that anyone swayed by Celsus's words is not a "true Christian." What Origen will lay out in *Contra Celsum*, then, is that which, when possessed, signals true Christianity—to Origen anyways.

In noting this, I have arrived at the second prong of my transparency analysis: the broader aims of the speaker (author) within the discourse (texts).

2. Origen's Broader Aims in *Contra Celsum*.

The second prong of my analysis asks what the broader aims of the speaker are within the context of their discourse, and whether such aims are not ultimately to tell us something about the speaker herself. And what I have already mentioned with respect to Origen's preface to *Contra Celsum* points exactly to his broader concerns within the text.

In saying that, "this books is not written at all for true Christians, but either for those entirely without experience of faith in Christ, or for those whom the apostle calls 'weak in faith'," [8] Origen has signaled that while his book is not for "true Christians," it

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Jews, 61, 64, 65-6. However, it is difficult to imagine the audience of the *Contra Celsum* being anything other than Christian. The preface makes clear that this text was written at the behest of his patron Ambrose who requested it on behalf of his congregation. See Origen, *Contra Celsum*, *P*.1, 3, 6 (p. 3-6). Further, in responding to certain claims Celsus made regarding the resurrection, Origen states that he intends to "give a brief account of this problem in a form exactly suited to our readers, since this is a defence addressed to one foreign to the faith, and is written because of those who are still babes and who are tossed to and fro". *Ibid*., V:18 (p. 277). The *one foreign to the faith* is Celsus, who according to the preface was "no longer living the common life among men but has already been dead a long time". *Ibid*., *P*.4 (p. 5). Thus, I think it is implausible to suggest that this lengthy text was intended for anything other than a Christian audience.

[7] An echo of Jacobs's 'Jewishly.' See note 82, in chapter one.

[8] See note 4, above.

will contain those things which younger or 'weaker' Christians must reckon with in order to perhaps attain true Christian status.

Of course, Origen is not saying that all there is to true Christianity is contained within *Contra Celsum*. Indeed, Origen's preface stresses the idea that true Christianity is contained not in words or arguments but in the conduct of one's life.[9]

But what we have in *Contra Celsum* is something of a guide to the rhetorical pre-conditions for being a true Christian as Origen understands them. It is Origen's way of teaching his hearers how to speak in "a certain way,"[10] and so we find ourselves in the realm of what Bhabha called the "discursive conditions of dominance."[11]

In other words, what Origen is articulating in *Contra Celsum* is ultimately about Origen himself, it is his self-description of the true Christian. "True Christian" is Origen's combat position,[12] and he is addressing the contours of what it means to be a true Christian to those Ambrose was concerned about, and precisely because they too are Christians. It is a commitment to Christian identity that Origen is intent on upholding (hence his orienting the text toward young or weak Christians), and it is a conversation in which only Christians are involved (identity between speaker and audience).

And while *Contra Celsum* represents an intra-Christian discourse, it is a discourse about non-Christian Greek thought, and, as we will see shortly, non-Christian Greeks themselves. *Contra Celsum*, then, is also dealing with Origen's Hellenistic *other* in the person and thought of Celsus.

Origen's response to Celsus suggests that Celsus's critique in *The True Doctrine*, if I may be excused a slight oversimplification, is that Christian belief consists of innovative[13] (recently conceived) falsities. It is the very basis of Christian identity that

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[9] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, *P*.2 (p. 3-4).
[10] From my citation of Said on p. 107, above.
[11] See note 59, in chapter two.
[12] See note 34, in chapter two.
[13] On the relationship of innovation to intellectual authority in the Hellenistic world, see G.R. Boys-Stones, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy: A Study in Its Development from the Stoics to Origen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

is at stake vis-à-vis a non-Christian Greek perspective, and Origen sets out to defend the viability of that Christian identity.

I will now turn to Origen's response to Celsus's challenge to Christian identity as well as to the third prong of my transparency analysis. How does Origen describe the Christian and her *others*? Are there any reifications involved? Are there ostensibly objective premises of the descriptions that are actually just decentered elements that require further consideration (or which are missing a preliminary consideration to begin with), and are thus hybrid moments that both assert something and undermine that assertion?

3. Origen's Description of Himself and His *Others*.

Considering Celsus's basic claim, that Christian doctrine is little more than a series of recently conceived falsities, Origen does not turn to his non-Christian Greek counterpart and respond in kind. Instead, referring to non-Christian Greek thought, Origen writes,

> But if you were to show me teachers who give preparatory teaching in philosophy and train people in philosophical study, I would not dissuade young men from listening to these; but after they had first been trained in a general education and in philosophical thought I would try to lead them on to the exalted height, unknown to the multitude, of the profoundest doctrines of the Christians.[14]

Thus, Greek thought, though it falls short of Christian doctrines, is nonetheless valuable for Origen, who goes on to write that, "human wisdom is a means of education for the soul, divine wisdom being the ultimate end," and that "it is not possible for a man who has not been trained in human wisdom to receive the more divine."[15]

But it is precisely the failure to receive the more divine wisdom that defines non-Christian Greek—or Hellenistic—thought for Origen, who writes,

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[14] *Ibid*., 3.58 (p. 168).
[15] *Ibid*. 6.13, 14 (pp. 326, 327).

> We candidly admit that some Greek philosophers did know God, since 'God made it plain to them'. But they did not 'glorify Him as God or give thanks, but became vain in their reasonings, and professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things'.[16]

Later, Origen adds that

> This is the reason why they were forsaken by providence. They have not lived worthily of the truths manifested to them by God . . . because 'they changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.'[17]

Origen's description of Hellenistic philosophy as forsaken by providence refers to the failure of that philosophy to receive the more divine wisdom that Christians possess, and for which Hellenistic philosophy is a preparation. The failure of Hellenistic philosophy resides specifically in the failure to recognize the Christian God as the only God, and the only God worthy of worship. And since it is not the thought of the Hellenist—the non-Christian Greek—that makes her so different from the Christian (Christians need Hellenistic philosophy too, after all), the Hellenist emerges as *other* on the basis of failing to worship the Christian God.

And this is a failure, according to Origen, because the human animal was created specifically to know and worship the Christian God.[18] Put another way, the entire purpose of knowledge for humans is the worship of God, hence Origen's contention that human wisdom prepares one for divine wisdom.

For Origen, the human being is "a soul using a body (ψυχὴ χρωμένη σώματι)," [19] the body being "the inferior part of the composite man (τοῦ συνθέτου ἀνθρώπου τῷ χείρονι μέρει)." [20] The soul, on the other hand, was made in the image of God:

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[16] *Ibid*. 4.30 (p. 206). For a very thorough examination of Origen's views on non-Christian religions in the *Contra Celsum*, see Michel Fédou, *Christianisme et Religions Païennes dans le Contre Celse d'Origène* (Paris: Beauchesne Éditeur, 1988).
[17] *Ibid*. 7.47 (p. 435); Borret, *Sources*, 7.47.
[18] For a brief discussion of the extant scholarship on Origen's anthropological sources, see note 34, below.
[19] Origen, *Celsum*, 7.38 (p. 425); Borret, *Sources*, 7.38.
[20] Origen, *Celsum*, vi:63 (p. 378); Borret, *Sources*, 6.63.

> [T]hat which is made in the image of God is to be understood of the inward man (ἔσω ἀνθρώπῳ),[21] as we call it, which is renewed and has the power to be formed in the image of the Creator, when a man becomes perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect . . . and assumes into his own virtuous soul (τὴν ἐνάρετον ψυχὴν) the characteristics of God.[22]

That the soul is virtuous is a function of the soul's being rational. According to Origen, "human nature . . . has been made for virtue (τὴν πρὸς ἀρετὴν κατεσκευασμένην ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν)", and it is the rational being that "possesses tendencies towards virtue."[23] That it is the soul alone, and not the body being used by it, which is virtuous is evinced in Origen's statement that the Christian "does all in his power in order that he may be in the flesh (σαρκὶ) no longer, but in the spirit alone."[24]

Origen further spells out the link between rationality and virtue when he writes:

> [N]o sensible person would say that these irrational animals (τὰ ἄλογα) [the elephant and the griffin] are superior to rational beings on account of their bodies; for reason (ὁ λόγος) raises the rational being (τὸ λογικὸν) far above all irrational beings (τὰ ἄλογα). . . . For it is the rational element in [rational beings] which has been perfected and endowed with every virtue.[25]

Thus, Origen has laid out a vision of the human being in which humanity was made for virtue, one's humanity (or humanness) is located in the rational soul, and reason (rationality) is that which is capable of virtue. We have already seen Origen put this another way, namely in describing the worship of the God as the end of wisdom (here we may say 'as the end of rationality'). Combining Origen's anthropological outline with his notion that the worship of God is the end of wisdom/rationality, then the worship of the Christian God emerges as the highest anthropological virtue.

This is made clear in Origen's contention that,

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[21] See also Origen, *Celsum*, 7.38 (p. 425) where it states, "A *man*, that is a soul using a body, the soul being called 'the inner man' (καὶ ἄνθρωπος μὲν οὖν, τουτέστι ψυχὴ χρωμένη σώματι, λεγοένη "ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος")". Borret, *Sources*, 7.38.

[22] Origen, *Celsum*, 6.63 (p. 378-9); Borret, *Sources*, 6.63.

[23] Origen, *Celsum*, 4.25 (p. 201); Borret, *Sources*, 4.25. I have here reversed the order in which these two statements are presented in the text.

[24] Origen, *Celsum*, 7.38 (p. 426); Borret, *Sources*, 7.38. See also Origen, *Celsum*, 7.4 (p. 397), where Origen notes that the bodies of the prophets ceased to oppose virtue once the prophets were united with the divine Spirit.

[25] *Ibid*. 4.24 (p. 200); Borret, *Sources*, 4.24.

> those people are human, and perhaps even more honourable than that (ἄνθρωποι δὲ καὶ ἔι τι ἀνθρώπων τιμιώτερον), who following their reason have been able to rise up from stocks and stones, and also from silver and gold, the substances considered to be most valuable, and have also ascended from the beautiful things in the world to the Maker of the universe and have entrusted themselves to Him.[26]

Thus, the worship of God is the aim of human life, making Christian worship rational, something of an anthropological principle. Hence Origen's contention that,

> It is written . . . that 'the invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made'. By this we may know that even though men in this life have to begin from the senses and from sensible things when they intend to ascend to the nature of intelligible things, yet they must on no account remain content with sensible things.[27]

That the Christian God is to be worshiped is clearly seen from what has been made, which is another way of saying that humans ought to naturally worship God. And this worship is an anthropological principle because, to the extent humanity is located in a rational, intellecting soul, that soul is expected to exercise its rationality, moving beyond the physical things to the knowledge and worship of God which is the soul's created aim.

Thus, Origen writes that Christians,

> say of images that 'they are not gods', and maintain that created objects such as these are not comparable with the Creator . . . And the rational soul (ἡ λογικὴ ψυχὴ), which at once recognizes that which is, so to speak, akin to it (τὸ συγγενὲς),[28] discards the images which it has hitherto thought to be gods, and assumes its natural (φυσικὸν) affection for the Creator; because of this affection for Him it also accepts the one who first showed these truths to all nations . . . the very Logos and wisdom and truth itself.[29]

And while the Christian assumes that affection for God which is natural to the rational human soul, the Hellenist—represented as Celsus and those who think like him—is described rather differently:

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[26] Origen, *Celsum*, 4.26 (p. 201); Borret, *Sources*, 4.26.
[27] *Ibid*. 7.37 (p. 425); Borret, *Sources*, 7.37. See also Origen, *Celsum*, 7.46 (p. 434-5).
[28] On "so to speak," cf. Origen's statement that "the reason, which originates from the Logos of God, does not allow the rational being to be regarded as entirely alienated from God." *Ibid*. 4.25 (p. 201).
[29] *Ibid*. 3.40-1 (p. 156); Borret, *Sources*, 3.40.

> But some of those who by God's providence have ascended to the knowledge of such profound truths do not behave worthily of the knowledge, and are impious, and hold down the truth in unrighteousness. And because of their knowledge of these profound truths, they are not able to have any further opportunity for an excuse before God. At any rate, the divine scripture testifies of those who have comprehended the ideas of which Celsus gives an account, and who profess to think philosophically in accordance with these doctrines, saying that 'although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God, neither were they thankful, but they became vain in their reasonings', and after the great light of the knowledge of the ideas which God manifested to them their heart quickly became foolish and was darkened.[30]

We have already seen Origen contend that God made certain truths known to non-Christian Greek thinkers. Origen's statement here that these Hellenists did not behave worthily of that knowledge, then, is a repetition of the idea that God is the end of human wisdom (though here 'wisdom' has been replaced with 'knowledge').

And thus, in describing the Christian's Hellenistic counterpart, Origen has relied on a self-description of the Christian that follows the contours of Origen's anthropological understanding. At the same time, Origen has described the Hellenist in a way that emphasizes her ostensible anthropological deficiencies (especially relative the Christian). The Hellenist's non-Christianity becomes a signifier of anthropological deficiency, and we see a late antique example of what is in Bhabha the racist stereotype: the Hellenist is simply vain in her thinking (unreasoning), ungrateful to God ("neither were they thankful"), foolish and dark.

Hellenists cease to be persons and are instead mediated through stereotypes on account of their non-Christianity—or their not being the same as Origen and his self-description, which has here taken on that tendency towards hegemonic speech which we saw Lyman argue Christians ought to refuse[31] by way of wrapping itself in a discourse of natural human rationality. Origen continues to mediate the Hellenist through these sorts of stereotypes when he writes,

> And it is possible to see how those who assert that they are wise exhibit

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[30] *Ibid*., 7.46-7 (p. 435).
[31] See note 61, in chapter one.

> examples of crass stupidity. For after learning in the philosophical schools the great doctrines about God and the intelligible things 'they changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things'. . . . They have not lived lives worthily of the truths manifested to them by God, and wallow in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, and their bodies are dishonoured by disgraceful and licentious behaviour.[32]

Stupid, lustful, impure, disgraceful, licentious. This is the description of Origen's Hellenistic *other* that emerges in *Contra Celsum*. It is a view of the *other* that is cast agonistically from the perch of a self-description crafted in explicitly anthropological terms.

That is, in Origen's self-definition of the Christian—as the worshiper of that God with whom the rational soul (i.e. the real human) shares natural kinship—rests the very basis for the otherization of the Hellenist. It is a self-description into which anthropological formulations have been woven in a way that makes the agonism of this particular self-description result in the stereotypical portrayal of the Hellenist, fixing her identity by way of terms like stupid, lustful, impure, disgraceful, and licentious.

Here we have what Fanon described as the impossibility of the ontological resistance of the *other*.[33] Because anthropological formulations have been woven into Origen's Christian self-definition, the life, experience, and being of the *other* can have no impact on how the Christian understands herself (or how the *other* is understood for that matter). Because Christian identity follows seemingly objective anthropological contours, only Christian identity serves as an adequate baseline from which to formulate the descriptions of *others*.

And the same anthropological formulations woven into Origen's Christian self-definition are the very reified elements of his discourse which function transparently vis-à-vis Origen's audience, and allow the sort of racist stereotyping that emerge agonistically from Origen's self-definition to pass by rather unnoticed. This is made

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[32] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 7.47 (p. 435).
[33] See my discussion beginning on p. 91, of chapter two.

most evident in Origen's statement that in God, the soul recognizes what is akin to it, and something for which the soul possesses a natural affection.

That the soul is rational and oriented towards God in its very creation is something almost simply asserted by Origen in *Contra Celsum*. Take for example, the sentence in which Origen defines the human being as a soul using a body:

> A *man*, that is a soul using a body, the soul being called 'the inner man', and a *soul* also.[34]

No basis for this assertion is really ever given beyond the phrase 'that is', and this fact would seem to signal two things. First, the idea of the human being as the rational soul is a notion that functions transparently for Origen himself, hence his apparent sense that the phrase 'that is' suffices to introduce the idea. Origen is not making an argument here, he is simply reminding his audience what they, himself, and everybody else already knows: man = soul.

And of course, Origen here sits in an intellectual current defined, for him, by Scripture as well as a long history of Hellenistic thought on the composition of man.[35]

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[34] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 7.38 (p. 425).

[35] On the sources from which Origen apparently draws his anthropology, see Henry H. Davies, "Origen's Theory of Knowledge," *The American Journal of Theology* 2:4 (1898); Eugène de Faye, *Origen and His Work*, trans. Fred Rothwell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929); Gustave Bardy, *Origène* (Paris, J. Gabalda et Fils, Éditeurs, 1931); *eadem*, *La Vie Spirituelle: D'après les Pères des Trois Premiers Siècles* (Paris, Bloud & Gay, 1935); William A. Banner, "Origen and the Tradition of Natural Law Concepts," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954): 49, 51-82; Daniélou, *Origen* (1955); B. Darrel Jackson, "Sources of Origen's Doctrine of Freedom," *Church History* 35:1 (1966): 13-23; Dupuis, *"L'Esprit de l'Homme"*; Berchman, *From Philo to Origen*; Henri Crouzel, *Origen*, trans. A.S. Worrall (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1989); Michael O'Laughlin, "The Anthropology of Evagrius Ponticus and Its Sources," in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 357-373; Henri de Lubac, *Theology in History*, trans. Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996); Stephen Thomas, "Anthropology," in *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. Fr. John A. McGuckin (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 53-58; Riemer Roukema, "Souls," in *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. Fr. John A. McGuckin (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 201-202; and Anders Lund Jacobsen, "Genesis 1-3 as Source for the Anthropology of Origen," *Vigiliae Christianae* 62 (2008): 213-232. The most important threads in this literature regard whether Origen held a dualistic or trichotomous anthropology, a discussion which itself turns on the understanding of Origen's notion of πνεῦμα. Against de Faye and Bardy, Dupuis, Crouzel, and de Lubac advocate the importance of the πνεῦμα as a third term in Origen's anthropology, and a notion distinct from that πνεῦμα which refers to the Holy Spirit. This position may be contrasted with those who interpret Origen's anthropological πνεῦμα as interchangeable with νοῦς, the higher part of the soul. See O'Laughlin, "Anthropology of Evagrius," 360-1; Thomas, "Anthropology," 53, 55; Roukema, "Souls," 202. My own discussion, touching only on the *Contra Celsum*, does not discuss the issue of πνεῦμα in Origen's thought, since this is not something Origen touches upon in the *Contra Celsum*, where Origen's anthropology is only

Origen's repetition of the idea is a function of his intellectual engagement with philosophy, Scripture, and Christian thought.

Origen's anthropological norms are presented as though rather objective propositions, and it must be said, within the context of Origen's intellectual milieu, they likely appeared that way to Origen. That does not change the fact that the argument for the soul as the anthropological seat is precisely that, an argument, a theory of humanity, not an objective proposition. But for Origen it has much more authority than simply one possible position in a discussion about the nature of human beings. It is an anthropological model (the human as rational soul) that—and to put it in Bhabha's terms—is visible to Origen, in its ostensible objectivity, as an unmistakable referent of necessity in such an immediate way that his hearer need only be reminded of it with the phrase, "that is a soul using a body."

This should caution us against using transparency analysis as a bludgeon. The

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discussed as a soul-body dualism. I mention the debate over Origen's use of πνεῦμα because discussions of the πνεῦμα in Dupuis, Crouzel, and de Lubac are in part driven by a concern to establish the Scripturality, and by that means the orthodoxy, of Origen's anthropological musings. (for Dupuis, Crouzel, and de Lubac, the relevant orthodoxy is *Roman Catholic* orthodoxy). This is a concern also echoed in other Francophone thinkers from the previous century, such as when de Labriolle assures us that rather than a 'pure intellectual', Origen was, in actuality, a 'fervent Christian'. Pierre de Labriolle, "Celse et Origène," *Revue Historique* 169:1 (1932): 20; de Lubac echoes de Labriolle in *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture According to Origen*, trans. Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 60-71 (French version originally published in 1950); see also Daniélou, *Origen*, 252, 269. This concern about the orthodoxy of Origen's positions is raised by claims such as those of de Faye, who characterizes Origen as more philosopher than Christian, a thinker whose approach anticipated modern historical criticism, and who wrapped strictly philosophical viewpoints in claims of Scripturality. See de Faye, *Origen and His Work*, 72-4, 83, 94-5. For some scholars, the focus on Origen's notion of πνεῦμα in part functions to establish Origen's *bona fides* as a mystic thinker. See Crouzel, *Origen*, 98-9, 116, 118-20; de Lubac, *Theology in History*, 38, 140-2. (Similarly, Bardy conceives of Origen as a Christian mystic. Bardy, *La Vie Spirituelle*, 244; *eadem*, *La Théologie de l'Église: De Saint Irénée au Concile de Nicée* (Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1947), 128. The attempt to cast Origen as a mystic strikes me as an attempted end-run around Origen's views on the mind and knowledge, which Daniélou himself has noted are epistemological views, not mystical ones. Daniélou, *Origen*, 297; See also Berchman, who has noted that Origen's notion that the mind becomes united with the object of its contemplation, cited by Crouzel as a mystical account, is simply an Aristotelian epistemological principle (Crouzel, *Origen*, 116; Berchman, *From Philo To Origen*, 199). All this to say that there is plenty to be said about Origen's reliance on Scripture, as well as non-Christian philosophical sources in developing his anthropology (not to mention other aspects of his theology). Comfort with the idea of Origen's use of philosophy strikes me as something of a confessional issue, and it would be silly to suggest a position on Origen's orthodoxy in a dissertation responding to a call to reject the hegemonic tendencies of Orthodoxy. Perhaps, it is best to say, as Ayres did with respect to Nyssen, "It seems important to me that we interpret him as both within and without th[e] ancient philosophical tradition; our skill as interpreters depends on our ability to grasp his very Christian relationship to the materials he appropriates." See note 33, in chapter one.

point is not to show how terrible Origen was, or to suggest he conspired to invent otherness, since much of what I am critiquing he would have been oblivious to for no reason other than his own historical contingency. The point, then, of this transparency analysis is not to indict, but simply to lay bare the transparencies operating within Origen's discourse as preparation for the project Lyman has set before us: to create an approach to self-definition that resists the historical temptation of hegemonic speech.

But, secondly, the fact that Origen is not making an argument, but simply pointing out something everyone seems to take for granted, is also an example of the ways transparencies reinforce themselves through their repetition. The repetition of the transparent elements is a reminder to the speaker's audience (and the speaker too) that these elements are the basic premises of Christian identity, the authority to which even Christians must bend.

And while these reified elements ground the authority of Origen's statements about his Hellenistic *other* (the anthropological formulations represented by the discourse of the soul serving as the basis for fixing the identity of the Hellenist by way of stereotypical terms like 'impure' or 'licentious'), they are also the very grounds of intervening in that authority, since their rather arbitrary nature, once identified as arbitrary, makes visible their transparent nature.

It also makes visible their arbitrary nature, and by arbitrary I do not mean something like random, but something that is a result of arbitration—that is, some sort of decision-making process. Bhabha referred to this when he wrote,

> Transparency is the action of the distribution and arrangement of differential spaces, positions, knowledges in relation to each other, relative to a discriminatory, not inherent, sense of order. This effects a regulation of spaces and places that is authoritatively assigned; it puts the addressee into the proper frame or condition for some action or result.[36]

The simple assertions about the soul as rational and the seat of humanity speak to the distribution of knowledges "relative to a discriminatory, not inherent, sense of order."

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[36] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 155-6.

Despite Origen's talk of what is natural to the soul, nature has very little to do with it. Origen's doctrine of the soul is simply a matter of arranging values in a way that allows the truth of his Christian self-definition to rest in its simply being stated. This is why Bhabha says that "the field of the 'true' emerges as a visible sign of authority only after the regulatory and displacing division of the true and the false."[37]

But while Origen's commitment to a rational soul is itself a participation in a transparency, it is not the transparency that by itself leads to the stereotyping present in *Contra Celsum*. Those stereotypes are really based on what Origen claims about rationality itself, namely human rationality's (and all rationality's) kinship to the Christian God, which establishes that Christian God not simply as the rational choice, but the necessary choice from the perspective of Origen's understanding of human nature.

Christianity then, is not something like a human view of the world, or of how to conduct one's life. Christianity is a natural necessity of human life. It is the natural (one might say, objective) end (*telos*) of any rational nature, and its correctness lies in its being a seemingly objective, and thereby natural, property of humanity: kinship with the divine by way of rationality.

By labeling certain views and positions as rational, rather than Christian, Origen has hidden the human authorship of the world which Lyman has sought to lay bare in her statement that "Orthodoxy as ideology has concealed its own human process."[38] This then has the effect of hiding the human authorship of both the anthropological formulations involved and the stereotypical view of Origen's non-Christian Greek *other*, who can be described stereotypically not because Origen is expressing bias, but on the basis of the seemingly objective metric of rational (and therefore human) behaviors:

> It is written . . . that 'the invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made'. By this we may know that even though men in this life have to begin from the senses and from sensible things when they intend to ascend to the nature

[37] *Ibid*., 157.
[38] See note 64, in chapter one.

> of intelligible things, yet they must on no account remain content with sensible things.[39]

Put another way, Origen is here saying that 'What Christians believe is clearly seen from the creation of the world.' Citing the first chapter of Romans, Origen is here arranging differential knowledges according to a Christian sense of order,[40] and in so doing the attribution of the term 'rational' to some conclusions and not others hides the Christian authorship of that action of distribution and arrangement. This allows Origen's suggestion that the worship of the Christian God is an anthropological necessity to function transparently, as a seemingly objective matter of human nature, and thus as a matter of natural, not discriminatory, order.[41]

And so we have seen in Origen's discourse of his Hellenistic *other* that identity between speaker and audience that enables the functioning of transparencies. We have also seen that Origen's discourse is ultimately about defining the Christian, and that it is done so along the lines of anthropological presuppositions. Further, we have identified reified elements, anthropological in nature, and which function in the discourse to classify different groups of people as either more or less human by way of stereotypes. These elements, however, are also grounds for intervening in that process of the production of stereotypes from a foundation of self-description, and puts us on guard against repeating the practice.

Thus we have completed the first three prongs of our transparency analysis with respect to Origen, while noting the way the functioning of transparencies in antiquity culminated in the production of the sorts of stereotypes of an other that today we would identify as racist. I will now turn to my consideration of Eusebius's *Praeparatio*.

II. Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica*.

1. Identity between Speaker and Audience.

[39] See note 26, above.
[40] See note 35, above.
[41] *Ibid*.

Eusebius's[42] *Praeparatio Evangelica*, written in the early fourth century,[43] is Eusebius's response to the claim "that Christianity has no reason to support it, but that those who desire the name confirm their opinion by an unreasoning faith and an assent without examination".[44] And while one might expect a work with such an aim to be directed, at least in part, towards whoever was describing Christianity as an unreasoning faith (presumably a non-Christian), Eusebius tells us that the *Praeparatio* has no such person in mind as its intended audience, but that, instead,

> my preparatory treatise [the *Praeparatio*] should help as a guide, by occupying the place of elementary instruction and introduction, and suiting itself to our recent converts from among the heathen.[45]

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[42] Eusebius is an interesting figure to my mind in Christian intellectual history. Both Kofsky and Johnson, at the beginning of their works on the thinker, feel the need to point out that Eusebius has not largely been considered a great theologian. Kofsky, *Eusebius against Paganism*, 81; Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 13. Indeed, Kofsky is prepared to more or less concede that Eusebius may not be much of a theologian, though nonetheless an important thinker. Kofsky, *Eusebius against Paganism*, 81-2. And this is what is striking to me about Eusebius's legacy, that he is considered an important figure in early Christian thought even though widely as little more than a parrot when it comes to his theological views. Eusebius, of course, has a large corpus of historical works that anyone can point to as important, if non-theological, contributions to Christian thought, and it is this corpus which has preserved his place as an important figure in the history of early Christian thought. But it is hardly clear that Eusebius's *historical* works are less constructively theological than, for example, Origen's *Peri Archon*. Indeed, Origen appeals to history quite a bit in *Contra Celsum*, but he is hardly remembered as a chronicler of events. Admittedly, Origen comes across as a far more explicitly constructive theologian than Eusebius, but this would seem more a matter of form than content. Are there really fewer echoes of previous thinkers in Origen than there are in Eusebius? Can one read Origen's *Contra Celsum* and not be reminded of Clement's *Exhortation*? Ultimately I do not think the problem is that Eusebius was a bad theologian, or an unoriginal thinker. His distinction of *Hebrews* and *Jews*, analyzed in this section, is a fairly original and constructive contribution to Christian theological speculation. What is interesting is that the suggestion that Eusebius was not a theologian is not a critique, but a reprieve. Eusebius cannot be critiqued for his failures of speculation like an Origen has been historically. More importantly, by presenting Eusebius primarily as a historian, Eusebius is presented in Modern scholarly discourse as a Modern actor himself. He is engaged in history, a science, not in speculative theology. Eusebius, then, is not critiqued for failing to be a theologian, he is simply spared the suggestion that he is such a thing. Increasingly, however, Eusebius's theological positions are drawing their fair share of scholarly attention. See J. Rebecca Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Kofsky, *Eusebius against Paganism*; Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews*; Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*. See also James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Antisemitism* (London: The Soncino Press, 1934); Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Sabrina Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context* (Boston: Brill, 2006); Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni, eds., *Reconsidering Eusebius: Collected Papers on Literary, Historical, and Theological Issues* (Boston: Brill, 2011).

[43] On the date of the *Praeparatio*, see Kofsky, *Eusebius against Paganism*, 74.

[44] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 3d-4a (p. 3).

[45] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 4b-c (pp. 4-5). Kofsky believes *Praepartio's* intended target consisted of recent converts to Christianity and pagans interested in Christianity. Kofsky, *Eusebius Against Paganism*, 76. Eusebius's states, in his introductory comments, that "my argument will proceed in due order to the more perfect teaching of the *Demonstration of the Gospel*, and to the understanding of our deeper

I find Eusebius's statement rather reminiscent of what Origen said about his intended audience for *Contra Celsum*, which, we may recall, was written, according to Origen,"for those entirely without experience of faith in Christ, or for those whom the apostle calls 'weak in faith'."[46] Both authors, then, have oriented their works rather explicitly at inexperienced Christians (Origen's 'without experience', in light of *Contra Celsum* being written at the behest of a wealthy Christian benefactor—Ambrose—out of concern for other Christians, weighs against reading the phrase 'without experience' as a reference to non-Christians, as does Origen's assertion that he yielded to Ambrose's request because among "the multitude of people supposed to believe" are those "who may be restored by [Origen's] reply to [Celsus's arguments]."[47]).

In directing their works towards persons whose grasp of Christianity was deemed lacking, both authors have seemed to indicate that their works are attempts to put "the addressee into the proper frame or condition for some action or result," as we saw Bhabha describe one of the consequences of transparent discursive elements.[48] And that result, in both cases, is to help their audience members view the world Christianly, that is, by way of the 'the action of the distribution and arrangement of differential spaces, positions, knowledges in relation to each other, relative to a [Christian], not inherent, sense of order,' to paraphrase Bhabha.[49]

As Eusebius himself puts it in the first sentence of *Praeparatio*, "By the present treatise . . . I purpose to show the nature of Christianity to those who know not what it

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doctrines, if my preparatory treatise should help as a guide, by occupying the place of elementary instruction and introduction, and suiting itself to our recent converts from among the heathen. But to those who have passed beyond this, and are already in a state prepared for the reception of the higher truths, the subsequent part will convey the exact knowledge of the most stringent proofs of God's mysterious dispensation in regard to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Eusebius, *Part 1*, 4b-c (p. 4-5). Thus, I must agree with Johnson, whose position is that the *Praeparatio* was intended for Christians alone, though I would not go as far as he in limiting that audience only to the recently converted. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 15.

[46] See note 4, above.

[47] *Ibid*.

[48] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 156. Also, see note 35, above.

[49] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 155-6. Also, see note 35, above.

means."[50] I have already shown that Eusebius explicitly oriented his work in the *Praeparatio* towards recent converts, and taken together with this first sentence, the purpose of *Praeparatio* is to teach those converts the basics of what Christianity means (hence Eusebius's claim that *Praeparatio* would serve the purpose of "elementary instruction"[51]), and hence what it means to be a Christian.

The *Praeparatio* is largely a collection of non-Christian Greek statements accompanied by commentary which indicates what a Christian should think about such statements. This basic structure of the *Praeparatio* suggests that in learning what it means to be a Christian, one must know how Christians think about/respond to non-Christian perspectives, which requires the arranging of differential knowledges relative to a Christian sense of order that results in a Christian who views the world Christianly (or from a decentered Christian perspective).

We have in *Praeparatio*, then, the same identity between speaker and audience that we observed in *Contra Celsum*, satisfying the first prong of my transparency analysis, and also putting us on guard against discursive elements which may operate transparently in light of that identity. Eusebius is a Christian, like his audience, and what he has set down in *Praeparatio* is specifically described as an account of Christianity's (true) "nature,"[52] which leads us to the second prong of my analysis, which asks whether the aim of the speaker who describes an *other* is not ultimately really one of self-description.

2. Eusebius's Broader Aims in *Praeparatio*.

I need not spend much time on this prong as the three citations of the *Praeparatio* in the previous subsection speak to both the issue of identity between speaker and

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[50] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 1a (p. 1).
[51] See note 44, above.
[52] See note 49, above.

audience, as well as the issue of the speaker's aims in the discourse. We saw that, with *Praeparatio*, Eusebius was seeking "to show the nature of Christianity to those who know not what it means,"[53] that the work would serve as "elementary instruction and introduction . . . to our recent converts,"[54] and that this elementary instruction would be with reference to the non-Christian accusation that "Christianity has no reason to support it, but that those who desire the name confirm their opinion by an unreasoning faith and an assent without examination."[55]

Taken together, the three citations show that, with *Praeparatio*, Eusebius has sought to explain Christianity to Christians, laying before those Christians what the nature of Christianity means. In other words, the ultimate aim of Eusebius, as a Christian speaker, is to say something about his own Christianity (the one with which his intended audience also identifies).

Further, in saying that he is showing the nature of Christianity to those who know not what it is, Eusebius has staked out his combat position: 'I am a Christian who knows what the nature of Christianity is'. Eusebius has also spoken to the commitments he is intent on upholding, namely the commitment to the idea that Christianity is a rational religion, one that is established not simply on the basis of somebody's willingness to believe it.

But in explicitly establishing this commitment, Eusebius is also committing to the idea that a system of thought must have "reason to support it" rather than be an "unreasoning faith" assented to "without examination." And so we begin to see in Eusebius a commitment that was also rather apparent in what we saw Origen say about non-Christian Greeks in *Contra Celsum*: the validity of Christian thought must be established along the contours of something that can receive the label of "rational."

Thus, in Eusebius, we have a speaker defining an identity (being a Christian) that

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[53] *Ibid*.
[54] See note 44, above.
[55] See note 43, above.

he shares with his audience. And, what we have seen so far with respect to Eusebius's concerns about Christianity's rational basis suggests that, as in Origen, we might expect the description of that Christian identity to touch on anthropological formulations (reason being central to the human definition in late antique Christianity), at least where the Christian is contrasted with her *other*. That expectation is heightened in light of the discussion in the first few sentences which open *Praeparatio*:

> By the present treatise, which includes in its design the Demonstration of the Gospel, I purpose to show the nature of Christianity to those who know not what it means; and here with prayers I dedicate this work to thee, Theodotus . . . in the hope of so gaining from thee the help of thy devout intercessions on my behalf, whereby thou mayest give me great assistance in my proposed argument on the teaching of the Gospel. But first of all, it is well to define clearly what this word 'Gospel' means to express. It is this then that brings 'good tidings' to all men of the advent of the highest and greatest blessings . . . a Gospel which makes not provision for . . . anything belonging to the body and corruption, but for the blessings which are dear and congenial to souls possessing an intelligent nature, and on which the interests of their bodies also depend, and follow them like a shadow. Now the chief of these blessings must be religion, not that which is falsely so called and full of error, but that which makes a true claim to the title; and this consists in the looking up to Him, who in very truth is both acknowledged to be, and is, the One and Only God.[56]

We find in these first few sentences of *Praeparatio* a repetition of this idea of the intelligent (rational) soul whose rational fulfillment lies in the worship of the Christian God, which we encountered in Origen, an idea that grounded the claims about the Christian and the Greek in *Contra Celsum*. In light of our reading of *Contra Celsum*, Eusebius's repetition of this anthropological formula so early in the *Praeparatio* at least suggests we are once again in a situation rife with the opportunity for transparencies. It is to Eusebius's defense of Christianity, and his description of the non-Christian *other*, in *Praeparatio* to which I now turn.

3. Eusebius's Description of Himself and His *Others*.

[56] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 1a-2b (pp. 1-2).

With *Praeparatio*, Eusebius says he set out to prove "that they were false accusers who declared that [Christians] can establish nothing by demonstration, but hold to an unreasoning faith."[57] Eusebius's demonstration of Christianity's reasoned beliefs is largely accomplished within the context of a comparison of the relative merits of Christianity versus non-Christian theological narratives, like that of the Egyptians or Greeks.

Eusebius's argument is simple: Christianity reaches a point of "high philosophy (ἄκρας φιλοσοφίας)" in its worship of the one, supreme creator God,[58] while Greek religion has failed in this respect.[59] The conclusion, thus, is that Christianity is a more rational system since its worship is in line with the highest philosophy.

In calling Christianity a high philosophy, Eusebius is responding to questions "which any Greek might naturally put to us, having no true understanding either of his own religion or of ours."[60] That is, in appealing to Christianity's value as high philosophy, Eusebius is answering a charge he imagines a Greek (or, we might say, Hellenist) might make. Indeed, Eusebius's statement that he is addressing questions that "any Greek might naturally put to us" suggests that these are not questions that were being actually put to Eusebius or anyone else, but that Eusebius has instead found himself fit to speak on behalf of the opponent, able to speak naturally in the voice of one who possesses "no true understanding either of his own religion or of ours."

As he assumes the non-Christian Greek voice, Eusebius is also reminding his audience of the non-Christian Greek's ignorance, and, by implication, inferiority. Thus, it would appear that within what amounts to just the first two or three pages of *Praeparatio*, the suspicion is already arising that whatever is said on this stage has been organized for the Christian alone, speaking to the fourth prong of my analysis. And

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[57] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 6b-c (p. 7).
[58] *Ibid*., 12b (p. 14); Mras, *Praeparatio*, 1.4.9.
[59] *Ibid*., 17b-18a (pp. 19-20).
[60] *Ibid*., 5c (p. 6).

while consideration of the fourth prong is the task for the next chapter, the fact that it has already reared its head should put us on guard against the possibility of discursive transparencies that might be operating within *Praeparatio* generally.

Mainly, however, I raise the point of Eusebius speaking for both Greeks and Christians only to help establish that the *Praeparatio* is a text concerned with the relationship of Christianity and Hellenism, one which casts the former as high philosophy and the latter as a failure to harness philosophy in order to reach the same height.[61] And this argument that Christianity is a system in line with highest philosophy parallels what we already saw Eusebius say in subsection II.2 of this chapter, that the Gospel provides blessings to souls possessing an intelligent nature, the principal blessing being the worship of the "One and Only God."[62] That is, for Eusebius, what makes Christianity a point of high philosophy is precisely that it conforms to what Eusebius would say are the highest philosophical doctrines concerning rational humans, doctrines which posit not only the rationality of the soul but a single intelligent source of all being (God) towards which the soul is oriented.

It is important to note that this sense of Christianity as high philosophy is not simply a suggestion that there exists an advanced intellectual tradition operating within Christianity on par with (or better than) any other academy, but an assertion that Christian worship corresponds with the highest natural (or objective) truths. For Eusebius, Greek philosophy possesses a number of these truths, if in modified forms, but they are truths first discovered by the Hebrews, the first race of men to engage in philosophy.[63]

Eusebius describes the Hebrews thusly:

> [T]hose of whom I speak were Hebrews alike by name and in character, and as yet neither were nor were called Jews. And you may know the difference between Hebrews and Jews thus: the latter assumed their name

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[61] In light of what we saw in our discussion of *Contra Celsum*, above, this should sound somewhat familiar.

[62] See note 55, above.

[63] *Ibid*. 301b (p. 324).

> from Judah, from whose tribe the kingdom of Judah was long ages afterwards established, but the former from Eber, who was the forefather of Abraham. And that the Hebrews were earlier than the Jews, we are taught by the sacred writings. But as to the manner of their religion, Moses was the first author of legislation for the Jews . . . But the Hebrews who were earlier in time than Moses, having never heard of all the Mosaic legislation enjoyed a free and unfettered mode of religion, being regulated by the manner of life which is in accordance with nature (τῷ κατὰ φύσιν), so that they had no need of laws to rule them, because of the extreme freedom of their soul from passions, but had received true knowledge (γνῶσιν ἀληθῆ) of the doctrine concerning God.[64]

The Hebrews led a life that was in accordance with ideal human nature, one in which their souls were free from passions, making them eligible for the reception of the true knowledge of God. And it is Eusebius's reference to the Hebrews's passion-free souls that communicates the idea that the nature in accordance with which the Hebrews were living is human nature specifically, since it was the Hebrews who both discovered the soul and that the soul was the 'true inner human being' (τὸν ἀληθῆ ἄνθρωπον, τὸν κατὰ ψυχὴν νενοημένον; and ἔνδον ἀνθρώπου).[65]

And that ability to allow the true human being, the soul, to function without the fetters imposed by the passions, gave the Hebrews access to God before any other group.

> It is reported then that Phoenicians and Egyptians were the first of all mankind (ἁπάντων ἀνθρώπων) to declare the sun and moon and stars to be gods . . . Before these, it is said, no one made any progress in the knowledge of the celestial phenomena, except the few men (ὀλίγων ἀνδρῶν) mentioned among the Hebrews, who with clearest mental eyes looked beyond all the visible world, and worshipped the Maker and Creator of the universe, marvelling much at the greatness of His wisdom and power, which they represented to themselves from His works; and being persuaded that He alone was God, they naturally spake only of Him as God, son from father successively receiving and guarding this as the true, the first, and the only religion.[66]

And while the Hebrews were fulfilling the supreme destiny of humanity by living in concert with their human nature and coming to know the supreme maker God, the Greeks were busy being mislead by those who were nowhere on par with the Hebrews.

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[64] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 304b-305a (pp. 327-8); Mras, *Praepartio*, 7.6.3-4.
[65] Eusbeius, *Part 1*, 302b-c (p. 325). Mras, *Praeparatio*, 7.4.1. See also, Eusebius, *Part 1*, 302d-303a (p. 325).
[66] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 17b-c (pp. 19-20); Mras, *Praeparatio*, 1.6.1-2.

> In fact the polytheistic error of all the nations is only seen long ages afterwards, having taken its beginning from the Phoenicians and Egyptians, and passed over from them to the other nations, and even to the Greeks themselves. For this again is affirmed by the history of the earliest ages.[67]

Of course, this all raises the question of what Eusebius understood human nature to be. In what has been said so far, some of those anthropological views have been alluded to (especially the idea of the rational soul as the true human being), but the way Eusebius understands human nature and that nature's relationship to God (or knowledge of God) I think is made most clear by Eusebius's discussion of evil and its relationship to the soul.

> [T]he source of evil, about which many have doubted, has place in nothing natural, neither in bodies, nor in spiritual substances . . . [but] solely in the self-determined motion of the soul, and in this, not when following the course of nature it walks in the straight road, but when it departs from the king's highway, and turns by its own decision into the course contrary to nature, being its own master. For the soul having obtained this excellent gift from God is free and master of itself, having assumed the determination of its own motion: but the divine law united with it by nature . . . calls to it with a voice from within . . . teaching us that 'the king's highway' is the path in accordance with right reason. For the creator of all implanted in every soul this natural law (φυσικὸν νόμον) as a helper and defender in its actions; and while by His law He showed it the right way, by the self-determined freedom bestowed on it He declared the choice of the better course to be deserving of praise . . . For God made neither nature nor yet the substance of the soul evil: since a good Being may not create anything but what is good. Everything, then, that is according to nature is good: and every rational soul possesses by nature the good gift of free-will, which has been given for choosing what is good.[68]

The human soul, says Eusebius here, has been implanted with a natural law, that by way of reason, leads the human being to the worship of God so long as that human being conducts herself in accordance with that human nature (i.e., conducts herself rationally), and not like the Greeks, who were led astray by the Phoenicians and the Egyptians to the worship of idols. This despite that, according to Eusebius, even Plato, who still today is colloquially understood as the arch-philosopher of the ancient Greek

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[67] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 29d-30d (pp. 33-4); Mras, *Praeparatio*, 1.9.13, 16.
[68] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 249d-250d (pp. 268-70); Mras, *Praeparatio*, 6.6.49-50.

philosophical tradition (deal with it Aristotle), knew well enough to follow the Hebrews on the idea "that God is good, and all things done by Him are of the same character."[69]

But of course, this raises an obvious question, and one which Eusebius notes he must address in the very beginning of *Praeparatio*.[70] If Christians follow the ancient Hebrews in reaching a point of high philosophy by way of their worship of God, why do they not identify as Jews, who are the descendants of the Hebrews? Eusebius addresses this question when he writes,

> But after the Hebrews who have been mentioned, the race of their descendants began to grow into a great multitude . . . until the influence of the pious conduct of their godly forefathers of old began little by little to be weakened and blunted, while the effects of their intercourse with Egyptians gained so much strength . . . that they forgot the virtue of their forefathers, and came round in their modes of living to like customs with the Egyptians, so that their character seemed to differ in nothing from the Egyptians. At this point then, when they had turned out such as I have described, the God of their forefathers sends forth Moses as a leader and lawgiver, thus verifying the promises given by the oracles to their progenitors . . . For they [the Jews] were unable through moral weakness to emulate the virtue of their fathers, inasmuch as they were enslaved by passions and sick in soul; so He gave them the polity that corresponded to their condition, ordaining some things openly and clearly, and implying others enigmatically, by suggesting symbols and shadows, but not the naked truth, for them to keep and observe. And so the Jewish polity began . . . and continues in accordance with the voices of their own prophets until the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ. For this also was a prophecy of Moses himself and the prophets who followed, that the customs and ordinances of Moses should not fail before those of the Christ appeared . . . and thus these ordinances found a fulfillment in the way which had been announced.[71]

Eusebius's contemporary Jews are the descendants of those Hebrews who "were unable through moral weakness to emulate" the Hebrews of old.[72] Jews are "sick in soul," and "enslaved from passions," a far cry from the Hebrews, whom Eusebius had

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[69] Eusebius, *Part 2*, 647b-c (p. 703). In another passage, Eusebius writes that, "we shall show that the Greeks and even their renowned philosophers had plagiarized all their philosophic lore and all that was otherwise of common benefit and profitable for their social needs from barbarians: but that nothing at all has yet been found among any of the nations like the boon which has been provided for us from the Hebrews." Eusebius, *Part 1*, 298d-299a (p. 321). See, also, note 87, below.

[70] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 5a-c (pp. 5-6).

[71] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 312b-313a (pp. 336-7).

[72] Note the parallel between how Jews devolved from Hebrews due to their failures of reason in *Praeparatio*, and Plato's account of how men devolved into women and animals, discussed beginning on p. 5, of the introduction.

described as possessing an "extreme freedom of their soul from passions."[73] And like the Greeks, the Jews were also led astray by the teachings of the Egyptians, allowing for the estate of the Hebrews (the worship of the one true God) to be inherited by the Christians, after Christ fulfilled the Mosaic law.

Both the Greeks and the Jews were led astray by the religious insights of the Egyptians (and Phoenicians in the case of the Greeks), led away from the worship of that God towards whom the inner rational law of the human soul is oriented and towards whom the soul ascends if unencumbered by the passions (or the Egyptians and their theology). And having cast the Greek and Jewish worship of a God or gods different than the Christian one as an anthropological shortcoming (a failure of the Greek and Jewish soul, the true inner human being, to follow the divine law implanted within it), Eusebius begins down the path of the racist stereotype.

The Greek is ignorant,[74] the Jew is morally weak, enslaved by passions, and sick in soul. The Greek and Jew emerge as caricatures, fixed in their inability to follow their basic human instincts toward the rational worship of the Christian God.

The Hebrew, in contrast, lived that contemplative life most suited to humanity's rational nature, and which culminated in the worship of the true God. Hence, Eusebius writes of the Hebrews that,

> the very name which is the appellation of the whole race has been derived from Heber; and this means the man that 'passes over,' since both a passage and the one who passes over are called in the Hebrew language 'Heber.' For the term teaches us to cross over and pass from things in this world to things divine, and by no means to stay lingering over the sight of the things that are seen, but to pass from these to the unseen and invisible things of divine knowledge concerning the Maker and Artificer of the world. Thus the first people who were devoted to the one All-ruler and Cause of the Universe, and adhered to Him with a pure and true worship, they called Hebrews, naming men of this character as travellers who had in mind passed over from earthly things.[75]

But Eusebius's account of the Hebrew is explicitly a rhetorical attempt to defend

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[73] See note 63, above.
[74] See note 59, above.
[75] Eusebius, *Part 2*, 520b-c (p. 559).

Christianity's distinction from Judaism despite a reliance on Hebrew scripture.[76] And what emerges is less a Hebrew whose depiction is based on historical sources, but on a reading of those sources that makes the Hebrew correspond in thought and manner of life to the Christian (hence their worship of the same God).

In this sense the Hebrew *other* might be said to only have value to the extent that she can be seen to correspond to Christian norms of thought and behavior. But Eusebius's Hebrew *other* is mostly a rhetorical or discursive construct, one that tells us very little about the Hebrew, but very much about how Eusebius understands Christianity. That is, Eusebius's Hebrew is really just a Christian proxy (and the definition of Hebrew is really just a Christian self-definition). However, in making the ancient, historical Hebrew a Christian for all effects and purposes, Eusebius tacitly suggests that non-Christians should be judged on the basis of their ability to correspond to Christian norms.

And so two things may be observed here. First, Eusebius's Hebrew—in light of its rhetorical role in Eusebius's broader argument about the rationality of Christian thought and worship—ultimately tells us something about how Eusebius understands Christianity. Eusebius's Hebrew is an account of the Christian, and thus an act of self-definition.

Second, the exercise of defining the Hebrew by way of casting her as a proxy for the Christian, tacitly implies to the reader that the Christian is an acceptable metric for judging non-Christians. And the Christian is precisely that metric—and transparently so—because the worship of the Christian God has been cast as an objective end of the rational soul, of the (inner/true) human being as a matter of nature.

As we saw previously with Origen, the idea that the worship of God is a basic anthropological necessity (something humans are supposed to do by nature), grounds the

[76] At one point, Eusebius writes, "But sons of the Hebrews also would find fault with us, that being strangers and aliens we misuse their books, which do not belong to us at all, and because in an impudent and shameless way, as they would say, we thrust ourselves in, and try violently to thrust out the true family and kindred from their own ancestral rights." Eusebius, *Part 1*, 5c-d (p. 6).

stereotyping of the non-Christian other, by allowing 'Christian' to itself serve as a proxy for 'human being.' It is a reified premise that, taken from its rhetorical ground and cast as a law of nature, allows for the demeaning of the non-Christian *other* along the lines of stereotypical fixations.

After all, Greeks and Jews do not simply disagree with Christians, they have abandoned the very dictates of their human nature. The otherness of the Greek or Jew is cast as something of an objective premise (Greek and Jewish religion falls short of what nature, not persons, intended), relating to an anthropological formulation that then serves as the basis for anthropological classification on the basis of stereotypes.[77] But if, with Lyman, one is to avoid the tendency to allow our 'ideology to conceal its own human process,'[78] then one cannot accept the sort of practice Eusebius is engaging in when he takes a specifically Christian premise (that the human soul was created to worship God) as the metric by which you define the non-Christian other. One can also not allow the line between what one knows and what one believes to be blurred through a process of reification, allowing that belief to parade as something more objective than it actually is.

And we can observe that line being blurred by ideology when, for example, Eusebius writes the following after summarizing a number of doctrines, including the idea of the rational soul as the true inner man,[79] which he claims are present in Moses: "But why should I thus anticipate, when I ought at once to describe the several things which I have stated out of the Scriptures themselves?"[80]

The problem is that the ostensible authority of the Scriptures[81] on these matters is not particularly convincing, and it does not aid Eusebius's case that he first tells his audience how the Scriptures ought to be read (thus his preceding summary of doctrines)

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[77] This is an issue raised by J. Kameron Carter. See my discussion of his work, beginning on p. 55, of chapter one.
[78] See note 64, in chapter one.
[79] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 314b-317b (pp. 338-42).
[80] *Ibid*., 317b (p. 342).
[81] Here, Eusebius has the Torah/Pentateuch in mind.

before he presents the relevant Scriptural passages themselves, putting his listener in a perspectivally Christian frame of reference that allows the Scriptures to echo Eusebius's own Christian positions and rhetoric.

Eusebius's attempt to ground the authority of the Scriptures can be gleaned from two passages. In one, Eusebius writes that,

> First of all then that admirable theologian and lawgiver himself [Moses], in founding by his own writing a polity in accordance with religion for the Jewish people . . . he thought it right to make his teaching begin with their ancestral theology, because he considered no other instruction to be proper to laws pertaining to religion, than that theology which had come down to him from their forefathers."[82]

We have already seen a portion of the second passage,[83] which states,

> I think it must be evident to every one [*sic*] on consideration that the first and most ancient of mankind did not apply themselves either to building temples or to setting up statues . . . This statement is not ours, but the testimony comes from within, and from the Greeks themselves . . . This is what our holy Scriptures also teach, in which it is contained, that in the beginning the worship of the visible luminaries had been assigned to all the nations, and that to the Hebrew race alone had been entrusted the full initiation into the knowledge of God the Maker and Artificer of the universe, and of true piety towards Him. So then among the oldest of mankind there was no mention of a Theogony, either Greek or barbarian . . . In fact the polytheistic error of all the nations is only seen long ages afterwards, having taken its beginning from the Phoenicians and Egyptians, and passed over from them to the other nations, and even to the Greeks themselves. For this again is affirmed by the history of the earliest ages.[84]

Taken together these two passages argue that the authority of the Scriptures rest on Moses having received his theology from the Hebrews, and the fact that the Hebrews have a theology that is older (and on Christian terms, more pure) than the Egyptians and Greeks from whom the Greeks received their religion. Eusebius tells us that the Greeks themselves attest to this Hebrew antiquity, with no reflection on the fact that the Greeks themselves do not seem to interpret history in the way Eusebius claims they do (at least not with respect to the conclusion about the authoritative place of Hebrew thought). But since Eusebius has cast himself as the Greek voice, and the Greeks as ignorant of

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[82] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 313b-c (pp. 337-8).
[83] See note 66, above.
[84] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 29d-30d (pp. 33-4).

even their own religion, Greek self-understanding need not enter the discussion.

And Eusebius's own phrase which introduces the second passage—"I think it must be evident to every one [*sic*] on consideration"—speaks precisely to the way only the Christian voice need be taken into account within this discourse of the non-Christian *other*. Clearly what Eusebius is arguing—that the true religion (true on account of the dictates of human nature) is that which the Hebrews practiced—is not clear to everyone, otherwise he would not be arguing it.[85] But it is the "on consideration" that really speaks to the way Eusebius helps effect transparency by way of a,

> distribution and arrangement of differential spaces, positions, knowledges in relation to each other, relative to a discriminatory, not inherent, sense of order. This effects a regulation of spaces and places that is authoritatively assigned; it puts the addressee into the proper frame or condition for some action or result. Such a mode of governance addresses itself to a form of conduct that equivocates between the sense of disposal, as the bestowal of a frame of reference, and disposition, as mental inclination, a frame of mind.[86]

With the phrase "on consideration," Eusebius is putting his hearer into the proper frame to disregard the "I think" that opens the sentence. What Eusebius is claiming is that what he is saying is less a matter of his own particular speculation ("I think"), and more a function of those natural conclusions that are the product of human rationality being applied to the problem objectively ("every one on consideration"). The "on consideration" hides the fact that what makes Eusebius's argument plausible is accepting the Christian frame that posits the antiquity of the Hebrew as the measure of theological authority, and suggests instead that what makes it plausible are the natural conclusions of basic human rationality.

G.R. Boys-Stones has argued that in late antiquity, appealing to the antiquity of a doctrine was a standard rhetorical practice among thinkers arguing over this or that philosophical position, and a practice which Christians inherited from Platonism.[87]

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[85] This is what Bhabha speaks of as an ambivalence internal to enunciations. Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 54-5.
[86] *Ibid*., 155-6.
[87] G.R. Boys-Stones, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy: A Study in Its Development from the Stoics to Origen*

Among Boys-Stones's examples is the claim by Justin Martyr that Plato borrowed doctrines from the Hebrews (something we also saw Eusebius argue above),[88] providing as evidence the assertion of Hebrew antiquity relative Plato (in other words, if the Hebrews had an idea before Plato, then Plato derived his idea from the Hebrews).

Eusebius is doing something similar here, establishing the authority of Hebrew thought on the basis of an ostensible Hebraic temporal priority. But it is not a particularly strong argument, in Justin or Eusebius, operating more on the basis of assertion ("I think it must be evident to every one") than evidence. On that basis, then, Eusebius's account of the authority of Hebrew thought is really a reminder to his addressee that the position Eusebius is staking out is the one they are supposed to agree with (put another way, Eusebius's audience is supposed to conform to the model of the 'everyone who has considered,' as opposed to being like the Greeks who are ignorant even of their own religion).

And so we are seeing the way anthropological formulations can be reified and mixed into a discourse about an other that makes those anthropological formulations the basis of stereotyping. We are also seeing how those formulations become transparent discursive elements, operating to put the addressee in the proper frame so as to accept and adopt the authority (or validity) of the Christian position, 'an authority to which even the Christian must bend,' to echo Said again.[89]

At this point, I have completed the first three prongs of my transparency analysis with respect to Eusebius's *Praeparatio*. I have identified an identity between speaker and audience by way of their shared Christianity; a discourse (the *Praeparatio* itself) concerned first and foremost with telling us something about that Christian identity (Eusebius speaks for both Christian and non-Christian in a discourse oriented at other

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(New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 170-3.

[88] See note 68, above. Origen makes a similar case in *Contra Celsum*, arguing throughout book six that Hebrew thought predates Plato, and then in book seven that Plato quotes the Hebrew Scriptures. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 7.30 (pp. 418-9).

[89] See note 1, in chapter two.

Christians who need elementary instruction on Christianity); and discursive elements operating transparently within that discourse that obscure the particular combat position of the speaker and suggest that the speaker's statements about the *other* (and the self, for that matter) are objective, as opposed to decentered and perspectival.[90]

III. Conclusion.

In this chapter I have sought to apply the first three prongs of my transparency analysis to Origen's *Contra Celsum* and Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica*. In both texts I identified an identity between speaker and audience that ought to put anyone on guard against the possibility of discursive transparencies operating within discourses, and that can be obscured by that shared identity between speaker and audience. This was the first prong of my transparency analysis.

Both texts were not only explicitly oriented towards an audience that identified as Christian, they were written with the purpose of instructing these Christians about Christianity specifically. In other words, both texts are informed by a broader aim of the speaker to communicate something about himself, and specifically himself as a Christian. The combat position of both texts, so to speak, is that of the Christian, and it is Christianity which the combatants (Origen and Eusebius) are defending. Put another way, both texts are acts of Christian self-definition. This was the second prong of my transparency analysis.

Lastly, both texts inform the intended audience about Christianity, in part, by way of a description of an *other* (Greeks in the case of Origen, Greeks and Jews in the case of Eusebius). The being of Greeks and Jews in both texts ends up mediated through stereotypes which fixes Greeks and Jews not simply as different, but as failing to live up to the contours of a 'natural' anthropological formulation. These anthropological

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[90] See my discussion of Foucault, beginning on p. 86, in chapter two.

formulations are reified elements operating within the text that form the basis of anthropological classifications by way of the stereotypes already mentioned.

Thus, what I have said above reinforces the claims made by Buell and Carter with respect to the location of the concept of race in antiquity as well as early Christian discourses. I am not asserting that race, in its Modern biologistic guise, is present in the thought of Origen and Eusebius. However, the attempt to fix the identity of an *other* relative to some ostensibly 'natural' (today we might say 'scientific') anthropological formulation that is little more than a decentered combat perspective is very much an engagement in the same agonism of self-definition that Bhabha identified as the crux of the racist stereotype. And so what emerges in both *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio* is a description of the Greek and the Jew that fixes both on the basis of arbitrary[91] anthropological formulations woven into the self-identity of the Christian authors. Thus, even if one were to assert that categories like 'Greek' or 'Jew' in these discourses do not conform to what today we refer to as race (and I think that is an increasingly hard case to make), one would have a harder time arguing that the way those terms are defined and operate within the discourses is not the same as what Bhabha called the racist stereotype. Put another way, my analysis in this chapter shows that whether one wants to acknowledge the late-antique Christian categories of 'Greek' or 'Jew' as racial, they can be demonstrated to be racist in their operation.

Locating the anthropological formulations informing the late antique Christian understanding of Greeks and Jews as presented within the two texts considered here was the third prong of my transparency analysis, and it reveals those anthropological formulations as hybrid moments that both ground the authority claimed by our Christian authors with respect to their knowledge of the *other*, but also reveal the grounds of intervention for those uncomfortable with the prospect of such otherizations operating within Christian self-definition.

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[91] Recall the discussion of my use of "arbitrary" on p. 118, above.

But there is one more prong of my analysis that we have yet to consider, whether the discourses about the *other* in *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio* do not ultimately serve to organize the relevant players on a stage that is for the speaker alone. This is important to consider not only because it is an aspect of discursive transparencies, but because hierarchization (what Carter called classification) is part and parcel to the practice of agonistic self-definition which produces the *other* as other.

As Bhabha put it,

> [the colonial] display of difference produces a mode of authority that is agonistic (rather than antagonistic). Its discriminatory effects are visible in those split subjects of the racist stereotype – the simian Negro, the effeminate Asiatic male – which ambivalently fix identity as the fantasy of difference.[92]

So while the racist stereotype is cast agonistically on the *other*, it is done so in pursuit of a mode of authority over that *other*. The purpose, then, of the racist stereotype is not simply to fix identity of the *other* as the fantasy of difference, but to assert authority over that *other* on account of that difference.

The fourth prong of my analysis speaks to this issue of authority over the *other*. It is to this prong of my analysis to which I now turn in chapter four.

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[92] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 153.

4

The Stage in *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio Evangelica*

In this chapter, I will present the final and fourth prong of my transparency analysis, as well as some concluding thoughts on the implications of that analysis for early Christian studies and projects of self-definition. Before doing so, however, I would like to briefly summarize what has been said so far.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I began with an illustration from Plato's *Timaeus* in which I highlighted a problematic tendency to judge the value of the *other* on the basis of correspondence to the self, and, further, to define proper human behavior on that same basis. I suggested there that one can observe a similar phenomenon in early Christian discourses, and that this is an aspect of those discourses that has come under increasing attention as early Christian scholars wrestle with the implications of Christianity's historical narratives about the *other* for contemporary praxis.

In my first chapter, I sought to show that this concern about early Christian perspectives on the *other* emerges out of a more classical concern within the field about the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism. J. Rebecca Lyman challenged the essentialisms that undergird the binary opposition of Christianity to Hellenism and suggested early Christian identity is better understood as a cultural hybrid, harnessing postcolonial perspectives as the basis of her framework, especially the work of Homi K. Bhabha.

For Lyman, this possibility of a Christian self-definition that is culturally hybrid, an amalgam of Christian and non-Christian elements, was opened by the horizon of postcolonial thought and aided Lyman's quest for a Christian self-understanding that avoided the hegemonic tendencies that have often played out violently where the Christian has encountered their non-Christian *other*.

In outline, Lyman argued that many historical Christian self-definitions revolved around a vision of orthodoxy, a practice that insisted on uniformity and punished non-conforming perspectives. Alternatively, by viewing Christian identity as hybrid, and capable of encompassing an "interior diversity" that has always been present in Christianity (hence fights over orthodoxy in the first place), Lyman suggests that Christians can avoid the strict boundaries orthodoxy insists upon to the point of violence.

But Lyman's attempt to avoid the hegemonic tendencies internal to historical narratives of Christian identity along the lines of orthodoxy is undermined by her particular application of postcolonial thought. Lyman's argument, illustrated with reference to Justin Martyr's account of Logocentric truth, attempts to analogize Justin's situation to that of a Modern colonial setting, with the pre-Constantinian Justin standing in the place of a colonized subject. Justin argues that truth enters the world by way of the Logos, that Greeks (Hellenists) possess (at least some) truth as a result, but that this truth is ultimately a possession of the Logos (Christ), himself a possession of Christians.

Lyman suggests that in making this argument, Justin is articulating a self-definition inclusive of both Christian and Hellenistic elements, but it is hard to see how Justin is not actually making a supersessionist claim rather than an inclusive one where Hellenism (non-Christian Greek thought) is concerned. Further, when other scholars have tried to follow Lyman's path, and one itself more established in the arena of postcolonial Biblical criticism, they have tended to treat early Christians making almost identical claims or arguments about non-Christians as engaging in qualitatively distinct projects depending on whether they are writing before the political ascension of Christianity under Constantine in the fourth century.[1]

For example, Andrew S. Jacobs has argued that Origen adopts the Jewish voice in an effort to resist Jewish control of the Hebrew scriptures when he argues that Christians better perceive the true meaning of those scriptures. Origen, in his depiction of Jews

[1] See my discussion beginning on p. 41, of chapter one.

and their scriptures, stands in the analogous position of a colonized subject in the Modern colonial setting, resisting an external hegemony. On the other hand, Eusebius, who would later make much the same argument about Jews and their scriptures that Origen did, only at a time when Christianity's place in the Roman Empire was much more settled, is cast as analogous to the European colonizer. Eusebius is described by Jacobs as engaging in a far more hegemonic act than Origen, otherizing the Jew as incarnate totalized difference (different vis-à-vis the Christian).[2]

But two figures making very similar claims about Jews should not have so wide a chasm allowed between the operation of their perspectives. By limiting the application of postcolonial thought to an analogy with the Modern manifestation of European colonialism, Lyman and those who have followed her have insulated some rather problematic early Christian discourses from their own implications (implications which themselves can and have grounded acts of violence).

Bhabha, by contrast, criticizes colonized subjects for engaging in problematic discursive paradigms established by European colonizers.[3] So an application of Bhabha to early Christian discourses should preserve the ability to criticize Christian perspectives regardless of the particular Christian speaker's position relative political (or, in the operative analogy, colonial) power.

I have argued that the limitation of Lyman's approach rests in her decision to focus on Bhabah's discussion of colonial mimicry, and that a method derived from Bhabha's discussion of transparency would better conform to Lyman's aim of avoiding self-definitions that can operate hegemonically. Mimicry analysis focuses too much on the person making the argument rather than the argument itself, and it is the latter that we are concerned with (since Lyman is focused on the operation of definitions, not the definer). It does not help that, in Bhabha, cultural mimicry undermines descriptions

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[2] See note 83, in chapter one.
[3] See note 86, in chapter one.

imposed on the mimic herself by an external hegemonic authority,[4] but in Lyman the cultural mimic is ostensibly undermining a description the mimic himself (here I'm thinking of Justin specifically) has imposed, so the analogy does not work particularly well on a number of levels.

A methodology centered on transparency, in contrast, focuses on what is being said, not who is saying it. Further, a transparency analysis incorporates the Foucauldean, Marxian, and Nietzschean critiques of discourse that Bhabha and other postcolonial theorists have applied to European colonial narratives in order to intervene in the otherizations effected by those narratives, which is the very crux of the postcolonial project (to deconstruct discourses, especially essentialist ones), but which Lyman's analysis largely avoids.

Lastly, because Bhabha has noted the way in which transparent colonial self-understanding otherizes by way of the racist stereotype, applying a transparency analysis bridges two related concerns present in contemporary early Christian scholarship: the concern with Christian self-definition in terms of a Christian essence raised by Lyman, and the concern over the presence of the concept of race in early Christian discourses raised by Scholars like Gay Byron, Aaron Johnson, Denise Buell, and J. Kameron Carter.[5]

Transparency analysis not only helps show the connection between these concerns, it does a better job of showing where one can intervene in the practice of self-definition in order to avoid ending up with a self-description that is not itself the basis for racist stereotypes, thus avoiding the tendencies toward hegemonic speech which Lyman has located in historical orthodoxy narratives.

In chapter two, I argued that transparencies have (at least) four common elements that form the four prongs of my transparency analysis: 1. transparencies are enabled by

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[4] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 126.
[5] See my discussion beginning on p. 55, of chapter one.

identity between speaker and audience; 2. transparencies are common in discourses where the aim of the speaker is ultimately to say something about herself (her own identity); 3. transparencies often involve reifications, especially those touching on anthropological formulations, that the author makes use of in defining herself and her *others*; and 4. transparencies are often marshaled for the setting up of a stage where every element is for the speaker, and those who share her identity, alone.

In chapter three, I applied the first three of these prongs to Origen's *Contra Celsum* and Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica*. In both texts I observed an identity between speaker and audience (both self-identify as Christians). Both texts are concerned with what it means to be a Christian, and therefore are discourses in which the speaker is ultimately concerned to say something about himself (both authors being men). Further, both texts accept a number of anthropological propositions that function as the basis of a narrative about an *other* that functions much like the Modern racist stereotype.

In what will now follow, I will consider the fourth prong of my transparency analysis to the two early Christian works here under consideration. I will follow this with my concluding thoughts on the scholarly, theological, and political implications of my dissertation. Unlike in the previous chapter, I will not separate my discussion of the fourth prong into distinct 'Origen' and 'Eusebius' sections, as the analysis flows better if the two are considered together.

I. The Stage in Origen's *Contra Celsum* and Eusebius's *Praeparatio*.

In light of the anthropological formulations woven into the Christian self-understanding on display in *Contra Celsum*, the stage Origen is setting up is a fairly broad one. While a discourse about how Christians might respond to non-Christian Greek statements about Christians does not necessitate a broad stage in and of itself, once the rhetoric of the pro-Christian side takes on an air of anthropological necessity, it has

lost the ability to limit the stage to something like the matter at hand. Everything begins to take on added weight, burdened by the rhetorical requirement of necessity that weaving anthropological formulations into self-descriptions effects.

And this can be illustrated—by and large—with reference to a single citation, in which Origen discusses the relationship of the created order to the rational being.

> [F]or all things have been created primarily on account of the rational being. . . . we will say that the Creator has not made these things for the lion or eagle or dolphin, but has created everything for the rational being, and *so that this world as God's work may be made complete and perfect in all its parts*. . . . God does not take care, as Celsus imagines, only of *the universe as a whole*, but in addition to that He takes particular care of every rational being. And providence will never abandon the universe. . . . Furthermore, he is not angry because of monkeys and mice; but He inflicts judgment and punishment upon men, seeing that they have gone against the impulses of nature. And He threatens them through prophets and through the Saviour who came to visit the whole human race, in order that by means of the threat those who hear may be converted, while those who neglect the words aimed at their conversion pay penalties according to their deserts. It is right that God should impose these according to His will to the advantage of the whole world upon people who need healing and correction of this kind and of such severity.[6]

In this passage, Origen argues that all things were created for the rational being, a continuation of what we saw him say in the last chapter about the way the created order points human rationality in the direction of God.[7] While the planets and angels are certainly among those Origen would include in this category, this passage appears nonetheless to have human beings specifically in mind, as illustrated by Origen's assertion that Jesus visited "the whole human race." In establishing a created order whose structure points to God, God godself has taken particular care of human beings, says Origen.

But many humans "have gone against the impulses of nature," not to mention the design of creation, in failing to recognize, acknowledge, and worship God as God. So God threatens, judges, and punishes them for their failure to marshal their rationality, the seat of human nature, to its intended purpose: the worship of God, and by implication,

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[6] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 4.99 (p. 262-3).
[7] See my discussion beginning on p. 111, of chapter three.

being a Christian.

> It is right that God should impose these according to His will to the advantage of the whole world upon people who need healing and correction of this kind and of such severity.[8]

For the non-Christian, then, the created order's design as a divine pharos, humanity's design as a rational soul, and the rational soul's creation as a God seeking/knowing capacity (recognizing what is akin to it),[9] all stand as the premise of a divine stance towards the non-Christian consisting of 'threats, judgments, and punishments.' Punishments that are not only 'severe,' but "to the advantage of the whole world." That is, these reified positions, posited as descriptions of nature and not the simple perspective of one side in an argument, become the grounds and justification for severe and punitive treatment towards the non-Christian *other*.

And so, we are left with a scene in which the entire cosmos seems explicitly for Christians, orienting their contemplation towards the divine. But it would be better said that the entire cosmos, in Origen's hands, is explicitly for humans so that they may become Christians (an end internal to the human being's design, as we saw in the previous chapter).

> We Christians . . . who are devoted to the only God who created [flora], acknowledge our gratitude for them to their Creator, because [God] has prepared such a home for us and, with a view to our benefit, for the animals which serve us. 'He causes the grass to grow for the cattle and herb for the service of man...'[10]

And so, Origen has set a stage on which all the players are for the Christian and only for the Christian. The non-Christian is on that stage, but the stage has been set in such a way as to establish the moral necessity of severity towards her. In failing to worship God, the non-Christian has not simply differed, she has "gone against the impulses of nature." On the basis of this ostensibly objective principle (the worship of God is the end of the rational soul by nature), threats and severe punishments are

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[8] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 4.99.
[9] See note 28, in chapter three.
[10] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 4.74 (p. 244).

justified, and the Christian's almost constitutional superiority over the non-Christian are established implicitly.

However, where Origen himself is concerned, that should not be read as an endorsement of interpersonal violence towards the *other*. What Origen is saying refers to a divine, not a human, prerogative. Further, there are a number of passages in *Contra Celsum* in which Origen says Christians are forbidden from engaging in violence, such as where he writes,

> the lawgiver of the Christians [has] forbidden entirely the taking of human life. He taught that it was never right for his disciples to go so far against a man, even if he should be very wicked; for he did not consider it compatible with his inspired legislation to allow the taking of human life in any form at all. . . . Concerning the Christians . . . we say that they have been taught not to defend themselves against their enemies.[11]

But it is hard not to sense in what Origen has said something of a seedling of that tendency toward hegemonic speech that Lyman has suggested Christians ought to resist in thinking about how best to define themselves. In the previous chapter, I argued that Origen's weaving of anthropological formulations into his Christian self-definition had the agonistic effect, where the *other* was concerned, of reducing her to a racist stereotype, stripped of agency and defined by traits deemed negative on the basis of deviation from the anthropological norms internal to those formulations (e.g., the Greeks as stupid, lustful, impure on the basis of falling short of some standard of innate human rationality that ought to culminate, by design/nature, in the worship of God).[12]

Here, I suggest that Origen has also marshaled those formulations to the purpose of creating a moral justification for divine violence against the *other*. The stage, which at this point consists of the entire cosmos, is not only for the Christian, it is itself the grounds for justified violence towards the non-Christian. And it is hard not to hear echoes of the way Origen has set up his stage in one of the early legal and theological justifications for European colonial intervention in the New World, the *Requerimiento*,

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[11] *Ibid*., 3.7-8 (p. 132-3). See also, *ibid*., 4.26-7, 52, 83; 5.33; 7.26; 8.41, 70 73.
[12] See my discussion beginning on p. 111, of chapter three.

written in the early 16th century by Juan Lopez de Palacios Rubios on behalf of the Spanish crown:

> On the part of the King, Don Fernando . . . [we] notify and make known to you, as best we can, that the Lord our God . . . created the Heaven and the Earth, and one man and one woman, of whom you and we, and all the men of the world, were and are descendants . . . Of all [the] nations God our Lord gave charge to one man, called St. Peter, that he should be Lord and Superior of all the men in the world . . . and that he should be the head of the whole human race[.]
>
> . . . This man was called Pope . . . One of [the] Pontiffs, who succeeded that St. Peter as Lord of the world, in the dignity and seat which I have before mentioned, made donation of these isles and Tierra-firme to the aforesaid King and Queen . . . with all that there are in these territories, as is contained in certain writings which passed upon the subject as aforesaid, which you can see if you wish.
>
> [W]e ask and require you that you consider what we have said to you, and that you take the time that shall be necessary to understand and deliberate upon it, and that you acknowledge the Church as the Ruler and Supervisor of the whole world and the high priest called Pope, and in his name the King and Queen Doña Juana and lords, in his place, as superiors and lords and kings of these islands and this Tierra-firme by virtue of the said donation, and that you consent and give place that these religious fathers should declare and preach to you the aforesaid.
>
> If you do so, you will do well . . .
>
> But, if you do not do this, and maliciously make delay in it, I certify to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of their Highnesses; we shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey; and refuse to receive their lord, and resist and contradict him; and we protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or ours, nor of these cavaliers who come with us.[13]

Many centuries after Origen, we see another stage set up entirely for the Christian, and which itself serves as the moral justification for violence against a non-Christian *other*. I am not suggesting that Palacios Rubios based the *Requerimiento* on Origen's work in *Contra Celsum.* But the *Requerimiento* is carried in a long-standing Christian

[13] Brett Rushforth and Paul W. Mapp, *Colonial North America and the Atlantic World: A History in Documents* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009), 31-2.

theological stream, of which Origen is a part, in which the entire world is a benefit to the Christian and a curse on the non-Christian.

Biblical scholar R.S. Sugirtharajah has noted that the Bible has the capacity to foster territorial conquest and detailed a number of historical examples in which Biblical passages, as well as Biblical scholarship, were explicitly marshaled to justify Western colonial projects, with all their concomitant violence on the colonized.[14] We see in Origen and Eusebius a similar habit of mind: both marshal interpretations of Biblical texts to the service of hegemonic speech that asserts a more genuine humanity as the exclusive possession of Christians, and sows the seeds of the idea that this greater humanity grants broad authority in various arenas. Put another way, we can see in the *Requerimiento* how a tendency toward hegemonic speech that Origen and Eusebius participated in matured into hegemonic praxis, the sort of thing that makes Lyman so wary of Christian self-definition as it has been historically practiced.

And we can see in Eusebius, writing not so long after Origen, a similar seed of that hegemonic tendency, yet here not coupled with quite the same commitment to non-violence we saw expressed by Origen. Eusebius describes the stage in which his narrative is taking place in much the same way Origen did, in a section of the *Praeparatio* in which Eusebius is arguing for the superiority of Hebrew thought. Having argued that Greek and other barbarian theologies largely prescribe a worship of bodies and pleasure rather than a cultivation of the soul, Eusebius writes that the original Hebrews, in contrast, pursued "rational speculation" (λογικῇ θεωρίᾳ).[15] Among the discoveries that resulted from this rational speculation was the fact that

> the one part of themselves was precious (and that this was also the true man, which is discerned in the soul), and that the other part holds the place of an envelope of the former, and that this is the body. And so having thus distinguished them [the soul and body], they concentrated their whole thought and diligence upon the life of the inner man. This they reasoned must be well-pleasing with God the Creator of all, who

[14] See the discussions in Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*, 31-6, 104.
[15] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 301b (p. 324); Mras, *Praeparatio*, 7.3.2.

> seemingly had endowed man's nature with dominion over all things upon earth, not so much by strength of body as by excellence of soul (ἀρετῇ ψυχῆς): for of existing things some were inanimate, as stones and stocks; and some partakers of a living force, as the plants that grow out of the earth; and some admitted to share in sensation and the impulse of perception, such as are the irrational animals: but all these were subjected to the service (πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν δουλοῦσθαι) of the one sole race of mankind (ἑνὶ τῷ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένει), constrained thereto not by vigour and strength of body, but by the exercise of reason and by excellence of soul (λογισμῷ δὲ καὶ ψυχῆς ἄρετῇ), whereby they have comprehended that the privilege of rule and royalty (ἀρχικόν τε καὶ βασιλικὸν) over all things upon earth has been granted originally from the Author of the universe. Starting from this thought, they determined to honour the body and the pleasures of the body no higher than the other creatures upon earth; but the ruling principle in themselves akin, as it were, to the Ruler of all (τοῦ πάντων ἄρχοντος οἰκεῖον), and the soul's rational and intelligent faculty, godlike and capable of true knowledge, bearing, as it were, the likeness of the God over all, this alone they held in high esteem.[16]

As in Origen, we see in Eusebius another narrative in which the entire Earth falls under the authority of those beings who have been endowed with reason by their creator, a reason which itself is the basis of that authority. That reason, housed in the soul, it may be recalled, is also the basis of moral agency and responsibility, as we saw in what Eusebius said about the ontology of evil in the previous chapter, cited again here:

> [T]he source of evil, about which many have doubted, has place in nothing natural, neither in bodies, nor in spiritual substances . . . [but] solely in the self-determined motion of the soul, and in this, not when following the course of nature it walks in the straight road, but when it departs from the king's highway, and turns by its own decision into the course contrary to nature, being its own master. . . . For the creator of all implanted in every soul [a] natural law[17] as a helper and defender in its actions; and while by His law He showed it the right way, by the self-determined freedom bestowed on it He declared the choice of the better course to be deserving of praise[.][18]

The phrase 'deserving of praise' speaks to the idea of moral responsibility, that one is held accountable on account of one's choices. These choices fall into two categories in this account: that which is in accordance with the divine law, and that which is evil. And so, as in Origen, we have here an account of human rationality and its

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[16] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 302b-303a (p. 325); Mras, *Praeparatio*, 7.4.1-3.

[17] Described in the longer quote, cited on pp. 128-9 of chapter three, as a 'divine law united with [the soul] by nature . . . call[ing] to [the soul] with a voice from within."

[18] See note 67, in chapter three.

relationship to the created order in which the anthropological formulation that the true human being is the rational soul functions to both establish the authority (some might say, superiority) of she who acts 'rationally,' and the moral culpability of she who does not. What is the signifier of rational action? The worship of the almighty God, as practiced in latest antiquity by the Hebrews, and by Christians in Eusebius's own time.

We are left, then, with a narrative that implicitly leaves authority over the Earth in the hands of Christians, who alone have exercised reason in a way "deserving of praise." The non-Christian has failed in this respect, and so while the non-Christian is still a rational human, possessed with a similar authority over the Earth on account of that rationality, her failure of rationality, as evinced by her non-Christian theology, is the premise of her moral culpability for failing to be a Christian (i.e., to worship the Christian God).

One might say, as I did with Origen, that this is a moral culpability before God, not before Christians. But unlike with Origen, we do not find a similar insistence on Christian non-violence in Eusebius's *Praeparatio*. And while this is not the same as endorsing or advocating violence against the non-Christian *other*, there is present in *Praeparatio* an apparent comfort with violence, such as when Eusebius suggests that Plato erred in prescribing temporary banishment as the appropriate punishment for non-premeditated murder as opposed to the death sentence prescribed by Mosaic law.[19]

Further, there appears to be a particular comfort with violence as the solution to deviations from Eusebius's understanding of human nature:

> [C]oncerning unnatural [i.e., same-sex] love, how unlike are [Plato's] sentiments to those of Moses, who in laws expressly contrary pronounces with loud voice the fit sentence against sodomites. Why need we still urge the charge that this most wise philosopher after acquitting such sinners, against whom he did not think it fit to prescribe sentence of death, directs in his *Laws* that the slave who failed to give information of a treasure discovered by another should be punished with death.[20]

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[19] Eusebius, *Part 2*, 713a (p. 769).
[20] *Ibid*., 710c-711a (p. 767).

In the above citation, Eusebius suggests that a deviation from an anthropological norm ought to be met with violent punishment (death), and specifically because it is a deviation from what is natural for humans. And while Origen does not go quite as far down the path of endorsing violence in his *Contra Celsum*, it is clear that both Origen and Eusebius are saying much the same thing with respect to their broader stage, though not pushing the rhetoric to the same conclusion.

But it is hard not to see Eusebius's conclusion in *Praeparatio* as a potential result of the sort of rhetoric Origen employed in *Contra Celsum*. In Eusebius's hands, the same premise of a stage entirely for Christians, and which establishes the moral culpability of the non-Christian for her non-Christianity (which in both Origen and Eusebius is a deviation from human nature), functions to inform a greater comfort with violence committed against the non-Christian than that stage did in Origen, but not in a way that is particularly unexpected. If anything, what is more surprising is how much more effectively Origen managed to hold the premise in tension with a commitment to non-violence.

While they do not push the premise to the same place, both Origen and Eusebius accept a premise that lends itself to violent exercises of hegemony precisely because they establish both the grounds of that hegemony as well as the moral justification for violent action on the part of that hegemony. Because they establish a stage that is for the Christian alone. It may be more implicit in Origen, but it is present in both.

And so what we observe in Eusebius is a more fulfilled seedling of the hegemonic tendency internal to the Christian self-definition both he, and Origen before him, pursued; a self-definition informed by particular and decentered anthropological formulations; and situated on a stage where everything is for the Christian. Since the Christian is defined in terms of certain anthropological formulations, the stage may be said to be set for that anthropological formulation itself. And thus, those anthropological formulations function transparently to shape a discourse that we observe

becoming more comfortable with violence in the hands of Eusebius, and way more comfortable with violence by the time it lands in the hands of the Spanish crown.

Of course, the point here is not that Origen and Eusebius are culpable for what the Spanish crown did in the sixteenth century, or what any European colonizer ever did, but simply to point out that hegemonic tendencies tend to mature into hegemonic exercises (or at least provide an established rhetorical tradition to justify the latter). That is precisely why Lyman has gone down the path of incorporating postcolonial perspectives into her Christian self-understanding, to ask whether a theoretical view informed by the short end of the hegemonic stick might proffer some solution to the tendency towards hegemonic speech the discourse of orthodoxy has imposed on Christian self-definition.

By pursuing a transparency analysis in this dissertation, I have agreed with Lyman that postcolonial thought might indeed proffer some solution to this problem, but up to now my analysis has really only functioned to point out the operation of transparent aspects of the early Christian self-definitions here under consideration, and show how those aspects inform a potential for violent hegemony (what Lyman called a tendency towards hegemonic speech, though connecting it to a history of actual violence "against Jews and other non-Christians").[21]

I want to now conclude this dissertation with some thoughts about how my transparency analysis might suggest some pathways towards a solution to the problem Lyman has identified and sought to disrupt. Pathways that take into account not only what has been said up to now, but which also take into account some less hegemonic seeds present in Origen's own discourse in *Contra Celsum*, as well as some more contemporary reflections on Christian self-definition in the realm of political philosophy.

II. Conclusion.

[21] Lyman, "Resources," 72.

In this and the previous chapter, I have suggested that Origen's and Eusebius's Christian self-definitions had anthropological formulations woven into them which operated to make racial stereotypes out of non-Christians and set a stage that was expressly and solely for Christians, while also establishing the moral justification for violent orientation towards the *other*. For those, like Lyman, concerned with the implicit operation of hegemonic tendencies within Christian self-definitions, one obvious implication of my analysis is that allusions to anthropological nature should be avoided in crafting a Christian self-definition.

Obvious perhaps, but potentially a non-starter for a theological worldview historically premised on the anthropological need for salvation after the fall, as narrated in Genesis. Certainly it is this concern that seems to underlie the tendency of both Origen and Eusebius to weave anthropological formulations into their self-definitions (not that this dictates the specific formulations in terms of a rational soul).

Though working in a different theatre of early Christian scholarship, John Rist provides a potential approach to what may be an inevitability for a worldview that tends to accept some version of the fall of humanity as central. In an article on the ancient phrase "blending without confusion" to describe a unification of two distinct essences (as in body and soul) without either being altered, Rist notes that,

> the mere coining of new terminology ["without confusion"] does not indicate that a problem has been solved (except in a trivial and merely verbal sense in that presumably ["without confusion"] is somehow different from other blendings), but merely that it has been identified.

It might be possible to think about the term 'human being' in a similar vein, not as something known and therefore a problem solved, but precisely as a problem identified, and perhaps one whose identification is premised on the fall (since without the fall the human perhaps ceases to be a problem at all). This might eliminate the possibility of weaving anthropological formulations into Christian self-definitions, since

no formulation has first been presented.

But it may be impossible to hold onto a theology of the fall of humanity without first formulating a definition of humanity. Without such a definition, there is no human ideal or non-ideal against which to judge whether humanity finds itself in a fallen condition. Without a fallen condition, it is not clear what the need for Christianity—at least as it's been conceived historically—would be in the first place.

But this may not, in and of itself pose a problem to the sort of project Lyman is proposing. Lyman located the hegemonic tendency of Christian self-definition in its being conceived, historically, in terms of orthodoxy. Lyman's project, then, would appear to be a call to think about Christian self-definition in a way other than it has been historically done. An implication of this, and in light of my analysis in this dissertation, may be that rethinking Christian self-definition as historically practiced may also require the rethinking of Christianity as historically defined—the practice stemming, at least in part, from the definition.

And we can locate a similar suggestion that Christians ought to make a departure from the practice of insisting on definitions and formulations where self-understanding is concerned in one of the texts considered in this dissertation, *Contra Celsum*.

It may be recalled that Origen claimed to "have no sympathy with anyone who had faith in Christ such that it could be shaken by Celsus . . . or by any plausibility of argument."[22] In the same preface where he made this claim, Origen explained that, when Jesus was accused before Pilate, Jesus remained silent. Jesus himself was still being accused in the accusations non-Christians like Celsus made against Christians. But, Origen, admonishes that

> [Jesus] is still silent in face of this and does not answer with his voice; but he makes his defence in the lives of his genuine disciples, for their lives cry out the real facts and defeat all false charges, refuting and overthrowing the slanders and accusations.[23]

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[22] See note 4, in chapter three.
[23] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, *P*.2 (p. 4).

Even Eusebius echoes this sentiment in *Praeparatio*, when he writes that Christians, in claiming who they are, do so "not in regard to the name, because this is manifest to all, but in the manner and purpose of life?"[24] To describe oneself only with recourse to the conduct of one's life could be a way of filtering out the project of exactly (and therefore rigidly) defining Christianity from the practice of Christianity itself. But this would still leave one without Christianity's traditional guides for determining whether a given conduct is indeed Christian.

Granted, one might say that is precisely the point. Lyman's call for a Christian self-definition free of hegemonic tendencies is perhaps an implicit admission that—at least from her perspective, one informed by what Lyman perceives to be a problematically violent Christian history—what is needed is a self-definition conceived along an ethical framework rather than conformity to categorical definitions. One can read this in Lyman's reference to Gandhi in "Tradition without Orthodoxy,"[25] when she recites his well-known quote: "Everyone knows Christians are non-violent, except Christians."[26]

Gandhi's "non-violent," I think it safe to say, speaks to the conduct of Christians in the world. Gandhi's "except Christians" suggests that what Christians 'know' themselves to be is wrong, and that therefore, for Christians themselves, the term 'Christian' has been misdefined. Lyman has clearly not abandoned the project of defining Christianity—looking for a non-hegemonic definition is not the same as abandoning the need for definition—but she is clearly looking for a basis of that definition other than a particular worldview cast in terms of 'orthodoxy.'

And indeed, political philosopher Gianni Vattimo has argued that Christianity, in order to have a future in contemporary democratic contexts with all their incumbent

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[24] Eusebius, *Part 1*, 4d (p. 5). Eusebius also writes, at the end of the tome, "the secrets of nature are above us, and the conditions after death nothing to us, but the affairs of human life alone concern us." *Eadem*, *Part 2*, 854d (p. 918).

[25] See note 56, in chapter one.

[26] Lyman, "Resources," 77.

pluralism, must move away from dogma and dogma's need for strict adherence (orthodoxy), and instead embrace its "essence as a religion of charity."[27]

> Christianity is marching in a direction that can only be that of lightening and weakening its burden of dogma in favor of its practical and moral teaching. In that sense . . . charity takes the place of truth. . . . The future of Christianity, and of the Church, is to become an ever more refined religion of pure charity. . . . This isn't just the usual message of tolerance: it's the ideal of the development of human society through the gradual reduction of all the rigidities that set us against one another, including the instinct of property, blood, family, and all the problems associated with the excessive absolutization, in defiance of charity, of things naturally given. The truth that sets us free is true precisely because it sets us free[.][28]

At first blush Vattimo, an Italian Catholic political philosopher, may seem a rather random selection for conversation partner with Lyman, an American Anglican Patristics scholar with an interest in postcolonial theory. But my transparency analysis has yielded the suggestion that anthropological formulations woven into early Christian self-definitions operated within the rhetoric of some Patristic authors to otherize certain defined populations by way of stereotypes, justify the moral culpability of the *other* for her difference vis-à-vis the Christian, and serve as the ground for claims of authority.

Vattimo is not dealing with the problem of Christian self-definition *per se*, but with the issue of what Catholic practice might look like in a pluralistic social and political context[29] which, for Vattimo, "is by definition egalitarian and neutral with respect to the ethical variations between one culture and another."[30] Vattimo has argued that contemporary attempts by the Catholic Church to see its authority recognized in the acquiescence of social policies to Catholic norms is still based on a premise that the

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[27] Gianni Vattimo, *A Farewell to Truth*, trans. William McCuaig (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 86. See also, *eadem*, *After Christianity*, trans. Luca D'Isanto (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); and Richard Rorty and Gianni Vattimo, *The Future of Religion*, ed. Santiago Zabala. For a broader sense of the philosophical commitments underpinning Vattimo's views on Christianity's future, see Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*, Jon Snyder (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); and *eadem*, *The Transparent Society*, trans. David Webb (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

[28] *Ibid*., 78-9.

[29] That is, contemporary Western democracies.

[30] *Ibid*., 50. Vattimo's is here making a claim that egalitarian neutrality is implicit in a pluralistic democratic context, not that pluralistic democratic contexts have achieved a political dialogue that is always neutral where distinct cultural values might be at issue.

Church is the depository of the knowledge of the true nature of human beings.

> We here in Italy can certainly testify that the Catholic Church never stops pressing its agenda to have its authority recognized, the rationale being that the Christian revelation empowers it to defend the authentic "nature" of mankind and civil institutions.[31]

Put another way, Vattimo seems to perceive that anthropological norms are still being woven into how the Catholic Church defines itself, standing as the justification for the church's claims of authority to shape policy in what is an otherwise pluralistic context. This is much the same problematic my analysis suggests is operating in *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio*, and it is hard not to notice the way Vattimo's description of the Church's rationale is reminiscent of some of the passages considered above, where appeals to 'nature' grounded claims of authority and formed the basis for stereotyping the other.

Vattimo, as a contemporary Catholic, suggests Christianity would do best to decouple a historical linking between truth (the claim to know the nature of things based on a divine knowledge revealed in the Bible) and charity.

> The insistence [of the Church], even in the encyclical *Deus caritas est*, on the inseparability of charity from truth is a sign that the Church continues to long for its former position of strength, from which it could impose the truth that it believes that God has handed down to it. But is the world now, and in the foreseeable future, really ready to acknowledge Catholic truth and give the Church of Rome back its "strength"?. . . It seems to me that the stripping away from the gospel message of all that keeps it at a distance from the men and women of the various cultures who are encountering and confronting one another in our time is a new phase in the history of Christian salvation. It is the incarnation understood as *kenosis* that is being realized more fully today, as Christian doctrine sheds the elements of superstition that have characterized it in the distant and recent past. And of these superstitions the most grave and dangerous is the belief that faith is objective "knowledge" of God . . . and the laws of creation, from which all the norms of individual and collective life derive. Superstition of that kind may be no more than an innocent attachment to outdated ideas, but it is far more likely to spring from a tendency to authoritarianism that has never disappeared from the Church's tradition. It is the claim to exert command in the name of the nature of the world and mankind that enables the Church to attempt to impose its own principles even on nonbelievers, in opposition to the principles of laicity,

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[31] *Ibid*., 49.

tolerance, and even charity.[32]

Vattimo, in noting the historical linking of truth and charity in the Catholic tradition, is essentially arguing that charity has historically been forced to conform to the truth of that objective knowledge of God and the laws of creation which create norms for individual and collective life. But Vattimo seems to miss an important implication of this observation, namely that the imposition of the Church's values on even non-believers, which Vattimo seems to chafe at, is precisely what one might expect charity to look like when accompanied by exact anthropological formulations that are viewed as true descriptions of nature. After all, if the Church is pursuing the fulfillment of what they know human nature to be, resulting in salvation, are they not acting charitably in imposing those norms on the nonbeliever?

I would suggest that Vattimo has it slightly turned around, that what he terms 'superstitions' are not the product of some 'tendency to authoritarianism' internal to the Church, but that the authoritarianism is a product of charity engaged on behalf of what he has termed 'superstitions.' But regardless, the bigger point is that Vattimo has identified, from a different methodological perspective and in the Christian rhetoric of a different time period, a connection between claims of authority on the part of the Catholic Church and that Church's commitment to the claim that it knows the objective nature of the created order.

That should obviously sound familiar in light of the analysis in this and the previous chapter. And in light of Lyman's own identification of a hegemonic tendency operating within Christian self-definition constructed with a view to orthodoxy, Vattimo's reference to a "tendency to authoritarianism" suggests he and Lyman share this concern about Christian self-understanding, and by implication Christianity's conduct in the world on the basis of that understanding, making them potentially excellent conversation partners. Especially since, like Lyman, Vattimo's concerns are ultimately about the

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[32] *Ibid*., 53-4.

violence that results from that authoritarianism.[33] And like Vattimo, Lyman has noted that Christian violence has often been the result of a commitment to 'truth.'

> The violent enforcement of orthodoxy in Christian history is the necessary and logical consequence of seeing an institution as the agent and protector of transcendent truth. Let us be clear. This righteous violence is not merely unfortunate. It is a blasphemy, the replacing of God by the Church. "Everyone knows Christians are non-violent, except Christians," commented Gandhi. The sins of ideological violence and genocide which are justly laid at the feet of modern secular totalitarian states must also be traced back to our own religious passions to protect and enforce the truth.[34]

Vattimo has already suggested a solution to this violent tendency, which he sees operating in Christianity, in what we saw him say above:

> Christianity is marching in a direction that can only be that of lightening and weakening its burden of dogma in favor of its practical and moral teaching. In that sense . . . charity takes the place of truth. . . . The future of Christianity, and of the Church, is to become an ever more refined religion of pure charity.[35]

I hear in these words an echo of Origen's apparent expression of annoyance, in the preface to *Contra Celsum*, at the idea that Christian faith is something understood rather than lived, that it consists of dogma rather than its practical and moral teaching. Vattimo suggests that this practical and moral teaching is distilled in an ethic he labels 'charity,' a term Vattimo says is analogous to what the American political philosopher Richard Rorty has termed solidarity.[36]

Like Vattimo with the term 'charity,' Rorty has argued that his idea of solidarity rejects overarching narratives (like the claim to know what humans are by nature) as the basis of conduct, preferring a basis grounded in shared human experiences (not definitions). According to Rorty,

> the pragmatist does not have a theory of truth, much less a relativistic one. . . . [her] account of the value of cooperative human inquiry has only an ethical base, not an epistemological or metaphysical one. . . . The question of whether truth or rationality has an intrinsic nature, of whether we ought to have a positive theory about either topic, is just the question

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[33] *Ibid*., 84-5.
[34] Lyman, "Resources," 77.
[35] See note 28, above.
[36] Vattimo, *Farewell to Truth*, 133.

> of whether our self-description ought to be constructed around a relation to human nature or around a relation to a particular collection of human beings, whether we should desire objectivity or solidarity.[37]

Rorty is here discussing whether the pragmatist bases her actions in the world on the basis of some epistemological or metaphysical vision that posits a true way to do so, on the basis of some understanding of "human nature" that is true and thus creates norms for right or wrong behavior. For the pragmatist, there is no such understanding, and so she cannot appeal to some normative standard for guidance in her orientation towards other persons (or anything for that matter). Rather than operating on the basis of a self-definition (Rorty uses "self-description") based on an ostensible understanding of human nature, Rorty suggests operating on the basis of a particular shared human experience: suffering in the particular form of humiliation.[38]

Again I am reminded of Origen's words in the preface to *Contra Celsum*, alluding as they do to Jesus's appearance before Pilate and thus invoking the Passion and crucifixion accounts of the Gospels. In those familiar narratives, Jesus does not only suffer, but there are a number of moments where the form of his suffering could certainly be construed as an experience of humiliation (e.g., being stripped naked prior to flagellation; the mocking of Jesus by the Roman soldiers equipped with their purple cape and crown of thorns).[39]

In that sense, for someone like Lyman, who wants to escape a historical practice of Christian self-definition while in no way abandoning Christianity itself, the possibility of a Christian self-understanding based on the quest to eliminate the sort of suffering and humiliation that marked the crucifixion could perhaps prove a fruitful starting point. The pragmatic suggestion that conduct in the world not be based on some objective knowledge, but on the subjective experience that is itself in many ways at the center of the crucifixion narrative.

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[37] Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity," in *Philosophical Papers, Vol. 1: Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 24.
[38] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 92.
[39] See Mt 27:26-30; Mk 15:15-20; Lk 22: 63-65; and Jn 19:1-5.

It must be noted, however, that I seem to have arrived at a pragmatic pathway based on a postcolonial analysis. This might seem odd in light of the fact that Bhabha specifically criticizes Rorty for his soft endorsement of ethnocentrism,[40] when Rorty writes that,

> I think that contemporary liberal society already contains the institutions for its own improvement . . . my hunch is that Western social and political thought may have had the last *conceptual* revolutions it needs.[41]

And while I admit Rorty's comfort with ethnocentrism troubles me,[42] it probably has to be admitted that there may be no real way to prevent one's social location from forming and shaping one's vocabulary and understanding of the world. That need not be a problem as a matter of necessity, but simply to the extent that, in our contingent history, such ethnocentrism has generally been couched as an objective understanding that creates norms for all. That is, the problem lies in the 'centrism', not the 'ethno.'

Without the sort of operative norms that Rorty suggests are a result of describing oneself in terms of an objective human nature, ethnocentrism might lose the spectre of that 'centrism.' Even if that might still not be enough to satisfy Bhabha, it might satisfy

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[40] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 275-6.

[41] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 63. Bhabha also includes, in his citation of Rorty, a note that appears alongside this statement, but which is not necessary to be included for my point here. Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 276.

[42] Rorty admits that his (neo-)pragmatism lends itself to 'ethnocentrism,' going on to explain that, "To be ethnocentric is to divide the human race into the people to whom one must justify one's beliefs and the others. The first group - one's *ethnos* - comprises those who share enough of one's beliefs to make fruitful conversation possible. In this sense, everybody is ethnocentric when engaged in actual debate." Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity," 30. In his introduction to the collection of his essays entitled *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth,* Rorty writes that by ethnocentrism, he had in mind a synonym for "human finitude." Rorty, *Philosophical Papers, Vol. 1,* 15. Bhabha challenges Rorty's perspective with that of Veena Das, who he reads, in the essay 'Subaltern as Perspective,' as saying that "a historiography of the subaltern . . . displaces the paradigm of social action as defined primarily by rational action." Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 276. That is, Bhabha rejects the Liberalist/rationalist premise on which Rorty's suggestion that Western society has had all the conceptual revolutions it needs in light of the subaltern experience of Liberalist European colonial rule. To the extent Rorty has seemed to set the task for his pragmatist vision as the wiping out of human suffering, particularly in the form of humiliation (see note 38, above), the experience of Liberalism's colonized suggests the West's institutions are perhaps not nearly as far along as Rorty observes them to be. To the extent that one's human finitude is unavoidable, I see Rorty's point, and I think that a comfort with this finitude combined with Rorty's premise that one ought to seek the expansion of conversation partners through engagement with other vocabularies in order to expand the overly restrictive 'us' that marks ethnocentrism, may be a sensible resolution. See Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 14-5, 84-6, 192-8. That said, the speed with which Rorty proclaims the full maturation of Western thought, suggests that he has not fully wrestled with the experience of Liberalism's *others*.

Lyman. Further, Bhabha's thought does not necessarily posit a solution, but simply a way of identifying a grounds of intervention in a particular problematic.

That process of identification consists of intervening in transparent aspects of discourses, the aspects hidden by the 'ethno' part (the hiding then becoming the basis of the 'centrism' part). Hence, I have suggested that a transparency analysis would better suit Lyman's project.

That analysis, begun in the previous chapter, yielded the suggestion that claims about the nature of human beings acted transparently, hiding their perspectival location, and setting the stage for hegemonic speech once those claims made their way into the self-definitions of Origen and Eusebius. Vattimo has observed a similar phenomenon operating in contemporary Catholicism, and though his work is not theological, it is explicitly Christian (even if a rethinking of Christianity), and wishes to avoid the authoritarianism and violence that Lyman is also reacting to.

Vattimo proposes an alternative vision for Christian self-definition, one based exclusively on an ethic of charity, saying his understanding of the concept is the same as what Rorty had called solidarity. Rorty's notion of solidarity calls for an ethical basis for cooperative human inquiry based on a shared subjective experience of suffering, and in particular humiliation.

Suffering is at the center of the crucifixion account that Origen alluded to in suggesting that it is the lives of Christians that ultimately justify them. And so there is an explicitly Christian pathway opened up by my transparency analysis for a scholar, or Christian, like Lyman toward an alternative practice of Christian self-definition.

And while the suggestion that one ought to pursue a Christian self-definition informed principally by the dictates of charity might be viewed as an attempt to propose a solution to the problem of hegemonic tendencies in Christian self-definition, I am not sure that it is. It seems more akin to an experiment: can one conceive of a Christian self-definition that is not a definition at all?

Lyman's own suggestion that Christians should abandon 'orthodoxy' as a governing principle[43] perhaps alludes to a need to do away with more formal doctrines, since they are unnecessary for a praxis of the sort Vattimo has in mind and which might successfully address Lyman's own concerns. Such a praxis would observe the suffering of Jesus in Gethsemane and respond, out of charity, with an attempt to end that reality for anyone or anything capable of experiencing it.

The question is whether Christians, or at least Christians whose concerns echo thinkers like Lyman and Vattimo, are prepared to consider an approach to Christianity that forgoes the defining of categories that have historically bounded Christian theology. I have, in this dissertation, suggested an alternative methodological approach towards finding grounds of intervention in the problem of hegemonic tendencies operating within Christian self-definition, based on the work of Bhabha which Lyman has opened a door to in the realm of early Christian studies.

This methodology, based on Bhabha's discussion of transparency, is useful in that it demonstrates the way anthropological formulations can be woven into self-descriptions, operating transparently to inform hegemonic tendencies that have at times become part and parcel to that self-description where Christianity is concerned. The methodology points to a grounds of intervention, namely the weaving of anthropological formulations into self-descriptions.

Whether a response like the one Vattimo has suggested is the best solution, or a solution at all, is an open question. But Christians concerned with the hegemonic operation of their worldview, and particularly in light of my analysis, must contend with the way certain anthropological commitments, to the extent they are viewed as central to Christian theology, can work silently to create the discursive conditions for violence.

Those conditions for violence are in no small way enabled by the way such anthropological formulations serve as the grounds for racially stereotyping the *other*,

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[43] See my discussion beginning on p. 34, of chapter one.

freezing her in her otherness, an otherness defined, implicitly, as non-humanity. Since otherness, in the form of the racial stereotype, is agonistically cast from a standpoint positing conformity with human nature, the *other* emerges as defined by flaws in her humanity. And those flaws, once viewed as flaws in one's humanity, perhaps operate by implication to condone inhumane treatment of that *other*.

Thus, in addition to positing and demonstrating the application of an alternative methodology to Lyman's mimicry analysis, and in addition to identifying a specific grounds of intervention in the problem of hegemonic tendencies operating in Christian self-definition, this dissertation also bridges two parallel discussions in early Christian scholarship: whether Christian identity should be understood in essentialist terms, and whether the problematic of race rears its head in early Christian thought and antiquity in general.

While I would not conclude that the racial stereotypes that emerge in *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio* turn on the basis of the same conception of race as Modern racial stereotypes, they nonetheless operate in much the same way. That is, regardless of what one means by "race," it is hard to see how the stereotyping that emerges in *Contra Celsum* or *Praeparatio* does not fulfill, for example, Isaac's definition of racism, which we encountered in chapter one: "an attitude which denies the individuality of human beings [and] regards them exclusively in terms of a collective and does not allow for individual differences."[44]

And while this is hardly an ideal definition of racism, failing to recognize or incorporate the way racism is a structural problem and not simply an attitudinal one,[45] it

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[44] *Ibid*., 18.

[45] Early anti-racist scholarship tended to view racism as a symptom of ignorance and thus largely an attitudinal phenomenon capable of being addressed through education or some other form of social progress. See, Ruth Benedict, *Race and Racism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1942); Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942); *eadem*, *The Idea of Race* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965); Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma, Vol. 1: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996); and Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Race and Racism: A Comparative Perspective* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1967). Omi and Winant's classic *Racial Formation in the United States*, at least in American sociological discourses, has done the most

nonetheless speaks to an ever present aspect of racist discourses: the idea that one can be understood on the basis of what is "known" about their collective group as opposed to their own actions.

My analysis above suggests that Christian essentialism is largely a function of the anthropological formulations woven into Christian self-definition, particularly since it is those formulations that largely ground the distinction between Origen's and Eusebius's "us" and "them." My analysis also suggests that the appearance of a practice that looks a lot like Modern racism in the thought of late antique Christian thinkers is itself a function of those same formulations woven into Christian self-definition.

Racist stereotypes form the discursive contours of racial categories. While we may define race itself on some other basis—today, phenotypical traits largely serve that purpose—the stereotype is where the claimed inferiority of another race is given life, and is what forms the rhetorical bases for continuing oppression (much as the stereotyping of Jews and Greeks in the texts analyzed above came to establish, rhetorically, the grounds for violent orientations towards the *other*). To the extent that stereotypes of Jews and non-Christian Greeks emerge in *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio* on the basis of anthropological formulations woven into Christian self-definitions, this suggests that racial categories result when the human being is defined in narrow, self-mirroring ways.

Jews and non-Christian Greeks are warped into caricatures, forced into rigid definitions on the basis of deviance from an asserted anthropological norm. Thus, my

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to push contemporary understanding of race and racism in the direction of the discourse of 'structural racism,' a discourse that argues racism has been woven into our social norms and institutions and cannot therefore be addressed simply from an attitudinal perspective. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States, 2nd Edition: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994). See also Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation," *American Sociological Review* 62 (1996); *eadem*, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism & Racial Inequality in Contemporary America, 3d Edition* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, lInc., 2010); Joe R. Feagin, *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Michael Omi, "'Slippin' into Darkness': The (Re)Biologization of Race," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 13:3 (2010): 343-358. For Omi and Winant's impact in the realm of critical race theory, another structural discourse, see Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); and Jayne Chong-Soon Lee, "Navigating the Topology of Race," in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw et al. (New York: The New Press, 1995).

analysis suggests that to avoid this sort of stereotyping—the stereotype forming the discursive conditions of dominance (to borrow a phrase from Bhabha,[46] and as seen in this chapter's analysis of the stage in *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio*)—one must be careful to avoid universalizing one's own values into anthropological norms that then form the relevant metric for defining *others*. Further, this analysis speaks to the way the idea of the human being is often a discursive construct, a rhetorical tool used to effect superiority claims that has very little to do with any actual understanding of the human animal.

This, perhaps, ought to put us on guard against forms of thinking claiming some sort of anthropological necessity as grounds for their validity. In any event, my analysis agrees with scholars like Buell and Carter, who locate the idea of race explicitly in late antique Christian thought. By noting that the relevant definitions of the human being in late antique Christian thought often unfold along intellectual, rather than physical lines (rationality, not biology, defines humanity in *Contra Celsum* and *Praeparatio*), my analysis also suggests that in thinking about the problematic of race in early Christianity, we ought to expect racial categories whose boundaries are informed by intellectual elements like language, theology, and piety, which both Buell and Aaron Johnson have noted are more relevant to racial or ethnic categories in antiquity.[47]

Much like the racist stereotype, then, my analysis suggests that the formulation of racial categories also extends from the discursive construction of the human animal. Thus, my analysis also goes further than Buell or Carter in that it not only locates the phenomenon of race in late antique Christian discourses, but also posits the grounds from which the phenomenon of race in late antique Christian thought springs.

Those grounds are also the appropriate theatre of intervention for persons like Lyman, who want to avoid the rigid otherizations in Christian self-definition that allow

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[46] See note 59, in chapter two.

[47] My discussion of both Buell and Carter begins on p. 55, of chapter one. See also, pp. 66-9, in that chapter.

for hegemonic praxis. Thus, another implication of my analysis is that the ongoing discussions in the field of early Christian studies about Christian essentialism (where self-definition is concerned) and early Christian racism are thus intimately connected, and should perhaps be engaged in conjunction.

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