European colonialism from the seventeenth through to the twentieth century, and the construction of new literatures and cultural identities by colonized peoples in the post-colonial period itself.

1. A Review of Postcolonial Criticism

Postcolonial criticism began in full with the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978 in which he exposed the production of the meanings of the West and the Orient, the colonizer and the colonized, through texts, art and various other cultural discourses. Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak form the second and third parts of what has been called the 'Holy Trinity' of postcolonial criticism. Postcolonial theory, method or criticism is now understood more broadly in two different aspects – temporally (the movements among and reactions of those who were colonized after the colonization ends) and critically or intellectually (those theories that question any form of colonialism and its assumptions).

But 1 Peter is not colonialist literature in the same sense as Rudyard Kipling's *White Man's Burden*. It was not produced by a member of the Roman establishment for the purpose of justifying and/or encouraging the conquering of territory or the extortion of taxes, or controlling local governments. It also does not describe the active attempt to convert non-Christians, nor does it portray travel into unsaved lands, nor dwell extensively on the superiority of Christianity over pagan religions. In fact, 1 Peter has long been viewed as a 'defensive' letter, one that deals with the protection and cohesion of Christian communities under attack from the outside.


5. Fernando F. Segovia, 'Interpreting Beyond Borders: Postcolonial Studies and Diasporic Studies in Biblical Criticism', in *Interpreting Beyond Borders* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia; Bible and Postcolonialism, 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 11–39 (12). Postcolonial theory borrows from deconstruction 'the critique of... the identity of the dominant Western subject as an imperial identity that is established by its violation of difference, that is, its appropriation or annihilation of the Other' (Catherine Keller *Introduction*, in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire* [ed. Catherine Keller, Michae Naasner and Mayra Rivera; Atlanta: Chalice Press, 2004], pp. 1–13 [9]). Rey Chow argues that 'post' connotes 'having gone through,' 'after,' and 'a notion of time which is no longer linear but constant, marked by events that may be technically finished but that can only be fully understood with the consideration of the devastation they left behind' (Rey Chow *Between Colonizers: Hong Kong's Postcolonial Self-Writing in the 1990s*, Diaspora 2 [1992], pp. 151–70 [152]).
poses the acceptability of a hierarchy of religious and social groups. He critiques and subverts the effects of imperialism that cause his readers to suffer, yet participates in the (colonizer-like) plundering of the cultural resources of another subaltern group solely for the purpose of the creation and maintenance of a superior identity. And finally, he resists the definitions constructed by Roman society for his readers, yet, like a colonizer, constructs for his group a metanarrative of replacement and ascendancy that defines outsiders as inferior.

The past decade has seen an effort on the part of some biblical scholars to apply postcolonial criticism to biblical texts, in part because postcolonial criticism is so compatible with the insights of historical criticism. Yet biblical scholars have also been reluctant to acknowledge that imperialism has shaped the contours of biblical texts and influenced their interpretation. It has for quite some time been more popular and profitable, particularly in pastoral and theological circles, to emphasize the emancipatory potential in the biblical texts. However, the Bible continues to be an unsafe and a problematic source. Some argue that for every redeeming aspect of the narrative there is an unredeeming feature linked to it. Some are now beginning to see that 'biblical studies can no longer be confined to the history of textual traditions, or to the doctrinal richness embedded in texts, but needs to extend its scope to include issues of domination, Western expansion, and its ideological manifestations, as central forces in defining biblical scholarship.'

Recent postcolonial studies of NT writings have paid more attention to the relationship between the Christian author, his text, his audience and the Roman Empire and its representatives. The postcolonial consensus is that nearly the entire biblical corpus was formed in reaction to one empire or another. Biblical texts express the formation of personal or national identity, resistant agency, and community under the influence of colonial power. Often the studies have resulted in widely variant interpretations. Chris Frilingos' original study of...
Revelation argues convincingly that the author of Revelation participates in and encourages the imperial gaze, which defines and subjugates ‘Others and Monsters’ of all sorts, while Steven J. Friesen takes the more traditional opinion that the lamb of Revelation completely subverts Roman power. Richard Horsley, in *Hearing the Whole Story* has interpreted Mark’s Gospel as unremittingly critical of the imperial state. Stephen Moore, on the other hand, finds Mark a highly ambivalent text, imbued with a ‘simultaneous attraction and repulsion’. Mark, he says, lacks the explicitly hostile attitude toward Rome of the book of Revelation, yet also fails to manifest the ‘quietist’ attitude of Romans and 1 Peter. Finally, Tat-Siong Benny Liew reads Mark as a mimicry of imperial authority – one that internalizes not just the language of the empire, but its ideology, and replaces the authority of the Roman empire with a similarly authoritarian, intolerant and exclusivist Christ.

2. The Application of Postcolonial Criticism to First Peter

The diverse interpretations of one text, for example, the Gospel of Mark, even when using the same methodology, points primarily to the inherent ambivalence of most biblical texts and the flexibility of the postcolonial method to capture it. While critiquing certain manifestations of colonial power, colonial texts utilize others. No text is entirely ‘anti-colonial’. This ambivalence derives in part from the colonial situation in general, in which oppressed peoples must negotiate strata of power, often using the only tools available: the devices and vocabulary of the colonizers. In the words of Warren Carter, ‘oppressed peoples … long for what they resist. They resemble what they oppose. Imitation coexists with protest, accommodation, and survival.’ A postcolonial study of 1 Peter, which to my knowledge has never been done, fits this context. One can certainly see 1 Peter as a response to Roman imperial methods, particularly as 1 Peter was written to communities populating the Roman province/colony of Asia Minor, communities which would have experienced first hand the kinds of abuses perpetrated by a colonial power. It seems undeniable that the author of 1 Peter did engage in one form of critique of empire and its relationships. David Horrell’s post-colonial analysis in this volume explores this more thoroughly, seeing 1 Peter as engaging in ‘polite resistance’, an indication of its less than overwhelmingly anti-imperialist tone. But that resistance was based largely on the appropriation of Judaism, an appropriation that constituted an imperialist move.

Of course, for most of the NT texts, the Jews are a point of reference for the creation of the new faith. And the interpretation of that point of reference has changed often. Attitudes have ranged from Adolph Harnack’s strident supersessionist claims, to the much more gentle ‘sibling rivalry’ and ‘parting of the ways’ of more recent treatments. But rarely do scholars see NT Christian attitudes toward the Jews through a postcolonial lens. There already is, in the study of early Christianity, a well-developed practice of listening to the voices of the oppressed, and recent scholarship has been especially attuned to the issue of Christian claims vis-à-vis Judaism and especially what might constitute anti-Judaism. One of the claims of this essay, against the view of most other 1 Peter scholars, is that 1 Peter is a supersessionist text, and that supersessionism itself might be better understood from a postcolonial viewpoint as a strategy that posits an ‘other’ to better delineate one’s own group, plunders the resources of a marginalized

19. David G. Horrell, ‘Between Conformity and Resistance: Beyond the Balch-Elliott Debate Towards a Postcolonial Reading of First Peter’, in this volume. I agree with nearly all of Horrell’s argument, particularly that the resistance in 1 Peter is ambivalent, and that ambivalence helps negotiate the Balch-Elliott debate. However, I explore the author’s resistance strategy a bit more thoroughly, whereas Horrell looks more closely at the balance between resistance and accommodation in the text.
group to delineate the self in relation to the colonial power and leaves that other group in a position of no value or status.

a. Postcolonialism and Supersessionism

The supersessionism of 1 Peter has largely been ignored, downplayed or denied, but rarely discussed. The typical interpretation of the author of 1 Peter's attitude toward the Jews is that he leaves them alone. Indeed, 1 Peter does not even mention the Jews as a people, let alone construct an identity of the Jews. John Elliott writes that '1 Peter manifests no interest in the tension between the Messiah and the Mosaic Law or believers and the House of Israel. The fundamental social contrast in 1 Peter is, rather, between believers and “Gentiles” (a term in 1 Peter for all, including Israelites, who reject the Gospel). Donald Senior notes no 'hint in the letter of any tension with Judaism or of any need to situate the Christian community in relationship to Israel.' The need for Petrine scholars to approach the text from a new perspective is epitomized by Paul Achtemeier's double mind on this topic:

1 Peter has appropriated the language of Israel for the church in such a way that Israel as a totality has become for this letter the controlling metaphor in terms of which its theology is expressed. Peter has no references at all to Israel as an independent entity, either before or after the advent of Christ. Nor is Israel explicitly understood as a forerunner to the more perfect covenant realized through Jesus Christ... [The] language is more than simply illustrative – it is foundational and constitutive for the Christian community.

Yet he insists that 'this is evidently not an instance of anti-Semitism' because there is no 'negative invective', nor 'any hint that the Jews have been rejected by God'. Judith Lieu, on the other hand, finds this silence somewhat suspicious: 'It is not enough to dismiss the problem [of the lack of direct reference to the Jews in later NT texts] by saying that these writers were more concerned with the internal needs of the churches than with external polemic.'

A second perspective regarding the use of Jewish materials in 1 Peter is that the letter indicates a writer who used the language of Judaism so extensively because he was Jewish and saw his community as Jewish in some way, and thus cannot be supersessionist. These are two separate issues. The first issue - that the author understood himself to be Jewish and an inheritor and possible redeemer of covenantal theology - is easier to support. Clearly the author understands the relationship between God, humans and salvation to be premised on the promises and prototypes he reads in the LXX. But I see two problems with this assertion and its implications. First, I believe that the letter assumes certain truths that either go beyond any contemporary Jewish belief or even conflict with it, and second, I disagree that, because someone belongs or once belonged to a certain faith group, he/she cannot thus participate in its undermining or elimination. In other words, it was possible for first century Jews to so redefine Judaism by including Christian concepts (such as the pre-existence of the incarnated Christ) that it was no longer recognizably Judaism.

21. See, for example, Judith Lieu’s discussion of the issue, which entails the ‘ways in which Jews and Judaism are presented in particular authors and contexts’ (Judith Lieu, Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996], p. 4).


23. Donald P. Senior, ‘1 Peter’, in 1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter (Donald P. Senior and Daniel J. Harrington; SP, 15; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), p. 12; William Schutter notes the ‘silence about any tension with the large Jewish populations in these cities’ (William L. Schutter, Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter [WUNT, 2:30; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986], p. 11).

24. Paul J. Achtemeier, First Peter (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), p. 23. Most scholars would not call this kind of idea or attitude ‘anti-Semitism’, but they might call it ‘anti-Judaism’. J. Ramsey Michaels goes beyond to say that the author’s ‘respect for
The second issue with this perspective is that the audience is the entity receiving the markers of Judaism, not the author, and the audience is by no means certainly Jewish. Most recent studies have described the Petrine audience as a combined Jewish and Gentile audience, in which recruits from among the Gentiles probably had begun to outnumber their Israelite counterparts.\(^{27}\) So why does the author feel comfortable transferring the identity of Jews to Gentiles? Even in the most universalist of passages (Isa. 42.4, 23; 49.6; 51.4-6; 41.5; 42.10-12; 45.6; 52.10) the Gentiles will be received by God, but not as Jews. Levine writes that 'Christian universalism thus entails the erasure of anything distinctly Jewish'.\(^{28}\) Applying such clearly Jewish ideas to a predominantly non-Jewish audience raises questions of connection between reader and author: Schutter notes that 'it is not clear why Scripture should play such an important part in a message to non-Jews'.\(^{29}\) Finally, Judith Lieu remarks that:

More pervasive, and perhaps more problematic for many early converts, would be the acquisition of the template of the Jewish Scriptures . . . Those with no prior experience must have found the style of argument, the pattern of models and examples, and the appeal to the authority of those Scriptures, painfully difficult to absorb . . . As we have seen elsewhere, these Scriptures would have provided a shared narrative of the past, a framework, and a language for speaking of the one God, but also a pattern for living. Yet all this was fraught with ambiguity: the same narrative when shared . . . could generate an awareness of a common identity . . . but

\(^{27}\) Elliott, I Peter, p. 89. Elliott notes that the Israelite origin of some is indicated by the use of Jewish concepts, but this might indicate only some familiarity with Jewish concepts as these are used to address the entire group (p. 95). Other internal evidence indicates that persons of a pagan origin, perhaps the majority, were also presumed. This is indicated by references to traits more characteristic of former pagans than Israelites — their former ignorance of God, their former Gentile immoral conduct, and associations, their ransom from the futile conduct inherited from your ancestors, their divine call from darkness to light, and their former alienation from God (p. 96).

\(^{28}\) Levine, Misunderstood Jew, p. 114. A superb example of this attitude is Achtemeier's comment regarding the Petrine author's belief in the continuity between the OT prophets and the gospel: 'Underlying such continuity is the unity of the one people of God, a unity that justified the author's appropriation for the Christian community of the history of, and language for, Israel found in the OT' (Achtemeier, I Peter, p. 110).

\(^{29}\) Schutter, Hermeneutic and Composition, p. 18.


31. I am suggesting that the borders between Judaism and Christianity have been historically constructed out of acts of discursive (and too often actual) violence, especially acts of violence against the heretics who embody the instability of our constructed essences' (Daniel Boyarin, Border Lines: The Partition of Jewra-Christianity [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004], p. xiv). Boyarin himself leaves open the possibility that there were Christians at the end of the first century 'who were not prepared (for whatever reason) to think of themselves as Jews' (p. 16, my emphasis). But he claims that prior to the fifth century there are no 'sets of features that absolutely define who is a Jew and who is a Christian in such a wise that the two categories will not seriously overlap' (p. 21).

32. I certainly question this argument and believe that it ignores Mark's claim that Jesus 'declared all foods clean' (purify laws), the discussions of the destruction of the temple in Mark (colo of the temple), the entire point of Hebrews, written around the same time as I Peter (sacrificial system), the Jews in Galatians, who clearly see certain kinds of behaviour as integral to Jewish identity (circumcision and the 'law'), Paul's remark in 1 Thess. 2.14-16 that 'the Jews ... killed both the Lord Jesus and the Prophets' (responsibility for the death of Jesus), and Paul's struggle to define the place of the Jews in Romans (election). All of these first-century texts indicate clear understandings that to be Jewish was to be distinct in a number of ways and the Christian writers defined their groups in contradiction. Indeed, the problem with some of Boyarin's points are that if one takes his conclusions seriously, there is no such thing as supersessionism as long as one of the parties claims a share in the texts or concepts, regardless of how they view the other participants.
In response to those who question our ability to distinguish between Jewish and Christian behaviour in the first century, I follow Boyarin’s own view that any good postcolonial analysis must make the distinction between the text and the ‘reality’ of the first-century world. Whatever the ‘real’ relations between Christians and Jews in late-first-century Asia Minor, the Petrine author assumes certain characteristics of his audience based on his reading of what are obviously Jewish texts (LXX). While we cannot know how clearly actual groups and individuals distinguished between their own group and others, or how solidly they drew boundaries between different practices, we can see where writers drew boundaries.

Part of Boyarin’s method is to question the assumptions about what identity markers were clearly Jewish in the first and second centuries. While a full examination would require a much longer essay, this one will address some of Boyarin’s points and the issue of when scholars might begin to apply the supersessionist label. The first point here is to show that 1 Peter is recognizably a Christian text, with concepts that are clearly distinguishable from Judaism, and thus it cannot be claimed that 1 Peter’s move is from one kind of Judaism to another. The most outstanding example is the Logos Christology of 1 Peter. 1 Peter 1.11a refers to ‘the spirit of Christ [who was] within [the prophets],’ referring, most commentators agree, to the Hebrew Bible prophets. Elliott calls this ‘the preexistent spirit of Jesus Christ,’ and notes that this was an idea found frequently among second-century writers such as Ignatius, Barnabas, Clement, Justin and Irenaeus. Achtemeier, while noting that some Petrine scholars rather read πνεύμα Хριστοῦ as the spirit that reveals Christ, or that later revealed itself in Christ, agrees that ‘the author knew of Christ’s preexistence.’ While Boyarin shows convincingly that Logos theology was an integral part of the first-century Jewish world, at least in certain texts, 1 Peter and the Gospel of John advocate more than just the pre-existence of the Logos, they identify that Logos with the incarnated Jesus of Nazareth, which even Boyarin admits ‘is the beginning of the specifically “Christian” kerygma.’ So by 90 CE, and the production of the Gospel of John and 1 Peter, some writers, no matter how Jewish their background, were advocating a ‘specifically Christian’ theology, that is recognizably not Jewish.

The three interrelated ideas of the death and resurrection of the Messiah, the reconfiguration of the Suffering Servant, and salvation through that death, permeate the text of 1 Peter. All three take this text beyond the scope of Second Temple Judaism. Levine observes that ‘no Jewish source, outside those associated with the followers of Jesus, shows any expectation that the messiah would be killed and after three days rise.’ Thus Second Temple Jewish literature did not identify the Messiah with the Suffering Servant, yet 1 Pet. 2:21-25 contains ‘the earliest definite proof for the full identification of Jesus with the [suffering] servant in all its Christological significance.’ Elliott notes that the Petrine author’s use of Isaiah 53 to refer to vicarious suffering ‘is a unique contribution of 1 Peter’ and was copied by 1 Clement and Melito in his Pauschal Homily. Commentators also stress that the concept of salvation through that suffering death of Christ establishes a new criterion for admission to the ‘elect and holy people of God.’ Faith, rather than ‘biological membership’ or observance of Torah, becomes the defining standard.

This brief review of only a few Petrine Christological concepts demonstrates that 1 Peter cannot be legitimately called a ‘Jewish’ text, but must be acknowledged to have moved past Judaism to something new and not Jewish. The Petrine writer defines the chosen people of his

33. Boyarin understands the study of texts not as reflective of social realities but as social apparatuses via the notion of a discourse or a discurso (Boyarin, Border Lines, p. 27).
34. Of Elliott’s list of 17 Christological elements in 1 Peter, at least three (vicarious suffering, death, and resurrection) would not apply to the Jewish Messiah. Elliott interestingly leaves out the ‘pre-existence’ passages in this list (Elliott, 1 Peter, pp. 30-31).
35. Elliott, 1 Peter, pp. 346, 352. He adds that the pre-existence of the Messiah is not an idea found in the Hebrew Bible or ‘Israelite writings’.
36. Achtemeier, 1 Peter, p. 110.
37. Boyarin, Border Lines, p. 103 and more conclusively, pp. 104-105; thus making a distinction between ‘theology’ and Logos ‘Christology’.
38. Relevant passages include 1 Pet. 1.3, 21; 2.21, 24; 3.18; 4.1.
39. Israel Knohl, in a recent monograph, has argued, following the arguments of John J. Collins and others, that Qumran documents (4QHe fg. 1-2; 4Q491 fg. 11, col. 1; 4QHa fg. 7, col. 1 and 2) anticipated the Christian view of the suffering servant as Messiah (Israel Knohl, The Messiah before Jesus: The Suffering Servant of the Dead Sea Scrolls [trans. David Maisel; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000]). Other scholars remain unconvinced regarding the scroll evidence and the influence of Isaiah Targum LII 13 (notoriously difficult to date). Finding a tenuous connection between the two in one text, is hardly the kind of direct identification we see in 1 Peter. See the variety of opinions in William H. Bellinger Jr, and William R. Farmer (eds), Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998). Levine, The Misunderstood Jew, p. 56.
41. Elliott, 1 Peter, p. 447.
42. One way of looking at the sense of replacement that occurs in 1 Peter, is to examine how in one passage (1:13-19), the author moves so fluidly from traditional Judaism (‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’) to clear Christianity (‘Knowing that you were ransomed . . . with the precious blood of Christ’). Two other very Christian themes that ought to be mentioned are the deep and broad significance of baptism in 1 Peter and the affinities of Petrine language with the Christian kerygma speeches of Acts.
audience as belonging to his group, and others who do not share their characteristics as not belonging. The levels of competition in other texts from the time of 1 Peter indicate more than a respectful sharing or a simple ‘sibling rivalry’ between fledgling Christianity and recognizably Jewish ideas but a sort of zero-sum game. Some ideas were clearly not sharable. God can have only one chosen people, one plan of salvation, one set of sacred symbols and one canon of sacred texts. What the Petrine author and others ultimately assert is a form of triumphalism based on critical differences in belief.

Having determined that 1 Peter contains supersessionist elements, it is helpful to see supersessionism as well as Jewish-Christian relations as part of a wider context – as components within the power configurations of the Graeco-Roman world. The attitude of the author of 1 Peter toward Judaism is determined, in part, by a stance against the Roman Empire. In its effort for legitimacy or even to achieve a more effective form of resistance, and to set itself up as a true community, Christians had to both affirm the Hebrew Scriptures and to deny their applicability to the Jews themselves. Seeing supersessionism from a postcolonial perspective allows for a more careful analysis of the power claims, even implicit ones, in the language. Specifically, it encourages us to see that the text of 1 Peter engages in a kind of colonial rhetorical act in the following ways: It is written from the perspective of a subaltern struggle, takes on the guise of an alien status, participates in the appropriation/plundering of the cultural treasures/resources of another group, rewrites the past of another group for its own benefit, endorses a hierarchy that includes the emperor, suggests, but rejects true hybridization and a real diaspora consciousness, highlights the concepts of chosenness and homeland, all through the utilization of the language of transcendence and inclusion/exclusion.

Some scholars have questioned the legitimacy of postcolonial

criticism/theory because it sometimes seems to be utilized as an academic stance or perspective. But familiarity with a wide variety of the applications of postcolonial theory creates an awareness of a pattern that most postcolonial theorists employ, and which I use here, although I do not have enough space to fully develop each step: First, to identify the colonial situation and the imperial power that controlled the political space in which the text was written; second, to locate and name the texts and practices the colonial power used to maintain psychological and physical control, including written texts, art, architecture, etc.; third, to analyse the dynamics of power relationships between the colonizer and the colonized and recognize nuance, ambiguity, hybridity and mimicry; and fourth, to expand the analysis of the power relations to include the relations among and between the groups that were not colonizers, to demonstrate the pervasiveness of power contention, but also the wide variety of power manifestations.

1 Peter was written in a time of, and for an audience that experienced, imperialism (an ideology that upholds the legitimacy of the economic and military control of one country by another), and colonialism (a practice which results from imperialism, specifically the settlement of groups from the more dominant country in the country of the conquered, often for means of control). Asia Minor, the site of the audience for 1 Peter, had experienced imperialism since the time of Alexander the Great and colonialism in the form of taxation and new religious demands, extraction of resources, including human ones, less autonomy for governors, and overall imperial supervision. Warren Carter emphasizes that ‘1 Peter’s five provinces knew the intimidating and taxing presence of troops stationed in parts of their territory, including requisitions of labor and resources for road construction, along with taxes and tributes, often paid in kind, on production and transportation’. The Emperor Claudius established Roman cities in all five of the regions named in 1 Pet. 1.1, and the mid-first century CE saw a marked change in the cultural and physical landscape of Asia Minor, including new cities, the conferring of citizenship status on

43. Interestingly, although he does not explore this fully, Boyarin suggests that the rabbis of the second and third centuries ‘articulated their own sense of identity’ in part through the ‘appropriation’ of the question identity asked by Christians. Boyarin sees this as ‘a kind of mimicry in the technical postcolonial sense and thus an act of resistance’ (Boyarin, Border Lines, p. 12). He is depending on the theories of Seth Schwartz.
44. Lieu, Image and Reality, p. 5. Postcolonialism understands power to be residing everywhere, to a greater or lesser extent. It is part of its insight to see even the oppressed groups as participating in the power way is ‘structured’. Outside of 1 Peter, in the Gospels and in the early patristics writings, Christians participated in the colonial project of producing literature that defined the subjugated and their cultures – particularly the Jews, but other nonbelievers – how their poverty, richness, barbarism, ungodliness, laziness or kindness laid a duty or divine right on the superior culture/religion to impose themselves by force.
45. Lieu, Image and Reality, p. 280.
46. These are not identical ideas, and cannot always be used interchangeably; but because both assume an unequal power relationship and many of the effects of imperialism were felt through colonialism, and the goals of imperialism achieved through colonialism, their boundaries can be fuzzy.
cities, and/or ‘pumping Roman money and colonists into small towns that had become strategic due to changing political circumstances’. 48

These colonization efforts would have brought new people to the original cities, creating new mixes of people with a variety of statuses and relationships to Rome and ‘resulted in complex social relationships accompanied by serious tensions that played out differently between citizens and non-citizens, free and slave, rich and poor in each city’. 49 Earlier claims of the extreme marginalization of Jewish groups have undergone some revision, and scholars are more likely to see the Jewish communities of Asia Minor as thriving and enjoying a more peaceful coexistence. 50 But ‘certain features are common to all empires – they subjugate people, deprive them of freedom, inculcate the values of the invaders, and seize the cultural heritage and property of the invaded’. 51 S. R. F. Price’s valuable study of the imperial cult in Asia Minor details the kinds of redefinitions and negotiations cities in Asia Minor engaged in to incorporate emperor worship into their traditional pantheons. 52 The province of Asia contained the cities of Ephesus, Pergamum and Smyrna, all sites of an imperial temple. Pressure to conform to the imperial cult might have come more from local authorities, although these local authorities would have seen the cult as a way to make Roman subjugation more palatable, and help cultural and social stability.

Chris Frilingos’ analysis of the language of Revelation and its connections to spectacles shows that urban audiences in the Roman empire were used to being viewed and viewing and were familiar with and influenced by Roman notions of masculinity and power. Frilingos points out that the spectacles in the cities were the most effective vehicle for conveying the psychology of Roman power. He writes: ‘every major theme of the Roman power structure was deployed in spectacles: social stratification; political theater; crime and punishment; representations of civilization and the empire; repression of women and exaltation of bellicose masculinity.’ 53 Newer studies of ‘Romanization’ indicate a situation of great complexity in which individual agents had some choice in how to construct their identities within the colonial context. Responses might include new building projects, new festivals and rituals, or additional civic offices.

It is now the majority view that the Roman Empire did not initiate any sort of official anti-Christian policy that could have prompted the suffering of which 1 Peter speaks. The letter itself contains no reference to Roman hostility to Christianity nor indicates any overt anti-Roman attitude. Elliott and others have instead focused on local harassment and detailed the ways that Christians in Asia Minor faced repressor from the majority culture. They suffered slander (καταλαλέω) disparagement (ἐπιθεώρον), unjust accusations (διαποίησις) and reproach (νομισματίζω). Elliott posits that ‘in the inland and highland areas, the social tension between Christians and natives instead would have been typical of the animosity regularly directed by natives again displaced and foreign outsider with Rome playing no role at all’. 54 He then claims that the author of 1 Peter used sectarian language to create an identity of resistance to native social pressures rather than empire and community cohesion. While Elliott is correct to argue against those who would see in 1 Peter the language of overt assimilation, it is also difficult to separate what Elliott calls ‘pagan’ native notions from Roman ones. Christian texts often refused to concede the existence of priority of Roman culture and Roman definitions of themselves, even when that Roman culture arrived in the form of local traditions practices and prejudices. As pointed out above, in reference to Price’s research, local natives of Asia Minor spent an enormous amount of time and resources absorbing and incorporating the imperial cult indicating a fair amount of acculturation to Roman imperia.

48. Karen Jobes documents the changes that Claudius’ colonization efforts brought to Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (Karen Jobes, 1 Peter [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005], p. 29).

49. Jobes, 1 Peter, p. 31. She uses this evidence on colonization to argue that the readers of 1 Peter were designated ἐκμητρῖσθαι because they were deportees from Rome, which is interesting and somewhat convincing, except that it faces the same objection as Elliot’s theory that the readers are all literally social outcasts in some other sense than their religious difference: would all of those groups really be in the same sociological situation?


51. Sugirtharajah, Postcolonial Criticism, p. 86. ‘Indigenous religions disintegrated, were simplified and reinterpreted under the impact of roman religion, particularly in the urban environment… Roman rule accentuated rather than broke down the divisions between city and country, rich and poor, local elites and the urban and rural masses’ (Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987], pp. 202-203).


53. Frilingos, Spectacles, p. 28.


55. Elliott, 1 Peter, p. 90.
ideology. A group or groups that resisted the imperial cult and the acculturation it implied might certainly be considered hostile ‘outsiders’ and thus defined by their unwillingness to adopt Roman-through-local practices.

In postcolonial terminology, we can thus identify the Christians of Asia Minor as one of many ‘subaltern’ groups – oppressed, minority groups whose presence was crucial to the self-definition of the majority group, and also struggling to subvert the authority of those in power. So as the author of 1 Peter uses his letter primarily to define his readers as ‘chosen’ in order to strengthen their identity and enhance group cohesion in the face of local social harassment, the letter can thus be conceived as a ‘resistance’ letter, in that it encourages self-definition over against the overpowering Roman social definitions of belonging and proper community.

Postcolonial analysis examines how victims of imperialism create these kinds of literature out of the encounter with imperialism. Different literatures of the colonized could arise from particular forms of imperial abuse such as captivity, slavery, exile, diaspora, immigration due to dispossession, poverty, violence and alienation from one’s land. They could take the form of the revival of precolonial mythology and literature leading to a pronounced nationalism, nativism or stringent enforcement of cultural boundaries. The strategy for identity creation of the subaltern group often involved an essentialist construction of the group that mimicked the imperialist’s own oppressive self definitions as superior and legitimately in power.

In addition, the collaboration of elites or other portions of the population with the rulers could lead to infighting among the colonized. These internal competitions were almost always to the advantage of the colonizers, who easily exploited the divided people. These internal conflicts and competitions could even prompt pro-imperial literature from the colonized. The literary response of the colonized is often then shaped by the textual forms and guiding ideologies of the imperialists. Both the colonized and colonizer imagine myths that validate their right to dominate and dispossess others. David Quint writes that ‘the losers who attract our sympathetic today would be – had they only power – the victors of tomorrow, those who have been victimized losers in history somehow have the right to become victimizing winners, in turn’. The colonized ‘influenced by the colonizer’s intolerance for difference and unjustifiable claims of power, respond on the same terms’.

Sometimes this imitation served to displace the conquest onto another subaltern group. Almost always, the literature of subaltern groups in the colonial situation involved the construction of myths of power, either over the oppressors themselves, or another oppressor group. As the representative of a subaltern, minority group, the writer of 1 Peter adopted Jewish languages of resistance to define it over against the coercive identity politics of the imperial power. But in so doing, he engaged in the typical exclusivism and heightened hierarchies of subaltern literature, including a suppression of the integrity of Jewish identity, by metaphorizing, decontextualizing and displacing.

What postcolonial theory helps us see is that Peter is an example of a particular subset of colonial relations – between two subalter groups – Jews and Christians, both marginalized in Roman society. But according to Jean-Francois Lyotard, the participants in an ethno-political dialogue are rarely equal, and are almost never equally represented in the final count. One of the participants invariably ‘knows better’ than the other, whose world view must be modified if any sort of consensus can be reached. Peter seems on the surface to belie this claim by positing his readers as the marginalized others, as the alien outsider group, but looked at more closely, this is deceptive, possibly purposefully so. The Petrine author surely claims that his audience, the other, the alien, is the superior set. What is gained by doing this? The other is chosen, set apart, beyond designation as systems themselves, they rejoice in their marginalized status, believing that the marginalized are in God’s care. This sense of the chosenness of the marginalized is itself an appropriation c

56. Carter argues cogently against the idea that the colonial elites viewed the imperial cult skeptically. Carter, "Going All the Way", pp. 20–21.
58. R. S. Sugirtharajah calls this move toward nativism and essentialism a ‘heritagist reading’. Heritagist readings are attempts to retrieve power through ‘cultural memory from the amnesia caused by colonialism. It is a form of reinterpretation of stories, myths, and legends as a remembered history of a region, class caste, gender or race.’ But he points out that heritagist readings can enchain oppressed peoples in isolation when there should be crossover and interchange (Sugirtharajah, Postcolonial Criticism, p. 62).
61. ‘Because the imitations or reversal models hardly ever liberating alternatives, the literature of both groups tends to be characterized by sharp dualisms, rigid cultural boundaries, vicious racisms, heightened nationalisms and hierarchic structures that would license any power to victimize other nations’ (Dube, Postcolonial Feminists, p. 52).
62. Quoted in Gandhi, Postcolonial Theory, p. 28.
Speaking Jewish: Postcolonial Aliens and Strangers in First Peter

Certainly, the author of 1 Peter would like his readers to believe that he authentically presents the ancient heritage of Judaism (thus his remarkable reliance on the LXX), and accurately depicts the relationship between his readers and the 'real' Israel. While he certainly distinguishes his own communities from any physical, believing Jews (1.4, 12) or others who reject Jesus as Messiah, the author does not participate in a critique of contemporary Judaism, as already noted. Instead, Israel's early history and covenant relationship with God are simply used as the beginning and model of a relationship with God that reaches its fulfillment in those who claim Jesus as the mediator of salvation. Elliott calls this a 'blatant appropriation of the nomenclature of ancient Israel', but sees it only as a strategy 'typical of a sect seeking to legitimate itself' by claiming to be the 'true' representation of the body to which some of them might once have belonged. While I again agree with Elliott's characterization of the appropriation, and even its possible motivation, I do not see the appropriation as benign or non-eventful. Instead, I read it as claims to power and identity in a contested environment, as intellectual-colonial 'plunderings' and as setting a more dangerous precedent than Elliott or others aver.

The Petrine author's adoption of the indicia of Israel for his own subaltern communities begins with what some commentators see as the overriding metaphor of the letter - the Jewish diaspora (1.1). In the

<table>
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<tr>
<th>METAPHOR</th>
<th>SITE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>spotless lamb</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>Diaspora sub-theme 1</td>
<td>Exod. 12.46/Isa. 53.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>spiritual house</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>Diaspora sub-theme 1</td>
<td>Exod. 17.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>holy/royal priesthood</td>
<td>2.5-9</td>
<td>Diaspora sub-theme 1</td>
<td>Exod. 19.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>spiritual sacrifices</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Diaspora sub-theme 1</td>
<td>Ps. 50.14 et al/Hos. 6.6</td>
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<td>elect/holy people</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Diaspora sub-theme 1</td>
<td>Exod. 19.6/Isa. 43.20f/Hos. 1-5</td>
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<td>out of darkness</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Diaspora sub-theme 1</td>
<td>Isa. 9.2, 42.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>strangers, aliens</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>Diaspora sub-theme 2</td>
<td>Gen. 23.4/Psa. 38.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>servants/slaves of God</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>Diaspora sub-theme 1</td>
<td>Isa. 41.8-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>righteous sufferers</td>
<td>2.19-24</td>
<td>Diaspora sub-theme 3</td>
<td>Job 9-10; Ps. 34.15-22; Isa. 53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suffering Servant</td>
<td>3.1-3.11</td>
<td>Diaspora sub-theme 1</td>
<td>Isa. 53</td>
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63. I read this understanding of marginalization as election/superiority in opposition to many scholars who see the two concepts as in tension, e.g., Robert Webb states: 'Their inferior status in society as "strangers" stands in marked contrast to their honored status as "elect"'. Robert L. Webb, 'Intertexture and Argumentative Strategy Within Priestly Discourse in First Peter', in Priestly Discourse in New Testament Rhetorical Argumentation (ed. L. Gregory Bloomquist; SBL SymS; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, forthcoming), p. 6. See also Elliott, 'despite their vulnerable condition as strangers and resident aliens ... they now constitute and elect and holy family of God'. Elliott, 1 Peter, pp. 105-106, my emphasis.


66. I used this as an example of the 'diaspora sub-theme' in the letter.
ancient Jewish sense, the diaspora represents the loss of home and
stable identity, deep, despairing questions about destiny, meaning,
spiritual reality and the required negotiations of self in new situations
and places of belonging. It forced adaptation and assimilation. Facing
absorption and acculturation, some Jews retrenched, choosing the
nationalist/heritagist path. When it was incorporated into the theology
of the Jews the term took on connotations such as displacement,
hardship and suffering, acquiring a new emphasis on victimhood.69
Since Jews in the diaspora were not usually permitted citizenship in the
cities they inhabited, living in the diaspora always entailed some form
of alien status. Elliott cites the Testament of Asher to illustrate the
sense of alienation this could cause: 'you will be scattered to the four
corners of the earth, in the diaspora you shall be despised as worthless,
like useless water, until such time as the most high visits the earth'.70
However, through redefinitions and creative mythologies, the Jews
adeptly turned what might be seen as a loss of honour and status, into
a positive alien identity.71

The notion of diaspora changed in the texts of first-century
Christians where it acquired a more religious sense. While the original
term expressed primarily the physically dispersed situation of the Jews
in regions beyond the traditional land of inheritance,72 some
Christians came to understand the term metaphorically, as their
situation on earth vis-à-vis their 'real' home in heaven. It could also
express their continuity with the Jews as a vulnerable minority in
foreign and hostile regions. Commentators on 1 Peter have taken both
positions, that the Christians of 1 Peter were both metaphorically and
actually diasporic – living outside of their homeland.

Of greater import is the appropriative move. The author of 1 Peter
claims diasporic status for his audience, clearly in an attempt to
replace the original owners of that identity. This is apparent from the
pairing of the diaspora metaphor with so many of the other Jewish
identifiers. From a postcolonial perspective self-identifying as diaspo-
ric might seem to be a positive step. The diaspora metaphor figures
prominently in postcolonial studies as an alternative to identities
defined by the empire. Immigrants and colonized have found it helpful
to speak of their realities as 'diasporic', and the ambivalence of
diasporic identity is valorized by such postcolonial theorists as Homi
Bhabha. Bhabha argues that the diaspora gives rise to an interstitial
perspective, which resists the closing off of identity or the idolatry of
identity.73 'Postcolonialism questions the basis on which insiders and
outsiders are identified and thus threatens the practices of exclusion
and subordination that are based on those distinctions.'74 Even
Sugirtharajah sees this moment in Christianity as the 'perfect
paradigm for the provisional sojourning spirit.'75 But I believe he
fails to use his own theory to discuss the theological and intellectual
moves necessary for the Christians to mobilize Jewish notions such as
diaspora, and to analyze more closely the Christian notion of
themselves as diasporic.

Indeed, in postcolonial writings diaspora takes on a much more
radical connotation. 'It is about the ambivalences and contradictions
of being at home in many places, and among many peoples ... It
challenges the territorially confined notions of national culture
through the fact of wide-ranging movements of people ... [It] signifies
the formation of identity based on diversity and difference and is not
necessarily seen in terms of reconnecting with a reveryntional notion
of homeland.' Even though dispersed peoples have often experienced
an intensified longing for and a clarified image of 'home', real diaspora
identity challenges the forces of uniformity and conventional ideas of
belonging and fixity.76

Fernando Segovia argues that real diasporic identity is not
essentialist, but acknowledges that texts are culture-specific, and he
understands readers as not universal, but flesh-and-blood, situated
socially, and historically determined.77 In contrast, while it purports to
occupy the space of diaspora, what 1 Peter truly claims is an essential

70. Elliott, *1 Peter*, p. 313. But the conquests of Alexander the Great and the resultant
intermingling of peoples extended the meaning of diaspora to include voluntary emigration.
Diaspora came to be tempered with 'Hellenistic optimism' (Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial
Criticism*, p. 181).
71. Some postcolonialists might be suspicious of this Jewish move, as the concepts of
diaspora, exile, and return were myths created under Persian imperial ideology, and contain
new ideas of kingdom, exclusivism, and essential identity.
75. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, p. 183. On the surface, this looks to be true.
'Diasporic thought finds its apotheosis in the ambivalent, transitory, culturally contaminated
and borderline figure of the exile, caught in a historical limbo between home and the world'
(Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, p. 132). What could be a better description of the 'homeless' of
1 Peter?
77. Fernando F. Segovia, 'Towards a Hermeneutics of the Diaspora: A Hermeneutics of
Otherness and Engagement', in *Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United
States*, vol. 1 of *Reading from this Place* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary A. Tolbert;
belonging to a universal community chosen by God. An authentic diasporic hermeneutic must give up its claim to be sole conveyor of truth, and renegotiate its role based on differences. In the case of 1 Peter, this would have required a full discussion of the author's own indebtedness to Israelite theology, plus how the Christians might use it while still allowing for an older, unchanged covenant theology. Instead, the author borrowed a myth from the Jews and mythologized it even more. The Petrine author appropriated diaspora myths as absolute spiritual truths and made their application even more explicitly essential, because hyper-historical.

Closely related to the diaspora metaphor is the theme of strangers and aliens, παροικοί καὶ παρεμπίπτοντες (2.11). It has long been a debate among Petrine scholars whether to take these terms literally or figuratively. Elliott claims that the audience of 1 Peter is a collection of Christian communities who were actual social outcasts before their conversions to Christianity. Most Petrine scholars believe that the strangers and aliens motif refers to the groups' status as Christians in the world, although some may have been originally socially, transferring that status metonymically to the entire group. Regardless of the actual socio-historical situation of the readers, the author again chooses to use a Jewish identity marker to help them define their own value. In the Septuagint, παροικός is used of Israel's residence as aliens in the land of Egypt, as well as Abraham's life in Mesopotamia, and its subsequent time in Babylon and under Seleucid and Ptolemaic rule. The Jewish need to psychologically and theologically incorporate exile, led to a redefinition of the value of alien status, just as it valorized diaspora. Following Judaism, then, the author of 1 Peter considers 'alien' and 'strangers' to be a positive label, because it subverts ruling ideology notions of honour and shame and demonstrates a disdain for popular opinion that the author is cultivating in these communities. Thus the intellectual repositioning of identifying with the oppressor other, the Jews, through the strangers and aliens motif, covers the concomitant moves: a move to take the identification of 'alien' from its original owners, a move to set his communities up as the valued alien groups, and a move to resist imperial definitions of 'alien' as bad.

The term παροικοί also implies a real home or dwelling just out of reach of the 'homeless' and 1 Peter translates the concept of home into eschatological destiny and Christian community, a hope universal and absolute, for the included. But as many postcolonial critics have pointed out, the concept of 'home' is constructed and specific. And course the idea of home becomes the contested ground, the source of nationalistic rhetoric and imperial force. From the perspective of postcolonial theory, the issue in 1 Peter becomes even more urgent because the author makes the more serious claim that the Christian are the new 'household of God', a group that physically replaces the sacred space of the Jewish temple. It might be argued that the redefinition of the temple constitutes a subversion of imperial ideology by the Petrine author, since the temple was sponsored by the Roman and served as an instrument of imperial rule. But this Petrin 'subversion' occurs after the second temple has been destroyed. Dube critiques 'the Christian claims of demolished boundaries' in terms of their reinterpretation of 'the temple, which is not replaced by a mobile community of holy Christians traveling under the authority of Jesus... the "Lord of all Cosmos". Its mobility disavows specific geographical and cultural boundaries, not in order to create true hybridity, but to claim the whole world.'

It is also often claimed that Christianity constituted a hybrid kind of identity, again a paradigm of postcolonial resistance. 'Hybridity' is best defined by Homi Bhabha as the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. He notes that in the very practice of

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78. "There never was a single idea of the days before exile and there was not a single or dominant concept of how Yehud should organize its own social existence after the exile. No one ever went into exile "returned", although some of their children and grandchildren moved to Yehud as colonists. These colonists were not following some master plan that they developed as devout followers of the Yehudite God while in exile; there was no master plan, only a colonizing impulse that took many of the same forms that Persian imperialism took in other neighboring areas' (Ron L. Benjamins, "Postcolonialism and Imperial Motives for Colonization", in Sugirtharajah, Postcolonial Biblical Reader, pp. 78–95 [93]). Elliott also argues that παρεμπίπτοντες and παροικοί do not mean 'exiles' (1 Peter, 460), while Achtenheier takes the opposite position (1 Peter, 81). Certainly, 'exile' and 'stranger' or 'alien' are not synonymous, but one cause of strangeness and alien-ness would be political exile. Others have made the case for the pervasiveness of the concept of 'exile' adapted from Judaism by early Jewish Christians. See N. T. Wright, The New Testament and the People of God, vol. 1 of Christian Origins and the Question of God (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1996). The point here is that, regardless of the cause of his readers' alien status, the Petrine author uses the concept of the Jewish exile to re-evaluate/valorize the meaning of alien-ness.

79. Elliott, 1 Peter, p. 94, although he acknowledges that the terms would not apply literally to every member.

80. Eventually the idea of "sojourning" was adopted as a distinguishing mark of the church, hence the term 'parish', from the late Latin paroecia, and the Old French paroisse. See Michaels, 1 Peter, p. 8.

81. This is the opinion of most Petrine commentators, Elliott being the important exception, seeing the olclos of this passage as referring to the 'household' of God, which, for postcolonial interpreters, would present its own problems.

82. Dube, Postcolonial Feminist, p. 30.
domination the language of the master becomes hybrid – neither the one thing nor the other.\textsuperscript{83} Catherine Keller writes approvingly: ‘And what is Christianity but a great hybrid, comprised at the urban crossroads of the Roman Empire? It cannot be understood apart from the extraordinary creativity of its high-risk hybridities – for instance, its “neither Greek nor Jew” – that is both Greek and Jewish, which let it spread like wildfire.’\textsuperscript{84} For Keller then, the culture of Christianity occurs at the edge of Judaism and Hellenism. But Boyarin adds that hegemonic discourses then ‘disown’ hybridity in order to support purity.\textsuperscript{85} So, even as it emerged at the borders, Christian writers then asserted its non-hybrity in an attempt to naturalize and redraw shifted boundaries. Thus the Petrine author creates a hybrid identity, both Jewish and ‘Christian’, yet then so stabilizes it that it becomes non-hybrid, completely Christian, and certainly never acknowledges its true hybrid character, portraying that character as inherently and universally true and beyond analysis.\textsuperscript{86} Indeed, not all border crossings generate hybridity. Some result in conquest, some in assimilation and some in true hybridity. The ideal of hybridity in postcolonial criticism is not achieved through the dissolution of differences, but by renegotiating the structure of power built on differences. And the negotiation of power structures and shared assumptions is not what we see in 1 Peter.

Diaspora, aliens and homeland metaphors all point rather clearly in 1 Peter to the claim that his Christians have replaced the Jews as God’s elect (1:1; 2:4-10; 5:13). Exclusive claims of election automatically ‘other’ those who are not chosen, particularly those who were previously chosen, and thus reify notions of hierarchy and superiority. Claims of divine election were made for Rome and specific emperors to justify power. Biblical literature was shaped by a constant struggle with imperial phenomena; it was born from the relationships of sanctioning, resisting or living with imperial powers and at the heart of Israel’s foundational story, is an ideology which is basically imperial, although it functions narratively as chosness or election.\textsuperscript{87} Nearly all biblical texts endorsed unequal power distribution along geographical and racial differences, so postcolonial historical analysis strongly suggests that at the heart of biblical narrative and belief is an imperialist ideology because that narrative ‘buys into’ and ever advocates the notions of empire that some peoples and populations should, by the will of God, be subdued or annihilated, and others be in positions of power.\textsuperscript{88}

Likewise, NT authors, appropriating the Jewish assumptions of election as their own and writing ‘under the domination of the Roman Empire, resisted the imperial oppression in their own ways but also articulated the right to propagate their own version of imperialism’.\textsuperscript{89} This paradigm of biblical authors constructing one group as superior to another because of God’s own choosing is continued in 1 Peter. Tied to holiness (1.2, 14-16, 22; 2.5, 9; 3.5) and a distinct community identity, ‘nowhere in the New Testament does the theme of electors assume the dominating significance that it has in 1 Peter.’\textsuperscript{90} Ironically, the Christian version of election would then be used to displace the Jews. Boyarin writes that “Christian groups also had no need to define “heresy” as long as their own self-definition did not fundamentally challenge the notion of Jewish peoplehood, that is, as long as they understood themselves as Jews and not as a “new Israel”’, and that the threat to that peoplehood ‘may very well have taken place first in the areas in which Jews and Gentile Christians were in intense and tense contact, that is, precisely in an area such as western Asia.’\textsuperscript{91} The connection between the election of this new group and the replacement of the old elect group figures prominently in the letter, as scholars have pointed out repeatedly. Robert Webb writes concerning the ‘sprinkling of the blood of Christ’ pericope that ‘the author is reconfiguring central concepts from the inauguration of the old covenant with God’s elect people to interpret the death of Christ as covenant-confirming event in which God’s new covenant is inaugurated with his new-

\textsuperscript{84} Yet she also notes that “neither can it be understood apart from its early acquiescence in empire, discernible according to some postcolonial hermeneutics already in the gospels, a mimicry that prepares the way for its imperial—and monolingual—appropriation of multiple cultures after Constantine’ (Keller, ‘Introduction’, p. 14).
\textsuperscript{85} Boyarin, Border Lines, p. 14. And, indeed, the notion of hybridity seems to imply the interaction of two originally separate cultural systems.
\textsuperscript{86} I have argued elsewhere (Betsy Buzan-Martin, ‘Women on the Edge: New Perspectives on Women in the Petrine Haustafel’, JBL 123 [2004], pp. 253–79) that the author encourages a sort of boundary-crossing hybridity in his positive reinforcement of the behaviour of the slaves and wives of non-Christian masters and husbands. Yet this is not a Jewish–Christian hybridity, but a non-Christian–Christian hybridity that seems to be more consciously acknowledged.

\textsuperscript{88} Duke, Postcolonial Feminist, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{89} Duke, Postcolonial Feminist, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{90} Elliott, 1 Peter, pp. 446-47.
\textsuperscript{91} Boyarin, Border Lines, pp. 66, 71.
covenant people – these “elect strangers”’. Likewise, Achtemeier comments that it is ‘the author’s conviction that it was precisely the fate of Christ that made possible the existence of a new people chosen in and through him.’ The notion of a new elect people to replace the old is further reinforced by the reference to the foundation stone that has been rejected by the builders. Either this passage refers literally to Jews who have rejected Jesus and have been replaced by the new building, or it refers to all unbelievers who are now characterized as rejecting Jesus by using a passage that refers to Jews. The implications are that either they are Jews (bad) or they are like Jews (bad). Those who reject Jesus are called Gentiles (non-Jews) but are characterized by bad Jewish behaviour.

Space does not allow a full discussion of every Jewish concept appropriated by the writer of 1 Peter, but nearly all of them require some sort of metaphorization, spiritualization and de/recontextualization to make them apply to his readers. They are well known to Petrine scholars, and include the royal priesthood (2.5), the Suffering Servant (2.21-25), Passover and liberation (1.19), the use of the Septuagint home as the land of Israel (1.4), covenant promises, references to the prophets (1.10-12) and, perhaps the most aggressive, the use of the term ‘Gentile’ to refer to anyone who did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, including, or especially, Jews (2.12, 4.2-4). Postcolonialists have long claimed that colonial and imperial powers would also rewrite the past of the oppressed – distorting it and destroying it, and often inserting themselves into it, all as a means of establishing superiority and legitimating their own identities, much as the author of 1 Peter does with Judaism.

93. Achtemeier, 1 Peter, p. 72.
94. Lieu, Image and Reality, p. 229
95. ‘More pervasive, and perhaps more problematic for many early converts, would be the acquisition of the template of the Jewish Scriptures … Those with no prior experience must have found the style of argument, the pattern of models and examples, and the appeal to the authority of those Scriptures, painfully difficult to absorb … As we have seen elsewhere, these Scriptures would have provided a shared narrative of the past, a framework, and a language for speaking of the one God, but also a pattern for living. Yet all this was fraught with ambiguity: the same narrative when shared … could generate an awareness of a common identity … but more commonly it became a divisive double narrative, of sin and judgment on the one hand, for “them”, and of hope and salvation, on the other, for “us” (Lieu, Image and Reality, p. 160).

But beyond the imperialist appropriations of Jewish theological elements, 1 Peter also participates in the language of imperialism through its own valorization of the notion of kingdom and the hierarchies of empire. According to Averil Cameron, the success of Christianity was largely due to the triumph of ‘hegemonic discourse’, as Christian men ‘talked and wrote themselves into a position where they spoke and wrote the rhetoric of empire’. In the fourth century Christian writers adopted the language of rulership – the ruler as good shepherd, God as the Father of all and the magnanimity of the good rulers. First-century texts helped prepare the ground for this later, more triumphalist literature. Liew demonstrates that Mark constructs a hierarchical community structure. Liew points out that at the end of the Little Apocalypse, Jesus describes his household in terms of a “lord” (Jesus himself) who “authorizes” his “servants” and “commands” his “doorkeeper” to various tasks before he goes on a trip … The imagery is that of an institution where … Jesus is at the pinnacle of the hierarchy … just as the Gentile or Roman rulers are at the pinnacle of their hierarchy of power, “lording over” (10.42b) and “exercising authority over” (10.42b) those who rank below them. This language would be easily understood by subjects of an empire and would reinforce the assumptions of empire.

Likewise 1 Peter seems to take for granted the hierarchical social structures of the empire. He first, as everyone knows in 2.13-14 exhorts his readers to honour the emperor, and his representative (‘those sent by him to punish wrongdoers’). Warren Carter maintains that this is an accommodationist strategy to allow some of the Petrine readers to offer sacrifices to the emperor. Some commentators attempt to downplay the more distasteful implications: Michaels write that ‘the emperor and the local magistrates – are persons, not power structures’, which seems to be almost intentionally naïve. But it is despite attempts to mitigate the thrust, the passage still shows an essential trust in the justice of the empire’s representatives, and we see no critique of the unequal distribution of power, or even the abuse of power.

The author also constructs his readers as a holy priesthood in 2.5 (ιεράτευμα ἔγινον) and a kingdom of priests/royal priesthood in 2.6.
Reading First Peter with New Eyes

Speaking Jewish: Postcolonial Aliens and Strangers in First Peter

b. Appropriation as Power Move

I have argued throughout this essay that the appropriation of Jewish identifiers by the Petrine author constituted more than simple supersonism or a 'sharing' of Scriptures, but an imitation of imperialist domination and an attempt to create a universal, absolutist identity for his marginalized readers. What remains is to show why this kind of appropriation was not benign or unimportant, or ignorable. One objection to postcolonial claims might be that all faith claims would be colonial or supersonistic. But faith claims are only supersonistic if they entail notions of replacement and engage in a totalizing discourse. Faith claims are not colonial if they refrain from unilateral appropriation and substitution. One might have hoped in Peter for the struggling of Paul in Romans 11, and an acknowledgment that others made the same claims to election. Discussing difference without condemnation or implicit (or explicit) assertions of absolutist superiority prevents colonialism. Horrell also points out insightfully that the 'appropriation – one might say, expropriation – of the Scriptures and identity of Israel raises its own challenging historical, theological, and ethical questions', and remarks that there might be 'some (contemporary theological) room for the view that Israel's existence must be affirmed alongside the church's. This is, at least better than explicit declarations that Israel has been replaced by the church, or that her covenant is now obsolete.'

Recently, cultural appropriation has become the focus of postcolonial critics, in part because appropriation is often an early form of resistance on the part of the colonized. But in turn, the colonizer 'appropriate' native natural resources, women, art forms, labour, etc. Cultural appropriation has been defined as 'the taking – from a culture as chosen; the silence and submission of the Petrine women is thus a sign of superiority of the Petrine communities.'


107. As Jon Levenson has noted, in some texts, 'their appeal to their common root 'Abraham ensures that Judaism and Christianity will be mutually exclusive', no sharia possible. Jon Levenson, Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity (New Haven and London; Yale University Press 1992), p. 219.

108. Horrell, 'Between Conformity and Resistance', p. 131, and n. 78. Levine writes that 'each church and synagogue' claimed the name Israel; the existence of one questioned the claims of the other' (Levine, Misunderstood Jew, p. 86).
that is not one’s own – of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowing.\textsuperscript{109} Of course, such a definition requires further refining. What is culture? What constitutes ‘taking’? Are some cultural forms so integrally related to a particular identity that they are inalienable?

Many current studies explore the ramifications and moral import of appropriations such as the use of native American art themes in mass-market art or clothing, or of the incorporation of indigenous musical elements into rap music. But this theory has been applied to intellectual, intangible traditions.\textsuperscript{110} This kind of cultural appropriation is seen as wrong because it degrades the integrity and identity of cultural groups, often those that are endangered. The appropriation can damage or transform the cultural good or practice; and some wrongly benefit in the transfer, to the detriment of others. One might argue that post-70 CE the Jews were not endangered, but they were certainly not dominant. We might ask if the integrity of either covenantal theology or Judaism as a whole was damaged or compromised. But a further perspective on cultural appropriation is that it is simple theft, and it appears that this definition applies to 1 Peter, in which the Petrine author took elements of ancient Jewish religion that were clearly Jewish and represented them as belonging to a different group, his group.

Further, cultural appropriation becomes imperialism when a culture is misrepresented, silenced and defined out of existence, as the author of 1 Peter does to the original holders of the covenant promise and constituents of the holy people. The absence of ‘real Jews’, which has been interpreted as a lack of anti-Judaism on the part of the Petrine author, indicates, in postcolonial theory, a silencing through language. Andrew Jacobs writes that ‘power does not only mean the brute exercise of force; it also signals the ways in which language and practices can constrain and conform, the ways in which a universe of meanings and habits shapes and constructs reality’.\textsuperscript{111} The Petrin author’s complete lack of reference to the ‘real’ Jews, as so many commentators have taken note of, implies not respect or lack of confrontation, so much as a replacement so complete that the origins group no longer exists.\textsuperscript{112} Sacred practices such as blood sprinkling (Exod. 24.3–8 in 1 Pet. 1.18–20) are spiritualized and de-contextualized.

Judith Lieu also points out that the construction of identity involves ‘a forgetting, a forgetting that is not an accidental amnesia but deliberate “not remembering”, or perhaps a “remembering otherwise”’.\textsuperscript{113} In 1 Peter, the inhabitants of Judaism, the original receptor of the identity tags, are absent, driven out, lost. The new Christia beginning requires the ‘forgetting’ of the immediate Christian past c the particular individual pasts of the community and the ‘remembering’ of a past with more power and potential. Someone else constructed past. So ‘remembering as well as forgetting . . . are but acts of power; if they include, they of necessity will also exclude . . . Th exclusion of the indigenous peoples and of the other victims from th standard histories of the colonizers perpetuates the latter’s claims t power and to superiority; in response, the post-colonial reinscribing c the former, of the excluded, in the memory of all groups has profound consequences for politics as well as for identity.\textsuperscript{114} Thus the Petrin writer imitates or has assumed the position of, the colonizer, wh excludes the indigenous from the new narrative. Ultimately, this kind of remembering/appropriation is ideological/colonial extraction. Th Christian forcibly crosses Jewish boundaries, enters Jewish territory; picks up Jewish cultural and religious treasures, and claims them f his own.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110} Jonathan Hart defines it thus: ‘Cultural appropriation occurs when a member of one culture takes a cultural practice or theory of a member of another culture as if it were his or her own or as if the right of possession should not be questioned or contested’ (Jonathan Hart, ‘Translating and Resisting Empire: Cultural Appropriation and Postcolonial Studies’, in Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation (ed. Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao; New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), pp. 137–68.
\item \textsuperscript{111} Lenore Keeshig-Tobias writes that ‘stories are power. They reflect the deepest, the most intimate perceptions, relationships and attitudes of a people’ (Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, ‘Stop Stealing Native Stories’, in Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation (ed. Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao; New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), pp. 71–73 (71).
\item \textsuperscript{112} ‘So that to them can be applied the epithets scripturally ascribed by God to the people at the identity-creating moment at Sinai (Exod. 19.5–6) “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession” (1 Pet. 2.9–10). There is no hint th there were others, aho of “the Dispersion,” who claimed the same epithets and appealed the same Scriptures. For this author, there is no moment of discontinuity between the time the prophets and that of the audience who are experiencing that of which the former apo (1.10–12) (Judith Lieu, Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World [Oxford Oxford University Press, 2004], p. 12).
\item \textsuperscript{113} Lieu, Christian Identity, p. 64.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Lieu, Christian Identity, p. 65.
\end{itemize}
c. A Place in the Empire

In many ways, one might read 1 Peter as an anti-imperial document, using postcolonial theory. One might say that the author constructs a hybrid identity, as many subalterns have done – an identity that in some ways mimics the one constructed for them by the empire, yet with a subversive twist. The author encourages disobedience to the paterfamilias, subverts Roman notions of honour and shame, valorizes suffering, and partially rejects popular Graeco-Roman moral standards. Yet to do this, to construct this cohesive identity for his group, the author completely appropriates the identity of another subaltern as a way of resisting. This identity cannot be shared, because it is so essentialist and exclusivist. And the appropriation is in some ways so hard to critique, because the Petrine sufferers create empathy. They are underdogs, and underdogs should win. But their winning strategy involves the bankrupting of a competing oppressed group, snatching away their identity.

Eventually, in the post-Constantinian period, Christians would take this kind of appropriation to another level. ‘Christians staked their imperial claims on a self-conscious appropriation of Jewish space and knowledge; that is, they embedded their power and authority in the authenticated existence of a religious, political, and cultural “other”’. Jacobs writes that ‘the Jewish land became the holy land, authenticating Christian Empire, even as it potentially disrupted Christian identity by remaining intractably Jewish’. I argue that the Jewish religious identity became the Christian holy identity, authenticating Christian self-definition, even as it potentially disrupted Christian identity by remaining intractably God’s chosen people.

3. The Implications of a Postcolonialist Study of First Peter

A thorough postcolonial critique of 1 Peter would require a longer essay. Each appropriated element should be analyzed in detail, several possible power configurations should be considered, and more comparisons should be drawn with current postcolonial issues. Serious objections to a postcolonial critique ought to be addressed, including the complexities of both Judaism and Christianity in the first century, power differentials between Rome and Jews and Rome and Christians in Asia Minor, and the essentialist claims/imperialist language of some Jewish texts themselves. One that I anticipate here is the objection that the representation of Judaism in 1 Peter might not be ‘real’, that it might not even closely approximate any kind of Judaism ‘on the ground’ in Asia Minor in the late first century. But the salient point is that the author of 1 Peter has a biblical understanding of the identity of the Jews and it is this identity he appropriates. Whether the Jews actually implemented this identity or its markers at some particular place and time really does not matter. The Christians set up the definition of the Jew they would like to appropriate or define themselves against – for example, Paul’s use of circumcision for the male Jews or the Jewish people. ‘Similarly, for 1 Peter, without justification or comment, “[you] once no people are now the people of God.” (1 Pet. 2.10) … Here, we have to speak of a continuity of boundaries, and so of identity claimed, despite a radically changed content.’ The continuity the Petrine author claims is on their own terms. Ultimately, regardless of the realities of multiple Judaeisms and Jewish self-representations and commonalities between Christians and Jews ‘in the real world’, this textual representation of the relationship between the two traditions would become the fixed paradigm of the Christian ‘sharing’ of Jewish covenantal theology.

So how does a postcolonial methodology add to our understanding of 1 Peter? First, it changes our perspective. The text becomes a player in a discourse, not just a solitary voice. Postcolonialism encourages us to see the text as participating in a continuum of power claims, both supporting and resisting imperial and hierarchical ideals. Postcolonial criticism allows us to see the point of view of the Jews, one subaltern group, whose considered cultural forms were claimed by the Christians, another subaltern group, as their own. Postcolonial criticism reconfigures silencing as an act of aggression, not necessarily one of tolerance. And postcolonial criticism redefines ‘sharing’ – noting the results of sharing material and identity that are considered select. It opens up a world of competitions and power plays, where occupied territory is ideological and every word matters.

117. Jacobs, Remains, p. 15. Michaels writes that we should not interpret 1 Peter looking backwards from the perspective of writers such as Justin and Melito (Michaels, 1 Peter, p. liv). But Justin and Melito could hardly have written so forcefully without precedents.

118. Liu, Image and Reality, p. 129.