Ideology, Culture, and British New Testament Studies: The Challenge of Cultural Studies

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the challenge presented to biblical studies by British cultural studies. Focussing on ideology, it first provides a detailed description of the background and emergence of cultural studies Behind modern cultural studies is an older tradition commonly known as the "Culture and Civilization Tradition," epitomised by Matthew Arnold and F R Leavis It was in reaction to this tradition that British cultural studies emerged. The early development of cultural studies is traced, with special reference to the work of what came to be known as the "Birmingham School," specifically the work of Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, and E P Thompson

Drawing on this body of work, the article then undertakes a fresh critique of the historical-critical tradition in biblical studies, exemplified here by British New Testament studies. It notes the tendency, even within recent British New Testament scholarship, to dismiss much feminist and third world exegesis as ideological, while at the same time claiming neutrality and disinterested, rational scholarship for itself Using questions and strategies drawn from British cultural studies, a selection of British New Testament commentaries are examined The examination suggests that British New Testament scholarship is itself ideological and not neutral Rather, it has been written from the viewpoint of the rich and powerful and has ignored those without power and influence.

This article will try to do three things. Firstly, it will look at the background to modern British cultural studies and outline some of that discipline's foundational ideas. Secondly, it will use those ideas to interrogate some of the writings of British New Testament scholarship which represent that tradition's dominant strand. Thirdly, it will make some tentative suggestions for further discussion.

The "British" context is important. In the case of cultural studies there are the names of Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson and the foundation of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University. While we must be careful not to mythologize and privilege this era of the late 1950s and early 1960s in the formation of cultural studies, this "British" context does provide a useful way of opening up some of the main themes of the discipline. Conversely, it provides a way of limiting the

wide-ranging, international nature of cultural studies. In its British manifestation, cultural studies "could be described just as easily and perhaps more accurately as ideological studies in that it assimilates, in a variety of complex ways, culture to ideology" (Carey: 65) It is concerned with issues such as power and hegemony

In the case of "British" New Testament studies, it is important to note that the dominant tradition is still the historical-critical method. It is still claimed that this method is rational, disinterested and scientific. Other methods are not John Bowden, the managing director of SCM Press, sums up this dominant British view in an article on the New Testament and its interpretation·

> The thought and argument of liberation theology in its various forms and of feminist theology often do not withstand very close critical scrutiny Too much of liberation theology, too much of feminist theology, is ideological propaganda Too much of it cannot be justified by the only criteria we possess to determine whether a viewpoint is as near to the truth as we can get (280)

Similar thoughts are also developed by the British biblical scholar John Muddiman, writing in *The Expository Times*, a popular British biblical and theological periodical. In this article, "The End of Markan Redaction Criticism?," Muddiman reviews several (then) recent works on Mark's gospel In considering the literary approach represented by Kingsbury, he writes

> How far Mark's Gospel corresponds to history, and if the correspondence is not precise, what has been changed and how and why, are questions that cannot be raised This kind of literary criticism seals the text into an inviolable story-world, and finds Mark's importance solely in the coherence and effectiveness of its plot and characterization (308)

In his discussion of Waetjen's socio-political reading, we are told that "Sociology, rather than historical critical method, is used to furnish the necessary element of objectivity lacking in purely literary approaches. But surely it is only through historical critical analysis of the text that its extra-textual world can be recovered . . ." (308). We might well want to question, here, the priority of text over context. However, Muddiman's lament for the historical-critical method now follows:

> Is redaction criticism finished, then? Are students of Mark's Gospel now homeless refugees, without a discipline of their own, simple readers of a text, looking for shelter wherever they can, in piety or politics or paradox? Or does the present crisis mean that we have to rebuild the historical-critical method, and settle at last some of those disputed boundaries between form and redaction criticism (309)

The implication behind the statements of both Bowden and Muddiman is clear. The historical-critical method is the only realistic, neutral, and non-

ideological way of handling the biblical text. This dominant tradition within current British scholarship sweeps aside the questions raised by feminist, liberationist, and other ideologically sensitive exegetes in favour of the status quo. But why? The tradition developed within British cultural studies provides some of the answers.

The Background to British Cultural Studies

Behind modern cultural studies lies an older tradition usually known as the "Culture and Civilization" tradition. It was in reaction to this tradition that modern cultural studies evolved. Several names exemplify this older tradition, among whom we might mention Matthew Arnold and F. R. Leavis.

Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) was born the eldest son of the famous Thomas Arnold, sometime headmaster of Rugby School (a famous British public, i.e. private school), and Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford University. The younger Arnold graduated from Balliol College, Oxford, in 1844 and was elected, the following year, Fellow of Oriel College. From this starting point, his career broadened considerably. His interest in poetry eventually led to his appointment as Professor of Poetry at Oxford. He served for some years as private secretary to the aristocratic British Cabinet Minister, Lord Lansdowne. Most crucially, he was for many years a government Inspector (later Chief Inspector) of Schools, which brought him into contact with schools and people in working class areas. It is this mixture of interest, the use Arnold made of it, and its subsequent impact which are crucial. The tradition which Arnold inaugurated, and its influence until the 1950s,

> is difficult to underestimate for almost a hundred years it was undoubtedly the dominant paradigm in cultural analysis. Indeed, it could be argued that it still forms a kind of repressed "common sense" in certain areas of British and American academic and non-academic life (Storey, 1998 5)

In general terms, Arnold's view of culture might be described as elitist. It was a mixture of fine culture and high reason, well exemplified by ancient Athens:

> In the conversations recorded by Plato, or even by the matter-of-fact Xenophon, which for the free yet refined discussion of ideas have set the tone for the whole cultivated world, shopkeepers and tradesmen of Athens mingle as speakers For anyone but a pedant, this is why a handful of Athenians of two thousand years ago are more interesting than the millions of most nations our contemporaries. (1993b 21)

Yet for Arnold, culture is not simply a body of pure knowledge or even "a study of perfection" (1993a:59). It is also concerned with practical action, to change things. Arnold often quotes a maxim of Thomas Wilson, sometime Bishop of Sodor and Man, that culture's aim is "To make reason and the will

of God prevail" (1993a:60). Storey summarises Arnold's view of culture as: "(1) the ability to know what is best; (2) what is best; (3) the mental and spiritual application of what is best, and (4) the pursuit of what is best" (1997:23). The key question is, of course, how and by whom it is to be decided what is best.

For Arnold the answer is clear. A cultural elite will make the decision.

> The highly instructed few, and not the scantily instructed many, will ever be the origin to the human race of knowledge and truth Knowledge and truth in the full sense of the words, are not obtainable by the great mass of the human race at all (1960–77 43–44)

If this culture, put forward by the elite, is not adhered to, then England will become like America with "the dangers which come from the multitude being in power, with no adequate ideal to elevate or guide the multitude" (Arnold, 1993b:15). This danger can only be prevented by the "action of the State" (13).

At this point it becomes very clear that culture is not only elitist, but also openly political. It is not simply an abstract body of knowledge or good taste. It is ideological. In the background here is the Chartist movement and its aftermath (particularly the Hyde Park riots of 1867) centring around the demand for universal male suffrage. There was considerable civil unrest led by the new urbanised, industrialised and organised working class. Arnold's aim was to bring this civil unrest to an end by getting "a distinct notion of our aristocratic, our middle, and our working class, with a view to testing the claims of each of these classes to become a centre of authority" (1993a:102). (Respectively, the Barbarians, the Philistines, and the Populace.) However, this is problematic.

Arnold briskly dismisses the aristocracy as having had its day and consigns it to history. The middle class might, therefore, seem his natural choice. Unfortunately, it has considerable drawbacks. Arnold describes it as "moving between its two cardinal points of our commercial member of Parliament and our fanatical Protestant Dissenter" (1993a:104) and as having a "narrow, harsh, unintelligent, and unattractive spirit and culture" (1993b:22). Despite this, the middle class is Arnold's only hope and the solution lies in education. A proper education will transform it from its Protestant narrowness and commercial concerns into a class fit to rule.

One of the foundations of this education is a mythical, pre-industrial past. It is here that the influence of the English Romantic tradition, especially Wordsworth and Coleridge becomes clear. This is a past of "Shakspeare [*sic*] or Virgil—souls in whom sweetness and light, and all that in human nature is most humane, were eminent . . ." (1993a:69). It is a past in stark contrast to the present.

> If England were swallowed up by the sea tomorrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of

> mankind,—would most, therefore, show the evidence of having possessed greatness,—the England of the last twenty years, or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal, were very little developed? (1993a 64)

The values of this mythical past are to be brought into the present by the study of English literature. Literature was to be "an agent of social harmony, capable of binding class to class; and this social project moulded the forms of literary education as they were applied variously to the teaching of workers, school-children, women, and Indians" (Baldick, 1983:82). Arnold is making a considerable claim. English literature, and especially poetry, can change the middle class from its narrowness and fit it to govern It can also hold society (and Empire) together and contain the real danger of anarchy represented by the working class. In Arnold's famous description:

> the working class . . is now issuing from its hiding-place to assert an Englishman's heaven-born privilege of doing as he likes, and is beginning to perplex us by marching where it likes, meeting where it likes, bawling what it likes, breaking what it likes (1993a·107)

Containment is probably the best description for Arnold's aim in the area of working-class education. In a letter to his mother, written in 1862, he wrote: "the State has an interest in the primary school as a civilizing agent, even prior to its interest in it as an instructing agent" (1896:187). This applies not only to the pupils, but to the whole "neighbourhood where they are placed" (1973:39). As Storey tartly summarises it, the working class is to be civilised for "subordination, deference and exploitation" (1997:26). Arnold has no brief for social change, despite his experience of the working class. In his essay "Equality," he ignores the social division in society:

> A community having humane manners is a community of equals, and in such a community, great social inequalities have really no meaning, while they are at the same time a menace and an embarrassment to perfect ease of social intercourse (1993c:223)

Much of what Arnold had to say was taken up in the first part of the twentieth century by F. R. Leavis and those around him. Leavis (1895–1978) was a literary critic who taught at Cambridge University after the Great War. He saw himself as a direct descendant of Arnold. In *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture,* written in 1930, he noted that: "For Matthew Arnold it was in some ways less difficult. I am thinking of the so much more desperate plight of culture today" (3). This plight was exemplified for Leavisism by Hollywood films, popular fiction, radio, and advertising (Storey, 1997:31). Even apparently "establishment" institutions such as the BBC, Oxford University and the London literary journals were attacked (Baldick, 1996) In more mod-

ern language, the problem was "dumbing down." This mass culture was seen as a threat to "proper" culture and frightened those around Leavis.

Leavis's wife, Q. D Leavis, wrote of a situation in which "the minority, who had hitherto set the standard of taste without any serious challenge" had experienced a "collapse of authority" (1978:185, 187). Leavis himself, writing with Denys Thompson, developed the theme in a similar way:

> Upon the minority depends our power of profiting by the finest experience of the past, they keep alive the subtlest and most perishable parts of tradition Upon them depend the implicit standards that order the finer living of an age, the sense that this is worth more than that, this rather than that is the direction in which to go, that the centre is here rather than there (5)

Like Arnold, Leavis and his colleagues put forward a past golden age when there was a shared culture uncorrupted by commerce. Leavis considered Shakespeare as belonging "to a genuinely national culture, to a community in which it was possible for the theatre to appeal to the cultivated and the populace at the same time" (1933:216). His wife put it rather more bluntly. When this national culture existed "the masses were receiving their amusement from above. . . They had to take the same amusements as their betters . even if they would not have understood the finer passages Happily, they had no other choice . . ." (1978:78).

Leavis did, of course, recognise that this past had disappeared, but its values and standards were still accessible through literature. To make sure that these standards were upheld in the face of the new mass culture, Leavisism proposed the sending out of cultural missionaries In schools, they were to spend "English lessons alerting schoolchildren to the manipulativeness of advertisements or the linguistic poverty of the popular press" (Eagleton. 34). In the wider community, they were to oppose mass culture as best they could.

Some of this might make us regard Leavis and his colleagues as eccentric reactionaries. In part they were. Yet within his own academic discipline, Leavis was responsible for a great renaissance in the study of English literature. As Eagleton has noted: "In the early 1920s it was desperately unclear why English was worth studying at all; by the early 1930s it had become a question of why it was worth wasting your time on anything else" (31). Nonetheless, English was for Leavis openly ideological. It was not a neutral academic subject. English literature and its study exemplified what it was to be English.

Of course, neither Arnold nor Leavis was writing in a cultural vacuum. Both were influenced by events around them. The "Culture and Civilization" tradition was the result of the working out of a wider set of events. Although historians disagree on the exact dating of some of these events, cultural change being notoriously hard to pin down, their main thrust is clear enough.

In the fifty years or so before Arnold's birth in 1822 the concept of "Britishness" and "British" culture came to be defined in a new way. Several inter-

connected areas forced this change. The landed classes of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland had suffered a major demographic crisis which meant that many family lines died out. The effect of this was severalfold. Estates did not pass to direct descendants but to distant relatives in different parts of the country (Colley: 166). The link between the gentry and the local community was broken while at the same time wealth was consolidated. This occurred at the same time as political upheavals such as the American and French Revolutions and the writings of radicals such as Thomas Paine and William Corbett were calling into question the existence of a powerful and wealthy ruling elite (Colley: 161–62).

The aristocracy struck back very subtly. Firstly, every class was encouraged to unite against what was foreign, i.e. the French, the Americans, and Catholics—though mainly the latter (Colley: 57). Secondly, the idea of private property was enshrined more firmly in the "British" consciousness. This was achieved, in part, by drawing attention to the horrors of revolution, but also by floating "the idea that aristocratic property was in some magical and strictly intangible way *the people's property also*" (Colley: 191). This latter was given a firm foundation by the establishment, in 1805, of the "British Institution for Promoting Fine Arts in the United Kingdom." In this Institution, aristocrats allowed their art treasures to be displayed, thus "sharing" them with the nation. Private ownership and wealth became less of an issue. In fact,

> the British Institution helped to forge a set of cultural assumptions that remain enormously influential today namely, the quite extraordinary idea that even if an art object comes from abroad, and even if it remains securely in private ownership, as long as it resides in a country house it must somehow belong to the nation and enhance it (Colley 191)

At the same time, it was not simply the aristocratic classes which defined "Britishness." In this same pre-Arnold period, London, as a metropolitan centre, achieved what might be termed a "critical mass." Commercial and artistic growth made it possible to join together theatre, music, literature and painting in one place. In this sense, our "modern idea of 'high culture' is an eighteenth-century invention" (Brewer: xvi). So strong was this cultural growth that the *London Guide* of 1782 opened

> not with royal palaces but with a detailed account of city theatres The visitor's journey continued to include, as it still does, the Tower of London, St Paul's Cathedral and the royal palaces, but the image and map of the city was now dominated by its cultural landscape (Brewer 50)

This cultural landscape in London had, within twenty years, brought together Shakespeare, Handel, and Reynolds as, respectively, the supreme British poet, British composer, and British painter. At the same time, "the British countryside had become irrevocably sanctified as the nation's greatest

beauty" (Brewer: 663). In this same period, guidebooks to art and music "not only spoke of the merits of individuals but conveyed a general sense of British literature and history" (Brewer: 463) and this commercially driven patriotism was disseminated through both the books themselves and also through the increasing number of newspapers (Colley. 233).

While this commercial, artistic transformation was taking place, the aristocratic classes were busy securing their own leadership role Having saved private property, they now used education to build an elite feeling. Prior to the uniting of various estates, schooling had also been much more localised Yet by around 1800 "over 70 per cent of all English peers received their education at just four public schools, Eton, Westminster, Winchester and Harrow" (Colley: 180) Classical (i e Greek and Latin) literature was the mainstay of the curriculum. This was

> doubly congenial because the kind of patriotic achievement it celebrated was a highly specific one The heroes of Homer, Cicero and Plutarch were emphatically men of rank and title As such they reminded Britain's élite of its duty to serve and fight, but in addition, affirmed its superior qualification to do both (Colley 181)

In the world outside education, publications such as the lavishly illustrated volumes of *The Antiquities of Athens* further nurtured "phil-Hellenism" (Brewer 260) Colley gives a useful summary of this pre-Victorian period:

> By becoming a more unitary élite in this way, top Britons not only buttressed and consolidated their own social and political primacy, they also helped to influence what Britishness was all about Public schools, fox-hunting, a cult of military heroism and a particular brand of "manliness," the belief that stately homes are part of the nation's heritage, a love of uniforms all of these characteristic components of British life, which still remain powerful today, first became prominent under patrician auspices in the half-century after the American war (207)

Moving forward into the Victorian era, while the landed classes had a firm grip on power, there was considerable pressure from below. Education was once more involved, though this time education for the working classes and women. Both the working class, and women of any class, were excluded from the professions, all of which required a classical education. In response to this exclusion various movements for adult education were founded "including Mechanics Institutes, Working Men's Colleges, and [university] extension lecturing and . . within this general movement, . . specific provision for women's education" (Baldick, 1983.61).

F D. Maurice, Professor of English Literature at King's College, London, in the 1840s, and one of the founders of "Christian Socialism" (which was designed to head off the Chartist movement'[Baldick, 1983.63]), was prominent in the setting up of the original Working Men's College and also founded Queen's College, London, for women in 1848. But it is clear that these classes

and colleges were designed for containment in much the same way as Arnold was to talk of school education Baldick quotes a piece Maurice wrote in 1853:

> In America some are maintaining that they [women] should take degrees and practise as physicians I not only do not see my way to such a result; I not only should not wish that any college I was concerned in should be leading to it, but I should think that there could be no better reason for founding a college than to remove the slightest craving for such a state of things, by giving a more healthful direction to the minds which might entertain it.

Baldick adds his own comment: "These classes for women were not designed to emancipate, but to confirm women in their established roles" (1983:68).

In the general field of adult education, it was soon realised that study in itself had a civilising effect, and that if the working class could be enticed into adult education, then it would "set in motion within the hearts and minds of working people a particular process of self-improvement, or—what was just as beneficial—a feeling of their need to be improved according to others' standards" (Baldick, 1983:64).

As in schools, so also in adult education, English was to be the medium used to contain the non-elite. In the late Victorian period it came to replace religion as the social cement of British society. In its Victorian forms, religion was "a *pacifying* influence, fostering meekness, self- sacrifice and the contemplative inner life." It was, however, no longer winning the hearts and minds of the masses. Thus, George Gordon, Professor of English Literature at Oxford, commented in his inaugural lecture:

> England is sick, and . . . English literature must save it The Churches (as I understand it) having failed, and social remedies being slow, English literature has now a triple function. still, I suppose, to delight and instruct us, but also, and above all, to save our souls and heal the State (Eagleton: 23)

Doyle comments that the academic discipline of "English is best seen as an invented or constructed cultural form which was a culmination of attempts to produce a truly 'English' theory of society and a prospectus for cultural renewal" (102). In similar vein, Eagleton notes that "Literature, in the meaning of the word we have inherited, *is* an ideology It has the most intimate relations to questions of social power" (22).

Despite the full backing of the establishment, this view of education in general, and English in particular, did not go entirely unchallenged. In 1919, the British government established a committee, under Sir Henry Newbolt, barrister and jingoistic poet, to enquire into the teaching of English in schools. The Newbolt Report, published in 1921, makes unsurprising reading, picking up on many of Arnold's ideas. There was, however, resistance:

> We were told that the working classes, especially those belonging to organised labour movements, were antagonistic to, and contemptuous of literature, that they regarded it "merely as an ornament, a polite accomplishment,

> a subject to be despised by really virile men." Literature, in fact, seems to be classed by a large number of thinking working men with antimacassars, fish knives and other unintelligible and futile trivialities of "middle-class culture" and, as a subject of instruction, is suspect as an attempt "to side-track the working class movement " We regard the prevalence of such opinions as a serious matter because it points to a morbid condition of the body politic which if not taken in hand may be followed by lamentable consequences (Newbolt Committee 155)

The working classes were, of course, not entirely wrong in some of their views.

Now if, as cultural studies claims, this view of Britishness/Englishness; of education in general, and English in particular; of phil-Hellenism; of manliness; of the role of the State; and of the other things mentioned, was widespread, it seems unlikely that British New Testament Studies would have been uninfluenced by this ideology The extent of some of these influences will be examined later. A small clue is provided by something Leavis wrote in 1930:

> The landmarks have shifted, multiplied and crowed upon one another, the distinctions and dividing lines have blurred away, the boundaries are gone, and the art and literature of different countries and periods have flowed together (3)

The parallels to the laments of Bowden and Muddiman some sixty years later, concerning New Testament studies, are striking.

"Modern" British Cultural Studies

It was out of the ideological background outlined above that what might be termed "modern" British cultural studies arrived. In the early period, three names predominate—Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, and E. P. Thompson The work of these three formed the basis of what was to become known as the "Birmingham School," though the latter two were never part of the University Centre

Richard Hoggart (b. 1918) is perhaps best remembered for two things—the founding of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), at the University of Birmingham, and his book, *The Uses of Literacy: aspects of working-class life with special reference to publications and entertainments*, published in 1957. Hoggart came, himself, from a working-class background, having been born on the outskirts of the northern industrial city of Leeds. After reading English at the local university, he saw war service in Europe and towards the end of the war was an Army education officer While he was in Italy, Hoggart met the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce who, some decades earlier, had influenced Antonio Gramsci. Croce may also have had an impact on Hoggart (Steele· 131).

After the war, Hoggart became an adult education tutor at the University of Hull, teaching English literature. During this time he wrote extensively on adult education matters, especially on how to teach literature to adults (Steele: 119). It was against this background that *The Uses of Literacy* was conceived.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part, "An older order," describes the working-class culture of Hoggart's (1930s) childhood. The second part, "Yielding place to new," details the attack which Hoggart believed modern mass culture was making on this older and better culture. The crucial step Hoggart takes is to consider seriously working-class culture as it was lived in his own youth, and to give it a positive assessment. He does not look back to "some rather mistily conceived pastoral tradition the better to assault the present" (24)—clearly a rebuke to Leavisism. Instead, he celebrates working-class culture and its strong sense of community. Phrases such as "straight-dealing," "good neighbourliness," "looking on the bright side," "openness," "lending a hand," and "loyalty" occur throughout (e.g. 169). This culture does not depend on outside influences, but is largely made by the people themselves. A good example of this can be found in the famous description of a day trip to the seaside by "chara" (northern working-class dialect for a single deck bus from the French *char-à-banc*—literally "carriage with wheels").

> Most illuminating of all is the habit of the "chara" trip For the day trip by "chara" has been particularly taken up by working-class people, and made into one of their peculiar—that is, characteristic—kinds of pleasure-occasion. Some even take their week's holiday in this way, in successive outings. . The "charas" go rolling out across the moors for the sea, past the road-houses which turn up their noses at coach-parties, to one the driver knows where there is coffee and biscuits or perhaps a full egg-and-bacon breakfast Then on to a substantial lunch on arrival, and after that a fanning-out in groups. But rarely far from one another, because they know their part of the town and their bit of the beach, where they feel at home. . . [T]hey have a nice walk past the shops; perhaps a drink; a sit in a deck-chair eating an ice-cream or sucking mint-humbugs, a great deal of loud laughter. Then there is the buying of presents for the family, a big meat-tea, and the journey home with a stop for drinks on the way. (146–148)

When in the second part of the book, Hoggart begins to be critical of modern (i.e. 1950s) mass culture, it is not because of the low-brow nature of that culture. It is because it destroys the solid, community based, working-class culture:

> The strongest objection to the more trivial popular entertainments is not that they prevent their readers from becoming highbrow, but that they make it harder for people without an intellectual bent to become wise in their own way (338)

Mass entertainments, such as films and the popular press, encourage passivity and create some sort of false group feeling or conformity (189, 177). The effect of this mass culture is not, however, all one-sided "The working-class have a strong natural ability to survive change by adopting or assimilating what they want in the new and ignoring the rest" (32).

In *The Uses of Literacy,* Hoggart achieved three things. Firstly, he took everyday working-class culture seriously. He analysed both its language and lifestyle and found good things to celebrate. Secondly, he noted how resistant this culture could be to what we would term hegemony. (As Storey has noted, "the seaside holiday began as an aristocratic event and within a hundred years it had become an example of popular culture" [1997.14].) Thirdly, he had outlined how complex modern culture was, demonstrating "the interconnections among various aspects of public culture—pubs, working men's clubs, magazines and sports, for instance—and the structures of an individual's private, everyday life—family roles, gender relations, language patterns, the community's 'common sense'" (Turner: 44). All of this began to lay the foundations for British ideological/cultural criticism.

More foundations were laid by Raymond Williams (1921–1988). Like Hoggart, Williams was born into a working-class family in Wales—his father was a signalman on the railways. In 1939, he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, to read English His studies were interrupted by war service. After active service, he too ended the war as an education officer He then completed his studies and then worked from 1946–1961 for the Oxford Delegacy (i.e. the University's adult education department) Subsequently he became a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge and the university Professor of Drama. He regarded himself as a life-long socialist In the field of cultural studies, Williams is best known for two of his early works: *Culture and Society,* published in 1958, which was conceived as a text-book for his adult education classes in literature, and its sequel, *The Long Revolution,* published in 1961 Williams also wrote prolifically about education, television, radio, the press, and advertising, as well as novels and other critical works (O'Connor: 128–175).

In *Culture and Society,* Williams examined the "cultural critique of industrial capitalism" (Taylor, 1996 564) He traced this through writers such as John Stuart Mill, William Morris, and R. H. Tawney. However, the "primal energy of the book springs from its repudiation of the value system and ideology which informed his degree course at Cambridge," that is, Leavisism (Inglis. 143) Like Hoggart, Williams will have nothing to do with some mythical past age: "If there is one thing certain about 'the organic community,' it is that it is always gone" (Williams, 1993:259). Williams filled out these ideas more fully in *The Long Revolution*

The "Revolution" referred to in the title is in fact a combination of three revolutions—the democratic revolution with the coming of suffrage and lib-

eration in the colonies; the industrial revolution; and, thirdly, the cultural revolution (Williams, 1992:x–xi). Williams saw the first two as generally accepted and concentrated on the third. However, "we cannot understand the process of change in which we are involved if we limit ourselves to thinking of the democratic, industrial and cultural revolutions as separate processes." Together they form "our whole way of life" (1992:xi).

The cultural revolution is "the aspiration to extend the active process of learning, with the skills of literacy and other advanced communication, to all people rather than to limited groups. . . . This aspiration has been and is being resisted . . ." (Williams, 1992:xi). Culture itself is broken down into three categories by Williams. The first is "the 'ideal,' in which culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values" (1992:41). Arnold and Leavis would have approved of this. The second category is:

> the "documentary," in which culture is a body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded. The analysis of culture, from such a definition, is the activity of criticism . Such criticism can [include] a kind of historical criticism which, after analysis of particular works, seeks to relate them to the particular traditions and societies in which they appeared. (1992 41)

For Williams, this is the detailed scholarship of English language and literature. Literary works were not produced in a vacuum.

It is Williams's third category which gave the British tradition its crucial step forward. This was

> the "social" definition of culture, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour The analysis of culture, from such a definition, is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture (1992 41)

Williams wants to hold all three categories together. Thus the theory of culture is "the study of the relationships between elements in the whole way of life" and the analysis of culture "is the attempt to discover the nature of the organization which is the complex of these relationships" (1992:46).

These relationships are not static. There is constant change caused by "the progress and interaction of democracy and industry" both between themselves and with art and literature (1992:xi). The point Williams is making is that language and literature cannot help but be affected by wider society. There is no ideologically pure "English" and meaning is socially constructed. Williams was to develop this further in *Keywords*, first published in 1976, which had been originally intended as an appendix to *Culture and Society*.

The third figure is the historian E P. Thompson (1924–1993). Unlike Hoggart and Williams, Thompson came from a middle-class background. Like the others, however, he saw active service in the war and it was only afterwards that he completed his degree in history at Cambridge. After his degree, he was for many years an extra-mural lecturer at Leeds University. Unlike Hoggart and Williams, Thompson developed his cultural theory from within Marxism, though he left the Communist Party around the time of the Soviet intervention in Hungary (Turner: 63).

Thompson's foundational work was *The Making of the English Working Class*, first published in 1963 and continually reprinted It is a massive work, running to almost one thousand pages in the tightly printed paperback Stuart Hall, who was to succeed Hoggart as director of the CCCS, described it as "the most seminal work of social history of the post-war period" (1980 19). As with the other works mentioned above, Thompson wrote his work, at least in part, to provide material for his adult education classes (Kaye: 206).

Despite its length and detail, the premise of the book is simple History, without the experience (in the widest sense) of "ordinary" men and women, is not history but some form of ideology. Thompson introduces what we now know as "history from below," rather than the "history of kings and queens." He argues that.

> history [has been read] in the light of subsequent preoccupations, and not as in fact it occurred Only the successful are remembered. The blind alleys, the lost causes, and the losers themselves are forgotten I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper from the enormous condescension of posterity Their aspirations were valid in terms of their own experience (12)

This rescue is not simply a new academic adventure. It has a purpose. Having outlined "a belief in the historical strength of the English subaltern classes to resist hegemonic culture through their own rituals and institutions" (Steele: 160), Thompson wants to point out that "it is possible for people to make something of themselves other than that which history has made for them" (McClelland: 3).

These three authors, Hoggart, Williams and Thompson, provided the basis for British cultural studies and the foundation of the CCCS at Birmingham. In subsequent years, cultural studies would widen in scope. It would look for a firmer foundation in theory, especially in Althusser and Gramsci. It would discuss gender, race, and youth culture, and it currently embraces, in part, the postcolonial tradition.

Returning to our three authors, we might usefully suggest, at this point, what sort of questions their concerns might put to British New Testament studies.

- From the background, both in Arnold and Leavis, and in the wider concepts of "British" culture, we might want to know what attitude is taken to power and authority, and in particular, the power of the State.
- To what extent has New Testament studies been influenced by the "Culture and Civilization" tradition?
- Hoggart and Thompson suggest, in rather different ways, that the poor have been written out of history. Is this true of New Testament studies?
- Do the rich, and their concerns, have a disproportionate amount of space?
- Do the authors of the New Testament commentaries reveal anything about their wider ideological concerns beyond what is justified by the immediate exegesis?
- Is it possible to see New Testament studies as a whole way of life?

I want to stress here that I am only concerned indirectly with what the New Testament itself may or may not say about these subjects—that is, the ideologies of the New Testament writings. I am concerned, in the main, with what commentators have written—that is, with commentaries and so forth as ideological works.

Interrogating the Commentaries

There are methodological problems in interrogating British commentaries—which commentaries to examine and whether to examine specific passages or whole commentaries. On the former problem, it was expedient simply to use a library well stocked with British commentaries from the late-Victorian period to the present. On the latter problem, both methods suggested that they would produce interesting material, though it requires considerable patience to read a routine commentary from cover to cover for one telling quotation. In the end, a mixture of methods was adopted. Specific themes were examined by consulting a range of commentaries on obedience to the state (Rom 13:1–7), taxes to Caesar (Mark 12:13–17, pars.), the story of the rich ruler (Luke 18:18–30, pars.), and the classic liberation theology text of the incident at Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30). In addition, certain volumes of *The Cambridge Bible Commentary* series were examined to illustrate the value of examining whole commentaries.

At the risk of generalisation, British commentaries fall into three groups, depending on the date of their publication, though these differences are perhaps not as great as might be expected. The example of Romans 13 illustrates the point. Among the late 19th century and early 20th century commentaries, this 1897 exegesis is typical (italics added):

> There is here an apparent point of contact between Christianity and anarchism, and it may have been the knowledge of some such movement of

> mind in the Church at Rome that made Paul write what he did There is perhaps nothing in the passage which is not already given in our Lord's word, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's", yet nothing can be more worthy of admiration than the soberness with which a Christian idealist like Paul lays down the Divine right of the state The use made of this passage to prove the duty of "passive obedience", or "the right divine of kings to govern wrong," is beside the mark, the Apostle was not thinking of such things at all *What is in his mind is that the organisation of human society, with its distinction of higher and lower ranks, is essential for the preservation of moral order,* and therefore, one might add, for *the existence of the kingdom of God itself,* so that no Christian is at liberty to revolt against that organisation The state is of God, and the Christian has to recognise its Divine right in the persons and requirements presented to him that is all (Denney 695)

Two things are fascinating in this quotation. Firstly, the equation of the kingdom of God with a stratified, hierarchical class system and, secondly, the idea that without this the kingdom of God would not exist. Additionally, we might note that the editor of the work quoted, Sir William Robertson Nicholl, 1851–1923, did not take his own commentary's advice. In 1902 he was one of the leading champions of resistance to the British Prime Minister's Education Bill. In this legislation, Balfour proposed a huge increase in educational provision for working people, both at school level and university. The campaign against this involved passive civil disobedience in the form of non-payment of rates (local taxes) to block the measure. However, in his later years, Nicholl returned to the position that the quotation might suggest, making the magazine he edited, the *British Weekly,* the focus of non-conformist support for the government war effort in the First World War (*Dictionary of National Biography* 1922–1930:636–37).

Another example of this late-Victorian exegesis can be found in H. C G Moule, 1841–1920, Cambridge classics scholar, public school teacher, Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and finally Bishop of Durham On the attitude of the Christian, Moule writes.

> Most assuredly his attitude was not to be that of the revolutionist, who looks upon the State as a sort of belligerent power, against which he, alone or in company, openly or in the dark, is free to carry on a campaign (1894 350)

And:

> Both in the Old Testament and in the New a just monarchy appears to be the ideal (354)

And:

> for the common run of lives the worst settled authority is infinitely better than real anxiety (355)

Moule disseminated his ideas to a younger audience in his 1903 commentary for the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* series. Similar comments on Rom 13:1–7 can be found in Sanday and Headlam, Gifford, and Gore.

By the middle decades of the twentieth century, at least the language used in exegesis is, sometimes, rather more moderate. C. H. Dodd, 1884–1973, Oxford classics scholar and Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, wrote in 1932 of the civil government: "It is part of the natural moral order, of divine appointment, but lying outside the order of grace revealed in Christ" (204). Yet this is still a troublesome passage. In 1948, we read, in a popular exposition by an Anglican cleric issued by a reputable publisher, that (italics added):

> St Paul's digression on the Christian's relation to the authorities was perhaps called for *by reason of the incorrigible Jewish tendency to turbulence, not unaccompanied by violence,* even under circumstances which gave no hope of even a momentary success. The Christian hope is not dependent on nationalist aspirations, and the Christian character cannot afford to be compromised by participation in popular tumults. . (Evans· 211)

This chilling exposition may be a reflection of earlier "learned" exegesis. In 1900, Charles Gore, 1853–1932, scholar at Oxford, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, royal chaplain, and successively Bishop of Worcester, Birmingham, and Oxford, had written that "The Jews . . . had always an instinctive tendency to rebellion" (116–17). How these mid-century commentaries fit into the holocaust, Indian independence, and the establishment of Israel is not clear.

The later commentaries of C. K. Barrett (1957) and Matthew Black (1973) advance the general exegesis of the mid-century commentaries by little. It is not until we reach Ziesler, in 1989, that we find some consideration given to the difficulties raised by this passage, especially for Christians in Germany during the wars. Ziesler writes that the passage

> has been seen as problematic by those who wished to challenge the state's authority, in whole or in part, in the name of Christian faith and obedience. What, for example, were Christians in Nazi Germany to make of such teaching? (307–8)

Yet at the same time, Ziesler tells us within five pages: "There is no place for anarchy" (308); "It excludes anarchy"(308); "Paul's teaching stands within a Jewish tradition of adopting a positive attitude to the established authorities, the alternative to which was seen as chaos and anarchy" (309); and, "Anarchy is ruled out" (313). Matthew Arnold seems to have a long reach!

The question of taxes to Caesar (Mark 12:13–17, pars.) reveals a not dissimilar pattern of exegesis through the century. The main thrust of all the

commentaries is the way Jesus manages to extract himself from a difficult situation. However, there is still a concern for authority. G. F Maclear, 1833–1902, sometime Cambridge classical scholar and public school headmaster, wrote in 1899

> The head of the Emperor on the coin, the legend round it, and its circulation in the country, were undeniable proofs of the right of the actually existing government to levy the tax (156)

Writing on the Matthean version in 1909, Alfred Plummer, 1841–1926, both a student and lecturer in Oxford, gave the following opinion:

> The coin represented Roman organisation, security of person and property, facilities of transit, and other beneficent elements of stable government (305)

At the same time, Henry Barclay Swete, 1835–1917, student and later Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, was writing of Mark's version:

> The thought seems to be "The coin is Caesar's; let him have his own The fact that it circulates in Judaea shews [*sic*] that in the ordering of GOD'S providence Judaea is now under Roman rule, recognise facts, so long as they exist, as interpreting to you the Divine Will, and submit " Granted that payment was a badge of slavery, there are circumstances, Christ teaches, under which slavery must be borne (276)

Moving forward half a century, little has changed. A M. Hunter, 1906–1991, student and Professor at Oxford, wrote: "In the present case there was much to be said for the Roman government; to its subject peoples it brought, on the whole, peace and even-handed justice" (1949:116). Similarly, Vincent Taylor, 1887–1968, one of the few not to have attended Oxford or Cambridge, though firmly co-opted through various honorary lectureships in both, wrote: "the acceptance and use of Caesar's coinage implicitly acknowledge his authority and therefore the obligation to pay taxes" (480)

A decade later, the same exegesis is still being followed. G B. Caird, 1917–1984, student at both Cambridge and Oxford, Double First in classics, and later Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at Oxford tells us.

> By accepting the Roman coinage and with it the benefits conferred by Rome in the way of economic stability and political order, they had committed themselves to answer their own question

And:

> As long as Caesar performs his God-given function of providing a framework of order for the common life of men, he has the right to claim his due, taxes are not an imposition extorted by the victor from the vanquished, to be paid under duress, but a debt to be acknowledged as a moral obligation (222–23)

No mention is made in any of the commentaries, including more recent ones such as Hooker (1991) of the immense difficulties involved for those who had to pay the taxes. Yet as Horsley has noted, taxation from the temple, Herod, and Rome had dire consequences.

> Unable to meet these demands and still feed themselves, many peasants fell increasingly into debt The downward spiral of indebtedness would have meant that many eventually either left their ancestral land or became tenants of their creditors Literary sources from the late first century C.E , such as the Gospels, reflect the disintegration of the fundamental forms of social life that accompanied these economic burdens on the people (221)

Myers gives an interesting summary of how the tax to Caesar incident has been interpreted: "Exegetes who otherwise think the Gospel of Mark has little to do with political discourse feel free at this point to insert their own" (313).

Turning to the "Nazareth Manifesto," the exegesis is interesting. The earliest commentaries spiritualize the poor in the verse "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). According to F. W. Farrar, Cambridge classical scholar, public school headmaster, Dean of Canterbury, and writing in 1884, these are the "poor in spirit" (150). There is little change to the exegesis in the later commentaries. Creed's 1930 commentary gives no detailed exegesis of the key quotation from Isaiah and we must look to comments on Luke 6:20 for an explanation of the poor, where we are told that "Poverty and piety are closely linked in the Psalter . . . and the beatitude must be interpreted in the light of this usage" (91). Creed, as might be expected, was another Cambridge classical scholar and later Professor of Divinity in the same University.

In the same year, 1930, William Manson, 1882–1958, Oxford classical scholar and eventually one of the first presidents of SNTS (1952–1953) gave his exegesis of the poor.

> The term poor is taken in its inward spiritual sense and similarly the expressions captive, blind, oppressed indicate not primarily the down-trodden victims of material force, such as Rome's, but the victims of inward repressions, neuroses, and other spiritual ills due to misdirection and failure of life's energies and purposes. (41–42)

This lack of exegesis or spiritualization continues in the later commentaries. (On the former see Leaney [1958], Browning [1960], for the latter Caird [1963], Marshall [1978].) The first full exegesis of the passage comes only in 1990. Christopher Evans, born 1909, Cambridge classics man, lecturer at Oxford, gives a detailed exegesis. On the poor he writes:

> The noun *ptōchoi* (absent from A[cts]) is . more frequent in Luke than in the other gospels Its occurrence here raises the question whether it, and the following expressions, are to be taken in a figurative sense, since it has, probably in Isa 61[1] and certainly often in the psalms, the meaning of "humble,"

> "meek" In all other instances in Luke, however, it denotes literal poverty (270)

Evans also provides a full exegesis of the Sabbath and Jubilee year traditions. This is the first commentary in which the rigour of the historical-critical method has prevailed. (It was, of course, the occasion of Evans's eightieth birthday which provoked Bowden's original lament.)

Turning now to the incident of the rich ruler (Luke 18:18–30), the same commentaries we have examined are concerned to show that the need to be without riches is not a general injunction, but something specific only to that occasion. Farrar, in 1884, tells us:

> The command to sell all and give to the poor was *special,* not general To the world in general the command is not to sell all, but "not to trust in uncertain riches, but to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate," 1 Tim vi 17–19 (334)

Towards the mid-twentieth century, Balmforth, 1890–1977, Oxford classical scholar and public school headmaster, wrote that for the rich ruler

> the call is to that life of literal poverty which Jesus and his companions led There is no general injunction upon all followers of Christ to strip themselves of their possessions (254)

In the same year, Creed wrote:

> Not the possession of wealth but too absolute a devotion to its acquisition and too ready a surrender to its temptations were feared (226)

The later commentaries of Leaney and Caird tend towards the "pass over in silence" category. Again, only Evans (1990) gives a full historical-critical exegesis.

If we take Raymond Williams's definition that the "analysis of culture . is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture" (1992.41), the culture of the British historical-critical method begins to emerge. With its roots firmly embedded in the classics, public schools, and Oxford and Cambridge, British New Testament studies would seem to be presenting a massive apologia for wealth, the ruling classes, and the State. The commentators seem unable to come to grips with the presence of the poor in the New Testament text, despite the much vaunted rigour of the historical-critical method The commentators also seem to move in an ahistorical world One moment they are dealing with Paul and the Roman state or Caesar and tax The next moment they are in the nineteenth or twentieth century To paraphrase the quotation from E. P Thompson: "history has been read in the light of subsequent preoccupations and not

in fact as it occurred. . . . I am seeking to rescue the poor Galilean fisherman, the peasant farmer . . . from the enormous condescension of history."

We turn now to a series of commentaries, *The Cambridge Bible Commentary Series,* published in the 1960s. A careful reading of five of these volumes is rewarding. The particular volumes are Lace's introductory work, *Understanding the New Testament,* and the four volumes on the gospels—C. F. D. Moule on Mark, A. W. Argyle on Matthew, E. J. Tinsley on Luke, and A. M. Hunter on John.

The aim of the series is set out in each volume in the general editors' preface (by P. R. Ackroyd, A. R. C. Leaney, and J. W. Packer):

> The aim of this series is to provide commentaries and other books about the Bible, based on the text of the New English Bible, and in these various volumes to make available to the general reader the results of modern scholarship Teachers and young people preparing for such examinations as the General Certificate of Education at Ordinary or Advanced Level in Britain and elsewhere, have been especially kept in mind The commentators have been asked to assume no specialized theological knowledge, and no knowledge of Greek or Hebrew

What sort of questions might cultural studies put to this opening statement?

In one sense, the statement is straight-forward. Academic specialists are making their work known at a more popular level, free from jargon and technicalities. How far the "results of modern scholarship" emerge is debatable. Tinsley's *Luke* is striking, among the others, in its open approach to critical matters. The rest, to a greater or lesser extent, have a feeling of "not in front of the children" and where critical matters are raised it is to defend the historicity of the narrative. This is particularly so with regard to the miraculous (Argyle: 113; Moule: 16). There is often a feeling of having stepped back a century or so.

This raises the question of the intended audience. One of the main aims of the series is preparation for examinations (interestingly both in Britain and elsewhere). Thus one of the intended audiences is young people between the ages of fifteen and eighteen. (Quite what this says about the intended audiences of the "general reader" and, on the covers of the later volumes, "ministers," is another matter!) Cultural critics might suggest that we look at these intended audiences in a little more detail. Staying with the teenagers, at the time the commentaries were being written, only a small percentage of pupils took the public examinations mentioned in the preface. Comprehensive schooling was in its infancy and the majority of pupils took different examinations of considerably less academic status, if they took any at all. Cultural critics could frame this in a combative manner: "These commentaries were written by the elite, for the elite." But has this affected the exegesis?

Some examples from C. F. D. Moule (b. 1908), Cambridge classics scholar and Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, suggest that it has.

- Mark's gospel "was probably written for the leader of some Christian community, to help him in teaching his people and explaining to inquirers what Christians believed" (3). Why the leader and not the whole community?
- On Mark 9:37, "Whoever receives one of these children in my name . . receives me," Moule writes disparagingly, "A concern for children was not invented by the welfare state: it goes back to the teaching of Jesus" (75). The British welfare state, with free health care for all, had come into being in 1947 with the birth of the National Health Service
- On Mark 10·17–27, the story of the rich young man, we read (italics added), "there is nothing to show, however, that Jesus's only prescription for possessions is, give them all away! Always, he tells us not to be attached to them. *But sometimes, rich men may have to keep their riches and bear the burden of using them wisely for the kingdom of God*" (80, italics added).
- On the character of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, "We hear about him also from the non-Christian Jewish writers Philo and Josephus. . . . They both give him a bad character, though we cannot help seeing that he was placed in a very difficult and unenviable position by the turn which events had taken" (124).
- Perhaps not surprisingly, on taxes to Caesar we are told that "to accept and use the currency is to put oneself under an obligation to the government which administers it" (97).
- Mark 9:42–48, the series of sayings about being thrown into the sea and cutting off limbs which cause one to stumble, is described as "Some stern sayings about *our* heavy responsibility towards any *who may look up to us*" (75, italics added)

Moule shows a concern for authority in these passages which cannot be described as disinterested.

These concerns are reflected in Lace's introductory volume. In the section on "The Teaching of the Epistles," three lines deal with family life, polygamy, pagan morals, and slaves and masters (89). All of these might be thought to be of interest to teenagers and certainly form a sizeable proportion of the epistles. But these three lines are followed by three pages, with full biblical quotations, about authority—obeying the authorities (Rom 13:1–7), submission to human institutions (1 Pet 2:13–17); submission to God (Jas 4:6–10); and obeying elders (1 Pet 5:5–9). There is clearly a very distinct message being conveyed here, not only to teenagers, but also to the other intended audiences—teachers, clergy, and the general public. The other commentaries

in the series contain similar material reflecting the ideological concerns and contexts of their authors.

Some Conclusions and Questions

It would seem to be beyond doubt that cultural studies has some challenging questions to put to the dominant tradition within British New Testament studies. The concerns emphasised by the "Culture and Civilization" tradition, in its widest sense, have clearly influenced the commentaries examined. The concerns of the rich and powerful have been given prominence and the concerns of the poor have been spiritualised or ignored. The powerful influence of public schools, classics, and Oxford and Cambridge are very clear. The historical-critical method is not as impartial as some of its practitioners might imagine. This dominant strand of British historical-critical scholarship is ideological and issues its own propaganda every bit as much as the types of scholarship it denigrates or ignores. Cultural studies gives us some of the tools needed to uncover this ideology.

Finally, I would like to raise some general questions in the context of moving the cultural studies argument forward.

- Out of the wide range of cultural studies material available, other academic disciplines such as English, History, and Sociology, have made their own selections from available theory for their own self-critique. What would be appropriate for biblical studies? Clearly, much work has already been done, particularly in feminist criticism and, more recently, in postcolonial criticism. I want to suggest that some sort of synthesis, of cultural studies, feminist criticism, and postcolonial criticism is urgent, so that a useful body of theory can be brought together which will allow for the building of some sort of emancipatory hermeneutic.
- If such a theoretical synthesis was to be developed, could and should it be developed collectively? One of the strongest aspects of the work of the CCCS in the 1970s was the collective nature of its work (found also, of course, to a lesser extent in the Frankfurt School), and still used by Stuart Hall and colleagues at the Open University (see Du Gay *et al.*). There is the example of the Bible and Culture Collective's *The Postmodern Bible* (though whether postmodernism itself could be part of an emancipatory hermeneutic has been challenged—see Sardar).
- Cultural studies questions the proper subject of biblical studies. What has been written earlier in this article has been very firmly within the academic tradition. But cultural studies draws attention to local or popular sub-cultures. Should we not also be studying popular works on the Bible? Examples might include Bible reading notes, Bible videos, children's Bibles,

Christian rock music—the list is endless. It may be this type of study that reveals voices resistant to the dominant tradition. Gerald West's work in South Africa is one recent example of this work.

Doubtless there are other questions raised for each of us. It is, however, clear that a great deal of work lies ahead.

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