EXPERIENTIA, VOLUME 2

SBL

Society of Biblical Literature

Early Judaism and Its Literature

Rodney A. Werline, Editor

Editorial Board

Number 35

EXPERIENTIA, VOLUME 2
Linking Text and Experience

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Society of Biblical Literature

Atlanta

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Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
EPRO	Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HR	*History of Religions*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	*Interpretation*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series

JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
RBL	*Review of Biblical Literature*
RevQ	*Revue de Qumran*
SBLAcBib	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigraphica
TAPS	Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.
TZTh	*Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Opening the Black Box: New Prospects for Analyzing Religious Experience

Colleen Shantz

The essays in this volume and the first *Experientia* collection reflect efforts to revise and reinvigorate the understanding of religious experience. Over the last century the category waxed and waned in popularity. Indeed, sometimes religious experience has been invoked in critically naïve or even apologetic ways, and these errors have led some to abandon the category altogether. In an effort to rescue the baby from the bathwater, the Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Early Christianity section of SBL has continued to invite papers that try to refine the category—both what it is and how we might access it in ancient texts. The papers collected here were all presented in some form at the meetings hosted by that section. The motivation for this effort, as stated in *Experientia,* vol. 1, is "the recognition that the texts that are the sources of scholarship on early Judaism and early Christianity often have as their *raison d'être* some religious experience of author and/or of community…. What we *can* do is to take seriously the textual *articulation* of religious experience in antiquity."[1]

This attempt to take the articulation of ancient authors seriously as topics for study requires attention to *experience*, which is precisely the crux. For many years, the possibility of accessing subjective experience has been considered a theoretical misstep at best and apologetics disguised as analysis at worst. No one argues that the particular circumstances—emotional, dispositional, even biological—of the individuals who wrote and received the texts are *insignificant* for early Judaism and formative Christianity. At the same time, many have maintained that

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1. Frances Flannery et al., "Introduction: Religious Experience, Past and Present," in *Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (vol. 1 of *Experientia*; ed. Frances Flannery et al.; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 2.

the religious sentiments of these ancient people are inaccessible to us. In other words, experience has been treated as a black box: we can describe the context of the writers and we can analyze the texts they produce, but the processes that transform the one to the other are necessarily inscrutable. This volume continues the quest of the first to pry open the black box by articulating the growing sense of new possibilities for study, and this chapter sets up those studies. In doing so, I begin by outlining some reasons for these persistent objections to the category of religious experience, suggesting a number of possibilities for rehabilitating it, and touching on some of what this might require of our scholarship.

To varying degrees, the contributors to these volumes want to reclaim the category of religious experience from its relative neglect. As you will see, some of the contributors remain wary of the category of experience (especially Vaage and to some extent Ramsaran), though their reasons share little in common. Other contributors have embraced new approaches with a critical enthusiasm that sets experience as a primary exegetical filter. Still, all the papers share attention to the relationship between the surviving literature and the people who wrote it or received it. More specifically, they have each attended to the means by which we might move from text to experience or vice versa. To do so, they necessarily must consider the elements that we have previously been unwilling or unable to examine. But before proceeding to the results, it seems necessary to linger a little longer over the reasons for resistance, some of which have been well justified. So we begin with the problems.

The Problem of Tendentiousness

Perhaps the most impeachable misappropriation of the category of religious experience is the role it has sometimes been given in debates about the validity of religion. The extraordinary nature of some experience has been claimed as evidence of a direct and unmediated encounter with the divine, however that is named. To a degree this perspective took warrant in William James's discussions of "pure experience." By "pure" James intended not to signify the absence of extraneous elements, but the monism of all experience, the undivided nature of consciousness and content.[2] In other words, "pure experience is just exactly what it is, whatever it is that is experienced,

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2. William James, "Does Consciousness Exist?" *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 1 (1904): 480.

in the here and now, in all its multiplicity, exactly as it is experienced."[3] James's conception had significant implications for the development of philosophical phenomenology,[4] but others used the concept of pure experience to assert a perceptual purity for one kind of experience—religious experience. Thus the term was conscripted to denote a way of knowing that is free of sensory input and, further, that blocks out everything except awareness of the divine. By this definition of religious experience, all interceding structures and senses were eliminated from consciousness and religious experience was an *unmediated* encounter.[5] Those who hold this position argue that the extraordinary emotional tone of such moments combined with the profound sense of clarity and conviction that attends them is evidence of the *object* of the experience, rather than the *subject* who undertakes it. In other words, the character of such moments of insight is so unlike ordinary experience that the difference cannot be attributed to the human subject. Further, proponents of "perennial philosophy" point to the cross-cultural similarities of such experience as proof that divine being must be the common object of all the diverse cultural practices.[6]

There are at least two kinds of problems related to this claim for religious experience. The first is its theoretical naïveté. The most important and sustained critique of this shortcoming has come primarily from cultural constructivists. Throughout the 1980s and 90s, cultural constructivists argued that all experience, especially religious experience, is culturally conditioned. Hence, in the words of Steven Katz, "the Hindu mystic does not have an experience of x which he then describes in the, to him, familiar language and symbols of Hinduism, but rather he has a Hindu

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3. Eugene I. Taylor and Robert H. Wozniak, "Pure Experience, the Response to William James: An Introduction," in *Pure Experience: The Response to William James* (ed. E. I. Taylor and R. H. Wozniak; Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), ix–xxxii, here xv. The authors also describe the intellectual climate within which James was arguing. For James's own words on the matter see his essays "Does Consciousness Exist?" *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 1 (1904): 477–91; and "A World of Pure Experience" *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 1 (1904): 533–43.

4. The phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (and before him Husserl) found great affinity with James's view of unfragmented consciousness. Merleau-Ponty calls the same fluid integration of self and object the "pre-objective" state.

5. William P. Alston, "Religious Experience," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (ed. Edward Craig; 10 vols.; London: Routledge, 1998), 8:250–55.

6. See Huston Smith, "Is There a Perennial Philosophy?" *JAAR* 60 (1987): 553–66.

experience, i.e. his experience is not an unmediated experience of x but is itself the, at least partially, pre-formed anticipated Hindu experience of Brahman."[7] So, Katz and others, such as Proudfoot and Scholem,[8] argue that it is not only the interpretation of a phenomenon after that fact but its very character and existence that are culturally constituted. In short, there is no experience that is pure (in the non-Jamesian sense).[9] The insights of constructivists were significantly invested in the intellectual climate of the time, which included a new awareness of the power of language and culture to shape human experience, formed in part by the trauma of World War II and the Shoah. Thus the constructivist position corrected a lack of discipline in the study of religious experience. Yet, as significant as the cultural observation was, the scope of its application sometimes exceeded the target. As the next section argues, it sometimes was taken as sufficient explanation for all the phenomena of religious events.

The second major problem with some earlier claims about religious experience concerns the tendentious and ideological use of the category. Some students of religion argue that the category should be abandoned altogether because invocations of experience are used to falsely protect religious claims from critical scrutiny. As Robert Sharf puts it, "By empha-sizing the experiential dimension of religion—a dimension inaccessible to strictly objective modes of inquiry—the theologian could forestall sci-entific critique."[10] To put the matter somewhat crassly, this critique fre-quently runs along the fault line between theology and religious studies in our own academic version of the culture wars. However, Scharf's critique extends to all scholars of religion, since those in religious studies faculties "have a vested interest in the existence of irreducibly *religious* phenomena over which they can claim special authority" despite the fact that other dis-ciplines in the humanities often claimed to explain the same phenomena.[11]

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7. Steven T. Katz, "The Conservative Character of Mystical Experience," in *Mysti-cism and Religious Traditions* (ed. Steven T. Katz; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)*,* 4.

8. See Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Proudfoot, "Explaining the Unexplainable," *JAAR* 61 (1993): 793–803; and, even earlier, Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961).

9. Katz, "Conservative Character," 26.

10. Robert H. Scharf, "Experience," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (ed. Mark C. Taylor; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 95.

11. Ibid.

So, according to Scharf, it has sometimes been in the interests of those of us who study ancient religion to treat experience as a black box in order to protect the specialness of our fields.

Given these two criticisms, for all of us interested in understanding early Judaism and early Christianity, the first difficulty might be described in these terms: Can religious experience be explored without special pleading? How is it possible to formulate research in religious experience in a way that does justice to the dimension of experience while lodging that exploration firmly in human subjects?

Although the essential subjectivity of experience—its "black-box-ness"—can never be fully overcome, a number of recent developments have rendered it a little less opaque. The first is more critically informed means of assessing the influence of culture on individual human actors. While recognition of cultural influence is a point well taken, descriptions of exactly how culture shapes experience have tended to be mechanistic, as if ancient people sat down with a menu of values and linguistic constructs that could be pieced together—through an exercise of intellect—like modules in a role-play video game. Often these arguments are fueled by cultural parallelomania,[12] and become reduced to genealogical claims about the connection between ideas without consideration of how such borrowing actually takes place or other possible explanations of similarity.

In far more sophisticated ways, a number of approaches are providing more transparent means to assess experience. For example, theorists such as the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu have developed nuanced descriptions of the interplay between culture and individual actors.[13] Bourdieu's work conceives not of the monolithic force of culture on individual experience, but the interplay between and mutual shaping of both with the body as the carrier and transformer of culture. As cultures shape individuals' experiences, regulating when they should speak and where they should stand, and prescribing meanings for objects, such cultural energy molds dispositions in a continuous negotiation between the subject and her/his environment. Using Bourdieu's terms, such collections of dispositions

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12. Some practices have improved since Samuel Sandmel identified the tendency in biblical studies to overattribute similarities in language to direct literary influence ("Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 [1962]: 1–13). We would do well to cultivate a corresponding sensitivity with regard to other cultural patterns.

13. See especially Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (trans. Richard Nice; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

comprise a *habitus*. In this volume, Rodney Werline's discussion of *paideia* explores the way cultural practices of education and childrearing are written into the relationship between God and the people in *Psalms of Solomon*. Through that strategy, the embodied *habitus* of ancient pedagogy is activated in order to transform the experience of suffering faced by its readers. The black box in a theory like Bourdieu's contains the automaticity of bodily behaviors that have been shaped by repeated and reinforced cultural practices. In a similar way, Frances Flannery's exploration of the power of social memory construction is a further example in this volume of the interplay between individuals and their culture. Flannery explores the active, constructive exercise of memory for the community of 4 Ezra. Through the selection of the historical figure of Ezra the author creates a "new, symbolic organization of reality that reflects the present experiences"[14] and, in this case, provides the point of view for the community in resolving the tension between their expectations of God's protection and the circumstances of defeat after 70 C.E.

A second means through which we can critically examine experience is the recently emerging field of the cognitive science of religion, or CSR.[15] The fledgling discipline draws on insights from cognitive studies, neuroscience, evolutionary psychology and anthropology to understand human patterns of religious behavior. Practitioners propose that certain species-wide habits or structures of thought predispose human beings to religious ideation. These cognitive and biological patterns are thought to have arisen for very different purposes—as strategies of survival—but also generate and constrain religious phenomena. One of the most significant implications of CSR is that it shows how certain similarities in behavior and ideation need not be explained by direct influence. Rather, some patterns are broadly *human* rather than particularly *cultural*. In this volume, CSR approaches are represented in the contribution of Istvan Czachesz,

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14. Flannery, this volume, pp. 47–48.

15. CSR offers hypotheses about both religious ideation and religious behavior in social groups. For the former see the landmark study of Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Human Instincts that Fashion Gods, Spirits and Ancestors* (London: Vintage, 2002). For the latter see David Sloan Wilson, *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). For the implications of evolution for religious groups, a convenient hub for information about CSR may be found at the website for the International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion: http://www.iacsr.com/iacsr/Home.html.

who argues that the debates about the Lord's supper in Corinth are fueled not by theological or economic factors, but by distinct neurological and social patterns of religiosity that are incompatible.

Concerns about anachronism have led to repeated lip service to the idea that ancient people were far more oriented to group identity than are we and were concomitantly far less likely to claim personal conviction as credible support for their views. Nonetheless, those corporate values and social sensibilities have to be received by individuals somehow in order for them to function. We cannot simply replace individual consciousness with corporate identity and assume that we have done justice either to the events themselves or to the complex process of enculturation. However, there are ways to ground culture in the individual without reducing it to individualism, ways that recognize that culture is also the product of humanness. Each of these approaches used by Werline, Flannery, and Czachesz provides a critically informed template through which we can scrutinize the text. Despite the fact that we cannot directly interview, observe, or subject our authors to fMRI scans, some methods allow us to proceed heuristically. When the text is held up to these templates certain previously opaque elements come into focus, and features that made no sense take on meaning. The measure of the aptness of the approach is the degree of explanatory power it wields.

The Problem of Reductionism

I have mentioned the overcorrection that has sometimes marked the attention to culture. Certainly it is clear that the arguments for a special category of experience that was free of the cultural conditioning or previous life experiences of the religious practitioner should be set aside. Constructivist critique is well taken as a response to arguments for "veridical experience"[16] or proof of divinity. However, the success of this corrective has come to participate in what I would name as the second problem in this area: reductionism. Too frequently, arguments about cultural influence have been extended beyond their weight-bearing capacity, and important observations of cultural influence have become a *de facto* contention that there is nothing but culture in such experience.

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16. William P. Alston "Religious Experience" in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 8: 250–55. London: Routledge, 1998), 250.

For Katz, for example, the doctrinal difference among mystical traditions is taken as sufficient evidence that the experience of each mystic is already thoroughly culturally determined before it happens. Such reasoning is a fallacy of division: since religious experience as a whole displays doctrinal properties, therefore every component of religious experience is doctrinal. Underwriting this reasoning is the further reduction of experience to language, the idea that language both creates and exhausts experience. Although few hold so strongly to this view, nonetheless it does continue to constrain our discussions and formulations of experience, if only because we remain silent about other features of experience. The "shift to belief as the defining characteristic of religion" after the Protestant Reformation has fueled attention to ideas and propositional knowledge.[17] The methodological companion to the emphasis on belief is the focus on words.

Although his work concerns Hermetic writings dated later than the biblical material, Wouter Hanegraaff has considered the plight of those of us who are text-bound. He points to problems shared by all scholars who study historical religious movements:

> Like any other academic discipline, the history of religions relies on discursive language to make itself understood. … However, scholars of religion are often faced with the strangely paradoxical task of having to make sense of textual sources which explicitly deny the relevance, indeed the very possibility, of what the scholar is trying to do.[18]

In short, religious texts sometimes negate the very language they use to convey their import. Hanegraaff observes further that the responses to this dilemma tend to be of three sorts: the first is to focus solely on discourse because it is the only datum to which we have access; the second is to supply the discursive meaning about which the texts are so skeptical (typically, in biblical studies, theological meaning that is extrapolated from other, ostensibly parallel, sources or influences); and the third is to address more narrowly the topics of philology, grammar, textual criticism and historiography. Hanegraaff calls this third approach "the quasi-positivist doctrine

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17. Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, 271.

18. Wouter Hanegraaff, "Altered States of Knowledge: The Attainment of Gnōsis in the Hermetica," *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 2 (2008): 128.

of descriptivism."[19] Certainly all of these approaches generate important insights for exegesis, and should not be set aside. The point is rather that none of them is able to uncover the precise matter at the heart of a certain set of texts—the significance that arises from experience.

Two decades ago Sallie King summarized the problem as follows:

> Of course, the scholar's primary access to mystical phenomena is through the literature of mysticism. The point is, however, that it is not useful, and in fact seriously obscures the matter, to forget that there are experiences and lives on which that literature is based and into which it is projected.[20]

Beyond King's concern about obscuration, we might consider whether we actually misunderstand or misrepresent these very texts if we take them primarily as ends in themselves, as nothing but text. An extreme example of this seems to me to be Martha Himmelfarb's well-known claim that ascent texts are always pseudonymous inventions and *never* reflective of personal experience except in the most banal way.[21] Here a textual convention (pseudepigraphical authorship) is made to say everything that can be said, again mistaking a part for the whole. The writings of early Judaism and Christianity are filled with references to and residue of phenomena that fueled shifts in social affiliation, that are grounded in human bodies rather than merely in cultural constructs, and that are intimately tied to the social history of communities. These are the sorts of elements that are shut up in the black box. Can religious texts be understood at all without reference to that rich non-discursive reality? All of this raises the second question. If, on the one hand, we reject absolutizing explanations, we must ask, on the other hand: Which approaches and theoretical investments will best help us avoid linguistic reductionism?

The essays collected here offer plenty of options for non-reductive readings. However, at this point I want to highlight four of them because, in varying ways, they are each relevant to the problem of texts-as-words. Two

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19. Ibid., 130–32.

20. Sallie King, "Two Epistemological Models for the Interpretation of Mysticism," *JAAR* 56 (1988): 258.

21. Martha Himmelfarb, "The Practice of Ascent in the Ancient Mediterranean World," in *Death, Ecstasy and Other Worldly Journeys* (ed. John Collins and Michael Fishbane; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 132–33.

of these papers are—following Hanegraaff's typology—deeply invested in the text as discourse, and two employ descriptive, theological modes of analysis. Both Jack Levison and Leif Vaage take the former approach. Levison discusses the *Testament of Eve* for its use of agency and voice as Eve speaks a newly constructed, alternative version of originary events. He argues that the empathy that is stimulated by her testament transforms the reader's own gendered experience. We could describe this discursively as a shift in identity construction, but the point is that the shift is conducted emotionally. In his chapter Vaage explores the Gospel of Mark as a discourse of violence written in reaction to the revolt against Roman rule (66–73 C.E.). He argues, in effect, that there would be no Gospel of Mark without the traumatized body of the author and the depiction of the abused body of Jesus: "The discourse of the text is the kind of speech in which a writer deliberately (with some intentionality) seeks to articulate a sensation that otherwise already has marked and impressed itself into the writer's own flesh."[22] In contrast, Robin Griffith-Jones and Rollin Ramsaran are interested in more explicitly theological descriptions—in this case using Paul's letters. Griffith-Jones marches through the letter to the Romans, describing its attention to the inner person as a progression toward transformation of the mind. He argues that the performance of the letter before its audience would have generated the corresponding transformation in them. Ramsaran scans the entire Pauline corpus for references to in-Christ language in order to describe the theological patterns of Paul's thinking. In the end he concludes that ideas in themselves do not sufficiently explain Paul's participatory theology, but that much of it relies on "inner religious experience," which is affective in nature. In quite different ways, each of these four essays explores the way that literary media are either produced out of experience or intended to shape experience. They show that, even at this most discursive and descriptive level, the human body, emotions, and what might generally be described as interiority are essential to the text.

Terra Incognita

The possibility to begin again with religious experience arises against this background of both the problems in the history of scholarship and the

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22. Leif Vaage, "Violence as Religious Experience in the Gospel of Mark," in this volume, p. 132.

access that is opened by new approaches. The parallel with renaissance maps of half-explored territory provides an apt analogy at this juncture. *Experience* remains largely unexplored territory. We have explored enough to know something of territorial mass and where it lies located relative to our interests in texts. The edges of this turf are also defined and, along with the crafters of the Lenox globe, we can point to some spots and say that *hic sunt dracones*. In our case, the dangers lurk in the claims, on one side, of a *sui generis* phenomenon and, on the other, of a linguistic reductionism that leaves no room for embodied perceptions. Between these coasts lies a territory that we now have better means to explore. But in what way is it meaningful to call it religious experience?

The calls for papers for the Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Early Christianity sessions have invited participants to retain the term but to use it in a way that is broader and more critically informed. For the most part *religious experience* has not been understood as an adjective and a noun, but rather as a compound term for a superlative sort of experience. Indeed, the more traditional terrain of out-of-body experiences, visions/hallucinations, and other extraordinary experiences remain heuristically useful in testing the limits of the category. For example, while a vision is culturally prepared and interpreted, the fact that it takes place in the body of the visionary is essential to its power. The visionary's neurons, emotions, brain chemicals, and personal associations all root the event *in her* and shape it *as hers*, making it meaningful in ways that doctrine or propositional reasoning is not. In short, the experience of it forms part of what makes it meaningful and part of what must be understood. What is true in those unusual circumstances is also true in the more ordinary. The body moving through the stances of a prescribed ritual, the recitation of a prayer in the midst of a gathered community, the reclaiming of a past figure in connection with one's own history, all generate significance that drives and shapes religious communities. In these volumes we propose to examine the ways in which analysis of experience, in all its rich variety, is relevant to and enlightening of the textual remains of early Christianity and Judaism. Rather than treating "religious experience" as a compound term, we treat it as a noun modified by an adjective. These essays offer a broad sampling of experience in religious contexts.

The difficulty on this point lies not only in the rejection of outmoded definitions, but in the fact that both of the terms of which "religious experience" is composed are likewise disputed. The difficulty with "religion" inheres in its artificiality, or at least in the failure to recognize that it is a

construct of academic convenience rather than a natural category. In the words of Jonathan Z. Smith, "'Religion' is not a native term; it is a term created by scholars for their intellectual purposes and therefore is theirs to define."[23] In the study of biblical literature, this is a question that does not naturally arise; rather, it is taken as a given that these texts and their content is religious. The challenge posed by Smith and others is that the definition of religion has been tailored far too closely on the pattern of Judaism and Christianity. Thus, the category becomes almost circular with regard to the Bible, and is misconstrued with regard to all other movements. The appending of modifiers like "primitive" and "folk" demonstrates the normative role of Judeo-Christian structures—all other forms of religion require qualification. If, in defining religion, we want to do more than create a synonym for Judaism or Christianity, we need a category that can apply comfortably to a wider range of cultures. Smith identifies Melford Spiro's characterization as the one that has gained greatest ascendancy. For Spiro the core of religion is "culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings."[24] That definition allows us to highlight the interplay between various practices and beliefs, which are facets of culture, and experience, which is a facet of the individual.

A working definition of experience is even more difficult than that of religion. The seeming interiority and subjectivity of experience is precisely the reason that it has functioned as a black box, but the benefits of considering experience are sufficient to justify the effort. First, it allows us to consider other epistemological categories: ways of knowing that are not logocentric, even while we work with texts that attempt to put them into words, or ratiocentric, even while we search for the causal links among elements. Much of the time, however, human beings function on the basis of information that never takes the form of words or reason. King describes such knowing through the example of staring at a candle:

> If one concentrates, for example, on a candle flame to the exclusion of all else, sooner or later there will be only "consciousness-of " candle flame, with no sense of a separate self perceiving a separate candle flame attendant upon this awareness. When one looks back retrospectively upon

23. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," 281.

24. Melford E. Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion* (ed. Michael Banton; London: Tavistock, 1966), 96.

such meditative experiences, if one attends carefully to what was in the experience itself, one will even later not want to speak of such experience in the language of subject and object. Such subject-object language does not fit the case.[25]

Phenomenology describes this epistemology in which we are not conscious of ourselves in most acts of perception and knowing. For the most part there is no subject-object dichotomy, but only in secondary reflection on the experience as object do we generate ourselves as subject. King argues from an epistemological grounding that there is pure (mixed) consciousness and it is what we experience much of the time. We experience the thing without consciousness of ourselves experiencing it. This mode of experience is often described in religious texts and participates in religious ideation.

A second means through which experience can be explored is in attention to the human body. At the same time that culture in general and words in particular have been promoted as the only safe ground for analysis, the body is increasingly asserted as a field of study. Sometimes such assertions merely identify the body as another cultural product, as constructed as is a ritual or other social convention. However, biological and cognitive sciences are describing human universals in ways that give us access to a bodily *givenness* as well. Some elements of experience are constrained by the fact of being human. Even language is body-bound, as conceptual blending theory argues.[26]

In this volume three essays are especially attentive to the power of embodiment in religious contexts. Relying in part on anthropologist Roy Rappaport, Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte explores the ritual of baptism in the Pauline communities. Peerbolte considers again the old question of the influence of the mystery cults on the establishment of baptism as an initiation rite. In Rappaport's model, the actions conducted in any ritual have a self-referential effect: they confirm the participant's status and iden-

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25. King, "Two Epistemological Models," 272.

26. For the state of the art in this approach, see Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002). The work began with the study by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson of the way all language, including abstract concepts, is grounded in physical, bodily experience (George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* [London: University of Chicago Press, 1980]).

tity within the community. In the end, such similarities among religious movements have more basis in the universally human patterns of embodied knowing than in any borrowing between cultures. Carol Newsom's fascinating analysis of the images and structure of the *Hodayot* and the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* focus on the physical performance of these liturgical texts. In the case of the *Hodayot*, the use of first person pronouns enacts the performer as the "I" of the text. As he repeats the dramatic oscillations of self-worth described in the text, his identity is destabilized and reconstituted. In the second case the repetition, paradox, and sensory overload stimulated in the language of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* bring the congregation into the imagined presence of the angelic worshippers. The bodily performance of both of these liturgical texts induces the experiences encoded in them. Angela Harkins's analysis of Neh 9 and the fourth-century *Hymns on Paradise* shares many resonances with that of Newsom. Harkins also points to the rich imagery and sensory data in these texts as keys to their efficacy. She uses performance theory to explain how active reading stimulates in the reader the same emotions and even sense of space that the text records. These heightened states can in turn generate new experiences that move beyond the scripted experience of the reading. In each of these three essays we see how meaning is conveyed through the body, from the bottom up.

CONCLUSION

This second *Experientia* volume attends to the challenge inherent in working with texts in order to understand experience. In some cases the essays show how the text helped to stimulate a particular kind of experience, and in other cases the texts communicate the residue of experience or a record of its effects. As in the first volume, these essays explore experience as a critically informed category, understood to be shaped by culture but also by universal human capacities. As such, many of the older concerns about the category of religious experience can be set aside. The analyses presented here are not naïve or apologetic. In place of special pleading, they ground their observations in cross-disciplinary theorizing about human behavior. Neither do they reduce experience to the mere replication of cultural values. Instead, in complex and contextually sensitive ways, the authors discuss the contributions of emotional, sensory, habitual, story-based, performative experiences to religiosity. Through social memory, *habitus*, and the creation of narrative, some ancient people came to terms

with unexpected suffering, and their relationship to God was stabilized through the text. Other texts examined in this volume helped to effect the transformation of their audiences, bringing them into perceived contact with divine realms, or evoking a sense of change in their constitution or sense of self. Through these various means these essays explore what has long been thought to be inaccessible or opaque. They thus help to reclaim the category of religious experience and offer ways to examine its significant contribution to early Judaism and early Christianity.

The Experience of God's *Paideia* in the Psalms of Solomon

Rodney A. Werline

Introduction

The imperial domination and political turmoil of the Second Temple period generated multiple textual traditions that addressed the problem of suffering. These traditions sprang from Jewish groups who needed in some way to bring their difficult experiences in line with faith in a righteous God. Well known and rather obvious questions naturally spring from these situations: How can the Jews who are suffering maintain faith that God cares for them? What does this suffering say about God's relationship to Israel as a whole and the covenant God has with the people? How and why does such evil continue in the world, and how will God rectify this? How can one hold to a just universe in which good is rewarded and evil is punished? Finally, on a personal, practical level, how does one endure?

Perhaps this last question gets at a key reason for writing such texts in the first place, given their contexts. In the end, even a text's more rational arguments and justifications for why the world is the way it is are intended to produce hope and endurance for real people and at a personal level. Clifford Geertz encapsulated the problem in this manner: how does religion make "suffering sufferable"?

> As a religious problem, the problem of suffering is, paradoxically, not how to avoid suffering but how to suffer, how to make physical pain, personal loss, worldly defeat, or the helpless contemplation of others' agony something bearable, supportable—something, as we say, sufferable.[1]

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1. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 104.

Religion must address this problem at multiple levels; in Geertz's terminology, religion must be comprehensive and comprehensible. If not, the system may crumble. First, the symbolic world must account for suffering, that is, the group's metanarrative must account for evil—what Weber called, according to Geertz, the "Problem of Meaning."[2] For believers within a tradition, this facet of the problem proves to be in part intellectual, though adherents must seek an answer through reflection within the parameters of a tradition. The authors do not apply "pure reason" or "rationality"—if these are ever possible—in their arguments, but a rationale that is reasonable within the particular worldview and cultural setting. The authors' answers as parts of intellectually constructed worlds must achieve some degree of coherency and plausibility for adherents, without violating too many cognitive categories. As religious literature demonstrates, including literature from Second Temple Judaism, the confines of a tradition somewhat limit possible innovations. Still, authors can creatively adapt and apply features from their *habitus* to almost any situation. Religious systems prove quite pliable.[3]

An approach to suffering in Second Temple texts from a perspective like that of Geertz, consequently, does not consist of "theodicy" in the sense of all the theological and philosophical baggage it sometimes carries, with its discursive, rational, linear, argumentative thought, perhaps as encountered in sectors of academia or theological scholasticism. In his discussion of religion and suffering, Geertz maintains that the intellectual and symbolic world provides an anchor and some precision for another key aspect of the phenomenon of suffering—the religious person's dispositions and emotions—and in so doing, provides a strategy for endurance:

> For those able to embrace them, and for as long as they are able to embrace them, religious symbols provide a cosmic guarantee not only for their ability to comprehend the world, but also, comprehending it, to give a precision to their feeling, a definition to their emotions which enables them, morosely or joyfully, grimly or cavalierly, to endure it.[4]

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2. Ibid.

3. For a theoretical base for these assertions, see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (trans. Richard Nice; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), and *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (trans. Richard Nice; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

4. Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 104.

With this articulation of the problem, Geertz gives priority to the intellectual and symbolic features of religion over the emotional, though he does not denigrate feelings. Perhaps a useful adjustment to Geertz's theory would include understanding the two—intellectual and emotional, if they can even really be separated—in a more dialectic relationship or mutuality. Cultural intellectual knowledge certainly shapes how an individual understands emotions. But emotions will in turn inform an individual's religious beliefs as well as a culture's intellectual traditions. Geertz might have included these ideas in his notion that religion is a symbolic system "of" and "for" reality. Nevertheless, Geertz seriously attends to the emotional and dispositional aspects of suffering, instead of dismissing religion as primarily offering an emotional escape into the supernatural through myth and ritual.[5] To state the rather obvious, suffering is concrete and personal because it is experienced personally in the body.

Within the context of suffering, religion sometimes relies on practice or action to evoke sentiments, to form acceptable dispositions, or to give expression to emotions in order to moderate, or "make manageable," the struggle. Geertz explores this process in his explanation of the Navaho cure sing. After a brief description of the rite's stages, he concludes the following:

> Clearly the symbolism of the sing focuses upon the problem of human suffering and attempts to cope with it by placing it in a meaningful context, providing a mode of action through which it can be expressed, being expressed understood, and being understood, endured. The sustaining effect of the sing … rests ultimately on its ability to give the stricken person a vocabulary in terms of which to grasp the nature of his distress and relate it to the wider world.… [A] sing is mainly concerned with the presentation of a specific and concrete image of truly human, and so endurable, suffering powerful enough to resist the challenge of emotional meaninglessness raised by the existence of intense and unremovable brute pain.[6]

Geertz's words capture a complex set of movements which tie action, emotions, and understanding into a single cultural practice, a complicated phenomenon for an anthropologist to explain, but a process that the prac-

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5. With this assertion, Geertz opposes Malinowski (Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 103).

6. Ibid., 105.

titioner has embodied through years of participation in the culture and can almost unconsciously enact. Further, Geertz claims that through this process, from a moral perspective, humans can place their "undisciplined squads of emotion" into "soldierly" order and maintain moral and ethical actions in a world in which suffering threatens that order.[7]

As a collection of psalms responding to crises resulting from the early era of Roman occupation, the Psalms of Solomon offers a ritual means "to make suffering sufferable." Further, like Geertz's proposition in his assessment of the Navaho sing, the Psalms of Solomon exhibit a strategy to maintain moral direction in the midst of pain—a culturally acceptable disposition for the circumstances. An exploration of especially these two features of these psalms through current anthropological methods opens a new window into the experience of suffering for this group.

Causes for Suffering in the Psalms of Solomon: Dates and Settings

Suffering in the Psalms of Solomon[8] affects several levels of the authors' world, and these generally correspond to the two basic types of psalms in the collection—psalms of the nation and psalms of the righteous and the pious.[9] The psalms exhibit at least two layers of editing that can be tied to the history of the beginning of Roman occupation in Judea. First, Pss. Sol. 1, 2, 8, and 17 contain rather clear references to the events leading up to and during Pompey's assault on Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E. Pompey's arrival in Jerusalem is tied to the dispute between Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II over who should rule. Pompey ordered the two parties to remain with him until he decided on the matter, but Aristobulus disobeyed the directive and returned to Jerusalem. Pompey marched on the city. Hyrcanus's followers opened the city gates for him, but Aristobulus and his support-

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7. Ibid., 106.

8. All English translations, unless otherwise noted, are from Robert B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983–1985) 2:636–79. For the Greek text, see Alfred Rahlfs, ed. *Septuaginta,id est Vetus Testamentum graeca iuxta LXX interpretes* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1935/1979).

9. Designations are from George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (rev. ed.; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 238–48.

ers had barricaded themselves inside the temple area, necessitating that Pompey take it by force.

While the Psalms of Solomon contains several details from this era, a few examples that demonstrate the relationship between text and history will suffice. Psalms 1 and 2 speak of Pompey profaning the sanctuary, with Pss. Sol. 2 recounting the use of a battering ram to gain entrance into the sanctuary (Pss. Sol. 2:1–2; cf. *Ant.* 14.4; *J.W.* 1.7). Pompey takes many captives, including the family of Aristobulus (Pss. Sol. 2:6–9).[10] Psalms of Solomon 8:16 alludes to the encounter of the Jewish leaders—perhaps of both parties—with Pompey, or at least Hyrcanus's party opening Jerusalem's gates for Pompey, as v. 17 depicts. A recounting of the slaughter inside the temple appears in 8:18–22.

The early layers of Pss. Sol. 17 probably also arose in response to Pompey's march on Jerusalem. However, several features of the text suggest that a redactional updating occurred during or after Herod the Great's reign.[11] For example, a reference to Herod "hunting down" the Hasmoneans appears in 17:6–9. This updating means that textual production at least extended from around 63 B.C.E. until Herod died in 4 B.C.E.

LOCATING THE AUTHORS IN THESE STRUGGLES

As part of the Jewish people, the authors of the psalms personally experienced these upheavals, but from what location in the culture? An earlier generation of scholars believed the Psalms of Solomon contained Pharisaic features, and therefore several interpreters identified them as Pharisees.[12] Since subsequent scholarship has demonstrated the difficulties in understanding much about the Pharisees from this time period, this position has lost credibility.

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10. Cf. ibid., 239.

11. See also Kenneth Atkinson, "On the Herodian Origins of the Militant Davidic Messianism at Qumran: New Light from *Psalms of Solomon* 17," *JBL* 118 (1999): 440–44.

12. For a review of scholars who held this position, beginning with Julius Wellhausen (*Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer* [3rd ed; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967]), see Dieter Lührmann, "Paul and the Pharisaic Tradition," *JSNT* 36 (1989): 75–94. Cf. also William L. Lane, "Paul's Legacy from Pharisaism: Light from the Psalms of Solomon," *Concordia Journal* 8 (1982): 130–38.

The discovery and early analysis of the Qumran scrolls revealed similarities between the psalms and the Qumran community. The psalms especially resemble the Hodayot in some basic language and structure. Further, the psalms indicate that their authors may have been engaged in halakic disputes with the Jerusalem priesthood, which, of course, factors into several Qumran texts. Such features encouraged Dupont-Sommer and Hann to propose that the Psalms of Solomon may be the product of an Essene community.[13] However, any direct connection between the two groups remains unsubstantiated. The Psalms of Solomon have not surfaced among the Qumran manuscripts. Further, the psalms are devoid of the stereotypical Qumran sectarian ideological language; though, admittedly, Qumran psalms, hymns and prayers often lack these characteristics as well. Any other formal linguistic features shared between the Psalms of Solomon and the Qumran scrolls result from the documents originating within basically the same cultural milieu during basically the same time period.

Kenneth Atkinson has proposed that the Psalms of Solomon originated from a group of disaffected priests.[14] This group, he argues, had severe halakic disputes with the Sadducean temple priests. Atkinson cautiously reconstructs the arguments through a careful combined reading of the psalms and the Qumran scrolls. He does not argue for a direct relationship between the Essenes and the authors of the psalms; rather, because of shared traits, Qumran provides a model for assessing and understanding the psalms. He concludes that the authors of the Psalms of Solomon decided that the priests' actions had defiled the temple, and so they abandoned it and established their own assemblies, replacing temple sacrifices especially with prayers and fasting. Unlike the people at Qumran, they did not withdraw from society.

While Atkinson's theory has much to commend, recent shifts in Qumran studies and the collapse of previous theories about Qumran's origins and history, and developments in the anthropological study of sects may place some strains on certain aspects of Atkinson's theories and

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13. André Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (New York: Meridian, 1962), 296; Robert R. Hann, "The Community of the Pious: The Social Setting of the *Psalms of Solomon*," *SR* 17 (1988): 169–89.

14. Kenneth Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon's Historical Background and Social Setting* (Leiden: Brill, 2004). See especially his conclusion (211–22).

necessitate adjustments.[15] A thorough treatment is not possible here, and his careful work deserves more than a cursory response.

Work on the authors' identity and social location must account for their suffering by determining how this occurred within the sociocultural world at the beginning of Roman occupation. The authors of the psalms, who refer to themselves and "the righteous" (δίκαιος) and "the pious" (ὅσιος), write as if they have been pushed to the margins.[16] Psalms of Solomon 4:9–13, 20–22 hints that some associated with the authors may have suffered the loss of property and financial devastation at the hands of the powerful within the culture: "For they disgracefully empty many people's houses and greedily scatter (them) … for they defraud innocent people by pretense" (vv. 20b, 22b). Further, the description of God as the "shelter of the poor," a "righteous judge," and a "strong man" whose house cannot be plundered (5:1–4) come in a text in which the author seems to locate himself within the persecuted group (5:5). In Pss. Sol. 17, which has wrongly served as the *locus classicus* of Jewish messianic expectations, the author indicates that members of his group were driven out by "sinners," presumably the Hasmoneans (17:5).[17] Although the psalm's language becomes

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15. See, e.g., Maxine L. Grossman, *Reading for History in the Damascus Document: A Methodological Method* (STDJ 45; Leiden: Brill, 2002); John Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); Charlotte Hempel, *The Laws of the Damascus Document: Sources, Tradition and Redaction* (STDJ 24; Leiden: Brill, 1998); idem, "Community Origins in the Damascus Document in the Light of Recent Research," in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts and Reformulated Issues* (ed. Donald W. Parry and Eugene Ulrich; STDJ 30; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 316–29. One might also consider Daniel Falk's suggestion for caution when speaking about early Jewish groups easily replacing prayer with sacrifice. See Daniel K. Falk, "Qumran Prayer Texts and the Temple," in *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts from Qumran: Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies Oslo, 1998* (ed. Daniel K. Falk et al.; STDJ 35; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 106–26. Further, Eyal Regev (*Sectarianism in Qumran: A Cross Cultural Perspective* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007]) shows that there are varying degrees of separation and isolation and that the term "sect" is complicated.

16. See Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 238. Similarly, for a list of sobriquets for the authors' enemies, see Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 1–11. Pss. Sol. 17:43 may refer to the authors' community as "the holy ones" (ἅγιοι).

17. For a full discussion of Pss. Sol. 17 from the perspective of the ideology of rule, see Werline, "The *Psalms of Solomon* and the Ideology of Rule" in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism* (ed. Benjamin G. Wright III and Lawrence M. Wills; SBLSymS 35; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 77–83.

quite opaque in verses 11–18, those associated with the authors suffer at the hands of the powerful—Hyrcanus II, Romans, or Herod?—while the "children of the covenant" adopt the practices and policies of the over-lords.[18] The psalm claims that those connected to the "assemblies of the devout," presumably those connected to these authors, had to flee and live as "refugees in the wilderness":

> Those who loved the assemblies of the devout [οἱ ἀγαπῶντες συναγωγὰς ὁσίων] fled from them
> > as sparrows fled from their nest.
> (They became) refugees in the wilderness
> > to save their lives from evil
> The life of even one who was saved from them was precious in the eyes of the exiles.
> > They were scattered over the whole earth by (these) lawless ones.
> > (vv. 16–17)

Even if one does not take the language in these verses literally, the author of the psalm at least communicates that the group is disenfran-chised and dwells at the social margin. In its vision of a future Davidic messianic figure, Pss. Sol. 17 anticipates a ruler who takes up the con-cerns of this community and establishes a "just" society. One might sur-mise from the features of this particular psalm that this group and its lead-ers experienced this disaffection from about the time of Pompey into the Herodian era.

Given these factors in the psalms, Richard Horsley's model of the role of scribes in the Second Temple period offers new possibilities for under-standing this evidence, though much work remains to be done regarding how exactly the group behind the Psalms of Solomon would fit into his reconstruction of that society.[19] As I argue in an earlier analysis of the

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18. On the problem of identity of the oppressors here, see Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 242. As mentioned, several features of Pss. Sol. 17 suggest that the piece underwent at least one updating. This probably contributes to the impenetrableness of the text on this issue of identity.

19. For a social history of scribes in the Second Temple period, see Richard A. Horsley, *Scribes, Visionaries, and Politics of Second Temple Judea* (Louisville: West-minster John Knox , 2007), 1–51; and "The Politics of Cultural Production in Second Temple Judea: Historical Context and Political-Religious Relations of the Scribes Who Produced *1 Enoch*, Sirach, and Daniel," in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apoc-*

ideology of rule in the psalms,[20] their ability to write, their knowledge of authoritative tradition, their ability to compose psalms, and their apparent involvement in the politics of the era indicate that the authors of the Psalms of Solomon probably served as scribes.[21] Horsley argues that, within the patron-client system of Roman Judaea, scribes functioned as bureaucratic retainers, the administrators of Roman and high priestly rule, though they may not have been of priestly lineage themselves. A wide range of scribal positions would have been required in that culture—from bureaucratic officials working directly under Roman officials or their high priestly elite clients to local scribes who could draft basic legal documents (cf. Sir 38:31–34b). Prestigious scribes may have even travelled as ambassadors (Sir 39:4).

Relying on texts such as Ben Sira and the depiction of the "scribe" Enoch in 1 Enoch, Horsley defines the social category of scribe rather broadly so that it also includes those who served as guardians and teachers of wisdom.[22] In this regard, they functioned as sages and scholars, who gave special advice to rulers and various clients within the society, studied and taught, along with several other possible activities. They may also have served in the administration and activities related to the temple cult. If Atkinson is correct in noticing priestly elements in the Psalms of Solomon, the authors may have served the Sadducean priestly elite in Jerusalem, or may have been of priestly families. Some scribes would probably have gained followers of their ideas, practices and positions.

This kind of role put scribes in close proximity to the powerful. Shifts in political relationships and power sometimes resulted in the disaffection of a particular group. The situation could be similar to the sufferings of those related to the Psalms of Solomon. These scribes may have had a patron within the system, and their fates would be attached to the fate— or determination or whim—of their patron. Or, drawing from Atkinson's theories about the origin of the psalms, if the authors were priests, or

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alypticism (ed. Benjamin G. Wright III and Lawrence M. Wills; SBLSymS 35; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 123–45.

20. See Werline, "*Psalms of Solomon*," 69–87.

21. For levels of Hellenistic scribal instruction, see David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tables of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 182–86. Composition represents a higher level of education in the Greek system. The same may be true for Jewish scribes in the first century as well.

22. Horsley, *Scribes, Visionaries*, 57, 81–87.

somehow served the priests, halakic disputes with the high priest could be disastrous. While every cultural role has some political dynamics, those more closely connected to the more powerful also have more at stake.

In a period earlier than the Psalms of Solomon, Ben Sira knew that scribes needed to exercise caution when in the service and presence of the powerful (Sir 13:1–13). To his young scribes in training, he offered the following cautionary instructions:

> A rich person will exploit you if you can be of use to him,
>   but if you are in need he will abandon you. (Sir 13:4)
> When he needs you he will deceive you,
>   and will smile at you and encourage you;
>   he will speak to you kindly and say, "What do you need?" (v. 6)
> Be on your guard and very careful,
>   for you are walking about with your own downfall. (v. 13)[23]

Ben Sira's description of the precariousness of one's position within the more elite levels of society is palpable. The authors of the Psalms of Solomon might have lived on a level of society with its own peculiar instabilities. Wherever they and their associates were socially located, they clearly experienced the upheaval of this period in a direct manner, as the evidence from the texts confirms.

One might wish for a bit more specificity and detailed precision in order to classify various scribes, for the category as presented here, drawing on Horsely, covers a wide range of positions, from people who draft legal documents to scholars to those engaged in cult-related occupations. Still, Horsley's reconstruction proves so useful in reminding interpreters that the texts reflect and are products of real societies, cultures and circumstances. His work continues to offer many new possibilities and issues for future research, and for these psalms and their setting a few questions and details still require attention. For example, the authors of these psalms seem to have associates or followers, as the phrase "those who love the assemblies of the devout" hints (οἱ ἀγαπῶντες συναγωγὰς ὁσίων; Pss. Sol. 17:16). Who made up this larger group, and how would they have been connected to these authors? Further, that these texts are psalms leads to likelihood that the group used them in worship. Did the authors have some official role related to worship in Jerusalem or Judea, and also in the

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23. Quotes from the Hebrew Bible and Apocrypha are from the NRSV.

"assemblies of the devout"? Or did they serve some other role in the larger Judean society, though their education provided them the abilities needed to write such religious poetry?

The Experience of Discipline in Education

We also know quite a bit about the process of training scribes. A well-developed scribal ethos existed in the Second Temple period.[24] Often, fathers who were scribes trained their own sons. However, as in the case of Ben Sira, who taught young scribes in Jerusalem, some wealthy families may have sent their sons to prominent teachers, and perhaps a few structured schools existed. The curriculum centered on reading, writing, and memorization. Along with these skills, a student was enculturated, acquiring a cultural repertoire requisite to function in that setting. Scribal education came not simply through thoughts and ideas, but in practice, action, and the formation of the whole student. Learning was grounded in *experience*, which proves true for most—perhaps all—the scribal circles related to the production of various Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Jewish texts. In the end, the scribe's education prepared him for full operation in the culture: knowing how to act, perceiving what the actions of others meant, intuiting particular dispositions to hold about or in certain situations, etc. The term for all this was παιδεία, "discipline."

If we can use Ben Sira as a model for the παιδευτής, the "instructor," one again notices that he educated young, elite males, culturally forming them for life in that society. This included not simply intellectual development, but, as stated above, learning how to act in all social situations. Ben Sira accomplished his learning objectives by forming every movement and action of the students, even down to eating at a banquet:

> Eat like a human what is set before you,
>   and do not chew greedily lest you be hated
> Be the first to stop eating, for the sake of good manners,
>   and do not be insatiable, lest you give offense
> If you are seated among many persons,

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24. For a full summary of scribal training in the Hellenistic period, see David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 177–99. For the Second Temple period, see also Christina Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second-Temple Period* (JSOTSup 291; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); and Horsley, *Scribes, Visionaries*, 71–87.

> do not reach out your hand before they do. (Sir 31:16–18)
> How ample a little is for a well-disciplined person!
>   He does not breathe heavily upon his bed.
> Healthy sleep depends on moderate eating;
>   He rises early, and feels fit. (31:19–20)
> Speak, you who are older …
>   and do not interrupt the music. (32:3)
> Leave in good time and do not be the last. (32:11)

Perhaps interpreters sometimes move through these sayings as comic relief in order to arrive at items of more intellectual substance. However, modern anthropological studies have emphasized the cultural significance of such instructions. Bourdieu, developing Foucault's theories, argues that such simple commands as "sit up straight" and "use that fork first" form the child and the child's experience of the world. These simple actions, Bourdieu maintains, become the embodiment of culture—the engraining of culture into a person's body. From this grounding or embodiment in the culture, other more complex dispositions find their footing.[25]

While the editing in Ben Sira appears somewhat loose in places, these interesting directives follow the discussions about table etiquette:

> The one who seeks God will accept his discipline ($\pi\alpha\iota\delta\varepsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$),
>   and those who rise early to seek him will find favor.
> The one who seeks the law will be filled with it,
>   but the hypocrite will stumble at it.
> Those who fear the Lord will form true judgments,
>   and like a light they will kindle righteous deeds
> A sinner will shun reproof
>   and will find a decision according to his liking. (32:14–17)

The juxtaposition shows that Ben Sira, or the editors of the text, could easily move from rules for eating to the "fear of the Lord" and keeping the law, most likely because both serve as core cultural values. In Bourdieu's terms, Ben Sira has been charged with shaping the cultural disposition of the students who come to him, which includes all cultural actions and attitudes. Once embodied, Ben Sira's "products" move, breathe, and have their being in the world from these dispositions.

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25. See Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, 66–71.

The relationship between teacher and student required absolute respect and trust, the belief that the teacher knew what the student needed even though the student might not see it at the time. The teacher formed every aspect of the student's life through discipline. In order to operate successfully in the world, the student must believe that he should wear his instruction like a mantle. Mistakes brought strong correction from the teacher, perhaps even beatings—certainly an embodied experience! Horsley recalls several proverbs about the use of physical discipline as part of the education process.[26] Similarly, Carr reports that physical punishment as tool for teaching became a widely accepted and practiced method according to Hellenistic sources, especially in cases of rebellious, stubborn students.[27] He provides the following summary about the teachers working in the early stages of a child's education: "The successful early teacher mastered his students, taming their minds by way of their bodies and engraving on those minds the rudiments of Greek culture."[28] Even excluding the probability of corporal punishment, Carr's comments from the perspective of Bourdieu's theories about embodiment profoundly exhibit the way in which culture and its key precepts come through bodily experience.[29]

Παιδεια in the Psalms of Solomon and the Experience of Suffering

The authors of the Psalms of Solomon explain their suffering as the experience God's παιδεία, that is, God's "discipline." Von Gebhardt's index lists παιδεία and its cognates occurring in a number of psalms: παιδεία in 7:9; 8:26; 10:2, 3; 13:7, 9, 10; 14:1; 16:13; 18:4, 7; παιδευτής in 8:29; παιδεύω in 3:4; 7:3; 13:8; 16:11; 17:42; and possibly παῖς in 12:6; 17:21 might be included as well. This means that a term related to "discipline" appears in Pss. Sol. 3, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 18.[30] Obviously, whatever the historical development and redactional history of these psalms, the concept of παιδεία crisscrosses the entire corpus and remains a dominant

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26. Horsley, *Scribes, Visionaries*, 83. He quotes the following: "Those who spare the rod hate their children" (Prov. 13:24).

27. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 182.

28. Ibid., 182.

29. For a discussion of Bourdieu on this topic, see below.

30. See Oscar von Gebhardt, ΨΑΛΜΟΙ ΣΟΛΟΜΩΝΤΟΣ: *Die Psalmen Solomo's* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1895), 147.

conceptual metaphor. Most likely, the Hebrew root יסר and its cognate noun, מוסר, stand behind the Greek terms. Though Pss. Sol. 8:29 refers to God as "disciplinarian," only on one occasion is God designated this in the Hebrew Bible (יסור; Job 40:2). The term παῖς,[31] "son" or "servant," resides in the same semantic domain, which the Psalms of Solomon reserves for Israel (Pss. Sol. 12:6; 17:21). Thus, the authors of the Psalms of Solomon apply the metaphor of discipline to Israel, to their own group that stands within Israel, and to individuals within the group.

The idea that God disciplines or that the righteous must seek discipline also appears in several Hebrew Bible traditions—Deuteronomy,[32] the prophets,[33] Psalms,[34] and Proverbs.[35] These traditions have either the raising of children or training of scribes in mind as they apply the metaphor.[36] Discipline within these traditions typically evokes a somewhat mechanistic moral universe where righteousness is rewarded and sin is punished. They assume that crises in a people's or person's life are intended to bring correction. This makes a proper response to these moments crucial. As trained scribes, the authors of the Psalms of Solomon knew many of these traditions.

Accepting and Responding to God's Παιδεια

As mentioned, the events of the early Roman period and Herod the Great's reign created much turmoil in Judean society and life. In regard to the Psalms of Solomon, this included life as part of the Jewish people, as a member of a scribal group, and as individuals. The two basic categories of psalms in the collection—psalms about the people (or the nation) (Pss. Sol. 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 17, 18), and psalms about the righteous and pious (Pss. Sol. 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16)—reflect these levels of the struggles.[37] Space limitations allow for only a few observations about the authors' reflections on God's παιδεία in the light of the suffering of the era. These

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31. Georg Bertram, "παιδεύω," *TDNT* 5:596.

32. E.g., Deut 4:36; 8:5; 11:2.

33. E.g., Isa 53:5; Jer 2:30; 5:3; 7:28; 10:8; 17:23; 30:14; 32:33; 35:13.

34. E.g., Pss 6:2; 38:2; 39:12; 50:17; 94:10, 12; 118:18.

35. Weinfeld suggests that the concept enters the prophetic traditions, namely Jeremiah, through Deuteronomic scribes.

36. See Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 111–73.

37. Again, the basic categories set forth by Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 238–48.

arise from an examination of selected psalms from both basic categories. The analysis that follows focuses primarily upon the appropriate dispositions and emotions modeled and encouraged in these particular psalms.

Psalms of the People or Nation

Psalms of Solomon 7 focuses on God disciplining the whole people, as seen, for example, in the use of "us," "people of Israel" (v. 8), and "house of Jacob" (v. 10), with the "whip of discipline" (v. 9). The psalm seems to indicate that the discipline is either impending or just beginning, as some petitions seek God's mercy in the application of the discipline as if it has not yet occurred.[38] God knows the degree to which discipline should be applied to the people, and especially to the righteous:

> For you are kind,
>   and will not be angry enough to destroy us. (7:5)

Thus, the author pleads for God to administer appropriate discipline without turning the people over to the Gentiles, who somehow may go beyond God's measured punishment:

> Discipline us as you wish,
>   but do not turn (us) over to the gentiles. (7:3)

While wisdom sayings also attempted to set limits on corporal punishment, the culture nevertheless understood the action as springing from the teacher's love for the student and reverence for the culture, its web of relationships, and its traditions. In the Psalms of Solomon, this is transferred to the relationship between God and God's people.

Given the authors' knowledge of tradition, this particular psalm could have in mind the range of "disciplines" in the covenantal curses that precede occupation by foreigners (see Deut 28; 1 Kgs 8). Similarly, the story of David choosing a plague over an enemy attack expresses an obvious aversion to domination by foreigners (2 Sam 24; 1 Chr 21). In fact, the potential brutality of Gentile invaders evokes more fear in the psalmist than if God loosed death itself on the people; God can give instructions to

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38. For the range of scholarly opinion on the date of Pss. Sol. 7, see Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 107–11. Atkinson dates the psalm to before Pompey's siege (110–11).

death, but the Gentiles are lawless (Pss. Sol. 7:3–4). Being given over to the Gentiles also represented God's ultimate rejection and a withdrawal of the deity's mercy, protection, and presence (Deut 28:25–37; 1 Kgs 8:46–47).

Despite potential disaster on the horizon, the psalm concludes in confidence (vv. 5–10), a tendency apparent throughout the collection, and perhaps an imitation of several biblical psalms. Pss. Sol. 7:6 asserts this faith by drawing on the deuteronomic traditions of the assurance and protection related to the presence of the divine name (cf. Deut 12; 1 Kgs 8):

> While your name lives among us, we shall receive mercy,
>   and the gentile will not overcome us.

The psalmist believes that God continues to protect, to hear, to have compassion on, and to have mercy on Israel; God has not rejected the people. Central to these assertions is the assurance that all this constitutes God's discipline.

> And we are under your yoke forever,
>   and (under) the whip of your discipline. (v. 9)

These concluding statements of faith in the psalms express the group's absolute trust in God their disciplinarian. These expressions match the trust found in students' attitudes toward their teachers in the cultural system of παιδεία.

Of course, the Gentiles do "overcome" the people in Pompey's invasion and also later in the "foreigner" Herod. While filled with painful descriptions of these disasters, the psalms manage to come to terms with the events as God's discipline. The authors claim to recognize the appropriateness of the punishment and God's right to do this. In the case of Pompey's invasion, the author of Pss. Sol. 8 at first assumed the people's righteousness (Pss. Sol. 8:1–6), thus making Pompey's assault on the temple incomprehensible. However, upon reflection, God's actions indeed exposed the people as sinners to the author (8:7–13). Verses 8–13 catalog the people's sins and thus legitimate God's actions.

The author acclaims the rightfulness of God's judgment, harsh as it is. He delivers this sentiment in the form of what von Rad labeled a *Gerichtsdoxologie*. A frequent feature of penitential prayers, the *Gerichtsdoxologie* sprang from deuteronomic theology as a ritualized action that proclaims or acknowledges God's righteousness in sending punishments upon the

people. The formulaic speech typically uses second person, "You are righteous, O Lord." The expression as the proper response to Israel's struggles occurs in 8:7, 26, as well as 2:15. I make some changes to Wright's translation in order to capture the force of the *Gerichtsdoxologie*.

> I thought about the judgments of God since the creation of heaven and earth;
>> I proclaimed[39] God right (ἐδικαίωσα) in his judgments in ages past. (8:7)
> We have proclaimed[40] your name right (ἐδικαιώσαμεν),
>> which is honored forever,
> for you are the God of righteousness,
>> judging Israel in discipline (παιδείᾳ). (8:26)[41]
> I will prove you right (ἐγὼ δικαιώσω σε), O God, in uprightness of heart;
>> for your judgments are right (τοῖς κρίμασίν σου ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου), O God. (2:15)

Thus, acknowledgement of God's righteousness functions as the appropriate response to national and, as will be demonstrated below, to personal suffering. In both cases, the formula gives expression to and shapes a proper disposition toward suffering. Given the number of instances of the *Gerichtsdoxologie* in these psalms, throughout the penitential prayer traditions, and in the Hodayot—just to mention a few examples—it is easy to imagine that individuals and groups made these declarations audibly, whether through psalms or other liturgical practices.

Because God has applied discipline with mercy and compassion, and the psalmist has confessed God righteous in doing this, he can pray for the restoration of God's dispersed people (8: 27–34). He implores God not to extend discipline for a "stiff neck" to God's total rejection of the people (vv. 29–30a). Again, as found in the Psalms and in other parts of the Psalms of Solomon, this psalm ends with statements of hope, trust, and praise (v. 33–34).

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39. Wright translates as "proved."
40. Wright translates as "proven."
41. Cf. also Pss. Sol. 4:8; 8:23; 9:2; 14:2.

Psalms of the Righteous

When the psalms turn to the suffering of the pious individual, the contrast between the manner in which the righteous and sinner respond becomes a favorite trope. Of course, portraying differences between the two is rife in the cultural repertoire of the psalmists, as similar contrasts litter Psalms, Proverbs and Ben Sira.

Psalms of Solomon 3 begins its contrast of the two groups with the psalmist's self-exhortation to pious action:

> Why do you sleep, soul, and do not praise the Lord?
>   Sing a new song to God, who is worthy to be praised.
> Sing and be aware of how he is aware of you,
>   for a good psalm to God is from a glad heart. (3:1–2)

The author of this psalm notices his soul is indifferent or inattentive—perhaps fading in the presence of the struggles. Singing as a ritual performance of the "good heart" physically enacts acceptance of God's discipline. At the same time, the psalmist's song provides an action that gives concrete expression to emotions and disposition, which Geertz suggested is a primary task for religion. While the psalmist does not speak of the physical action of singing shaping internal dispositions, one could imagine the movement occurring in this direction as well.

The phrase "new song" along with exhortations to "praise" the Lord reveals more interesting features about the author's attitude. Appearing in biblical psalms such as Pss 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1 (cf. Isa 42:10; Rev 5:9; 14:3), these words typically occur in celebrations of God's victories or mighty works. These biblical psalms are celebratory ritual performances that communicate the state of the group, and as such, they carry or generate those appropriate emotions. As Rappaport explains, ritual actions are especially self-referential—that is, they refer back to the state of the group, particularly its mood and disposition.[42] Rappapport's observation seems ostensibly simple, yet upon reflection proves more significant. A group that experiences a death activates mourning rituals, which signal to the group the culturally appropriate collective attitude. The author of

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42. Roy Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 110; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 69–106.

Pss. Sol. 3, however, has placed these words into a context of struggling under God's discipline, i.e., suffering, and attempting to emerge from a self-diagnosed spiritual malaise. Thus the exhortative rhetoric, "sing a new song," does not quite contextually fit this setting, for "new songs" serve as reactions to salvation. Therefore, in this strange location, the exhortation must construct God's discipline as a marvelous work, and consequently the psalm becomes an exclamation of trust.

More than just a simple trust, the psalmist continues by claiming that the righteous remember God through all aspects of life and that struggles have justly come upon him.

> The righteous remember the Lord all the time,
> > With confession (ἐξομολογήσει) and justification (δικαιώσει), the Lord's judgments.[43]
> The righteous does not lightly esteem the discipline from the Lord
> > his desire is (to be) always in the Lord's presence. (3:3–4)

The two nouns ἐξομολογήσει and δικαιώσει refer to the practice of confessing and acclaiming God's righteousness, the *Gerichtsdoxologie*, like that found in Pss. Sol. 2 and 8. The Greek word ἐξομολογεῖν, "to acknowledge," "to acclaim," or "to confess," typically translates the Hebrew ידה, which occurs in the *hitpaʿel* with this meaning. By the time of the Psalms of Solomon, the term has strong roots in penitential prayer traditions, which acknowledge that God has rightfully punished the people for their sins.[44]

Psalms of Solomon 3 also provides valuable information about how the author drew on the experience of παιδεία to manage and respond to suffering.

> The righteous stumbles and proclaims[45] the Lord right (ἐδικαίωσεν τὸν κύριον);
> > he falls and watches for what God will do about him;

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43. I have altered Robert Wright's translation ("Psalms of Solomon" in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:654) in an effort to reflect what I believe is a reference to liturgical action. Wright's translation is as follows: "by acknowledging and proving the Lord's judgments right." Cf. also, idem, *The* Psalms of Solomon: *A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (T&T Clark Jewish and Christian Texts 1; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 77.

44. See, e.g., Ezra 10:1; Neh 1:6; 9:3; Dan 9:4. Cf. also Hodayot.

45. Wright translates as "proves."

> he looks to where his salvation comes from.
> The confidence of the righteous (comes) from God their savior;
>> sin after sin does not visit the house of the righteous.
> The righteous constantly searches his house,
>> to remove his unintentional sins.
> He atones for (sins of) ignorance by fasting and humbling his soul.
>> and the Lord will cleanse every devout person and his house. (Pss. Sol. 3:5–8)

The righteous accept their problems as God's tough love. Again, the psalmist refers to the declaration of God's righteousness as part of the pious person's response to trouble (v. 5). For the righteous person, the moment of struggle offers an opportunity to take moral inventory in order to avoid a pattern of action that could lead to piling "sin upon sin." Fasting and "humbling the soul" as a way to remove sin was probably widely practiced. However, a reference to the ritual in Ben Sira indicates that this clearly formed part of scribal piety:

> So if someone fasts for his sins,
>> and goes again and does the same things,
> who will listen to his prayer?
>> And what has he gained by humbling himself? (Sir 34:31)

According to the psalmist, the "sinner," on the other hand, becomes more obstinate in his sinfulness under God's discipline (Pss. Sol. 3:9–11). Due to a lack of discipline, the "sinner" curses "the day of his birth, and his mother's pains" when problems arise, and instead of recognizing God's correction through discipline, the sinner falls into the pattern that "adds sin upon sin in his life" (v. 10).

Psalms of Solomon 15 also encourages singing a "new psalm" (v. 3) from a happy heart as not only a proper praise to God but also a survival strategy. In this case, the song arises in the midst of some form of oppression (ἐν τῷ θλίβεσθαί), or difficult circumstances. Wright translates the phrase as "When I was persecuted" in the Charlesworth volume (quoted below),[46] a possibility given the sociohistorical setting. However, in his later critical text and translation, Wright renders the phrase as "When

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46. Wright, "*Psalms of Solomon*," 664.

I was oppressed."[47] This translation may also carry the notion of being oppressed by someone rather than by circumstances.

> When I was persecuted I called on the Lord's name….
>> For who, O God, is strong except he who confesses you in truth;
>> and what person is powerful except he who confesses your name?
> A new psalm with song with a happy heart,
>> the fruit of the lips with the tuned instrument of the tongue,
>> the first fruits of the lips from a devout and righteous heart.
> The one who does these things will never be disturbed by evil;
>> the flame of fire and anger against the unrighteous shall not touch
>> him. (15:1a, 2–4)

The explicit meditation on the action of the "fruit of the lips" along with the "tuned instrument of the tongue," while common metaphors for singing, allow for the interpretation that the author has in mind real, performed liturgical actions. As with Pss. Sol. 3, a bodily practice both forms and springs from the disposition of the individual facing suffering. The ritual action, bodily performed, unites tradition, emotion, and understanding similarly to that described by Geertz.

Psalms of Solomon 14, which also contrasts the life of the righteous and the sinner, proclaims God's "faithfulness" to those who "love" God, to those who "endure his discipline" (τοῖς ὑπομένουσιν παιδείαν αὐτοῦ), and to those who live according to Torah (vv. 1–2). Again, a basic feature from the teacher-student relationship may serve as background to the idea. This psalmist unites the disciplined life to keeping Torah. Those who display these characteristics constitute the Lord's "devout" (ὅσιοι κυρίου; v. 3). As Wright notes, the metaphors relating the devout to firmly rooted trees, along with the contrast with the sinners and the accompanying metaphors, echo biblical Ps 1.[48]

The Anatomy of Experience

The analysis of the selected psalms from the collection highlights the concept of discipline, and showcases the proper response to and disposition towards God's administration of it. The authors of the Psalms of Solomon,

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47. Wright, *The* Psalms of Solomon: *A Critical Edition*, 161.
48. Wright, "*Psalms of Solomon*," 663.

who had undergone the discipline of the school, probably much as Ben Sira describes it, now seem to be "reclaiming" their roles from their past experiences as students or apprentices to face the struggles in a new world. In part, this "re-assumed" role becomes expressed in the ritual performance of the newly composed liturgies or hymns that rise from the authors' *habitus*, which is all a part of their "embodied history, which has been internalized as a second nature."[49] That is, they knew the role of student to teacher and how to "live" in this role because they had embodied how to be in that world; they had embodied their scribal training, and they again rely on knowledge gained from that experience.

Dorothy Holland and her associates offer a sociolinguistic method that permits further exploration of such claims. They propose that humans construct complex "figurative worlds," which define various social roles, and therefore activities of persons. These consequently determine the way in which they experience their world.[50] These figured worlds "rest upon people's abilities to form and be formed in collectively realized 'as if' realms."[51] So she asks as she explains, "What if there were a world called academia, where books were so significant that people would sit for hours on end, away from friends and family, writing them?"[52] To restate her description of these worlds minus the technical jargon, the "as-if" world is culturally constructed in people's imaginations, but in such powerful ways that, through continual cultural participation and formation in it (by rituals, conversations, tasks, etc.), the figured world becomes "embodied" to the point that this is the way in which people experience—even physically sense—the world.

People possess a tendency to be drawn into these worlds, to be formed by them, and to participate actively and passionately in them.[53] Linguists believe, Holland reports, that these figurative worlds and their social reali-

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49. Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, 56.

50. Dorothy Holland, et al., *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, 35–42, 52. Carol Newsom, in her splendid analysis of the construction of the self at Qumran, draws heavily on Holland's theories, as well as on Bahktin and Foucault. See Carol A. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran* (STDJ 53; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004). Her essay in this volume also relies on Holland's theories.

51. Holland, *Identity and Agency*, 49.

52. Ibid., 49.

53. Ibid.

ties are necessary for words to have meaning.[54] She summarizes her position as follows:

> By "figured worlds," then, we mean a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actions are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others. Each is a simplified world populated by a set of agents … who engage in a limited range of meaningful acts or changes of state … as moved by a specific set of forces.[55]

As her definition indicates, figured worlds contain narratival and dramatic features.[56] Eventually, through continual participation, these narratives become embodied in the participants, mediating the ways in which they "sense (see, hear, touch, taste, feel)" their world.[57] Thus people do not so much apprehend figured worlds as objects as they live out of them and process and act in their world through them.[58]

In reaching these conclusions, Holland has consciously developed Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus*, field, practice, disposition, and power, which received some attention above. Bourdieu, building upon the theories of Foucault, emphasized how cultures embody belief in their people through practice.[59] Through the regulation of bodily actions and language, cultures shape the dispositions of their members. Practice produces not a "state of mind," but a "state of the body."[60] "The body believes what it plays at," Bourdieu asserts; we come to believe what we enact.[61] Or, those engaged in such a manner do not simply symbolically represent an idea by their actions. In their bodies they believe what they play; they are what they play as they inhabit a different ontological reality.[62] Bourdieu clarifies further, "What is 'learned by body' is not something that one has, like knowledge that one can brandish, but something that one is."[63] Action

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54. Ibid., 52.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., 53.
57. Ibid., 52–53.
58. Ibid., 41.
59. See, e.g., Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, 68–70.
60. Ibid., 68.
61. Ibid., 73.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.

in society becomes a *mimesis*, "which requires a total investment and deep emotional identification."[64]

By evoking the imagery and language of their scribal education, the authors of the Psalms of Solomon bring back to life a prior "as-if" world and reassign roles in that world—they are students, while God takes the role as "teacher," "disciplinarian," or παιδευτής. Even if they functioned as teachers as adults, they now reverted to being "students." However, it is not difficult to imagine that the "feeling" or "disposition" of being a student never quite left the scribe. This might be especially the case if a scribe engaged in his professional career in the presence of his former teacher, which is quite possible in an ancient society like Roman Judea—once a student, always a student. They knew how to be good students, for that knowledge had been embodied as it formed their lives and careers. As Holland explains, the act of inhabiting these "as-if" figured worlds begins to develop in childhood as children play and imagine such things as a couch that serves as a car. Interestingly, among Carr's data about Hellenistic schools appears an account of children "playing school."[65] Appropriate dispositions, proper emotional responses, and fitting actions all stood available in their embodied memory. In this way, managing suffering by invoking a pedagogical *habitus* arose as a kind of natural, basically intuitive response, but now with God as teacher.

Ritual between the Discursive and the Nondiscursive

The determination of the function of ritual within this experience remains. The number of psalms, hymns and prayers dated to the Second Temple period testifies to the importance of these ritualized actions within that culture, including the prominent position they held within scribal subculture. In the context of suffering, these media of expression can play an interesting role in the phenomenon of experiencing suffering, especially in making it manageable. Here the discussion returns to Geertz and the central place that ritual singing occupied in the Navaho strategies for managing suffering. However, as mentioned, Geertz explains the efficacy of the ritual with only a brief statement:

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64. Ibid.

65. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 192.

> Clearly, the symbolism of the sing focuses upon the problem of human suffering and attempts to cope with it by placing it in a meaningful context, providing a mode of action through which it can be expressed, being expressed understood, and being understood, endured.[66]

A fuller exploration of how ritual does its work, which might fill in this gap in Geertz's theory, appears in Roy Rappaport's monumental work, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. He provides several interesting observations about the place of ritual in religious experience. He approaches this phenomenon by exploring William James's concept of "grace" as the experience of "wholeness" in the individual. According to Rappaport, "grace" for James refers to a "psychic reunion in which war among parts of the self is replaced by a harmonious and enthusiastic concert of the whole self working in peace as one."[67] While experts in psychology may quibble with Rappaport's view of the psychological self, he draws on James at this point in order to bring together two apparent oppositions in religious experience—the discursive, which claims reason and rationality, and the nondiscursive, which is more emotionally, intuitively, and bodily grounded. According to Rappaport, when the opposites achieve integration, the individual experiences "wholeness," which for Rappaport may also be categorized as an experience of the "holy":

> The term "holy," sharing as it does its etymology with "whole," is appropriate for the designation of that which encompasses and integrates both the discursive and non-discursive aspects of human experience.[68]

Individuals arrive at this integration through ritual performance, as ritual acts "make the reasons of the heart one with the reasons of reason."[69]

He further fleshes out this claim by using a theory of aesthetics. Art and the experience of art "stand midway between thought and experience," Rappaport asserts.[70] Works of art, including poetry and song, are discursive in that they "represent objects available to our ordinary senses,"[71] and appear to be objects produced by reason and thought. However, art is also

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66. Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 105.
67. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion,* 383; cf. 382–88 and 216–35.
68. Ibid., 384.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid., 386.
71. Ibid.

sensuous and in this way aims at the emotions. While the experience of art with its accompanying emotions will certainly prove different for each individual and the person appropriates and relates aesthetic experience to his or her own life, nevertheless, the culture may form "socially approved sentiments" (such as "seriousness, solemnity, reverence, submission") by framing or guiding the varied individual responses, thus managing both experience and thought.[72] Consequently, ritual as art unites the discursive with the nondiscursive, while it also culturally guides the varying individual responses.

However, ritual and art are not simply equivalent. While Rappaport lists several differences, perhaps the most important relates to congregational participation in a ritual performance. In this case, the subject-object distinction of most art disappears, for a worshipping community does not simply observe but participates. Rappaport's words best explain the significance of this:

> The members of the congregation may experience the Ultimate Sacred Postulates [i.e., the most important propositions about the divine] not only through their ears and eyes, but coming out of their own bodies in song, or forcing entry into their bodies through the beat of drums animating their limbs in dance. The self-unification of participation in ritual is more comprehensive than that of aesthetic contemplation, for it embraces the somatic as well as mental processes, and thus may bring the act and sensation of the body into the mind's computations.[73]

Departing from James's tendency to view religion and the religious as belonging to "individual men in their solitude,"[74] Rappaport emphasizes that not only is an integration of the self achieved in ritual, but also a union with others. As he asserts, that which makes "the reasons of the heart one with the reasons of reason" also effects a union with others in an intimacy akin to that of "cells or organs of single organisms."[75] Further, in emphasizing the participatory characteristics of congregational rituals, the anthropologist alludes to the communal power of unified practice. Drawing on Victor Turner's concept of *communitas*, Rappaport states that "participa-

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72. Ibid. Here Rappaport draws on the theories of Radcliffe-Brown.

73. Ibid., 388.

74. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: The Modern Library, 1994), 36.

75. Rappaport, 384. Rappaport bases this claim on neurological studies.

tion in communitarian ritual" imparts an experience of the numinous. Those who experience the *communitas* of a congregation ritual do so in part as the result of the power of a group united in a harmonious practice. The distinction between the self and others blurs, and the experience of the self extends beyond itself to the congregation. In fact, the practitioner may even sense "oneness" with the cosmos. Once again, ritual action operates as the linchpin, in this case as a "non-discursive confirmation of the discursive and rational."[76]

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CONCLUSION: HOW TO MANAGE SUFFERING
ACCORDING TO THE PSALMS OF SOLOMON

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Now a return to the question Geertz's work raises in regard to the Psalms of Solomon seems appropriate: How do the Psalms of Solomon "make suffering sufferable"? First, certainly, the psalms' authors include discursive elements in their approach to the problem. This occurs in their use of authoritative, sacred traditions, which they learned in their scribal training and perhaps also from worship. This cultural repository readily offers long-accepted ideas, images, and explanations about God, God's actions in the world, and the people of Israel; the tradition proves quite pliable.

However, the work of making suffering sufferable does not end with these discursive elements, with *logos*, in Bourdieu's terms. Thus, the authors of the psalms also draw on their past experiences as students—or their continued adult relationships with their former teachers—in order to generate an appropriate disposition out of which to face their struggles. They reassume their roles as students and turn the world into the scribal school. God plays their instructor (παιδευτής), and their problems—suffering in a dangerous and constantly shifting political climate—become the "discipline" of their new, adult-world educational setting. Thus, they take a primary disposition, a structuring principle from their *habitus*, the disposition of the student, which had been culturally formed in them, and transfer it to this new field. As Bourdieu and Holland remind us, this does not simply constitute a way of thinking, an intellectual position, a *logos*. Rather, they intuitively and bodily know how to be and how to survive as students, so now they hope this knowledge will help them survive on a much bigger cultural stage as disaffected scribes. In part, then, their expe-

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76. Ibid., 380.

rience of God becomes mimetic of the teacher-student experience, neither simply metaphor nor analogy. The authors of the Psalms of Solomon were not saying that their struggles resembled or could be compared to the *paideia* of the school. Rather, their experiences of suffering as *paideia* became mimesis, an acting out or playing out of their relationship with God. Through that mimetic practice (here as teacher-student), the leaders of the community sought to "transmit a particular form of practical mastery" for being in this world.[77] Here laid the possibility for trust and patient endurance.

Finally, the psalm served as the linchpin between the discursive postulates and forms of the sacred tradition and the nondiscursive intuitive, emotional and bodily dimensions of being human. In ritual and liturgical participation, the discursive and nondiscursive united in bodily action and engendered in the adherents a sense of wholeness and transcendence. The clear references to singing hymns or psalms in Pss. Sol. 3 and 15, the frequent occurrences of the *Gerichtsdoxologie* and variations on it, and allusions to what seems to be worship in the "assemblies of the pious" strongly suggest that these psalms were performed in some kind of community worship. Thus the ritual performance of singing these psalms generated what Rappaport considers the numinous force of *communitas*, the feeling that the self extended into the community and perhaps into the oneness of the cosmos. If so, one should not underestimate such a powerful antidote to suffering; in part, suffering became sufferable in the performing of the psalm.

Theodicy, a term often used to describe the heart of the Psalms of Solomon's theology, as a resolution to the problem of why evil exists, is not simply achieved in the Psalms of Solomon through theological argumentation. It is also achieved through practice—through a particular way of acting in the world, a group's dispositions and emotions, the orientation of the self and of the community.[78] The logic of this practice in the Psalms of Solomon, as Bourdieu claims, "can be grasped only in action."[79] For the believer, then, theodicy—as the affirmation of God's righteousness—is only finally realized in practice.

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77. Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, 73–74.
78. Ibid., 92.
79. Ibid., 92.

Esoteric Mystical Practice in Fourth Ezra and the Reconfiguration of Social Memory

Frances Flannery

At the end of 4 Ezra, the Most High gives Ezra a distinctive command regarding the circulation of his revelations, saying, "*Make public* the twenty-four books that you wrote first [i.e., presumably some form of the Tanak] and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; but keep the seventy that were written last, in order *to give them to the wise among your people*" (4 Ezra 14:47; also 8:61–62; 12:38–39; 14:26).[1] This fictional coda assumes the existence of two kinds of writings, public and esoteric, and two kinds of audiences, the wider public and the smaller group of "the wise." In fact, this ending also reveals an authorial strategy that aims two different stories at two distinctive readerships throughout the whole of the text. On one level, the whole text of 4 Ezra may be read exoterically as a story in which Ezra progresses theologically and psychologically from a state of despair to one of consolation.[2] This field of meaning would be particularly relevant for a wider Jewish audience that survived the post-70 C.E. period, the generally accepted dating for 4 Ezra. On another level, the entirety of 4 Ezra may also be read esoterically as an encoded narrative of a mystic's progress through successive levels of divine encounter. This reading of the narrative, consistently and carefully constructed throughout the text, would be fully recognizable only to ritual experts of early Jewish mysticism. I use "early Jewish mysticism" in the general sense

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1. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of 4 Ezra are from Bruce M. Metzger, "The Fourth Book of Ezra," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983–1985), 1:517–60.

2. Earl Breech, "These Fragments I Have Shored against My Ruins: The Form and Function of 4 Ezra," *JBL* 92 (1973): 267–74; Michael Stone, "The City in 4 Ezra," *JBL* 126 (2007): 402–7.

outlined by April DeConick, as a tradition "centered on the belief that a person directly, immediately, and before death can experience the divine, either as a rapture experience or as one solicited by a particular praxis."[3] In this sense, 4 Ezra appears to operate both as a public narrative and as an esoteric, mystical treatise.

The thrust of my argument is that the theological and psychological tensions that Ezra expresses for the first half of the text are not solved primarily in an intellectual fashion. Rather, they are only fully resolved for Ezra experientially, as is most apparent through a reading that uses a particular, esoteric hermeneutical key: ritual that provokes divine encounter. Through seven stages of ritually induced mystical transformation, Ezra comes to understand that a wider eschatological solution, available to the public, is also available before the end of time for the wise, the few (8:62). This understanding, arrived at by visions and other forms of contact with divinity, is what ultimately consoles and informs Ezra.

In this investigation I first address the exoteric level of reading and employ social memory theory to establish that Ezra is a figure in 4 Ezra who expresses a significant point of view for the author by voicing socially relevant theological concerns. Next, I combine social psychological cognitive dissonance theory with social memory theory to show that the character of Ezra voices tensions coherent with actual cognitive dissonances, or severe psychological tensions, that would reasonably be experienced by the author and his/her (and hereafter the more likely "his") community after 70 C.E.

Having thus established the nature of the anxieties that propel the narrative, and that were likely of urgent concern for the real author and his community, I then establish several lines of textual evidence to uncover an esoteric shape of the narrative that resolves the theological and psychological tensions felt in the early part of the book. This evidence includes internal textual clues and, importantly, attention to ritually induced states of divine encounter. I conclude that, like the "twenty-four" and "seventy books," 4 Ezra itself contains both a general story for the public and an

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3. April D. DeConick, "What is Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism?" in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism* (ed. April D. DeConick; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 1–24, here 2. By "mysticism" I do not mean the fully developed system of later *merkabah* mysticism, although as early as Gershom Scholem 4 Ezra has been viewed as a precursor (*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* [New York: Schocken, 1941, repr. 1995], 49).

esoteric story aimed at an audience of ritual experts attuned to the transformation that Ezra undergoes.

Social Memory Theory and 4 Ezra

Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity, edited by Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, introduced biblical scholars to social and cultural memory theory. Other fields of the humanities and social sciences have utilized this work for many decades.[4] This theory provides a valuable means of perceiving the social worlds of authors by viewing their selection of materials as purposeful and laden with meaning. Initiated by Maurice Halbwachs, with notable contributions made in biblical studies by Jan and Aleida Assmann, the basic contours of social/cultural/communal memory theory are simple but incisive.[5] Memory of a cultural past is not static, hermetically sealed, nor the aggregate of actual remembrances of individuals. Rather, cultural memory is intersubjectively and socially constructed,[6] dynamic, and "wired into the ever-shifting present."[7] Cultural memory is constantly updated to conform to a community's present concerns and self-identity through semantic framing.[8] The past provides some limits, in that cultural memory selectively utilizes shards of tradition, but these may be extensively rearranged and "pieced together like a mosaic."[9] This process creates a new, symbolic organiza-

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4. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, eds. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (*Semeia* 52; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005).

5. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (trans. F. J. Ditter Jr. and V. Y. Ditter; New York: Harper & Row, 1980, repr. and trans. of *La mémoire collective* [Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1950]); idem, *On Collective Memory* (ed. and trans. L. A. Coser; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); idem, *La mémoire collective* (ed. G. Namer; Paris: Michel, 1997); Aleida and Jan Assmann, "Schrift und Gedächtnis," in *Schrift und Gedächtnis: Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation* (ed. Aleida Assmann et al.; Munich: Fink, 1983), 265–84; Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: Beck, 1992), and idem, *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis: Zehn Studien* (Munich: Beck, 2000).

6. Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory,* 51–53, 68; Assmann, *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis,*19.

7. Kirk, *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 10.

8. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* 183; Kirk, *Memory, Tradition and Text*, 10.

9. Barbie Zelizer, "Reading the Past against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12 (1995): 214–39, 224; April DeConick,

tion of reality that reflects the present experiences of an individual and a community.[10]

As applied to 4 Ezra, social memory theory can speak to the crucial question of which character provides point of view for the author and his community. Some commentators see the character of Ezra merely as a foil against the representative view of the angel and God (e.g., Brandenburger, Harnisch),[11] while others maintain that Ezra's viewpoint reflects at least some of the concerns of the author (e.g., Stone, Breech, Gunkel).[12] Departing from both positions, Hogan has recently argued that neither Ezra nor the angel provides the text's point of view.[13] Rather, she maintains that the dialogues between the angel and Ezra represent actual or imagined debates between two schools of wisdom possibly present at the author's time, neither of which are identical to the author's position. For Hogan, the text solves the debate through the apocalyptic theology experienced in the fourth, fifth and sixth visions, which stand over and against the earlier, ineffective sapiential positions of Uriel and Ezra.[14]

Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and Its Growth (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 207; Kelber, "The Works of Memory: Christian Origins as MnemoHistory—A Response," in *Memory, Tradition, and Text*: *Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*, 221–48, here 226.

10. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 58–59. For religion as a symbolic organization of reality, see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973; repr., New York: Basic Books, 2000), 87–125.

11. Egon Brandenburger, *Die Verborgenheit Gottes im Weltgeschehen: Das literarische und theologische Problem des 4.Esrabuches* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1981), 30–32, 66, 70; Wolfgang Harnisch, "Der Prophet als Widerpart und Zeuge des Offenbarung Erwägungen zur Interdependenz von Form und Sache im IV Buch Esra," *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism, Uppsala, August 12–17, 1979* (ed. D. Hellholm; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 461–93, here 472–78.

12. Michael Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 14, 28, 32; Breech, "These Fragments," 271; Hermann Gunkel, "Das vierte Buch Esra," in *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testament* (ed. E. Kautzsch; Tübingen: Mohr, 1900), 2:331–402, here 337.

13. Karina Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict in 4 Ezra: Wisdom, Debate and Apocalyptic Solution* (JSJSup 130; Leiden: Brill, 2008).

14. My approach brings me into some agreement with Hogan, namely, that the text rejects a rational solution to the problems outlined at the outset in favor of "a non-rational, apocalyptic solution." Our analyses differ with respect to the role of Ezra, since Hogan states: "neither Ezra nor Uriel, nor some conflation of their points of view in the dialogues, represents the author's own beliefs." She also criticizes Stone, saying,

My approach builds mostly on Stone's position, providing evidence for *why* Ezra should be considered as at least partially representing the author's viewpoint.[15] According to social memory theory, authors select traditional motifs *only as they are relevant, reconfiguring them in relation to an ever-impinging present.*[16] If this is so, the biblical Ezra, priest and leader for Israel in the wake of the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians, would appear to be chosen as the lead character of the text because he functioned in some way as an *Erinnerungsfigur,*[17] given that the author and community are also likewise living in the decades after the destruction of the (Second) Temple. In other words, the choice of Ezra as lead character is purposeful and meaning-laden for the author and relevant to the wider community because of his role during the period after a calamity caused by a foreign empire. Importantly, Jan Assmann suggests that the forty-year mark is the approximate point at which a memory crisis would ensue based on the demise of the living carriers of memory,[18] a temporal limit that fits rather well with the introductory dating of the text itself, "In the thirtieth year after the destruction of our City" (4 Ezra 3:1). Since scholars generally accept this setting as a code for the actual historical setting of the composition of 4 Ezra, about thirty years after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple,[19] the post-586 B.C.E. Ezra thus acts as a kind of *Doppelgänger* for the post-70 C.E. author and his/her community. The author's generation is living in a multi-faceted *Traditionsbruch*[20] that makes sense of itself through the reinterpretation of the earlier *Traditionsbruch* of the exile and return.

"While it may be argued that Ezra's journey from doubt to acceptance is a representation of the author's own, it is unwarranted simply to assume that it is, as Stone does" (*Theologies in Conflict*, 9, 37, 29).

15. Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict*, 205.

16. Kirk, *Memory, Tradition and Text*, 10.

17. Assmann, *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis,* 216; Kelber, "Works of Memory," 243.

18. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis,* 11; idem, *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis,* 29.

19. The specificity of images of Domitian in the eagle vision lends credence to this dating around the end of the first century C.E. for the composition of 4 Ezra (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 10).

20. Assmann, *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis,* 87–88, 218–21; idem, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 165, 216.

If the choice of Ezra as the main character has potency for the author's community, then the questions that Ezra poses repeatedly with great anguish should form a coherent set of theological queries consonant with the post-70 C.E. context of Roman imperial destruction, interpreted as punishment for Israel under the covenant. Indeed, they do. First, Ezra poses questions concerning Israel's inability to keep the covenant and its subsequent suffering under the Gentiles, such as: How can anyone keep the law, given the evil heart that has existed in humans since the time of Adam (4:20)? How is anyone able to keep the commandments and covenant and thus avoid God's punishment (7:45–48)? And, furthermore, why must we suffer without really understanding the reasons (4:12, 22–25)? Second, Ezra asks questions that address the disparate conditions of Israel vis-à-vis the Gentiles, namely: Why have the Gentiles, who are even less righteous than Israel, been allowed to destroy us (4:28–33; 5:28–30)? Does the Lord not love Israel anymore (6:30, 59)? Finally, Ezra voices many questions about the end times: How long until the eschatological conclusion of this age and the end of this suffering, so that Israel may be vindicated (5:33; 6:59)? Will the end come soon (5:44–46, 50; 6:7)? What will happen to the unrighteous (7:17–18, 45–48, 75) and to those not alive at time of the eschatological judgment (5:43)?

Clearly, the Ezra of 4 Ezra is not the same as the biblical Ezra in numerous respects, including his approach to biblical law or to the restoration of order in the community, and his framing of social boundaries. Determining the exact appeal of the biblical Ezra for the author of 4 Ezra lies outside of the scope of this investigation. However, in the most general terms, what social memory theory shows is that Ezra's initial concerns are not only coherent in terms of the narrative's depiction of the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians, they are also reflective of theological questions that would be appropriate to a Jewish community living a generation after the *Traditionsbruch* event of the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans.

Where this study departs from some others that consider the role of Ezra in relation to authorial viewpoint is in the recognition that the pseudepigraphical Ezra is not a static character. I agree with Hogan that two important functions of Ezra are that he is "a model recipient of esoteric revelation in the visions, and a scribal transmitter both of Scripture and of esoteric revelation in the epilogue."[21] However, I would add that he is

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21. Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict*, 31.

a model recipient of esoteric revelation *throughout* the text, since the dialogues with the angel, as in the case of Zechariah's night visions, also constitute privileged revelation. Hence, I would depart from Hogan's conclusion that the dialogues between Uriel and Ezra are "external to the author."[22] Instead, I maintain that Ezra's early theological positions in the dialogues must be viewed in a long trajectory of the seer's growth, the *whole* of which represents an ideal for the author. That is, it is not simply Ezra's theology as articulated in the dialogues that should be characterized as representing Ezra's position.[23] Rather, the whole array of Ezra's experiences and his overall, profound transformation should, according to social memory theory, have some significance for the author.

The ending in which Ezra receives scribal revelation may in fact provide the best clue for the choice of Ezra as the lead *Erinnerungsfigur* of 4 Ezra.[24] Out of the many post-exilic figures that played a role in Israel's history after the destruction by a foreign empire, Ezra is the one that is most prominently responsible for imparting the Torah to the people. That memory is selectively reconfigured here, so that the post-destruction pseudepigraphical "Scribe of the Most High" (14:49) improves greatly on the biblical one. The Ezra of 4 Ezra imparts the whole Tanak to the people, both "the worthy and the unworthy," as well as seventy esoteric books, which by implication are available only to "the worthy" (14:47). As I will show, Ezra only reaches this unique scribal status and ability to transmit esoteric revelation through seven increasingly more sophisticated stages of mystical revelation.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory and 4 Ezra

The questions voiced by Ezra, as representative of the author and his cultural community, are not only theologically coherent concerns for a post-70 c.e. Jewish setting, they are psychologically compelling as well. Cognitive dissonance theory reveals Ezra's questions to be expressive of a psychologically unstable state that must achieve resolution.

Cognitive dissonance theory, as articulated by Leon Festinger, states that individuals and groups must necessarily act so as not to hold strongly

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22. Ibid., 35.

23. Ibid., e.g., 31, 35, 163, 205.

24. In no way does this mean that the author's experiences are *identical* to Ezra's. Cf. Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict*, 218.

competing claims on reality indefinitely, due to the psychological pressures such dissonance creates.[25] Two cognitive elements are in a dissonant relation if the conceptual propositions are somehow oppositional.[26] The degree of dissonance between elements may vary, such that: "the magnitude of the dissonance … increases as the importance or value of the elements increases."[27] Important claims on reality that impinge on a person or community in starkly contradictory ways are thus very dissonant with one another and result in strong pressures to alleviate the imbalance. As Festinger notes, "The strength of the pressures to reduce the dissonance is a function of the magnitude of the dissonance."[28] Since extreme dissonance is psychologically unsustainable in the long run, a situation with strongly competing claims about reality must result in one of the following changes: either one claim must give way to the other, or else a new cognitive element (a third proposition) must be added to harmonize the former two. Until the strong imbalance in claims on reality is resolved, tremendous anxiety arises, such that there is psychological disequilibrium.[29]

Ezra's questions, discussed above, may be expressed neatly as pairs of strongly dissonant, competing claims on reality, as follows: (1) The covenant is God's special gift to Israel and should bring blessings, *yet* it has not been possible to keep it, resulting in our inevitable punishment (4:20–27, 22–25; 7:45–48; 8:34–36). (2) Israel should be special to God, *and yet* the unrighteous Gentiles were able to destroy the temple and rule over Israel (4:27–36; 5:28–30; 6:55–59). (3) The eschatological end of history and ultimate triumph of the righteous is fervently expected, *and yet* there is increasing frustration and confusion over the timing and perceived delay of the end of the age (5:33–35, 44–45; 6:7, 58–59; 7:46–61; 8:63). Clearly, the pressure to reduce these dissonances would be great in a post-70 C.E. setting. For Ezra's fictively remembered community and for the author's real community as well, the crisis moment for Israel was

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25. Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 3.
26. Ibid., 13.
27. Ibid., 18.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., 3, 18–22.

severe, representing a genuine "memory crisis"[30] that created profound psychological anxiety.

Following Festinger, psychological equilibrium could have been reinstated through the erasure of one claim in each dissonant pair above. For example, the author and his community could have abandoned the claim that they were special to God because of the covenant, or else decided that the Romans had not been victorious. The first option seems too painful to embrace fully, as Ezra complains early on to God: "If you really hate your people, they should be punished at your own hands … but because of my grief I have spoken; for every hour I suffer agonies of heart, while I strive to understand the way of the Most High" (5:30–34). [31] Nevertheless, deciding that Rome had not been victorious was impossible to conclude, given the visible, historical triumph of Rome. Simply giving up one or the other claim was too difficult.

The solution arrived at by the author is to introduce a third proposition, eschatology, which harmonizes the claim that Israel has special covenantal status with the oppositional claim of Rome's victory. In the first three visions, Uriel plainly discusses eschatological matters with Ezra in answer to his queries (e.g., 5:1–13; 6:18–24; 7:10–16, 26–48). As the story continues to unfold, Ezra receives further revelations, through visionary experiences of the manifested eschatological city (10:11–59) and his symbolic, eschatological dreams (11:1–12:51; 13:1–14:58). Through the revelations, Ezra receives further details about the eschatological reward of the Jewish people and eventual punishment for Rome (e.g., 12:10–30). Rome's crushing victory over Israel is real (and thus that proposition is accepted), but it is a temporary win—and this makes sense of the proposition that God loves Israel the most. Cognitive dissonance theory and social memory theory together provide another glimpse into the experiences of the author and his community and the psychological processes that were likely at work.

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30. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis,* 216–19; idem, *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis,* 29.

31. According to Festinger, the attempt to give up a claim—such as Israel having a special covenantal relationship with the Lord—may be so painful as to create resistance to change. The post-70 Jewish community may actually have been unable, psychologically speaking, to conclude that God was not with them, since rejecting this claim would represent enormous loss to self-identity. See Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, 25–26.

Ezra's Personal Transformation: Past Scholarship

Although Ezra receives abundant explanations from Uriel about eschato-
logical matters early on, most scholars agree that these do not resolve his
angst.[32] Ezra relentlessly questions Uriel and debates with him for the first
three episodes, yet he remains notably disturbed: "As I lay on the grass, my
heart was troubled again as it was before" (9:27). Later, after the vision of
the city and two more dream visions, Ezra walks around the same field in a
wholly different state of mind, rejoicing and "giving great glory and praise
to the Most High because of his wonders" (13:57). This eventual transfor-
mation in the prophet's demeanor is clear to all readers, but commentators
disagree on precisely when and why it occurs.

The structure of 4 Ezra is conventionally divided into seven "visions"
or "episodes": One (3:1–5:20), Two (5:21–6:34), Three (6:35–9:25), Four
(9:26–10:59), Five (11:1–12:51), Six (13:1–14:58), Seven (14:1–48).
Most interpreters focus on a single key point in the narrative that is
transformative, ignoring or minimizing the significance of the many other
lengthy and detailed visionary episodes. For Earl Breech, Ezra's efforts to
console a bereaved mother (9:40–10:24) trigger his own consolation by
way of his receipt of eschatological dream visions (ending with 13:57–58):
"[Ezra's] distress is fully overcome only after he has received the dream
visions of the eagle and the man from the sea (13:57–58)."[33] While Bran-
denburger, Harnisch and Hogan all consider appearance of the city (and
not the consolation of the mother) to be the pivotal point of transforma-
tion for Ezra, like Breech they contend that Ezra makes little or no prog-

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32. Although she would not put it in such psychological terms, Hogan's main
thesis certainly agrees that the problems that Ezra raises in the dialogues are not
resolved through rational debate with Uriel (*Theologies in Conflict*, 35–40, 157).

33. Breech, "These Fragments I Have Shored," 267–74. There is no sufficient
explanation in Breech's analysis for why the eschatology of the fifth and sixth visions
should have such a powerful effect on Ezra, when the extremely detailed eschatologi-
cal explanations in visions one to three, even including specific signs and events, seem
to have left him unmoved (see 5:1–14; 6:8–10; 6:17–28; 7:26–44; especially 9:28).
Breech also considers the giving of the whole Torah and Tanakh and seventy secret
books in episode seven simply to be a "necessary epilogue to the consolation of the
prophet," since Breech cannot fit it into his overall pattern of distress and consolation.
Likewise, Gunkel had also viewed the seventh episode merely as "an esthetically pleas-
ing conclusion to the book." Gunkel, "Das vierte Buch Esra," 348.

ress until this fourth episode.[34] Thus, although they locate the moment of change at slightly different moments, all four interpreters minimize the role of the first three episodes in the overall shape of the narrative, except as a kind of static, unresolved phase for Ezra that sets up a later change in the fourth episode. As Hogan succinctly states, "I do not see the dialogues as contributing to Ezra's conversion, except in a negative way."[35]

Somewhat similarly, Stone locates Ezra's pivotal change in the fourth episode but, more clearly than anyone else, recognizes that it is the experiential, mystical component of vision four that is responsible, namely, the experience of the manifested city.[36] Stone calls attention to Uriel's command to Ezra, "Go in and see the splendor and vastness of the building, as far as it is possible for your eyes to see it, and afterward you will hear as much as your ears can hear" (10:55–56). Stone rightly construes this as an extraordinary event that is beyond rational, effable human perception, stating: "Resolution of the issue [of consolation] … is not made explicit verbally but remains at an experiential level and was regarded, at least, as esoteric."[37] According to Stone, this city vision is consonant with the supreme goal of mystical practice in other Jewish texts:

> The heavenly city [10:55–57] is a metaphor for the environs of God. In this respect, it functions like the metaphors of the heavenly Temple and the Chariot in such works as 1 Enoch and in the Hekhalot books. The distinctive formulation of the commandment in 4 Ezra clearly indicates that entry into the city means experience of the Godhead. Indeed, Ezra can only experience the divine in partial, human measure, yet this very command indicates that Ezra has achieved *a new level of revelation, the experience of the Divine presence*.[38]

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34. Brandenburger, *Die Verborgenheit Gottes im Weltgeschehen*, 30–31, 66, 70; Harnisch, "Der Prophet als Widerpart," 472–78.

35. Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict*, 38.

36. Hogan correctly notes that "Ezra's quasi-death coincides with the woman's metamorphosis into the glorified Zion" and must somehow mark Ezra's transformation. However, she does not explain why Ezra reacts this way except to offer that his "resistance to Uriel's revelations has finally been broken down" (*Theologies in Conflict*, 167).

37. Stone, *Fourth Ezra,* 340–41.

38. Michael E. Stone, "The City in 4 Ezra," 402, emphasis added.

Despite this valuable insight, Stone's emphasis on a single moment of transformation in episode four still overly minimizes the importance of key features in the other episodes. All seven episodes are crucial to the seer's transformation, as I will now argue.

The Encoded Shape of 4 Ezra: Ezra's Mystical Journey

I contend that the conventional division of the text into seven episodes is internal to the text,[39] representing seven stages of Ezra's mystical progression. Each stage is initiated by preparatory rituals and successively demonstrates Ezra's growing mystical prowess in his capacity to withstand the divine presence.

1. Progressively "Greater" Revelatory Stages

Divine beings often refer to each of Ezra's successive revelations as somehow being more profound or "greater" than the former ones. At the end of both episodes one (3:1–5:20) and two (5:21–6:34), Uriel indicates that the subsequent revelations that Ezra will receive are "greater": "[In] seven days, I will again declare to you *greater* things than these" (5:13); and " [in] seven days, I will again declare to you *greater* things than these" (6:31). The angel Uriel then indicates in episode four (9:26–10:59) that the vision of the city in the field is his greatest experience yet: "Go in and see the splendor and vastness of the building, as far as it is possible for your eyes to see it, and after you will hear as much as your ears can hear" (10:55; cf. Ezek 3:10), which as Stone indicates, "means experience of the Godhead."[40] This kind of revelation is restricted in audience, since Uriel explains to Ezra that "you are more blessed than many" (10:55) and "only a few" (Syr. *ʾyk zʿwr*; 10:57) have "been called before the Most High" (10:57), which is apparently the context of the experience of the touring of the building (10:55–59).[41] Then, after Ezra's dream vision in episodes five (11:1–12:51) and six (13:1–14:58), a voice speaking as the Most High declares to him:

39. Cf. Breech ("These Fragments I Have Shored," 268), who sees the sevenfold division as artificial: "The number seven may have some arcane significance in apocalyptic lore, but it tells us only how to count 4 Ezra's sections."

40. Stone, "The City in 4 Ezra," 1.

41. Uriel states that Ezra has been "called before the Most High" (10:57 in the Syr. has *wʾshtmht lwt mrymʾ,* so too Eth. Arab 1 has "your name is known before the Most

"You alone have been enlightened about this," suggesting more selective revelatory content (14:54).

Finally, against the views of Breech and Gunkel, several thematic factors imply that episode seven (14:1–48) is the greatest revelation Ezra has received. It is explicitly cast as a recapitulation of a secret Sinai revelation given to Moses (14:1) called "wondrous things" (14:3–6), while Ezra's final revelation is called "weighty and wondrous matters" (13:56). An esoteric Moses tradition is remembered, as "a voice from a bush" speaks to Ezra and describes Moses' encounter with the angel of the Lord, explaining that Moses openly published some words and kept others secret (14:5), foreshadowing that Ezra will do the same, as he does at the end of the text (14:46–47). The voice predicts that Ezra will ascend to heaven permanently to live with "my Son and with those who are like you, until times are ended" (14:9–10). It is vital to grasp that this permanent, elite ascent is explicitly linked to Ezra's status as a scribe, as is clear in the ending of the Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic and Armenian versions:

> At that time Ezra was caught up, and taken to the place of those who are Like him, after he had written all these things. And he was called the Scribe of the knowledge of the Most High for ever and ever. (14:49, Syr., Eth., Arab. 1, Arm.)

Irrefutably, this experience surpasses the contact Ezra had with divinity in earlier episodes.

2. The Forms of Seven Progressively "Greater" Revelatory Stages

Attention to the form (i.e., the *Gattung*) of each divine encounter demonstrates that the seven episodes are carefully arranged to demonstrate Ezra's growing mystical prowess. Ezra receives increasingly more complex visionary revelations in progressively more awakened states in which he gains closer and closer intimacy with the presence of the Most High.

Crucial to this reading is the recognition that from at least the period of the Priestly school (ca. sixth century B.C.E.) to well into the medieval

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High"; Lat. "*vocatus es apud Altissimum*"); thus Stone (*Fourth Ezra*, 340) translates this "named before the Most High."

rabbinic period, it was widely held in Judaism that direct exposure to the presence of divinity was dangerous. This danger is perhaps best illustrated by the Mishnaic tale of the "Four Who Entered Pardes," in which four prominent rabbis ascend to heaven, resulting in only one successful journey alongside madness, death, and apostasy (b. Ḥag. 14b). The kind of divinity which one encounters matters: being in the presence of an angel is safer than being in the presence of the Most High. Early Jewish texts considered dreams to be a way of softening the dangerous impact of theophanies, as Oppenheim rightly assessed for the ancient Near East in general:

> The essential feature of the theophany … its dramatic, soul-shaking impact, the shattering inroad of the supernatural into the reality of this world, the terror-inspiring sight of the deity, etc., have disappeared in the transfer from consciousness to dream. The change of reality-level acts as a cushion to soften the contact between god and man.[42]

That is, being in the presence of the divine when asleep is safer than when one is awake.

Keeping in mind that social memory theory suggests that 4 Ezra's reconstruction of Ezra's journey is selective and meaningful, and only minimally based on the biblical portrait of Ezra, it is noteworthy that the author has chosen a wide array of formulae, drawn from well-established biblical traditions and the literature of Hellenistic and early Judaism, through which Ezra encounters the presence of divinity. These include discussions with angels,[43] "message" dreams,[44] "symbolic" dreams,[45] "auditory message" dreams,[46]

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42. Leo Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East: With a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book* (TAPS 46, 3; Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956), 192.

43. 4 Ezra 4:1–5:13; 5:32–6:34; 7:1–9:25; cf. Gen 18:1–5; 32:27–31; Dan 9:21–12:13; 1 En. 19, 27; T. Abr. 7:8–12; etc.

44. 4 Ezra 3:1–5:13; 5:21–6:12; 6:35–7:1; 9:27–10:24; cf. 1 Kgs 3:5–15; Job 4:12–21; Jub. 27:19–26; *Ant.* 1.278–284; 2 En. 69:4–6; 70:3–11, L.A.B. 28:4–5.

45. 4 Ezra 11:1–12:2; 13:1–13; cf. Gen 37:5–7, 9; 40:9–15, 16–19; 41:5–8, 14–45, Dan 2:31–35; 4:4–18; 1 En. 83:3–10, 85:3–90:42; Dan 7:1–28, 8:1–27; Jub. 39:16–40:12; 2 Bar. 35:1–36:11; 52:7–53:12; T. Abr. 5:6–7:15b; *Ant.* 1.341–342; 2.10–17.

46. 4 Ezra 12:36–46; cf. 1 Sam 3:5b–6; Gen 31:10–13; Jub. 41:24; L.A.B. 23:3–14; *Ant.* 11.326–328; 20.18–19; Jub. 14:1–17. The form-critical labels "message," "symbolic," and "auditory message" dreams are taken from Oppenheim, *Interpretation of Dreams*. While dreams and visions exist along a continuum, there are ends of the

waking visions,[47] transformation along the angelic-human continuum,[48] premortem tours of heaven,[49] the consumption of revelatory substances,[50] and scribal activity that transmits divine revelation.[51]

In an esoteric reading that privileges contact with the divine as a goal of the mystically adept, the form of a revelation is at least as important as the revelation's content. Speaking with an angel, hearing a divine voice, touring the heavenly Zion, seeing eschatological symbolic visions, receiving interpretations from the Most High himself, and imbibing a divine, fiery drink are not equivalent encounters with divinity. The systematic ordering of these revelatory elements communicates an esoteric story that depicts Ezra as a mystic who is increasingly capable of withstanding the direct divine presence.

As I have argued elsewhere, from a form-critical perspective, episodes one through three are all "message" dreams in which clear content is relayed verbally by an angelic messenger who appears in the dreams.[52] In episode one, Uriel, who appeared *inside* the dream, appears *outside* of the dream after Ezra awakens (5:15), after which Uriel touches him, strengthens him, and helps him stand up (5:14–16). No revelation ensues in Ezra's awakened state. Such a dream is scary, but safer than receiving waking revelations from a divine figure.[53] In episode two, Ezra is asleep for a briefer period. Early on in his dream, Uriel tells him not to be terrified (6:15) and instructs him to rise to his feet, an act that earlier signifies Ezra is waking up (5:14–16).[54] Ezra is able to rise on his own this time, without

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spectrum where one is "asleep" and where one is "awake." It is important to note that modern criteria for what constitutes a dream do not apply (Frances Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes, and Priests: Jewish Dreams of the Roman and Hellenistic Eras* [JSJSup 90; Leiden: Brill, 2004], 119–29).

47. 4 Ezra 10:29–59; cf. Ezek. 1:1–3:10.

48. 4 Ezra 15:37–48; cf. Dan 12:3; T. Levi 8:1–19; 2 En. 22:6–10.

49. 4 Ezra 14:9, and the addendum in 15:49 in Syr., Eth., Arab. 1, Arm.; cf. 4 Ezra 10:53–54; Isa 6; 1 En. 14–36; 2 En. 3:1–67:1; T. Levi 2:5–5:7, 8:1–19; Aram. Levi 4Q213a 14–16; Ezek. Trag. vv. 68–82.

50. 4 Ezra 9:26; 12:50–51; 14:37–48; cf. Ezek 3:1–3.

51. 4 Ezra 14:37–48; cf. Dan 7:1; 10:21; 12:4; 2 En. 22:11–23:6; 1 En. 13:4; 33:4; Jub. 4:19.

52. Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes and Priests*, 212–20.

53. Oppenheim, *Interpretation of Dreams*, 192.

54. Hogan notes with surprise that this interpretation, found in my earlier work on 4 Ezra, would mean that the third message dream must then consist only of Ezra's

help (6:13–17). In this waking state, revelation continues in the form of a "voice … like the sound of many waters" (6:17–28; Ezek 1:24). Thus, a little revelation does occur while Ezra is awake. Episode three is the briefest message dream and the longest waking revelation yet. Immediately after Uriel arrives in Ezra's dream, he awakens him with the command, "Rise" (7:2). The two then have a lengthy discussion about cosmic matters (7:3–9:25). Uriel's discourse with Ezra in episode three thus occurs while Ezra is wholly awake (7:1–9:25). Ezra, who first awoke shuddering from a dream of an angel, has gained the ability to converse freely with the angel while awake, without the need of a dream state to soften the impact of the angelophany. He is improving as a mystic.

Episode four consists of a message dream of a woman who subsequently transforms into a city, a potent experiential, divine reality that remains after Ezra awakens.[55] Uriel arrives only after Ezra is awake, completely terrified, and flattened by the experience: "I lay there like a corpse" (10:30). This reaction indicates that the visionary sequence is the most

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own words, followed by Uriel's arrival. This is indeed what I am saying, since this is not unusual for a classic *Wecktraum*, a formal "dream" type present throughout the literature of the ancient Near East and the Bible, in which the dream messenger arrives and says "Rise/stand NN," followed by further revelation received while awake (Oppenheim, *Interpretation of Dreams,* 190–92). In fact, a *Wecktraum* need not have any content other than the arrival of the divine messenger who awakens the sleeper (e.g.,1 Sam 3:2–6, 1 Kings 19:5–7, Zech 4:1). Modern notions of dreams simply do not apply. This is why my earlier work examined Ezra's visionary episodes, as well as all extant dream accounts in the ancient Near East, Greece, Rome, the Hebrew Bible, and Second Temple Judaism, by means of form-critical categories. See, e.g., Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes, and Priests,* 22, 43–45, 53, 55, 60–63, 66, 80, 119, 121, 126, 154, 186, 193, 204, 214, 274; Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict*, 159–60, n. 1.

55. In light of Stone's article "The City in 4 Ezra," I must amend an earlier position. I had argued that this episode consists of a message dream (the mourning woman) that becomes a symbolic dream (the city), which remains after he awakens (when he stands in 10:29–31) as an experiential reality, as sometimes occurs in ancient dreams. Hence I stated: "[Ezra] still sees the heavenly Zion after awakening. Just as Uriel appeared in his dream and remained afterwards, so does Zion" (*Dreamers, Scribes and Priests*, 217). However, the city portion of the dream does not seem to be a symbol that requires interpretation, but rather an experiential reality in and of itself, implying that this could simply be a message dream that transforms into a waking vision. Note that Hogan misunderstands my earlier position by stating that I held that the (whole) fourth episode was a message dream that becomes a symbolic dream (*Theologies in Conflict*, 167, n. 18).

challenging experiential revelation Ezra has encountered thus far. By this time, Ezra has come to depend on Uriel and to rely on his presence for help, and he asks: "Where is the angel Uriel, who came to me at first? For it was he who brought me into this overpowering bewilderment!" (10:28). Ezra is in need of comfort precisely because the experience is so "over-powering."

After finally arriving, Uriel again tells Ezra to stand up, but Ezra's enormous fear and the greater stress of the revelatory event means that Ezra once again requires Uriel's strengthening touch in order to rise (10:31). After standing, Ezra wonders aloud if he could really be seeing this city while awake, exclaiming, "I saw [in my dream], and still see [awake], what I am unable to explain.… *Or is my mind deceived, and my soul dreaming*?" (10:32–35). But Ezra is no longer dreaming, and Uriel instructs him not to be afraid, but rather to "go in and see the splendor and vastness of the building, as far as it is possible for your eyes to see it, and afterward you will hear as much as your ears can hear, for you are more blessed than many" (10:55). As Stone has rightly pointed out, this is a high point of revelation thus far for Ezra.[56]

However, being asleep or awake is not the only criterion for mystical growth, and although episodes five and six consist of related symbolic dreams, these stages do not represent a mystical step backward for Ezra. By convention in antiquity, message dreams consist of a clear revelation from a divine representative, while symbolic dreams require an official human or divine interpretation.[57] Therefore, they can sometimes be more difficult to penetrate and more profound than straightforward message dreams, and this seems to be the sophisticated way in which the author employs the form here. Uriel had acted as Ezra's interpreter and guide throughout episodes one through four, but now, while fully awake, Ezra proactively requests these dream interpretations from the Most High and receives them in the first person from the Most High or at least the Angel of the Lord (12:3–6; 13:14). For a mystical hermeneutic that prizes proximity to the divine, this indicates that Ezra has reached a level in which he can communicate with a greater being. At the end of episode six, a happy and enlightened Ezra walks around and rejoices, praising the Most High (13:57).

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56. Stone, "The City in 4 Ezra," 402.
57. Oppenheim, *Interpretation of Dreams,* 206–8.

Thus far I have argued that the forms in which the seer receives revelation, his periods of relative wakefulness versus sleep, the type of divinity he encounters, and his relative activeness or passiveness in procuring revelation, all demonstrate Ezra's systematic progression as a mystic throughout the first six episodes. Using these criteria, the seventh episode depicts the culmination of Ezra's mystical transformation. Fully awake, Ezra makes a surprisingly bold, proactive request:

> *Let me speak in your presence, Lord* … send the Holy Spirit to me, and I will write everything that has happened in the world from the beginning, the things which were written in your Law, that men may be able to find the path, and that those who wish to live in the last days may live. (14:19–22)

Whereas simply encountering an angel in a dream had at first caused his soul to faint (5:14), Ezra's mystical ability has increased to the point at which he can enter *the presence of the Lord*, the goal of all early Jewish mystical practice,[58] and request the Holy Spirit and the revelation of all Scripture. In the sacred space of the field, and with no mention of any fear, Ezra is then able to imbibe—that is, to incorporate into his very being— "understanding … wisdom … and knowledge" in the form of the full cup of fiery water (14:37–42), before dictating his revelations to other scribes.

As I already noted, Ezra's scribal status as the receiver and transmitter of books, namely, the public ones and the seventy esoteric books, is explicitly linked to his premortem ascent to heaven: "At that time Ezra was caught up, and taken to the place of those who are like him, after he had written all these things" (14:49 in Syr., Eth., Arab. 1 and Arm.). The text therefore ends with what should be seen as two interrelated *Gattungen*: the receipt and transmission of public and esoteric scribal revelation (for which I know of no previously identified *Gattung*) and a heavenly ascent.[59] For Ezra, this represents a marked mystical achievement over the start of

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58. Here I follow Vita Daphna Arbel (*Beholders of Divine Secrets: Mysticism and Myth in the Hekhalot and Merkavah Literature* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003], 140, 153–54), who speaks of *merkabah* seekers attaining "a spiritual awareness of God during a personal, unmediated experience," and who notes 4 Ezra's interest in esoteric knowledge.

59. Compare 2 En. 22–23, in which Enoch ascends to heaven and transforms into an angel, after which the Lord declares to the archangel Vereveil, "Bring out the books from the storehouses, and give a pen to Enoch and read him the books" (22:11),

the narrative, in which he could only faint at the appearance of an angel in a message dream.

3. Evolving Incubatory Rituals

Each episode in 4 Ezra is introduced with an incubatory ritual that provokes a certain form of revelation. At the commencement of episode one, Ezra mourns and prays (3:2–36) and has a message dream of the angel Uriel. At the start of episodes two and three, he prays and weeps again, and also fasts for seven days (5:13; 6:31–37) and again has message dreams of the angel Uriel. These actions that Ezra performs are well-attested rituals that were practiced in Israelite and later Greco-Roman dream incubation cults,[60] as well as in later Jewish *merkabah* mysticism.[61] While weeping, praying, and fasting are specific rituals for incubating dreams and visions, no particular expertise is necessary to perform them, nor are any special materials required. Ezra performs these actions in his bedroom, as could anyone.

However, a crucial change in the incubation ritual occurs in episode four, in which Ezra follows an angel's instructions to stay in a special field of flowers, eat only those flowers for seven days, and abstain from meat and wine (9:23–37). Since sleeping in a sacred site is the most important form of dream incubation in antiquity, the angel's disclosure of the location of the field of Ardat is itself a significant revelation.[62] Also, the practice of eating special diets, particularly flowers or poppies, to induce dreams and

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after which Vereveil gives the pen to Enoch and dictates 360 books to him (Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes and Priests*, 144).

60. Typical incubatory rituals include sleeping at a sacred site, as well as praying, mourning, crying, self-abasement, fasting, and abstaining from certain foods and wine. See Oppenheim, *Interpretation of Dreams,* 188; Susan Ackerman, "The Deception of Isaac, Jacob's Dream at Bethel, and Incubation on an Animal Skin," in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* (ed. G. A. Anderson and S. M. Olyan; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 92–120. For excellent examples of prayer and mourning in dream incubation see the dreams of Assurbanipal and Sethos in Oppenheim, *Interpretation of Dreams,* 249, par. 8, no. 10; 252, par. 8, no. 22. On dream incubation see also Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes and Priests,* 153–64, 195–97, 213–20, 255–63.

61. For mourning and prayer in *merkabah* mysticism, see Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 76, 197–99.

62. Oppenheim, *Interpretation of Dreams*, 188.

hypnagogic stages is known from Hellenistic and Roman mystery cults.[63] After following these ritual instructions, Ezra prays and has a fantastic dream of the woman who turns into the divine city, which continues to exist outside of Ezra's initial dream as a vibrant, sensually rich, divine reality. At the angel's instruction, Ezra then remains in this field eating flowers, whereupon he experiences his vivid fifth and sixth symbolic dreams (10:58; 12:50–13:1). The author of 4 Ezra thus links new forms of visually dense revelatory experiences with the change in ritual location and the transition from fasting (episodes two and three) to eating special food (episodes four through six).

The overall move from fasting to ingestion culminates in episode seven, when the Most High directs Ezra to imbibe a fiery cup of liquid that results in his acquisition of wisdom and a change in the status of his heart, which "pour[s] forth understanding" in the form of public and secret writings (14:40). Like the burning bush mentioned at the commencement of episode seven (14:1–4) and the city in episode four (10:25–57), the cup is not a dream symbol that requires an interpretation,[64] but rather is itself a divine reality, expressed by the paradoxical images of fire and water (14:37–40). Ezra's ability to ingest the "fire" suggests a transformed state in which he is finally able to come into *direct contact with divinity and, in fact, to make it a part of himself* (see below; 14:49 Syr.; cf. Isa 6:7, 1 En. 14:10–22, 17:1).

While the image of the fiery drink may be reflective of ritual of just symbolic imagery, we also have evidence that other activities in which Ezra engages were practiced as visionary incubation rituals in cultures contemporary with 4 Ezra. Thus, the author is not simply concocting a random string of fantastical, fictional actions, but rather demonstrates close familiarity with certain known rituals. Moreover, the author has

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63. The effect of poppies on dreaming was so well known in antiquity that the iconography of the gods Somnus/Hypnon (sleep) and Nox/Nyx (night) shows them holding poppies in their hands (Carl Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs* III, I [Berlin: Einzelmythen, 1897], nos. 50, 58, 65, 83; Diana Kleiner, *Roman Imperial Funerary Altars with Portraits* [Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editores, 1987], plate XI, no. 4).

64. In antiquity, unsolved dream symbols are necessarily dangerous due to their ambiguity, which absolutely demands a solution through interpretation (Oppenheim, *Interpretation of Dreams,* 206–8; idem, "Mantic Dreams in the Ancient Near East," in *The Dream and Human Societies* [ed. G. E. von Grunebaum and R. Callois; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966], 349–50).

carefully arranged them to demonstrate that Ezra steadily improves in his capacity to encounter divinity.

4. Structural and Linguistic Key to the Sevenfold Progression

Ezra's mystical journey is not only significant for that character, but has wider implications for "the wise" who are like him. Perhaps as part of an esoteric reading passed on with the text, the real significance of Ezra's seven-stage mystical journey is encoded in the text through a linguistic and structural key found in the third episode. Uriel explains to Ezra that after death the souls who hated God and failed to keep the Torah wander about in torment in seven ways, while the souls of the righteous pass through seven orders (*ordines*; Syr. *ʾwrḥʾ*) until they behold God (7:91–99). Both Stone[65] and Scholem viewed this as ascent terminology:

> The idea of the seven heavens through which the soul ascends to its original home, either after death or in a state of ecstasy while the body is still alive, is certainly very old. In an obscure and somewhat distorted form it is already to be found in old apocrypha such as the Fourth Book of Ezra.[66]

Uriel's description of the ascent of the righteous dead through seven levels of heaven corresponds to Ezra's seven revelatory stages, as is made clear through linguistic catchwords and parallel descriptions. It is emphatically *not* the case that each stage of Ezra's journey is a literal ascent through a level of heaven. Rather, his journey in the text as a whole prefigures and prepares for his climactic ascent at the end of the book, modeling a mystical journey of self-transformation that, on an esoteric level of interpretation, recognizes divine encounter and ascent as hermeneutical keys.

In the interest of space, I will only give a few examples of the correspondences between the steps of Ezra's mystical journey and the *ordines*, or heavenly levels of ascent of the righteous that Uriel describes. For illustrative purposes, I describe evidence taken from the beginning, middle, and near the end of Ezra's journey. Uriel describes the first "order" and the qualifications of the righteous souls thusly: "They have striven with great effort to overcome the *evil thought* which was formed with them,

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65. Stone also thought that the term "ordines" indicates ascent. See Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 253.

66. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 49.

that it might not lead them astray from life into death" (7:92). This is the topic that profoundly upsets Ezra in episode one, namely, humanity's "evil thought," the "evil heart," "evil root" or "evil seed" that has prevailed since Adam and that prevents the Torah from bringing forth fruit in human-kind (3:20–22; 4:30–31).[67] In a similar fashion, Uriel explains that in the fourth "order," the righteous souls of the dead "understand the *rest* which they now enjoy, being gathered into their *treasuries* and guarded by angels in profound *quiet* and the *glory* that awaits them.…" (7:95), which are precise catchwords that are featured in episode four in Uriel's dialogue with Ezra: "Inquire concerning the *glory* of those who are like yourself, because it is for you that … a city is built, *rest* is appointed … and in the end the *treasure of immortality* is made manifest" (8:51–54). In the visionary experience of episode four, the terms "glory," "rest," and "quiet" again figure prominently. The mourning woman twice describes herself as "quiet" (10:2–3); Ezra laments that Zion has lost her "glory" (10:23) and promises that the Most High will give the woman "rest" from her troubles (10:24). After her transformation into the city, Uriel explains that "now the Most High … has shown you the brilliance of her *glory*" (10:44, 50). A final example pertains to the description of the sixth "order" of the ascent of the dead and language in episode six. Uriel states that in the sixth order the righteous are transformed like the light of the sun and stars (*stellis adsimilari luminis*), "being incorruptible from then on" (7:97). Similarly, in Ezra's dream from stage six, Uriel tells him that he alone of all mean is "enlightened" (*inluminatis*; 13:53).

The linguistic correspondences between Ezra's stages of transforma-tion and the "orders" of the ascending righteous dead are too tight to be accidental. The final culmination of the ascent of the righteous souls in the seventh order, the seventh and highest level of heaven, is that "they hasten to behold the face of him whom they served in life and from whom they are to receive their reward when glorified" (7:98). That is, the highest reward of the righteous is permanent ascent, after death, into the pres-ence of God, and the conclusion of the text asserts that Ezra will ascend to heaven (14:9, 49 in Syr.). Hence, at many points along the way, linguistic

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67. Interestingly, to accentuate Ezra's prevailing lack of knowledge, Uriel notes that Ezra would likely respond to any cosmological questions from him by stating, "I never went down into the deep, nor as yet into hell, *neither did I ever ascend into heaven*" (4:9). At this first stage, Ezra models the mystic initiate who has not yet made preparations for ascent.

catchwords suggest that Ezra's personal journey mirrors the afterlife ascent of the righteous.

Ezra as *Erinnerungsfigur* and Model Mystic

There is a crucial difference between Ezra and most of "the people" who are righteous, because Ezra is likened to those unusual persons who are "taken up, who from their birth have not tasted death" (6:26). He is more privileged than the ordinary righteous, and will live in heaven with a select few like him, and the Messiah (14:10). In this esoteric aspect, he is not an *Erinnerungsfigur* equally for everyone, but rather primarily for mystics seeking a special, pre-eschatological taste of God's presence such as Ezra had in the field, or even perhaps in the aspirations of a few, a special ascent without death such as Ezra finally attains.[68]

Ezra's ascent to heaven is the culmination of a long personal transformation that puts him in an unusual class of people. At the start of the text, Ezra shares the same plight as all the descendants of Adam: burdened with an evil heart, all humans are incapable of doing the good of the law (4:21–26). Yet later Uriel tells Ezra several times not to number himself amongst those sinners (7:76; 8:48): "You humble yourself … and have not deemed yourself to be among the righteous in order to receive the greatest glory … think of your own case and inquire concerning the *glory* (Lat. *gloriae*; Syr. *tšbwht*) *of those who are like yourself*" (8:48, see also 7:95; 8:51–54). In 4 Ezra, as in later *merkabah* mysticism, "glory" is a multi-faceted term that conveys divinity and incorruptibility.[69] The heavenly city shows her "glory" (10:50), as does the law (9:32, 37), which "does not perish but remains in its glory" (9:37). As applied to a human, the text is clear that Ezra's regular human state changes such that he will not die: "The root of evil [which plagued Adam] is sealed up from you, illness is banished from you, and *death is hidden* … in the end the treasure of immortality is made manifest" (8:53, emphasis added). For Ezra and for those few mystics like him, "glory" connotes some state—one without evil, illness, or death—that Adam lost but which can be regained.[70] Ezra becomes "*inluminatis*"

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68. DeConick, "What is Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism," 2.

69. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 43.

70. The intriguing similarities with Paul's eschatological formula of Christ as the Second Adam cannot be overlooked here, particularly since Paul too envisions sin and death as being overcome in the end. See 1 Cor 15:21–28, 45–49, 56; Rom 5:12–19.

(13:53, 57), a condition the righteous souls of the dead attain only when they are transformed in the sixth order into a state like the sun and stars (*stellis adsimilari luminis*, 7:97). Thus, for most of the righteous, incorruptibility only vanishes after death or in the eschatological resurrection (7:32), whereas Ezra achieves this during life.

Ezra's transformation from a regular Adam-like human to a state of luminous glory may well be conceived of as lying along the human-angelic continuum.[71] Halfway through the text, Uriel commands Ezra in the fourth vision to stand up "like a man" (10:33), a phrase that is used pervasively in the Hebrew Bible and literature of early Judaism to indicate an angelic being (e.g., Gen 18:2; Dan 10:5; Zech 1:8 and others too numerous to mention). By the seventh episode, Ezra imbibes fire (14:37–40), a form that the angels themselves take at the Lord's command (8:22). For the mystic Ezra (but not for the ordinary righteous who are alive), the ontological problem of Adam's "evil heart" (4:27) has been overcome. Since evil, illness, and death no longer exist for him (8:53), Ezra pours forth the many books and ascends to heaven, having completed his mystical transformation into an angelic Scribe who is capable of dwelling there.

On the exoteric and esoteric levels of the narrative, different solutions obtain for "the people" on the one hand, and for Ezra and "the wise" on the other: "Some things you shall make public, and some you shall deliver in secret to the wise" (14:26, 47). Regarding "the people," Ezra has learned that Israel is indeed special to God. The destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by Rome is mitigated in that the true temple is in heaven (9:26–10:59) and will be revealed in the eschaton, when Rome is destroyed (11:1–12:51; 13:1–14:58). Yet Ezra has already gained access to the divine city through the performance of mystical rituals in episode four (9:26–10:59). For "the people," the failed covenant is somewhat restored through the giving of new books of the Tanak to the people (12:37–38; 14:13; 15:45), whereas for Ezra and "the wise," there are seventy secret books. For "the people," the problem of the "evil heart" that Ezra raised early on appears unresolved, yet for Ezra the "root of evil" has been sealed up for him and for "those like [him]" (8:53). The righteous among "the people" will ascend after death through seven levels of heaven to behold God, awaiting their final eschatological resurrection and reward (11:1–13:51; 13:1–14:58). For Ezra and

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71. For the widespread presence of this motif in early Judaism, see Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 42; Leiden: Brill, 2002), especially 23, 49.

those like him, there is a special reward of premortem access to God's presence (14:9, 49). Thus, eschatological expectations that still obtain for "the people" are interpreted through a realized mystical eschatology on behalf of an elite group.[72] "The wise" are those "whose hearts you know are able to comprehend and keep these secrets" (13:38–39) and do not share all that they know, nor the seventy esoteric books.

Ithamar Gruenwald speaks of mystical interpretations as a "second language," in that what appears as mundane language to the uninitiated takes on mystical significance for mystical initiates.[73] Similarly, I have argued that the whole of 4 Ezra itself has a "second language"—a story in which there is a model of mystical transformation and ascent. Early on, Ezra voices theological and psychological tensions that are readily intelligible in a post-70 C.E. setting for both the author and for his community at large. Using internal literary evidence and a hermeneutical key that attends seriously to ritual, I have uncovered an esoteric reading that shows Ezra growing in his mystical capacity for divine encounter throughout the text through the practice of various rituals. Some of these rituals, such as those for dream and vision incubation, were at least known or practiced by a few in the author's community, while others, such as the drinking of the fire and heavenly ascent, were probably idealized. As a model mystic, Ezra tours the eschatological city before anyone else and also makes a final ascent to heaven, since the "root of evil," illness, and death are indeed sealed up from him (8:53). A few "wise," including the author, could aspire to this mystical ideal while they transmitted esoteric traditions, attempting to "keep these secrets" (13:39). Perhaps the esoteric reading of 4 Ezra, which reconfigured the social memory of the biblical Ezra, was among these secrets.

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72. My formulation of this dynamic is inspired by the work of April DeConick, who notices a similar process operating in the *Gospel of Thomas*. See April DeConick, "Reading the *Gospel of Thomas* as a Repository of Early Christian Communal Memory," in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (ed. A. Kirk and T. Thatcher; Semeia Studies 52; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 207–20; and more fully as the main thesis of her *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas*. Obviously, our analyses address two completely different social contexts; however, the same strategic theological move, the mystical reinterpretation of a wider eschatology, pertains in both instances.

73. Ithamar Gruenwald, "Reflections on the Nature and Origins of Jewish Mysticism," in *Gershom Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism: 50 Years Later* (ed. P. Schäfer and J. Dan; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 25–38; especially 36.

Finally, the constituency of the text's esoteric readership may only be guessed at intelligently by using clues from the text. Social memory theory urges us to consider what interests would be validated from the inclusion of mystical elements such as: the careful encoding of Ezra's personal transformation vis-à-vis the *ordines* of the righteous dead, the progression in Ezra's ritual technical activities, the attainment of Ezra's premortem ascent to heaven, and the transmission of secret books to an elite group. My best guess is that the author aimed this text at a general audience of "the people" as well as at a small readership of ritual experts engaged in the mystical transmission or interpretation of books, including 4 Ezra itself. Even the fictive production of esoteric books has iconic or "monument making" value that would have validated the interests of an elite minority that claimed to possess an authoritative esoteric tradition.[74] The author may have seen his group as opposed to others whom he thought taught the Torah publicly but ineffectually, without mystical understanding. The urgency of this mystical hermeneutic may be found in the context of the pressing collective experience of the destruction of the temple and the hegemony of Rome.[75] As articulated in Ezra's laments, these events constituted a severe crisis and rupture of living memory that created theological and psychological problems—problems that, for some sensitive persons, could only be solved experientially.

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74. Richard Horsley, *Scribes, Visionaries, and the Politics of Second Temple Judea* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), esp. 93, 97–99; also Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox 1996).

75. Horsley, *Scribes, Visionaries,* 6.

Filled with New Wine? Religious Experience and Social Dynamics in the Corinthian Church

István Czachesz

1. Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to present a new interpretation of the religious dynamics of the Corinthian church as known from the Pauline epistles. This new interpretation draws on recent neuroimaging research on religious experience, connecting such insights with social and theological factors. Neuroimaging uses noninvasive brain-scanning technology to observe which parts of the brain are active as people perform some task. To be more precise, neuroscientists compare the activation of different brain areas in a series of conditions: some group of neurons will work harder than others in some conditions and vice versa; the same group of neurons will be less or more active in another condition. Looking at people's experience in this way is quite different from asking them questions. When we ask people to report their experience explicitly, we only scratch the surface of their mental lives. People can only report what they experience consciously; reporting that conscious experience will be further constrained by the medium of human language. When we speak about religious experience, we often mean precisely this kind of verbally expressed, conscious mental content. Neuroimaging is not limited to the description of human language—even if what we see on the brain scan is most often compared to and correlated with what people actually report.

For the time being, neuroimaging research is limited by the state of technology. The number of nerve cells (neurons) in the human brain is a hundred billion (also written as 10^{11}), to which at least as many other types of brain cells have to be added. Our technology makes it possible to monitor the activity of individual neurons (single-neuron recording), but this

method is seldom used in human experiments.[1] Fortunately, the organization of the brain is such that observing the activity of much larger spots (containing many thousands of neurons) can provide meaningful data. For example, one of the widely used technologies, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), allows researchers to take pictures of about 100,000 chunks of neurons (so-called "vortices") in the brain simultaneously.

The earliest neuroimaging studies of religious experience date back to the 1960s, when the electroencephalograph (EEG) began to be used to observe brain activity in meditative states. With the help of electrodes attached to the scalp, this technology measures electromagnetic signals emitted during the activity of brain cells. Most other technologies (the most widely used being now fMRI, mentioned above) measure the increase or decrease of blood flow in particular areas, showing which part of the brain is activated or deactivated during certain tasks. Whereas EEG provides very good temporal resolution—showing *when* exactly things happen in the brain, other technologies have better spatial resolution, telling us more precisely *where* things happen in the brain. Despite the technological limitations, the past two decades have provided us groundbreaking information about how brain parts participate in various cognitive processes.

As soon as correlation between the activation of a brain part and some behavior is discovered, the temptation is to assume that the particular brain area is "responsible" for the behavior, or even that some behavior "originates" in that specific area of the brain. The *localization approach* has been quite influential in neuroscience, and it is indispensible for understanding the specialized function of different brain parts. However, one has to keep in mind that any real-life cognitive and behavioral phenomenon depends on the cooperation of a network of brain areas, and the activation or deactivation of a single area does not by itself explain the behavior. Only if we appreciate the fundamental complexity of the neural correlates of cognition can we meaningfully speak about the contribution of some particular part of the brain. This is the approach I will take in this essay.

It is thrilling that we possess reports about the conscious experience of religious people from the first century—these are our written sources. However, we do not have brain scans of them while undergoing such experience. This is when empirical research enters: we can use contemporary

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1. Singe-neuron reading is an *invasive* technology: it requires the implanting of electrodes into the brain.

brain imaging studies to make learned guesses about what *actually* happened to ancient believers at the level of neural activity. In this essay I will ask how various kinds of brain activations in modern and ancient believers are connected to their social networks, group dynamics, and theological ideas.[2]

2. Neuroscientific Perspectives on Religious Experience

Since the 1980s, considerable effort has gone into finding the neuroscientific correlates of religious experience. Neuroscientists tried to understand what happens in people's brains when they undergo states that they closely associate with their religious faith. Without attempting a full survey of the field, it is interesting to mention some of the influential theories that emerged in the past three decades. During the mid-1980s, Michael A. Persinger developed and tested the hypothesis that mystical and religious experiences are correlated with mild epileptic seizures in the temporal lobe, the part of the brain located above the ears on both sides.[3] In the 1990s, based on earlier experimental work in brain imaging, Eugene G. d'Aquili and Andrew B. Newberg put forward a complex theory of how brain parts interact to cause different types of mystical experience in med-

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2. In previous research, the connection between religious experience and social factors has usually been approached from the perspective of social constructivism. This essay takes a different route. For discussions of the theoretical assumptions underlying my attempt, see István Czachesz, "The Emergence of Early Christian Religion: A Naturalistic Approach," in *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism* (ed. P. Luomanen et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 73–94; István Czachesz and Tamás Biró, "Introduction," in *Changing Minds: Religion and Cognition through the Ages* (ed. István Czachesz and Tamás Biró; Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 42; Leuven: Peeters, 2011), ix–xvi. For a more favorable assessment of the constructivist perspective in relation to neuroscience in the study of religious experience in the New Testament, see chapter 4 of Colleen Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy: The Neurobiology of the Apostle's Life and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

3. Michael A. Persinger, "Religious and Mystical Experiences as Artifacts of Temporal Lobe Function: A General Hypothesis," *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 57 (1983): 1255–62; idem, "People Who Report Religious Experiences May Also Display Enhanced Temporal-Lobe Signs," *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 58 (1984): 963–75; idem, "Striking EEG Profiles from Single Episodes of Glossolalia and Transcendental Meditation," *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 58 (1984): 127–33; idem, *Neuropsychological Bases of God Beliefs* (New York: Praeger, 1987).

itation.[4] They focused in particular on two ways that lead to the experience of "absolute unitary being," in which the subject "loses all awareness of discrete limited being and of the passage of time, and even experiences an obliteration of the self-other dichotomy," an experience that is usually interpreted as the *unio mystica* or the experience of God.[5] More recently, Fred H. Previc developed a model that connects religious belief with a particular system of the brain that is responsible for processing information in the extrapersonal space, that is, space that surrounds the individual outside of arm's reach but still close enough to be immediately relevant for thoughts and actions.[6] This system is also active in dreams and hallucinations, explaining experiences of leaving the body or being connected to external forces. In his recent monograph, Patrick McNamara emphasized the "decentering of the self" in religious experience.[7] He proposed a model of how the interaction of a network of brain parts and changes in the balance of neurotransmitters (messengers that carry information across neurons) underlie a process that starts with "reduction of intentionality or a turning over of the will to God" and culminates with "insights and gratitude/joy."[8]

This is not the appropriate occasion to discuss the above-mentioned neuroscientific models of religious experience in detail. It can be noted, however, that they seem to be informed by a rather undifferentiated concept of what religion is and how it operates. They apply to some religious traditions and phenomena better than to others. One can recognize in them, to different degrees, an ethnocentric bias, insofar as they seem inspired especially by world religions that are widely practiced in the modern Western world (such as Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism). The theories tend to put much emphasis on mystical union with the divine and related positive feelings: joy, bliss, and other kinds of positive experience. None of the theories mentions suffering, being torn, feelings of guilt,

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4. Eugene G. D'Aquili and Andrew B. Newberg, *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999); Andrew B. Newberg and Eugene G. d'Aquili, "The Creative Brain/The Creative Mind," *Zygon* 35 (2000): 53–68.

5. D'Aquili and Newberg, *Mystical Mind*, 109–10.

6. Fred H. Previc, "The Role of the Extrapersonal Brain Systems in Religious Activity," *Consciousness and Cognition* 15 (2006): 500–539.

7. Patrick McNamara, *The Neuroscience of Religious Experience* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 44–58.

8. Ibid., 143–44.

terror, or humiliation. It would be difficult to find any help in these theories if one wanted to interpret religious feelings such as the one indicated by Jeremiah's cry, "Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me" (Jer 20:7).

Reports of religious experience in the New Testament also endorse the need for an improvement of the theories of religious experience so that they explain the differences rather than only the commonalities in the evidence. Paul's palette of religious experience is hardly exhausted by blissful union with Christ. For example, he describes the beginning of his work in Corinth with the words, "And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (1 Cor 2:3). In particular, it is obvious that members of the church in Corinth did not simply share the experience of a universal kind of mystical union. Paul's catalogue of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor 12 underlines the distinctions between different styles of religious experience. As is apparent from Paul's discussion, many in the congregation put salient emphasis on "speaking in tongues," or glossolalia. In this context it proves extremely helpful that one of the important neuroimaging studies on religious experience from the past ten years focused precisely on this curious phenomenon. Before we turn to Newberg's work on glossolalia, however, it is rewarding to discuss his two other neuroimaging studies conducted before the glossolalia experiment.

Newberg's first experiments using single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT) involved subjects who had practiced Tibetan Buddhist meditation with great frequency for more than fifteen years.[9] Meditators were focusing on a visualized image and at the peak of the meditation experienced a sense of absorption into the image, accompanied by clarity of thought and loss of the usual sense of space and time. Newberg and his colleagues found changes in brain activation during meditation compared to activation before meditation as well as activation in the control group. First, they associated increased activity in the prefrontal cortex (located in the frontal lobes under the forehead) with the willful focusing of attention. Second, the more activation was found in the frontal lobe, the less activation showed in the superior parietal lobe (located near the back and top of the head), which they connected to the altered sense of space.

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9. Andrew Newberg et al., "The Measurement of Regional Cerebral Blood Flow During the Complex Cognitive Task of Meditation: A Preliminary Spect Study," *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging* 106 (2001): 113–22.

Third, changes of activity in a variety of areas, such in the thalamus (the "relay station" located deep at the center of the brain) indicated a complex network of interactions. It is interesting to compare these results with findings about Franciscan nuns meditating in the same experimental setting.[10] Each of the nuns had more than fifteen years of experience in the meditation technique called "centering prayer," which aims at opening oneself to be in the presence of God by focusing on a Bible phrase or prayer. Two of the activation patterns observed in the brains of the subjects corresponded to the results of the experiment with Tibetan Buddhist meditators: activation in the prefrontal cortex indicated a focus of attention, and negatively correlated activation in the superior parietal lobe the altered sense of space. An unanticipated finding was the activation in the inferior parietal region associated with the involvement of language in the exercise (as opposed to the visual nature of the previously studied meditating style).

What were the results of the glossolalia study?[11] The experimenters described two types of glossolalia reported in ethnographic studies. The first type has a dramatic form, "involving singing, vocal utterances, and ecstatic bodily experiences."[12] The second type is almost silent and is associated with calm, pleasant emotions. In the experiment, Newberg and his colleagues studied the former type. In the first condition, subjects were listening to gospel music while rhythmically moving and singing. In the second condition, they were asked to perform glossolalia in the same setting. Researchers looked for patterns of activation in the second condition as opposed to the first. The findings were spectacularly different from the findings of both meditation studies. First, there was *decreased* activity in the prefrontal lobes, correlated with a *lack of intentional control* over the performance of glossolalia. Second, there was no decreased activity in the superior parietal lobe, suggesting that no loss of the sense of the self occurred in glossolalia. Third, changes of activation related to altered emotional activity were found (in the left caudate nucleus, located next to the thalamus).

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10. Andrew Newberg et al., "Cerebral Blood Flow During Meditative Prayer: Preliminary Findings and Methodological Issues," *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 97 (2003): 625–30.

11. Andrew B. Newberg et al., "The Measurement of Regional Cerebral Blood Flow During Glossolalia: A Preliminary Spect Study," *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging Section* 148 (2006): 67–71.

12. Ibid., 69.

When comparing the results of these experiments with other neuroimaging studies, a distinction emerges between two styles of religious experience.[13] (1) The first style of religious experience is induced by focusing attention and is characterized by increased activation of the prefrontal cortex. We can call this *volitional* religious experience. (2) The second style of religious experience is primarily induced with the help of some routinized activity (such as rhythmic body movements) or external stimulus (such as music) and is characterized by a decreased activation in the prefrontal cortex. We can call this style *resonant* religious experience.[14]

In the above-mentioned experiments, volitional religious experience was accompanied by a loss of sense of some aspects of the self (such as spatial and temporal location or boundaries). This appeared in the neuroimaging data as decreased activation of the superior parietal lobe. However, such changes in the sense of self did not accompany some other volitional religious experience. Nina Azari and her colleagues examined religious and nonreligious subjects who were asked to read and recite a religious text (Psalm 23), a nonreligious but happy text (nursery rhyme), and a neutral one (phone directory).[15] For the religious subjects, the religious text was of salient importance and they reported being in a religious state while reading and reciting it. Activation in the right prefrontal cortex and in additional parts of the brains of religious subjects has been found in the religious state, all brain areas being related to higher (executive) cognitive processes. Whereas activations related to emotional stimuli (such as in the amygdala) were found when reciting the nursery rhyme, they did not show up when reciting Psalm 23. It seems that this style of religious experience relies primarily on a cognitive rather than emotional process, involving the integration of stimuli into previously existing cognitive templates. In another experiment, subjects emphasized their personal relation to Jesus Christ as an important element of their experience. Activations

13. Cf. István Czachesz, "Religious Experience and Neuroscience: Toward an Integrative Model," *Religo* 2 (forthcoming in 2012).

14. Ibid. I used the labels "frontal-lobe" and "temporal-lobe" experience, respectively. However, the labels suggest an anatomically oversimplified picture, and allow for interpretations that are not intended by the model (that is, the *localization* of religious experience in one of those brain parts).

15. Nina P. Azari et al., "Neural Correlates of Religious Experience," *European Journal of Neuroscience* 13 (2001): 1649–52.

observed in the prefrontal cortex were connected to social cognition in this experiment.[16]

3. Religious Experience and Religious Groups

The two styles of religious experience are embedded in different ritual contexts. For example, the activation of the frontal lobes in Buddhist meditation and pietistic Bible reading corresponds to the important role of intellectual reflection and literacy in both traditions. In contrast, for religious groups focusing on resonant experience (like modern-day Pentecostals or snake handlers), rhythmic music, dance, and communal prayer will be more important than scriptural exegesis. This is not to say that pietistic Bible reading precludes music, for example, or that speaking in tongues in Pentecostal churches precludes the existence of Pentecostal theology, which is clearly not the case. As we have already stated above, cognition always involves a variety of brain areas, and no experience arises simply from a tiny part of the brain. Given that complexity, however, styles of religious experience can be connected to particular patterns of brain activation as well as with particular rituals that result in such activations. Further, religious groups do not accidentally use specific kinds of rituals that generate specific kinds of religious experience: on the one hand, there are religious groups that practice rituals more capable of eliciting resonant experience; on the other hand, there are religious groups that practice rituals that more intensely engage the frontal lobes, resulting in a volitional type of religious experience. Activations or deactivations of other brain areas can be added to these two main patterns.

Table 1: Volitional versus Resonant Style of Religious Experience

Variables	Resonant experience	Volitional experience
1. Characteristic pattern of brain activity	Deactivation in the prefrontal cortex	Activation in the prefrontal cortex, deactivation of the superior parietal cortex

16. Nina P. Azari et al., "Religious Experience and Emotion: Evidence for Distinctive Cognitive Neural Patterns," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 15 (2005): 263–81.

2. Activities	Rhythmic music, dance, synchronization	Learning, textual transmission, symbolic interpretation
3. Accessibility of experience	Easy to acquire but requires sensibility	Long process of learning
4. Social structure	Simple, fluid	Complex, static
5. Joining the group	Spontaneous, quick—also easy to quit	Gradual, catechetical (can be interpreted as sudden)
6. Theological views	Dynamic agents/entities (epiphany, spirit)	Structured space, time, existence, divine being
7. Rejected as…	Pathological, demonic	Futile wisdom, blocks "revelation"

The choices a group makes about religious experience and rituals will also influence other aspects of the group's activity. If a religious group emphasizes the importance of resonant experience, it is expected to regard such experience as meaningful and important, confirming its existence and beliefs. Consequently, they will focus on eliciting and interpreting such experience. Their rituals will include music, dance, and other synchronized behavior. If a religious group, in turn, emphasizes the value of volitional religious experience, their operations will facilitate and interpret experience gained in that particular way. Such a group finds volitional religious experience meaningful and their activities will be centered on eliciting and interpreting such religious experience. In this movement, individual religious engagement and attention to textual tradition will occupy an important place. Both types of movements will tend to downplay and structurally suppress experience gained by the activation of a brain area that is different from their dominant one. For example, a volitional movement will have difficulty accommodating experience gained from resonant religious experience, such as in glossolalia or under the effect of ecstatic music, as a way to confirm its beliefs. Such experience might be labeled as pathological or even outright demonic in origin. For example, as the text of Acts 2:13 indicates, glossolalia could be termed "drunkenness" by the opponents of early Christianity (see below). A resonant movement, in turn, might reject volitional religious experience as futile knowledge that blocks the way of divine revelation.

Differences in the social dynamics of the two kinds of movements will be determined by the typical ways one can elicit volitional and resonant religious experience, respectively. Maintaining a textual tradition, either in writing or orally, and developing a hermeneutics that applies the text to actual situations, takes considerable effort and investment, often spanning several generations. Achieving an experience of the loss of self in meditation requires several years of exercise. Reading the Bible in ways that are meaningful for the individual requires education that familiarizes the believer with the text and introduces her to the hermeneutical techniques.[17] Achieving resonant religious experience, in turn, seems to require different operations. Synchronizing one's movement and emotion with others is an important aspect of the elicitation of such religious experience. In general, achieving resonant experience seems easier in some respects, because learning the relevant techniques requires less time and effort, but more difficult in other respects, because it requires sensitivity that exist only in a part of the population.[18] It is perhaps not accidental that subjects in Newberg's meditation study had fifteen years of daily practice, whereas participants of the glossolalia study (who were also considered experts of their respective tradition) only five years. One can also expect that maintaining traditions and facilitating learning that are required for volitional religious experience are associated with more complex social structures, whereas resonant movements have simpler and probably more fluid social networks. Conversion to resonant religiosity might occur more quickly and spontaneously, since joining a group occasionally might trigger the right kind of experience in the sensitive subject. This would also predict that resonant movements are more transient than volitional movements: they are easier to organize but also dissolve more easily.[19]

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17. I do not refer to the knowledge of the specialists of religious traditions, but the techniques used by the average member of the movement to deal with the tradition individually or as a group.

18. Cf. Michael A. Persinger, "The Neuropsychiatry of Paranormal Experiences," *Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 13 (2001): 515–23.

19. For example, the dynamic formation and transformation of Pentecostal churches in the Netherlands is discussed by Sipco J. Vellenga, "Geestige praktijken: Over de vitaliteit van religieuze heelwijzen in Nederland sinds 1850," *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 59 (2005): 1–20. See Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy*, ch. 4, for a discussion of relevant aspects of Winkelman's anthropology. The life span of such movements could be increased if they lived in relative isolation from other communities.

The beliefs held by both types of movements are also expected to cor-
relate with theological factors. Resonant movements focus on ideas about
the dynamic nature of spiritual presence. Since no conscious, elaborate
learning is needed to gain the highly esteemed sort of religious experience,
and such groups themselves have a fluid structure, their theological con-
cepts can be expected to be more fluid and dynamic. The divine being can
take over the body and soul of the believer instantly and autonomously.
Volitional religious movements, in turn, which invest more in the main-
tenance of textual traditions and in learning what is needed to achieve
religious experience, as well as to have a more complex social structure,
are likely to hold more static and probably also more complex theological
concepts about the structure of space, time, and existence.

4. Religious Experience and Social Dynamics in Corinth

We can now return to the analysis of the Corinthian church in Paul's epis-
tles. Both the ritual practice and the social dynamics of the community
seem to be problematic for Paul. In his extant (and authentic) letters to
Corinth, Paul draws a picture of the congregation that can be interpreted
as the profile of a community pursuing resonant religious experiences. The
great emphasis given to glossolalia in the Corinthian correspondence is
quite telling: it was probably this particular ritual that was the main source
of religious experience for the members of the congregation.[20] The majority
of the occurrences of "tongue" (γλῶσσα) in the New Testament is found in
1 Cor 12–14, especially in chapter 14. Although arguments from silence are
not necessarily decisive, the lack of references to this ritual in other writings
of the New Testament (with the notable exception of three occurrences in
Acts)[21] and the great importance it receives in the Corinthian case suggest
a certain tendency: either a community practices glossolalia and esteems it
highly or it does not practice it at all. Practicing a little glossolalia now and
then is certainly not the way we know this ritual from historical evidence.[22]

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20. Shantz (*Paul in Ecstasy*, 157) calls glossolalia "the predominant form of …
spirit possession" in Corinth.

21. There is no mention of glossolalia as a routinely practiced ritual in Acts. In
all three passages (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6), speaking in tongues occurs when someone
receives the Holy Spirit.

22. Felicitas D. Goodman, "Glossolalia," in *Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. Lindsay
Jones et al.; Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 3504–7.

Based on the evidence from the Newberg experiment, we can identify glossolalia with resonant religious experience and conclude that the resonant style was important for at least some of the Corinthians.[23]

From several passages in both Corinthian epistles it appears that the congregation also practiced other kinds of rituals that could nurture resonant religious experience, such as healing, miracles, and prophecy (1 Cor 12–14). How closely these other rituals can be associated with the resonant style of religiosity is not easy to determine because we do not yet have neuroimaging data about such rituals. We can make at least some preliminary observations about prophecy in Corinth, based on Paul's warning that prophets should not speak simultaneously but take turns (14:29–32, 39–40). Paul's remarks suggest that people were lacking conscious control when they were prophesying, which in terms of neurological correlates means the deactivation of executive areas of the frontal lobes.[24] Participation in prophecy as a collective ritual probably involved an involuntary synchronization of behavior by means of "emotion sharing" or "emotional contagion."[25] Future neuroscientific research will hopefully provide further data about the style of religious experience occurring in these rituals.

In terms of the social dynamics of the group, leadership hierarchies were unclear and the congregation was lacking consistent power structure (1 Cor 1:10–17; 3:1–4:21; 2 Cor 11:1–13): "What I mean is that each of you says," Paul writes, "'I belong to Paul,' or 'I belong to Apollos,' or 'I belong to Cephas,' or 'I belong to Christ'" (1 Cor 1:12).[26] In such circumstances there were hardly consistent doctrines in the community, as exemplified by the ambiguities about resurrection (ch. 15) and a variety of ethical questions, including sexuality, marriage, and the consumption

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23. Using data from her own fieldwork in various cultural contexts, Felicitas Goodman (ibid., 3505) demonstrated the fundamental continuity of glossolalia across cultures (including different religious traditions). Contemporary experimental data is thus certainly relevant for understanding glossolalia in ancient Corinth.

24. Nevertheless, it appears that prophets produced utterances that could be interpreted, which is not true of glossolalia.

25. For the neuroscience of emotion sharing, see Eddie Harmon-Jones and Piotr Winkielman, *Social Neuroscience: Integrating Biological and Psychological Explanations of Social Behavior* (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 250–56. For a study of the physiology of synchrony in ritual, see Ivana Konvalinka et al., "Synchronized Arousal between Performers and Related Spectators in a Fire-Walking Ritual," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108 (2011): 8514–19.

26. Biblical passages are from the New Revised Standard Version.

of meat from pagan sacrifice (chs. 5, 7, 8, respectively). Rituals such as the communal meals were weak in theological interpretation (ch. 11). Note that we cannot speak of unorthodox belief or practice as a deviation from previously established standards here. The Corinthian situation rather displays a noncentralized power structure, a variety of rituals, and a diversity of theological views and interpretations. We do not know exactly how easy it was to join or leave the group, but the ethical chapters of the letter (chs. 5–6) suggest that the boundaries were unclear, at least when it came to customs and behavioral standards.

After dominant religious experience and social structure, let us turn to the theological concepts of the Corinthian church. Even a sketchy discussion of the entire problem would exceed the limits of this essay. Previous descriptions of the thought world of the Corinthians employ a variety of categories and adjectives, such as enthusiasm, Gnosticism, Hellenistic Jewish wisdom, Jewish apocalypticism, and spiritualism.[27] How one characterizes the theology of the Corinthians largely depends on how one connects theological ideas to the problem of "factions." For example, one can proceed from the idea of a basic socioeconomic division and attribute some beliefs to the rich and others to the poor. Further, one can try to arrange all of the ethical problems raised in the central chapters of 1 Corinthians along this bipartite model. For example, rich people would emphasize wisdom, eat meat from pagan sacrifice, and celebrate the Eucharist improperly. However, connecting all differences within the community tightly to an assumed socioeconomic dichotomy might be misleading (see below). We have seen that the group had a fluid and unclear structure with multiple authorities—not simply a twofold division. Situated in a cosmopolitan seaport, the urban community of the Corinthian church could host people with a variety of backgrounds, beliefs, and habits.[28] It is also quite possible that Paul did not have a clear picture of the range of "factions" and theological views in the community and mistakenly assumed that he was addressing a homogenous "opposition party"—or he could do so simply on practical or rhetorical grounds.

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27. For a recent survey of scholarship, see Kwon Oh-Young, "A Critical Review of Recent Scholarship on the Pauline Opposition and the Nature of Its Wisdom (Σοφία) in 1 Corinthians 1–4," *CBR* 8 (2010): 386–427.

28. For a detailed discussion of Corinth at Paul's time, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1–16.

Irrespective of their diverse backgrounds and religious beliefs, however, these people, or most of them, could belong to a single religious movement. As I suggested, the nature of resonant religious groups is such that it is relatively easy to join or leave them and they can tolerate a great deal of diversity and fluctuation in terms of theological views. Yet like every social group, the resonant religious group must have shared beliefs. In particular, the group is expected to share interpretations about the source and nature of its religious experience—although these views are not perfectly consistent or unified. As far as we can conclude from Paul's text, the most important shared theological idea of the Corinthian church is the divine being as a dynamically moving and powerful spirit. This is the understanding of God that corresponds to their shared religious experience. It is telling that whereas Paul presents most views he attributes to (some group of) the Corinthians as controversial or wrong, he uses the concept of the Holy Spirit as a *leitmotif* throughout the letter without any problem. This does not mean that Paul and the Corinthians necessarily shared the same views about the Holy Spirit. It is quite possible that the Corinthians even used a different word for their concept. For example, the Corinthians could use the word χαρίσμα, which Paul also uses in the introduction and many times later (1:7; 7:7; 12:4; etc.); whereas Paul's own term could be πνευματικά (12:1; 14:1).[29] Even if they used the same word, however, Paul's complex exposition about the Spirit in chapter 2 and his discourse about the gifts of the Spirit in chapters 12–14 could be entirely new ideas to his readers. Most likely he understood that his readers' relation to God depends entirely on this concept and it is through an elaboration of pneumatology that he can convey his message to them.

In his interaction with the congregation, one of Paul's important aims is to shift the operation of the community away from the resonant style and toward the volitional style of religiosity. Paul's lengthy discussion of the matter suggests that, in his opinion, the congregation in fact attached too much importance to glossolalia. In a great part of his treatment of the subject, he tries to deprive glossolalia of its central importance by arguing (1) that the presence of the Holy Spirit can be manifested in a range of other "gifts," all of which are equally important (especially in ch. 12); and

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29. Most commentators regard πνευματικά as a word from the Corinthians' inquiry. For an alternative interpretation of the word as "spiritual persons," see John David K. Ekem, "'Spiritual Gifts' or 'Spiritual Persons'? 1 Corinthians 12:1a Revisited," *Neot* 38 (2004): 54–74.

(2) that there are even greater gifts than speaking in tongues (especially love, in ch. 13).

Paul's rhetoric of power also serves the purpose of shifting the style of religiosity in Corinth. In an attempt to establish himself as the single authority in the community, Paul argues that he is the "father" of the congregation, whom they are supposed to imitate:

> I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me. (1 Cor 4:14–16)

Paul is especially keen to establish his theological views as the doctrinal framework in which the Corinthian community should operate. While admitting that he is not the founder of the congregation, he insists that Christ sent him to Corinth to proclaim "the gospel" (1:17) and he (Paul) has the "mind of Christ" (ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν; 2:16). He gives specific instructions on ethical issues, provides an authoritative interpretation of the ritual meal, and reinforces a certain view of resurrection. It is interesting to see how Paul introduces a magical understanding of the Lord's Supper to discourage alternative interpretations: "Examine yourself, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died" (11:28–30). Paul's advice actually can be seen as an attempt to change the nature of religious experience in the community. For example, only two or three individuals are allowed to speak in tongues at one occasion, and only one after another (14:26–32). In this way he probably hopes to eliminate the driving force of synchrony in collective rituals (see above). Similar rules apply to prophecy. Anyone who claims to be a prophet or to have spiritual powers, Paul writes, "must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord" (14:37).

5. Resonant Experience in 1 Corinthians 11?

From the perspective of the neuroscience of religious experience, there is an intriguing link between the denouncement of glossolalia by some of the bystanders in Acts 2:13, on the one hand, and Paul's discussion of

Corinthian ritual practices, on the other.[30] We predicted that religious movements relying on one style of religious experience will deny the relevance of experience derived from the other source. In the story of Acts 2, some of the bystanders can understand what the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, speak "in different tongues" (ἑτέραις γλώσσαις, v. 4). They are "bewildered" (συνεχύθη, v. 6), "amazed" (ἐξίσταντο, v. 7), and "astonished" (ἐθαύμαζον, v. 7). The text seems to suggest that not only the apostles, but also the listeners were undergoing some particular religious experience. Yet there were other bystanders who apparently did not understand the words of the apostles; they "sneered" and said, "They are filled with new wine" (γλεύκους μεμεστωμένοι). It is unclear whether this remark only refers to the apostles or to the whole crowd that was under the influence of the Spirit. The intensified verbal form (διαχλευάζω) that expresses the attitude of the critics is quite strong, as suggested by contemporary usage.[31] As we have seen before, Paul also employs quite strong expressions to convey his disapproval of the practice of ritual meals in Corinth, specifically warning that the improper celebration of the Eucharist means eating and drinking death. Remarkably, when he condemns the Corinthian practice, he uses the same verb as the bystanders in Acts: some members of the community "become drunk" (1 Cor 11:21).[32] Reading the passage in the broader context the of the epistle's discussion about the Corinthians' rituals, we can arrive at the interpretation that "drunkenness" does not simply refer to the result of drinking too much alcohol.[33] On the analogy

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30. In my treatment of the episode in Acts 2 I do not consider the story a faithful account of a concrete historical event, but suggest that it reveals important aspects of the way a contemporary spectator could reflect on glossolalia practiced by Christians.

31. For example, Josephus' use of διαχλευάζω in *Ant*. 15.220 carries intense emotional connotation (cf. *J.W.* 2.281). For the classical usage, see Walter Bauer et al., *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der Frühchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), col. 379. The basic form is χλευάζω, which frequently occurs in classical Greek to mean "scoff, jeer at, treat scornfully." See Henry George Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon with a Revised Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1994.

32. Both forms come from μεθύω.

33. Justin J. Meggitt (*Paul, Poverty and Survival* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998], 191) cites Philo, *Plant.* 35.142f, and argues that "in the first century this term [that is, μεθύω] was used not only of individuals who were in a state of physical intoxication but also of anyone who exhibited the kind of unrestrained behavior which accompanied the consumption of alcohol, even if they had, in fact, imbibed very little." Alcohol

of Acts 2:13, the expression could also describe the practice of glossolalia or prophecy in the Corinthian church, possibly by outsiders or members of the congregation who did not participate in these rituals. Indeed, later Paul suggests that outsiders perceive the Corinthian practice of glossolalia as "being out of one's mind" (μαίνομαι). This is yet another expression that suggests that Paul's seemingly sympathetic discussion of glossolalia was hiding a good deal of aversion.

Further support for this reading of the passage can be derived from the somewhat unexpected mention of "divisions" (σχίσματα) and "factions" (αἱρέσεις) in the congregation (11:18 and 19, respectively), the former expression echoing the discussion of rival groups in the opening chapters (cf. 1:10). In light of the importance of the problem of rival groups in the whole letter, we can be certain that "divisions" could not be mentioned in ch. 11 without an automatic connection (in both Paul's and the readers' minds) to that broader issue. What exactly did the division in the Corinthian church imply? The question has been intensely debated in previous scholarship and we cannot undertake an exhaustive survey of the discussion at this place. To summarize the recent history of research, we can say that whereas in the second half of the twentieth century a scholarly consensus emerged about the socioeconomic nature of the division (that is, essentially it occurred between the rich and the poor),[34] more recently the presence of important economic differences in the community has been brought into question.[35] It seems that reducing any difference in

consumption could in fact influence the religious experience that took place at the Corinthian meals.

34. Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (trans. J. H. Schütz; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982); Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "The Gospel and Social Practice According to 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 33 (1987): 557–84; L. L. Welborn, "On the Discord in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1–4 and Ancient Politics," *JBL* 106 (1987): 85–111.

35. See especially Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, 75–154. For Theissen's response, see Gerd Theissen, "The Social Structure of Pauline Communities: Some Critical Remarks on J. J. Meggitt, Paul, Poverty and Survival," *JSNT* 24 (2001): 65–84; Gerd Theissen, "Social Conflicts in the Corinthian Community: Further Remarks on J. J. Meggitt, Paul, Poverty, and Survival," *JSNT* 25 (2003): 371–91. For a more nuanced reconstruction of economic conditions, see Steven J. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," *JSNT* 26 (2004): 323–61; idem, "The Wrong Erastus: Ideology, Archaeology, and Exegesis," in *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society* (ed. S. J. Friesen et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 231–56.

ritual practice, social behavior, and theological views to basic economic divisions within the community—even if we accept that such existed in Corinth—is not a fruitful strategy. People can have different habits and preferences, and hold different opinions, for a variety of reasons. Indeed, if we reduce every difference to economic divisions, we are in danger of arriving at an oversimplified version of a Marxist interpretation.

In the particular case of Paul's criticism of the Corinthian meal ritual, interpretations other than a one-dimensional economic reading of the passage are available. For example, eating bread and wine as regular food, instead of treating it as the flesh and blood of Christ, could well be the attitude that Paul criticized.[36] Once we agree that the division in the matter of the Eucharist was not necessarily socioeconomic, there is room for the suggestion that it was a division with regard to ritual practice and its interpretation. If some of the believers were engaged in resonant religious experience, it is possible that they did not care much about the symbolic content of the Eucharist. Probably they did not regard it just like any other meal (as Meggitt proposed), but nevertheless celebrated it very differently from Paul's understanding of the ritual—in an "unworthy manner" (ἀναξίως, v. 27), in his opinion. What did this resonant Eucharist look like? Without going too deeply into speculations, it could certainly include hymns and it could even include dance.[37] Dance was a normal part of Greek and Roman symposia and was not unknown in early Christian ritual practice.[38] Paul, however, sided with believers who were not comfortable with such practices and he promoted a different celebration of the ritual, more in line with volitional (frontal-lobe) religiosity. As he was, according to our foregoing discussion, quite critical of the resonant religious practices of the congregation, he probably sought allies among the members of the church who

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36. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, 189–93.

37. For dance in Greek and Roman religion, see H. Alan Shapiro et al., "Dance," in *Purification, Initiation, Heroization, Apotheosis, Banquet, Dance, Music, Cult Images* (ed. Vassilis Lambrinoudakis and Jean Ch. Balty; vol. 2 of *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum (Thescra)*; Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 299–343.

38. For ritual dance in early Christianity, see G. Mick Smith, "The Reasoned Rhythm of Ritual: Dance in Early Christianity" (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1994); Barbara Ellen Bowe, "Dancing into the Divine: The Hymn of the Dance in the Acts of John," *JECS* 7 (1999): 83–104. On *Acts of John* 94–96, see István Czachesz, "The Gospel of the Acts of John: Its Relation to the Fourth Gospel," in *The Legacy of John: Second Century Reception of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Tuomas Rasimus; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 49–72, here 66.

were not "filled with wine." Connecting the celebration of the ritual with the question of "division" at large was, therefore, Paul's rhetorical move to promote his agenda by identifying the ritual practice as a dividing issue and by recruiting supporters among the "hungry" members of the congregation. At the same time, as noted above, Paul introduced symbolic interpretation that offered religious experience in a volitional (frontal-lobe) framework: the elements are the body and blood of Christ; consuming them is a sharing in Christ; misuse might kill people. Our interpretation of 1 Cor 11:17–22 replaces the customary socioeconomic approach with one based on the neuroscientific typology of religious experience. While some members of the community celebrated the Eucharist in the resonant mindset, others were—at least in Paul's perhaps exaggerated exposition of the situation—unable or unwilling to participate in such a ritual. We can hypothesize that the latter group could more easily accept frontal-lobe religious experience. For them, Paul's interpretation of the Eucharist in vv. 23–26 offered a solution. Focusing on the words of the Lord, they were able to achieve volitional religious experience in a meditative way. In sum, Paul's treatment of the Eucharist in 1 Cor 11 has the same goal as the subsequent chapters about glossolalia and prophecy: to restrain resonant religious practice and establish a volitional style in Corinth (possibly by supporting already existing frontal-lobe tendencies).

6. Paul's Religious Experience: Volitional or Resonant?

This takes us to the question of Paul's own religious preference. Paul himself was a master of textual traditions and symbolic interpretation. So was his personal style of religious experience volitional? How then does the image of "Paul the mystic" or "Paul in ecstasy" fit into this picture? After all, Paul received his divine call from a vision on the Damascus road (Gal 1:15–16), and "boasted" of his visionary journey to heaven (2 Cor 12:1–4)? This is not the appropriate place to draw the profile of Paul's religiosity in every detail (a problem that fills many pages in Pauline scholarship), and I limit myself to a few remarks from the point of view of our typology.[39] The most important observation in this regard is that volitional religious experience provides ample room for mystical experience. The frontal

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39. Shantz (*Paul in Ecstasy*, 87–109) uses insights from neuroscience to interpret various details of 2 Cor 12:1–4. Note that the passage can be a highly stylized version of what Paul experienced originally.

lobes host areas that play important roles in social interaction, and indeed, elevated activation of the pre-frontal cortex in Azari and her collaborators' Bible-reading experiment was partly interpreted as a sign of active social cognition. Thus, interacting with Christ and even having the strong impression that Christ replaced the self of the believer (Gal 2:20) are kinds of religious experience that can fit into volitional religiosity. The mystical union suggested by the later expression could be accompanied by a deactivation of brain areas responsible for maintaining aspects of the self, as was found in Newberg's meditation experiments. As evidenced by his epistles, Paul's religious experience was based on the thorough contemplation of textual tradition. We cannot of course exclude the possibility that Paul did have a predisposition toward resonant experience but was socialized in a volitional religious tradition.[40] Individuals can migrate between groups and it is the typical theology and practices of the *group* that matter for our theory. As an inter-group broker who negotiated quite extended and diverse social networks, Paul may have had the ability to switch back and forth between volitional and resonant experiences.[41]

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40. Cf. especially his claim in 1 Cor 14:19 to be able to speak in tongues better than the members of the Corinthian church.

41. I thank Joseph Bulbulia, Armin Geertz, Robert Jewett, Robert N. McCauley, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, Gerd Theissen, Risto Uro, Peter Westh, and the editors of the present volume for their helpful remarks on various drafts of this essay.

Ideology and Experience in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve

John R. Levison

The Prevalent Ideology

Eve's Enduring Legacy

The opening scene of the television series *Desperate Housewives* begins with Jetsonesque music from the 1960s and a medieval portrait of Eve that moves as Eve plucks the apple from the tree and hands it to Adam. In the final moment of this opening scene, the apple falls into the hand of one of the desperate housewives, who are mesmerizing a generation of those who inhabit TV Land. The more recent trailer begins with a split-second image of a serpent and an apple. The first time I saw the connection between *Desperate Housewives* and Eve was in a German U-Bahn station in Munich, on a billboard where five women—the desperate housewives—were lying in a huge box of apples. When I returned to Seattle, my students explained the whole "affair" to me.

The metamorphosis of Eve into Adam's desperate housewife, of course, antedates the invention of televisions and subways. Two millennia ago, imaginations nearly went wild in their efforts to excoriate and isolate her, so much so that when Joan Wallach Scott contends that the establishment of gender requires "culturally available symbols that evoke multiple (and often contradictory) representations," where does she turn? To "Eve and Mary as symbols of woman, in the Western Christian tradition."[1] The resonance of these figures runs deep. Scott discerns

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1. Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1067.

in Mary and Eve "myths of light and dark, purification and pollution, innocence and corruption."[2]

The representation of vulnerability to deception and a tendency toward seduction coalesced around Eve in Jewish and Christian antiquity.[3] For example, Ben Sira, who taught toward the beginning of the second century B.C.E., offered the young men in his academy this instruction: "From a woman [or "wife"] is the beginning of sin, and on account of her we all die."[4] Early in the first century C.E., the Alexandrian philosopher Philo Judaeus accepted as axiomatic that woman, when created, would become for Adam the beginning of a sinful life (*Opif.* 151–152).[5] In his allegory of the soul, pleasure is represented by the serpent, the mind by Adam, and sense perception by woman. "Pleasure," he writes, "does not venture to bring her wiles and deceptions to bear on the man, but on the woman, and by her means on him" (*Opif.* 165–166). Elsewhere he explains why the serpent spoke to the woman; quite simply, "woman is more accustomed to being deceived than man" (*QG* 1.33). The infamous passage in 1 Tim 2 draws a similar association between Eve and womankind: "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor" (1 Tim 2:12–14). Of course, no ancient author can match Tertullian's extended rant, in which he condemns all women for being Eve, the devil's gateway (*On the Apparel of Women* 1.1).

The Greek Life of Adam and Eve

Though Tertullian's may be the most infamous excoriation, a more detailed demonization of Eve can be located in the less well-known Apocalypse of Moses, or the Greek Life of Adam and Eve (G.L.A.E.), a pseudepigraphon composed sometime during the first three centuries C.E. Tischendorf ini-

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2. Ibid.

3. For a sampling of interpretations, see Kristen E. Kvam, Linda S. Schearing, and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds., *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 41–155.

4. I argued that this reference is to the evil wife rather than an evil Eve in "Is Eve to Blame? A Contextual Analysis of Sirach 25:24," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 617–23.

5. Quotations of Philo Judaeus are from the Loeb Classical Library.

tially published this text in the middle of the nineteenth century.[6] This pseudepigraphon, which is, in part, an inventive interpretation of Gen 2–5, can be divided into four neat sections: patrimony, pain, parenesis, and pardoning.

Patrimony (1:1–5:3; retelling Gen 4:1–5:5)

Long after the births of Cain and Abel, in a dream—a nightmare, really—Eve learns of the murder of Abel by Cain. Patrimony, however, does not belong to Cain; therefore, God commands Adam not to reveal to Cain the mystery that Adam alone knows. God then promises that Seth will be born to replace Abel. Adam—he is given credit, not Eve—makes or produces thirty sons and thirty daughters. After this flurry of births, an unknown condition—they do not yet know how to identify illness—befalls Adam. So he gathers his children around him in traditional testamentary fashion.

Pain (6:1–14:2)

Adam proposes that Seth and Eve should travel to paradise, beg God to send an angel into paradise to retrieve the oil of mercy, and return with the oil to alleviate Adam's inscrutable suffering. This otherwise smooth story (6:1–2; 9:1–3; 13:1–14:2) is interrupted twice, first by Adam's autobiographical recollection of the first sin (6:3–8:2), then by a wild animal that attacks Seth and accuses Eve of initiating, by her greed, the dominion over the wild animals (10:1–12:2). The scene ends when the archangel Michael denies Seth's request, so he and his mother return incapable of relieving Adam's duress.

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6. Constantin von Tischendorf, *Apocalypses Apocryphae Mosis, Esdrae, Pauli, Johannis, item Mariae dormitio* (Leipzig: Hildesheim, 1866/1966), 1–23. There is intense debate about whether the composition was written originally in Hebrew by a Jewish author (Jan Dochhorn, *Die Apokalypse des Mose: Text Übersetzung, Kommentar*, TSAJ 106 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005], 105–72), or in Greek by a Christian author (e.g., Michael E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* [SBLEJL 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992], 58–61; Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997], 65–78; and Marinus de Jonge, "The Christian Origin of the Greek Life of Adam and Eve," in *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays* [ed. G. Anderson et al.; SVTP 15; Leiden: Brill, 2000], 347–63, esp. 363).

Parenesis (14:3–30:1; retelling Gen 3:1–24)

After Seth and Eve return from paradise, Adam again indicts Eve, providing an occasion for her to reveal her own perspective on the primeval sin in what might be called the Testament of Eve. Eve recounts the following, in a flourish of biblical and unbiblical elements: the envy of the devil; the entrance of the serpent, the devil's tool, into paradise; Eve's inability to resist the devil's trickery; Eve's taking of the fruit; Eve's ability to persuade Adam to eat; God's awesome entry into paradise on a chariot; the curses; and the expulsion of the first pair from paradise, despite angelic pleas for mercy. Eve does more than recount the story; the intention of her testament is parenetic. Eve ends her testament: "Now therefore, my children, I have disclosed to you the way in which we were deceived. And you yourselves—guard yourselves so as not to disregard what is good" (G.L.A.E. 30:1).

Pardoning (31:1–43:4)

Following the Testament of Eve, Adam attempts to assuage Eve's anxiety by promising their shared destinies. Eve then confesses her sin repeatedly and is subsequently instructed by an angel to watch Adam's ascent. While she is watching, God's chariot arrives in paradise, replete with an entourage consisting of angels, the sun, and the moon. Seth explains to Eve what she sees, including the inability of the sun and moon to shine in the presence of God. The story continues with the burial of Adam's body and the sealing of his tomb until the burial of Eve should take place. Eve is subsequently buried, and the archangel Michael delivers final instructions about this burial to Seth.

Eve, the Prevalent Ideology, and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve

In the first thirteen chapters, there is much to be said about Eve—nearly all of it negative. Adam begins his autobiographical account of the first sin with the words, "When God made us, both me and your mother, through whom I am also dying" (7:1).[7] Eve, in turn, blames herself for Adam's pain

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7. All translations of G.L.A.E. are my own, based upon the critical edition of

and sickness, to the extent that she begs to take half of his disease from him: "My lord, Adam, get up, give to me half of your disease, and I will endure it because on account of me this has happened to you, on account of me you are meeting with troubles" (9:2). When Adam subsequently sends her with their son, Seth, to retrieve healing oil from paradise, she encounters a wild beast, who blames her—and particularly her greed—for the animal rebellion:

> Oh, Eve, your greed is not about us, nor your weeping, but about you, since the dominion of the wild animals came to be from you. How was your mouth opened to eat from the tree about which God commanded you not to eat from it? For this reason also our natures were altered. Now, therefore, you will not be able to endure [it] if I begin to cross-examine you. (11:1–2)

The animal stands back only when Seth commands it because Seth is the image of God—Eve, presumably, is not. In the first thirteen chapters of G.L.A.E., then, Adam blames Eve for his death, Eve blames herself for Adam's pain and disease, and the wild animal blames Eve for the sharpening of its teeth, that is, for animal rebellion. These thirteen chapters express, to a daunting extent, and with an extensive amount of detail, the prevalent negative ideology about Eve.

The exclamation point is put to these scenes when Adam indicts Eve in these words: "Oh, Eve, what did you bring about among us? You have brought upon us enormous anger, which is death's exercise of dominion over all of our race?" (14:2). Such incendiary language is usually reserved for Adam, and only occasionally for Eve, in Jewish apocalypses that attempted to make sense of the devastation of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.[8] 4 Ezra contains this indictment: "And you laid upon him one commandment of yours; but he transgressed it, and immediately you appointed death for

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Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve in Greek: A Critical Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). I have preserved awkward Hebraisms and some of the wooden qualities of the original Greek. Occasionally I add words, which are marked by brackets. Other sigla adopted from Tromp, such as double brackets, indicate textual variants.

8. The apocalyptic authors 4 Ezra (3:4–11, 20–27; 4:26–32; 6:45–59; 7:11–14, 62–74, 116–31) and 2 Baruch (4:1–7; 14:17–19; 17:1–18:2; 19:8; 23:4–5; 48:42–47; 54:13–19; 56:6–10), during the decades following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., accentuate the effects of the sin of Adam—and Eve in 2 Baruch—by viewing him as the inaugurator of the present evil age.

him and for his descendants" (3:7). 2 Baruch laments, "For when he transgressed, untimely death came into being, mourning was mentioned, affliction was prepared, illness was created" (56:6).[9] In chapter 14 of G.L.A.E., however, this is Eve's doing, not Adam's. This is Eve's sin, not Adam's. This is her greed, not his.

The finale of G.L.A.E. begins in much the same way that the first part ended. After a brief interchange between Eve and Adam, Eve "got up and went outside. And having fallen upon the earth, she said repeatedly,

> I sinned, God,
> I sinned, father of all,
> I sinned against you,
> I sinned against your chosen angels,
> I sinned against the cherubim,
> I sinned against your immovable throne,
> I sinned, Lord,
> I sinned much,
> I sinned in your eyes,
> And because of me has all sin come about in the creation." (G.L.A.E. 32:1–2)

Throughout the final chapters, Eve incessantly weeps, perplexed and chagrinned by Adam's death and pending fate—with the hope of burial by his side. When she cannot understand something, such as why the two dark

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9. They also question Adam's (and Eve's for 2 Baruch) place in the problem of ongoing moral depravity. The author of 4 Ezra appears to blame Adam: "O Adam, what have you done?" Yet there is a measure of ambivalence when he continues, "For what good is it to us, if an eternal age has been promised to us, but we have done deeds that bring death?" (7:117–20). Ultimately, the angel lays responsibility at the individual's feet: "This is the meaning of the contest which every person who is born on earth shall wage" (7:127–28). Although the question in 2 Baruch is the same—"O Adam, what did you do to all who were born after you?" (48:42)—the answer is crisper than in 4 Ezra. While Adam brought physical death to the present evil age, individuals have the capacity to determine their destinies in the age to come: "For, although Adam sinned first and has brought death upon all who were not in his own time, yet each of them who has been born from him has prepared for himself [herself] the coming torment" (54:15). In other words, "Adam is, therefore, not the cause, except only for himself, but each of us has become our own Adam" (54:16). For English translations of pseudepigraphical texts, see James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983–1985).

heavenly apparitions cannot shine, she turns to Seth for answers (34:1–36:3). The deference Eve pays to Seth, who understands what she does not, takes the reader back to Eve and Seth's encounter with the wild animal. In that instance, Eve could not forestall the animal's attack; only Seth, the image of God, could (10:1–12:2).

The Greek Life of Adam and Eve, then, comprises a detailed, perhaps even *the* quintessential expression of a prevalent negative ideology of Eve. Yet such vilification characterizes only the first thirteen and the final twelve chapters of G.L.A.E. Eve is a very different figure in the middle section, chapters 14–30, in which we are able to discern a subversive ideology that poses a challenge to the prevalent negative ideology that swirls around Eve in the remainder of this text.

The Subversive Ideology of Eve's Testament

Against the backdrop of the prevalent ideology, according to which Eve introduced sickness, death, and animal chaos into the world, we will be able to appreciate the many ways in which the middle portion of G.L.A.E. forcefully projects an alternative, even a subversive ideology. This middle portion can aptly be designated the Testament of Eve, for Eve gathers her children to tell them about how she and Adam sinned. Such scenarios and stories are the quintessential characteristics of ancient Jewish testaments.

The Testamentary Genre and a Female Narrator

Our extant Jewish sources contain no testaments set into the mouth of a woman; in no instance does a Jewish woman gather her children in preparation for death and offer final words to them. The pseudepigraphical Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, for example, contains no comparable testaments of the matriarchs.[10]

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10. According to a conversation with Sarah Johnston, extant Greek and Roman sources do not contain testaments set into the mouth of a woman, with the possible exception of Euripides's *Alcestis*, in which Alcestis, as she is dying, speaks briefly to her children about how they should live the rest of their lives. Even if we admit the resemblance between Alcestis and Eve, we are compelled to admit that only in this rare instance does a Greek or Roman woman gather her children in preparation for death and offer final words to them.

The exception occurs in chapters 15–30 of the Greek Life of Adam and Eve. This is a literary and cultural anomaly; this anomaly alone, in my opinion, suggests subversion. Eve is, in a very real sense, the author of her own story. She, the first *woman,* is the ideal figure who informs their children while Adam writhes in the throes of pain (15:1; 30:1). She, and not Adam, is the one who says, "I have disclosed to you the way in which we were deceived" (30:1). Yet Eve's testament is subversive in more salutary ways than this.[11]

Two Testaments, Two Perspectives

Within the first thirteen chapters of the Greek Life of Adam and Eve, Adam delivers his own autobiographical narrative of the first sin and its horrific consequences. The narrative is far shorter than Eve's, measuring but two chapters, but it is long enough to present the prevalent ideology about Eve, and therefore to suggest how radically the perspective of Eve's testament diverges from his testament. It provides, in other words, an ample illustration of the prevalent ideology with which the subversive ideology can be contrasted. It will be beneficial, before proceeding, to set these testaments side by side, with topics identified at the relevant points.

Adam's Version	Eve's Version
Typical introduction to a testament	
5:1–3: And Adam produced thirty sons and thirty daughters. And Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years, (2) and, having fallen into disease [and] crying	14:3: And Adam says to Eve, "Call all our children and the children of our children, and reveal to them the manner of our sinful neglect."

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11. For indications of why this should be read as an independent unit within G.L.A.E. (e.g., a different view of the location of paradise from the remainder of G.L.A.E.), see John R. Levison, "The Exoneration of Eve in the Apocalypse of Moses 15–30," *JSJ* 20 (1989): 135–50. Further, there are two textual insertions in G.L.A.E. 13:3–5 and 29:7–13 that may indicate the conjoining of originally independent parts of G.L.A.E. In short, G.L.A.E. 15–30 (with G.L.A.E. 14 added as a transition) may have formed a separate unit.

out with a loud voice, he says, "Let all my sons come to me so that I may see them before I die." (3) And all gathered (for the world was settled in three regions).

7: And Adam said to him, When God made us, both me and your mother, through whom I am also dying, he gave to us every plant in paradise, but about one he commanded us not to eat from it, through which also we are dying.

Division of labor in paradise

(2) And the hour for the angels who were guarding your mother to ascend and to worship the Lord drew near.

Serpent deceived

15: Then Eve says to them: Listen, all my children and the children of my children, and I will reveal to you how the enemy deceived us.

(2) And it just so happened that we were tending paradise, each of us the portion allotted to him, whatever region [was] from God, and I myself tended in my allotment— south and west. (3) And the devil went into the allotment of Adam, where the wild animals were (since God had divided the wild animals; all the males he had given to your father, and all the females he had given to me.)

16: And the devil spoke to the serpent, saying, "Get up. Come to me." (2) And, having gotten up, he went to him. And the devil says to him, "I hear that you are shrewder than all the wild animals. Listen to me, and I will become friends with you. (3) Why are you eating from the weeds of Adam and not from paradise? Get up and come, and let us make him to be thrown out of paradise,

as also we were thrown out through him." (4) The serpent says to him, "I am afraid that perhaps the Lord will be angry with me." (5) The devil says to him, "Stop being afraid. Become a tool for me, and I myself will speak through your mouth one word aimed at deceiving them."

Eve deceived

17: And immediately he became suspended next to the walls of paradise. And when the angels ascended to worship God, then Satan was transformed into [the] appearance of an angel and praised God with hymns—just like the angels. (2) And as I peeped out of the wall, I saw him—similar to an angel. And he says to me, "Are you Eve?" And I said to him, "I am." And he says to me, "What are you doing in paradise?" (3) And I said to him, "God placed us [here] to tend and to eat from it." (4) The devil answered through the mouth of the serpent, "You are doing well. But you are eating from every plant, aren't you?" (5) And I said, "Yes, from all of them we are eating, except one only, which is well inside paradise, about which God commanded us, 'Do not eat from it, since with death you will die.'"

18: Then the serpent says to me, "God lives—because I grieve for you [two], for I do not want you to be ignorant. Come therefore and

eat and consider the value of the tree." (2) But I said to him, "I am afraid that perhaps God will be angry with me, just as he said to us." (3) And he says to me, "Stop being afraid. For when you eat, your eyes will be opened, and you will be as gods, knowing what is good and what is evil. (4) And because God knew this, that you will be just like him, he bore a grudge against you and said, 'Do not eat from it.' (5) But you, turn your attention to the plant, and you will see intense glory." But I was afraid to take from the fruit, and he says to me, "Come, I will give [it] to you. Follow me."

Trick about the oath

19: And I opened, and he entered inside into paradise. And he passed through ahead of me. And after walking a bit, he turned and says to me, "Because I have changed my mind, I will not give to you to eat, unless you swear to me that you [will] give [it] also to your husband." (2) But I myself said to him, "I don't know with what kind of oath I will swear to you. Nevertheless, what I know I say to you: By the throne of the Authoritative One and the cherubim and the tree of life, I will give also to my husband." (3) When he had extracted from me the oath, then he came and placed upon the fruit which he gave to me the venom of his wickedness [[this is of desire. For desire

And the enemy gave to her and she ate from the tree, knowing that I was not very near her—nor the holy angels.

Eve weeps about her oath

is of all sin.]] And after having bent the branch to the ground, I took from the fruit, and I ate.

20: And at that very hour my eyes were opened, and I knew that I was naked of the righteousness with which I had been clothed. (2) And I wept, saying, "What did you bring about, that I have been estranged from my glory?" (3) And I began to weep about the oath. And that one got down from the plant and became invisible. (4) And I was searching in my region for leaves so that I could hide my shame, and I did not find [any]. For the leaves had fallen off all the plants of my region, except for the fig alone. (5) And having taken the leaves from it, I made for myself loin-cloths.

21: And I cried out at that very hour, saying, "Adam, Adam, where are you? Get up, come to me, and I will show you an enormous mystery." (2) But when your father came, I spoke to him words of lawlessness, which brought us down from intense glory. (3) For when he came, I opened my mouth, and the devil was speaking, and I began to give harsh counsel to him, saying, "Come, my lord Adam, listen to me and eat from the fruit of the tree (about) which God said to us not to eat from it, and you will be as God." (4) And answering, your

father said, "I am afraid that perhaps God will be angry with me." But I said to him, "Stop being afraid, for when you eat, you will be knowledgeable (about) good and evil."

Eve gives Adam the fruit

(3) Then she gave also to me to eat.

(5) And then after having quickly persuaded him, he ate, and his eyes were opened, and he became aware of his nakedness. (6) And he says to me, "Oh, evil woman, what did you bring about among us? You have estranged me from the glory of God."

God's entry to paradise

8: And God was angry with us.

22: And at that very hour we heard the archangel Michael sounding the trumpet and calling the angels and saying, (2) "These things says the Lord, 'Come with me into paradise and hear the sentence with which I am going to sentence Adam.'" And when we heard the archangel sounding the trumpet, we said, "Look, God is coming into paradise to sentence us." And we

And coming into paradise,

were afraid, and we hid. (3) And God came into paradise mounted upon a cherubim-throne, and the angels were praising him with hymns. And when God entered, the plants of Adam's allotment sprouted—and all of mine. (4) And the throne of God was established firmly where the tree of life was.

the Authoritative One called me with a frightful voice, saying, "Adam, where are you? And why do you hide yourself from my face? A building cannot be hidden from the one who built it, can it?"

23: And God called Adam, saying,

"Adam, where have you gone into hiding, thinking that I will not find you? A building will not be hidden from the one who built it, will it?" (2) Then answering, your father said, "Not, my Lord, are we hiding from you because we think that we (cannot) be found by you, but I am afraid because I am naked, and I stood in awe of your power, Authoritative One." (3) God says to him, "Who made known to you that you are naked, unless you disregarded my command—to keep it?" (4) Then Adam remembered the word which I had spoken to him, "Free of danger from God I will make you." (5) And having turned to me, he said, "Why did you do this?" And I said, "The serpent deceived me."

Curse of Adam

(2) And he says, "Since you disregarded my covenant and my command you disobeyed, I have inflicted upon your body seventy blows. The first disease of a blow: violence to the eyes. The second [is a disease of] a blow to hearing–and in this way, one after the other, all the blows to your body will follow closely behind."

24: And God says to Adam, "Since you disobeyed my command and listened to your wife, cursed is the earth on your account. (2) You will work it, and it will not give its produce. Thorny and prickly plants it will sprout for you, and with (the) sweat of your face you will eat bread. And you will be in various diseases, [having been] oppressed by bitterness, [and] you will not taste sweetness—(3) [having been] oppressed by burning heat and constrained by cold. And wild animals, which you used to rule, will

rise up in revolt against you with anarchy because my command you did not keep."

Curse of Eve

25: And having turned toward me, the Lord says, "Since you yourself listened to the serpent and disobeyed my command, you will be in various diseases, and in unendurable pains (2) you will give birth to children [[in many ways.]] And in one hour you will come to give birth and you will lose your life from your intense bodily anguish and childbirth pains. (3) And you will confess and say, 'Lord, Lord, save me, and I will not return to the sin of the flesh.' (4) On account of this, on the basis of your words I will sentence you—on account of the enmity which the enemy placed in you. And having turned again to your husband, (and) he himself will rule you."

Curse of serpent

26: And after he had said these things to me, he said to the serpent with intense anger, saying to him, "Since you did this and became an ungrateful tool, so that you could deceive the careless of heart, cursed are you from all domestic animals. (2) You will be deprived of your food, which you used to eat, and dust you will eat all the days of your life. Upon your breast and upon your belly you will go, lacking both your hands and feet. (3)

There will be left to you neither ear nor wing nor one body part of these with which you enticed with your wickedness and caused them to be thrown out of paradise. (4) And I will place enmity between you and between their seed. And he himself will (closely) watch your head, and you the heel of that one, until the day of judgment."

Expulsion from paradise and Adam's confession

27: Having said these things, he commands his angels to throw us out of paradise. (2) And while they were driving us out and wailing out loud, your father Adam begged the angels, saying, "Allow me a little (time) so that I may beg God to have compassion and show me mercy, for I only sinned." (3) And they themselves stopped driving him out. And Adam cried out with weeping, saying, "Forgive me, Lord, what I have done." (4) Then God says to his angels, "Why did you stop throwing Adam out of paradise? The sinful act is not mine, is it, or did I hand down a sentence wickedly?" (5) Then the angels, having fallen upon the earth, worshipped the Lord, saying, "You are just, Lord, and you hand down fair sentences."

Refusal of mercy

28: And having turned toward Adam, he said, "I will not allow you from now on to be in paradise." (2) And answering, Adam said, "Lord,

give to me from the plant of life so that I may eat before I am thrown out." (3) Then the Lord spoke to Adam, "You will not take now from it. For it was determined that the cherubim and the fiery sword which revolves should guard it on your account so that you may not taste from it and be immortal forever. (4) And you have the enmity which the enemy placed in you. But when you go out of paradise, if you guard yourself from all wickedness—as if longing to die—again, when the resurrection happens, I will raise you, and (it) will be given to you from the tree of life, and you will be immortal forever."

Expulsion complete

29: And having said these things, the Lord commanded his angels to throw us out of paradise. (2) And your father wept in the presence of the angels in paradise, and the angels say to him, "What do you want us to do for you, Adam?" (3) And answering, your father said to the angels, "Look, you are throwing me out. I beg you: Allow me to take away fragrances out of paradise so that, after I go out, I may present an offering to God, so that God will hear me." (4) And having approached, the angels said to the Lord, "Jael, eternal king, command that incenses of fragrance from paradise be given to Adam." (5) And God commanded that it be allowed to Adam that he should

take fragrances and seeds for his
sustenance. (6) And having left
him, the angels brought four kinds:
saffron, spikenard, aromatic cane,
and cinnamon—and other seeds for
his sustenance. And having taken
these, he went out of paradise. And
we came to be upon the earth.

PARENETIC CONCLUSION

30: Now therefore, my children, I
have disclosed to you the way in
which we were deceived. And you
yourselves—guard yourselves so as
not to disregard what is good.

Considerable differences of opinion about Eve distinguish the two tes-
taments. First, there is no doubt about where responsibility lies for the
primeval sin and its consequences. Adam refers to Eve as "your mother,
through whom I am also dying" (7.1). In contrast, although Eve in her tes-
tament admits to being deceived, it is Adam who offers the most unequiv-
ocal admission of guilt. As the angels drive him from paradise, he begs for
a brief reprieve to elicit God's mercy; as he says, "for I only sinned" (27:2).
When the angels relent, he weeps and cries, "Forgive me, Lord, what I have
done" (27:3). The weight of sin that Adam lays on Eve's shoulders in *his*
testament rests principally upon Adam's shoulders in *her* testament.

Second, the explanation for Eve's vulnerability differs in the two tes-
taments. According to Adam, the angels who were charged with guard-
ing Eve had ascended to worship (7:2). The enemy gave the fruit to
Eve, "knowing that I was not very near her—nor the holy angels" (7:2).
(Though it is only a matter of innuendo, Adam may be suggesting that
Eve was alone because he was at worship with the angels.) Eve offers a dif-
ferent explanation of how the serpent so easily approached her. Note the
repetition that Eve adopts to underscore the partitioning of paradise and
sexes, as she recalls,

And it just so happened, that we were tending paradise, each of us the
portion allotted to him, whatever region [was] from God, and I myself
tended in my allotment—south and west. And the devil went into the

allotment of Adam, where the wild animals were (since God had divided the wild animals; all the males he had given to your father, and all the females he had given to me). (15:2–3)

The Eve's testament clearly communicates that Eve was not originally one who was guarded, but one who guarded. There is no angelic escort, and certainly no male one. This is a decidedly autonomous woman.

Equally significant is the third difference between the testaments: the divine division of paradise into a female and a male portion. What is clear here is that the laxity of a *man* with respect to his *male* animals allows Satan entrée into paradise. To quote this again in order to appreciate the implications of this division: "And the devil went into the allotment of *Adam*, where the wild animals were (since God had divided the wild animals; *all the males he had given to your father*, and all the females he had given to me)." The detail of the division of paradise is strong enough perhaps to offer firm pressure against the prevalent ideology, according to which Eve was responsible for the entrance of Satan, sin, and death.

Adam and Eve's testaments in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve offer two very different perspectives on the symbol that was Eve. In Adam's testament, which is caught in the web of the prevalent ideology, Eve is the one through whom human beings die because she, left unguarded, succumbed immediately to the enemy. In Eve's testament, which represents a subversive ideology, Adam alone admits to being culpable—and he is right, from Eve's perspective, because he did not adequately guard his male portion of paradise.

<div align="center">From Text to Experience</div>

The observation that the Testament of Eve evinces a subversive ideology does not of itself require us to acknowledge that it is a window into religious experience in antiquity. Further, the besetting difficulty of the Testament of Eve is that its narrator is fictionalized. Few women outside the world of Harry Potter or G.L.A.E. could claim to have conversed with satanically inspired snakes, eaten fruit that wrested death from immortality, and had the capacity to undo the submission of wild animals through her greed. Is it possible to make the leap from this fictionalized Eve, even one who champions a subversive ideology, to real women in antiquity?

In order to answer this question, we should perhaps lift a page from a longstanding debate between women's and gender studies. In pioneer-

ing work on women's history, on the one hand, scholars in *women's* studies in religion have tended to employ ancient literature as documents, as resources for the lives of real women, for social history. On the other hand, scholars who prefer *gender* studies in religion have tended to employ ancient literature as literary texts, as resources for cultural and intellectual history. In short, women's studies deals with lived history, gender studies with ideologies.[12]

The solution to this tension between women's studies and gender studies, between social history and cultural history, may prove illuminating for the discovery of religious experience in antiquity. Elizabeth Clark, by appealing to the pioneering insights of Joan Wallach Scott, explains that the impasse between social history and intellectual history, between the lives of women and discourses about women, is not insurmountable because discourse is not merely rhetoric or narrative; *discourse rather takes shape in the context of concrete social, economic, and political organizations.* The ability to understand gender in terms of discourse (in our case an autobiographical narrative, or testament, in the mouth of a woman) arises from the realization that gender is "a means of representing ideas about social order and social organization."[13] Therefore, "to study the meaning of the rhetoric pertaining to women—in addition to raising up women as agents and victims—enlarges our historical perspective."[14] Amy Hollywood, in her response to Clark, assesses the value of texts succinctly in these terms: "Knowledge of prevalent ideologies is itself a kind of historical knowledge."[15]

If a bifurcation between historical events and rhetorical discourse fails to hold the day, if women's actual experience can be related to discourses about or by women, then identifying the *ideologies* that permeate the Tes-

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12. Elizabeth Clark ("Engendering the Study of Religion," in *The Future of the Study of Religion: Proceedings of Congress 2000* [ed. S. Jakelic and L. Pearson; Numen Book Series; Studies in the History of Religions 103 [Leiden: Brill, 2004], 237) distinguishes between "women's history (with its focus on social, political, and economic forces) and gender history (with its focus on the production of knowledge)," though she also recognizes that they "need to be kept in tandem."

13. Clark, "Engendering," 236.

14. Ibid., 241.

15. Amy Hollywood, "Agency and Evidence in Feminist Studies of Religion: A Response to Elizabeth Clark," in *The Future of the Study of Religion: Proceedings of Congress 2000* (ed. S. Jakelic and L. Pearson; Numen Book Series; Studies in the History of Religions 103; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 249.

tament of Eve may be a means of discerning *experience* as well. This is not a simple transition, and I will make it with caution and care. Still, if it is possible to discern experience—including religious experience—through the lens of literary discourse, then the Testament of Eve may be a principal, perhaps even indispensable, discourse that leads to the world of experience in antiquity. While this experience may be reflected in details as mundane as Eve's calling Adam "lord" or as remarkable as her responsibility to guard the primeval garden, it may also be expressed in subtle, less apparent ways, to which we may now turn our attention.

The Testament of Eve and Religious Experience

The Tweaking of the Testamentary Genre

The complex role women played in antiquity is discernible in Eve's capacity to construct a testament, delivered when all of her children are gathered together. She, it seems, is the agent of her own story. She, not Adam, concludes the story with the words, "*I* have disclosed to you …" (30:1). Nonetheless, it is not her story exclusively. This is a shared story: "how *we* were deceived." Her children, further, are not gathered for her death but in anticipation of Adam's. Eve's agency, in short, is constrained by the pervasive presence of Adam, her husband, though not to the extent that her voice is effaced and her agency expunged.

Another constraint on Eve's story is the presence of a more ancient story. She cannot, consequently, exonerate herself, as that would undermine the older story of Gen1–4, of which G.L.A.E. is a revision. Still, she proves herself to be an agent with a level of autonomy in the way she revises that first story. She does not merely repeat the story or claim responsibility for the first sin. Her retelling is more subtle in two respects. First, its testamentary quality renders it more universally applicable. This is not just a story about her and her husband; this is a story that reflects the experience of all people. Second, the way in which Eve offers inside views of her experience prompts readers to sympathize with her: though she is a sinner, and the first sinner, her actions are understandable, her transgression forgivable. These two dimensions of Eve's story, and the insight they bring to religious experience, comprise the substance of what is left to say about the Testament of Eve.

Parenesis and the Experience of Deception

The universal significance of this testament is discernible in its parenetic character. In other words, Eve's retelling of the primeval story in this testamentary form is an indication that it is intended to offer instruction—parenesis—in the struggle for righteousness that is integral to religious experience. The rhetorical discourse of a testament, simply put, offers insight into how religious experience was perceived in antiquity.

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs provide stellar examples of the transformation of ancient biblical stories into universal lessons. In these testaments, Israel's male ancestors function as narrators who retell their stories from the book of Genesis. One of the apparent purposes of these retellings is to shape the religious experience of the testaments' readers. Several testamentary figures are preoccupied with urging their children—and by extension the readers—to avoid sexual sin. For example, the story of Reuben who, in a sliver of Genesis, sleeps with Jacob's concubine, Bilhah (Gen 35:22), explodes in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs into a tirade against sexual promiscuity. This tirade is not about personal animus or private sin; it is rife with generalizations about women and men: men should not devote their attention to the beauty of women (T. Rub. 4:1); because women are evil, they must scheme about how to entice men with their looks (5:1), like a prostitute (5:4); men should therefore protect their senses from women (6:1); men should even order their wives and daughters not to adorn themselves so as to seduce men's sound minds (5:5). On and on it goes, with stereotypes and generalizations that extend far beyond Gen 35 into the world of extramarital sexual activity. The Testament of Reuben is less about Reuben than about the treachery of women and the ways in which men can avoid their morally fatal grip.[16]

The point of this brief excursus into the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is to underscore that testaments transmuted the specificity of a biblical text into universal parenesis in an effort to shape religious experience. The rhetorical discourse of a testament, in other words, provides a window into the experience of its readers—or what the author considered their experience, or potential experience, to comprise. The rhetorical shape of the Testament of Eve points in the same direction. In this testa-

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16. See further T. Sim. 5. In another testament, Judah urges his children to avoid promiscuity, drunkenness, and greed (T. Jud. 15–19).

ment, Eve transforms details of the biblical story in a way that renders them applicable to the experience of all readers of the text. In several ways, then, Eve offers insight into the religious experience of all people.

First and foremost, the recurring pattern of deception communicates to Eve's children—and by implication all readers of the testament—precisely how to avoid disregarding what is good, how to steer clear of finding themselves vulnerable to deceit. The deception of the serpent, Eve, and Adam proceed precisely along five identical steps. In each of the three instances:

1. The deceiver approaches and arouses desire (16:1; 18:1; 21:1);
2. The deceiver invites the soon-to-be-deceived to follow (16:3; 18:1; 21:3);
3. The soon-to-be-deceived hesitates: "I fear lest the LORD/ God be angry with me" (16:4; 18:2; 21:4);
4. The deceiver responds with the words, "fear not," accompanied by a partial truth intended to allay fear (16:5; 18:3–4; 21:4);
5. The deceived acquiesces (17:1; 19:3; 21:5).

This pattern is repeated with variations. The deception of the serpent is the paradigm that sets out the basic elements in the process of deception. The deception of Adam, marked by brevity, indicates how easily the unguarded victim falls prey to deception. The deception of Eve exposes the complexity and inner turmoil of the process. The repetition of this pattern is an indication that this testament is aimed, at least in part, at bolstering the integrity of the religious experience of its readers: three different characters—representing animals, men, and women—manage to find themselves deceived and in the throes of transgression.

This pattern is characterized as well by verisimilitude. Notwithstanding the presence of a talking serpent, the pattern is realistic, and its parenesis down to earth: desire enters human experience; hesitation holds desire off—but only temporarily; a part truth or rationalization allays that fear, preparing the way to succumb to deception, so that the apparent good is now within reach. Such a lucid pattern of sin belongs to more than the primeval pair and the talking serpent; this is a common pattern of sin, a pervasive prototype of authentic and flawed religious experience.

Despite the recurrence and verisimilitude of this pattern, should readers of this testament fail to grasp the likelihood that this tragic experience

will overtake them, Eve makes one final appeal, in which she emphasizes that this is not just a story but an experience to which her hearers too are liable: "Now therefore, my children, I have disclosed to you the way in which we were deceived. *And you yourselves—guard yourselves so as not to disregard what is good*" (emphasis added). There is a clear lesson to be learned here, a lesson to be applied in pursuit of what is good. This is not only Eve's personal story—or Adam's—but a testament told to steel her children, and by extension all readers, to guard themselves so as not to disregard what is good.

The Power of Inside Views

Though constrained by the biblical story, as well as the prevalent ideology about women, according to which Eve succumbed to sin because weak-willed, salacious, and seductive women precipitate sin, Eve is still able to revise the story in such a way that she is not entirely, or ultimately, culpable for the first sin. Rather than adopting the tactic of omission—leaving out the sordid details of Genesis—Eve preserves the negative elements of the original story but expresses them in a way that serves to exonerate her. She accomplishes this with subtle narrative details and by offering inside views of her experience. In other words, in her own testament, Eve, while guilty of actions similar to those in Gen 3, evokes sympathy because the reader can empathize with her inner experience of being deceived.

This is an effective narrative technique. Wayne Booth, for example, notices the importance of inside views in this respect when he writes, "*If* an author wants intense sympathy for characters who do not have strong virtues to recommend them, *then* the psychic vividness of prolonged and deep inside views will help them."[17] He also points to Shakespeare's "elaborate rhetoric" by which he controls reader sympathies even with a criminal: "Macbeth's suffering conscience," notes Booth, "dramatized at length, speaks a stronger message than is carried by his undramatized crimes."[18] Along a similar vein, Booth writes of Emma in Jane Austen's novel by the same name: "Sympathy for Emma can be heightened by withhold-

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17. Emphasis is Booth's, see Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983), 377–78. See as well Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 170–71.

18. Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 115.

ing inside views of others as well as by granting them of her.…"[19] By the same token, sympathy for Eve is heightened by withholding inside views of Adam and the serpent—the others who are deceived—and by granting inside views of her own experience. The narrative in G.L.A.E. contains precisely this sort of inside view of Eve that is possessed of the potential to evoke a resonance between her experience of being deceived by an evil, inhuman being—her negative religious experience, we might venture—and the experience of the readers (or hearers) of this testament.

This, then, is the heart of the matter: the portrait of Eve in this independent testament offers a compelling narrative in which inside views of Eve embody a subversive ideology according to which Eve is not nearly as culpable as the prevalent ancient ideology would suggest. Already in the first of five steps on the path toward deception—the approach of the deceiver—Eve explains her perception, in 17:1–2, in such a way that she may be accused only of an inadvertent sin, for she emphasizes through repetition that Satan looked very much like an angel: "And immediately he became suspended next to the walls of paradise. And when the angels ascended to worship God, then Satan was transformed into [the] appearance of an angel and praised God with hymns—just like the angels" (17:1). What other conclusion could Eve have drawn? Here, in paradise, was an angelic figure who spoke with her. Her error, set in this light, is entirely understandable.

Equally significant are the dialogue and inner view that this encounter precipitates in the third step of the process of deception. Like the serpent before her and Adam after her, Eve too verbally confesses her fear. This verbalization leads in G.L.A.E. to the dialogue that occurs in Gen 3 between the serpent and the women. Yet at the conclusion of that dialogue—and this is what is noteworthy—Eve continues to feel fear. In 18:5, she recalls, "But I was afraid to take from the fruit."

The force of this resistance, which is an extra step in the process of deception, is apparent when Eve's unwillingness to be deceived is compared with Adam's. Eve in G.L.A.E. 21:4–5 remembers:

> And answering, your father said, "I am afraid that perhaps God will be angry with me." But I said to him, "Stop being afraid, for when you eat, you will be knowledgeable (about) good and evil." After she had quickly persuaded him, he ate, and his eyes were opened, and he became aware of his nakedness.

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19. Ibid., 249.

If proponents of the prevalent ideology saw in Eve a figure who was particularly prone to deception, this portrait in the Testament of Eve offers an alternative point of view. The serpent succumbed to deception readily. Adam succumbed to deception quickly. Only Eve expressed her fear, entered into a lengthy conversation, and *felt* continued fear; only Eve resisted deception.

This subversive ideology gains further momentum in the subsequent scene in chapters 19–20, in which Eve as narrator depicts her acquiescence by expanding upon the laconic words of Gen 3:6: "And she also gave some to her husband with her." Eve communicates to her children that she did not intend to give an evil fruit to her husband; rather, Satan tricked her by extracting from her an oath that she would give this fruit—this presumably good fruit—to her husband as well. That is, Eve agreed to share the fruit with Adam while she still thought it was possessed of God's glory. Only *after* she ate did Eve realize the predicament in which she had placed herself. She was bound by an oath to give the pernicious fruit to Adam. In good faith, Eve had promised to share the glorious fruit with Adam; after eating it she discovered that she was compelled to offer him the harmful fruit. Her mistake was not intentional; on the contrary, she was deceived, duped into giving the fruit she now knew to be evil to her husband. And her response? Her response was to weep. Eve recalls, "And I began to weep about the oath" (20:3).

In summary, throughout the detailed process of deception, Eve divulges something unique and self-exonerating, typically by offering inside views of her experience. These views have the potential to evoke reader sympathy for her predicament and her eventual plight. When the deceiver approaches, he looks to Eve and acts very much as an angel should. Her naïveté, in other words, is understandable and perhaps even forgivable. Despite the apparent angelic likeness of Satan, she still offers resistance, so much so that Satan does not quickly deceive her. Even her culpability with respect to the deception of Adam diminishes. She was bound by an oath which she took when she thought the fruit a good thing; when she found out the truth, she wept.

If the discourse of the Testament of Eve and the ideology it champions are a reflection of social history, then we have learned much about conceptions of religious experience in antiquity. Eve, in contrast to Adam and the serpent, is a good person duped by a deceiver. Despite her resistance, she succumbs, bound further by the goodness of her intention not to withhold the fruit from her husband. Everything has gone wrong, though the read-

ers, represented by Eve's children, are able to empathize with this tragic figure, since the pattern of deception is so subtle yet so realistic, it reflects an actual experience that may overtake them at any time. This, of course, is the gist of Eve's conclusion: "Now therefore, my children, I have disclosed to you the way in which we were deceived. *And you yourselves—guard yourselves so as not to disregard what is good.*"

Conclusion

Several dimensions of the Testament of Eve identify it is as a window into ideologies, prevalent and subversive, and religious experience in antiquity. First, the Testament of Eve is rife with *sympathy* toward Eve. The other characters are developed without inside views, inner tensions, and various elements that evoke a reader's sympathy. In contrast, a reader learns about Eve's feelings, her resistance, and her regret. The reader can empathize with her inability to recognize Satan disguised as an angelic being. The reader can sense in her tears a fidelity to Adam, to whom she does not want to give the fruit, though she is bound by an oath. This sympathy is a subtle subversion of the prevalent ideology, in which the first woman, because she was a woman, became the source of sin and the cause of Adam's downfall.

Second, the *initiative* of Eve is evident in the fundamental observation that this is not a story told *about* Eve. Although it is not exclusively her story, and though it is told to children gathered prior to her husband's death, this is a story told *by* Eve. From the perspective of Jewish antiquity, it must be said that the placement of a testament in her mouth would have served to raise her status. Further, Eve offers clear, even perspicacious insight into religious experience, into the protracted process of deception, into unwitting betrayal.

Third, Eve is *autonomous* in her testament. She is shown at first to be the guardian of her portion of paradise rather than, as in the prevalent ideology, one who needs angelic—and presumably Adamic—protection. She is also, unlike the serpent and Adam, resistant to deception; her fall is protracted, her demise a struggle.

Fourth, Eve is able in her testament to communicate sympathy, initiative, and autonomy despite the dependence of her story on Gen 3. These are adaptations of the biblical text, additions to it, and nuanced developments of it. Despite her incorporation of much of Gen 3 in this testament, Eve is able nonetheless to imbue her character with virtue tinged by naïveté.

Fifth, this testament offers a clear alternative to the prevalent ideology. This is not simply about an autonomous narrative character who evokes reader sympathy through inside views, who conveys an elaborate assessment of deception, who takes the initiative to guard paradise alongside Adam, though in a different portion. We can say still more. Because we know the prevalent ideology about Eve in particular and womankind in general, we can recognize in this testament a narrative that subtly undermines the prevalent ideology. Other texts thought possibly to be authored by women—the Testament of Job, Joseph and Aseneth—have to do with women for whom there was no longstanding tradition of denigration. The scenario is otherwise with the figure of Eve, who came to symbolize vulnerability to deception, the capacity to seduce, and, frankly, all things wicked that could be associated with women. This is not simply a sympathetic take on an autonomous woman, but a subtle, even subversive, recasting of the alleged progenitrix of evil.

Sixth, the Testament of Eve is a window into religious experience in antiquity. By recounting a finely honed, down-to-earth pattern of deception, which is repeated three times with wide variation, Eve offers a lesson in flawed religious experience—a lesson intended to prevent her children from succumbing, even inadvertently, to sin. This testament is also a window into women's experience in antiquity. Eve's retelling of the primeval sin goes a long way toward undermining Adam's version. Yet it does so under constraint. Eve must offer evocative inside views and a variety of details, such as the serpent's entering through Adam's portion of the garden, to destabilize the prevalent ideology obliquely rather than directly. Such a subtle but forceful literary effort may correspond to the clever and circuitous means women were compelled to adopt to maintain their status in a world dominated by men.

Violence as Religious Experience in the Gospel of Mark

Leif E. Vaage

Introduction

Initially I wrote this essay because I was invited to join a conversation already underway about the possibility of reclaiming—or, as I would rather state it, using the language of Jonathan Z. Smith, redescribing and rectifying—the faded scholarly category of "religious experience," specifically regarding early Christianity and early Judaism. I have not generally wanted to use the category of religious experience when writing about the ancient Mediterranean world. Indeed, I have cautioned other scholars against using this category and urged them, if they insist on doing so, to clarify exactly what they mean by it, since I have never been able to discern why it would be necessary in order to name the specific nature of the phenomena under review. Moreover, as I write the essay that follows, I continue to be uncertain that such a clarification can be made successfully.

Nonetheless, I have found the juxtaposition of the two categories "violence" and "religious experience" in the phrase "violence as religious experience" to be an interesting conjunction of terms, conducive of a number of novel considerations, and therefore conceivably worthwhile pursuing. Perhaps two wrongs will make a right! In any case, combining the vague categories of "violence" and "religious experience" across the comparative bridge of "as" has proven strangely illuminating, at least for me. For "violence," when it comes time to define the term, finally proves to be as "fuzzy" or indeterminate a notion as "religious experience."

I shall begin, therefore, with a few preliminary remarks on the general topic of "violence," and then discuss "violence as religious experience" without, however, trying to specify more precisely at this point what the category

of "religious experience" might properly describe. Rather, I will follow my initial effort to redescribe violence as part of the field of religious experience by taking up, next, the figure of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, which I find a telling example of this possibility; whence, lastly, I shall return to the question of the kind of early Christian religious experience this figure may attest or have enabled, including also a concluding assessment of the category of "religious experience" itself. Let the reader understand—and beware!

Violence as Religious Experience

I begin, then, with a few preliminary remarks on the general topic of violence and violence as religious experience. First, however, the disclaimers: Does anyone really know how to speak, specifically in a scholarly manner, about violence? I, for one, do not. I am certainly not a fan of violence. It hurts. And it has a way of making most things ultimately worse, not better. So, by taking up the invitation to discuss whatever it might mean to speak of violence as religious experience I am not, unlike Georges Bataille, applauding the actual practice of violence, not even to promote its aesthetic appreciation.

At the same time, violence obviously belongs to a wide swath of human life, and it does so in often ambiguous ways; therefore, it is not, presumably, just an anomalous or flatly aberrant form of social behavior, however perilous and harmful it may be.[1]

In his 1990 work *Vineland*, the American novelist Thomas Pynchon lampoons with aplomb the silliness of treating violence as an everyday topic—even as he underscores how this silliness has, in fact, become profoundly interwoven with normal daily life in the United States at the end of the twentieth century. The principal protagonist of the novel is an adolescent girl named Prairie. Her devoted father is Zoyd Wheeler, an

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1. Thus violence is a *vague* category—not unlike asceticism—whose analytical utility would derive from its ability to sponsor a certain line of inquiry rather than to define a specific phenomenon. For this understanding of a vague category, see Robert Cummings Neville, *Normative Cultures* (Axiology of Thinking 3; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 59–84. For asceticism as such a category, see Anthony J. Saldarini, "Asceticism and the Gospel of Matthew," in *Asceticism and the New Testament* (ed. Leif E. Vaage and Vincent L. Wimbush; New York: Routledge, 1999), 11–27, esp. 13–18; also Leif E. Vaage, "An Other Home: Discipleship in Mark as Domestic Asceticism," *CBQ* 71 (2009): 741–61, esp. 742–43.

unreconstructed doper-musician from the time of promise—the 1960s—
before Nixon (in Washington) and Reagan (in California) took over the
nascent fascist state. Near the beginning of the book, Prairie's boyfriend
wants to speak with Zoyd about the possibility of him cosigning a bank
loan. The boyfriend's name is Isaiah Two Four:

> "After Isaiah Two Four, a verse in the Bible," [Prairie explains to Zoyd
> while] shaking her head I-give-up slowly, "which *your* friends his hippie-
> freak parents laid on him in 1967, about converting from war to peace,
> beating spears into pruning hooks, other idiot peacenik stuff?" … Isa-
> iah's business idea was to set up first one, eventually a chain, of violence
> centers, each on the scale, perhaps, of a small theme park, including
> automatic-weapon firing ranges, paramilitary fantasy adventures, gift
> shops and food courts, and video game rooms for the kids, for Isaiah
> envisioned a family clientele. Also part of the concept were a standard-
> ized floor plan and logo, for franchising purposes. Isaiah sat at the
> cable-spool table, making diagrams with tortilla chips and pitching his
> dreams—"Third World Thrills," a jungle obstacle course where you got to
> swing on ropes, fall into the water, blast away at surprise pop-up targets
> shaped like indigenous guerilla elements … "Scum of the City," which
> would allow the visitor to wipe from the world images of assorted urban
> undesirables, including Pimps, Perverts, Dope Dealers, and Muggers,
> all carefully multiracial so as to offend everybody, in an environment
> of dark alleys, lurid neon, and piped-in saxophone music … and for the
> aggro connoisseur, "Hit List," in which you could customize a lineup of
> videotapes of the personalities in public life you hated most, shown one
> apiece on the screens of old used TV sets bought up at junkyard prices
> and sent past you by conveyor belt, like ducks at the carnival, so your
> pleasure at blowing away these jabbering, posturing likenesses would be
> enhanced by all the imploding picture tubes.…
>
> Zoyd was barely ahead of the white water here, nearly taken under
> by the surge of demographics and earnings projections the kid was
> coming up with. Dazedly he realized that at some point his mouth had
> fallen open and remained so, he didn't know for how long. He shut it too
> abruptly and clipped his tongue, just as Isaiah arrived at the line, "And it
> won't cost you a penny."
>
> "Uh-huh. How much *will* it cost me?"[2]

Let us agree immediately that this is not the best example of violence
as religious experience—precisely because of its evident incorporation

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2. Thomas Pynchon, *Vineland* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1990), 16, 19.

here within the daily round of business as usual, including the false prom-
ise Zoyd knows better than to believe that "it won't cost you a penny."
Violence always costs. That is, perhaps, one of the main reasons why
sometimes it may become a vehicle of religious experience—at least if and
when religious experience is understood to describe something essentially
extraordinary, uncanny, exceptional, what a Christian theologian might
call a "costly grace."

Of course, if the category of religious experience also includes or
defines the daily round of business as usual, which is to say ordinary social
life, "how things actually are," and does not obviously or exclusively or even
especially refer to heightened experience or any other form of excessive,
exalted, transcendent life—then, in an oddball kind of way, Isaiah Two
Four's proposal would be another example, *mutatis mutandis,* of the kind
of claims made, for example, by René Girard and Walter Burkert regarding
the role of collective violence in the development of social orders tradi-
tionally sanctioned by sacrificial practices.[3] In this regard, it may be help-
ful to recall that the Latin term *religio* whence the English word "religion"
had as one of its primary meanings: "that which binds (us) together" in
social community.[4] No wonder, then, that Isaiah Two Four "envisioned a
family clientele" for his project.

Second, there is the meaning of the word "violence" itself. Not unlike
Augustine, writing about the experience of time in Book Eleven of his
Confessions, I too know what violence is until I have to explain it to some-
one else. Then it becomes a most unwieldy or intractable category.

When exactly, for example, do we pass into the realm of violence in
this ascending list of verbs that describe the encounter of one life with
another: to meet, greet, touch, kiss, embrace, enter, entice, inveigle,
impress, undress, urge, exhort, inspire, persuade, expose, inveigh, instruct,
constrain, impinge, cajole, demand, insist, command, conspire, collude,

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3. See René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (trans. Patrick Gregory; Baltimore:
Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); Walter Burkert, Homo Necans: *The Anthropol-
ogy of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (trans. Peter Bing; Berkeley: Univer-
sity of California Press, 1983). Cf. Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, ed., *Violent Origins:
Walter Burkert, René Girard, and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural
Formation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

4. See Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 4.28; further, for alternative interpreta-
tions, Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1982), 38, 141 n. 7.

coerce, compel, intrude, interrupt, distract, deprive, refuse, resist, reform, convert, educate, placate, separate, impregnate, violate? To debate the order of words in this list, while evidently legitimate, is to concede my point.

The Latin roots of the English word "violence" do not diminish this ambivalence. Obviously derived from the Latin adjective *uiolens, -entis*, the adjective, in turn, seems to come from the Latin verb *uiolo, -are*, whence the English verb "to violate." The first explanation of the Latin verb *uiolo, -are* in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* is: "1.a. To disturb the sanctity of, violate, profane (temples and other sacred or quasi-sacred things). b. to violate, treat without respect (boundaries); to fail to respect the ownership of (land). c. to pollute, defile (the hands, by unholy deeds; also the senses, by shocking sights or sounds)."

Minimally, therefore, violence, according to this definition, would be a form of impious religious experience, such as blasphemy. But since to violate means first (1.a.) to have entered sacred space—for example, a temple precinct—or the sphere of the sacred, although this is done without demonstrating due respect and therefore tarnishes the integrity of the zone, the verb "to violate" means, effectively, to penetrate whatever is deemed to be holy or divine.

The sexual connotations of the verb "to penetrate" in English are also present in the Latin verb *uiolare*, which appears to derive, if the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* is to be believed, from the term *vis*—itself another inherently vague category—meaning basically "vital force, strength, power," or what otherwise "a real man" (as the substantive *vir*) was supposed to embody. Although plainly not approved as such, "violence"—at least in Latin—nonetheless is evidently rooted in the vigorous stuff of life itself.[5]

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5. Moreover, violence is first known—if the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* is still to be believed—at the interface between the human world and the realm of the gods as a consequence of entering the latter region improperly, viz. mistakenly. In other—biblical—words, just as Adam and Eve first learn the difference between evil and good and come to know themselves as naked only after violating the divine prohibition against eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And just as Job finally beholds God "out of the whirlwind" only after uttering falsely, "What I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know" (Job 42:3); so also the word "violence" appears to recall a borderland of human experience in which the divine and the mortal would encounter and contend with one another, and thereby—on the human side of the ledger—gain important knowledge of things divine.

In what follows, I wish to focus specifically on what I shall call "enacted" violence as religious experience. This is not the random or routine violence that one might have to encounter and engage or have to suffer as part of ordinary daily life, including religious experience. Rather, it is the violence that one instigates for the sake of enabling this experience. The ritual practice of sacrifice is an obvious example. But there are other examples as well.[6] One of these would be the projected day of divine wrath to which both early Jews and early Christians looked forward, hoping to enjoy in safe proximity God's genocidal rendition of the designated preterite (see, e.g., Matt 25:31–46, esp. vv. 32, 41, 46; Luke 16:19–31, esp. vv. 23–26). This expectation frequently included the fantasy of participation in a just or holy war as the divinely authorized mechanism to enable the dawning of that day and its promised sequela of eternal peace (see, e.g., Rev 19:11–21). Another—perhaps less obvious—example of the same enacted violence as religious experience is, I suggest, the figure of Jesus of Nazareth in the Gospel of Mark.

<div align="center">Jesus of Nazareth in the Gospel of Mark</div>

Let us suppose that the figure of Jesus of Nazareth in the Gospel of Mark was supposed to function as a model of early Christian religious experience, at least insofar as the reader (see Mark 13:14; also 4:9, 23) would continue the intent of the disciples who are depicted in the text as seeking to follow the Son of God/Man into the kingdom of God. By a model of early Christian religious experience, I mean that the figure of Jesus in Mark would function as the proper name for a certain putatively "divine" way of being in the world. This is why one follows him: in order to learn how to "save" one's own life—whatever this might mean in the wake of having to "lose" it first (8:34–35).

Indeed, the figure of Jesus in Mark seems also to register a certain telling mistake: namely, the costly error—even if it is deemed to have been an unavoidable misstep—that was his direct challenge to the dominant powers in Jerusalem (see 8:31; 9:31; 10:32–34), an act of bravado that is not to be imitated precisely because it now would serve as a λύτρον ἀντὶ

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6. Cf. Luke 16:16: "The law and the prophets are until John; from then, the kingdom of God is announced and everyone enters it violently."

πολλῶν (10:45).[7] This is plainly a paradoxical depiction. But why? Can it be explained beyond merely a restatement of the problem?

I read the Gospel of Mark as a text of trauma, which reflects and articulates the social disruption occasioned by the first Jewish War against Rome (66–73 c.e.). On the one hand, this is merely to state the standard scholarly assumption that the first Jewish War and, specifically, the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 c.e. is the immediate backdrop of the statements made about the temple's imminent collapse in Mark 13. Reciprocally, the same statements would indicate the most likely time when the work as a whole was written.[8]

In my opinion, this reading remains the most plausible setting for the original composition of the gospel. This means that the work should first be seen as one more piece of ancient war literature. Thus, for example, just as Josephus' subsequent and self-serving chronicle of the first Jewish War (or, previously, Thucydides' account of the disastrous Peloponnesian war between Athens and Sparta with Euripides' earnest tragedy *The Women of Troy* and Aristophanes' equally earnest satire *Lysistrata*), so also the Gospel of Mark, *mutatis mutandis*, has evident errors to lament, ghosts to tame, accounts to settle, and an unsettled (or unsettling) future to imagine.

On the other hand, I assume that the Gospel of Mark was written not in Rome, where ecclesiastical tradition otherwise has placed its composition, but within the region of Syria-Palestine. Again, this is increasingly a common assumption among biblical scholars, although it cannot be said yet to have attained industry-wide acceptance.[9] Much of the same evidence used to date the composition of the gospel around 70 c.e. also serves to support the supposition that its site of composition could not have been too far removed from the social catastrophe's epicenter, which the destruction of the temple represents. In this case, the Gospel of Mark

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7. In Mark 8:34, which speaks of following Jesus, to take up one's cross does not mean, notably, to take on the temple in Jerusalem or any other social authority or institution but, rather, to deny oneself, and then in 8:35, to destroy one's life.

8. See, e.g., Joel Marcus, "The Jewish War and the *Sitz im Leben* of Mark," *JBL* 111 (1992): 446–56; John S. Kloppenborg, "*Evocatio deorum* and the Date of Mark," *JBL* 124 (2005): 419–50. Cf. James G. Crossley, *The Date of Mark's Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 19–43.

9. See John R. Donahue, "The Quest for the Community of Mark's Gospel," in *The Four Gospels 1992* (ed. F. Van Segbroeck et al.; 3 vols.; Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 2:817–38; and idem, "Windows and Mirrors: The Setting of Mark's Gospel," *CBQ* 57 (1995): 1–26.

was obviously written in a situation shaped by everything that belongs to war and therefore, not surprisingly, though unpredictably, some violence inhabits its narrative of "Jesus Christ, son of God" (1:1).

What routinely trips up not a few of my college students when they read the Gospel of Mark from beginning to end for the first time is how irascible a person Jesus seems to be. In fact, Jesus in Mark is a violent figure—certainly not another "idiot peacenik." Yes, Jesus in Mark is not simply a violent figure, but he is at least that.

Perhaps the clearest example of this is the so-called cleansing of the temple in Mark 11:12–25. Once Jesus gets to Jerusalem, even as he expects to suffer humiliating violence there, he also enacts it, energetically. More-over, he does this as the first order of business after his initial triumphal (!) entry into the holy city, against a hapless fig tree and, then, within the temple precinct. The latter is where "he began to throw out those selling and buying in the temple, and turned over the tables of the moneychang-ers and the chairs of those selling doves, and did not permit anyone to carry a vessel through the temple" (11:15–16; cf. John 2:14–16).

Why would we think of this as anything other than a violent act? There is no suggestion of any external provocation for this outburst by Jesus beyond his own volition—just as, earlier in Mark, Jesus begins his teaching career in the synagogue of Capernaum, "and they were amazed at his teaching, for he was teaching them as [someone] with power (ἐξουσία) and not as the scribes" (1:22; see also 1:27). That is, after first breaking up a couple of ordinary households in the preceding episode (1:16–20; cf. 10:28–29), this exhibition of "strong" teaching inaugurates an (almost) unflagging sequence of imposing self-display by Jesus in the first half of the gospel. For example, it immediately leads to what Richard A. Horsley has described as "a decisive, violent battle … for the control of [a] pos-sessed person."[10] Shortly thereafter, Jesus proceeds flagrantly and repeat-edly to contravene basic Jewish custom or "law" by "eat[ing] with sinners and tax-collectors" (2:16), by not teaching his disciples to fast (2:18), and by defending their plucking grain on the Sabbath (2:24). Finally, Jesus refuses to understand the Sabbath as an impediment to doing whatever might be deemed—by whom?—to be "good" or equivalent to ψυχὴν σῶσαι

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10. See Richard A. Horsley, "'My Name Is Legion': Spirit Possession and Exor-cism in Roman Palestine," in *Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity* (vol. 1 of *Experientia*; ed. Frances Flannery et al.; Atlanta: Society of Bibli-cal Literature, 2008), 41–57, here 53.

(3:4), becoming rapidly "enraged" at his detractors and perhaps even giving them the evil eye (περιβλεψάμενος αὐτοὺς μετ' ὀργῆς) since he is sorely "aggrieved" (συλλυπούμενος) at their disagreement with him (3:5). (The Evangelist characterizes this, however, as due to their "hardness of heart"; see 3:5).

Today our response to such behavior might be: This is a man with either very thin skin, or a big chip on his shoulder. Certainly the Pharisees and the Herodians understand him to be provoking a fight to the death, and immediately begin to take up the challenge (3:6). The same sense of high-stakes confrontation is reiterated on the eve of the passion narrative (12:9), even when it has been made clear that Jesus is doomed to die for reasons that exceed individual culpability (14:21). Violence also accompanies Jesus' capture in Gethsemane; although in this case, it is "one of the bystanders (παρεστηκότων)," i.e., one of Jesus' own people (see 3:21, οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ), who cuts off the outer ear of the high-priest's slave (14:47).

The Beelzebul controversy in Mark 3:20–30 concludes—unlike the similar but distinct text in Q (11:14-20)—with a parable about binding the strong man (3:27), which clearly pits Jesus not only against Satan (Beelzebul), but also, by implication, against those who had come down from Jerusalem and were making the accusation that Jesus "has Beelzebul, and he casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." After demonstrating the logical silliness of such a claim—as he also does, but differently, in Q—Jesus then elaborates in Mark: "But no one is able after he has entered into the house of the strong man to seize (διαρπάσαι) his things (τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ) unless he first bind the strong man, and then he will ransack (διαρπάσει) his house" (3:27).[11] Anticipated here is precisely what Jesus subsequently does once he has gone up to Jerusalem and there charges all those who are associated with "my house" with having made it "a den of thieves" (11:17). In other words, the later violence is premeditated—or at least foreshadowed by the conclusion Jesus draws concerning the Beelzebul controversy.

The healing of the Gerasene demoniac in Mark 5:1–20 is likewise revealing. Certainly it underscores how the practice of exorcism by Jesus in this gospel is a practice of power, and sometimes of lethal force. The description of the man possessed by an unclean spirit makes it clear that he is a feral creature, a "wild man," a denizen of death, emerging from the

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11. Horsley ("My Name Is Legion," 55) erroneously suggests "takes back" as the meaning of the verb διαρπάσαι. In fact, it connotes, if anything, theft more than recovery.

tombs where he resides (ὃς τὴν κατοίκησιν εἶχεν ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν), no longer able to be controlled by anyone (5:3). Twice we are told this in very short compass (5:3, καὶ οὐδὲ ἁλύσει οὐκέτι οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο αὐτὸν δῆσαι; and 5:4, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἴσχυεν αὐτὸν δαμάσαι)—as if to make certain that we understand that the combat to come will be *mano a mano* with a most formidable foe, a force as elemental and chthonic as "the wind and the sea" which Jesus just calmed in the preceding text (4:35–41).[12]

In the case of the Gerasene demoniac, however, the "great calm" (4:39; cf. 5:15, ἱματισμένον καὶ σωφρονοῦντα) that follows the extraction of his many occupants entails Jesus' willful or, at least, consenting destruction of a whole lot of local livestock: "about 2000" pigs (5:13). Predictably and understandably enough, not everyone affected by this miracle of transference sees it as a boon: "And those who saw what (πῶς) happened to the demoniac told them also about the pigs. And they began to exhort him to leave their region" (5:16–17). Whatever we make of the rest of this story, the cure obviously entailed much collateral damage, of the kind that tends to be immediately threatening to most ordinary citizens.

In fact, the collateral damage caused by Jesus in the Gospel of Mark extends beyond the proverbial "other." Sometimes, it seems, being "saved" by Jesus is just a set-up for further abuse. Thus, for example, the leper whom Jesus cleansed after Jesus felt compassion for him and extended his hand to touch him (1:41–42) is promptly accosted, upbraided, chastised by Jesus and thrown out—as though he, too, somehow were now an undesirable presence (1:43, καὶ ἐμβριμησάμενος αὐτῷ εὐθὺς ἐξέβαλεν αὐτόν; cf. 14:5). Similarly, there is Jesus' gruesome counsel recommending self-mutilation as a likely part of what will be required in order to "enter into life" (9:43, 45) or "into the kingdom of God" (9:47). Note especially the second-person singular imperatives: "cut it off" (9:43, ἀπόκοψον αὐτήν; 9:45, ἀπόκοψον αὐτόν) and "pluck it out" (9:47, ἔκβαλε αὐτόν). One is told to do the dirty deed directly to oneself.

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12. Horsley's fanciful reading of Mark 5:1–20 ("My Name Is Legion," 55–56) effectively ignores the immediately preceding pericope about the calming of "the wind and the sea" in Mark 4:35–41, where the repeated reference to "the sea" (4:39, 41) obviously does not invoke the Mediterranean. Cf. Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 105–8. For a different understanding, see Rodney A. Werline, "The Experience of Prayer and Resistance to Demonic Powers in the Gospel of Mark," in *Inquiry into Religious Experience*, 59–71, here 64–65.

Finally, there is the scene of Jesus' last supper with his twelve disciples in Mark 14:22–25. This is not without relevance to our theme. Indeed, it threatens to overwhelm it. As though Jesus were proleptically dismembering himself, he says as he gives to the gathered group of men first bread and then wine: "Take, this is my body.… This is my blood …" (14:22, 24). As though Jesus, too, in order to renew his life in the kingdom of God, must not only first excise each recalcitrant hand and foot and eye (see 9:43–47), but also now dissect and drain whatever else might remain of him. As though the twelve disciples were invited here to take up by devouring Jesus the violent flourishing he now lets go.[13]

There is no indication in Mark 14:22–25 that the meal depicted here was understood by the evangelist to reflect or model early Christian ritual practice. Jesus eats the meal with the group of twelve disciples (14:17), who promptly will bring to its thudding conclusion in Mark the progressive demonstration of their total failure to grasp whatever it may mean to follow Jesus. This fact suggests that their unique participation in the meal cannot represent—at least in the eyes of the Evangelist—any kind of exemplary early Christian ritual practice.

Just as previously in Mark (6:52; 8:14–21; also 10:37–40; 14:3–9), so also here as well, Jesus makes an effort to instruct his chosen cohort regarding what is "up" with him but, again, to no avail. Unlike Paul, who writes that such a meal, which Paul uniquely calls the "Lordly supper" (1 Cor 11:20, κυριακὸν δεῖπνον), should be performed "in remembrance of me," Jesus' final moment of conventional conviviality in Mark—it was, after all, the time of Passover (14:12)—functions effectively as the proverbial last meal of someone condemned to death, or the doomed.

It is striking how thoroughly "passive" Jesus becomes in Mark after this last meal. There is none of the usual bravado of the early Jewish or early Christian martyr in what follows. Jesus hardly utters a word after his arrest in Gethsemane (14:43–50). He initially says nothing in response

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13. Lest one think that the fact that Jesus in Mark subsequently dies a thoroughly disgraceful death with notable passivity somehow would belie his previous life of violence, I note a comparable text, in which an exceedingly violent man ultimately suffers a gruesome death. He, too, bears this as silently as Jesus does his trial and crucifixion in Mark, regarding which even his enemies acknowledge its demonstration of an extraordinary valor. The text in question concerns the life and death of Sigurd Slembedjakn, in Snorre Sturlasson, *Kongesagaer* (trans. Anne Holtsmark and Didrik Arup Seip; Stavanger: Gyldendal, 1975), 648–64.

to his accusers, neither in the presence of the Sanhedrin (14:60–61) nor
before Pilate (15:4–5). In the first case, it is only after the high priest
addresses Jesus a second time and asks him directly, "Are you the Christ
the son of the Blessed One?" (14:61) that Jesus finally answers laconically,
"I am," and then goes on to cite a couple of biblical phrases, whose pre-
dictable effect is precisely what happens next, namely, Jesus' immediate
condemnation by the high priest—as though Jesus at this point deliber-
ately sought through such an act of exaggerated cooperation to move the
show-trial along. The biblical phrases, which originally describe figures
of transcendent power, serve here precisely to underscore the opposite
condition of the one now citing them. Similarly when asked by Pilate,
"Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus' response is essentially no answer:
"That's what you say" (Σὺ λέγεις; 15:2).

The next and only other words that Jesus utters in Mark, albeit very
loudly (ἐβόησεν … φωνῇ μεγάλῃ), are at his death: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabach-
thani" (15:34), echoed shortly by a second wordless cry (v. 37, ἀφεὶς φωνὴν
μεγάλην). Between his curt replies to the high priest and Pilate and this
concluding pair of cries of dereliction, Jesus is wordlessly whipped (v. 15),
mockingly dressed up in purple with a crown of thorns and addressed
sardonically (vv. 17–18), hit on the head with a cane and spat upon (v. 19),
ridiculed first by the soldiers (v. 20) and then by the chief-priests with the
scribes (v. 31), carried to the site of crucifixion (v. 22), disrobed (v. 24),
badmouthed by passersby (v. 29), and even reviled by those who are suf-
fering the same fate (v. 32). All this takes place without the slightest hint of
resistance or even commentary on Jesus' part. It is as though he is already
dead or has embraced his coming death as fully as he once wielded a com-
parable power (and therefore refuses, for example, to drink the drugged
wine that is offered to him; see vv. 23, 36).

Even after Jesus is dead (15:37), the striking passivity continues to be
emphasized. The centurion's so-called confession uses the imperfect tense
to opine that "this human being truly *was* a son of a god (υἱὸς θεοῦ)" (v. 39).
Although Joseph of Arimathea had also been anticipating the kingdom
of God, his request to Pilate asks only for "the body of Jesus (τὸ σῶμα τοῦ
Ἰησοῦ)" (v. 43). What Joseph then receives is "his corpse (τὸ πτῶμα)" (v.
45). And not even this cadaver remains intact at the end of the gospel: the
announcement by the young man in the empty tomb that "he has been
raised (ἠγέρθη)" is immediately explained to mean: "he is not here (οὐκ
ἔστιν ὧδε)" (16:6).

Although the prospect of seeing Jesus again is announced (16:7), nothing of the sort ever happens in Mark.[14] Instead, we are told that the women fled the tomb and said "nothing to anyone," for they were overcome by fear (v. 8). The narrative effect of this characterization of Jesus after his death as progressively diminished is essentially to erase him altogether: he disappears finally into the thin air of the last two verses of the text with their completely contradictory horizons—in vivid contrast to the fierce abruptness with which Jesus first burst upon the scenes depicted at the beginning of the work in Galilee (see, e.g., 1:14–15, 16-20, 21–28, etc.).

In short, Jesus in Mark is a violent teacher and healer whose words and deeds save others (especially in the first half of the gospel), but who finally cannot save himself (15:31). Indeed, he knows even before he begins to travel to Jerusalem that he will suffer there a reciprocal violence (8:31). And when this eventually happens—after a pivotal moment of vacillation in Gethsemane (14:32–42)—Jesus undergoes the violence that awaits him as matter-of-factly as he was previously wont to impose it. An odd depiction—to say the least—of someone who would be the bearer or embodiment of "good news" (see 1:1, 14, 15; 8:35; 10:29)!

Jesus in Mark as Early Christian Religious Experience

Let us say that my description of a violent Jesus in Mark is more or less correct exegetically. What, then, does such a figure tell us—if it tells us anything at all—about the early Christian religious experience informing or enabled by it? And what is it, specifically, that makes this depiction of enacted violence and the experience of reading about it in the Gospel of Mark properly religious? In other words, how does noticing, describing, and interrogating such a depiction of violence—or if you will, with Frances Flannery, describing, identifying and locating it—help us better to understand whatever we mean by religious experience in early Christianity and early Judaism?[15]

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14. Mark 16:7 is the final statement of the gospel in a series of such pronouncements that together articulate a weak horizon of postmortem continuance for the life that was Jesus of Nazareth (see, e.g., 9:9–13; 14:25, 28, 62). This horizon, however, never materializes in the narrative of the text, perhaps because it never exceeded a wraith-like existence in the experience of the Evangelist.

15. See Frances Flannery with Nicolae Roddy, Colleen Shantz, and Rodney A.

I began the preceding section by suggesting that we should read the Gospel of Mark as a text of trauma. Its depiction of Jesus as a violent man would be one indicator of this situation. By a text of trauma I do not mean, simply or especially, that it traffics in "shock and awe." Instead, I mean that the discourse of the text is the kind of speech in which a writer deliberately (with some intentionality) seeks to articulate a sensation that otherwise already has marked and impressed itself into the writer's own flesh. Minimally, therefore, such speech remains a vestige of this body. The body of the writer continues to trouble the semantic field of the text, to disturb and disrupt its desire for homeostasis, to rearrange the conventions of its configuration in one way or another, etc.

In the case of the Gospel of Mark, the name for this experience of semantic trouble is "Jesus Christ, Son of God" (1:1). As already noted, the original context of this effort to articulate the truth of trauma appears to have been the social upheaval and disintegration caused by the first Jewish War against Rome, with its destructive aftermath. The social situation giving rise to the Gospel of Mark was thus not a normal one, if by "normal" one means something such as the daily round that otherwise a person would typically choose or know in a given time and place. Neither, therefore, was the early Christian experience of this situation a "normal" one.

The socially abnormal Jesus whom the Gospel of Mark makes its narrative focus and who thereby becomes a figure of early Christian religious experience (at least insofar as early Christian religious experience is what the narrative drama of following Jesus in Mark historically articulates) registers what I shall call a constitutive ambivalence. By constitutive ambivalence I mean to recall the Kantian notion of a constitutive antinomy, which I understand to conceptualize a certain inability to resolve the key terms of a given equation, which human thought otherwise must use in order to organize whatever it is that we are claiming as knowledge of the world in which we live.

What makes of the human, social, bodily experience that underwrites the Gospel of Mark an *early Christian* experience is, essentially, the use of the figure of Jesus to depict it. What makes this experience *religious* would be its explicit engagement by means of such a figure with a certain unresolved or irresolvable ambivalence in human, social, bodily life, specifi-

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Werline, "Introduction: Religious Experience, Past and Present," in *Inquiry into Religious Experience*, 5.

cally in the case of the Gospel of Mark, under the conditions of a full-scale war and its aftermath.

It is the same ambivalence that I sought to indicate in the first section of this essay regarding both the concept of violence as such and the possibility of violence as religious experience. Such an ambivalence I would not simply equate with the perennial "gap" between, for example, whatever we might say about ourselves and all that we otherwise embody, or our experience of the world and the world before and after us; although, obviously, these gaps always contribute directly to the construction of the ambivalence in question. Beyond them, however, there would be … the ineffable fact of existence, the slippery nature of being, the endless permutations of life and death, whose considered manipulation and occasional contemplation we now name the field of "religion."

In speaking of a constitutive ambivalence as the proper focus of "religious" experience and its relation to the epistemological "gap" that recurs between existing thought and something else occurring, I presuppose Jonathan Z. Smith's suggestion of the experience of incongruity as the generative matrix of so-called religious thinking.[16] This is the contrast between, on the one hand, what we say and do in mythic speech and ritual practice and what, on the other hand, we otherwise say and do in normal daily life. So-called religious thinking, in the case of Smith, would describe the adjective "religious," since Smith does not seem to understand anything actually to be inherently "religious" as such. Rather, Smith is at pains to point out how so-called religious myths and rituals are basically further instances of the thoroughly mundane, if quite marvelous, ability of most human beings to observe and organize life in, with, and around a given social group.

The figure of Jesus in Mark clearly remains the proper name used by the Evangelist to signify what I shall call, for want of a better term, a certain experience of early Christian "salvation" or entrance into "the kingdom of God." At the same time, Jesus in Mark also exemplifies—both through his violent behavior and in his disgraceful death—a certain deadly peril. In this regard, the figure of Jesus in Mark is precisely an instance of the ancient φάρμακον: both poison and cure.

What the figure of Jesus in Mark plainly does not register is an experience of escape or even evident amelioration. Rather, Jesus in Mark articu-

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16. See, e.g., Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993; orig. 1978), 289–309.

lates an experience of human, social, bodily life that includes, first, a full measure of everything that the struggle to survive tends to entail: irritation, fatigue, anger, loss of power, and so on; and, then, a striking uncertainty or uncharted vacancy as the horizon of its continuance.

What we get, then, with the figure of Jesus in Mark as early Christian religious experience is a figure of deep ambivalence: a striking mixture of defiance and defeat, loss and endurance, the violence of salvation with the dead-end of business as usual—in a word, survivor's guilt with gusto.

On the one hand, to twist Frank Kermode's well-known title, there is in the Gospel of Mark a pervasive sense of the end of everything that once was the usual pattern of local life. Thus Jesus in Mark routinely signals that the social order traditionally identified with Second Temple Jewish culture—Sabbath observance, ritual purity, fasting, tithing, as well as ordinary household or family relations—is no longer compelling. Ostensibly, it no longer works. This sense of a complete stop includes the projection (after the fact) of the upcoming demise of the temple. Jesus' violent behavior belongs to the same situation of everything falling apart. It is a function of the collective upheaval out of which the gospel was originally written, even as the violence that is Jesus in Mark also signals the struggle to know some other kind of life—in a word, to "save" one's life by entering into another "kingdom of God."

At the same time, the violent Jesus in Mark who was able to save others ultimately cannot save himself (15:31). In the end, he too becomes just another corpse (15:45) before he finally disappears (16:6)—not unlike the temple that has been left without one stone standing on another in the historical experience of the Evangelist (13:2).

In this regard, the fate of Jesus and the fate of the temple in Jerusalem are two sides of a single coin in the Gospel of Mark (14:57–58; 15:29–30, 38). Both destinies, in retrospect, were equally predictable disasters. For those who survived the catastrophe(s), life went on, perhaps with something learned about the perils of "salvation." Even so, it was a hard lesson, and not everyone would likely have the ears to hear or eyes to see the paradox of their enduring existence.

Conclusion

This essay is obviously a kind of experiment. It has first sought to explore how the practice of violence could be considered a form of religious experience—without wanting to suggest that violence might ever be generally

desirable. It is not. And therefore, perhaps, neither is religious experience. Second, this essay has demonstrated that the figure of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark displays such a violent practice. And third, the essay has considered how this literary depiction of violence in Mark aims to articulate a particular moment of early Christian religious experience: to wit, the harsh pleasure of having survived the social implosion occasioned by the first Jewish War against Rome, the bittersweet irony of knowing retrospectively the inevitability of it all, and the vague horizon of something else lurking within the end of an age.

To save one's life becomes here essentially a function of loss, the trauma of endurance, the uncertain pleasure of survival, the recollection and reconfiguration of collapse. Violence registers the painful process of a dangerous and insecure reconstitution of "we the living."[17]

If this is one way to represent violence as religious experience, what does it suggest, in turn, about the category of religious experience as such? One answer might be as follows. Religious experience is the rehearsal of one or another constitutive ambivalence of human, social, bodily life—as violence, for example, its uncertain dance with pain and death. Religious experience does not resolve this ambivalence in any way, but rather, actively explores it. Regarding violence, this is by no means a safe thing to do—just as the figure of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark is by no means a good citizen.

As religious experience, both early Judaism and early Christianity include a certain inherent violence. If merely denied or minimized, this violence does not simply disappear. It rather tends to return with one Isaiah Two Four or another under the aegis of business as usual: as "first one, eventually a chain, of violence centers, each on the scale, perhaps, of a small theme park," or a synagogue, or a church. Perhaps Zoyd Wheeler, "barely ahead of the white water here," already asked the only pertinent question at this point: "How much *will* it cost [us]?"[18]

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17. Cf. Søren Kierkegaard, "Fear and Trembling," in *Fear and Trembling and the Sickness unto Death* (trans. Walter Lowrie; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), 21–132; Jacques Derrida, "The Gift of Death," in *The Gift of Death, and Literature in Secret* (2nd ed.; trans. David Wills; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 3–116.

18. Thanks to Arthur J. Droge, Colleen Shantz, and Susan M. Slater for their various comments on the ante-penultimate draft of this essay. None will be wholly satisfied with the final version, but each should recognize the improvements they promoted.

"Keep Up Your Transformation within the Renewal of Your Mind": Romans as a Therapeutic Letter

Robin Griffith-Jones

Our chief concern in this paper will be the imaginative engagement in the typological redefinition of the self that Paul's letter to the Romans demanded of its listeners. Paul himself, in markers that point up the letter's structure and the progress through which it was to take the listeners, reveals that the letter was therapeutic: Paul set out to heal the νοῦς of the letter's recipients through and during its reception. We will return to this architecture, but it is well to have a sketch of it before us from the outset. The opening attack on idolaters climaxes at 1:28: καθὼς οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν. Idolatry was the consequence of a wilful ignorance, and led to internecine division. Paul located the origin of the Romans' divisions in just such an unreckoning mind, a comparable failure of intellect and will (2:1).

At Rom 7 the listeners were to be at a turning point. They could now recognize within themselves the incapacity to which the persona of 7:7–25 was still subject: ἄρα οὖν αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοῒ δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ, τῇ δὲ σαρκὶ νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας (7:25). Both Adam and Moses' generation were recalled in the opening attack on idolatry, and the "I" of Rom 7:7–13 evokes both Adam and those subjected to the Mosaic law. The Adamic theme continues. Those who heard Paul's letter were on their way into glory (8:30), that is, into the likeness of Christ, the new Adam. And the first object of that transformation was the listeners' νοῦς, no longer conformed to the old Adam's νοῦς and its corruption. Paul was at work within the letter's reception on the transformation of his addressees, and held before them that transformation's culminating glory.

By 12:2 Paul expects his listeners to be equipped for their full recovery, and so to be able to reckon aright, δοκιμάζειν: μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός, εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ. The recipients were now ready to hear Paul's guidance, 12:1–15:33, for the healing of the divided body of Christ of which they were members.

Thus far, our argument follows the procedures of first-order exegesis, at a familiar interface of literary and historical study: we study the formal clues to the letter's structure and to the argument of some passages in detail, Paul's own self-understanding (reconstructed without reference to this letter), and the putative circumstances of his writing (reconstructed in large measure and cautiously from this letter itself).

Paul's therapeutic method, however, is striking. Important features in the text are most convincingly explained when we recognize that the Romans were, during and through their reception of the letter, to re-envision their own identity by the sustained engagement of their imagination on a typological reworking of their own selves. *This* is to effect the healing of their νοῦς; for only so would the addressees be able genuinely to appropriate the knowledge to which at the letter's start they had been blind. At issue then, for Paul himself, was the second-order concern: what were the conditions for the possibility of this knowledge and so for the success of his letter, and how were those conditions to be met? The present essay is fundamentally an exploration of this second-order concern, confronted in Paul's terms and in our own. It is well to emphasize the essay's limited aim: not to offer a detailed phenomenological account of the reception sought by Paul, but to sketch the space that such an account must fill if we are ever to describe in our own terms the conditions, as seen by Paul, for the possibility of the letter's successful reception.

Pauline scholarship has evolved over recent years: the Paul who set out to *teach* has become, for many scholars, the Paul who set out to *persuade*. Scholars study not only what Paul said but the rhetoric with which he said it. This shift in viewpoint is welcome, but does not yet do justice to Paul or his letters. We must ask as well, what did Paul set out to achieve in his audience by his persuasive teaching: not, then, just "what" or "how" but "with what end in mind." Only when this is our principal viewpoint will we see the landscape of *transformation* within which we need to map Paul's strategies and aims. Paul believed the gospel to be the power of God for deliverance (1:16). He intended his letter itself to be that power in action even as the listeners heard. As we might phrase it: Paul did not write to persuade his listeners through his letter, but to heal and transform them.

The Letter's Context and Character[1]

I have argued elsewhere that Paul was defending himself through much of the letter against claims that his gospel was libertine.[2] "I am not ashamed of the gospel" (1:16). Paul himself reveals what could be shameful about it: "it is certainly not—as we are slandered and as some say that we claim—that we should do evil so that good shall come; the judgment on them is just!" (3:8). Paul was not yet ready at 3:8 to address the slander. He had to return to the topic of 3:8 at 6:1 and 6:15 and to the theme of 3:5–7 at 9:14 and 9:19. Paul was mounting a sustained response to a credible misreading of his good news.[3] This misreading had gained traction not only among those who opposed him, but also among those who claimed his endorsement of their own libertinism.

I accept the familiar suggestion that Paul wrote Romans in the awareness of —and perhaps in direct response to—the emergence (probably in Rome itself, as in Asia Minor and Greece) of factions within the churches. The modern slogans "legalists" and "libertines" are crude, but make clear the gulf across which the disputants on each side (however divided among themselves) faced those on the other.[4] I build upon this basic diagnosis

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1. In reference to ancient theorists, scholars have sought to categorize the letter as epideictic (or perhaps more particularly "ambassadorial"; see Robert Jewett, "Romans as an Ambassadorial Letter," *Int* 36 [1982]: 5–20) or protreptic. Karl P. Donfried (*The Romans Debate* [2nd ed.; ed. Karl P. Donfried; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991], lvii–lxi) finds much common ground between the proposals. All emphasize persuasion.

2. Robin Griffith-Jones, *The Gospel according to Paul* (San Francisco: Harper, 2004), 396–407. For the contrasting view that the letter was a balanced, dispassionate overview of Paul's gospel, see classically Gunther Bornkamm, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament," in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 16–28: the letter "elevates [Paul's] theology above the moment of definite situations and conflicts into the sphere of the eternally and universally valid" (31).

3. I will, for convenience, refer to the addressees as "the Romans"; my argument is not affected by the uncertain history of the text at 1:7, 1:15, 15:1–33 and 16:1–23. It matters only that Paul believed there to be such a misreading of his gospel in the city or cities to which he was writing or (if the letter was written with an eye on its delivery in Jerusalem) overall.

4. For an elaborate diagnosis of the Roman factions, see Paul S. Minear, *The Obedience of Faith* (London: SCM, 1971); among critiques, see Robert J. Karris, "Romans 14:1–15:13 and the Occasion of Romans," in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 65–84. For further analyses, see Frederick F. Bruce, "The Romans Debate—Continued," in Donfried, *Romans Debate,* 175–94 (dissecting some familiar presuppositions); Francis

of the position in which Paul believed his listeners to be and for ease of expression I take it from now on that he was right. (The argument itself is unaffected if in fact he was wrong.) We keep in mind as well those caught in the middle: unsettled converts unconvinced by the conflicting certainties of the churches' insistent factions.

My emphasis will be on the therapeutic introspection encouraged by Paul. We may seem to be in danger here of resuming an approach to Paul that has apparently been discredited since Krister Stendahl's classic article on the introspective conscience.[5] But it is important to be clear what Stendahl established: that unlike Luther Paul, in Stendahl's words, did not "struggle" with a bad conscience or have any sense of being "an actual sinner." Stendahl's analysis leaves intact Paul's self-conscious reflection upon himself, and historians of philosophy continue to analyze the intense and nuanced introspection recommended by the philosophical therapies current in Paul's day.[6] New Testament exegetes have explored such therapies too; in particular, Stowers and Engberg-Pedersen have addressed Romans with the techniques and aims of Stoic philosophers in mind.[7]

B. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); the work of Peter Lampe, esp. *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten* (WUNT 2/18; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989); Alexander Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991); and the essays in Karl P. Donfried and Peter Richardson, eds., *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

5. Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *HTR* 56 (1963): 199–215 (repr. in idem, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976], 78–96). Stendahl's subject might be titled, "Paul and the Introspection of the West upon a Guilty Conscience."

6. Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (New York: Picador, 2001), 229–88, analyzes Seneca's emphasis on knowledge of the subject's place in the world. For the exquisite and therapeutic attention given by ancient philosophers to individuals' emotions, character and motivation, see Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), and Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). The Stoics had the term προσοχή for "the introspective supervision of one's own thoughts and actions" (Sorabji, *Emotion*, 13). On Philo, see Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Random House, 1985), 28: Philo expected each Jew to "act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve and transform himself."

7. Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000).

My dialogue partners in this paper are primarily the scholars who study the close relations between Paul and Hellenistic thought. There remains some danger of abstraction here from the concerns of Paul's own addressees. Paul, I suggest, envisioned Romans who were asking, "What should I do to secure glory and honor and life in the new eon on the day of God's judgment?" (cf. Rom 2:5, 7). The options within the churches were varied and confusing. Individuals and household heads were confronted with questions that in a settled, ancestral, lifelong conformity to social and familial roles had hardly been thinkable.[8] Paul will be creating for the Gentiles among his Roman audience a new ancestry from the conjunction of Adam and Moses; these were now the ancestors to be honoured in the perpetuated worship of their God.[9]

Let us then survey the letter itself, alert to the drama of its delivery: out loud, point by point, with the listeners' sensibilities heightened, we might expect, by a liturgical setting.

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8. This emphasis upon the *individual* within overlapping communities is important, however different such individuals' relations to their societies, their ancestors and current families, and themselves may have been from those relations that characterize modern Western individuals. Richard Sorabji (*Self* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006], 50), summarizes the characterization of ancient Mediterranean cultures by Bruce J. Malina and Jerome Neyrey (*Portraits of Paul* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996]): the individual is an artificial or derived construct; individuals always represent their groups; it is impossible to imagine a self acting independently outside the inherited tradition and the community that upholds it; there is a total inattentiveness to one's own contribution to group goals; such people do not readily distinguish self from social role. Sorabji responds (50): "I do not recognise any of this as applicable to the 'ancient Mediterranean person.'"

9. On ancestral religion, see Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 2–4: "To be pious in any sense, to be respectable and decent, required the perpetuation of cult.… 'Such is the chief fruit of piety,' says Porphyry [*Ad Marc.* 18], 'to honour the divinity according to one's ancestral custom.' Porphyry indicates one reason anyway for saying what he does: the impious man wrongs his own forebears as well as the deity." Converts to Christianity needed new ancestors of a new kind. On adoption, the new member of a Roman family became responsible, not for the cult of his natural family, but for the cult of the family into which he had been adopted; see Jörg Rüpke, *Religion of the Romans* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 29–30.

THE HEALING OF THE MIND: AN OUTLINE

AN UNRECKONING MIND

Deft and emphatic verbal signposts are wholly characteristic of Paul.[10] Such signals reveal the structure, character and purpose of the letters. In the analysis of these signals in Romans we clearly have terms to clarify: what did Paul understand by νοῦς,[11] and what would count for Paul as its transformation? The letter itself offers us ostensive answers; we will therefore reserve clarification for the end of our inquiry, rather than proceeding through prior definitions. Paul's understanding and aims involved, for the Romans, more than anything that we would comfortably describe as a "change of mind." Paul called for the Romans to scrutinize and to change their own self-understanding through the involvement, above all, of what we would identify as the listeners' *imagination.* This change itself, as we shall see, was to effect or even to constitute the healing of the νοῦς.

"As they have not reckoned to keep God in their awareness, God himself has consigned them to an unreckoning mind, to do all kinds of wrong" (1:28). Paul has evoked two stories in Jewish scripture: the story of Adam and Eve, and so of all humanity, and the story of the Hebrews and the golden calf. Nobody's history is untainted. In the first story God made the "birds, four-footed creatures" and "creeping things" (Gen 1:21,

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10. It is widely acknowledged that Paul can introduce a letter with a single-sentence *propositio*: e.g., Rom 1:17; 1 Cor 1:10; 2 Cor 1:12–14. Just as important—but less often analyzed—are the thematic *reprises* that reveal the letters' architecture. (Their neglect is ironic given that they have, by their nature, a broader textual basis than the familiar *propositiones*.) I have analyzed Paul's use of such structural markers in 1 Thess and Phil in *Paul*, 189–210, 447–76; and in 2 Cor 1–8 in "Turning to the Lord: Vision, Transformation and Paul's Agenda in 2 Cor. 1–8," in *Theologizing in the Corinthian Conflict: Studies in the Exegesis and Theology of 2 Corinthians* (ed. Reimund Bieringer et al.; Leuven: Peeters, 2012).

11. According to Johannes Behm ("νοέω, νοῦς , κτλ," *TDNT* 4:948–1022), in the New Testament "there is no connection with the philosophical or mystico-religious use … as in the popular usage of the Greeks the term has no precise meaning" (958–59). Cf. Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of their Use in Conflict Settings* (AGJU 10; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 358–90. Jewett scrutinizes Romans itself and Bultmann's analysis of νοῦς in Rom 7 as the true man, the real "I," the self as the subject of its own thoughts and actions, 358–67, 384–90. Hans Dieter Betz has more recently studied the part played by νοῦς in "The Concept of the 'Inner Human Being' in Paul's Anthropology," *NTS* 46 (2000): 315–41.

24–5) and then the human "according to his image and likeness," and gave the human command over (among others) the "birds" and animals and "creeping things" (Gen 1:26); but Adam and Eve's pagan descendents idolize both human figures and the creatures over whom those descendents have been given dominion. In the second story, revealing the dangers to which even Paul's Jewish contemporaries could be exposed, the Hebrews at Sinai "exchanged their glory in the likeness of an ox that eats grass," ἠλλάξαντο τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν ἐν ὁμοιώματι μόσχου ἔσθοντος χόρτον (Ps 105.20 LXX). Both are evoked in Rom 1:23: Paul's delinquents "exchange the glory of God in the likeness of the image of a mortal human and of birds and four-footed creatures and creeping things," ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνος φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου … (Rom 1:23).[12] The natural and the covenantal orders are both overturned.[13]

Paul is inviting pagan addressees into the history of God's chosen nation as members of that nation. In their prior idolatry they committed the crime of all *adam*, to which even the Hebrews in Moses' generation had succumbed. The most obvious barrier separating Jewish from Gentile history is no barrier after all. Paul's Gentile Romans can start seeing the Hebrews' history as their own history, the Hebrew patriarchs as their ancestors too. At stake is their identity, defined by that ancestry and its social and personal legacy, its taboos and its norms. Paul will later invite his listeners to look upon *themselves* in terms of Adam/Eve and of the Hebrews together. These typologies will, separately and together, shape much of what follows.[14]

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12. Morna D. Hooker, "Adam in Romans 1," *NTS* 6 (1960): 297–306, repr. in idem, *From Adam to Christ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 73–87. See by contrast Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 283–84: "This rather clear allusion to the golden calf makes highly unlikely an implicit allusion to the Adam narratives." Paul uses words found too in the LXX account of creation, "but again … this does not mean that he alludes expressly to the Adam story of Genesis. How else could he express such things?" This is an interesting but unsettling decision, to discern one allusion and exclude the other. The break in the text after 1:17 marked in the *kephalaia* (and thereafter through to NA[26]) is misleading. 1:17–18 presents a single antithetical revelation of God's righteousness and of his anger.

13. Sexual urges are already at issue (1:26–27). They had been at issue in Eden; they were again at the foot of Sinai, when the Hebrews rose up to play (Exod 32:6, לצחק as in Gen 26:8; cf. Gen 39:14, 17). Within the letter they will appear again when the typologies converge once more (Rom 7:7–28).

14. Philip E. Esler ("The Sodom Tradition in Romans 1:18–32," *BTB* 34.1 [2004]:

What was the initial delinquency at 1:18–27? Scholars such as Stowers who diagnose ἀκρασία, lack of self-mastery, as the problem described in 7:7–25 can see the same emphasis at 1:18–32.[15] It was a philosophical commonplace that passions were determined by beliefs (which might be true or false); it would thus be quite natural to see distorted passions as the

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4–16), has argued that Sodom is the master image underlying 1:18–32. Abraham, then, here as elsewhere in Romans, is the vital ancestor; cf. idem, *Conflict and Identity in Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003). The argument is important but perhaps not strong. Esler rightly emphasizes that we should not expect Paul's audience, largely illiterate, to have picked up word-for-word allusions to LXX. But this does not speak against such allusions in Rom 1:18–32 (to Gen 1 or Ps 105 LXX) by the well-read Paul; it is arbitrary to assume that Paul neglected the precision of his own knowledge when writing to those who did not share it. Esler reconstructs the Sodom story as we might reasonably expect it within "the realities of communication in an oral culture" to have circulated in more-or-less remote relation to Gen 13 and 18–19, Deut 29 and 32, and Ezek 16; he then draws out the elements that this story shared—or did not share—with Paul's account at Rom 1:18–32. Paul has a striking emphasis on same-sex relations between women. Esler argues that in popular culture the same-sex sins of Sodom had been extended to include women's same-sex relations via the appearance of the daughters of Sodom ("an isolated but striking detail" which Esler argues *was* remembered accurately) in the allegory of Jerusalem's self-prostitution at Ezek 16 (in which same-sex relations are not mentioned). Esler is right that in principle we should "find no difficulty in the suggestion"; but that does not yet give us reason to believe that the suggestion is right. Esler's argument will further depend on the identification of the "I" at Rom 7:7–15 as Israel. We will see below that Paul evokes a rich combination of Adam and Moses at 7:7–25, and so encourages his audience to recognize them—and not Israel—behind the monologue.

15. According to Stowers (*Rereading*, 94), ἀκρασία was induced by God among the polluted Gentiles. ἀκρασία has been the object of close study; see Justin C. B. Gosling, *Weakness of Will* (London: Routledge, 1990); Christopher Gill, *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy and Philosophy: The Self in Dialogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 179, 226–39; and R. Sorabji, *Emotion*, 56–57, 305–15. The translation of ἀκρασία as "weakness of will" has been widely questioned; the failure of the rational, moral will to exert its strength over emotions and desires is traced as a largely Christian conception with only a few antecedents; see Gosling, *Weakness*, ch. 6; Gill, *Personality*, 227, 233. Emma Wasserman, *The Death of the Soul in Romans 7: Sin, Death, and the Law in Light of Hellenistic Moral Psychology* (WUNT 2/56; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) accounts for Rom 7:7–25 in terms of ἀκολασία, extreme immorality (in some accounts enlightened by regretful self-contradiction, in others not) which constituted soul-death. Ian W. Scott (*Paul's Way of Knowing* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009], 18–23) surveys current scholarly views on the relation at 1:18–32 between morality and knowing.

consequence of distorted beliefs. Stowers is right to link Rom 1 and 7; but the problem to which Paul is directing his attention is wilful ignorance, not consequent passion. The overarching theme of 1:17–3:26 is the revelation and the *apprehension* of divine action in the world. Both the righteousness of God (ἀποκαλύπτεται, 1:17) and, by contrast, his anger (ἀποκαλύπτεται, 1:18) are being unveiled. Paul at least hints here at apocalypse, disclosure made possible by God's own special action. The delinquents were blinding themselves to the knowledge that they did have (γνόντες, 1:21; ἐπιγνόντες, 1:31; cf. γνωστόν, 1:19), of truths that were clear because God had made them clear (φανερόν, ἐφανέρωσεν, 1:19). Why then was there any call for an apocalyptic disclosure? There was an underlying truth that could all too easily elude not only the obviously targeted delinquents, but Paul's Romans themselves: that the delinquents' immorality was itself the work of God's punitive anger. Paul's emphasis on knowledge continues. At 2:1–29, Paul's principal concern is not boasting, but knowledge (most forth-rightly at 2:18, γινώσκεις; 2:20, γνῶσις). The limits of the law are made clear by 3:19–20: through it comes (only) ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας. The disclosure of God's justifying power in Jesus has been made clear (πεφανέρωται, 3:21; cf. πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν);[16] and yet its character has eluded the divided Romans. Knowledge of sin then introduces the climactic 7:7–25 (7:7, ἔγνων). Paul will bear witness that most of his fellow Jews do have a zeal for God but not κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν (10:2). A genuinely appropriated knowledge of God, freed from the blindness of will and intellect ascribed to the idolaters of 1:18–32, will in itself constitute a properly reckoning mind.[17]

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16. A contrast can plausibly be drawn between Mark 4:22 (φανερωθῇ) // Luke 8:17 (φανερὸν γενήσεται) and Q's Matt 10:26 // Luke 12:2 (ἀποκαλυφθήσεται); the latter is making the stronger claim seen too at Matt 11:25–27 // Luke 10:21–22 (ἀπεκάλυψας, ἀποκαλύψαι). Similarly, Matt 16:17 (ἀπεκάλυψεν) and Luke 17:30 (ἀποκαλύπτεται) cer-tainly speak of divine disclosure, and Mark 3:12 // Matt 12:16 and Mark 6:14 (φανερὸν) certainly do not. Albrecht Oepke ("καλύπτω, κτλ," *TDNT* 3:556–92) draws the distinc-tion with reference to a "gnostic" tinge to φανεροῦν. "In apocalyptic, however, what is seen is fundamentally supratemporal and inaccessible. It is disclosed only by a special act of divine will" (590–91).

17. Is ἐπίγνωσις to be distinguished from γνῶσις? Charles E. B. Cranfield claims "a strong sense" at 1:28 (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Introduction and Commentary on Romans I–VIII* [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975], 128). According to James H. Moulton and George Milligan (*The Vocabu-lary of the Greek New Testament* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914–29], 237): "The verb denotes not so much fuller or more perfect knowing, as knowledge arrived at by

The challenge that Paul faces throughout the letter is this: how to bring the Romans' unreckoning mind (ἀδόκιμος) to make such a reckoning (δοκιμάζειν), grasp that knowledge and hold it in the awareness (ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει). That last elaborate phrase—for enduring attention and responsiveness—is significant: attention and memory can too easily slip, as 1:18–32 have made clear. Paul sets out to build in the Romans a viewpoint that makes the awareness inescapable.[18]

It has too often been assumed that the chief theme of Rom 2 is boasting (2:17)—in particular, the boasting of those Jews who believed that their observance of the law gave them a claim upon God.[19] Rather, the major theme of these opening chapters is knowledge and its denial. Paul moves from the wilful ignorance of 1:18–32 through to the neglect among the Jews of what they themselves know from the law. In terms familiar to ourselves (not to be ascribed to Paul without further scrutiny), we might say that Paul diagnosed an intellect and will that had been so badly distorted that they could occlude the knowledge of God.

But how could listeners deploy a corrupt intellect and will to heal themselves? Such subjects would have, it seems, no grip by which to pull themselves up from their own corruption. To make possible the change of which the listeners stood in need, Paul relies not just on propositional reasoning but on the subject's entry into and occupation of a new identity. Paul's "I" in Rom 7 will be a version of Adam who has come through the

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the attention being directed to (ἐπι) a particular person or object." Rudolf Bultmann ("γινώσκω, κτλ," *TDNT* 1:689–719) sees the simple and compound versions as interchangeable (703–4).

18. In Rom 2:1–3:20 Paul levels the playing field on which the different groups among his likely audiences were competing for the moral and religious high ground. By 3:10–20 every individual in every such group has apparently been condemned; this has led to Campbell's magisterial rereading of 1:18–3:20 as a presentation in *prosōpopoeia* of the argument of Paul's direct *opponent*. See Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification Theory* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 528–600. Campbell's claim may, however, be vulnerable on formal rhetorical grounds: extended *prosōpopoeia* is common, but its start and its speaker are clear either from the context or from an explicit introduction. A single sentence of Quintilian's has been invoked to show that no introduction was needed (Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.37, in Stowers, *Rereading*, 20, and now in Campbell, *Deliverance*, 533). But Quintilian's own example (*Aen.* 2.27–30) is no analogy to the procedure claimed by Campbell.

19. For an account and rejection of such a reading, see Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (WUNT 29; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 162–77.

Mosaic law to the knowledge of good and evil and finds in it only a tortured awareness of his incapacity for good. This is the *adam*, according to Paul, who will be rescued by the gospel's power.

We will be concentrating on Rom 6–7. But Paul is already stirring his listeners to such imaginative engagement in Rom 4. The Romans have taken on a belief as drastic and as strange as Abraham's. As Abraham trusted God despite the "dead" bodies of Sarah and of Abraham himself (4:19), so Christ's followers are to trust God for the raising of Christ and of themselves. Abraham and Sarah, as the trusting objects of God's action, are types *both* of Christ *and* of Christ's followers. We must identify the conditions under which Paul might plausibly have expected such typology to be effective.[20] We will, I think, not be satisfied with the thought of a mere ratiocination that acknowledged the points of possible comparison. Paul was invoking a generous, free-ranging imagination that would allow typologies to come alive.

WHOSE MIND?

We turn our mind back to the factions—legalists and libertines—outlined earlier in this paper. In Rom 6–7 Paul evokes the adherents of those two conflicting sets of views. We may suspect that such groups, where they co-existed in Rome or elsewhere, came to define themselves by opposition to each other. But according to Paul their opposition disguised their interdependence. Each was in error and, in their mutual opposition, they were wholly destructive. Paul avoids a blanket condemnation of either; for he argues that each group's anthropology was incomplete without the other's. In conjunction with each other, the two anthropologies described a mind that was accessible to healing. To evoke the conflicting factions and their conjunction was the basis for Paul's healing of the Romans' mind.

Paul Evokes the (Pseudo-Pauline) Libertines (6:1–23)

Some of those who had been baptized believed—and invoked Paul in support of their belief—that they could, without any qualms or ill effect, live after baptism with none of the ethical restraint fostered or imposed by the

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20. This inquiry of course raises the question of what knowledge and sensibility qualify us to define those conditions. Modern scholarly method is here under scrutiny as closely as Paul's own.

Jewish law. Paul confronts such a position at 6:1: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death?" (6:3).[21] Paul expects an affirmative answer. But his position is strange. He has to urge the Romans: "So you too, account yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (6:11). They have not grasped what has already happened to them in baptism, and must be told to make a deliberate effort to think of themselves as "dead to sin." By this conscious self-assessment they will come to see what is true of them already. Paul pursues the theme. The Romans must work at the image and understanding which they have of themselves: "Present yourselves to God as if (ὡσεί) alive from the dead" (6:13). Through the phrase "*as if*" Paul summons his addressees to make life-changing decisions on the basis of an imaginative reoccupation of their past baptism and its promised—but in some ways unrealized—effect, illumined by Paul's own extended play on the themes of life and death. He talks of life and death: physical life and death; life under the power of wrongdoing and the death to which this leads; death to the power of wrongdoing and the life to which that leads; and the state of Paul's own listeners meanwhile sharing in the burial of Jesus and looking to share his life.[22]

But the libertines, as Paul presumes, are so far from recognizing such experience as their own that they have to envision it by an act of will. They hear from Paul a dazzle of strange images and a psychological fiction that they are expected to realize within themselves. The addressees will be called to such endeavor—for similarly high stakes—throughout Rom 6–7. This self-consciously imaginative engagement is not a peripheral, decora-

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21. Engberg-Pedersen (*Paul and the Stoics*, 225–40) fruitfully explores this passage. He puts weight on the specifically Stoic model of growing self-awareness informed by reason, as a model that informs—and so, for modern readers, illumines—Paul's own parenesis. I suggest that this overstates Paul's appeal to the Romans' reason and so obscures Paul's address to what we would designate the *imagination* of his listeners.

22. Paul makes close links between physical life/death on the one hand and, on the other, life/death in relation to God. Where we hear a brave metaphor, Paul (and perhaps any Jews among his listeners) may have heard a natural association, amplified but not distorted for Paul's purposes. For Paul's multivocal use of "death," see C. Clifton Black, "Pauline Perspectives on Death on Romans 5–8," *JBL* 103 (1984): 413–33. For the deathliness of extreme physical or moral degradation, see Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 35–46.

tive supplement to the real work that the listeners have to do; it *is* the work to be done for the appropriation of Paul's claims.[23]

Paul Evokes Those Dedicated to the Law's Observance (7:1–6)

Paul expected others among his listeners to see—and to be urging upon their fellow members of the churches—the offer and demand of God in the law's loyal observance. These "legalists" as well had good reason to find Paul confusing. Paul tells them that their death with Christ has freed them from the law as certainly as a husband's death frees the wife from her marriage.[24] They are free then to go with another man: Christ. But, Paul insists, these law-observant listeners have no grasp of their former husband's death or of their new freedom. Once more, in a strikingly bold move, Paul wants his addressees to abandon a well established and respected principle for an intricate series of images that will have worked, we may think, only by *displacing* other, more discursive ways of thinking.

Such Libertines and Legalists: The Relation between Them

Paul has evoked two putative groups and their distinct outlooks. But where the groups' members saw only the differences between the outlooks, Paul has presented them in identical terms. Paul first envisions those who think themselves free to do wrong (6:1, 15). All those claiming such privilege have failed to grasp what they have undergone in baptism. The person they were, "our old man," was crucified "so that the body of sin might be brought to nothing." They "have died to sin," so that they might live "in newness of life." Thanks to baptism, wrongdoing "will have no lordship over them." This is a far cry from the old slavery to wrongdoing and its "fruit" of death. Now the Romans are "enslaved to God" and have instead the "fruit" that leads to holiness.

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23. For Paul's engagement of his own and his listeners' imagination, see Douglas A. Templeton, *Re-exploring Paul's Imagination* (Eilsbrunn: Ko'Amar, 1988), an appropriately poetic, enigmatic book.

24. Karl Barth may have clarified this notoriously perplexing image in *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM, 1959), 77–78: the listener is both the husband who has "died" in baptism and the widow who is thereby freed from her legal obligations to him. The listeners (if they were to avoid the confusion that the passage causes to us, the present readers) must have been thinking freely and flexibly.

Paul next turns to those who rely on the law's observance (7:1–6). Paul creates a moment of drama by defining their status in terms and structure precisely parallel to those that define their antagonists. The law "has lordship" only over those who are alive. A widow is "brought to nothing" from the law of her husband: "You have died to the law … so that we can bear fruit to God." Now Paul aligns himself with those whom he addresses: we once "bore fruit" to death, but have been "brought to nothing" from the law and are "slaves in the spirit's newness" (Rom 7:1–6).

Paul has identified a symmetry of error and restoration. On the one hand, there were those who defined themselves by the template of Moses' law. These looked to the law for life, but it was a law that had brought Adam —and so all *adam*—to death. On the other hand, there were those, we may suspect, who defined themselves by the template of Adam before the fall, and so of *adam* now restored in the new Adam, Christ. These thought of themselves as free from all law, forgetting that Adam himself was subject to a commandment that was in force long before Moses lived. Adam broke it, and so died. Thus, both the Roman factions were deluded. As we watch Paul correct the delusion, our own concern will as ever be with the form of apprehension without which the successful reception of Paul's argument would not be possible: a supple and strong typological imagination.[25] It is time to appraise in this light some part of Paul's procedure.

How Is the Mind Healed?

Baptism

Romans 6:1 introduces baptism. In the ensuing chapters Paul invites the addressees to retrace in self-conscious reflection—this time in the persona made possible by the letter so far—the baptism which they have already

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25. Such engagement is not a function of an individual's simply and exclusively private world. It is salutary to envision the effects which the Christian house at Dura Europos was redesigned to make upon those undergoing baptism. Evidence suggests that the room that was converted into a baptistry became a tomb-like cave, its walls painted with the women's approach to the tomb of Jesus and then to his sarcophagus. To the effects attributable to the building and to its furniture and decoration we must add (even if we cannot specify) the effects of the liturgy, the gathered congregation and officiants, the shared excitement, and the expectations both for the ritual itself and for the candidates' incipient part in the community's life and future.

undergone. Startling as such a function may seem to us, the letter will have been successful only if the process through which it takes its listeners effects in them what their own baptism has not. Paul, we may say, evokes in 6:1–7:25 a baptism without the endowment of the spirit; this incompleteness will account for the crisis of 7:7–25 and so the crisis of the Romans. To take up again our earlier terms, both intellect and will would by this process be healed; the mind would no longer, "unreckoning," pitch the self into the crimes portrayed at the letter's start. This first stage of the healing would not in itself be sufficient to heal each subject as a whole, but ideally the mind would now be cleared of its blindness, would see the limits of its own capacity, and would be receptive to the God-given help which would—in and by the reception of Rom 8—make possible the rest of the subject's healing.

The "I"[26]

Paul creates in his letter a world of its own. He evokes an "I," who exists only in the letter: a figure in whom the characteristics of each imagined faction (as sketched above) will converge to form a single "whole" person.[27]

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26. Among recent surveys of the accounts given of Rom 7:7–25, see Cranfield, *Romans* 1:342–47; Gerhard Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 190–201; Jan Lambrecht, *The Wretched "I" and its Liberation: Paul in Romans 7 and 8* (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 59–91; Lauri Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul* (WUNT 124; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 117–26; and idem, "Romans 7 Derhetorized," in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps; JSNTSup 195; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 420–40. The fictive "I" described below is not the wholly fictitious "I" of Kümmel's classic study. Thurén ("Romans 7," 427–28) rightly insists that for any reading to be plausible that omits Paul himself from the "I," "the original addressees must have been able immediately to exclude Paul from the semantic field of ἐγώ."

27. Stowers (*Rereading*, 260–72) emphasizes Paul's *prosōpopoeia* here. Stowers draws on the fragments of Origen's commentary on Romans. But he brushes aside Origen's principal point, that in the successive parts of the pericope Paul represents people standing in different relations to—and seemingly at different stages in—their own conversion (*Catena* frags. XLI–XLIII). See A. Ramsbotham, "The Commentary of Origen on the Epistle to the Romans. III," *JTS* 14 (1912): 15–16. How would the listeners have realized this, without further guidance from within the text? A sceptic might claim that Origen was simply forced to some such distinctions by the contradictions between some of the verses and Paul's autobiographical statements elsewhere (frag. XLVI init). For Jerome's use of Origen and for Rufinus' paraphrase, see Caroline

This composite figure is fictive, but not fictional; all of the components in the figure's ideas and ideals were familiar among the Romans; Paul just brought them together into a single and startling "I." This being (as Paul would have the addressees believe) the truth of every person, Paul appropriately defines himself in these terms no less than his addressees—the personal I within the "I." This "I" is shaped by allusion to Adam and Eve as made subject to the pre-existent law that was later codified in its transmission to and by Moses.

Paul's ostensible focus shifts chiastically in this central section. After the discussion of "us" through the letter Paul moves to an emphasis on "you" (plural, 6:12–7:4), then on "us" (7:5–6), then on "me" (7:7–25) and on "you" (singular, 8:1),[28] then moving outwards again to "us" (8:4) and to "you" (plural, 8:9–11) and then back to the usual "us" (8:12). At this central point his focus is on the individual "I"; but this "I" is also Adam, *adam*, all humanity, as realized under the Mosaic law. The moment of narrowest focus in the letter is also the moment of its widest reference. Paul speaks of the single self precisely by speaking in terms of Adam, of the first human and so all his heirs; and of all *adam* by speaking of the individual self.

Paul is not doing obscurely what we modern readers would expect him to do; he is doing clearly what we would not have foreseen. Paul creates in his letter a world of its own.[29] All the components of the I were familiar; and in their combination, so Paul would claim, lies the anthropological truth that those components, while still apart, did not reveal. Paul's technique respects both factions, and is already a tool for the harmony he is writing to restore.

P. Hammond Bammel, "Origen's Exposition of Romans VII," *JTS* 32 (1981): 67–72. Origen himself appears to have been slightly confused by the personae he saw adopted in Paul; in part because they were so unlike Paul himself—a dissonance which helped Origen to see that *prosōpopoeia* was involved.

28. σε, ℵ B F G; με, A D.

29. For ease of reference, I will hereafter write of this "I" as the I, the self, or the persona, generally without any further qualification or inverted commas. This figure remains the figure defined by the letter (and is not to be elided with any "self" of our modern conception).

The Growth of Self-Consciousness

Now we reach the vital development in the I's self-understanding. Paul's evocation of Eden and Sinai together is familiar; Rom 7 is resolving the crisis laid bare at 1:18–32. God gave Adam a rule (ἐνετείλατο, Gen 2:17, cf. ἐντολή, Rom 7:8); on the day that Adam broke it he would surely "die" (ἀποθανεῖσθε, Gen 2:17, cf. ἀπέθανον, Rom 7:10). But the serpent "deceived" Eve (ἠπάτησέν, Gen 3:13, cf. ἐξηπάτησέν, Rom 7:11); both she and Adam ate. Jewish exegesis by the time of Paul diagnosed desire, glossed as lust, as the root of sin.[30] The law, then, could be summed up in the tenth commandment,[31] which itself pertained above all to sexual desire (οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ πλησίον σου, Exod 20:17 LXX; cf. οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, Rom 7:7).[32] In Paul's evocation, the rule given to Adam is inseparable from the commandments given to Moses (ἐντολαί, cf. Rom 7:8).[33]

The first half of the monologue, 7:7–13, makes space for the voices of both factions: for a life envisioned without law; and for the (muted) praise of law. These voices merge in the monologue's second half, 7:14–25. Both of the imagined factions are represented and, in their fusion, transcended; their fusion will be the condition upon which the persona can come to the self-knowledge which the persona needs.

An emphatic argument here is too readily read as repetitive:

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30. *Apoc. Mos.* 19.3, *Apoc. Ab.* 24.10, James 1:15, *Vit. Ad.* 19. On the importance of sexual allusions here, see Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 149–56, and John Ziesler, "The Role of the Tenth Commandment in Romans 7," *JSNT* 33 (1988): 41–56.

31. Cf. 4 Macc 2:6. Ἐπιθυμία came to be used in particular of (1) wrongful and (2) sexual desire.

32. On the pre-existence of the law, see Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 33, 42–43; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans* (2 vols.; WBC; Dallas: Word, 1988), 1:379.

33. According to the speech ascribed to Paul's persona, either the commandment itself revealed that (long-familiar) desire was sinful (the apparent emphasis of 7:7); or the commandment stirred the desire (the apparent emphasis of 7:8); or, more probably, both. For an account of the origins of human sin, both readings may sound to our ears bathetic. But Paul is constrained by his material: the sequence of Adam and Moses expounded (with some difficulty) at 5:12–14. Paul will not focus here on the (awkward) period between Adam and Moses; rather, he brings together themes particular to each figure, and from these generates a composite persona.

> For we know that the law is filled with the spirit, but I am made of flesh, sold [like a slave] under sin. For what I am effecting, I do not know. For what I want—that's not what I do; but what I hate—that's what I do. And if what I don't want, that's what I do—then I say "Yes" to the Law, and agree that it is fine.[34] And now[35] it is no longer me effecting this, but the sin that lives in me. (7:14–17)

In this self-appraisal the I makes no mention of good or evil. It is the bare fact of the division that reveals a rival center of action in the persona, and so makes possible the distinction between the I and the I's sin. Our analysis of the passage must focus on the I's developing awareness, because any survey of static relations between the I, the mind, and sin will miss Paul's point.[36] He now further explores this realization. In this developing self-awareness is the heart of the subject's healing.

> For I know that the good does not live in me, I mean in my flesh. For to want it, that is close to hand, but to effect what is fine—that is not. For I don't do what I want, the good; but what I don't want, the bad—that is what I do. And if what I don't want, that's what I do—then it is no longer me that is effecting it, but the sin that lives in me. (7:18–20)

The self can now specify where the good and the evil lie; it can spot the conflict between mind and deed and so come to understand its own will. The self sees its own mind in action healed: here it is, analyzing, assessing

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34. F G bear witness to the difficulty of the passage: for ὅτι καλός, "that [the law] is fine," they read ὅτι καλόν ἐστιν, "that [what I do] is fine." They understand the "I" as doing the good that the corrupt "I" does not want to do.

35. Cf. νυνὶ δέ, 6:22, 7:6, introducing the contrast between past and present. At 7:17 a similarly dramatic change is marked; although the resolution of the paragraph is reached only at 8:1: οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν. It is characteristic of Paul's argument that these emphatic transitions, νυνὶ δέ, refer at once to the events of the past and to the time at which Paul's audience, as they heard the letter, drew Paul's transformative inferences for themselves.

36. The point is missed when 7:19–20 are read as a repetition of 7:15b–17. Again, Dunn at 7:25 (averting the danger that Paul might be thought to conform to a Greek philosophical—rather than a Judaeo-Christian eschatological—anthropology of the inner and outer person) argues that "in the search for synonyms to provide rhetorical variation in this quite lengthy treatment, 'mind' was an obvious variation on the more careful statements about the divided 'I' in vv. 14–21." Dunn's commentary is invaluable, but I would argue that he here misses the role of the νοῦς and so the point of 7:7–25; the purpose and function of the letter then slip from view.

and deciding. Intellect and will are no longer blocking the subject's knowledge of God. There is no delusion here, as there was at 6:1 and 6:15; just an incapacity. The mind is learning a new lesson: the lesson of its own limitations. It is discovering the power within the self over which the mind itself is powerless: the *flesh*. The self-consciousness to which the self has come is not enough. There remains an opposing center of action that leaves powerless this newly healed and knowing νοῦς. The self can see for itself the death about which Paul has been speaking. But it can see no escape. The mind is now doing all it can, and it is not enough. The self is watching its own death from the power of sin.

> For I share the delight in the law of God, in my inner person; but I see another law in my limbs, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner in the law of sin which is in my limbs. What a wretch I am! Who will rescue me from the body of this death?—But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!—So then: I myself in my mind am a slave to the law of God, but in my flesh to the law of sin. (7:22–25)

The self seems destined for yet another death. So Paul has set up the conditions for his final movement: only with the spirit will the self find life.

Adam has come to his knowledge of good and evil. This time the knowledge, agonizing though it is, brings the self towards healing. The death that Adam shall surely die (Gen 2:17) will be averted.[37]

"Now There Is No Condemnation…"

We move from a downward spiral at the letter's start to an upward spiral at its end. In the letter's first half Paul had constructed for his listeners a mirror image of the state to which he hoped to bring them in the second. The elevated style of Rom 8 is not decorative. It is integral to Paul's agenda to have the addressees undergo, afresh and effectively—as they heard the letter—their own passage from the body of this death to the realm of the spirit. This is more than a re-evocation of the past experience of transfer from one condition to the other. Indeed, to describe Paul's aim, we need some such term as the "re-presentation" or "re-instantiation" of the

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37. For a narrative informed by a similar inversion of the command in Gen 2:19 and of its consequences, see Luke 24:28–48. The two disciples at Emmaus are told (not forbidden) to eat, and their eyes are opened (to recognize Jesus, and not to shame).

transfer. Not that Paul was naïve. Within a few lines he warns: "You are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if indeed the spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, they are not his" (Rom 8:9). Five times in as many sentences Paul challenges his listeners, with a conditional, to ask if they have really made the move he has sought to stir in them.

First the Romans had undergone baptism itself. Then, in the letter's reception, they underwent Paul's evocation of baptism in the two stages offered by 6:1–7:25 (baptism without the spirit) and 8:1–11 (the endowment of the spirit).[38] We will then want to clarify what comprised for Paul a successful re-instantiation of this transfer on the first and then on subsequent hearings; in other words, what would constitute the letter's *success*. We have one further motif to visit, which will offer an ostensive answer to this question from within the text itself. Paul had reminded his listeners of the old Adam in 1:18–27, 5:12–14, 7:7–13. I have argued elsewhere that Paul's thought is informed by his study and contemplation of "the likeness of the appearance of *adam*" on the throne-chariot of God (Ezek 1:26). Paul's conversion was the recognition that this figure was Jesus, the new Adam, who now in the last times displayed the glory that Adam had lost at the fall.[39] Rabbinic traditions (whose origins are notoriously hard to date) and others would describe Adam's figure—in particular his face—before the fall as shining with a glory reminiscent of God's own.[40] This

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38. The effect of the text was not confined to the particular effect of the text's first reception, which would never be repeated. We should bear in mind the re-presentation of this sequence in the successive rehearings of the text.

39. Griffith-Jones, *Paul*, 15–104. John Bowker ("'Merkabah' Visions and the Visions of Paul," *JSS* 16 [1971]: 157–73) emphasized the parallels between Paul's Damascus-road experience as relayed in Acts and the accounts of *merkavah* visions. We need, for our purposes, only a weaker link: Paul's sustained reflection on the chariot-throne, its occupant, and its setting. For a recent assessment of visionary experiences and the rapid emergence of a high Christology, with a survey of other scholars' work, see Andrew Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?" *Early Christianity* 2.1 (2011): 47–49.

40. Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (7 vols; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 1:60, 79–80, 85–86, and notes at 5:80, 102–3, 112–13; Jacob Jervell, *Imago Dei* (Göttingen; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) 100–107 (rabbis); Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 26–27 (apocrypha), 48–49 (rabbis); cf. Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 72–83 (Sirach 50), 92–103 (4Q504, 506; 1QS4.22–3).

glory was lost to humanity at the fall and would be recovered by Adam's descendents only when God restored his whole creation to a last perfection which would match its first.[41]

Paul himself had been transformed by this sight and recognition of Jesus,[42] and he sought to transform his converts not by the sight of the throne, to which they had no access, but by the gospel which he himself— the visible, human Paul—embodied as the re-presentation, in his own person, of Christ. To sense this relationship in which Paul believed himself to stand with Christ, we must recover the meaning of Gal 1:16: "It pleased God to unveil his son in me."[43]

Such a glimpse of heavenly glory and the attendant transformation were in general reserved for the righteous dead. It was sufficiently startling to confront a Paul irradiated (as Paul himself believed) with the glory he had seen. Ordinary converts, with no prospect of a heavenly ascent, could also hope to absorb from him and to reflect in their turn, before their death, a small part of that glory: for "all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death and have been buried together with him" (Rom 6:4). The baptized were already living, pre-mortem, a life of post-mortem blessings; they were offered, in this life, the first movement from glory into glory.

In this light we can see more clearly Adam's significance in the letter. Paul acknowledges the glory for which the Romans hoped (2:7, 5:2). They will share in Christ's inheritance if they share in his suffering so that they might share too in the glory with which he has been glorified (8:17; cf. the suffering of 5:3). Glory is going to be revealed to believers (8:18). But further, the whole of creation is groaning with the birth pangs of a new order in which the emptiness of the old Adam's failed dominion shall be replaced by the dominion of the new Adam, and all creation shall be freed

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41. Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (2nd rev. ed.; WUNT 2/4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984), 189.

42. See Griffith-Jones, *Paul*, passim. On the seer's transformation by the sight of the *merkavah*, see for example Alan F. Segal, *Paul the Convert* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 34–71, Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition," *JJS* 43 (1992): 1–31.

43. Not "to me" or "in my heart," but—as a listener would most naturally understand the phrase on hearing it—"in me, this person Paul." For a full account see Griffith-Jones, "Turning to the Lord."

into the freedom of the glory of the children of God (8:21–22). Those who had been envisioned in a wedlock that bore fruit to death (7:5) are now present at the birth pangs of the new creation (8:22).[44]

With Romans Paul was trying to do in a letter—and so must spell out—what he would normally try to do in and through his own personal presence. The letter is especially valuable not as a systematic statement of Paul's teaching but as a record of his ambitions for his own transformational therapy.

The Results

Only and precisely at the letter's end, as Paul planned it, could Paul's listeners take on his command: "Stop your conformity to the present age. Keep up your transformation within the renewal of your mind, so that you might reckon aright what is the will of God: what is good and well-pleasing and perfect" (12:2). Once more Paul invokes the mind, as at the letter's start but, this time, healed. If Paul has been successful, the communities that had been collapsing into bitterness could now recover the life to which they were called: as a single body of many limbs. The Gentiles among Paul's audience had found their identity within a new ancestry as children of Adam informed by the law of Moses, whose weakness was made good by Christ. As fellow-heirs with Christ (8:17), they had a new identity as comprehensive and as robust as the identity they had once had in their ancestral communities under the care of their ancestral gods.

We will want to enter a note of caution here. Any teacher might seek to engender a moral amendment and might use "transformation" to speak of it.[45] We are entitled, then, to ask what result would plausibly be described

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44. The sight of God's glory was associated with the Paradise that was the heavenly counterpart of Jerusalem's Edenic Holy of Holies. It is no coincidence that Jesus is described as a mercy-seat (3:25) and a stone in Zion (9:33), whose messengers proclaim salvation to Zion (10:15, the setting of Isa 52:7). Paul's addressees are to be the sacrifice in this new temple (12:1).

45. For example Seneca: "I feel that I am being not only reformed but transfigured. I do not yet, however, assure myself or indulge the hope that there are no elements left in me which need to be changed. Of course there are many that should be curtailed, reduced or removed. And indeed this very fact is proof of a spirit that has been altered into something better: the fact that it sees its own faults, of which until now it has been ignorant. Some sick men are to be congratulated since they themselves perceive that they are sick" (*Ep.* 6.1). Seneca promises his correspondent Lucilius to

as such a transformation, and to ask what Paul would have felt himself able to describe, to the letter's listeners themselves, as the transformation of those listeners, effected by and during his letter's reception. An answer again lies within the text. The addressees were now to be ready to hear Paul's guidance for the healing of the body of Christ of which they were members. Paul has already distinguished between the φρόνημα of the flesh and of the spirit (8:6, 7, 27). Now he returns to the latter. The addressees (12:3) are not to think too highly of themselves (ὑπερφρονεῖν) but to think reasonably (σωφρονεῖν). They must not think (φρονεῖν) haughtily, nor be clever (φρόνιμος) in their own eyes (11:20; 12:16). The command at Rom 14:5–6 shows how closely Paul linked the healed νοῦς with the proper use of φρόνησις: ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ νοῒ πληροφορείσθω. Ὁ φρονῶν τὴν ἡμέραν κυρίῳ φρονεῖ. Paul envisions—or hopes for—unity restored (15:5–6, φρονεῖν).

Paul's warnings in Rom 8 were purposeful. There was a danger that the Romans would still be subject to the errors from which he had tried to free them. He is still issuing such warnings at 13:8–13. We may suspect that Paul himself, at the end of his therapeutic endeavor, was not confident of his success.

The Study of Paul: Tools and Aims

This paper has raised more questions than it has answered. There is work to be done especially on the definition and character of possible "transformation," communal and individual. There is work to be done too on processes: on the role (in our terms) of memory, imagination, self-definition and identity in the ancient reception of such a text. Anthropologists of religion have recently distinguished between imagistic and doctrinal modes of religiosity. The imagistic mode is characterized by dramatic but infrequent ritual events, generally in small and non-hierarchical communities. The doctrinal mode can normally be associated with larger, more hierarchical communities.[46] "Christianity is typical of the doctrinal mode, involving

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send him some improving books (with the best passages marked!). But most effective of all instruction is the living voice and shared life of those whose example Lucilius should follow. Such improvement is central to Seneca's aims. "Those who have learnt and understood what they should do and avoid are not wise until their mind is transfigured into those things that they have learnt" (*Ep*. 94.48). He exclaims to Lucilius, "You are my work of art!" (*Ep*. 34.2).

46. Harvey Whitehouse, *Arguments and Icons: Divergent Modes of Religiosity*

regular rituals repeated week-by-week or day-by-day throughout the year. Christian services involve low levels of arousal … but they also offer clear verbal explanations of what they are about, and through them worshippers acquire an authorized account of the nature of the divine and their relationship to it."[47] In the west Christianity became a doctrinal religion, but we should not assume that it began as one. As exegetes we readily think of Paul's listeners as learning from Romans. Here I have been arguing that we begin to do better justice to the letter when we think of the listeners as *undergoing* it. Our results are as ever shaped by our predispositions. Thus this paper remains to its end a reflection as much on contemporary scholarly method as on Paul's own.

Only when we survey Romans from this viewpoint and with the corresponding expectations and questions in mind will we recognize the overall shape and the detailed maneuvers of Paul's attempt to transform his addressees within the renewal of their mind.

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 147–59. Whitehouse unsurprisingly sees missionaries as well equipped to spread religion of a "doctrinal" mode in which revelations are codified as a body of doctrines.

47. Hugh Bowden, *Mystery Cults in the Ancient World* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 16.

"In Christ" and "Christ in" as Expressions of Religious Experience: Testing the Waters in Galatians

Rollin A. Ramsaran

The phrase "in Christ" and various similar constructions have been examined with regard to "participation"[1] or "mystical union."[2] Interest remains strong in clarifying this concept both in terms of revisiting previous work and in positing new directions. On the one hand, the work of Adolf Deissmann and Albert Schweitzer continues to warrant reconsideration, as evidenced by recent studies.[3] On the other hand, new models and new ways of conceiving religious experience warrant a reconsideration of "in Christ" language as well.[4]

Just as certain shifting social, philosophical, and cultural factors caused the ideas of "religious experience" and "mysticism" in the work of Deissmann and Schweitzer to be considered suspect,[5] so now, it would

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1. See James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 396–408, for an extensive discussion of texts covering, among others: "in Christ," "in the Lord," 'with Christ," "into Christ," "through Christ," and "of Christ."

2. The catalysts for "mystical union" views are the works of Wilhelm Bousset, Albert Schweitzer, and Adolf Deissmann. See Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 390–96.

3. On Deissmann, see the engaging essay by Jan de Villiers, "Adolf Deissmann: A Reappraisal of His Work" in *Paul and His Theology* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 391–422. On Schweitzer, see Jouette M. Bassler, *Navigating Paul: An Introduction to Key Theological Concepts* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 35–47, esp. 35–37.

4. Bassler, *Navigating Paul*, 43–46.

5. See Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "The Construction of Religious Experience in Paul," in *Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (vol. 1 of *Experientia*; ed. Frances Flannery et al.; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 147–50; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 392–93.

appear, a new perception of social, philosophical, and cultural factors has provided again an openness to considering the wholeness, necessity, and prominent place of religious experience in human life. The so-called postmodern climate—in reaction to the Enlightenment and "modern" contexts—emphasizes, among other things, the human being as an integrated person for whom experience is a proper and necessary way of knowing. New Testament studies have participated in this cultural shift, and more studies on religious experience in Paul's letters have come about in the recent past than are otherwise generally noted.[6] For example, in a chapter titled, "In Christ: Mystical Reality or Mere Metaphor?" Jouette Bassler sums up the growing popularity of the theme of participation or inclusion:

> There has been a shift in terminology: the language of "mysticism," deemed by many to be confusing or discomfiting, is often replaced by references to "participation" or, less frequently, "interchange." And debate continues, even among those who accept the reality of Paul's language of participation, over what this participation actually means…. John Ashton has, I think, put his finger on the problem: "Paul [was] a real mystic" and the issue is "a matter of visionary insight rather than logical thought." This suggests that only another mystic can grasp the "category of reality" of which Paul speaks, and mystical scholars are few and far between. Yet whatever the language used and whatever the level of insight into the nature of the reality, more and more scholars of a nonmystical bent are acknowledging that some form of *real* union with Christ was important, even central, to Paul's experience and thought.[7]

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6. Alan Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Klaus Berger, *Identity and Experience in the New Testament* (trans. Charles Muenchow; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); Luke T. Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); John Ashton, *The Religion of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Gilbert I. Bond, *Paul and the Religious Experience of Reconciliation: Diasporic Community and Creole Consciousness* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005); and Colleen Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy: The Neurobiology of the Apostle's Life and Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

7. Bassler, *Navigating Paul*, 37.

This "recent" shift to participation actually began with the 1977 work of E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.[8] Sanders, in appreciation for and critique of Schweitzer, perceived participation as an interconnection of being in Christ and the inner presence of the Spirit, leading to the ethical life.[9]

Paul had "religious experiences" and that fact has been creatively discussed within the work of the SBL Section on Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Early Christianity.[10] All religious experience is certainly interpreted; therefore one must contend with the ways/forms/patterns in which that religious experience is communicated as interpretation. Paul interprets and brings to mind the religious experience of members of his believing communities as well as his own. Religious experience is also a bridge of commonality—part of a developing worldview—between Paul and his converts. Therefore, our subject is *both* the religious experience of Paul *and* that of the members of his believing communities.

Setting a Context for "In Christ" *and* "Christ In"

The idea of "in Christ," including the significance of the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ ("in Christ"), has been debated over a long period of time. Albert Schweitzer proposed that "Christ mysticism [mystical union with Christ] is the centre of Paul's thought."[11] Adolf Deissmann preferred the term "Christ-intimacy":

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8. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 393, n. 19. Bassler (*Navigating Paul,* 37) also sees the perspective of Sanders anticipated earlier in the work of Ernst Käsemann.

9. E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 439–41.

10. Now published in *Inquiry into Religious Experience*: Troels Engberg-Pedersen (religious psychological "experience" in the inward person); Colleen Shantz (religious experience in the context of suffering); Bert Peerbolte (ascent/visionary experience); and John Miller (dreams/visions). Another area, possibly still yet untapped, is prayer. The recent work of Rodney Werline offers guidance in how to frame issues connected with prayer in terms of social visions; the making of appeal to the divine in individual and communal settings; and the experience of the divine as religious experience. See Rodney A. Werline, *Pray Like This: Understanding Prayer in the Bible* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 9–11, 162; regarding Paul, 142–58.

11. As quoted in Bassler, *Navigating Paul*, 35 from Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (New York: Henry Holt, 1931), 22.

Paul lives "in Christ," "in" the living and present spiritual Christ, who is about him on all sides, who fills him (Gal 2:20), who speaks to him (2 Cor 12:9), and who speaks in and through him (2 Cor 13:3); Christ is for Paul not a person of the past, with whom he can only come into contact by meditating on the words that have been handed down from him, not a "historical" personage, but a reality and power of the present, an "energy" (Phil 3:12; Col 1:29: Eph 1:19), whose life-giving powers are daily expressing themselves in him … and to whom, since that day at Damascus, he has felt a personal-cult dependence.[12]

Both Schweitzer and Deissmann recognized that (1) the ἐν Χριστῷ phrase needed to be interpreted in conjunction with other similar expressions and (2) the phrase "Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20) appears to be very important for a sense of reciprocal movement *from Christ to Paul*. Putting the two aspects together forms a dynamic upon which "mysticism" or "participation" can be posited:

"In Christ":   Paul ⟶ Christ
"Christ in me": Christ ⟶ Paul

Paul

↓ ↑

Christ
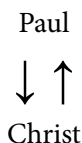
Subsequent research has followed this trajectory of Schweitzer and Deissmann with a number of adjustments/refinements along the way. Briefly summarized below are four such areas of adjustment.

First, what other words, phrases, and expressions find themselves in the same semantic field as "in Christ"? This question has been discussed in two recent studies: Dunn's *Theology of Paul* and Gorman's *Cruciformity*. In a comprehensive way, Dunn identifies (1) "in Christ" ("in Christ Jesus," "in the Lord," "in the Lord Jesus"); (2) "with Christ" ("with Jesus," forty "with" verbs used by Paul); (3) complementary formulations ("into Christ," the

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12. Villiers, "Adolf Deissmann," 406–7, referencing Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (2nd ed.; trans. William E. Wilson; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1926), 136.

"body of Christ," "through Christ," "of Christ").[13] Gorman connects "in Christ" with "'with' Christ, 'according to' Christ, and 'for' Christ."[14]

Second, ostensibly, Paul can employ the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ with more than one meaning depending on the context. Dunn suggests that ἐν Χριστῷ often aligns with σὺν Χριστῷ phrases pointing to the death/resurrection of Christ (the saving moment); at other times it aligns with διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ phrases that speak to how life is lived in the faith. It appears that the ἐν Χριστῷ phrase is shorthand for a variety of possibilities that, for precision, must be negotiated from context.[15] Gorman is more interested in the idea of "in Christ" rather than examining precisely the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ to formulate a stance.[16]

Third, there continues to be an interest in correlating the very similar ἐν Χριστῷ ("in Christ") and ἐν πνεύματι ("in the Spirit") phrases.[17] What distinguishes the two expressions from one another? Both phrases occur in the context of some of Paul's most important ideas, such as faith and righteousness.[18] How one should describe and define "Spirit" is another debate within New Testament studies. More and more, however, the idea of Spirit is spoken of as religious experience.[19] With the close identification of "in Christ" and "in the Spirit" and other similar expressions ("fellowship of the Son of God," "fellowship of the Spirit"),[20] speaking of religious experience in Paul is strengthened.

The idea of Spirit in Paul's writings also shares the "in Christ/ Christ in" combination diagrammed at the beginning of this section. Another key text in this regard is Rom 8:9–10. Bassler comments:

> Rom 8:9–10 seems to provide the most fruitful insights into Paul's meaning:

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13. Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 396–407.

14. Gorman, *Cruciformity,* 45–48.

15. Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 397–99.

16. Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 45–48.

17. Already apparent in Deissmann; see Villiers, "Adolf Deissmann," 406–7. Also Schweitzer, *Mysticism of Paul*, 167–69. See Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 407–8; Bassler, *Navigating Paul*, 38–39.

18. Villiers, "Adolf Deissman," 408.

19. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 408; 426–34; Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), xxi.

20. Villiers, "Adolf Deissman," 408.

> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of
> God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ
> does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is
> dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

In this passage Paul speaks interchangeably of the "Spirit of God," the
"Spirit of Christ," and "Christ" dwelling within the believer, and all of
these phrases seem to designate the same entity he refers to elsewhere
as the "Holy Spirit." Apparently Paul identified the Spirit that they
received upon their confession of faith (Gal 3:1–5) and that served as a
sign of their new status as children of God (Gal 4:4–6) as the Spirit of
the risen Christ. Indeed, he identified the two so closely that it made no
difference to him if he spoke of the Spirit of Christ or of Christ himself
dwelling within.[21]

Finally, uneasiness with the word "mysticism" has generated other descrip-
tors beyond "Christ mysticism": Christ-intimacy, participation, inter-
change, symbiosis, and interpenetration.[22]

Assessing the Background of Religious Experience in Galatians

In order to explore these terms and concepts and their relationship to
experience, we turn our attention to Paul's letter to the Galatians. This
focus is appropriate since two key participation texts are often noticed:
"[God] was pleased to reveal his son in/to me" (1:16); and "I have been
crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"
(2:20).[23] Likewise not to be overlooked is the sheer amount of interpreted
religious experience throughout Galatians. Furthermore, one should not
restrict this religious experience to Paul's unique personal experiences,
which are arguably few. A larger context—built on a descriptive founda-
tion of language modalities and shapes of religious experience[24]—might

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21. Bassler, *Navigating Paul*, 38; cf. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 407–8.

22. This is already apparent in Deissmann, who defines "Christ mysticism" but
chooses the term "Christ-intimacy." See Villiers, "Adolf Deissmann," 399–403. Bassler
(*Navigating Paul*, 37) names "participation" (from E. P. Sanders) and "interchange."
Gorman (*Cruciformity*, 38) notes "symbiosis" (from Joseph A. Fitzmyer) and "inter-
penetration" (from Ben Witherington III).

23. Translations are taken from the NRSV unless noted otherwise.

24. I use the terms "modalities" and "shapes" loosely as categories under which to
make description, rather than as highly defined technical terms. Modalities are Paul's
fluid common expressions—marked by semi-fixed syntactic structures. Shapes of reli-

greatly increase our understanding and interpretation of the more intrigu-ing passages. Specifically, one text, Gal 2:20, will occupy our attention.

Five Key Language Modalities for Religious Experience in Galatians

In what follows, the proposal of Troels Engberg-Pedersen will be inves-tigated: Interpreted religious experience "invokes (i) an 'I' (or at least an individual) *and* (ii) the 'interior' of the 'I' (or individual)."[25] What is tricky, of course, is how to see that "I" in either the singular "you" or more often the collective "you" of Paul's report on community members. A similar quandary surrounds detection of "interior" quality. People in antiquity thought of life as being engaged by divine forces. Therefore, most experi-ence was religious for them in one way or another. But given that there were places, events, rituals, and so forth that marked a more intense engagement with the divine, maybe that is what we have our sights set on with the term "religious experience." Possibly religious experience may need to be broader than the "interior 'I,'" but we will start there for now.

In the letter to the Galatians, one finds language usage that clusters around certain thematic centers. The intensity of the language or its repeti-tion produces an expressive modality that indicates importance for Paul. The following language modalities point to "inner" religious experience.[26]

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gious experience seem to be concrete descriptions of moments that warrant recur-rence as ongoing religious experience. Verbal action becomes nominalized (marked by a noun): revealing language becomes "revelation"; being crucified becomes "cru-cifixion"; telling one's story becomes "one's story" to be reflected upon, and so forth.

25. Engberg-Pedersen, "Construction of Religious Experience," 151.

26. There are other modalities that might qualify: being circumcised, practicing the law, regulating eating together, and social relationships such as love or friend-ship, among other possibilities. In addition, two other modalities remain important for another time: "faith" language and "freedom" language as related to religious expe-rience. Regarding the description and function of "faith" language in relation to reli-gious experience, see as a start, David M. Hay, "Paul's Understanding of Faith as Par-ticipation" in *Paul and His Theology* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 45–76. Another large area is examining Paul's "freedom" language in light of his engagement with moralist paradigms. My work in this area has only engaged 1 Corinthians. See Rollin A. Ramsaran, *Liberating Words: Paul's Use of Rhetorical Maxims in 1 Corinthi-ans 1–10* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1996). For Galatians, see the hints provided in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Stoicism in the Apostle Paul: A Philo-

1. Reveal Language

Paul shares the idiom of early Christian and Second Temple apocalyptic documents in their concern to articulate apocalyptic wisdom, namely, the revealed knowledge of God's ongoing purposes given over to the people of God to guide their course. In one case this is an inner experience of the Apostle Paul, who finds himself to be a significant part of God's purposes to include the Gentiles within the covenant people of God: "[God] was pleased to reveal his son in (ἐν)[27] me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles" (Gal 1:16). If Paul is here referring to the appearance of Christ that marked his call/conversion, then he may not expect this type of religious experience to continue to occur among his followers (see 1 Cor 15:8: "Last of all … he appeared to me").

But in a second case of the reveal-language modality in Gal 3:23–29, Paul expects a transformative religious experience to be present, not only in himself, but also among his followers. When a timely additional path of "faithfulness" (with respect to Christ) was revealed to the Galatians ("until faith should be revealed," 3:23), the consequences in vv. 25–29 indicate that among this group of differentiated individuals an experience of inner identity transformation occurred ("there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male and female"). In the larger textual context, this "faith coming" in 3:23–29 connects directly to the Galatians' "coming-to-faith" experience in 3:2–5.

2. Crucifixion Language

Paul uses crucifixion language both literally of Christ's death by crucifixion (explicitly, 2:20–21; 3:1; and by inference, 1:4; 3:13) and metaphorically as a means to describe the believer's death[28] within the inner person (the "I")—with this inner person living again with Christ "in" and operative within the inner person ("it is no longer I who live, but Christ who

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sophical Reading," in *Stoicism: Traditions and Transformations* (ed. Steven K. Strange and Jack Zupko; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 52–75, esp. 60–61.

27. The Greek preposition's lexical value can translate variously as: "in," "among," "on," "at," "to/into," and "with." Among interpreters, the two prominent choices are "in" and "to." Here the choice is "in."

28. Below I argue that in Paul's mind Gal 2:20 refers not only to Paul's religious experience but also to the religious experience of every believer.

lives in me; and the life I now live," 2:20). Important here is to see how the believer's "path," by identification, follows Christ's death and life again.

It is characteristic of Paul sometimes to speak of death and resurrection in the same breath (Rom 1:4; 6:4; 1 Cor 11:26; 15:3; 2 Cor 5:15; Gal 1:1; Phil 3:10; 1 Thess 1:10). Crucifixion language then has the potential to push connections with the language of "life," indeed, "transformed life." In Galatians, among possible examples, one notices connections with the "Spirit" at 6:8 ("from the Spirit reap eternal life") and the idea of "new creation" at 6:15 (cf. Rom 6:23; 8:11; 1 Cor 15:21; 2 Cor 4:11; 5:17; Phil 3:12).

3. "In Christ" Language

This is a longstanding agenda item for New Testament studies, which is evidenced in all of Paul's letters. In Galatians it appears at 2:4 ("in Christ Jesus"), 2:17 ("in Christ"), 3:14 ("in Christ Jesus"), 3:26 ("in Christ Jesus"), and 5:6 ("in Christ Jesus"). This list does not include the genitive constructions (which produce the "faith in"/"faith of" issue) and other non-ἐν constructions. Most, if not all, of the above-mentioned instances appear to point to a believer's mental assent to the gospel story framed around Christ (i.e., a social experience shared among members). These are not excluded from "religious experience" per se, but we are looking for more precision. Keeping both "inner experience" and social experience in mind is appropriate; however, Paul himself finds it necessary to relate to the full range of a human being's inner response when recalling the Galatians' conversion experience (Gal 3:1–5, discussed below). It is important to note further that the Gal 2:20 text ("*Christ* who *lives in* me" often becomes the frame from which to view all the other so-called "*in Christ*" texts. This is not helpful.[29]

4. Belonging Language

A believer's identity is embedded in Christ. Thus Paul's "lordship" language sets a context for his use of belonging language: "our Lord Jesus

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29. When "in Christ" is explored in all of Paul's indisputable letters, the "Christ in" Gal 2:20 text (with the similar Rom 8:10 and 2 Cor 13:5 texts) often becomes the frame from which to evaluate all the other texts as well. Again, is that really helpful in looking carefully at the variety of texts, syntactical constructions, and contexts that surround "in Christ" and "Christ in"?

Christ" (1:3), and Paul as a "slave of Christ"[30] (1:10; also, 6:14, 18).[31] This is the category where at least one of the two εἰς Χριστὸν ("into Christ") phrases fits: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (3:27). The link with belonging language is evident as this section concludes in 3:29 ("and if you are Christ's," εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ). With simplicity, Paul expresses the "belonging" relationship of believers to Christ in 5:24 ("And those who belong to Christ Jesus," οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ). The larger context of 5:24 (Gal 5–6) indicates that "belonging" language fits easily alongside "Spirit" language in Paul's thought (see the next section).

The value of belonging language, especially "into Christ," is not easy to evaluate with regard to inner religious experience. Does moving "into Christ" constitute the movement into the community of believers with baptism as a marker of inclusion? Or might the movement "into Christ" be the reverse of "Christ lives in me"—in a sense that Paul does not explore fully in Galatians, but elsewhere as the "body of Christ"?[32]

5. Spirit Language

The "coming-to-faith" or conversion of believers is spoken of by Paul in terms of experience (ἐπάθετε, 3:4, from πάσχω[33]). This conversion experience is marked by the reception of the Spirit in response to faith. When

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30. This is a positive metaphorical usage of δοῦλος that is not reflected again in the letter until 5:13. In between its use turns decidedly negative as seen in the allegory of Sarah and Hagar.

31. These references represent a positive metaphorical usage of δοῦλος that is not reflected again in the letter until 5:13. In between, its use turns decidedly negative, as seen in the allegory of Sarah and Hagar.

32. This perspective was already suggested by Schweitzer. See Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 392, 408–10; Bassler, *Navigating Paul*, 39–41. Also now see the extensive study of Paul's use of "the body of Christ" through the background of a Stoic conception of the universe as body, infused with πνεῦμα ("spirit") and λόγος ("reason"), in Michelle V. Lee, *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ* (SNTSMS 137; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

33. The verb πάσχω is used here in the less expected neutral sense of "experience" rather than the more common sense of "suffer" (with respect to bad things). See the full discussion in Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920), 149–51. Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993), 156–57.

Paul speaks of the reception of the Spirit in terms of "having begun,"[34] we find Paul arguing that the circumstances of one's conversion experience remain constant. Even more, the circumstances from which one began are adequate and may remain the same.[35] Galatians 3:1–5, then, sets up the context for the Spirit's activity and role in Gal 5–6 (also Gal 4 under the surface; see 4:29). Spirit language is notable throughout (4:29; 5:5, 16, 17, 18, 22, 25; 6:8).[36]

Six Key Shapes of Religious Experience

In some cases what Paul has to say about the believer's experience through certain modalities crystallizes or reifies into a more concrete shape. This is a difficult category to describe, and despite the loose association and clear overlap with the modalities above, these shapes have *the expectation of a marked recurrence* in the experience of believers. As such, we begin to see here social and ethical extensions among the corporate body of believers that are based on their inward, shared, and subjective religious experience.[37] The following are moments of religious experience that form a shape that can be described in concrete terms.

1. Revelation

In two places Paul speaks not only of God revealing God's plan and purposes for the covenant people of God, but of the details of such plans in concise terms (Paul's gospel, 1:12) or a part of such plans (Paul's return to Jerusalem, 2:2). In the first instance, Paul is adamant that there is

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34. Gal 3:3b: "Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending in the flesh?" Paul's point, of course, is that what happened at the beginning forms the true trajectory for continuance—namely, life lived in the Spirit's power without any *later* suggestions of added elements such as circumcision.

35. A similar argument is made by Paul for the adequacy and location of one's coming-to-faith experience in 1 Cor 1:26–31: "For consider your call, brothers and sisters, not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many of noble birth, but God chose what is foolish … weak … low and despised … things that are not…." For details, see Ramsaran, *Liberating Words*, 32–33.

36. See Rollin A. Ramsaran, "Maxims in Paul," in *Paul in His Greco-Roman World* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 429–56.

37. This perspective was already noted by Schweitzer (*Mysticism of Paul*, 165–69, 297–310).

no human mediation to this "revelation." It is an inward prompting of the knowledge of God's purposes to Paul alone. If this first instance, an unmediated revelation, is to be in any way equated with Paul's call/conversion experience as "appearance," then Paul would consider the early appearances of the living Lord to some believers and apostles as a type of religious experience that has concluded (1 Cor 15:8: "Last of all … he appeared also to me").

In the second instance, Gal 2:2, we cannot be sure whether or not revelation is mediated by another person. Since we know from other places that this religious experience (i.e., reception of a revelation) is common to prophetic believers, revelation is possible along the lines indicated in Acts 21:10–12 (Agabus, a prophet from Judea, passing on revelation to Paul—in this case, a message not to go to Jerusalem).

2. CRUCIFIXION

Again reflecting on the literal "cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," Paul metaphorically expresses a more concrete state or stance with regard to the believer's "crucifixion": "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world" (6:14). Paul has moved beyond the process of experiencing Christ's presence through crucifixion (2:20) to how that transformed state alters his perception of relating to the cosmos—that is, not allowing the world's standards and values to dictate his direction and practices. The larger context of this transformed state is moral: "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have *crucified* the flesh with its passions and desires" (5:24). In the context of chapter 5 the connection between the Spirit's power/presence and the power of the flesh is notable.

3. STORY PORTRAYAL

In trying to convince the Galatians that they should stay the course with regard to their conversion without further additions such as circumcision or law practices (as suggested by outside teachers[38]), Paul argues that what was sufficient at the beginning is sufficient for the distance. He sketches

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38. To use the more neutral designation for "Christian-Jewish evangelists" suggested by J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 18.

out their coming-to-faith-story in Gal 3:1–5 as a story based on the recital of their full experience. It is a concrete reality to which he can appeal as a shared memory of conversion experience: proclamation of Christ crucified in vivid terms; a response of faith by believers; reception of divine power (Spirit); further manifestations of divine power (Spirit); powerful acts (δυνάμεις).[39]

4. Spirit's Presence

Paul's discourse not only speaks of the Spirit, but also articulates a shape of religious experience in the Spirit that is manifest through the moral life of believers. This presents an interesting dynamic across the undisputed Pauline corpus—the Spirit guides a common life ("the body of Christ") through given gifts, inward dispositions, and actions of individual community members (cf. Rom 8:1–27; 12:1–21; 1 Cor 12–14; 2 Cor 3:4–18; Phil 2:1–11; 4:4–9; 1 Thess 5:12–22).

In Galatians, Paul also thinks of the Spirit's presence as an ongoing divine infusion ("Did you receive the Spirit," 3:2). One key issue in Galatians is, in the absence of "the law" (νόμος), what will be the foundation for the moral life? ("faith working through love," 5:6). Paul's answer is the Spirit's leading presence and faith's response to it: "For through the Spirit, by faith" (5:5); "Walk by the Spirit" (5:16); etc.[40] While Paul usually writes in the plural second person or plural first person in Galatians, in Gal 6:3–6 and then again in 6:7b–8 he slips into addressing the individual directly. In the second instance, the direction of the "individual" concerns the Spirit's presence ("he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap," 6:8b). Inner dispositions ("the fruit of the Spirit"; 5:22–24) and outward actions (5:25–26), prompted by the Spirit, form a structure of the moral life for individuals in the community.[41]

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39. If ritual ἀνάμνησις ("remembrance") were consistent across the Pauline communities, then this "story portrayal" might be connected or compared with the Lord's supper tradition in 1 Cor 11: 17–34, particularly the phrase "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (11:26).

40. Ramsaran, "Maxims in Paul," 440–46.

41. This way of putting the Spirit's presence works equally well with the idea of "s/Spirit" as (1) simply divine power or (2) the intriguing view that Paul's explanation of "Spirit" and "flesh/desire" is relating to the Stoic system of right thinking built on a πνεῦμα ("spirit")—carried Reason unaffected by παθός ("desire")—the human individual's proper response of ἀπάθεια ("without passion/desire"). For the latter view,

5. Baptism

Again, if conversion is to be seen as a religious experience, then in Gal 3:27–28 baptism is pictured squarely in the middle of a transformative experience. A presence of change within the human being is apparent in the descriptions "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female." Further, and decisively, there is a union in some manner with Christ ("put on Christ" = "have clothed yourselves," 3:27).

6. The "Abba Cry" and "Being Known by God"

The presence of the Spirit produces a characteristic "inward" experience and response in the heart of believers —the cry, "Abba Father" (Gal 4:6). Paul pictures this as a relational experience, that of sonship. It would appear that by referencing the "Abba Father," Paul is not simply making a "logical" argument with terms like "slave," "son," and "heir." His argument appeals to the emotional aspect of a son-father relationship while referencing the divine presence of the Spirit. The larger context (Gal 4:1–11) contrasts the prior religious experience of these believers ("slaves to elemental spirits of the universe," 4:3, cf. 4:9) with a present relational religious experience: sonship through the Spirit to the Father God.

Paul's rhetorical correction in 4:9, "Now that you have come to know God, *or rather to be known by God*," is an emphatic declaration of relational religious experience. This appears either to be restatement, elaboration, or extension of the "Abba Cry" above. Possibly, "being known by God" is perceived in the Spirit's presence, as in 4:6.

In sum, this section has shown that Paul uses key language modalities to reference religious experience and, furthermore, that the text of Galatians contains recurrent concrete shapes of religious experience relative both to Paul and to members of his believing community in Galatia. This religious experience shares conversion to a transformed inner state, the ongoing experience of divine power (Spirit), shared memory alongside ritual practices, perception of the divine purposes being revealed to leaders or the community as a whole, and the perception of divine presence on

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see Engberg-Pedersen, "Stoicism in the Apostle Paul," 64–73. And now compare Lee, *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ,* 48–58, 69–83.

the "inside" ("Abba cry"; "known by God"). We now turn to look at divine interiority a bit more closely.

Galatians 2:20

It is fair to say that Bousset, Schweitzer, and Deissmann identified variations of "Christ mysticism" (the inner human mingling with the divine) that have been threatening to more modern sensibilities. But the idea of union or participation with Christ has not left scholarship, and possibly, now again, we are settling on some such description of "interior religious experience." Further, it may be fair to say their views *might* have gone away, if not for a few key texts about "Christ in": Gal 1:16; 2:20; Rom 8:10 (all three quoted above).[42] Hence, it seems appropriate to look at one of those texts, Gal 2:20, more closely.

> I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God [alt. "by the faith of the Son of God"[43]], who loved me and gave himself for me. (2:19c–20, NRSV)

The sense of interiority within this verse is striking, as is the sense of transformation. The "I" has died ("been crucified"), but it returns transformed ("the life I now live") on a different footing ("live by faith"). What now drives and gives life to the "I" is taking on "the pattern of Christ."

Four brief arguments support that claim. First, in Gal 2:20, Paul is lining his life up with Christ's story of death-life. This fits Paul's *imitatio* theme elsewhere ("as I am an imitator of Christ," 1 Cor 11:1). One might compare Paul's similar argument in Philippians: "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil 1:21, RSV).[44] Paul can apply the same argument

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42. Note also 2 Cor 13:5: "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that *Jesus Christ is in you?*—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" And Gal 4:19 is often overlooked: "My little children, with whom I am again in travail until *Christ be formed in you*!" (italics added).

43. I agree with this alternate translation, but this is not central to the argument here.

44. Rollin A. Ramsaran, "Living and Dying, Living is Dying (Phil 1:21): Paul's Maxim and Exemplary Argumentation in Philippians," in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference* (Emory Studies in Early Christi-

to the resurrection of the believer in 1 Cor 15: it is based on the pattern of Christ's resurrection.

Second, as the "faith in Christ" versus "faithfulness of Christ" debate continues, there is growing recognition of some middle ground.[45] The believer's faith is somehow patterned on that of Christ's own faithfulness. This is of course based on Paul's interpretation of Christ's death-resurrection event. If this pattern of Christ's faithfulness is most fully articulated in the exhortation of Phil 2:1–11 (Christ's giving of himself for the sake of others),[46] then this pattern of faithfulness is fully recognizable at the end of Gal 2:20 in that Christ gave himself for Paul.

Third, it is characteristic at times for Paul to make close identification between people or entities, to the point that it strains the retention of identity itself, as we see in our text: "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). A prime example is 2 Cor 3:17–18: "Now the Lord *is* the Spirit … from the Lord *who is* the Spirit." The same is true with Paul's identification with co-workers: In Phil 2:20, Paul states that he has no one else but Timothy who is "the same self" (ἰσόψυχον) as he himself is. With reference to Titus, Paul states in 2 Cor 12:18: "Did we not act (literally, "walk," περιεπατήσαμεν) in the same spirit. Did we not [walk] the same steps?" When Paul expresses himself this way, it is to show that he and someone else are focused together with respect to agency and action (action in all realms including thinking).The agency of Timothy is characteristic of Paul. The pattern of Titus's steps is indistinguishable from Paul's own. Where the Spirit of the Lord is at work (agency) in the believer, the ongoing transformative action (pattern) is characteristic of the Lord (2 Cor 3:17–18—"into his likeness").

Finally, Paul is crucified with Christ to the standards and values of the world ("I am crucified to the world and the world is crucified to me," Gal 6:14), presumably to live transformed as "Christ lives in me." Christ directs Paul's formation and values.

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anity; ed. A. Eriksson, T. H. Olbricht, and Walter Übelacker; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2002), 325–38.

45. Hay, "Paul's Understanding of Faith as Participation," 68–75.

46. This is the approach of Gorman (*Cruciformity,* 39–49).

Galatians 2:20 and Religious Experience

The previous argument fits a "participation" model for this verse. Christ as Lord[47] (see "belonging language" above) guides and directs Paul in his pattern of life. So we might be tempted to say that a position based on mysticism is not required. Along with others following and reacting against the perspectives of Schweitzer and Deissmann, we also might wish to avoid using labels such as "mystical," "emotional," or "experiential." However, in light of recent scholarship, maintaining such a stance seems like a goal from a previous time and place. Based on the argument presented above, I stand committed to this participation perspective for Gal 2:20, but because of larger contextual factors this commitment remains partial[48] and not complete.

Based on the observations above, it seems that Paul does not take a strictly propositional approach in the letter to the Galatians. He articulates his life and the life of believers in terms of experience. He appeals to Gal 2:20 in arguing for crucifixion and "in Christ" language modalities and for the shape of crucifixion as religious experience. In addition to this specific verse (2:20), we find a significant number of other observations in Galatians about religious experience.

Galatians 2:20 ends with a strong relational, emotional element[49]: "I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." This ending engages three semantic fields with strong relational qualities—faith, love, and loyalty. Paul has experienced an emotional bond with Christ that is motivating. Is Paul attempting to draw a connection between the love of Christ and the motivation and ability for love among the believers ("faith working through love"; 5:6)? Is Paul attempting to draw a connection between the loyalty of Christ's self-giving and the motivation and ability of self-giving among believers for one another: "but through love be slaves of one another" (5:13); "bear one another's burdens

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47. From a theological standpoint, this is often explained as a transfer of lordship—from sin, from the law under sin, from condemnation, etc.

48. The rational aspect is an important part of experience that should not be marginalized. Nor should we think Paul would want to marginalize it (see 1 Cor 14:15, 19).

49. Note again, the "emotional" quality observed with regard to the "Abba cry" above.

and so fulfill the [love] law of Christ" (6:2")? In both instances this seems to be the case.

Galatians 2:20 is illuminated by its context. It occurs either within Paul's autobiographical narrative or as a close commentary upon it.[50] Because Paul used autobiographical narrative as a means of instructing,[51] not simply as polemic or value-free "reporting," we can suggest that 2:20 fits within a broader argument: When Peter and Barnabas, by not eating with Gentiles, behaved contrary to the claims of the gospel, Paul did not join but resisted them (2:14). Hence the Galatians should follow Paul's example. When opposing teachers come with requirements contrary to the gospel's claims ("works of the law" [2:16], specifically, the added requirement of circumcision for Gentile believers [5:2–3]), the Galatians should not join but resist them. The point is this: if Gal 2:20 belongs within this argument, then Paul's religious experience should be shared by them. The Galatians are also crucified with Christ; they should also no longer live, but Christ should live in them.[52]

The full context of the letter to the Galatians indicates that God's will can be fully accomplished by community members not on the basis of law, but through cooperation with the Spirit of God. Paul's argument comes to a head in Gal 5–6 with instruction on the life properly lived through a cooperative patterning with/by[53] the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control). In light of the context of the Galatian letter as a whole, it is fair to paraphrase that key phrase of Gal 2:20 as "Christ lives in me [through the Spirit]." There is good evidence, however, that Paul thinks that his and other believers' involvement with the Spirit is a true religious experience. When Paul declares to these Galatians in 4:19 that he is "in travail until Christ be formed *in you*," it seems clear that such a religious formation will occur through the Spirit's work.

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50. Scholars differ regarding the point at which Paul's identification and dispute with Peter is over. Some contend it is finished by 2:14, others see it continuing into 2:15–21. See the discussion in Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians,* 132. See also Burton, *Galatians,* 117, 125.

51. George Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding* (SBLDS 73; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 170–76.

52. Cf. Hay, "Paul's Understanding of Faith," 53.

53. "With/by" maintains the dative constructions in 5:16–26: "Live … walk … be led … with/by the Spirit."

Conclusions

We have entertained a descriptive analysis of religious experience among Paul and believers based on the larger context of the letter to the Galatians. From that context we have considered issues arising from the "in Christ" and "Christ in" texts. Because the "Christ in" texts seem to be an interpretive filter for the "in Christ" texts, we have looked more closely at one such key text: Gal 2:20. What can be learned about this verse and about religious experience through careful attention to function and context of the larger letter itself? This study prompts the following observations.

Key modalities and shapes within the letter to the Galatians indicate that interior religious experience is a significant part of the shared worldview of Paul and his Galatian auditors. Certainly some of our best evidence for interior religious experience is found in the "Christ in" texts (Rom 8:10; Gal 1:16; 2:20; cf. 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 4:19). In particular, investigating the inner religious experience of Gal 2:20 in light of the larger context of Galatians allowed us to make connections with the modalities of "in Christ" and "belonging" language, and with the shape of the Spirit's presence (Gal 5:6, 22–23) leading to ethical actions. These connections are strongly supported by Paul's overall argument in Galatians, which emphasizes a shape of crucifixion empowered by the Spirit (the powerful impulse to Jesus' pattern of self-giving actions toward others) in the inward person. Galatians 2:20 also demonstrated an affective relationship with Christ, characterized by care, loyalty, and love. How might religious experience be evaluated in such a reciprocal emotional relationship, or should it be?[54]

With regard to inner religious experience, Paul appears for the most part to expect that his experiences will be shared by other believers. Again, in the flow of Paul's argument, the contextual factors in Galatians indicate that the inner religious experience of Gal 2:20 ("Christ who lives in me") can appropriately be linked with the Spirit's presence in all believers. If the Spirit prompts transformation within the body of believers, then some "in Christ" texts (e.g., those with the "body of Christ" metaphor) may point to *social* religious experience. How might this help us to articulate more accurately the relationship between "in Christ" and "Christ in" texts in

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54. Matthew A. Elliott (*Faithful Feelings: Rethinking Emotion in the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006]) introduces and suggests methodological underpinnings for the topic of emotion, including Paul's, in the New Testament.

Paul? Is it advisable to differentiate between inner religious experience and social religious experience, or to look for an inner logic and movement between the two?[55]

From a theological perspective, religious experience is human experience of the divine. In the context of early Judaism and early Christianity, this refers in some way to how God brings about the "people of God." In light of that context, the words of Bassler ring true: "[Paul] did not, however, retreat into that mystical union [religious experience] in isolation from the world, but found there the strength to engage daily in his very nonmystical struggle to establish, nurture, correct, and comfort cells of believers in the Roman world."[56]

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55. This is potentially a fruitful avenue of research into and clarification of the religious experience of Paul and his believing communities.

56. Bassler, *Navigating Paul,* 47.

Paul, Baptism, and Religious Experience

Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte

In her guide to *Religions of the Ancient World*, Sarah Iles Johnston gives a brief, but excellent introduction to the mystery cults of antiquity.[1] The author outlines the main characteristics of the Eleusinian mysteries, the Samothracian mysteries, the Bacchic mysteries, and the cults of Meter, Mithras, and Isis. She observes a number of similarities with the early Christian movement, but then notes an important difference: "As a proselytizing religion that aimed to build the largest possible community as quickly as possible, Christianity used the lure implicit in the word *mystery* more boldly than anyone previously had and in doing so turned one of the best-known qualities of mystery religions—privilege through exclusivity—upside down."[2] Johnston's point is that, to a certain extent, Christianity used the vocabulary of the mystery religions but not their esotericism. Instead, Christianity spread its message, the gospel, by characterizing it as a divine mystery that had now become readily available for every single person, without restrictions. In a sense, what Johnston proposes is that Christianity democratized the concept of "mystery."

The issue of Paul and the mystery cults has been examined by many of the best scholars in the field, and it is not the pretention of this essay to give a totally new perspective.[3] In this essay a couple of points will be considered that are relevant to our understanding of Paul and the early

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1. Sarah Iles Johnston, ed., *Religions of the Ancient World. A Guide* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). Her contribution "Mysteries" is on pp. 98–111.

2. Ibid., 110–11.

3. On the problems concerning the analysis of mystery cults and their relation to early Christianity, see the classic work by Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). For the relevant bibliography, see vii n. 2.

Christ movement. The reason for this focus in this particular *Experientia* volume is that the question needs to be answered: What difference does the study of the experiential setting of Paul's letters make for our reading of those letters? As I will show, especially the initiation rite of the early Christ movement (baptism) should be taken into account in reading the Pauline epistles.

This contribution consists of four sections. First, Paul's own socio-religious context (Jewish apocalypticism) needs to be explored: To what extent did this particular context color his ideas? In other words, what does it mean to speak of Paul as an apocalypticist?[4] Next, the evidence of 1 Cor 2:1–8 will be dealt with: Do these verses indicate that Paul's Christ groups had different levels of initiation? Thirdly, I shall briefly assess Paul's presentation of baptism as an initiation rite. This, finally, will usher in a discussion on Paul's relation to the mystery cults. All in all, the goal of this essay is to proceed beyond the mere textual approach of Paul toward a reconstruction of his activities as part of an experience-based faith. In the end, I will show that insights from the field of ritual studies contribute to our understanding of Paul's letters: the faith communities he wrote to should be understood as groups that were tied together by the experience of their faith, a dimension that becomes clearly visible in the ritual of baptism.

Paul the Visionary

Over the past years the subject of Paul as a visionary has received renewed attention.[5] This experiential dimension of Paul's faith is clear from a

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4. The emphasis on apocalypticism does not mean that other socioreligious contexts did not influence Paul. Paul's discourse is so much colored, however, by this particular movement, that the emphasis on apocalypticism in this reconstruction is warranted.

5. After Albert Schweitzer's study on *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1930), the experiential character of Paul's religion hardly received any attention. Schweitzer himself largely bypassed the subject as well, notwithstanding the title of his work. For recent expositions, see especially Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1992); Alan F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), esp. 34–71; Bernhard Heininger, *Paulus als Visionär. Eine Religionsgeschichtliche Studie* (Herders Biblische Studien 9; Fribourg, Switzerland: Herder, 1996); Colleen Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy: The Neurobiology of the Apostle's Life and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

number of passages in his letters. In particular, the description of Paul's rapture in 2 Cor 12 is indicative of the fact that Paul's life was characterized by "visions and revelations of the Lord" (ἐλεύσομαι δὲ εἰς ὀπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου, 2 Cor 12:1).[6] Paul occasionally indicates that he made important decisions on the basis of what he calls "a revelation." Such is the case in Gal 2:2, where Paul says that he had gone to Jerusalem "in response to a revelation" (NRSV; ἀνέβην δὲ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν). In fact, in Galatians Paul founds his apostleship on the fact that God's Son was "revealed" in him (Οτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί κτλ, Gal 1:15–16), and he actually opens the letter by pointing at the "revealed" character of his ministry (δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Gal 1:12). The great emphasis Paul lays on this point is also conveyed in by its rhetorical effect: the direct character of the divine revelation that Paul claims to communicate puts him, as its messenger, in a position of authority. What Paul intends to communicate is that opposition by the Galatians against the divine messenger ultimately becomes opposition against God himself. As is the case in Galatians, Paul's argument in 2 Corinthians intends to legitimize his authority.

The extent to which Paul's ideas were influenced by this visionary context has often been neglected. This is gradually changing, however. Especially Bernard Heininger's work on Paul the visionary has indicated the importance of this point. Heiniger has shown that Paul was thoroughly influenced by the mystical language of Jewish apocalypticism. This language appears to have been part of a religious environment in which ecstatic experiences formed part and parcel of the religious life. In the conclusion to his work, Heininger asks why Paul's appeal to visionary experiences is almost exclusively restricted to the Corinthian correspondence.[7] His answer is twofold. First of all, Heininger argues, Paul was reluctant to appeal to his visionary experiences because they were not automatically helpful in his communication with the various congregations to which he wrote. Secondly and concomitantly, the Corinthian context was especially open to this type of argument, because Paul's opponents in Corinth

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6. On Paul's experience and its importance, see Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, "Paul's Rapture: 2 Corinthians 12:2–4 and the Language of the Mystics," in *Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Frances Flannery et al.; vol. 1 of *Experientia;* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 159–76.

7. Heininger, *Paulus als Visionär*, 301–2.

appealed to visionary experience in order to claim their authority. In this context, Paul could, and perhaps needed to, refer to his own experience. It would seem to me that Heininger's analysis indeed holds true. The crucial pericope in the Pauline letters in this respect, 2 Cor 12:2–4, shows a certain reluctance on the side of Paul to dwell upon the subject of his visionary experiences, but this does not mean that these experiences were unimportant to Paul. Instead, they seem to form the experiential framework without which Paul's ideas, his "theology," cannot be understood.

In her work on the experiential character of Paul's ministry and his theology, Colleen Shantz has drawn attention to the fact that Paul's ideas cannot be perceived as merely that—ideas.[8] In her view, they reflect the living reality of Paul's faith, and to take his ideas and concepts out of their experiential framework is basically to mispresent Paul. With regard to Christology, for instance, Shantz argues that Paul's visions and his ecstatic experiences were constitutive of the way he spoke about Christ: "Thus, Paul's visions were not necessarily the source of such ideas, but they did confirm and amplify Christological reflection on Jesus's divine nature."[9] Shantz even adds a neurobiological analysis of Paul's brain, and makes a strong case that Paul must have frequently practiced experiences that we now would register as altered states of consciousness (ASCs). According to Shantz, those ASCs were practiced throughout the early Christ movement. Since this is not the place for a detailed discussion of Shantz's work, the most important insight of her book may suffice for the present purpose: Paul should be interpreted, at least in part, as a visionary, an ecstatic.[10]

Approaching Paul as a visionary, a mystic, has a number of important consequences. To start with, the apocalyptic stream in early Judaism, to which Paul was evidently linked, must have influenced not only his ideas, but also his experiential framework.[11] The concepts and ideas Paul uses to express his views on the gospel were shaped by that context. This is the case in Paul's characterization of the Christ community as "new creation"

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8. Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy*, passim.

9. Ibid., 205–6.

10. For a more detailed discussion, see Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, review of Colleen Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy: The Neurobiology of the Apostle's Life and Thought. RBL* (2011). Online: http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/7217_7852.pdf.

11. On the relation between Jewish apocalypticism and mysticism, see Alan F. Segal, "Mysticism," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (ed. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 982–96.

(καινὴ κτίσις, 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15), but it probably also forms the background for his ἐν Χριστῷ language. The corporate unity of the believers with Christ, expressed in this formula, coincides with what Paul addresses as the "new creation." This is not just a new idea, but a reality Paul believed in and experienced.

A second consequence of the fact that Paul was embedded in the visionary practice of apocalypticism is that his use of the term "mystery" should be seen primarily against this particular background. In Rom 11:25 Paul characterizes the "hardening" of Israel over against Christ as a "mystery," something that is known and understood by God, but not by humankind. In 1 Cor 2:1–7 Paul refers to the content of the faith he and the Corinthians share as a "mystery." This passage will be dealt with in the next section. To be noted here is that Paul identifies the role he and his fellow workers play as "servants of Christ and ministers of the mysteries of God" (ὡς ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ καὶ οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ). For Paul, this meant that he had knowledge of the divine mysteries, matters that are generally unknown to human beings, but that had been "revealed" to Paul and his co-workers. The most telling example of his use of this terminology is 1 Cor 15:51. There, Paul describes what will happen at the *parousia* of Christ as a "mystery": "Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed" (NRSV; ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω· πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα κτλ). The "mystery" language is to be understood within the context of Jewish apocalyptical ideas, in which God has (pre)ordained certain events to happen, and revealed the secrets concerning those events to a select number of visionaries to whom he has disclosed this knowledge. As elsewhere, Paul here positions himself as such a privileged visionary to whom God has granted secret knowledge.

A third consequence of approaching Paul as a mystic is that the categories he uses to describe life "in the Spirit" are misunderstood if we take them as mere *concepts*. For Paul, the Spirit of God is not just a concept; it is a reality that pervades his life. And not just his life—it is the reality that pervades the congregations as well. Paul's theology cannot be understood without taking its experiential character into consideration. If Paul states that "the Spirit dwells within you" (Rom 8:9), this is not a theoretical concept, but a description of emotional and somatic phenomena. The crucial unity between Jew and Greek, between the various groups within the Christ movement, is caused by the presence of the Spirit (see 1 Cor 12:13). And when Paul states that "the Spirit is the Lord," a divine presence within the community is hinted at.

Finally, the fact that Paul saw his ideas as knowledge that was revealed to him by God and/or Christ himself puts Paul in a position of authority.[12] He saw himself as one to whom secret knowledge was granted, insight into the divine mysteries was given, and for that reason it was his obligation to spread that knowledge. He stresses the fact that he stands in a tradition of special knowledge, granted to him by divine grace. This is probably the way to understand Paul's remark in 1 Cor 11:23, where he emphasizes that he received the tradition on the Lord's Supper from the Lord himself.[13] In 1 Cor 15:1–11 Paul refers to the tradition of the gospel and describes himself as both recipient and transmitter of this tradition. In Gal 1:1, 11–12; 2:2 Paul stresses the independence of his gospel, and points at its divine origin. Apparently, Paul saw himself as mediating divine mysteries, and as commissioned to do so by divine instruction. It was the direct experience of the divine that Paul saw as evidence of his commissioning. It is here that the question becomes urgent: How did Paul proclaim the hidden knowledge to which he had been granted access? Did Paul spread this knowledge freely to all people? Or did he make a distinction between public knowledge and esoteric knowledge? To answer this question, it is important to take a closer look at 1 Cor 2.

1 Corinthians 2: Degrees of Initiation in the Corinthian Church

The point Paul wants to make in the opening chapters of 1 Corinthians is that the church in Corinth should put their conflicts to rest and focus on Christ, instead of Paul, Apollos, and Cephas.[14] In chapter 2 Paul argues that he has not brought the gospel as a rhetorician or a philosopher (ἦλθον οὐ καθ᾽ ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας, 2:1). Paul here introduces the content of his proclamation as "the mystery of God" (καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον

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12. See Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy*, ch. 4, esp. 176–84.

13. The words ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου imply that Paul received this tradition ultimately from the Lord himself, albeit through a process of tradition.

14. The words ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ in 1 Cor 1:12 should be read as Paul's objection against the three parties he has referred to, and not as indicating the existence of a so-called "Christ faction" in Corinth. This faction was invented by F. C. Baur in "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christenthums in der ältesten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom," *TZTh* (1831): 61–206.

τοῦ θεοῦ, 2:1). Paul focuses entirely on Christ as the crucified one (2:2), and indicates that this gospel does not issue in human logic, but in the power of God (2:3–5).[15] For Paul, the concept of δύναμις is linked to the Spirit of God: it is the all-pervading strength of God that speaks in the gospel, not the power of human reasoning.

Strangely enough, Paul makes a sudden transition in 2:6. His point so far has been to underpin the fact that the gospel does not originate in human wisdom, but in divine power, and now all of a sudden Paul refers to a "wisdom" that is spoken by "those who are perfect": Σοφίαν δὲ λαλοῦμεν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις. This wisdom is hidden (2:7) "in a mystery," and is the object the perfect ones speak about. These remarkable words raise two questions: What is the character of the wisdom described here by Paul? And who does Paul have in mind when referring to the τελείοι?

To begin with the latter question, there are basically two options here. The first possibility is to understand the τελείοι as a general reference to those believers who have reached the highest level of belief in that sense that they have a full understanding. If read in this way, Paul's remark in 2:6 rhetorically enables him to point out to the Corinthians that they have not yet reached that level of understanding.[16] Indeed, this is what Paul does in 3:1–4, when he addresses the Corinthians as νηπίοι. The best way to translate ἐν τοῖς τελείοις would then be "among adults."[17] There are, however, good reasons to reject this idea and follow Louw and Nida in their analysis of the term. In their dictionary they propose to understand τέλειος in Phil 3:15 and Col 1:28 as "one who is initiated into a religious community of faith."[18] The word could still be translated as "adult," but then the term "adult" would have to be considered a technical term for those who have been initiated into the community of faith. Given Paul's use of the same term in Phil 3:15 (Οσοι οὖν τέλειοι, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν κτλ), it seems likely that Paul refers to a group of initiated believers in 1 Cor 2:6.[19] The impli-

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15. Also in 4:20 Paul states this point: οὐ γὰρ ἐν λόγῳ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλ᾽ ἐν δυνάμει.

16. E.g., Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 102.

17. See, e.g., Heb 5:14.

18. The alternative is also mentioned: "It is possible, however, to interpret τέλειος in Phil 3:15 and Col 1:28 as mature spirituality or a state of being spiritually mature" (Louw & Nida, s.v. τέλειος).

19. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Andreas Lindemann argues against influence of the mystery cults in this particular passage (*Der erste Korintherbrief*

cation would be that there were two different groups within the Pauline communities: those who had been fully initiated and those who had not yet reached that level.

In his monograph on the Pauline congregations, Edwin D. Freed has argued exactly this point.[20] According to Freed, the Pauline communities consisted of two groups of believers: those who had already received baptism and those who were still awaiting it. Paul distinguished between the two groups, and addressed them separately in his letters. Freed proposes a reading of 1 Corinthians in which 1:10–6:20 is addressed "to small groups among baptized converts."[21] Unfortunately, the criteria upon which Freed decides which parts of a text have been written for baptized converts and which for the unbaptized are not strong enough. A detailed discussion of his proposal would exceed the scope of this paper, and should be done elsewhere. The suggestion, however, to regard the Pauline communities as consisting of two groups of believers is an intriguing one. It would seem to me that the "perfect ones" or "adults" Paul addresses in 1 Cor 2:6 can be identified as the baptized converts. In this case, Paul says that those who have been initiated into the mystical bond with Christ do understand a certain type of wisdom. They have received knowledge of a divine mystery. This observation brings us to the last point to discuss in this second section: the nature of the wisdom Paul speaks about here.

In his description of this wisdom, Paul stresses the fact that it is hidden, concealed from the rulers of this world. He indicates that this wisdom is connected to Jesus Christ and his crucifixion. And he points out that the source of this wisdom is God. The concealed character of this wisdom is stated in 1 Cor 2:7–8. It is wisdom "in a mystery" (ἐν μυστηρίῳ) and Paul explicitly adds about this wisdom that it is "hidden" (τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην). The "rulers of this world" (οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἔγνωκεν, v. 8) failed to recognize this wisdom, for if they had done so they would not have crucified "the Lord of glory." It is here that Paul's words show that the "wisdom" he speaks of is in fact Jesus Christ. This is fully in line with

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[HNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000], 61–62). Instead, he reconstructs sapiential traditions as the background of this particular language.

20. Edwin D. Freed, *The Morality of Paul's Converts* (Bibleworld; London: Equinox, 2005), passim.

21. Ibid., 158.

what he has argued in 1:30, where he stated that Jesus Christ "has become wisdom for us."[22]

Interestingly enough, Paul characterizes this wisdom as a profound insight that is revealed to humankind by God and his Spirit. Apparently Paul illustrates this point by a quote from the *Apocalypse of Elijah*.[23] A similar logion is found in *Gospel of Thomas* 17, where Jesus says: "I shall give to you what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, what no hand has touched, what has not arisen in the human heart."[24] In the *Prayer of Paul*, one of the Nag Hammadi texts, the motif has clearly been taken up and rephrased: "Grant what eyes of angels have not [seen], what ears of rulers have not heard, and what has not arisen in the human heart, which became angelic, made in the image of the animate God when it was formed in the beginning."[25] Yet another version of this *logion* is found in *Gospel of Judas* 47. There reference is made to the great invisible [Spirit],[26] "which no eye of angel has seen, no thought of the mind has grasped, nor was it called by a name."[27] This is not the place to reconstruct the history of this *logion*, but this much is clear: Paul uses it to refer to the character of the "wisdom" he speaks of as a divine mystery.

This divine mystery, Paul continues, "God has revealed to us through the Spirit" (1 Cor 2:10). Here it seems that Paul links the accessibility of the wisdom he discusses to the gift of the Spirit. Given Paul's remarks in 1 Thess 1:5–6, 1 Cor 1:17, and Gal 3:1–5, the gift of the Spirit seems to be connected to the moment in which the gospel is proclaimed and accepted. Apparently, baptism was seen as the ritual manifestation of the presence of the Spirit. This presence would lead the convert to a correct understand-

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22. The use of wisdom language in 1 Cor 8:6 is further indication that for Paul Jesus Christ had taken on the role of wisdom in Jewish writings. In 1 Cor 1:30 Paul's emphasis is not on wisdom Christology. Rather, "Paul stresses that it is only in the foolishness and weakness of the crucified Jesus and the proclamation of the message of the cross that God's power and God's wisdom are revealed and have become operative." Marinus de Jonge, *Christology in Context: The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 122.

23. This is attested by Origen and Ambrosiaster. For the texts, see Wolfgang Schrage, *Die Elia-Apokalypse* (JSHRZ 5.3; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1980), 195.

24. Marvin Meyer, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 141.

25. Ibid., 18.

26. The word is lacking; reconstruction is by Meyer.

27. Ibid., 765.

ing of Christ and God, and the transmission of knowledge to converts was apparently related to baptism. But was this knowledge hidden from the outsiders? Was it really *esoteric* knowledge? It seems that 1 Cor 2 does not provide any indication to assume this. What we do have here is a situation in which Paul considers the baptized believers as those who fully understand the mystery of God. They had received the Spirit and for that reason they were able to grasp the divine secrets.

The analysis so far has led us in the following direction: in the Corinthian congregation there was a difference between baptized and unbaptized converts. Paul considered the baptized converts to be those who had a full understanding of what he calls the "mysteries of God." To them these mysteries were revealed because they had received the Spirit, and the gift of the Spirit was crucial because the true wisdom Paul speaks about cannot be accessed through human reasoning. Jesus Christ as God's ultimate envoy cannot be understood in human terms, but only through intervention of the Spirit. This conclusion inevitably leads to two new questions: First, how does Paul speak about baptism? Second, what is the relation of the initiation rite of the Pauline congregations to those of the mystery cults? The next two sections of this essay will focus on these two questions.

Paul on Baptism

Roy Rappaport: Self-Referential and Canonical Meaning of Ritual

Given the importance of baptism in the Pauline communities for the subject under discussion in this essay, it is worth the effort to take a closer look at the evidence we find on baptism in Paul's letters. For the discussion of this evidence, Roy Rappaport, an American anthropologist who died in 1997, has laid out a useful perspective. His theory of ritual and the analysis of material and language within the ritual can open up our reading of Paul's comments on baptism. In 1999, two years after the author's death, Roy Rappaport's *opus magnum* was published under the title *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*.[28] In it Rappaport argues that the practice of ritual is essential to human communities, since it defines and

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28. Roy Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

establishes the mental boundaries of these communities. In his analysis of the role of acts and words in the practice of ritual, Rappaport distinguishes between two types of messages embedded in ritual. Rituals contain "self-referential" and "canonical" messages.[29] The self-referential messages define the social status of the members of the group that performs the act, since each ritual act structures the social location and existential state of those who are involved in it. Canonical messages in a ritual, however, refer not to the members of the group and their positions, but to meanings and codes that transcend the immediate act of the ritual. To quote from Rappaport, "The self-referential represents the immediate, the particular and the vital aspects of *events*; the canonical, in contrast, represents the general, enduring, or even eternal aspects of *universal orders*. Indeed, its quality of perdurance is perhaps signified iconically—its sense is surely conveyed—by the apparent invariance of its mode of transmission."[30]

In a later chapter of his work Rappaport discusses the relation of "word and act, form and substance" in rituals.[31] He also elaborates his ideas on the "canonical" status of words used in rituals. They may have self-referential status, but their most important function is to refer to the canonical message conveyed in the ritual:

> While acceptance of, or participation in, canon is easily—and best—signaled by physical display, canons themselves must be specified in words or in material symbols assigned meaning by words. Gods, dead ancestors and the like, not existing materially in the here and now, cannot be referred to by acts whose designata are limited to the present. Reference to them is impossible without words.[32]

Ritual is by its nature ambiguous, in the sense that it combines the two forms of meaning in one act.[33] While the act of baptism is clearly self-referential in character—it defines the social position of the person who is being baptized as a member of the community—the narrative framework in which it is embedded relates it to a canonical meaning. The physical ritual of baptism itself, with immersion in the water as its main charac-

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29. See esp. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion*, 52–54.
30. Ibid., 53.
31. Ibid., 139–68.
32. Ibid., 152.
33. Ibid., 58, on ritual: "It is, rather, a very complex form in which the two classes of messages are dependent upon each other."

teristic, must have left its mark on the people who experienced it. They were not just accepted as members of the Christ group, but they also went through a very specific physical and spiritual experience of the ritual.

Rappaport's study of ritual and the function of words within a ritual context may help us in our study of Paul's use of baptismal language. Paul refers to baptism a number of times in his letters. It will appear below that Paul attempts to relate the self-referential meaning of the ritual of baptism to a canonical framework. Given the importance of ritual for the formation of identity and group boundaries, it is important to discuss these attempts in some detail. The next step in this analysis therefore has to be an analysis of the Pauline evidence on baptism, in order to find out what Paul's references to baptism convey about the status of the Pauline Christ groups, in terms of both the self-referential and the canonical meaning of the language used. Before we can proceed to this, however, one more methodological remark has to be made.

In studying Paul's letters we have to realize that their status is secondary over against Paul's oral proclamation of the gospel. For the most part, the letters do not contain Paul's sermons or the full proclamation of his gospel, but refer primarily to what he has done among the groups to which he writes. The letters do not convey the whole of Paul's gospel, but do contain traces of it.[34] We do not have direct access to the language used in the Pauline ritual of baptism. Still, we do have references to the ritual, and likely to some of the language used in it. Romans 6:1–11, for example, certainly reflects what Paul must have preached at the event of baptism, and passages such as Gal 3:27–28 and 1 Cor 12:13 most likely contain references to baptismal formulas. In the next section, I will deal with the most important information on baptism conveyed to us by Paul's letters.

Paul's Evidence on Baptism

The first texts to examine are those passages in which Paul explicitly speaks of baptism.[35] Put in the most likely chronological order the texts

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34. Similarly, the letters reflect Paul's theology without directly coinciding with it. See James D. G. Dunn *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 1–26.

35. The standard study of baptism was recently published by Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). For a bibliography on Paul and baptism, see 146 n.

concerned are: 1 Cor 1:13–17; 10:2; 12:13; 15:29; Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3–4. Let us take a closer look at these passages.

1 Corinthians

In 1 Cor 1:13–17 Paul speaks of baptism, saying that he himself had only baptized Crispus, Gaius, the household of Stephanas, and no one else. Some divisions in the Corinthian congregation had apparently been caused by the importance that members of the community assigned to the person who had performed their baptism.[36] Paul does make a clear difference between βαπτίζειν and εὐαγγελίζεσθαι in 1:17, but this is probably for contextual purposes. Two things that are clear from this passage are important for our present undertaking. First, baptism is practiced "in the name of Christ." Although Paul does not state this explicitly, it can be inferred from 1:13. The use of the preposition εἰς here is confirmed by Paul's remark in 10:2. Its meaning ("into") indicates that Paul understood baptism as a ritual act that leads to something new: namely, unity with Christ. Second, the Corinthians apparently interpreted the ritual of baptism in a way with which Paul was particularly unhappy. It seems they thought that the act of baptism established a special bond between the baptizer and the one baptized. Paul apparently considered this a wrong interpretation of the ritual of baptism, since it directs the attention from Christ.

The ethical implications of baptism are clear: in 6:11 Paul founds his exhortations in an offhand manner on the fact that the Corinthians have been "washed clean" and "sanctified" (ἀλλὰ ἀπελούσασθε, ἀλλὰ ἡγιάσθητε). There seems to be a relationship between baptism and sanctification, though its exact nature is unclear.[37] For Paul, a sanctified life in holiness

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1, 2. Chapter 9 (146–65) deals with baptism in the Pauline epistles: "Paul took over from the earliest Palestinian Christianity the following aspects of baptism: Baptism presupposes preaching and faith, but preaching and faith do not replace baptism; baptism occurs in the name of Jesus, it mediates the eschatological gift of salvation (forgiveness and the Holy Spirit); baptism is by the leaders of the community and orders the community" (146–47).

36. The point Paul is making here is not a "deprecation of baptism" but a "deprecation of the administer of baptism" (Ferguson, *Baptism*, 149).

37. Referring to baptism: Rom 15:16; 1 Cor 1:2. In a different context: 1 Cor 7:14; 1 Thess 5:23. The Spirit is a "spirit of sanctification" (Rom 1:4), and the believers are "called as saints" (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2). Through baptism the believers take part in the sanctification effected by Christ (1 Cor 1:30).

is the appropriate sequel to the experience of baptism. A person who had been baptized could not look upon her or his life in the same manner as before. For the members of the earliest Christ movement, baptism was a life-changing experience.

In 1 Cor 10:1–5 Paul uses baptismal language to connect the identity of the Corinthian Christ-worshippers to that of Israel in Moses' day. Paul gives an allegorical interpretation of the Exodus account and explains that "all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (10:2). Here, the verb βαπτίζω is used in an intricate manner: though it refers to the founding ritual of the Christ community, Paul uses it in such a way as to point out that entry into this community is also entry into the community of Israel that surrounded Moses in the Exodus account. Paul evidently relates baptism to the history of Israel, indicating that he understood the community into which a person was initiated in terms of Israel.

Paul makes another crucial remark on baptism in 12:13 (καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ πάντες ἓν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν). The words ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι should probably be interpreted as "through one spirit." They indicate that for Paul the spirit was the instrument through which baptism was practiced. Its effect is mentioned with the preposition εἰς: εἰς ἓν σῶμα. Hence, baptism led to the formation of a community of believers who were considered "one in Christ." Within this community, ethnic and social boundary markers between Jew and Greek, slave and free are superseded. The essential act that establishes this community is referred to here by Paul as the "drinking in of the spirit" (πάντες ἓν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν).

A curious element from the practice of baptism in Corinth is recounted in 15:29. Here, Paul mentions the Corinthians' practice of baptism on behalf of the dead. This indicates that Paul and his peers considered the community of believers who are "one in Christ" as transcending the boundaries of death.

Result. From 1 Corinthians we can conclude that baptism was practiced in Paul's congregations as a ritual act of initiation into a community of believers. This community found its focus in unity with Christ, the risen Lord. The bond of the believers was thought to transcend human boundaries such as ethnicity, social status, and even death. In Paul's view the initiation was acted out by "drinking in the Spirit," even though the gift of the Spirit did not coincide with the moment of baptism. Although in 1 Corinthians Paul did not mention the use of water in baptism, the assumption lies at hand that the "drinking in of the Spirit" was thought to

coincide with the moment that the believer was submerged in the water. This act of baptism resulted in a new life within the union with Christ, and this new life was a life of holiness and sanctification.

Galatians

In Galatians Paul is brief on baptism, but the remark he makes is of the utmost importance. In Gal 3:26–28 Paul argues that believers in Christ are the true descendants of Abraham. In Paul's terms, "faith in Christ Jesus" (3:26) has turned the believers into "children (sons) of God." Paul claims that the believers have been "baptized into Christ" (εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, 3:27) and that the effect of that baptism is that they have "put on Christ" (Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε, 3:27). Paul uses the same expression, ἐνδύω with Christ as its object, in a moral exhortation in Rom 13:14. The Romans are to "put on the weapons of light" (13:12) and to "put on Christ" (13:14) in order to live in the correct manner. There Paul probably refers to what happened at the ritual of baptism. Here in Galatians, the expression explicitly characterizes the event of baptism as an act of change. The result of this change is stated in what is often regarded as a baptismal formula quoted by Paul in 3:28 (οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Here again baptism is presented as an initiation that is supposed to bring about a major change in the life of the one baptized. As a result, ritual ethnic and social boundaries are considered to be superseded. In Galatians Paul even inserts the phrase οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ, thereby pointing out that gender differences are also considered overruled in Christ. In Gal 6:15 Paul summarizes the new unity in Christ as καινὴ κτίσις, the "new creation" (cf. also 2 Cor 5:17, ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις). For Paul, the new era had already begun in Christ and the followers of Christ were connected with him through their faith by baptism.

Result. The situation in Galatians is comparable to the one found in 1 Corinthians. Baptism is practiced "into Christ" and Paul considers the ritual fundamental to the present state of the believers.[38] All differences between the believers "in Christ" are unimportant to Paul, and the equal-

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38. See Ferguson, *Baptism*, 148: "The distinctive of Christian baptism is its relationship to Christ."

ity springing from baptism apparently functions as the foundation for Paul's ethics.

Romans

In Rom 6 Paul elaborately discusses baptism and stresses the analogy between the baptism of the believers and the death and resurrection of Christ. In 6:3 Paul states that baptism is actually a way to share in the death of Christ (ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν). His remark in 6:4 indicates that for him the resurrection of Christ prefigures the "newness of life" in which the believers will walk. In verses 5–11 Paul plays with that concept. In his eyes, the believers are now already free from sin, since they will share in the resurrection of Christ. The newness of life that will be realized at the resurrection now already defines the life of the believers. For this reason, Paul exhorts the Romans not to let sin rule their mortal bodies, for it is God's grace that defines their lives (6:12–23).

In this carefully constructed chapter (Rom 6:1–23), Paul founds his ethical exhortations on the union of believers with Christ. It is likely that the language Paul uses here has been influenced by baptismal discourse, but since he does not explicitly quote any formula here, the language used in the practice of baptism cannot be reconstructed from Rom 6. Therefore the question arises whether or not the connection to the death and resurrection of Christ was part of the baptismal discourse itself. Since Paul makes the hermeneutical move of explaining baptism as a way of creating a union with Christ by sharing his death and resurrection, the argument he builds in Rom 6 is no *ad hoc* argument. This observation raises a new question: did Paul invent the baptism/crucifixion parallel or was this part of the baptismal discourse that was used in the actual practice of baptism? Unfortunately, there is no way to tell. In his commentary on Romans, Joseph Fitzmyer refers to Mark 10:38–39 and Luke 12:50: "Paul has undoubtedly derived his teaching about baptism from the early Christian tradition that existed before him. Such a tradition would also have recorded the way Jesus himself had referred to his own death as a baptism (Mark 10:38–39; Luke 12:50)."[39] This argument suffers from a certain amount of circularity: in its literary form the tradition of Jesus' identifica-

39. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 431.

tion of his death as a baptism postdates Paul's letter to the Romans. For that reason we cannot automatically identify it as a pre-Pauline tradition. It may have to be seen as a narrative metaphor that grew out of the Pauline material we are discussing. In Phil 3:10 Paul also refers to the state of the believers as "sharing the form of Christ's death," though baptism is not mentioned in that context. To use Rappaport's terms again, one can say that the self-referential status of the language coincides with its canonical status: Paul interprets the ritual of baptism as at the same time referring to the death and resurrection of Christ (this complex forms the narrative, canonical framework within which the ritual is to be understood) and to a change of social status that the believers experience by undergoing baptism. Baptism ushers in a new perspective on life, and the language used at the event is both canonical and self-referential.

Result. In Rom 6 Paul interprets baptism as fundamental for the identity of the believers "in Christ." The connection he makes between baptism and the death and resurrection of Christ forms the foundation for Paul's moral exhortations. According to Paul, a life according to the καινοτὴς ζωῆς, the "newness of life" (6:4), is free from sin. Thus, Paul interprets the ritual of baptism as a transition ritual, a *rite de passage*, which defines the state of the believers after they have taken part in this ritual. He works to establish baptism as a shared, embodied action with the potential to generate a sense of *communitas* among those who have submitted to it. By ritually tying individuals together in this way and striving to institutionalize a "canonical" dimension to the words associated with the shared ritual, Paul believes he has additionally achieved a foundation for moral demands. Indeed, Rappaport notes that submission to a ritual especially implies acceptance, and operates as a social contract between the individual and the community to uphold agreed upon values. For Rappaport, ritual inherently includes moral expectation, which Paul also certainly seeks from baptism.

Other Relevant Texts in Paul

A thorough scrutiny of all texts in Paul relevant to the theme of baptism is impossible here. Yet there are two remarks in 2 Corinthians that are important here. In 2 Cor 1:21–22 Paul speaks of the believers in Christ as having been "anointed" and having received the Spirit as a "down payment" (ἀρραβῶν). Paul repeats this image in 5:5, thereby pointing out that the Spirit is decisive for the new life of the believers. This theme, the new-

ness of life, explicitly mentioned in Rom 6:4, seems to pervade Paul's let-
ters. In 2 Cor 4:1–6 Paul describes the state of life of the followers of Christ
in another metaphor well known from mystical writings: the light-dark-
ness opposition. For Paul the gospel is a light that is hidden for those who
do not believe. They live in darkness, and the gospel does not light this
darkness. Paul even refers to the creation account in Genesis (cf. 4:6). In
the pericope immediately following these remarks he points out that the
newness of life refers to the interior person (ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν, 5:16). The exte-
rior person (ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν) deteriorates every day, but the interior person is
consistently being renewed.[40] It seems that this specific description is tied
to baptism, but in an implicit manner. It is the life after baptism that Paul
describes here, not baptism itself. In his description of life after baptism,
however, Paul makes a clear distinction between "inside" and "outside."

Some Final Observations on Baptism

Given the abundant and complex evidence we have on Paul's views of bap-
tism, only a quick scan has been possible here. This quick scan does, how-
ever, lead to some important observations.

1. In his letters Paul both implicitly and explicitly refers to baptism in
a way that indicates that this ritual helped shape the communities he had
founded into groups with a distinct identity. In Paul's rhetorical strategies,
he can refer to baptism to establish common ground between himself and
the communities he is addressing. This strategic use by Paul of the theme of
baptism is enabled by the self-referential status of the ritual: it functioned
as a constituent that created the identity of the Christ movement. At the
same time, Paul interprets baptism in canonical terms in order to relate the
identity of his groups to the grand narrative of God and Christ. Therefore,
the ritual of baptism should be considered fundamental to the framework
of theology already in the Pauline period. For this reason, Paul's theology
should be understood as an attempt to formulate the life-changing impli-
cations of baptism. His interpretations of baptism, discussed above, aim
at strengthening the canonical framework of the self-referential ritual of
initiation. Paul's theology is thoroughly contextual, and in a sense sacra-

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40. A number of deutero-Pauline texts are relevant, too; see, e.g., Col 2:11–12;
Eph 1:13; 4:30; 5:14, 26; Titus 3:5. However, within the present essay they can be left
out of consideration.

mental. One of the most important elements in the believers' lives, one to which Paul refers in many different ways, is their experience of baptism.

2. Paul's interpretation of baptism as a sharing in the death and resurrection of Christ presupposes the story of passion and resurrection as the narrative framework for interpreting the ritual of baptism. This means that the canonical meaning of baptism as interpreted by Paul is that it unites the believer with Christ. This union signaled a decisive change for the believers. The actual practice of baptism must have been understood as the moment in which the believer entered into a new life. The earliest believers apparently thought of this new life as consisting of a union with Christ. This accounts for the prominent position of Paul's ἐν Χριστῷ-language within his letters: the ἐν Χριστῷ expressions refer to the believers' baptism, and should be understood as an attempt by Paul to underline the importance of the believers' bond with Christ. Paul considered this life "in Christ" as a life in holiness, no longer governed by sin and death. Accordingly, the believers should pursue high ethical standards in their lives.

3. In a sense, the self-referential and the canonical meaning of the ritual of baptism coincide in Paul's interpretation. For him, baptism is self-referential in that it sets off the members of the ἐκκλησία from outsiders, who are considered to live in darkness, without hope (2 Cor 4:3–4; 1 Thess 4:13). At the same time, their union with Christ defines their status, and this union leads to a fundamental equality of persons, regardless of ethnicity, social status or gender (Gal 3:27–28).

4. If this reconstruction is correct, it would seem to imply that the way in which baptism was practiced in the Pauline communities does indeed indicate a certain closeness to the initiation of the mystery cults. In the first section of this essay, however, it was argued that the context in which Paul came to his views was strongly determined by Jewish apocalypticism. Given Paul's background in (apocalyptic) Judaism, this last point is more or less evident. But the correspondence with the mystery cults does raise the question of how exactly Paul's construction of communities of believers in Christ related to those mystery cults. It is to this last question that the final section of this essay is devoted.

Paul and the Mystery Cults

The subject has often been dealt with, and it seems that the discussion has turned down a dead-end street. In the heyday of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, Wilhelm Bousset suggested that faith in a dying deity who

is subsequently resurrected did not belong to the Jewish stratum of early Christianity. Bousset considered this a typically Hellenistic thought and pointed at the mystery cults as the closest analogy.[41] Bousset's analysis has had a strong impact on New Testament scholarship. Many scholars, among them most notably Rudolf Bultmann, have taken over Bousset's view. Recently, Larry Hurtado has convincingly argued against Bousset's idea that the divine veneration of Christ was a secondary development originating in Hellenistic patterns of devotion.[42] Since Christology is not the topic of this essay, this development can be left untouched here. What is important for the present purpose is the debate on the relationship of the early Christ movement and the mystery cults. This debate has seen recent contributions by Alexander Wedderburn and, to a lesser extent, Dieter Zeller and Simon Légasse.[43] It is worth the effort to look especially into Wedderburn's refutation of Bousset's view of the mystery religions as the immediate religious background of Paul's soteriology.

    In a number of publications Wedderburn has argued that the case made by Bousset is not at all convincing. In his 2005 article on the matter, Wedderburn has summarized his three main arguments against the idea

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41. See esp. Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus* (2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921 [repr. 1965]), 134–45.

42. Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

43. Alexander J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against Its Graeco-Roman Background* (WUNT 44; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987); idem, "The Problem of the Denial of the Resurrections in 1 Corinthians XV," *NovT* 23 (1981), 229–41; idem, "Paul and the Hellenistic Mystery-Cults: On Posing the Right Questions," in *La soteriologia dei culti orientali nell'Impero Romano* (ed. U. Bianchi and M. J. Vermaseren; EPRO 92; Leiden: Brill, 1982), 817–33; idem, "Paul and the Mysteries Revisited," in *Kultur, Politik, Religion, Sprache–Text* (ed. Christian Strecker; vol. 2 of *Kontexte der Schrift;* Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), 260–69. Wedderburn's approach is strongly influenced by Günter Wagner, *Das religionsgeschichtliche Problem von Römer 6:1–11* (ATANT 39; Zürich: Zwingli, 1962). See also Hans Dieter Betz, "Transferring a Ritual: Paul's Interpretation of Baptism in Romans 6," in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 84–118; Simon Légasse, "Paul et les mystères," in *Paul de Tarse. Congrès de l'ACFEB (Strasbourg, 1995)* (ed. Jacques Schlosser; LD 165; Paris: Cerf, 1996), 223–41; Dieter Zeller, "Die Mysterienkulte und die paulinische Soteriologie (Röm 6,1–11): Eine Fallstudie zum Synkretismus im Neuen Testament," in *Neues Testament und hellenistische Umwelt* (ed. D. Zeller; BBB 150; Philo: Bonn, 2006), 173–87.

that Paul was directly influenced by the mystery cults: (1) The borrowing by Paul of ideas from the mystery cults is practically improbable. Paul was not initiated in any of these cults and did not know their practices from within. Furthermore, the language Paul uses differs at crucial points from that of the mystery cults.[44] (2) Paul's soteriology as expressed in Rom 6 differs fundamentally from what is found in the mystery cults. Wedderburn mentions the example of Lucius's fate in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, and points out that in Lucius's initiation "there is no hint that in his experience he shared the fate of Osiris or re-enacted it."[45] The participation in the fate of Christ, which is so central to Paul's argument, is totally lacking in the evidence on the mystery cults. The believers are initiated into the mysteries of whichever deity is celebrated, the myth of the deity is narrated, but the idea of a mystical bond with the deity is lacking. (3) The idea of baptism within the Christ movement is not connected to the initiation rites of the mystery religions—those were kept secret to outsiders—but should be seen against the background of initiation rites as a general, cultural phenomenon. In Wedderburn's words, "The Christian initiation rite is, for Paul, not so much one that ushers the baptized through an interim, liminal phase into the realization of the new phase, but one which places the baptized in a prolonged interim state."[46]

Wedderburn's first two points are indeed strong objections to Bousset's thesis. The third point, however, seems less convincing. In Paul's view the sharing of the fate of Christ in baptism by the baptized does usher in a new age which, as we have seen, he characterizes as the "new creation." This new age is of course proleptic, but even with the restriction of the eschatological *iam et nondum*, the reality of the new life in Christ should not be diminished by seeing it as a prolonged interim state.[47] Time and again Paul argues that this new life in Christ takes away the burdens of death and sin, even if the believers still sin and die.

In his discussion of the matter, Dieter Zeller points out that, notwithstanding Wedderburn's criticism of the *Religionsgeschichtliche* approach,

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44. Wedderburn, "Paul and the Mysteries Revisited," 263–64.

45. Ibid., 264–65.

46. Ibid., 267.

47. Paul's eschatological interpretation of time brought Giorgio Agamben to his interpretation of the messianic age as a "state of exception" (*The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005], 104–8).

the mystery cults still stand as the closest analogy to Paul's views.[48] He grants that there are no convincing direct parallels to be drawn between Paul and the language of the mystery cults, but does consider the soteriology of Rom 6 an example of Hellenistic syncretism. The corporate meaning of the death of Christ, indicated by expressions such as "to die with Christ" and "being crucified with Christ," should be seen against a Hellenistic background, and the idea of baptism as an initiation rite also stems from this cultural environment.

Here two points must be raised. First, the issue that is most difficult to explain for scholars in this field is the rise of baptism as an initiation rite. There is simply no evidence that this was an existing Jewish habit, since the cleansing rituals of Qumran form the closest parallel we have to the practice of baptism in the Christ movement. This particular type of baptism was a recurrent, daily ritual aimed at purification, and for this reason it differed profoundly from the Christian practice of baptism. Baptism as described by Paul, especially in Rom 6, is a one-time-only rite that opens up life in Christ for the baptized. The closest parallel we have for this rite is and remains the initiation practiced by the mystery cults. So even if direct influence on Paul and the Hellenistic Christ movement is improbable, in all likelihood we should credit Bousset for having seen this parallel.

Second, Bousset came to his theory on the basis of the observation that the celebration of the death and resurrection of a deity in a cultic context was a pagan Hellenistic phenomenon.[49] Recent study has indicated that this type of deity was hardly the central figure in mystery cults.[50] Furthermore, Jewish monotheism did provide the language of divine intermediary figures that, applied to Jesus, eventually led to the rise of a so-called "high Christology."[51] With regard to the death and resurrection of Jesus, Zeller rightly argues that the earliest interpretations of these events were strongly influenced by Jewish ideas rather than by pagan Hellenistic thoughts.[52] It

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48. Zeller, "Mysterienkulte," esp. 186–87.

49. This point is made most strongly by J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (3rd ed.; London: MacMillan, 1914), vol. 4.

50. Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 22–27.

51. See Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 42. On Jewish monotheism, see Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, "Jewish Monotheism and Christian Origins," in *Emphychoi Logoi–Religious Innovations in Antiquity* (ed. Alberdina Houtman et al.; AJC 73; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 227–46.

52. Zeller, "Mysterienkulte," 175–76.

would seem that the two elements that have led Paul to formulate his view on baptism as a union with Christ are the belief in the corporate meaning of Christ and faith in his death and resurrection as events that bring atonement, reconciliation, and the like to his followers. Both elements are present in pre-Christian Jewish traditions: Isaiah's suffering servant of YHWH is seen as a corporate personality, and there is much to be said in favor of the Son of Man in Daniel as a similar figure, symbolizing the community of Israel. The other element—the idea that Christ's death and resurrection bring salvation to his followers—fully stands in line with the Maccabean theology of the martyrs as doing the same for Israel. It appears that Paul has newly combined existing elements in the traditional discourse of Israel and used this particular combination to formulate the meaning of baptism as a community-establishing ritual.

Conclusion

Numerous points should be explored further. For example, the experiential setting of christological confession formulas used during baptismal rites needs further scrutiny. What change did the performative aspect of language bring to members of the early Christ movement when they were baptized? How did the new social equality that was proclaimed by Paul change the lives of members of Pauline communities? If Gal 3:28 indeed reflects a baptismal formula, as is supposed by many interpreters, how then did this formula affect the experience of Christ's earliest followers? Looking at Paul and other early Christian authors from the angle of religious experience opens up new meanings of texts. Concepts appear to be much more than concepts—often, they reflect life-changing experiences.

It has been argued above that Paul should be understood as an author from a Jewish apocalyptic background. This background entailed a visionary, experiential dimension that is also present in his letters. In his congregations a distinction was made between members who had been initiated and those who had not yet reached that point. Baptism, the ritual by means of which this initiation took place, is the ultimate example of a context where practice and words meet. For those who wish to see it, the experiential dimension of Paul's baptismal language is evident and clear. The parallel with the mystery cults is evident; in these cults too members were initiated into a unity with the deity. This parallel does not, however, account for the rise of baptism as initiation rite in the early Christ movement. It is exactly what it is: a parallel development. Initiation into the

Christ movement must have been an important moment in the believers' lives. It was the final step in "turning away from the idols" (1 Thess 1:9), a break with life as it had been up to that moment. The experience of this profound change in a person's life must have colored the way in which people listened to Paul's words. It must also have changed the way Paul spoke and wrote. It should not be overlooked in any study of Paul nor of early Christianity in general.

Religious Experience in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Two Case Studies

Carol A. Newsom

Though this paper is informed by theories of ritual and by sociolinguistically keyed cultural anthropology, it focuses primarily on specific case studies rather than theory per se. These case studies consider the careful use of language in prayer and liturgical texts to induce certain kinds of religious experience. The texts in question come from the Dead Sea Scrolls, specifically texts that were composed by members of the Qumran community. One is a collection of mostly first-person singular prayer texts known as the Hodayot or Thanksgiving Psalms. The other is a collection of thirteen linked liturgical songs called the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice.[1]

Although there continues to be uncertainty about some aspects of the community's structure and history, it is generally assumed that the finds at Khirbet Qumran represent one part of a larger religious reform movement that flourished from the mid-second century B.C.E. at least until the revolt against Rome in 70 C.E. Apparently, two forms of community life existed, one of which is reflected in the Damascus Document. This composition describes family-based communities known as "camps," presumably located in towns and villages throughout Judea. The ruins at Qumran and the document known as the Community Rule suggest a different form of organization: a largely, if not exclusively, male settlement in which the members undertook to live in a state of ritual purity modeled on that of

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1. In one essay I experimented with arguments for a nonsectarian provenance of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice ("'Sectually Explicit' Literature from Qumran," in *The Bible and Its Interpreters* [ed. W. Propp and B. Halpern; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 167–87). Ultimately, however, the evidence for sectarian provenance is more compelling. The Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms) have been recognized from the time of their discovery as a sectarian composition.

priests serving in the temple. Their community was understood to be "a holy house for Israel and the foundation of the holy of holies for Aaron," whose function was "to atone for the land and to decide the judgment of wickedness" (1QS VIII, 5–6, 10).[2] Although the relationship between these two forms of sectarian life is not fully known, I think that the Qumran settlement is best understood as a form of more exacting and dedicated piety followed by a minority of members of the movement.[3] They had a distinct term for themselves—the Yahad, which simply means "the community." Although there may have been other such dedicated communities, this is the only one for which we have physical evidence. It is within this context that I assume the two texts I wish to examine had their setting, whether or not they may have been used elsewhere.

What we know about the communal context of life in the Yahad is relevant to the issue of the role of religious experience in the particular texts I wish to examine. The Community Rule, which probably served as a teaching guide for the Maskil, literally, the "Instructor," who supervised the instruction of members, makes clear how much attention the Yahad paid to individual formation of members and to the formation of the community as a structured whole. Prospective members were repeatedly examined with respect to their "insight" and their "deeds in Torah," and only gradually integrated into the community (1QS V, 20–23; VI, 13–23). Indeed, all members underwent yearly examinations by which their rank in the Yahad was determined (1QS V, 23–24), and seating at assemblies was according to rank (1QS II, 19–23; VI, 4–5). It was thus a community of intense instruction, study, and communal ritual activity. "Together they shall eat, together they shall bless, and together they shall take counsel.… And the Many will keep watch together for a third of each night of the year in order to read in the book, to interpret the law, and to bless together" (1QS VI, 2–3, 7–8). The Yahad was a finely crafted social machine designed for the production of true interpretation and performance of Torah. Each of its members was a carefully constructed part of that machine.

In an earlier study concerning the formation of members and community at Qumran, *The Self as Symbolic Space*, I drew on two different but complementary approaches to understanding such formation. One was Michel Foucault's analysis of disciplinary institutions and the technolo-

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2. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

3. See the analysis of John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 69–75.

gies of the self. What the Community Rule says about the way of life of the Yahad bears an almost uncanny similarity to Foucault's discussion of the mechanisms by which disciplinary institutions produce individuals.[4] More relevant to the present topic, however, is the other approach I found useful, namely, the analysis of figured worlds and constructed selves developed by anthropologist Dorothy Holland and her associates in the volume *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*.[5] Figured worlds are the culturally constructed institutions in which we participate (e.g., the figured world of academia). These figured worlds are furnished with model narratives, typical character roles, objects, and activities that are part of the social performances conducted within these worlds, sets of appropriate and inappropriate emotions and responses to recurrent situations, posited beliefs about the nature of reality, and so forth. Figured worlds, along with the character roles they offer and the structures of meaning they provide, are not default modes of being that everyone always knows how to inhabit. Whether the process is formal or informal, persons enter into figured worlds as novices and become both more proficient and more shaped by the worlds as they continue to engage in their discourses and practices. Although figured worlds are part and parcel of every aspect of human culture, sectarian movements must be particularly explicit and intentional in constructing the language and practices that will give tangible shape to their world and that will shape the experiences and identities of their members.

It is within this context of subject formation through structured experience that I would situate the work of the Hodayot. Unfortunately, we do not know its precise *Sitz im Leben*. It is not clear whether these first-person singular poetic prayers had a place in the liturgy, though it has often been suggested that they may have been recited in connection with the covenant renewal ceremony.[6] Others have suggested that the Hodayot may have been

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4. Carol A. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran* (STDJ 52; Leiden: Brill, 2004; repr., Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 95–101. Portions of this essay adapt arguments made in more detail in that work.

5. Dorothy Holland et al., *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

6. At least one composition does appear to presuppose a liturgical setting (1QH XXVI), though it is distinctive in many respects from the majority of Hodayot. For the text see Hartmut Stegemann et al., *Qumran Cave 1: III; 1QHodayota* (DJD 40; Oxford: Clarendon, 2009), 298–309. For a review of various proposals for the *Sitz im Leben* see

texts for private instruction and devotion. While this is certainly possible, the highly communal nature of Qumran activities suggest that, even if the Hodayot were models for the expression and formation of approved forms of piety, they would probably have been "performed" before the gathered community. The most plausible scenario in my opinion is that proposed originally by Bo Reike.[7] On analogy with Philo's description of the practices of the Therepeutae, he suggested that the common meals might have been followed by the leader and other members of the community reciting new or previously composed prayers in the style of the Hodayot.[8]

There are several features of the Hodayot that make them relevant to the question of religious experience—and in particular, to the normative shaping of religious experience. First, as first-person singular prayers, the Hodayot represent themselves as an account of the speaking subject's own experience. Linguist Emile Benveniste's account of the first-person pronoun as the linguistic basis of subjectivity is critical for understanding what is at stake.[9] The pronouns "I" and "you" are linguistically distinctive. Unlike ordinary nouns, they do not refer to a concept but "to something very peculiar which is exclusively linguistic: *I* refers to the act of individual discourse in which it is pronounced, and by this it designates the speaker.… The reality to which it refers is the reality of the discourse.… And so it is literally true that the basis of subjectivity is in the exercise of language."[10] "I" refers to—indeed, instantiates—the one who says "I." It is through such utterances that a speaker predicates an identity and claims her experience. Of course, Benveniste was thinking of the use

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Denise Dombrowski Hopkins, "The Qumran Community and 1Q*Hodayot*: A Reassessment," *RevQ* 10 (1981): 336.

7. Bo Reicke, "Remarques sur l'histoire de la form (Formgeschichte) des textes de Qumran" in *Les manuscrits de la mer Morte: Colloque de Strasbourg 25–27 Mai 1955* (ed. J. Daniélou; Paris: Paris University Press, 1957), 38–44.

8. If this supposition is correct, then we can actually identify the physical space in which the Hodayot were likely performed. The rectangular chamber identified as the assembly hall at Qumran (L77) was adjacent to a pantry (L86) where over 1000 dishes were stored. The Community Rule specifies special seating arrangements according to spiritual hierarchy for assemblies, apparently including meals (1QS VI 4–6). See Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 113–26.

9. Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics* (trans. M. E. Meek; Miami Linguistics Series 8; Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1971), 217–30.

10. Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics,* 226.

of the pronoun "I" in ordinary conversational discourse situations. The Hodayot, as formal prayers, are something else; but they are none the less important for being that.

In order to understand the function of a prayer in constructing experience (even, possibly, a memorized prayer written by someone else), it is helpful to compare the function of the first-person singular pronoun in ordinary discourse and its function in literary discourse. Benveniste distinguished between the "speaking subject" (the person who produces the speech) and "the subject of speech" (the pronoun, plus all of the elements that stand in for the speaker at the level of discourse). In adapting Benveniste's insights for an analysis of literature and film, Kaja Silverman adds a third category, the "spoken subject," that is, the subject constituted by identification with the "subject of speech."[11] In ordinary discourse all three subjects coincide (I produce the speech, I predicate something about myself, and I identify with that predication). In literature, one might say that the speaking subject is the author or implied author, the subject of speech is the narrator or central character, and the spoken subject is the reader who is invited to be represented by that narrator or character. In literature, of course, the reader's identification with the spoken subject is always provisional and incomplete. But there is another type of speech that differs both from conversational discourse and from literature in the way in which the speaking subject, the subject of speech, and the spoken subject are related. Consider the types of utterance represented by the children's prayer that begins "Now I lay me down to sleep," or the American Pledge of Allegiance, "I pledge allegiance to the flag." Someone in particular wrote these and similar texts. But if I say, "Now I lay me down to sleep" or "I pledge allegiance to the flag," I do not experience myself as quoting the words of another individual. I may speak them in rote fashion or with deep conviction, but in either case "I" am speaking those words. They are mine. So, too, would be the words of the Hodayot be those of the speaker when uttered by a member of the Yahad.

Second, even though much is not known about the actual performance of the Hodayot, it is almost certain that the compositions were recited out loud, probably from memory. As is well established, even private reading in antiquity was performed out loud. Moreover, written texts

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11. Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 43–53, 194–201.

often functioned more as *aides memoire* for texts that were memorized.[12] While we cannot know with certainty whether Hodayot functioned in such a capacity, it is a plausible hypothesis. The combination of memorization, which would involve repeating out loud, with verbal recitation in the presence of others, would strongly reinforce the appropriation of the words of the text as one's own experience. This is the case not least because speaking aloud involves the body in an intimate way. As Roy Rappaport puts it: "The use of the body defines the self of the performer for himself and others."[13] While Rappaport understands public ritual performance to enact "acceptance," that is, a public display of cultural submission, he distinguishes acceptance from belief, which is the inward appropriation of the meaning of the ritual action.[14] The fact that the performance of the Hodayot consists of the recitation of a *first-person singular* prayer certainly encourages the move from acceptance to belief, but considering the sectarian community as a figured world further suggests how this ritual recitation of the Hodayot might have provided both new and older members with a type of appropriated experience that was definitive for their self-understanding.

Dorothy Holland and her associates studied the genre of personal stories in Alcoholics Anonymous groups. Alcoholics Anonymous is also a type of figured world, which "has constructed a particular interpretation of what it means to be an alcoholic, what typical alcoholics are like, and what kinds of incidents mark a typical alcoholic's life."[15] Since no one is born into the figured world of Alcoholics Anonymous, its cultural system and the AA identity must be learned, and one particularly important means of appropriating the identity is learning to tell one's "personal story." A new AA member learns by listening to others and then by beginning to articulate, and probably also to see, his own experience in the forms and categories he has heard. The Hodayot, with their limited range

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12. Martin S. Jaffe, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism 200 BCE–400 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15–16.

13. Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 146. Other important analyses of the body, experience, and ritual include Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (trans. R. Nice; Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 16; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 87–95, 114–24; and Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 94–117.

14. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion,* 119–24.

15. Holland, *Identity and Agency*, 66.

of characteristic themes, *topoi*, narrative plots, and patterns of emotion, function in a similar fashion, offering the Qumran sectarians a template of the normative experience that they are to claim as their own in fashioning their identities. As a new member listens to the Hodayot recited by older members and then either composes a new one according to the patterns heard or memorizes an already existent one to recite to the community, the emotional experience he lays claim to would be patterned according to the normative template of the Hodayot.

There is a possible objection to this model of the function of the Hodayot. Not all of the Hodayot appear to describe the persona of the ordinary sectarian. A few are attributed to the Maskil (the teaching official), but a significant block appear to voice the experience of a persecuted leader. Most scholars think that these are either compositions of the Teacher of Righteousness himself or are prayers composed in his persona.[16] While some of the particular roles he represents himself as playing would not be applicable to the experience of the ordinary sectarian, what he models in terms of his experience of God, self, and world is not very different. Thus, hearing prayers of the Teacher provides an opportunity for the ordinary sectarian to identify with the normative experience of the leader, and becomes an incentive to model his own religious dispositions on those of the leader.

There is room in this short article to give only a few selected examples of the way in which the Hodayot provide normative templates for certain patterns of experience central to forming the identity of the sectarian. Certainly, one of the most common themes in the Hodayot is that of knowledge. (There are, for example, 73 instances of the verbal forms of ידע ["to know"] in 1QH[a]; in 31 cases the subject is "I"; in 6 the object is "me.") The speakers repeatedly thank God for the gift of knowledge, and they often cast their speech as a recitation of what they know. This knowledge may be about the mysteries of creation, the roles of the righteous and the wicked in God's plan for every generation, or the eschatological conflict at the end of days. Simply the act of reciting these mysteries gives the speaker the sense of being privy to powerful knowledge of transcendent reality.

But what is the status of the knower? One of the most intriguing aspects of the Hodayot is the way in which these compositions subject both

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16. I hold out the possibility that these compositions may not be specific to the historical Teacher of Righteousness, but may be the prayers of the leaders of the community at any stage. For present purposes, however, it does not matter.

knowledge and moral capacity to a paradoxical construction. Particularly common is the speaker's acknowledgment that his election and his capacity to turn back from sinning against God is itself a gift of God, and not his natural capacity. Indeed, his very capacity for knowledge is not his own, but purely the gift of God. Several commonly repeated phrases encapsulate this relationship: "And I know, by means of the knowledge that comes from you" (1QHᵃ VI, 23; VII, 25; IX, 23); "I know by means of the spirit that you have placed in me" (V, 36; VIII, 29); "you have caused me to know" (XII, 28; XV, 30; XVIII, 16; XIX, 19; XXII, 11).[17] Often what the speaker goes on to say is that the content of his knowledge is the recognition of God as the source of his own moral capacity and/or the fates of the righteous and the wicked. While these expressions may be simply a reflex of humility and piety, they are no less significant on that account. One does not find this phraseology in other Second Temple prayer or psalmic texts. To shape one's speech like this is to practice a distinctive experience of the self.

More significant than the short phrases, however, is the fact that the Hodayot often dramatically stage the paradoxical construction of the self as a moment of recognition: the speaker realizes that he is simultaneously a guilty sink of putrid nothingness and an elect being charged with knowledge of profound mysteries. This is perhaps the most distinctive religious experience that the Hodayot attempt to construct. Earlier scholars referred to these curious passages as *Neidrigkeitsdoxologie*. But I think that expression puts the emphasis in the wrong place. I prefer to call this pattern of experience constructed by the Hodayot "the masochistic sublime," since the experience of exalted and profound knowledge and moral capacity is intensified precisely by a repeated encounter with the nothingness that is the human on its own.

Two examples illustrate the pattern. In the hodayah found in 1QHᵃ V, the speaker (perhaps the Maskil) introduces the prayer with references to the act of "giving understanding to the simple" and "giving humankind understanding" (V, 12–14). The hodayah proper begins with a long section concerning the "mysteries of the plan" that God has established (V, 17) and in which God instructed the speaker (V, 19). The dualistic language (V, 20–24) echoes the Two Spirits section of the Community Rule (1QS III, 15–IV, 26). Clearly, this is a discourse of powerful knowledge, quite appropriate to the teaching role of the Maskil. Yet at the end of this discourse

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17. Citations follow the numbering in DJD 40.

that moves so confidently to describe the mysteries of God's plan, the style abruptly changes:

> [But how] is a spirit of flesh to discern all these things and to grasp the secret coun[sel of your] great [wonder]? And what is one born of woman amid all your fearful works? He is a thing constructed of dust and kneaded with water. [Sin]ful gui[lt] is his foundation, ignominious shame, and a so[urce] of pollution, and a spirit of error rules him. And if he acts wickedly, he will become [a sign] forever and an emblem for generations, an eternal horror among flesh. (1QH V, 30–33)

Although the end of the psalm is badly broken, it is clear that the speaker negotiates his way out of his focus on the guilt and incapacity of the human subject by reflecting again on the gift of knowledge from God "through the spirit that you have placed in me" (V, 36).

A similar pattern occurs in column IX. The beginning of the psalm is not preserved, but the central part contains a long account of the wisdom of God in the creation of the heavens, the earth, and the destinies of human beings "throughout all their generations" (IX, 18), all of which was determined by God before anything existed. Once again, the character created by this speaking voice is quintessentially a character with an intimate understanding of the sorts of knowledge located in God's provenance. Then, at the conclusion of the act of praise, the speaker pauses to comment on what makes possible his act of praise and constitutes him as a subject of knowledge: "These things I know because of the insight that comes from you, for you have opened my ears to wondrous mysteries" (IX, 23). Somehow this act of recognition precipitates another perception, for as soon as these words are uttered, the subject that has spoken so powerfully describes itself as abject and loathsome:

> But I am a creature of clay and a thing kneaded with water, a foundation of shame and a well of impurity, and an edifice of sin, a spirit of error, perverted, without understanding, and terrified by judgments of righteousness." (IX, 23–25)

The result of this self-recognition is to question the meaning and value of the author's speech.

> What could I say that is not already known? Or what could I declare that has not already been told? (IX, 25)

The passage continues with a recognition of the speaker's inability to explain or defend his sinfulness to God. Elsewhere the hodayah asserts that moral cleanness is necessary for one who would praise God (IX, 34–35). Consequently, the fact of the speaker's sinful condition makes his very act of praise deeply problematic. The resolution to this crisis of speech can only be achieved by pursuing the logic of null subjectivity to its conclusion. Even speech, that most personal expression of self, derives not from one's own self but from God.

> You created breath for the tongue, and you know its words, and you establish the fruit of the lips before they exist … in order to make known your glory and to recount your wonders.… (IX, 29, 31–32)Recognizing that the speaking subject is entirely an effect of God, the speaker regains his voice, promising to "[make known in the assembly of the sim]ple the judgments of my affliction" (IX, 33). He concludes with an address in the bold wisdom style: "Hear, O you sages, and you who ponder knowledge" (IX, 36–37).

That this structure of self-experience is not simply a feature of the Hodayot collection is underscored by the similar pattern exhibited in the song of the Maskil at the conclusion of the Community Rule. The poem is introduced by the Maskil's disciplined commitment to praise God at all liturgical times (1QS X, 1–8) and at the beginning of all his activities (X, 13–16). A lengthy section follows in which it is affirmed that the knowledge and strength that come to the Maskil through his contemplation of God are what allow him to undertake the moral commitments he enumerates in X, 16–XI, 2. At this point, however, begins a series of poetic units, each introduced by the phrase "but I" (אני כיא or ואני). In these sections the Maskil first orients himself to God, focusing on the nature of God, and then seems to see himself from God's perspective, and so becomes aware of his sins. The relationship between the Maskil's own evident incapacity and the divine super-capacity becomes the theme in XI, 2–9. There, everything that constitutes the Maskil—his perfection of way, his insight into divine mysteries, his strength and sureness, his status as part of God's eternal possession—everything is seen as coming from the hand of God.

At the moment that the Maskil's description of the benefits of God's graciousness reaches its pinnacle, as he joyously affirms that God's elect are joined with the heavenly assembly, he plunges abruptly into an abyss of awareness of his own nature ("but I," ואני) as a member of the "assembly of deceitful flesh" and the "assembly of maggots" (XI, 9–10). This downward

movement of horrified self-recognition is once again reversed ("but I," ואני; XI, 11b), as he recalls that God's plan and power are the source of all. These vertiginous reversals of the angle of self-perception and the quick changes of emotional tone are part of the construction of the self that is made available through the recitation of this composition. Indeed, the Maskil sees in this dynamic the purpose of his existence: to praise God for just such gracious rescue from the impurity and sinfulness that is the human condition (XI, 14–15). Only here, some forty lines after declaring his intention to bless God, does the Maskil address God directly. The content of the praise recapitulates the themes that have been rehearsed in the preceding part of the composition—the nothingness of humankind that corresponds to the fullness of the divine. The conclusion of the composition, however, is not a celebration of divine glory. Instead, it returns to images of human decay, corruption, and inability to understand.

What, then, constitutes the Maskil's character? It is not so much his knowledge about the plan of God and the nature of humankind itself as it is his experience of a distinctive dynamic within his own psyche. Reciting the hymn creates a vertiginous experience that could be described as the cultivation of the masochistic sublime. The pleasure of seeing oneself constituted and destined for heavenly reward by means of the overwhelming power and mercy of God is experienced and even intensified by simultaneously expressing and experiencing one's natural human sinfulness and loathsomeness.

In sum, the effect of listening to, reciting, and perhaps composing Hodayot—prayers composed in the first-person singular and formulated according to a limited range of templates—would have given the Qumran sectarians an important instrument for the development of a common experience. This common experience of the self would have facilitated their collective life together, giving them the identity they needed in order to be receptive to the disciplines that their sectarian life dictated, if they were to enhance the spirit of holiness to which they aspired.

The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice

A very different example of the cultivation of religious experience through the careful use of language is offered by the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice.[18]

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18. Carol Newsom, "Shirot 'Olat Hashabbat," in *Qumran Cave 4.VI: Poetical and*

These texts are a cycle of thirteen liturgical texts that were recited on each of the first thirteen Sabbaths of the year, presumably at the time of the Sabbath *musaph* offering. Each begins with a date heading and an imperative call to the angelic worshipers to praise God. The body of the song differs in content and style according to the place that it occupies in the cycle. In most of the compositions nothing is said about the human community that summons the heavenly angels to praise. The exception comes in the second Sabbath song, where the human community briefly contemplates its inadequacy in comparison with the angelic worshipers, but then proceeds to offer its praise (4Q400 2, 6–8). Otherwise, however, in contrast to the Hodayot, the human self-consciousness is completely elided. The Qumran community did frequently express the conviction that in some sense they shared a common lot with the angels, even justifying regulations concerning ritual purity "because the holy angels are in their [congre]gation" (1QSa II, 8–9). The notion of common worship with the angels is already attested in the Psalms (e.g., Ps 148) and remains an aspect of the synagogue liturgy and of the Christian eucharistic liturgy. The Sabbath Songs differ from these rather brief references to such common worship by being far more elaborate and vivid. The Sabbath Songs thus appear to be one of the ritual mechanisms by which the Qumran community's belief in communion with the angels was actually experienced.

It is particularly unfortunate that we have no indication as to how these songs were performed. Presumably, they were recited by the Maskil in his role as liturgical leader (as the introductory phrase of each song suggests) to an assembly of the Qumran community, as indicated by the first-person plural pronouns in 4Q400 2, 6–8. Whether this assembly consisted of priests alone or of a mixed gathering of priests and laity we have no way of knowing. Presumably, as in other assemblies, the community would have been seated according to rank. While there is no indication that the songs were recited in unison, the experience may have involved more than mere passive listening, as I will discuss below. But the structured assembly itself, the coordination with the rhythms of sacred time, and the synchronized attentiveness would have served to generate an experience of *communitas* within the group, even as it provided a sense of access to the angelic worshiping community.[19]

Liturgical Texts, Part 1 (ed. Esther Eshel et al.; DJD 11; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 173–401.

19. See the discussion in Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion*, 216–30.

Recitation of a liturgical text that summons to praise is by definition a worship experience. But there is ample evidence that the Sabbath Songs were carefully constructed to provide a particular structure of experience that has two points of intensity. This evidence has to do with the different ways language is used in three discrete parts of the cycle. Although not terribly well preserved, the first five songs are composed in a style that hovers between heightened, parallelistic prose and poetry. Finite verbs are frequent, and grammatically complete sentences are typical. The content seems to focus largely on giving information about the tasks and responsibilities of the angelic priests and the role of the angelic armies in the eschatological battle (e.g., 4Q400 1; 2; 4Q402 4). All of this information, however, is conveyed within the framework of praise of God. The central three songs (Sabbaths 6–8) have a very different style. Songs 6 and 8 are highly repetitive, enumerative accounts of the psalms and blessings uttered by the seven chief princes (Song 6) and the seven deputy princes (Song 8). Each is characterized by a repeated theme word and an almost obsessive repetition of the number seven. Indeed, those enumerations constitute the entire content of the songs. For example, from Song 6:[20]

> Psalm of blessing by the tongue of the first chief prince to the eternal God with its seven wondrous blessings; and he will bless the King of all the eternal holy ones seven times with seven words of wondrous blessing.

> Psalm of magnification by the tongue of the second to the king of truth and righteousness with its seven wondrous songs of magnification; and he will magnify the God of all the heavenly beings who are appointed for righteousness seven times with seven words of wondrous magnification.

> Psalm of exaltation by the tongue of the third of the chief princes, an exaltation of His faithfulness to the king of angels with its seven wondrous exaltations; he will exalt the God of the lofty angels seven times with seven words of wondrous exaltations.

The passage continues through the seventh of the chief princes, then summarizes as follows:

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20. The text presented is a composite and restored text. For the text as preserved in individual manuscripts, see Newsom, "Shirot 'Olat Hashabbat," 256–61.

> Seven psalms of His blessing; seven psalms of the magnification of His righteousness; seven psalms of the exaltation of His kingdom; seven psalms of the praise of His glory; seven psalms of thanksgiving for His wonders; seven psalms of rejoicing in His strength; seven psalms of praise for His holiness … seven times with seven wondrous words.

It is well known that repetitious language can be used to induce dissociated states that facilitate a meditative state of consciousness. Indeed, repetition of texts is a standard technique in Jewish mystical practice.[21] Although the Sabbath Songs are not mystical, properly speaking, it does appear that the intent of these highly repetitive recitations of the angelic psalms (and following them, the blessings) in the sixth and eighth Sabbath Songs is to inculcate a meditative experience.

The central seventh song follows a different strategy, but also attempts to create a sense of the numinous. Instead of a simple call to praise, approximately 40 percent of the song consists of seven increasingly elaborate calls to each of the seven angelic councils to praise God. Following these calls to praise, however, the speaker invokes praise from the very architectural structures of the heavenly temple (e.g., foundations, beams, pillars), as well as from the *merkabot* (chariots), the *ophannim* (wheels), and the *cherubim* (attendant creatures) that occupy the inner sanctums of what appear to be seven heavenly temples. The extraordinary evocation of hearing the heavenly temple itself and its furnishings praise God is an experiential tour de force, but it is based on the metaphysical assumption that heavenly structures would not be built out of stone and wood and metal, but out of living spiritual substances (cf. 4Q405 14–15 i).

The final five songs pursue a different linguistic and poetic strategy. Although only portions of the songs are preserved, it appears that Songs 9–11 describe the heavenly temple, moving progressively from its outer gates and courts toward the holy of holies. Song 12 describes the divine chariot throne, and Song 13 focuses on the angelic priests in their heavenly priestly vestments. In these songs the linguistic style undergoes yet another radical transformation. There are virtually no finite verbs, only participial and nominal sentences. Moreover, the descriptive passages are full of ostensibly precise but in actuality very vague descriptions that suggest appearances, but deny to the hearer the ability to construct a deter-

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21. Steven T. Katz, "Mystical Speech and Mystical Meaning," in *Mysticism and Language* (ed. Steven T. Katz; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 14–15.

minate image. The physical senses of both sight and sound are engaged. Sensuous color descriptions are employed, and paradoxical sound images play on the intersection of sound and silence.

Two examples will illustrate. The first is the description of the divine chariot throne from Song 12.

> The cherubim fall before Him and bless. As they rise, the sound of divine stillness is heard, and there is a tumult of jubilation as their wings lift up, the sound of divine stillness.… And when the wheels move, the holy angels return. They go out from between its glorious hubs. Like the appearance of fire are the most holy spirits round about, the appearance of streams of fire like electrum. And there is a radiant substance with glorious colors, wondrously hued, purely blended, the spirits of living godlike beings which move continuously with the glory of the wondrous chariot. There is a still sound of blessing in the tumult of their movement.

The second is the description of the appearance of the heavenly angelic priests in their holy vestments from Song 13.

> In their wondrous stations are spirits (clothed with) many colors, like woven work, engraved with figures of splendor. In the midst of the glorious appearance of scarlet, the colors of most holy spiritual light, standing firm in their holy station before the King, are spirits in garments of purest color in the midst of the appearance of whiteness. And this glorious spiritual substance is like fine gold work, shedding light. And all their crafted (garments) are purely blended, an artistry of woven work. These are the chiefs of those wondrously arrayed for service, the chiefs of the realm of the holy ones of the King of holiness in all the heights of the sanctuaries of His glorious kingdom.

These examples illustrate the way in which the careful manipulation of language constructs an invitation to certain kinds of numinous religious experience. The question that lingers, however, has to do with how the sectarians would have engaged the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. From my own experience in translating, editing, and commenting on this text, I can say that the effect of the language is most powerful when it is read and experienced in a single sitting. But if the date headings are taken seriously, the Sabbath Songs would not have been experienced as a rhetorical whole, but would have been spread out over a quarter of the year. Would not the religious experience of the composition have been significantly weakened if it were encountered in such a piecemeal fashion? It certainly

seems so. One other piece of evidence, however, may suggest an additional dimension to the way in which these texts were engaged. At Qumran, eight different copies of the text were recovered from Cave 4, and one from Cave 11. In addition, a copy was found at Masada, probably carried there from Qumran when the Qumran community was destroyed by the Roman army in 68 C.E. The large number of copies of the text suggests that it was extensively used, and perhaps even formed part of the curriculum of sectarian education. As recent scholars have reminded us, education in antiquity consisted largely of the memorization of texts, known as "writing on the tablets of the heart."[22] To envision even a portion of the Qumran community memorizing the Songs of the Sacrifice is to see its rhetorical structures in a very different light. In that case these texts and their careful modulation of language to construct different experiences would be internalized as a whole by each person who memorized them. For such sectarians, even the dispersed communal recitation of these texts over a series of thirteen Sabbaths would activate the individual's sense of the place of that particular song in the entire sequence. Moreover, to hear someone recite words that you yourself have memorized is to come close to unison recitation, which is one of the powerful ways in which ritual activity affects the neurophysiology of participants and shapes the social body.[23]

Conclusion

The investigation of religious experience in communities of antiquity is one of the most elusive of academic quests. It is not, however, an investigation that eludes inquiry entirely. Language itself encodes experience—or at least it encodes attempts to induce experience. That encoding is something that is objectively present, and that can be studied. Thus where we have texts that presumably served as scripts or models for performances, we can draw reasonable conclusions about the ways in which religious communities attempted to construct common experiences for individuals in the community and for the body of the community as a whole. In the analysis of the Hodayot I have attempted to show how the creation of a novel form of first-person singular poetic prayer served to construct a

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22. Aptly, this is the title used by David Carr in his study of education in antiquity, *Writing on the Tablets of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

23. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion*, 226–30; Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 215.

new model of the self that would be appropriated by individual sectarians as they became more proficient members of the figured world of the Qumran sectarian society. The linguistic magic of the pronoun "I," the use of the individual's own voice and body, and the public nature of the performance itself would have worked together to encourage the appropriation of the experience described in the prayer as the speaker's own. The Sabbath Songs illustrate a different type of inculcated experience, a common worship shared not only by the assembled members of the community but also to a certain extent with the angelic priests themselves. While common praise with the angels was already a trope in biblical psalmody, the Sabbath Songs' intentional use of various linguistic strategies (intense repetition, mirroring passages, paradoxical formulations, sensuous imagery, deformations of ordinary syntax, etc.) are indications of an attempt to generate an experience of the heavenly realm and its wonders. Clues from other sectarian texts such as the Community Rule concerning the ways in which the community used its common space and arranged the bodies of members within that space also point to ways in which the verbal instruments for inculcating experience interacted with nonverbal aspects of ritualized behavior. In gleaning these clues from the texts that remain, however, one cannot help but be aware of how much of the rich religious experience that was cultivated at Qumran remains beyond our ability to recover.

Religious Experience through the Lens of Critical Spatiality: A Look at Embodiment Language in Prayers and Hymns

Angela Kim Harkins

This essay proposes that critical spatial theory can offer a helpful framework for examining how a reader can move from text to religious experience. In this essay, religious experience is understood to be the transformation of the ancient reader from a more or less detached observer to a full participant in the events that are being described. Such an experience has phenomenal aspects of lived experience, including elements of sensory perception and affect. The texts that I have chosen to discuss, Neh 9 and Ephrem's *Hymns on Paradise*, are not simply writings that were preserved for their literary artistry; they are texts associated with ritual and religious praxis. This study does not eliminate the possibility that sacred texts were composed by authors in various states of consciousness.[1] The thesis that I offer is that the rhetorical use of embodiment language, through the construction of spatial realms and the generation of subjectivity (including phenomenal bodies and affect), can create a religious experience for the reader who seeks to reenact the text.

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1. While such a proposal has often been expressed for apocalyptic visionary literature, it seems wholly appropriate for Ephrem's *Hymns on Paradise*, which will be discussed later in this essay; see Michael E. Stone, "Apocalyptic—Vision or Hallucination?" in *Selected Studies in Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha with Special Reference to the Armenian Tradition* (SVTP 9; Leiden: Brill, 1991), 419–28, here 428; repr. from *Milla Wa Milla* 14 (1974); idem, "A Reconsideration of Apocalyptic Visions," *HTR* 96 (2003): 167–80.

CRITICAL SPATIAL THEORY

In this essay, when I speak of spatiality I refer to the elaborate way that language about space and physical experience can facilitate a reader's phenomenal reenactment of a text. Jon Berquist describes spatiality in the following way:

> Within the growing body of literature on critical spatiality, the terms space and spatiality refer to aspects of reality that involve concepts of distance, height, width, breadth, orientation and direction, and also human perceptions, constructions and uses of these aspects.[2]

The theorists associated with critical spatial theory refer to the bodily experience of space as it is perceived empirically as *ordinary geography* or Firstspace.[3] It is also possible for phenomenal aspects of embodiment—the physical extension of the body, its sensory perceptions, and affect—to

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2. Jon L. Berquist, "Critical Spatiality and the Construction of the Ancient World," in *Imagining Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social, and Historical Constructs in Honor of James W. Flanagan* (ed. David M. Gunn and Paula McNutt; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 15. Berquist discusses critical spatiality's indebtedness to Marx and various social theories. Important foundational work on spatial theory and biblical studies was done by James W. Flanagan, "Ancient Perceptions of Space/ Perceptions of Ancient Space," *Semeia* 87 (1999), 15–43; idem, "Space" in *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 239–44; idem, "Mapping the Biblical World: Perceptions of Space in Ancient Southwestern Asia," in *Mappa Mundi: Mapping Culture/Mapping the World* (ed. Jacqueline Murray; Working Papers in the Humanities 9; Windsor: Humanities Research Group, University of Windsor, 2001), 1–18. See also the recent collection in honor of James Flanagan: Jon L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp, eds., *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative* (New York: Continuum, 2008).

3. The language of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace is associated with Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith; Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), and Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996). Also see Michel Foucault ("Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16 [1986]: 22–27), whose work on critical spatiality uses different vocabulary. Also see the discussion of these post-modern theorists by Flanagan, "Ancient Perceptions," 27–30; and Philip R. Davies, "Space and Sects in the Qumran Scrolls," in *Imagining Biblical Worlds*, 81–97; as well as the excellent discussion of spatiality in Christl M. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space, and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 10–29; and Alison Schofield, "Re-placing Priestly Space: The Wilderness as Heterotopia in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in

be constructed rhetorically for the reader. Constructed spaces like those found in prayers and hymns are called *religious geography* or Secondspace, wherein "theological imagination and religious cosmology play an active role in representing geographical space."[4] Scenes of religious geography may reuse sites and places from ordinary geography to give vividness and familiarity to the constructed landscape, but the space that is produced in the text does not exist empirically in Firstspace. The concept of a religious constructed geography is analogous to Michel Foucault's idea of a utopia or "a placeless place."[5] Foucault uses a mirror to describe how a utopia can provide access into a (virtual) space that occupies no physical place. Foucault writes:

> Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society.… The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent; such is the utopia of the mirror.[6]

Here note that Foucault uses the idea of "space" differently from "place," which is more concrete and precise. Peter Johnson explains this distinction in the following way:

> As is often remarked, there are complex and subtle relational differences in English and French between space [*espace*] and place [*lieu*]. Augé provides a helpful and succinct distinction. "Space" is much more abstract than "place." The former term can refer to an area, a distance and, significantly in relation to Foucault's concept of heterotopia, a temporal period (the space of two days). The latter, more tangible term, refers to an event or a history, whether mythical or real. [7]

A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam (ed. Eric F. Mason et al.; JSJSup 153; 2 vols., Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1:470–90.

4. Thomas B. Dozeman, "Biblical Geography and Critical Spatial Studies," in *Constructions of Space I*, 87–108, here 88; also Roger W. Stump, "The Geography of Religion—Introduction," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 7 (1986): 1–3.

5. Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 24. Utopias are placeless spaces but they do not carry an intrinsic positive value.

6. Ibid., 24.

7. Peter Johnson, "Unravelling Foucault's 'Different Spaces,'" *History of the Human*

Critical spatial theory offers a vocabulary for discussing the rhetorical construction of space in prayers and hymns, which are placeless spaces that can be visited experientially insofar as a reader can visualize himself or herself to be there, though they do not occupy a place in ordinary geography.

In addition to Firstspace and Secondspace, there is also a third category of space, which is the realm where transformation is possible and power is reconfigured. The critical theorists Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja understand this space, Thirdspace, to be the site of resistance where alternate realities are produced.[8] Both theorists conceptualize Thirdspace through a Marxist lens as oppositional,[9] but this seems to be an unnecessary condition. Insisting upon an aspect of resistance can predetermine experiences in Thirdspace and restrict the types of experiences generated. Instead, Michel Foucault's account of Thirdspace as "heterotopia" helpfully constructs the concept without the strong Marxist overtones that characterize Lefebvre's idea.[10] Returning to the idea of the "placeless place" occupied by the mirror, Foucault explains how the mirror can simultaneously function as a heterotopia insofar as it is grounded in actual experiential phenomena:

Sciences 19 (2006): 75–90, here 76–77; see also Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995), 81–84.

8. Lefebvre is heavily influenced by Marxist social theory, in which participation is imagined as inherently oppositional. Yet I do not find that this needs to be a crucial element of phenomenal experiences of Thirdspace realities.

9. Thirdspace is also associated with post-Marxist theories (see Peter Beilharz, "Post-Marxism," in the *Encyclopedia of Social Theory* [ed. George Ritzer; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2005], 1:581), and with other theoretical studies of identity and power, including postcolonialism. For a summary of these social theories, see Elizabeth King Keenan and Dennis Miehls, "Third Space Activities and Change Processes: An Exploration of Ideas from Social and Psychodynamic Theories," *Clinical Social Work Journal* 36 (2008): 165–75; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999). Keenan and Miehls describe Thirdspace as "thresholds where existing perspectives are dissembled, other perspectives are considered, and new understandings emerge" (166).

10. Soja, Lefebvre, and Foucault understand this type of space to be the realm of "lived experience"—see Soja, *Thirdspace*, 15–16. Lefebvre calls the Thirdspace "lived spaces of representation." Foucault ("Of Other Spaces," 22–27) refers to these spaces as "heterotopias," the "space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs" (here 23; see also 24–27).

But it [i.e., the mirror] is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy.… The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.[11]

Foucault's heterotopia as a space of simultaneity offers the full range of sensory perception and the free movement of physicality that comes with occupying a real experiential place. Peter Johnson does not understand resistance as an essential element of Foucault's heterotopia.[12] He writes:

The supposition here is that Foucault's "different spaces" are sites for resistance to the dominant culture. This may be one interpretation, but it is actually difficult to find anyone who explicitly makes a sustained case for it. Hetherington asserts that the term has been used to identify "sites of marginality that act as postmodern spaces for resistance and transgression—treating them in many ways as liminal spaces" but the references he provides are not substantive.[13]

Thirdspace experiences are liminal spaces that are real world experiences and so have real world consequences, but they allow for full participation in other worlds.

Thirdspace can be generated by ritual practices. A fine example of the constructed, not actual, understandings of the land in the apocalypse of 2 Baruch is offered by Liv Ingeborg Lied, who writes:

The Land is always localised and is always presented by familiar terms and imageries, but it is also always more than a location, or a territory, and more than the allusions and connotations associated with the Land-theme. The Land is the spatial outcome of the creative recombination of location and conventional concepts through Israel's collective righteous practices.[14]

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11. Ibid., 24.

12. See Johnson, "Unravelling Foucault's 'Different Spaces,'" 81–82.

13. Johnson ("Unravelling Foucault's 'Different Spaces,'" 81–82) here references Kevin Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering* (London: Routledge, 1997), 41.

14. Liv Ingeborg Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch* (JSJSup 129; Leiden: Brill, 2008).

Here Lied demonstrates how the very idea of the land in 2 Baruch can be understood as emerging from the community's religious practices. The ongoing conceptualizations of the land throughout time are produced by the lived experience of the faithful communities that generate them. Land as a Thirdspatial reality is generated by religious praxis.

For the modern critical theorists who engage the concepts of First-space, Secondspace, and Thirdspace, it is important that Thirdspace experiences take place in actual embodied realities. Yet I propose that embodied performative reading and the material text can function as the real world places for heterotopia. Both are firmly planted in the ordinary world of lived experiences. The text as material object, I propose, can be considered the real world place for heterotopic experiences when it is reenacted as an affective script. Spatial descriptions in prayer texts can arouse sensory parts of the brain that can effectively simulate a real experience of being in the places that are described.[15] The idea of the material text as heterotopia recognizes its capacity to function as a physical portal to a world constructed by the religious imagination. The heterotopic experiences that arise there have the potential to transform a reader into a full participant in the religious event. The material aspects of the text as scroll also move a reader in a linear direction without the freedom of random access. Thus the reader enjoys unique elements of physical spatiality. Like Foucault's mirror, a scroll simultaneously provides entry points into Secondspace and potentially Thirdspace experiences. Thirdspace is, I propose, a space where readers can move from the constraints of the ordinary human condition to experience events in a phenomenal way as if they were active participants in these spaces with an undetermined freedom that comes from lived experience. Participants in Thirdspace are free to challenge, expand, and innovate; they are not confined to simply resistance.

All three types of spatiality, Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace, relate to bodily experiences and so rely on perceptual experiential elements.[16] Rather than resistance, it is best to understand Thirdspace expe-

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15. Various regions of the brain are stimulated during sensory experiences. These same regions are activated when mental imaging occurs. See Stephen Michael Kosslyn, *Image and Brain: The Resolution of the Imagery Debate* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994).

16. Kathryn M. Lopez ("Standing before the Throne of God: Critical Spatiality in Apocalyptic Scenes of Judgment," in *Constructions of Space II: The Biblical City and Other Imagined Spaces* [ed. Jon L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp; New York: Con-

riences as going beyond or as departing from the scripted experiences of Secondspace. Within this tripartite spatial schema, Thirdspace is distinguished by the fullness of lived experience; yet Secondspace experiences are also perceptual sensations of embodiment that are phenomenologically no less real for the individuals who construct them and the readers who experience them. Every description of religious geography, either apocalyptic or hegemonic, can function as a Secondspace construction that offers a reader a scripted experience of spatiality.

In the case of religious experience, I propose using this theoretical framework from critical spatial theory to identify two different types of religious experience, one in which a reader is asked to participate in the phenomenal experiences of being in a constructed religious geography (Secondspace), and another in which a reader can hope to become a full participant in the scene (Thirdspace). Secondspatial religious experiences refer to events in which a reader seeks to phenomenally reenact the affective experiences described in the text, and so to participate in the experiences of transformation that they describe. This process is facilitated by the rhetorical construction of subjectivity, which compels a reader to take on the persona of the subject in the text, a process that Claudia Camp describes as "readers' reading through ancient textualized persons."[17] Because spatiality is conveyed through reports of phenomenal sensations of embodiment, it is intimately linked to matters of subjectivity and questions of identity. The sensory perceptions of the textualized rhetorical subject become the vehicle through which a reader experiences the Secondspace terrain of the text. As James Flannagan has rightly noted, "people move through people, not through space."[18] The type of religious experience that happens in these Secondspace events is a scripted reenactment of the bodily experiences described in the text, including the transformations experienced by the textualized subject. The ancient reader seeks to

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tinuum, 2008], 140) summarizes Soja's understanding of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace: "By Firstspace Soja refers to the perceivable materiality of space. Secondspace is space as conceived, as ideologically construed, a construction of space that may occur through mapping or verbal discourses. Thirdspace is space as lived, or experienced, including affects, desires, and imagination."

17. Claudia Camp, "Storied Space, or, Ben Sira 'Tells' a Temple," in *Imagining Biblical Worlds*, 64–80, here 77.

18. Flanagan, "Mapping the Biblical World," 13.

read with an eye to recreating the phenomenal sensations of the rhetorical subject in a religiously constructed geography.

Constructing Embodied Experiences in Nehemiah 9

Second Temple prayers, especially the kind of penitential prayer found in Neh 9:5–37, powerfully reiterate stories of God's salvation by redeploying scriptural images and language. The use of embodiment language in penitential prayers effectively constructs phenomenal Secondspaces for a reader to occupy and provides access to Thirdspace experiences as well.[19] These discursive prayers take great pains to retell key moments in Israel's history, with particular attention to the physicality and spatiality of the events. Penitential prayers are especially fitting texts to examine for religious experience, since they express the expectation of the prayer's efficacy in real time and space, and its ability to transform the ones who pray it from a state of guilt to innocence.[20] Ezra's prayer in Neh 9:5–37 has the following elements: (1) address (9:6a); (2) historical recital (9:6–31); (3) address (9:32a); (4) petition (9:32b); (5) confession of sin (9:33–35); and (6) lament (9:36–37).[21]

The language and imagery found in Ezra's historical recital, while referencing events from Exodus, exhibits Deuteronomistic taste in the scene selection (although scholars have also rightly noted the Priestly influences

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19. See Judith H. Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBLEJL 14; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999). Also see the fine collection edited by James L. Kugel, *Prayers That Cite Scripture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), especially the essay by Esther G. Chazon, "Scripture and Prayer in 'The Words of the Luminaries,'" (25–41). For a discussion of Neh 9 and its use of scriptural traditions, see Mark J. Boda, *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9* (BZAW 277; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999); Richard J. Bautch, *Developments in Genre between Post-exilic Penitential Prayers and the Psalms of Communal Lament* (SBLAcBib 7; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

20. On the special function of penitential prayers to remove sin, see Rodney Alan Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* (SBLEJL 13; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 2–3; Leon Liebreich, "The Impact of Neh 9:5–37 on the Liturgy of the Synagogue," *HUCA* 32 (1961): 227–37.

21. Form-critical correspondence of these elements to the psalms of communal lament is discussed in Bautch, *Post-exilic Penitential Prayers*, 118. However, unlike the communal lament psalms which assert innocence, the penitential prayers assert the guilt of those who pray (120).

present in the prayer).[22] Recognizing a thematic hinge in the historical recital at Neh 9:16, Richard Bautch notes that the emphasis in the second half highlights moral failure and guilt in a manner characteristic of the Deuteronomic historian, as seen in texts like Judg 2:11–23.[23] In this part of the historical recital, the reference to the ignominious golden calf episode from Exod 32, an event that is especially critical of the Priestly tradition's cult hero Aaron, is highlighted. The prayer's continuity with specific Deuteronomistic elements can also be seen in its use of embodiment language. According to Steven Weitzman, rhetorical language about the body and its sensory faculties is used by the author of Deuteronomy as a strategy for reform or transformation.[24] Weitzman argues that "its reformative project is much more innovative than scholars have realized, seeking not merely to resituate religious experience in a new setting but to intervene in the nature of religious experience itself by reorienting the sensory self through which it is filtered."[25] The construction of sensory experiences is part of the construction of Israel's subjectivity in the book of Deuteronomy, and so too in Ezra's prayer.

The historical recital of Israel's guilt and rebellion is vividly retold in the third person. It constructs a vivid religious geography of Israel and his experiences as he enters into the land. These Secondspace experiences are appropriated and actualized by Ezra, who then confesses the sins of the Second Temple community in the first person (Neh 9:33–35). The rhetorical language in the historical recital in Neh 9:6–31 effectively produces a phenomenal persona, Israel, through which a reader can experience the sensations related to guilt and salvation. The subjectivity of Israel is constructed by the mention of various and specific body parts and physical experiences—a "stiff neck" (9:17, 29), a "defiant shoulder" (9:29), an "ear" that would not heed (9:30), "feet that did not swell" (9:21), clothes that did not wear thin (9:21)—all of which succeed in constructing a phenomenal body capable of the full range of sensory perception. It is through this body

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22. For example, the importance placed on Sabbath and its observance is typical of Priestly traditions. The reference in Neh 9:13–14 to "holy sabbath" appears here and in only one Priestly passage, Exod 16:23 (Newman, *Praying by the Book*, 85).

23. Bautch, *Post-exilic Penitential Prayers*, 113.

24. Steven Weitzman, "Sensory Reform in Deuteronomy," in *Religion and the Self in Antiquity* (ed. David Brakke et al.; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 123–39.

25. Ibid., 136.

that the Judeans are asked to re-experience the physical sensations, including affect, of the wilderness trek and journey into the land—an experience that is fitting for the Judeans who also find themselves entering into the land after the exile. A reader who reads the historical recital as religious praxis can generate within himself or herself a subjectivity that is predisposed to having the types of experiences that Israel had.[26] Ultimately, the prayer in Neh 9:6–37, and the script that is offered for reenactment, promise the transformative experiences of forgiveness (9:17) and deliverance (9:27) that Israel also enjoyed.

Sensory perceptions relating to visualization, even when they are simulated through textualized descriptions, can arouse the emotions and intensify the experience of reenactment. Emotions are understood to be bodily changes in heart palpitation or endocrine levels.[27] According to the account of the exodus events preserved in the Book of Exodus, the act of visual perception aroused a strong emotional response of fear within Israel: "When Israel *saw* (וירא ישראל) the wondrous power which the LORD had wielded against the Egyptians, the people *feared* the LORD (וייראו העם את־יהוה); they had faith in the LORD and his servant Moses" (Exod 14:31).[28] Ezra's recounting of the exodus event in the Second Temple prayer likewise uses vivid language that seeks to simulate the experience of visual perception by describing concrete spaces and scenes of God's saving acts: God divided the sea and "tossed the pursuers into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters" (Neh 9:11). Such phenomenal details rhetorically

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26. For the idea that iterable ritual praxis generates subjectivity and the predisposition to certain types of experiences, see Amy Hollywood, "Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Ritual and Bodily Practice," in *Difference in Philosophy of Religion* (ed. Philip Goodchild; Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003), 73–83. Also see the important discussion by Saba Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival," *Cultural Anthropology* 16 (2001): 202–36, esp. 212–17; and idem, *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

27. For an account of emotions and their role in performative reenactments, see Rhonda Blair, "Reconsidering Stanislavsky: Feeling, Feminism, and the Actor," *Theatre Topics* 12 (2002): 177–90.

28. The language here of a fearful response to events seen or experienced is typical of theophanic episodes, which often have the quality of lived experience and a sense of realism. On the presentation of the exodus events as theophanic episodes, see Michael Segal, "Text, Translation, and Allusion: An Unidentified Biblical Reference in *1 Enoch* 1:5," *CBQ* 72 (2010): 464–74.

construct a space which facilitates a reader's ability to visualize the events described. The historical recital detailing Israel's acts of rebellion and guilt in Neh 9:6–31 establishes the *pathos* for the petition in Neh 9:32, which is then followed by a confession of sin in the first person (Neh 9:33–35).[29]

The lengthy and detailed historical recital constructs a religious geography that facilitates a Second Temple reader's reenactment of Israel's guilt, shame, and need for salvation. Israel's emotional experience during the journey into the land becomes an affective script for the Judeans to imitate. A range of emotions are scripted by the poignant retellings of the desperate hunger and thirst experienced during the wilderness trek (Neh 9:15, 20), presumptuous behavior in the wilderness (9:16), the ignominious golden calf episode (9:18), growing fat and sleek in the land, and rebellion in the land (9:25–26). All of these events effectively construct Israel's history of salvation as a series of affective memories of fear and desperation, defiant rebellion, regret, and relief, and make them available to Ezra and to the Second Temple community present with him. By reenacting the emotions associated with guilt found in the historical recital, a reader becomes predisposed to having a fully participatory experience of the first-person petition and confession of sin in Neh 9:32–37.

The historical recital of Israel's experiences in the third person is not simply a record of past events. It functions instrumentally to connect the Judeans viscerally to a set of phenomenal experiences that are attached to significant moments of theological transformation. The spatial aspects of the prayer in Neh 9:6–37 move from a cosmic space (Neh 9:6) to a geography marked by familiar references to the promised land (Neh 9:7–8). The bulk of the prayer in Neh 9:9–23 recounts the movement from Egypt into the land, with critical landmarks noted along the way. The historical recital constructs an elaborate spatial context for the affective experiences that punctuate the salvific journey. The prayer's literary context of liturgy established by Neh 9:1–5 also offers fairly specific spatial details about the Judean context, and so can be regarded as a constructed Secondspace. The reader is told exactly who was present, how they prepared by fasting, what they wore, where they stood, and what they were doing during Ezra's recital of this penitential prayer. For example, the bodily postures and behaviors include specific details such as separating themselves physically from the foreigners (9:2), standing and reading the Torah (9:3), and

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29. Bautch, *Post-exilic Penitential Prayers*, 119.

crying out to the LORD (9:4). These detailed descriptions of the ritual set-
ting in Neh 9:1–5 construct a concrete spatial setting for the prayer that
contributes significant aspects of realism and provide Ezra with an audi-
ence for his recitation. These spectators are not detached onlookers, but
participants who are expected to play their choreographed parts in the
ritual reenactment.[30] The assembly of Judeans vicariously participates in
the experiences of the exodus by reenacting the emotions of those events
as they are described. The Judeans imitate the scripted emotions and utter
"cries" (Neh 9:4). In doing so, they provide a model of affective reenact-
ment for later readers to imitate.

A spatial shift occurs when the Levites, each one identified by name,
instruct the Judeans to bless God: "Stand up and bless the LORD your God
from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is
exalted above all blessing and praise" (Neh 9:5). The blessing scene here
and the standing of the assembly signals a change, since from this point
onward Ezra addresses God directly as if God is suddenly there in their
midst.[31] These formal elements of standing and acknowledging by bless-
ing are typical social practices recorded in prayer literature marking the
presence of a sovereign or deity.[32] This introductory scene in Neh 9:1–5
describes a Second Temple Judean liturgy, but also serves rhetorically to
construct a ritual space wherein the vivid re-experiencing of the saving
events of the exodus becomes possible in God's presence, who is then
addressed directly in the second person. Rhetorical language presumes
God's real presence. The second person address ואתה in 9:6, 17, 19, 27, 28,
33 is a near homophone to the petition and confession of sins that begins
in Neh 9:32 with ועתה. These rhetorical elements that begin Ezra's prayer
possess a dynamic quality that presumes his real presence in the midst of
the Judeans and God Himself. Laura Lieber describes this literary quality

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30. For discussion of the choreographed performance aspects of Ezra's prayer see
Ruth Langer, "From Study of Scripture to a Reenactment of Sinai," *Worship* 71 (1998):
43–67.

31. Here I follow Judith Newman (*Praying by the Book*, 59–60), who argues that
the blessing formula in Neh 9:5 begins the prayer and is not secondary to it. The bless-
ing formula and some formal acknowledgement of the deity in the form of standing
are appropriate markers, given the liturgical context, that the deity is really present
from that point onward.

32. See Alan Lenzi, "Invoking the God: Interpreting Invocations in Mesopota-
mian Prayers and Biblical Laments of the Individual," *JBL* 129 (2010): 303–15.

in prayer as the "rhetorical elements of participation."[33] In her study of the early Hebrew *piyyut* of the sixth century poet, Yannai, she writes:

> Yannai, in short, is not only teaching Scripture but using it and sharing the exegetical task with his listeners. The biblical story, its rabbinic expansion, and associated intertexts allow the poet to dramatically recreate the confrontation of Judah and Joseph for a living audience; the interest is less in rehearsing the precise plot of the biblical story and more in conveying *its tone, its emotional content, and the electrifying drama* of being a witness to the confrontation. In ten brief lines, primarily as reported speech rather than narration, Yannai recreates the essence of the biblical encounter, *with an eye toward generating a visceral experience for his audience* even as he captures Judah's panicked desperation (emphasis mine).[34]

Lieber describes Yannai's rhetorical style as dynamic and dialogical. It addresses God directly in the "blessed are you" formulae and in the use of relational language.[35] Standing and blessing are embodied practices that arouse in the Judeans the phenomenal sensations of being in the real presence of the deity. Such behaviors help to give a postexilic reader the predisposition to perceive the narrated historical recital that follows in a phenomenal way. The historical recital has an experiential quality and seeks to re-create the emotions associated with the events of Sinai in the here and now.[36] The sensations generated in the reenactment of affect are bodily and experienced phenomenally. It is this ritualized bodily reenactment of the affective script in prayer that generates a religious experience.

The rhetorical language in Neh 9, I propose, seeks the same goal as the type of performative prayer that Lieber identifies for the early Hebrew *piyyutim*: the re-creation of the sensory perceptions of an event so as to

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33. Laura S. Lieber, "The Rhetoric of Participation: Experiential Elements of Early Hebrew Liturgical Poetry," *JR* 90 (2010): 119–47. See also Georgia Frank, "Romanos and the Night Vigil in the Sixth Century," in *Byzantine Christianity: A People's History of Christianity* (ed. Derek Kreuger; 3 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 3:59–78; idem, "Dialogue and Deliberation: The Sensory Self in the Hymns of Romanos the Melodist," in *Religion and the Self in Late Antiquity*, 163–79; and Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "Spoken Words, Voiced Silence: Biblical Women in the Syriac Tradition," *JECS* 9 (2001): 105–31.

34. Lieber, "The Rhetoric of Participation," 132.

35. Ibid., 136.

36. See Langer, "From Study of Scripture to a Reenactment of Sinai," 43–67.

make it seem real in the here and now. The rhetorical construction of religious geography in the historical recital is a Secondspatial account of Israel's experiences of salvation for postexilic Judeans who seek to re-experience the exodus event. Certain features of the prayer indicate a performative reenactment of the text. For example, the pleading cries of Israel during key moments of this history (Neh 9:9, 27, 28) can be understood as an affective script for the Judeans to reenact. Doing so allows a reader to actualize the experience of salvation that is being recounted, and aims to recreate the tears and cries that are described as happening in both the rhetorically constructed persona of Israel and in the Judeans (Neh 9:27–28) flow once more in every reader who prays this text subsequently.

The exodus journey retold by Ezra in the prayer in Neh 9 constructs an elaborate Secondspace experience.[37] This Secondspatial realm is phenomenal and experiential, but it does not rely on any single empirical reality as its model. In fact, there is no actual space that is used as a model, and it occupies no physical place. Rhetorical elements of embodiment language, strategic arousal of emotions, and elaborate spatiality allow Ezra to recreate the exodus events with an experiential quality—so real as to arouse actual emotional responses in the Judeans. Such rhetorical elements seek to assist the assembled Judeans in imagining themselves present at these events. The guilt of Israel becomes merged with the guilt of the transformed Judeans who come to fully participate in the subjectivity of the first-person voice in the petition and the confession of sin (Neh 9:33–37). When subsequent readers pray this text, they too can place themselves at the exodus events and imitate the behavior and emotional responses of the Judeans, thereby participating in the community's scripted experience of guilt and remorse and, more importantly, of forgiveness and deliverance.

The historical recital in Neh 9:6–31 constructs a vivid religious geography for the reader to inhabit, giving special attention to the various physical spaces associated with the exodus event and the various emotions associated with it. While the arousal of emotions in Ezra's prayer can be

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37. The distinction between the Firstspace and the Secondspace is similar to Mikhail Bakhtin's distinction between the 'real world' and the 'represented world' that is created by the text. Bakhtin writes that "the represented world, however realistic and truthful, can never be chronotopically identical with the real world it represents, where the author and creator of the literary work is to be found" (*The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* [ed. Michael Holquist; trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981], 256).

said to function to compel God to remove Israel's guilt, Mark Throntveit rightly notes that the rhetoric of the prayer serves in an important way to move the ones who pray.[38] The intended bodily expression of affect is what allows a reader to move from reading the text to participating fully in the events. Ezra's retelling of the history leading up to the possession of the land is richly detailed with the language of embodiment, the arousal of emotion, and an eye to spatiality. The spatiality of the events and Israel's emotions are described with such detail that the experience can easily be reenacted by the community that prays the text. Penitential prayers are a genre distinct to the postexilic period, and they proliferate during that time.[39] Perhaps it was due to their ability to arouse vivid bodily sensations of spatiality and affect within readers that they became an especially effective mechanism for traversing the temporal and spatial rupture caused by the exile, making the preexilic bodily experiences of salvation real again for the Judean community.

An Example of Fully Participatory Religious Experience: Ephrem's Hymns on Paradise

Another example showing how a fully participatory religious experience can be induced from the practice of performative liturgical reading is the richly detailed spatial reports of paradise found in Ephrem the Syrian's *Hymns on Paradise*. Ephrem was a fourth-century liturgical poet. He lived in the city of Nisibis (in modern-day Turkey) for much of his life, but spent the last ten years of his life in Edessa (northern Mesopotamia), where he died in 373 C.E.[40] The *Hymns on Paradise* were composed early in Ephrem's career and used in worship.[41] According to the later poet Jacob of

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38. Mark Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 106.

39. See the various studies that examine the emergence of this genre in the postexilic period from earlier forms and traditions: Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 11–64; Bautch, *Post-exilic Penitential Prayers*, 101–36.

40. Details of Ephrem's general biography are taken from Joseph Amar and Edward G. Mathews Jr., trans., *Ephrem the Syrian: Selected Prose Works* (FC 91; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 25–37. See also Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian* (rev. ed.; Cistercian Studies Series 124; Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1985, 1992), 16–17.

41. See Joseph Melki, "Saint Ephrem le Syrien, un bilan de l'édition critique,"

Serugh (d. 521), Ephrem's hymns were performed liturgically by women.[42] The dating of their composition is known from a rare biographical note in which Ephrem remarked that he did not think that he would write a commentary on Genesis since he had already written so many hymns (*madrashe*) on paradise: I "had not wanted to write a commentary on the first book of Creation, lest we should now repeat what we had set down in the *madrāšê* and in the *mêmrê*."[43] The wonderful artistry demonstrated in these liturgical *Hymns on Paradise* has lasting power, and their detailed and sensuous reports of the religious geography of paradise are capable of arousing emotion and simulating sensory perception in the one who reads them through the first-person voice. When the *Hymns* are reenacted by a reader, it is possible to expect that the subjectivity of one who has actually visited paradise would be generated within him or her.

The simulation of sensory stimuli and the use of affect are critical aspects of the rousing retellings of what paradise and its environs are like in Ephrem's *Hymns on Paradise*.[44] Susan Ashbrook Harvey describes Ephrem's *Hymns* as "a dazzling tour de force for the senses, reminiscent of the Song of Songs in their lush sensuality. Paradise in these hymns is a place of breathtaking, sumptuous beauty—shimmering in resplendent light, billowing with myriad exquisite scents, its colors gleaming, its tastes and sounds a marvel."[45] In the following excerpts from his first *Hymn on*

Parole de l'Orient 11 (1983): 3–88. According to Edmund Beck (*Ephräm der Syrer. Lobgesang aus der Wüste* [Fribourg, Switzerland: Breisgau, 1967], 14–17), many details of Ephrem's life are unclear. See also Amar and Mathews, *Ephrem the Syrian,* 30.

42. For an account of the liturgical performance of Syriac hymns in late antiquity, see the fifth-century Rabbula Canon 20, edited and translated by Arthur Vööbus, in *Syriac and Arabic Documents Regarding Legislation Relative to Syrian Asceticism* (Stockholm: ETSE, 1960), 41; also the discussions by Harvey, "Spoken Words, Voiced Silence," 107–8 n. 11; and Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 168–69.

43. Amar and Mathews, *Ephrem the Syrian,* 59.

44. For representative studies on eastern Syriac poetry that is sensitive to matters of performance, the arousal of emotion in the listener, and the formation of self, see Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "Locating the Sensing Body: Perception and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity," in *Religion and the Self in Antiquity*, 140–62. See also the fine essay by Georgia Frank, "Dialogue and Deliberation," in *Religion and the Self in Antiquity*, 163–79. Frank writes the following about Romanos' technique of retelling transformative experiences through the perspective of the biblical characters themselves: "The formation of self emerges from the transformation of perception these characters undergo" (164).

45. Harvey, "Locating the Sensing Body," 156. See further idem, *Scenting Salva-*

Paradise, Ephrem constructs elaborate spatial experiences that target the specific perceptual faculties of seeing, smelling, and tasting:

> (2) I took my stand halfway between awe and love; a yearning for Paradise invited me to explore it, but awe at its majesty restrained me from my search. With wisdom, however, I reconciled the two; I revered what lay hidden and meditated on what was revealed. The aim of my search was to gain profit, the aim of my silence was to find succor.
>
> (3) Joyfully did I embark on the tale of Paradise—a tale that is short to read but rich to explore. My tongue read the story's outward narrative, while my intellect took wing and soared upward in awe as it perceived the splendor of Paradise—not indeed as it really is, but insofar as humanity is granted to comprehend it.
>
> (4) With the eye of my mind I gazed upon Paradise; the summit of every mountain is lower than its summit, the crest of the Flood reached only its foothills; these it kissed with reverence before turning back to rise above and subdue the peak of every hill and mountain. The foothills of Paradise it kisses, while every summit it buffets.
>
> (5) Not that the ascent to Paradise is arduous because of its height, for those who inherit it experience no toil there. With its beauty it joyfully urges on those who ascend. Amidst glorious rays it lies resplendent, all fragrant with its scents; magnificent clouds fashion the abodes of those who are worthy of it.
>
> 8) But because the sight of Paradise is far removed, and the eye's range cannot attain to it, I have described it over simply, making bold a little.…
>
> (9) And because my tongue overflows as one who has sucked the sweetness of Paradise, I will portray it in diverse forms.[46]

Ephrem's description of the primordial garden is attentive to scriptural details. It effectively constructs for a reader a detailed bodily experience of being at the place of paradise.[47] Ephrem's use of embodiment language, I

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tion: *Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

46. St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise* (trans. Sebastian Brock; Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 77–84, here 78–79, 80–81. In the second *Hymn*, Ephrem goes on to describe the three levels in paradise that are assigned according to the individual's merit.

47. The compositional style that appears in these hymns demonstrates the influence of both Jewish interpretive approaches in his writings. See Nicholas Séd, "Les hymnes sur le paradis de saint Ephrem et les traditions juives," *Muséon* 81 (1968): 455–501.

propose, effectively constructs for a reader a phenomenal body with eyes, nose, and mouth through which the sensory delights of paradise may be accessed.[48] On the one hand, Ephrem reports visions of Eden's amazing features that reflect scripted sensations from other inherited textualized visions. For example, Ephrem repeats details such as Eden's extraordinarily high altitude and its location on a cosmic mountain that exceeds all other mountains, details also reported in early Jewish traditions.[49] On the other hand, Ephrem's *Hymns on Paradise* reports vivid and fully participatory experiences of paradise that may also be considered to be generated by the Syriac hymnist's Thirdspace experience of the garden as heterotopia.[50] In the following example, Ephrem describes how meditations upon the spatiality of Paradise actually grant him a deeper and more profoundly participatory experience of it. In the fifth of his *Hymns on Paradise*, Ephrem writes:

> (3) I read the opening of this book and was filled with joy, for its verses and lines spread out their arms to welcome me; the first rushed out and kissed me, and led me on to its companion; and when I reached that verse wherein is written the story of Paradise, it lifted me up and transported me from the bosom of the book to the very bosom of Paradise.

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48. For Ephrem, the body's ability to know and perceive God through the physical senses was by virtue of baptism. Harvey ("Locating the Sensing Body," 148) says of Ephrem's understanding of the body: "Through baptism, the believer entered into the renewed condition of the created order, acquiring 'new senses' by which to experience it.… The sanctified human body could then receive knowledge of God through its own sensory experiences, could know something of God through its own physicality."

49. According to Ezek 28, the Prince of Tyre is placed in "Eden, the Garden of God" (Ezek 28:13) and resides on "God's holy mountain" (v. 14). God then casts him down from the mountain of God (v. 16). It is clear that Ezekiel places Eden on a high mountain. This detail is also reflected in the book of Jubilees, which reports that the floodwaters did not reach the Garden of Eden because it was positioned high on a cosmic mountain (Jub 4:23–26). Ephrem the Syrian presumes that paradise is a mountain with terraced levels coinciding with various moral states of being. See Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* (rev. ed. Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2004), 306–10. The Syriac Cave of Treasures also presumes that paradise is on a series of hills. That paradise is a mountain is a view also expressed by 1 En 18:6.

50. Daniel Merkur discusses this hymn as an example of how meditation practices can generate further visionary experiences of what Paradise was like; Daniel Merkur, "Cultivating Visions through Exegetical Meditations," in *With Letters of Light: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Early Jewish Apocalypticism, Magic, and Mysticism in Honor of Rachel Elior* (ed. Daphna Arbel and Andrei Orlov; Ekstasis 2; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 62–91, here 65.

(4) The eye and the mind traveled over the lines as over a bridge, and entered together the story of Paradise. The eye as it read transported the mind; in return the mind, too, gave the eye rest from its reading, for when the book had been read the eye had rest, but the mind was engaged.

(5) Both the bridge and the gate of paradise did I find in this book. I crossed over and entered; my eye indeed remained outside but my mind entered within. I began to wander amid things not described. This is a luminous height, clear, lofty and fair: Scripture named it Eden, the summit of all blessings.[51]

Here Ephrem uses the explicitly spatial language of locomotion in the form of vertical ascent to describe his experience of the Thirdspace of paradise. In contrast to the first hymn, which reports various sensory experiences of paradise, this passage contains a vivid quality of lived experience that is characteristic of egocentric episodic experiences. Ephrem not only reports what he sees, but fully participates in paradise, and is "embraced," "kissed," and "lifted-up" into its environs. Once there, he crosses the bridge and begins "wandering" and seeing further things that had not yet been described. In this particular hymn Ephrem has been transformed from an observer into an active participant in an otherworldly paradise, where he is capable of generating new experiences and further revelations about what is contained there. A subsequent reader of Ephrem's *Hymns* can hope to generate the subjectivity of the "I" and to reenact Ephrem's experience.

According to Foucault, heterotopias are liminal experiences of our ordinary experiences of the world; there is always a phenomenal experience in this world that occasions an individual's heterotopic experiences. Foucault identifies heterotopias as real world places, such as gardens, deserts, and museums, in which individuals must situate themselves so as to experience them phenomenally. All of these places are marked by their simultaneity and liminality. With ancient texts, however, it is not possible to know the real world situation of their composition. Foucault does not specify whether a text can be experienced as a heterotopia. Lefebvre does, however, clearly caution against applying critical spatial theory to strictly textualized experiences.[52] For Lefebvre, the experience of Thirdspace

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51. Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise,* 103–4.

52. Lefebvre writes "Any search for space in literary texts will find it everywhere and in every guise; encoded, described, projected, dreamt of, speculated about" (*The Production of Space*, 15). Davies begins his essay by citing Lefebvre's caution, but moves

must be in this world, not disembodied literary descriptions of an otherworld. Yet the Thirdspace religious experiences we have proposed are not strictly textualized events; they are phenomenal experiences that arise from embodied readings of texts. Unlike silent reading today, the practice of performative reading in antiquity would have been very bodily, and in ritual contexts it would have been accompanied by the appropriate performative emotions.[53] In the case of Ephrem, the mystical sensation of being transported to paradise and wandering amidst its delights takes place through a phenomenal experience of the text. Ephrem reports vivid egocentric experiences that suggest a full participation in the scene. Paradise is so vividly described as to seem real. The details target the eyes, the nose, the mouth, and create a multisensory experience of the garden. These textualized sensations, experienced through the rhetorically constructed body in the text, can stimulate actual sensory processes in the body that simulate the actual experience of being in paradise. The text, like Foucault's mirror, is physically experienced in the real world event of affective reading. Thus performative reading can function as a heterotopia that possesses both simultaneity and liminality.

Conclusion

Embodiment language, the text's creation of perceptions of spatial experiences and subjectivity, is compelling and powerful. These rhetorical elements are not simply literary embellishments. They function instrumentally to help a reader move from text to experience. Ezra's penitential prayer in Neh 9 and Ephrem's *Hymns on Paradise* both use embodiment language to construct detailed sensory landscapes of religious geography for a reader to visit. References to the body and its parts, especially its organs of sensation, allow authors of these texts to construct rhetorical personae through which a reader can experience the intended sensory perceptions and emotions, generating in him or her the predisposition to becoming a full participant in the events described.

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around this problem by including in his essay a discussion of the physical space of the Qumran site, the actual scholars who are engaged in the scholarship, and the ideological world of the texts themselves ("Space and Sects in the Qumran Scrolls," 81).

53. On the significant role of ritual performative displays of emotion in non-western, non-modern contexts see Gary Ebersole, "The Function of Ritual Weeping Revisited: Affective Expression and Moral Discourse," *HR* 39 (2000): 211–46.

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