DAVID JOHN MCCOLLOUGH

Ritual and Religious Experience in Early Christianities

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe
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The Spirit In Between

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

Questions regarding initiation into the early Christian movements are often entangled with Systematic Theology, e.g., when and where is the Spirit given? What does it mean for a person to be justified? What is the role of water baptism in becoming a Christian? I have sought to avoid this entanglement by asking historical and anthropological, rather than metaphysical, questions, e.g., what did ancient Christian writers instruct their audiences regarding initiation into their new religious movements? Did spirit possession facilitate social bonding (i.e., identity fusion)? Did intense religious experience make the early Christian sects more attractive in the ancient religious marketplace? Could Victor Turner's notions of 'the ritual process' and liminality be gainfully employed in analysing early Christian rituals?

This work was researched at Durham University, United Kingdom, supervised under the watchful eyes of Professor Douglas J. Davies and Professor David Janzen, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude. It was successfully examined in the Fall of 2021 by Professor Francis Watson (Durham) and Dr. Joseph Webster (Cambridge). I am very thankful that they took time from their busy schedules to read my work and make key recommendations.

I wish to thank the editors of the series, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe*, especially Professor Jörg Frey, for accepting my monograph. I am grateful that Mohr Siebeck is publishing the work and thanks go to Ms. Elena Müller of Mohr Siebeck who has facilitated that. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Claus-Jürgen Thornton who has edited the manuscript.

Phoenix, Arizona, July 31, 2022 David John McCollough

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

AAA	*Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik*
AANS	*American Anthropologist New Series*
AE	*American Ethnologist*
AJPS	*Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*
AJS	*American Journal of Sociology*
ANYAS	*Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*
ARA	*Annual Review of Anthropology*
ARES	*Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*
AS	*American Scientist*
ASR	*American Sociological Review*
ASC	altered states of consciousness
AT	*Anthropological Theory*
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
AYB	The Anchor Yale Bible
AYBRL	The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BBS	*Behavioral and Brain Sciences*
BC	Biblical Commentaries
BDAG	Walter Bauer, rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000)
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BES	*Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BI	*Biblical Interpretation*
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJMP	*British Journal of Medical Psychology*
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BRS	The Biblical Resource Series
BTCL	Biblical and Theological Classics Library
BTS	Biblisch-theologische Studien
BW	Bible World
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CA	*Current Anthropology*
CB	The Church's Bible
CBC	The Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
CCIR	Columbia Classics in Religion
CCR	*Cross-Cultural Research*

CFTLNS	Clark's Foreign Theological Library New Series
Ch	The Churchman
CI	*Critical Inquiry*
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
CJQHCE	*Cliodynamics: The Journal of Quantitative History and Cultural Evolution*
CNTDS	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament Deuxième Série
CP	*Classical Philology*
CSCT	Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition
EC	*Early Christianity*
EHB	*Evolution and Human Behavior*
EJIL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
EJSP	*European Journal of Social Psychology*
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EQ	*The Evangelical Quarterly*
ET	*Expository Times*
Eth	*Ethnos*
Ethos	*Ethos*
ETL	*Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses*
ETP	*English Teaching Professional*
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GFC	Geschichte des frühen Christentums
GNT	Grundrisse zum Neuen Testament
GTA	Göttinger theologische Arbeiten
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HN	*Human Nature*
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HR	Hermeneia
HTA	Historisch-theologische Auslegung
HTS	*HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
Int	Interpretation
IRSS	*International Review for the Sociology of Sport*
ISG	International Study Guide
JAH	*Journal of Ancient History*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCC	*Journal of Cognition and Culture*
JCR	*Journal of Contemporary Religion*
JCRe	*Journal of Consumer Research*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JGL	*Journal of Greek Linguistics*
JGRCJ	*Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*
JPSP	*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*
JPT	*Journal of Pentecostal Theology*
JPTS	Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series
JRAI	*Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*
JRitS	*Journal of Ritual Studies*

JRS	*The Journal of Roman Studies*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSRNC	*Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*
JTS	*The Journal of Theological Studies*
JYT	*Journal of Youngsan Theology*
KEK	Meyers Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LC	*Language & Communication*
LCL	The Loeb Classical Library
LLL	Longman Linguistics Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
MES	*Middle Eastern Studies*
MNS	*Man New Series*
Nar	Narratologia
Neo	*Neotestamentica*
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
Nr	*Narrative*
NRT	*Nouvelle revue théologique*
NT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTL	The New Testament Library
NTM	New Testament Monographs
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus/Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTS	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
Oc	*Oceania*
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
PNAS	*PNAS: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*
PP	*Pastoral Psychology*
PR	*Psychological Review*
RJHR	*Rhetorica: A Journal for the History of Rhetoric*
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RQ	*Revue de Qumrân*
RRA	Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity
RRJ	*The Review of Rabbinic Judaism*
RRR	*Review of Religious Research*
RRT	*Reviews in Religion and Theology*
RS	Religion and Society
RSR	*Revue des sciences religieuses*
RTNT	Reading the New Testament
SB	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBFLA	*Studium Biblicum Franciscanum: Liber Annuus*
SBJT	*The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*

SBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SCL	Sather Classical Lectures
Sem	*Semeia*
SERAPHIM	Studies in Education and Religion in Ancient and Pre-Modern History in the Mediterranean and Its Environs
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and its World
SP	Sacra Pagina
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
Synkrisis	Synkrisis
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
TB	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TCS	*Trends in Cognitive Sciences*
THNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TJ	*Trinity Journal*
TLG	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TRENT	Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UCL2	Universitas Catholica Lovaniensis: Dissertationes ad gradum magistri in Facultate Theologica consequendum conscriptae Series II
VE	*Verbum et ecclesia*
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WUNT2	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

1. Introduction

> 'We can scarcely believe that every convert on emerging from the water of baptism fell into a trance and spoke in tongues …' (Wayne A. Meeks[1])
>
> The Jesus followers, 'spontaneously became spirit-possessed and from that point on formed themselves into a missionary spirit-possession cult.' (Stevan L. Davies[2])

This book consists of narratological, discourse analysis, and literary exegesis of texts in Paul and Luke-Acts relevant to the question of Holy Spirit experience and initiation in the Pauline and Lukan streams of Christianity, followed by interpretation of the resultant data with social anthropological approaches. It is not a theological study. Nor is it a psychological study of 'conversion' *per se*, though implications for conversion will be addressed. It is a social anthropological analysis of the initiation rituals of a historically significant new religious movement through literature of that movement. It does not attempt to understand all sectarian variants of early Christianity but focuses exclusively upon the Pauline and Lukan versions. All references to the 'early Christian sect' or to 'early Christianity' are in this way limited and make no claims to any unified, monolithic 'Christianity'. The book challenges common assumptions about Paul, such as the *communis opinio* that Paul thought the spirit to be communicated through water baptism, or the notion that 'justification' was non-experiential and unrelated to ritual. Likewise, the book refutes the standard view that Luke was either incoherent or unconcerned or a poor editor of sources regarding early Christian initiation practices. The book furthermore questions the scholarly belief that water baptism was the cardinal initiation rite among early Christianities, instead, arguing that spirit possession marked by dissociation and glossolalia was the cardinal initiation ritual for Pauline and Lukan communities. These challenges to the status quo are made possible by using standard, well recognised methodologies (narratology, discourse analysis, literary analysis) which have rarely, if at all, been employed in the analysis of initiation rituals.

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[1] Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (Second Edition; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003 [1983]), 151.

[2] Stevan L. Davies, *Spirit Possession and the Origins of Christianity* (Dublin: Bardic Press, 2014), 206.

As stated initially, the book is not theological. Rather, it is fundamentally etic in its approach. That is, it works from outside the community being studied. This would be in contrast to an emic approach which adopts the internal viewpoint of the subjects, such as Luke or Paul (e.g., God, Satan, angels, demons, etc., are metaphysical realities). An etic approach requires studying texts without asserting the validity of the beliefs of the authors. An emic approach would adopt the worldview and ideology of the authors. Working with an etic view requires the researcher to be careful to understand the emic expressions of the religionists studied, but those emic understandings do not provide the framework for interpretation. The book adopts a non-religious, non-metaphysical approach to the beliefs, experiences, and practices of those it studies. The tension between an emic faith orientation and an etic scientific methodology is resolved by understanding emic information as data to be analysed. Paul and Luke inform us about their religious beliefs and the book seeks to interpret that information in terms of scientific theories of human behaviour and cognitive processes. The exegesis sections provide for us the emic data. For example, we will analyse the narrative 'camera' as it depicts various scenes just as 'Luke', the narrative 'movie producer', wanted his readers to view them. In this way we uncover the emic viewpoint of the author of Luke-Acts.

As we recognise the possibility of tension between emic and etic approaches, care will be taken not to damage the emic data with etic impositions: for example, assuming *a priori* that Lukan or Pauline spirit experience is identical with a modern practice. Thus, we cannot simply begin with the assumption that Paul was identical to a modern practitioner of Santería. Equally, we cannot presume that Paul was identical with a modern Pentecostal or Charismatic. We are, naturally, free to use contemporary religious practices heuristically to assist in understanding ancient religions. But the operative word is 'heuristic'. For example, one might observe that a contemporary spirit cult has seemingly unintelligible speech that is translated by special ritualists.[3] This could lead a researcher to ask whether a similar phenomenon was taking place in Pauline churches.[4] It does not require that the phenomenon be the same, but it raises the possibility which can then be explored exegetically.

Equally, care will be taken not to assume that the emic construction represents 'how it actually was'. That is, we do not have to believe that the utterances which Luke claims were real languages were genuinely languages to recognise that Luke's insistence upon actual denotative content suggests

[3] Cf. Kristina Wirtz, '"Where obscurity is a virtue": The mystique of unintelligibility in Santería ritual', *LC* Vol. 25 Issue 4 (October 2005), 351–375.

[4] Cf. Giovanni B. Bazzana, *Having the Spirit of Christ: Spirit Possession and Exorcism in the Early Christ Groups* (Synkrisis; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020), 202, drawing upon Wirtz, '"Where obscurity is a virtue"', 353.

that the utterances were significant for him. We should therefore explore what function the utterances had within Luke's presentation of the practices of his new religious movement. Here, we can draw, in a tentative manner, upon modern religious practices which can be observed, such as glossolalia in Lagos or *Lucumi* speech in Havana. Again, contemporary phenomena ought not be imposed upon the ancient texts but may indeed suggest possibilities which can be tested or corroborated through examination of the texts.

Thus, the book has two broad phases: (1) the exegetical gathering of data and (2) the social anthropological interpretation of the data. Naturally, in both phases, secondary literature (i.e., Pauline scholarship or classic anthropology) is engaged. The salient result of the book's critical exegetical and social anthropological analysis is, *pace* Meeks and consonant with Davies, that the Lukan variant of early Christianity, at the time of Luke's writing, circa 70–130 CE, was a glossolalic spirit-possession cult and that the earlier Pauline churches of the 50s differed little if at all. For both Paul and Luke, God's Spirit was imparted separate from water immersion but nevertheless both water baptism and Spirit baptism were united as integral elements of Christian initiation, both preceding admittance to the Christian sacred meal.

That is, the book shows that not only was 'Spirit reception' among several early Christianities in some generic way experiential, as James Dunn and others have asserted, but that every initiate to the Lukan stream of Christianity, a sect which laid claim to the charismatic Pauline heritage, was expected, after immersion in water and via the laying-on-of-hands by powerful community representatives, to become possessed by the Holy Spirit, to psychologically dissociate, and to 'speak in tongues'. While Paul and those who imitated him were clearly pneumatic enthusiasts and could expect initiates to undergo both water immersion and spirit experience before reaching the status of 'justification' before God, Luke may have been the first to require glossolalia of initiates. Nevertheless, the differences between initiation in the early Pauline Christ groups and in the later Lukan circle are minimal. By roughly the turn of the century, when Luke published his Acts, the ritual initiation process in the Lukan stream of the Jesus movement entailed a highly experiential, glossolalic, spirit-possession experience.

The Lukan initiatory experience will be viewed as a cluster of distinguishable, yet interrelated phenomena – dissociation, spirit-possession, glossolalia. Glossolalia, the utterance of language-like sounds which have no denotational content, is understood here in this book as a natural phenomenon, a product of the human brain and socialisation. Consequently, the glossolalia of Luke's time is unlikely to be fundamentally distinct from contemporary glossolalia. That is, it would be special pleading to suggest that the brain only recently evolved the capacity to produce free vocalisation. Naturally, there is likely to be variation between the ancient glossolalic experience and contemporary glossolalia due to cultural considerations, and when we come to the task of

interpretation, we will discuss types of worldviews (viz., rural cultures with complex, overlapping social networks vs. urban cultures with hierarchical social structuring) and how those worldview-types might produce distinct religious experiences. Nevertheless, Luke presents his glossolalia as spontaneous and unlearned – a divine interruption in normal human affairs. A social science perspective need not reject this emic conception as merely an idealisation of a learned behaviour. If glossolalia is a latent human talent, shaped by social conditions but fundamentally a product of biology, then reports of its sudden activation need not be a cause for scepticism. Rather, the means and techniques – perhaps at once cognitive, emotive, and physical – which practitioners employ to evoke glossolalia, and which may be at play in spontaneously occurring glossolalia, represent an area ripe for research (a project beyond the bounds of this book).

As we class Lukan Spirit reception within the anthropological spectrum of spirit possession phenomena,[5] we note that spirit possession phenomena vary from culture to culture and do not always result in the host personality being completely replaced by an alter-agency. Thus, the glossolalia Luke integrates with spirit experience is not *necessarily* the product of a trance state, as argued by Felicitas Goodman and roundly rejected by linguists (William Samarin) and anthropologists (Nicholas Harkness) alike.[6] Experienced glossolalists can produce tongues speech at will apart from dissociation.[7] But, as documented by Christopher Dana Lynn, glossolalia can present in both dissociative and non-dissociative modes – 'excited' vs. 'calm' glossolalia – with each type fulfilling different social roles.[8] The book asserts that the Lukan sect encouraged intensity in *initiatory* religious experience and moulded

[5] NB, the capitalisation of 'Spirit' is employed to represent an emic perspective, while a simple 'spirit' represents my own etic perspective.

[6] Felicitas Goodman, *Speaking in Tongues: A Cross-Cultural Study in Glossolalia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), 8. William J. Samarin, Review of Felicitas Goodman, *Speaking in Tongues: A Cross-Cultural Study in Glossolalia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), *Language* Vol. 50 (1974), 207–212; 209. Nicholas Harkness, *Glossolalia and the Problem of Language* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2021), 15.

[7] Cf. Thomas J. Csordas' humorous first encounter with glossolalia: 'I was in the back seat of the car as both people in front devoutly spoke in tongues. Theories of trance and altered states of consciousness completely preoccupied my thoughts as we approached a red traffic light …'. *Language, Charisma, and Creativity: The Ritual Life of a Religious Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 41. So too, Harkness, *Glossolalia*, 15–16. See also the small, but original study of Brian Grady and Kate Miriam Loewenthal, 'Features Associated with Speaking in Tongues (Glossolalia)', *BJMP* Vol. 70 Pt. 2 (1997), 185–191.

[8] Christopher Dana Lynn, '"The Wrong Holy Ghost": Discerning the Apostolic Gift of Discernment Using a Signaling and Systems Theoretical Approach', *Ethos* Vol. 41 Issue 2 (2013), 223–247.

that intensity around a constellation of phenomena embracing glossolalia, dissociation, and spirit possession. Subsequent religious experience was to be marked by characteristics of calm, but powerful 'flow', as well as periods of renewed intensity in corporate prayer especially in response to opposition.

This Christian spirit-possession experience I interpret in social anthropological terms. In what way does it mediate between the sacred and the profane, between the devotee and her God? How is it related to sacrifice, in particular to conceptions of Jesus as a sacrifice? I suggest that it does not eliminate the concept of sacrifice but changes the subject and nature of sacrifice. In the performance of holy spirit possession, the Lukan initiate is purified to offer sacrifices of glossolalic worship to Jesus while at the same time she is conceptualised as herself a sacrifice, consumed by the divine spirit. The initiate both receives the holy spirit – a gift which cannot be reciprocated – and is herself gifted to the deity, becoming a 'devoted' object. The Lukan sectarian, purified and consumed by the fiery spirit, consecrated to God, is now transformed and enabled, by the same holy spirit, to enter the spiritual realm and encounter angels, Jesus, and God himself. That is, drawing upon Joel Robbins, Maurice Bloch, and Douglas Davies, I suggest that for Luke, the mediation of holy spirit possession does not merely establish brief contact between the sacred and the profane while concomitantly holding the two realms apart, but it transforms the profane into the sacred and grants entrée to holy space. Having become a sacred being, possessed of and possessing the holy spirit, now wholly devoted to God and accessing spiritual realms, the sectarian is imbued with power and zeal to transform the – still profane – human world.[9]

This grand story of transformation begins with Christian initiation which we will analyse in terms of experience, rituals, beliefs, and texts. At initiation, holy spirit possession functions to signal commitment to the group, to symbolise the Christian ritual/moral 'purity' system, to establish the sectarian emotional regime, i.e., the expected emotional habitus, to legitimate the sacred values of the group, and to bind the individual group members together through a process of 'identity fusion' so that sect members become willing to radically sacrifice for the group and its ideology. Christian initiatory spirit-possession, in synergistic combination with the sacred belief system, is the primary factor – even more than social networks – in the growth of the new religion.

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[9] Cf. Joel Robbins, 'Keeping God's distance: Sacrifice, possession, and the problem of religious mediation', *AE* Vol. 44 Issue 3 (August 2017), 464–475. Maurice Bloch, *Prey into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Douglas J. Davies, 'Rebounding Vitality: Resurrection and Spirit in Luke-Acts', in M. Daniel Carroll, et al., eds., *The Bible in Human Society: Essays in Honour of John Rogerson* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 205–224.

2. Exegetical Methodology

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Why the Status Quo Can Be Challenged – A Hermeneutical Lacuna

In the introduction I asserted that this book would seek to challenge, even overturn, the accepted views on early Christian initiation practices. I argue that narratology, discourse analysis, and literary analysis, while standard methods in current use, have been applied to questions of initiation rarely, if at all. Because a significant portion of available texts regarding ritual processes are in narrative form, this failure to use narrative-oriented methodological tools produces errant readings. By using narrative-appropriate tools, I obtain significantly different results than those produced by sole dependence upon standard historical-grammatical methodologies. This is in no way a slight or disparagement of historical-grammatical methods. Those remain foundational. However, a radio telescope can detect things (such as massive clouds of hydrogen gas) that a normal optical telescope cannot. The limitations of optical telescopes do not mean we cease to use them, only that we supplement them with other instruments.

2.1.2 Similar Methods for Luke and Paul? Narrative Rhetoric and the Psychology of Reader Transportation

Can we use the same interpretive methods for Luke and Paul? That is, does Paul as an epistolary rhetorician require different exegetical approaches than Luke as a narrator? Michal Beth Dinkler argues that the arts of narrative persuasion and rhetorical persuasion are not as far apart as has been thought and that, 'scholars concerned with New Testament rhetoric should be considering narrative's poetic features.'[1] Citing the work of Douglas Hesse on Aristotle, she writes that 'we can read the *Poetics* as advancing "a fourth mode of persuasion – the mimetic or narrative – that complements and com-

[1] Michal Beth Dinkler, 'New Testament Rhetorical Narratology: An Invitation toward Integration', *BI* Vol. 24 (2016), 203–228; 210.

pletes the logical, ethical, and pathetic forwarded in [Aristotle's] *Rhetoric*".'[2] Dinkler does not mean merely that narratives utilise rhetorical techniques to persuade. Rather, drawing upon literary theorists Michael Kearns and James Phelan, she states: 'Telling a story is a rhetorical act; narratives create rhetorical effects *as narratives*.'[3]

But Dinkler does not leave us simply with literary theory, she cites psychological research to demonstrate that narratives *qua* absorbing stories, do in fact impact the reader.[4] In experiments involving over 600 participants, Melanie C. Green and Timothy C. Brock found that psychological absorption, or 'transportation', into a storyworld affects beliefs, both by making subjects less likely to identify 'false notes' in a story and by aligning subjects' beliefs with the story. What then is 'transportation'? First, in transportation, a reader (inclusive of hearers, i.e., any story recipient) becomes so immersed in the story that she loses touch with reality, not only in the sense of not noticing a new person walking into the room, but also in terms of 'real-world facts that contradict assertions made in the narrative'.[5] Second, in transportation, readers experience intensified 'emotions and motivations' despite awareness that a story is fictitious. Green and Brock explain how transportation impacts the narrative recipient:

> First, transportation may reduce negative cognitive responding. Transported readers may be less likely to disbelieve or counterargue story claims, and thus their beliefs may be influenced. Next, transportation may make narrative experience seem more like real experience. Direct experience can be a powerful means of forming attitudes (Fazio & Zanna, 1981), and to the extent that narratives enable mimicry of experience, they may have greater impact than nonnarrative modes. Finally, transportation is likely to create strong feelings toward story characters; the experiences or beliefs of those characters may then have an enhanced influence on readers' beliefs.[6]

Green and Brock paved the way for research on narrative transportation spanning the last two decades. Recently Tom van Laer, et al., in a multi-

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[2] Ibid., 211. Douglas Hesse, 'Aristotle's Poetics and Rhetoric: Narrative as Rhetoric's Fourth Mode', in Richard Andrews, ed., *Rebirth of Rhetoric: Essays in Language, Culture, and Education* (London: Routledge, 1992), 19–38; 19–20.

[3] Dinkler, 'Rhetorical Narratology', 216, original emphasis. Michael Kearns, *Rhetorical Narratology* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1999). James Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1996). James Phelan, 'Rhetoric/ethics', in David Herman, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 203–216.

[4] Dinkler, 'Rhetorical Narratology', 218. Melanie C. Green and Timothy Brock, 'The Role of Transportation in the Persuasiveness of Public Narratives', *JPSP* Vol. 79 (2000), 701–721.

[5] Ibid., 702.

[6] Ibid., 702. Russell H. Fazio and Mark P. Zanna, 'Direct experience and attitude-behavior consistency', in Leonard Berkowitz, ed., *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Volume 14 (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1981), 161–202.

disciplinary, meta-analysis of 76 published and unpublished articles, showed that research has continued to focus on the transportation effect in terms of imagery, empathy, and suspended reality – the narrative 'consumer' engages in a vivid world of mental images so that she disengages physiologically from the real-world environment, and, in the narrative world, comes to emotionally identity with certain characters.[7] Transportation results in 'strong and long-lasting' 'affective and cognitive responses, beliefs, and attitude and intention changes'.[8] In a separate paper, van Laer underscores the ethical ramifications of these effects in his research on marketing practices:

> We argue that the ethical relevance of stories should attract more attention from managers, policymakers and scholars, as storytelling drives suspension of disbelief, has enduring persuasive effects, is unintentionally affective and may lead to actual behavior.[9]

Van Laer keenly observes: 'nothing is less innocent than a story'.[10] Thus, when it comes to narratives such as Luke-Acts, we must recognise that they are intrinsically didactic. By their very nature, biblical narratives instruct, and that forcefully. But what of Paul's epistles?

While Dinkler has encouraged Pauline scholars to recognise the innate rhetorical force of narrative – Luke is not just telling stories – this works both ways. The force of narrative dynamics can also be brought to bear upon Paul. Note the narrative/discourse principle of sequential reading. One reads Paul's letters from opening greeting to closing farewell. Paul unfolds his ideas line by line. One cannot interpret the last bit of a Pauline discourse apart from reading what he says at the beginning. For example, if Paul *initially* argues that baptismal practices within a particular local church have led to schism, then a reader, attuned to both rhetorical and narratological concerns – following the Pauline logic and the Corinthian story – might reasonably question scholarship, indeed the *communis opinio*, which claims that Paul *later* appeals to the water rite as a source of unity.

But what about the grand narrative of the Hebrew Scriptures – does not Paul weave his thoughts integrally into that sweeping biblical story? As a matter of pragmatics, this book will limit itself to engaging the story of Israel

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[7] Tom van Laer, Ko de Ruyter, Luca M. Visconti, and Martin Wetzels, 'The Extended Transportation-Imagery Model: A Meta-Analysis of the Antecedents and Consequences of Consumers' Narrative Transportation', *JCRe* Vol. 40 Issue 5 (2014), 797–817; 799–800.

[8] Ibid., 800.

[9] Tom van Laer, Stephanie Feiereisen, and Luca M. Visconti, 'Ethical Implications of Story Domain, Teller and Receiver for the Narrative Transportation Effect', Paper presented at the 45th Annual European Marketing Academy Conference, 24–27 May, 2016, Oslo, Norway, p. 1.

[10] Van Laer, et al., 'Extended Transportation-Imagery Model', 798.

where it impinges upon the interpretation of specific texts, such as 1 Corinthians 10:1–4, related to the specific focus upon initiation.[11]

2.1.3 Similar Exegetical Cautions with Paul and Luke

As Richard B. Hays notes, 'There is no reason to think that Paul's Roman readers had read Galatians'.[12] A rhetorical/narratological approach is concerned to engage narrative/rhetorical wholes. To extract disparate scenes from the flow of a Lukan narrative, juxtapose them, and declare them inconsistent, is just as egregious as extracting a verse from one Pauline epistle and inserting it into the argument of another – both are interpolation. Case in point: to one audience Paul may emphasise water baptism as the great source of unity, nullifying categories of Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female. But for another audience, water baptism may be such a source of disunity and schism that Paul appeals to charismatic Spirit baptism as the supreme unifier, the factor nullifying categories of Jew and Greek, slave and free. The similar discourse of Jew/Greek, slave/free belies fundamentally different argumentation and fundamentally different baptisms.

2.2 Acts: The Dual Problems of Historicity and Intelligibility

Stories are potent generators of religious thought and emotion. As Douglas Davies writes, 'Narratives, with paradigmatic scenes at their heart, implant core values in the mind and … may exert a deeply formative influence on the very structures of feeling of a tradition'.[13] But does Davies' social anthropological observation have any relevance for ancient literature? Consider Judith M. Lieu:

> Few would dispute the paradigmatic role that 'remembering our story' has played in the Jewish and Christian traditions, in the maintenance of identity for the group and for those who claim membership of it …[14]

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[11] For recent interaction with the literature on the Pauline thought world, cf. Christoph Heilig, *Paulus als Erzähler? Eine narratologische Perspektive auf die Paulusbriefe* (BZNW 237; Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2020). See also Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (Second Edition; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016); Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Revised and Expanded Edition; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007).

[12] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 188.

[13] Douglas J. Davies, *Emotion, Identity, and Religion: Hope, Reciprocity, and Otherness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 49.

[14] Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 63.

Index of Sources

1. Hebrew Bible

2. Septuagint and Deuterocanonical Books

3. New Testament

4. Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian Authors and Works

Index of Modern Authors

Subject Index