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Taves, Ann

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“Magical thinking” and the Emergence of New Social Movements: Cognitive Aspects of Reformation Era Debates over Ritual Efficacy

Ann Taves¹
University of California at Santa Barbara
taves@religion.ucsb.edu

Abstract: Sørensen’s (2007) cognitive theory of magic offers more precise tools for analysing the cognitive dimensions of novelty and change across a range of cultural domains if we extract it from academic discussions of “religion” and “magic” and recast it generically in terms of the attribution of non-ordinary powers within temporally structured event-frames. Focusing on the agreements required to generate new collective rituals reveals the chief limitation of Sørensen’s theory of magic and Lawson and McCauley’s theory of ritual for understanding the emergence of new groups with new rituals: neither attends sufficiently to the contestations surrounding the interpretation of presumed originatory events, either when the original attributions are made or when “reformers” reanalyse them. Reformation Era debates over the Eucharist illustrate how subtle shifts in the interpretation of originatory events can signal critical shifts in counterpart connections that in turn lay the foundation for new movements based on new or “reformed” rituals. Although the historical interactions that lead to or preclude such agreements are the basic “stuff” of historical analysis, use of cognitive tools to describe underlying shifts provides a more adequate basis for comparing processes of emergence within and across cultures and time periods.

Keywords: magic, ritual, social movements, non-ordinary powers, Reformation, Eucharist

In *A Cognitive Theory of Magic* (2007: 181), Jesper Sørensen characterizes magic as “a method of innovation” that utilizes “established means of contact[ing sacred domains] in order to achieve socially or individually specified purposes”. As such, he argues, it facilitates the emergence not only of “new interpretations of existing rituals, but [also] of whole new ritual structures”. Magic, he concludes, is “deeply embedded in most religious rituals and ... [a] major force ... in the creation of new religious institutions” (2007: 186). From a purely theoretical point of view, his argument is quite compelling. For historians, however, his use of the terms “magic” and “religion” as second order

¹ Ann Taves is Professor of Religious Studies at UC Santa Barbara.

(etic) concepts presents difficulties, especially in cases where historical subjects define magic pejoratively and use it to disparage the beliefs and practices of others. The problems are particularly evident in the context of the Protestant Reformation, where Sørensen too readily embraces the Protestant claim that the Protestant understanding of the Eucharist relied on “faith” in contradistinction to the Catholic understanding, which both Protestants and Sørensen view as dependent on magic.

The potential value of Sørensen’s (2007) cognitive theory of magic for historical analysis of emergent social movements is more readily apparent if we extract it from longstanding academic discussions of “religion” and “magic” that are better relegated to the emic level and recast it in more generic terms applicable not only to ritual but to goal directed action more generally. Recast in this way, we can focus on Sørensen’s chief contribution: the elaboration of the cognitive aspects of the process whereby people utilize ascriptions of non-ordinary power to achieve various (ordinary and non-ordinary) goals by incorporating them in temporally structured event-frames that have the potential to become new social movements. Doing so, allows us to use his work to develop more precise tools for analysing the cognitive dimensions of novelty and change across a range of cultural domains.

Recasting Sørensen’s Cognitive Theory of Magic

Sørensen’s theory builds on Lawson and McCauley’s cognitive theory of ritual (McCauley and Lawson 2002; Lawson and McCauley 1990), which situates ritual in the context of a cognitive approach to action more generally.² Sørensen (2007: 32) defines magic as effecting “the state or essence of persons, objects, acts, and events through certain special and non-trivial kinds of actions with opaque causal mediation”. In contrast

² McCauley and Lawson (2002: 8–9) indicate that, according to some definitions of religion, theirs may not be “a theory of religious ritual”, but rather “only a theory about actions that individual and groups perform within organized communities of people who possess conceptual schemes that include presumptions about those actions’ connections with the actions of agents who exhibit counter-intuitive properties”. Their focus on “organized communities of people” with (presumably) agreed upon conceptual schemes that connect their actions with those of (presumed) non-ordinary agents sidesteps the historically interesting questions of how *new* conceptual schemes emerge and how people come to agree on them and in doing so constitute themselves as a community connected to agreed upon non-ordinary agents. It is this question that Sørensen’s work begins to address from a cognitive perspective.

to actions with more transparent causal mediation, “in magical rituals, at least one element [whether an agent, an action, or an object] will be invested with the *magical agency* necessary for the ritual to have any effect” (2007: 65). He draws from conceptual blending theory (2007: 51–61; Fauconnier and Turner 2002) to model religious and magical rituals, which he argues, involve “a blended space consisting of elements projected from ... two general domains – ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’ – and structured by a ritual frame” (Sørensen 2007: 63; see Fig. 2, for a sample diagram). In magical rituals, “at least one element will be invested with the magical agency necessary for the ritual to have any effect, and this agency is constructed by a mapping between the sacred and the profane domain” (2007: 65). He uses the elaborated conceptual blending model to provide a more precise analysis of the ascription of magical agency and efficacy, which, he argues, effects “the transfer of power from the sacred to the blended space necessary in order to attain the change of state implied in the magical action” (2007: 65). He develops a typology of magical actions (transformative and manipulative) and situates ritual action within event-frames that link actions to specific goals (2007: 95–140).

Here I want to highlight the contribution that Sørensen’s work can make not only to a theory of ritual but more broadly to the emergence of new social movements, whether conceived as religious or not. To appreciate its potential, his theory needs to be extracted from longstanding academic attempts to distinguish “religion” between “magic” as second-order concepts and recast in more generic terms. While such distinctions can and do play a potent role in debates within and between groups, as analysis of the Reformation Era debates makes evident, we will make more headway in synthesizing across related domains of inquiry and identifying underlying mechanisms, if we analyse first how cultural distinctions such as religion and magic are being made at the emic level, in keeping with standard historical practice, and then redescribe processes of interest in more generic terms in order to develop etic explanations.³

³ Philosopher Paul Davies (2009) method of naturalistic inquiry provides a helpful way to think about the second-order concepts that have long been the stock in trade of scholars of religion. Seeking to overcome our human tendency to cling to concepts of “dubious descent”, he urges us to “embark on the study of natural systems with the positive expectation that our settled view of the world is about to be unsettled”. He offers a number of directives that he thinks should inform such inquiry, the first of which is the

Sørensen's theory can be redescribed rather easily as an attempt to identify underlying – presumably cross-culturally stable – cognitive principles that constrain and, thus, structure *actions involving ascriptions of a special (non-ordinary) kind of agency that subjects view as effecting changes in the state or essence of persons, objects, acts, and events*. As actions directed toward the goal of changing the state or essence of something, such actions, like all goal directed actions, are “embedded in representations of a temporally structured event-frame” (Sørensen 2007: 148). Although I would tend to assume with Sørensen (2007: 65) that the ascription of agency to a non-ordinary source typically involves a “displacement of [ordinary] agency and intentionally”, I see no reason to assume that ritualization is the only way to trigger such a displacement; indeed, from the point of view of subjects, rituals may presuppose rather than trigger such displacements.⁴ Thus, I see no reason to assume that the goal-directed actions in question

expectation of conceptual change. “For systems we understand poorly or not at all, expect that, as an inquiry progresses – as we analyse inward and synthesize laterally – the concepts in terms of which we conceptualize high-level systemic capacities will be altered or eliminated” (Davies 2009: 32–33, 37). Davies draws this directive, which aptly describes what I am trying to do here, from the history of science. Thus, he writes: “We make progress in our knowledge of natural systems to the extent we *analyze inward* and identify low-level systemic mechanisms and interactions that instantiate high-level capacities. We also make progress as we *synthesize laterally* across related domains of inquiry, as we look for coherence among taxonomies of mechanisms postulated in associated areas of study. Such analyses and syntheses serve as checks on our theories and as mutual checks on one another” (36–37, emphasis in original). Davies’ approach builds on the understanding of levels and mechanisms that informs explanations in the natural sciences, as discussed by Bechtel and Richardson (2000) and Bechtel (2009). Since my primary concern in this paper is to synthesize laterally across related domains of inquiry as a check on theory and as a precondition for specifying more precise constitutive mechanisms (operative at the next lower level), I use “constituent processes” to refer to processes that inform higher-level phenomena, rather than “mental mechanisms”, in order to avoid (for now) the technical questions of what constitutes a mental mechanism (as discussed, for example by Craver 2007: 2–8) and the need to specify precisely how the mechanism works.

⁴ People also make such ascriptions in the context of play. Some theorists view ritual as a special form of adult play (e.g., Luhrmann 1989 and Sharf 2005), grounding it in the work of Vygotsky and Winnicott (see Taves 2009: 159). People also make ascriptions as a result of conscious deliberation, within the context of recognized group processes, whether intellectual, political, or otherwise. At other times, however, people make spontaneous ascriptions under conditions they consider ordinary and unmarked, that is, in contexts in which they insist that they were not ritualizing or playing or fantasizing or

are necessarily ritual actions. If we do not assume this, we can describe Sørensen’s theory as an attempt to explain why and under what conditions people attribute the efficacy of (some) actions intended to change the state or essence of something to non-ordinary kinds of agency. Considering his theory in the context of goal-directed action, rather than simply in the context of ritual, allows us to consider what his theory contributes to our understanding the rise of new social movements.

Synthesizing Laterally Across Theories

Framed in this way, it is possible to compare Sørensen’s theory of magic with my own (2009) work on religious experience, and, to a lesser extent, with Max Weber’s theoretical work on charisma. We can use the comparison, as philosopher Paul Davis suggests, to look for “coherence in mechanisms postulated in associated areas of study” and specifically to “identify low-level systematic mechanisms and interactions that instantiate high-level capacities” (Davis 2009: 36–37). In each case we can identify a primary ascriptional unit (that presumably involves a lower-level systematic mechanism), a larger interaction in which it is embedded (goal directed action), and the type of theory the researcher draws upon to characterize the ascription.

	Sørensen	Weber	Taves
Primary Ascriptional Unit (what ascribed to what)	Magical agency ascribed to persons, actions, and objects	Charisma ascribed to person and objects	Specialness ascribed to any “thing” (event, person, action, experience, object)
Conceptualization of Goal-directed action	Event-frames	Social action (various types)	Path schema
Theoretical Emphasis	Cognitive Theory	Social Theory	Attribution Theory

Figure 1: Comparison of Three Theories

Locating Sørensen’s analysis in relation to these other theoretical efforts allows us to position it in relation to research on attributional processes in social cognition and social psychology (Malle 2013, 2004; Taves 2009). In doing so, we can distinguish

dreaming, often claiming that an non-ordinary source of agency simply presented itself to them. In such cases, where the blended space in which features of the ordinary and special realms come together is not marked (as it is in dreaming, play, and various recognized group processes), the authenticity of the ascriptions is typically contested and the mental status of those making the ascriptions may be called into question.

between emic *attributional processes*, which include both the *ascriptions* (or inferences) that people make consciously or unconsciously on the basis of behaviour and the *explanations* they offer for behaviour, and (etic) *attributional theories*, in which researchers attempt to provide meta-explanations of the general processes that people use in making inferences and offering explanations. Although typically considered under the heading of attributional processes, the ascription of qualities and the explanations of behaviours are psychologically distinct (Malle 2013) and, thus, likely rely upon different underlying mechanisms.

At the level of historical data, historians have access (sources permitting) to both types of attributional process, but limited access qua historians to the constituent mental mechanisms. Given the right sources, historians can analyse subjects' conscious (reflective) and nonconscious (seemingly spontaneous or automatic) *ascriptions* of qualities to and their *explanations* of actions, events, and experiences (for examples of such analysis, see Taves 2009: 90–118). Historians can use these distinctions to deepen their analysis of how people explain events. In doing so we need to maintain a careful distinction between subjects' (emic) and researchers' (etic) explanations.

Distinguishing more carefully between subjects' (emic) and researchers' (etic) explanations also allows us to clarify what we ought to be trying to explain with regard to religion and magic. Here Max Weber is instructive. Both Weber and Sørensen are interested, to quote Weber's formulation, in understanding "elementary forms of behaviour motivated by religious or magical factors" (Weber 1978: 399–400). Sørensen, however, defines magical agency as effecting the state or essence of something through "actions with opaque causal mediation", but does not specify who perceives the mediations as opaque – subjects or researchers – nor the basis on which they perceive it as such. Weber is much clearer in this regard, insisting that we start not with an etic understanding of causality (i.e. mediations that researchers view as opaque) but rather with *a distinction that would make sense to the subjects in question*. Behaviours stand out for subjects, Weber (1978: 399–400) argues, depending on "the greater or lesser ordinariness of the phenomena in question". Behaviours that seem out of the ordinary may lead subjects to infer the presence of non-ordinary powers, which they may then use both to effect and explain presumed changes. Weber (1978: 399–400, 1133–34) refers to

the *extraordinary* powers that people ascribe to persons and objects as “charisma” in much the same way that Sørensen uses magical agency to refer to *special* powers that people ascribe to persons, objects, and actions.

Replacing the labels chosen by Sørensen (magical agency) and Weber (charisma) with a more generic formulation has two distinct advantages: it allows us to analyse how people use various first order terms on the ground without confusing the emic and etic levels and it makes overlapping theoretical interests at the etic level more evident. In this case, Sørensen’s characterization of “magical agency” as a special kind of agency and Weber’s definition of “charisma” in terms of “extraordinary powers” point to an obvious underlying generic discourse having to do with ordinariness (non-ordinary, extraordinary) and specialness, on the one hand, and agency understood minimally as the power to effect change, on the other.⁵ Avoiding the culturally-loaded labels allows us to specify the process that is of common theoretical interest: *the ascription of powers, which people perceive as special or non-ordinary, to persons, objects, and actions and to which they then attribute causal efficacy relative to goal directed actions (event frames).*

This reformulation allows us to focus on Sørensen’s chief contribution: the elaboration of the cognitive aspects of the process whereby people make and utilize ascriptions of non-ordinary power to achieve various (ordinary and non-ordinary) goals by incorporating them in temporally structured event-frames that have the potential to become new social movements. We can begin with the three things that Sørensen suggests are needed to create a new magical ritual “(a) *agreement between a few people on the existence of certain counterpart connections, (b) the infusion of magical agency*

⁵ My adoption of “specialness” as an alternative second-order formulation was directly inspired by my engagement with Sørensen’s work (see Taves 2009: 161–62). For a discussion of Weber’s distinction between the charismatic and the ordinary, see Eisenstadt 1968: xxxiv–xxxvii). For a discussion of problems surrounding the concept of agency, and specifically “human agency”, see Davies (2009). We can distinguish between at least three different kinds of agency that scholars (and those we study) may ascribe to individual or collective things. (1) *The capacity to act intentionally*, which presupposes an awareness of awareness, and, thus, the ability to give reasons for why one acts. Agents with the *capacity to act intentionally* don’t always use it, however, and are responsible for many unintended actions for which they cannot give reasons. (2) *The capacity to act*, which presupposes at least some primitive level of awareness or animation, but not conscious intentionality. (3) *The capacity to produce an effect*, which does not require awareness or animation (Taves 2013: 84).

and (c) its embedding as the instrumental cause in an event-frame” (2007: 187, emphasis in original). Assuming that Sørensen didn’t mean to limit agreement among “a few people” to the first point, we can revise this to read: a few people need to agree on (a) the presence of “magical agency”, which we can describe more generically as a special kind of agency that people attribute to something (Y) located in a non-ordinary (mythic) realm, (b) the existence of counterpart connections that link the special agency of Y to something (X) in the ordinary realm, and (c) the efficacy of the special agency (attributed to Y and linked to X via a counterpart connection) relative to the goal specified by the event-frame. As Sørensen indicates, a few people have to *agree* on these points (the existence of the special kind of agency, the counterpart connections, and the structure of the event-frame) for any sort of collective action to occur.

Stressing that “magical agency” is attributed, which Sørensen recognizes, makes it obvious that people often attribute special agency to things (whether persons, events, experiences, objects, etc.) without forming new groups or creating new rituals. For a group to emerge in relation to such an attribution, an individual’s ascription of non-ordinary powers to a thing has to be recognized by others. It has to generate an interpretive consensus among a few people as to what occurred, which in turn constitutes them as a group and the occurrence as an “originary event”. The group, however, will only generate a collective ritual if they agree that the originary event or some aspect of it *can be* re-created in the present (Taves 2009, Table 1.3). Given that, they then have to agree, as Sørensen indicates, both on the specific counterpart connections that can or should connect the originary event to the present and the conditions that can or should be considered causally effective in the event-frame.

The insertion of these additional steps reveals the chief limitation of both Sørensen’s theory of magic and Lawson and McCauley’s theory of ritual for understanding the emergence of new groups with new rituals: neither attends sufficiently to the contestations surrounding the originary events, either when the original attributions are made or when “reformers” reanalyse them. Established rituals presuppose interpretations of originary events that are typically questioned by those who seek to transform them. Thus, not only do attributions of non-ordinary powers generate controversy when they are first asserted, as, for example when some Jews started to claim

that Jesus was the Messiah, they also generate controversy when they are revisited after the fact.

To analyse the emergence of new groups with new rituals, we need to take a closer look at what McCauley and Lawson (2002: 23) refer to as “hypothetical religious rituals”, that is the actions that humans attribute to the gods and to which they appeal in the course of carrying out their own rituals and, I would add, in *generating* new ones. We can’t analyse the counterpart connections between originary events and actions in the present until we understand how people interpret the originary events, i.e. what powers people are ascribing to whom and for what purpose in what they take to be the beginning (*in illu tempore* to quote Eliade 1987: 70). This, of course, is where the disputants typically put all their energy, which makes it easy to lose sight of the larger picture. The kind of analysis advocated by Sørensen, building on the work of Lawson and McCauley, can help us to analyse shifts in the underlying cognitive processes, if we pay more attention to emic debates over the actions of the gods *in illu tempore* without confusing their point of view with our own.

Analysing Reformation Era Debates Over Ritual Efficacy: an Overview

I can illustrate the advances that Sørensen’s work allows us to make, as well as the ironies it engenders with respect to a theory of “magic”, in light of the rise of various Protestant forms of Christianity in the context of sixteenth-century controversies over the Eucharist. In emic terms, these controversies represented debates over the nature of the sacraments, and, in the context of the Eucharist or Lord’s Supper, debates over the sense in which Christ could be said to be present. In the terms adopted here, these controversies can be understood as conflicts over the efficacy of various ritual practices relative to the goal of making Christ present within the ritual event-frame of the Eucharist or Lord’s Supper.

In these sixteenth century debates, the various parties agreed that true religion should be distinguished from false beliefs and practices, variously labelled as superstition, magic, and sorcery. They generally understood “superstition” as referring to “the worship of the true God by inappropriate and unacceptable means” (Cameron 2010: 3). The terms “magic” and “sorcery” were often used alongside “superstition” to

designate means that they considered “inappropriate and unacceptable”.⁶ As Cameron points out (2010: 3), “all of these were labeling expressions: none had a secure frame of reference apart from the values, presuppositions, and preferences of those who used them”.

In the course of the sixteenth-century controversies, reformers drew selectively from extant, late medieval critiques of superstition and magic to mount a critique of Catholic Eucharistic practice (Cameron 2010: 143–44). In mounting this critique, they relied on definitions of superstition and magic that reflected their presuppositions regarding the relationship between spirit and matter and that in turn shaped early social scientific definitions of religion and magic (Styers 2004). Although there was considerable continuity with medieval scholastic views, the official Catholic understanding of the Eucharist was not solidified until the Council of Trent (O’Malley 2013). There is a sense, then, in which three new or at least more sharply defined confessions (Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed) arose from the sixteenth-century debates.

Sørensen (2007: 85–87, 98–102, 178–79) provides an extended analysis of magical agency in the context of the Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass and briefly mentions the rise of Protestantism, citing Luther to suggest that Protestants adopted a symbolic, non-magical understanding of the Eucharistic ritual. Sørensen’s distinction between magic and religion draws from Peirce’s distinction between three types of signs (iconic, indexical, and symbolic), where iconic refers to interpretations based on “recognition of perceptual similarity and identity”, indexical to interpretations based on “underlying essences or traits”, and symbolic to interpretations based on convention (44, 55–60, 62 n. 7; see also Atkin 2006). Ironically, his characterization of the Protestant view as symbolic – if correct – undercuts his claim that magic, by manipulating iconic and indexical signs to promote real transformation, plays a crucial role in the emergence of new religious movements (178, 181–84).

⁶ In this context, Cameron suggests the importance of distinguishing between superstition and more formalized witchcraft beliefs. Styers also notes (2004: 29–30) that scholars generally agree that “the persecution of witchcraft flared only when notions of simple sorcery and popular magic were overlaid with a demonological in which these practices were seen as involving socially threatening, diabolical, and heretical pacts with Satan”. Superstition thus would include what Styers refers to as “simple sorcery and popular magic”.

Sørensen, however, misreads Luther, construing Luther's reference to "the thing symbolized" as symbolic in Peirce's sense, when in fact it refers to the *res sacramenti*, (the thing signified), in contrast to the *sacramentum* (the external sign).⁷ This misreading has the ironic effect of allowing Sørensen to miss the second-order "magic" at the heart of the Protestant redefinitions of the Eucharist, while buying into a substantive definition of magic not unlike the first-order definition that Protestants used to attack the Catholic understanding and each other. Conceived more generically, however, we can use Sørensen's approach to identify key differences in their understanding of the Eucharistic ritual and at the same time to illustrate the ironic complexities that can arise if we use a second order concept of magic to analyse first order debates.

Sørensen's analysis of the Catholic position reflects the official outcome of the debate on the Catholic side, as articulated in the decree on the Mass at the 22nd Session of the Council of Trent in 1562. Sørensen's diagram of the Catholic construction of the ritual space of the Mass (see Figure 2) depicts the present social space (or ordinary world) on the left, the mythic (or extra-ordinary) space on the right, and the ritual (or blended) space below. As he indicates, the ritual action of making Christ present in the Eucharist reproduced "a mythical act of Christ" depicted in the New Testament (Mt. 26: 26–29 and Lk. 22: 14–23) in which Jesus referred to the bread and wine he shared with his disciples at his "last supper" as his body and blood and tells them to "do this in remembrance of me". The "words of institution", which all parties recounted with minor variations when reenacting the event, were drawn from the New Testament accounts and established counterpart connections between the disciples' face-to-face interaction with Jesus (sacralized by Christians as the Christ) and the re-presentation of that event to followers in the present (in the blended/ritual space).

⁷ Sørensen's quote is taken from Luther's "Babylonian Captivity of the Church" (1520) as abridged in B. L. Woolf, ed. *The Reformation Writings of Martin Luther*, 2 vols., I: 220. For an alternative translation as "the thing signified" and the underlying Latin referent, see LW2: 23 n. 45.

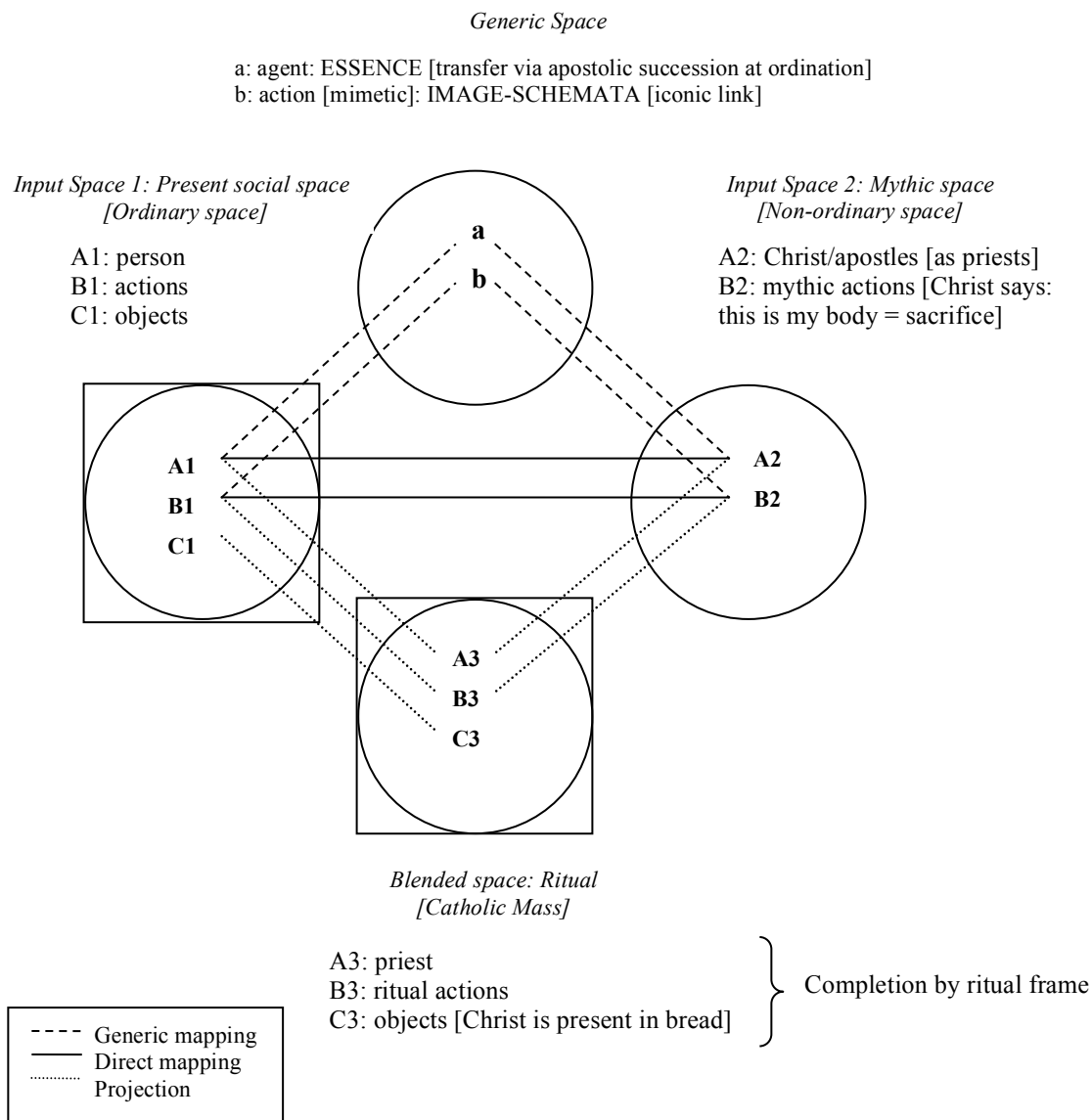


Figure 2: The ritual space of the Catholic Mass (adapted from Sørensen 2007: 86 with the assistance of John McGraw; additions are noted in brackets).

Points of Contention: Interpreting the Actions of the Divine *in illu tempore*

Although in all cases the words of institution were used to forge connections between the mythic past and the ritual space, the nature of the connections rested on how the referenced passages were interpreted, thus on the interpretation of what took place in the mythic past. To understand how these disputes gave rise to new religious bodies (Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic), we have to consider not only what Jesus allegedly said, but more crucially what various interpreters argued that he *meant* and, thus, the

basis on which disputants made different connections between the events of the last supper, as they understood them, and the ritual event-frame of the Eucharist.⁸

The words of institution not only generated counterpart connections between the events of the last supper and the event-frame of the Eucharist, the recounting of Jesus' instruction to "this do in remembrance of me" supplied the event frame for the ritual as a whole. Thus, the goal of the event was the "remembrance of me" and "this do" was the means of arriving at the goal. The preposition "in" understood as "in order to" linked the means with the goal, deeming it efficacious. Most of these words raised contentious issues of interpretation in the context of Reformation Era debates (Wandel 2006: 6–10).

- "*Doing this*" was understood as having to do with the "taking and eating", which in turn was linked to what was eaten (the bread and wine), which in turn was linked to what Jesus said about the bread and the cup. Disputants connected the meaning they attributed to Jesus's words regarding the bread and cup at the last supper to their ritual actions in the present. Disputes over the meaning of "this" were connected to the meaning of the ritual as a whole and were fought out over the phrase "this cup is the new testament in my blood". Disputes over the sense in which "doing this" made Christ present were fought out over the phrase "this is my body", where the central issue was how "this" (meaning the bread) should be linked to "my body" (meaning Christ's body) and, thus, what attributes Jesus meant to ascribe to the bread at the last supper and, thus, should be ascribed to the bread in the present.

- "*In*" linked the "doing of this" (*in illu tempore* and in the present) with the goal of "remembering me". In linking the two, it signaled that "doing this" (whatever it was) again would effectively accomplish the goal of "remembering me". This basic counterpart connection was not disputed.

- "*Remembrance of me*" ([King James]; *meam commemorationem* [Latin Vulgate]) was understood as a reference to the goal or purpose of "doing this". "Me" was understood to refer to Jesus, whom all parties to the debates understood as the Christ (i.e. God incarnate). All parties to the disputes in question, thus, agreed that it was Christ who was "remembered" by "doing this". They all even agreed that remembering made Christ present in some sense; it was the sense in which *doing this made Christ present* – whether

⁸ The case study is adapted from Taves (2009: 140–49) with permission of the publisher.

“really” or simply in memory, whether bodily or spiritually – that was at the center of the dispute.

Differences were fought out on two major fronts: between Catholics and Protestants over the meaning of the last supper in relation to Jesus crucifixion (interpreted by all as “his sacrifice on the cross”) and between all parties over the sense in which Christ could be said to be really present in the Eucharistic ritual. With respect to the first debate, Catholic teaching, as articulated by the Council of Trent, insisted that the last supper prefigured Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and was ritually duplicated in the Mass; the leading Protestant reformers all disagreed. Ritually, their disagreement was rooted in their respective understandings of the nature of the priesthood and how it was conferred, i.e. via ordination or baptism. Textually, their disagreement rested on whom they thought Christ was addressing: the 12 apostles (Catholic) or the 12 disciples directly and all other disciples by extension (Protestant). Based on the first reading, Catholics established an iconic counterpart connection between the celebrant and Jesus; based on the second, Protestants established an iconic counterpart connection between the congregants and the disciples.

The second debate, which not only precipitated disagreement between Catholics and Protestants but also between Protestants, focused on Jesus’s words at the last supper (and thus practically on the meaning of “this is my body”). The Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, argued that Luther interpreted the word “is” too literally and in doing so perpetuated “the delusion that the bread is flesh and the wine blood” (Zwingli 1526: 186). To avoid this, Zwingli and others in the Reformed tradition reconceived the linkage between bread and body in a manner that approached, but probably did not fully embrace, the symbolic in Peirce’s technical sense. Yet the Reformed Protestant rejection of a real *bodily* presence *in the bread* should not obscure their embrace of alternative conceptions of presence derived from the new iconic counterpart connections that Protestants made between communicants and the disciples. Although Protestants characterized these connections emically as “faith” rather than “magic”, they can be construed etically as “magical” in light of Sørensen’s second order definition and, thus, provide evidence to support his claim that “magic” plays an important role in the emergence of new movements.

To get at these shifts in counterpart connections, I begin, like Sørensen, with the official Catholic understanding of the Mass as articulated at the Council of Trent (1562), then backtrack chronologically to contrast the counterpart connections solidified at Trent with the counterpart connections that Luther introduced in his 1520 treatise “On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church”. Subsequent Protestant critiques of Luther’s understanding of the real presence as too “magical” did not question the new iconic counterpart connections proposed by Luther and indeed relied on them to generate alternative Protestant views of Christ’s presence in the sacraments.

Counterpart Connections and Proximal Causes

At the 22nd Session of the Council of Trent, which was devoted to a discussion of the “Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass”, the Council specified that the Passover meal celebrated by Jesus and his disciples was to be interpreted as a priestly sacrifice in which the priest (Jesus) offered himself as the sacrifice. In the words of the Council:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, ... declaring Himself constituted *a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech* [Ps. 109:4], He offered up to God the Father His own body and blood under the species of bread and wine, and, under the symbols of those same things, He delivered (His own body and blood) to be received by His apostles, whom he then constituted priests of the New Testament; and by those words, *Do this in commemoration of me*, He commanded them and their successors in the priesthood, to offer (them); even as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught (Waterworth 1848: 153, emphasis in original).

In this view, Jesus as priest offered up his own body and blood as a sacrifice at Passover, thus, instituting the new Passover, which is received and reenacted by “His apostles”, whom he constituted as his successors in the priesthood. Thus, the same “divine sacrifice ... is celebrated in the mass, [where] that same Christ is contained and immolated in an unbloody manner, who once offered Himself in a body manner on the altar of the cross” (Waterworth 1848: 154). The literal equation of the bread with Christ’s body meant that then and in the present, “[the victim] is one and the same..., the same now offering by the ministry of priests, [as He] who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different” (Waterworth 1848: 155).

In this interpretation of “this do”, the interpretation of “this” as a ritual sacrifice presided over by a priest is obviously crucial. As both sacrificer (the priest who offers the sacrifice) and that which was sacrificed (the offering or “victim”), the Catholic

interpretation of Jesus' last supper provides a model for the human agent (priest), the objects (bread and wine), and the action (the words of institution). Thus, in Sørensen's terms, the reenactment of the original sacrifice in the present is based on an iconic counterpart connection based on perceived similarities between the two events. The counterpart connection is in turn legitimated by a line of succession running from Jesus to "His apostles, whom he constituted as priests of the New Testament", to priests properly ordained in a ritually constituted lineage, i.e. *apostolic* succession. This lineage ensured that the priest, who celebrated the Mass, was himself linked iconically to Christ and could pronounce the words "this is my body" *in the role of Christ*, thus replicating not only the sacrifice but also the sacrificer sacrificing himself. It was not the priest as individual, who effected the transformation of the bread and wine, though the intentions of the priest were crucial, but the words of Christ spoken by the priest in the role of Christ that did so (Sørensen 2007: 85–87).

Thus, to sum up, in the Catholic view, a human male can be ritually constituted as a priest through the sacrament of ordination (Fig. 2, A1–3). This establishes an iconic connection between him and Christ [the special agent] allowing him to mimetically assume the role of Christ whose word it is that transforms (Fig. 2, B1–3). The elements so transformed (Fig. 2, C3) were understood "to contain the grace that they signify", in this case, the power to sanctify [the goal of the event-frame], and to confer that grace effectively upon any who did not place "an obstacle" (Latin, *obex*, i.e. a sinful act or disposition) in the way (Canons 6-7, Waterworth 1848: 55).

Luther and the Protestant reformers who followed him configured the counterpart connection differently, focusing on the words "this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins", which Luther construed as the promise of a testator, rather than as the sacrifice of a priest (LW2: 20–23, 36–38). Where sacrifice was the key word for post-Tridentine Catholics, the word from which all else flowed in Luther's view was "testament", as in "new testament", which he interpreted as "a promise which implies the death of him who makes it" (LW2: 38).

Now God made a testament. Therefore it was necessary that He should die. But God could not die unless He became man. Thus the incarnation and the death of

Christ are both comprehended most concisely in this one word, ‘testament’ (LW2: 38).

Thus, according to Luther:

[W]hat we call the mass is a promise of the forgiveness of sins made to us by God, and such a promise as has been confirmed by the death of the Son of God. ... If the mass is a promise, as has been said, then access to it is gained, not with any works, or powers, or merits of one’s own, but by faith alone. For where there is the Word of the promising God, there must necessarily be the faith of the accepting man” (LW2: 38–39, quoted in Wandel 2006: 100).

For Luther, the promise of the new testament referred simultaneously to Jesus’ words regarding the cup as recorded in the gospel accounts and the Word of God, understood as God incarnate in Jesus as the Christ. As Wandel aptly states, “The Lord’s Supper ... took place within layers of God’s Word” (Wandel 2006: 103).

The shift from sacrifice-of-a-priest to promise-of-a-testator was linked to different ways of conceiving those whom Christ addressed at the last supper. In the Catholic interpretation codified at Trent, which linked Heb. 3:1 (“Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession”) with Luke’s account of the last supper (Lk. 22:14), Christ’s words were addressed to “His apostles”. In the Protestant interpretation, which reflects the words of institution actually used by both, Christ’s words are addressed to “his disciples”, as in “Jesus took bread ... and gave it to his disciples and said ...” (for the words of institution, see LW2: 36–37, 319). Moreover, the wine is explicitly “poured out for you [disciples] and for many”, which Protestants construed as all who believed in the promise (i.e. Christ’s disciples in an extended sense).⁹ Although the use of the terms apostles (*apostolos*) and disciple (*mathetes*) in the New Testament is complex, the former was the narrower term, often limited by later tradition to the “twelve apostles”, such that the apostles were all disciples, but not all disciples were apostles.¹⁰ This subtle shift in

⁹ The traditional canon of the Mass harmonized the gospel accounts of the last supper, including both Matthew’s “for you” (Mt. 26:28) and Luke’s “for many” (Lk. 22:20). Regarding this line, Luther writes (LW2: 22–23): “And do you not see whom he [Christ] addresses when he gives the cup? Does he not give it to all? ... ‘For you’ [Lk. 22:20], he says – let this refer to the priests. ‘And for many’ [Mt. 26:28], however, cannot possibly refer to the priests”.

¹⁰ On New Testament usages, see Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), s.v. *apostolos* (69–74) and *manthano* (559–62).

wording, which undercut the Catholic doctrine of apostolic succession, signaled a critical shift in counterpart connections. Where Catholic teaching made a counterpart connection between Christ and the apostles as priests and the celebrant, Luther forged a counterpart connection between Christ's disciples and the communicant (Fig. 3, C1-3). This shift, which was adopted by subsequent Protestant reformers, lay at the heart of the Protestant Reformation.

The shift in focus from priest/minister to communicant highlighted the role of "faith" or "belief" in the Lutheran understanding. Thus, according to Luther, "the mass [as the gift of a divine promise] is received only by the person who believes for himself, and only to the extent that he believes" (LW2:51). Though faith was necessary in Luther's understanding, it was not faith per se that made the mass efficacious, but faith in "the Word of the promising God", where the Word was understood as Christ. Or as Luther said, "these two – the promise and faith – must go together. For without the promise there is nothing to believe, while without faith the promise is useless, for it is established and fulfilled through faith" (LW2:42). In the Lutheran interpretation, which later Protestants generally accepted, the communicant [the ritual subject] must intentionally recognize [by faith] the power of the Word to transform in order for the transformation to take place.

In making this shift, Protestant reformers did not reject the idea of priesthood, but extended it to all ("the priesthood of all believers") on the basis of baptism, rather than to a select group on the basis of ordination. Citing I Peter, Luther insisted: "we are all priests, as many of us as are Christians. But the priests, as we call them, are ministers chosen from among us [with our common consent]" (LW 2: 112-13, 116-117). Luther, thus, rejected the Catholic claim that "Christ ordained the apostles to the priesthood", which in his view, "separated [clergy and laity] from each other farther than heaven from earth, to the incredible injury of the grace of baptism and to the confusion of our fellowship in the gospel" (LW2: 112). Where Catholics were taught to perceive an iconic counterpart connection between Jesus and the priest as successor to the apostles via ordination (understood in terms of apostolic succession), Protestants were tacitly taught to perceive an iconic counterpart connection between themselves and Jesus's disciples constituted by baptism (understood in terms of the priesthood of all believers). In both

systems, the proximate power to transform the bread and wine was derived from a prior ritual – ordination for Catholics and baptism for Protestants – that McCauley and Lawson (2002: 18-19) refer to as enabling rituals.

In their respective understandings of the two enabling rituals, we see the action that each attributed to God, which in turn provided the rationale for their understanding of the Eucharist. Thus, baptism, for Luther, was the acceptance in faith of God’s promise of salvation (LW2:58-59). Luther stressed that the agent who baptizes is “Christ himself, indeed, God himself”, not the minister (LW2:62-63). As with the Eucharist, it was the acceptance of the promise by the ritual subject that made the sacrament efficacious, not the ritual actions correctly performed by the proper ritual agent (LW2:66-67). The Council of Trent, in its decree on the sacrament of Order at the 23rd Session, reaffirmed the integral connection between sacrifice and priesthood, as instituted “by the ... Lord our Saviour [and delivered] to the apostles, and their successors in the priesthood” (Waterford: 170). It explicitly condemned those, such as Luther, who affirmed “that all Christians indiscriminately are priests of the New Testament” (p. 172).

The basic points of agreement among Protestants are summed up in Fig. 3. Line A1-A2 represents the human response to an action attributed to a deity (God’s promise of salvation), which constitutes the believing person as a priest. Line C1-C2 represents the iconic connection between the ritual action of the communicant and the mythic action of the disciples in response to “the Word of the promising God”, i.e. Christ, at the last supper (B2). Although the minister recounts “the Word of the promising God” to the congregants in the context of the ritual, this does not change the bread and wine (hence the absence of a connection between B1 and B2). The change in the elements (D1) occurs at D3 in the blended space, where it is effected (proximally) by the believers who consume them in faith (C3). While Protestants agreed that the minister was not the proximate cause of change in the elements and that Christ was present in some sense in the elements-consumed-in-faith, the sense in which Christ was present in the elements (D3) was disputed.

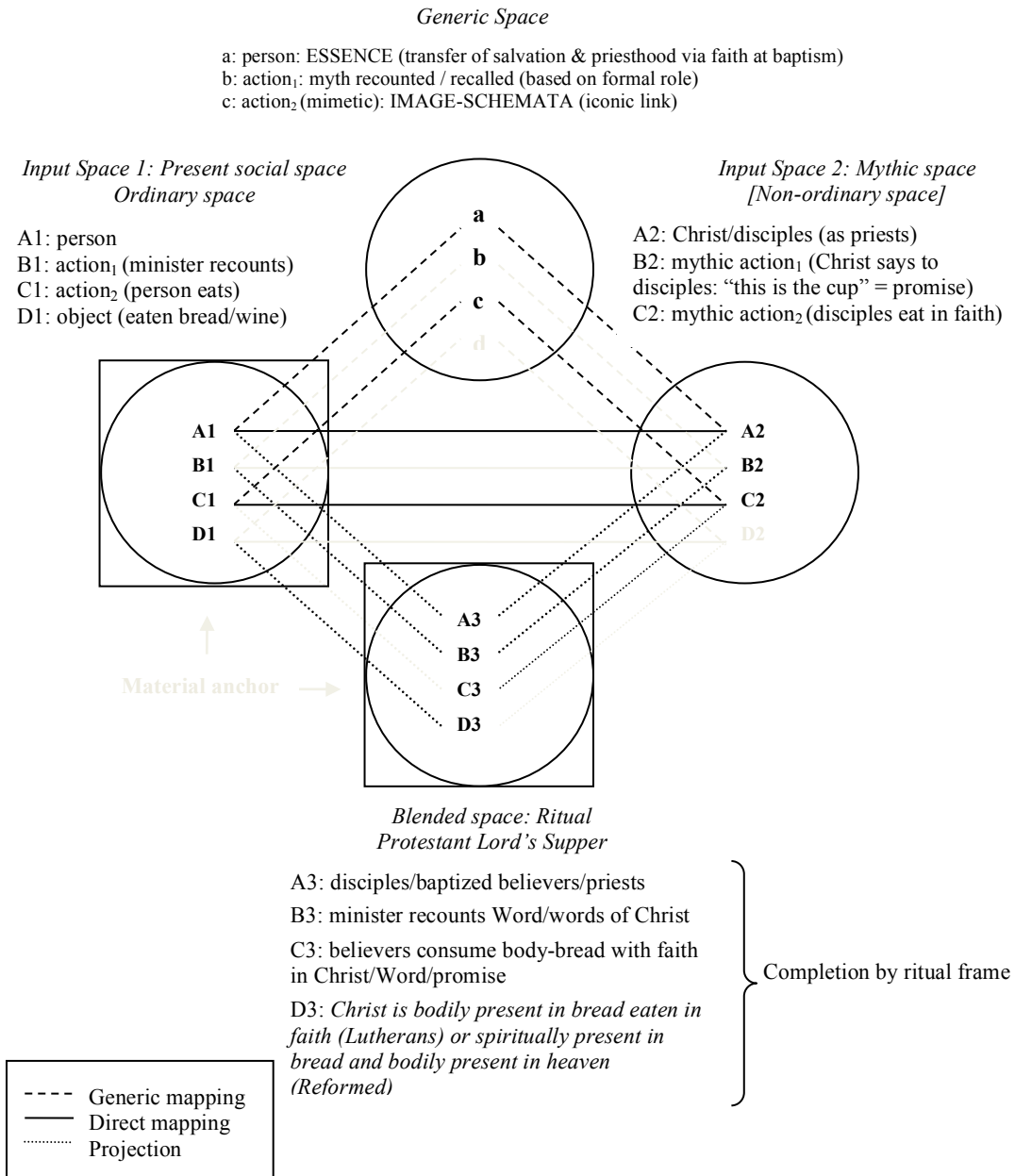


Figure 3: The ritual space of Lutheran and Reformed Lord's Supper rituals

The shift in the proximate cause of the transformation from the priest to the communicant had a direct effect on the status of the materials transformed. In the Catholic case, the proper intention of the priest results in a permanent change in the consecrated elements. In the Protestant case, Luther and subsequent Protestant reformers agreed that Christ was present in the bread and wine *in some sense* when the communicant received the promise in faith even though they did not agree on the sense in

which this was the case. The shift in the proximate cause of the presence, thus, meant that Catholics understood Christ as present in all properly consecrated wafers, while Protestants understood Christ to be present only in consecrated wafers that were consumed by the faithful. With this shift, Luther and the Protestants more generally rejected the whole panoply of Catholic devotions related to the “Blessed Sacrament” and thus by extension a wide range of practices by means of which Catholics continued to expect that they could experience Christ as really present.

The shift from ordination to baptism as the proximate source of the power to transform the elements had even more radical implications, which Luther forthrightly acknowledged. In – as he claimed -- wrongly separating clergy and laity, Luther blamed the sacrament of ordination for “establishing of all the horrible things that have been wrought hitherto in the church” (LW2: 112). Indeed, he said, “unless I am greatly mistaken, if this sacrament and this lie fall, the papacy itself with its characters will scarcely survive” (LW2: 117). Luther hoped for a response from the pope and engagement with the system he was criticizing, but wound up instead spending much of his energy clarifying his views in response to the “misunderstandings” of other reformers who rejected his understanding of the sense in which Christ was really present in the Eucharist (Wandel 2006: 98-102).

Protestant debates over the sense in which Christ was present in the Eucharistic elements were complicated. In arguing against the Catholic view, Luther maintained a tension between the Word (the promise of God) and the sacramental signs (water in the case of baptism and bread and wine in the Eucharist), criticizing earlier theologians for focusing on “the sign or sacrament” and neglecting “the testament and word of promise” (LW2:44). Although he questioned the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, Luther continued to maintain that Christ was bodily present in the elements consumed in faith, when challenged on this point by more radical reformers, such as Ulrich Zwingli, beginning in the 1520s. Two delegations of reformers, led by Luther and Zwingli, met at Marburg 1529 to attempt to resolve their differences. While they resolved some, they failed to agree on the nature of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist (LW4: 5-14).

The heart of the disagreement lay in their interpretation of the word “is” in “this is my body”, which Zwingli argued had to be understood as “figurative and symbolical”

rather than literal (Zwingli 1526: 199). Although Zwingli viewed the *bodily* presence of Christ in the Eucharist as symbolic in a sense that was similar, if not identical to that of Peirce, he did not reject the idea of Christ's *spiritual* presence in the Eucharist (see Zwingli, 1526: 208-209; Stephens 1986: 218-59). Distinguishing more sharply than Luther between the divine and human natures of Christ, he viewed Christ's human nature as circumscribed and his divine nature as omnipresent (see LW3:xvii-xx). As human, Christ was physically present (incarnate) in the man Jesus, appeared physically to the disciples after his death, and then – as stated in the Nicene Creed – ascended bodily into heaven where he “sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty” (Zwingli 1526: 186). In his human nature, he therefore could not be bodily present in the bread, since humans cannot be in two places at once. As divine, however, Christ was omnipresent; as such, he was spirituality present in the Eucharist for those who received it in faith (Zwingli 1526: 212-13). Since in this conception Christ's spiritual presence in the Eucharist depended solely on the spiritual presence of Christ in the hearts of believers, Luther accused Zwingli of entirely “remov[ing] the body and blood of Christ from the bread and wine, so that it remains no more than mere bread, such as the baker bakes” (LW2: 336). Zwingli claimed that this was not the case; although viewed materially, it was only bread; in terms of its use, it was something more (Stephens 1986: 248).

Subtle disagreements on this last point notwithstanding, Zwingli's critique highlights a central divide that emerged between Reformed Protestants, on one hand, and both Catholics and Lutherans, on the other, concerning whether Christ could be seated “at the right hand of the Father” in heaven and at the same time be physically present in the sacrament. Catholics and Lutherans thought he could, though both traditions had difficulty explaining how he did it, while Reformed Protestants thought he could not. Writing several decades later, Calvin mediated between the Lutheran and Zwinglian views (Janse 2009). Assuming the Zwinglian claim that Christ was bodily present in heaven, he (Calvin 1559: 4.17.31) chided those “who conceive no presence of flesh in the Supper unless it lies in the bread”. In doing so, he argued, “they leave nothing to the secret working of the Spirit, which unites Christ himself to us. To them Christ does not seem present unless he comes down to us. As though, if he should lift us to himself, we should not just as much enjoy his presence!” The Reformed traditions that followed

Calvin expected the Holy Spirit to carry believers “above all things that are visible, carnal and earthly”, so that they could “feed upon the body and blood of Christ Jesus, once broken and shed for us but now in heaven and appearing for us in the presence of his Father” (Scots Confession, quoted in Wandel 2006: 188). In the Reformed traditions that followed Calvin, it is thus the Holy Spirit that effects the communion between the believer and Christ’s ascended body, through the faith of the communicant.

Magic and Religion as Concepts of Dubious Descent

In light of the preceding analysis, we can draw several conclusions about the disputants’ (emic) understanding efficacy. First, all parties viewed their own Eucharistic practice as efficacious relative to the goal of communion with Christ. In each case, a change was effected that allowed believers to experience the presence of Christ. The proximate cause of the change was attributed either to the intentions of the priest (Catholic) or the faithful (Protestant). In no case, however, was the proximate cause considered efficacious in its own right. Although they offered different explanations of how their practices exerted their efficacy and set different requirements for achieving efficacy, they all ultimately attributed the efficacy of their own practices to divine agency, whether God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit.

Second, based on their disparate readings of scripture, all parties concluded that their rivals’ practices were not efficacious. Catholics and Protestants understood efficacy differently. For Catholics, efficacy was attributed to the words spoken by the priest insofar as the priest was understood to be speaking mimetically as Christ, a power granted to him by sacramental ordination. Sixteenth-century Protestants construed the efficacy accorded to the words of institution spoken by the priest as magical and contrasted it with the ostensibly non-magical efficacy of faith in a promise contained in the Word/words of Christ. In the context of the Reformation, Protestants hammered out a distinction between religion and magic in which magic was associated with practices deemed efficacious in themselves (i.e. automatic) and religion with the (non-automatic) power of the deity to effect what was promised when it was received in faith.

Although emic charges of magic and superstition swirled around the question of whether Christ was bodily present in the Eucharistic elements, emic definitions should not obscure the broad reach of etic Sørensen’s definition, which includes not only

changes in the state or essence of objects that people attribute to non-ordinary agents, but also changes in *persons and events*. Here I have argued that Protestants shifted the meaning of “the thing signified” from sacrifice to promise and in doing so precipitated a new understanding of who effected the change proximally (communicants who received the promise in faith rather than the sacramentally ordained priest) and what ritually enabled the change (salvation and priesthood received by all who believed at baptism rather than priesthood conferred on successors of the twelve apostles at ordination). Regardless of whether or how Christians enjoyed the bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Protestants made an indexical connection between the believer and the Christ/Word received at baptism and iconic connections between communicants and disciples in the Eucharist. These counterpart connections supplied the underlying structure of the Protestant Eucharistic ritual just as the indexical and iconic connections noted by Sorensen structured the Catholic ritual. By shifting the thing signified from sacrifice to promise, Protestants undercut the distinction between clergy and laity, deprived the clergy of a role in effecting the change in the elements, and limited any change in the elements to wafers consumed by the faithful. In doing so, they eliminated much of what Protestants emically construed as “magic”, i.e. a person saying words that “automatically” made the deity present in a material object.

If we shift to a second-order definition of magic, such as that advanced by Sørensen, we can reframe the Reformation Era debates differently. From this perspective, it is clear that all parties to the debates ascribed non-ordinary power to Jesus’ words at the last supper, which they believed could and should be replicated in some sense in the present. In that sense, they all ascribed “magical” properties to Jesus’s words. They disagreed, however, in their interpretation of what Jesus was doing when he spoke the words (sacrificing or promising) and, thus, on the means of replicating that effect in the present. Viewed from the second-order perspective advanced by Sørensen, the “magical” efficacy that Protestants attributed to the communicants’ “faith” in God’s promise to act through the sacrament (thus, circumventing the need for sacramentally ordained priests) fueled the emergence of new forms of Christianity (new religious traditions) with new ritual structures and symbolic elaborations.

As I have been indicating throughout, I see no evidence to suggest that calling the powers in question “magical” (or “religious” or “charismatic”) adds anything but confusion at the etic level. Both “religion” and “magic” are what Davies (2009) would call “concepts dubious by descent”, that is concepts implicated in worldviews and historic contestations that may not be particularly useful in terms of furthering knowledge at the etic level. In light of the “conserving effects of cultural institutions and human psychology”, Davis suggest that “[we] do not make it a condition of adequacy on our philosophical theorizing that we preserve or otherwise ‘save’ [such] concept[s]”. Rather, he encourages us to bracket such concepts with “the expectation that [they] will be explained away or vindicated as inquiry progresses – as we analyse inwardly and synthesize laterally” (Davies 2009: 42–43). The key thing to recognize, as I see it, is that people had a goal – in this case, realizing the presence of Christ – and a variety of competing means that they considered efficacious for realizing the goal. The tools that Sørensen has assembled from Peirce’s semiotics, Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor theory, and Fauconnier and Turner’s conceptual blending theory, when added to the analytic framework laid out by Lawson and McCauley, nonetheless allow us to analyse the cognitive processes involved in such actions with more precision.

Conclusion

From a cognitive perspective, an analysis of a concrete instance, such as the Reformation Era debates over the Eucharist, illustrates the importance of abandoning concepts of dubious descent (e.g., magic) in our etic formulations and the value of synthesizing laterally across related domains of inquiry in order to identify constituent processes that inform higher-level interactions. Synthesizing laterally revealed parallels between Weber’s definition of “charisma” and Sørensen’s definition of “magic”, which then allowed us to recast these culturally loaded labels more generically as references to powers that people perceive as special or non-ordinary. This in turn allowed us to analyse situations in which people ascribe non-ordinary powers to things, consider what particular things (persons, events, objects, etc.) they ascribe them to, and the effects they attribute to such powers in the context of goal directed action. Here I have been particularly interested in testing Sørensen’s claim that such attributions play a crucial role in the formation of new movements that center on new ritual practices.

To get at this, I added to the agreements that Sørensen suggested were necessary to generate a new ritual, focusing in particular on the need for (at least) a small group to arrive at an interpretive consensus with respect to event that they view as “originary”, i.e. as revealing the presence of non-ordinary powers, and agreement that the “originary event” or some aspect of it can and should be recreated in the present. In the Reformation Era disputes over the Eucharist, all parties agreed that there was an originary event. Generally speaking, it was the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the deity and the associated claim that Jesus was the Christ. More specifically, it was the “last supper”, in which Jesus called upon his followers to “do this in remembrance of me”. Given these conditions, we could then – following Sørensen’s lead – consider the counterpart connections that people used to connect the special agency perceived in the originary event to the present and the conditions under which people viewed the special agency as effective.

To understand how new movements form around new rituals, I argued that we needed to pay more attention to disputes over the interpretation of the originary events, since, as McCauley and Lawson note, it is the “hypothetical religious rituals” of the gods to which people appeal in the course of carrying out their rituals and in generating new ones. Here I argued that Luther’s reinterpretation of the last supper as a promise rather than a sacrifice redefined the counterpart connections between the originary/mythic event (the last supper) and its ritual reenactment. Although some Protestants disputed Luther’s claim that Christ was bodily present in the Eucharistic elements, they did not question the new counterpart connections he proposed and indeed relied on them to general alternative understandings of Christ’s presence. In that sense, the shift in counterpoint connections laid the foundation for the emergence of Protestantism as a movement.

For historians of religion, the schematic depiction of constituent processes offered here does not diminish the importance of dynamic contextual interactions. As Sørensen and I both stress and as McCauley and Lawson assume, groups constituted by collective rituals presuppose the agreements discussed here. Identifying basic cognitive processes, such as conceptual blending, action representation systems, event-structures, and cognitive schemas, allows us to identify shifts at this more basic level that when agreed

upon (or tacitly adopted) can structure widespread change. Although the dynamic historical interactions that lead to or preclude such agreements are the basic “stuff” of historical analysis, use of cognitive tools to describe underlying shifts allows us to describe the process of change in more basic and generic terms. These underlying processes provide a more adequate basis for setting up comparisons of the working out of such processes, such as those that lead to the formation of new social movements, both within and across cultures and time periods.

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