

○ SIMULATING CHRIST

LUKE AND JOHN, AND THE CANONICAL CONTROL OF MEANING

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I examine the effect that the 'synopsis' between the gospels of Luke and John have on the New Testament's intertextual construction of 'Jesus Christ'. I draw particularly on the theories of Deleuze and of Barthes. I conclude that Luke and John, in combination with the letters of Paul, form a simulacrum of Christ that overwhelms and absorbs any divergences that may appear in the other gospels. This in turn plays a large part in defining the Christian 'Gospel' as a theological/ideological construct.

Interpretation is our modern way of believing and of being pious (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 171).

[T]he similarities – and dissimilarities – between the theologies of the two evangelists [Luke and John] constitute... an exceedingly interesting subject, and one which it is the writer's hope that he can treat later in a companion piece to the present study (Bailey 1963, viii).

GOSPELS AND THE GOSPEL

In this essay, I explore how the canon of the New Testament makes possible or at least assists significantly in the construction of the singular Jesus Christ of Christianity. More specifically, my interest is in what John Bailey calls in my second epigraph the 'exceedingly interesting subject' of the theologies associated with the gospels of Luke and John,¹ and the cumulative effect of those complementary or even harmonious ideologies within the larger intertextual structure that is the canon of the New Testament – that is, how Luke and John combine within the New Testament to construct the Christian concept of 'Jesus Christ'. I am *not* interested in hypothetical historical trajectories, underlying oral traditions, or probabilities of influence between these gospels, nor do I argue that this intertextuality between Luke and John is intentional on the part of either author.² Instead, I explore the effects of this relationship, within the canonical structure, on the reader. I do not here consider how Luke and John combine to create other Christian theological concepts, such as the Holy Spirit, or other important ways in which they may relate to or differ from one another in content or form.

One of the more important functions of the Christian Bible is to restrain the polysemy of its constituent texts and thereby to support the Christian churches' theological claims. It does this by forming an intertextual network through which texts within that network are interpreted in relation to other texts within the network. Texts from outside of the canonical network, such as theological proclamations, sermons, and creeds, also play important roles in the churches' interpretation of the Bible, but the intertextuality of the biblical canon establishes the necessary framework for the control of biblical meaning. The canon helps to define, among other things, Christians' understanding of Christ. Although texts of the Christian Old Testament play an important role in this definition, the texts of the New Testament are doubly decisive, both in their own right and in the ways in which they control Christian interpretation of the Old Testament texts.

Within the New Testament, each of the four stories narrated in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John features a character named Jesus who is followed by some disciples. Each of these Jesuses announces the kingdom of God and performs miracles, and he is crucified by the Romans and raised from the dead. Yet despite interesting similarities between the four gospels' stories and their Jesuses, they are not the same. Important differences and even contradictions appear between the gospels' stories, and therefore they all cannot both be true and also refer to the same Jesus. The name of Jesus serves as a hook on which each story hangs diverse predicates, and thus each of these Jesuses is a distinct 'reality effect' (Barthes 1986, 141–148) – in other words, a different semiotic entity, a simulacrum. As Gilles Deleuze notes, 'the simulacrum is an image without resemblance... If the simulacrum still has a model, it is another model, a model of the Other, from which there flows an internalized dissemblance' (Deleuze 1990, 257–258). As simulacra, these Jesuses are virtual beings, ideological constructs. They are copies that *precede* their models, not different replicas of a single original model.

Among other differences between them, the four gospels do not share the same view of Jesus as Christ. Not only does the Jesus of each story have a different relation to Christ, but 'Christ' means something different in each story. Matthew's Jesus is surely the Christ (16:16-17), but he is not 'the Lord'. No matter how closely he may be associated with God prior to his death, he is not God, at least not until he is resurrected, when the disciples worship him (28:17). In Mark it is uncertain whether Jesus is the Christ (8:27-30) or even what Christ is (11:27-33, 12:35-37), and Jesus is at best a puzzling and paradoxical Christ. Luke's Jesus is both Christ and Lord (2:11), and John's Jesus is the incarnate yet divine Word, come from God to shine the light of truth in the dark world.

The four gospels describe four distinct events and four distinct Jesuses, but that is unacceptable to the Christian ideology. Belief that there is only one Jesus Christ (and thus disbelief in the gospels' multiple Jesuses) is essential to Christian thought, and it has been since well before the canonisation of the Christian Bible – indeed, it may be one powerful reason *for* the canonisation of the Bible. Christianity constructs the theological concept of a singular being, Jesus Christ (also known as the Lord Jesus), from *out of* the four distinct Jesus simulacra of the gospels, as well as other sources, including Paul's letters and other New Testament writings.³ Every simulacrum is always profoundly intertextual, and as a very powerful intertext, the Bible absorbs the differences between different stories of different Jesuses, and especially between the four gospels. The biblical canon negates the diverse reality effects of the multiple gospels, in effect translating and unifying the message of the various texts into the theological concept of 'the Gospel', which is the canonical simulation of Jesus as Christ and Lord. The Gospel replaces the four gospels' different Jesus simulacra with yet another simulacrum, Jesus Christ, who is then projected through the canon upon the various gospels and indeed, the rest of the Bible, as the theological object of readers' beliefs and desires. For the Gospel there is only one 'real' Jesus: namely, the divine sacrifice who takes away the sins of those who believe in him.

The traditional practice of titling the four New Testament gospels 'The Gospel According to...' reflects widespread Christian belief that there is just one Gospel of Jesus Christ that appears in multiple versions. Differences between actual gospel texts pale to insignificance in the Gospel. The Gospel is not any of the gospels, nor is it all of them; it is something else. It is no longer simply a story but instead a revelation from God, a message of ultimate salvation. The similarity

of terminology between Gospel (as concept) and gospel (as text) is indeed confusing, but it is there in the discourse of Christians, and its effect is to obscure this important distinction. Likewise, the Jesus Christ of this Gospel does not appear in any New Testament text, even though the phrase ‘Jesus Christ’ does.

The tendency to read the various gospels together appears well before the New Testament canon is established in the fourth century. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John or parts of them were bound together in papyrus codexes (P45 and especially P75) or even harmonised (by Tatian) as early as the second century. However, the canon provides an intertext that gives authority to such readings, encouraging the reader to weave together the different stories or to treat them as mutually illuminating versions of a single story, featuring a single character, so that each gospel complements and supplements the others. The gospels’ canonical status in the Bible both augments their value and encourages the reader to read them as ‘the same’, as united in the single ‘word of God’. The New Testament gives its constituent texts another sense, producing its own reality effect and thereby referring the four gospels to a single theological truth – namely, the Gospel. The four virtual objects named Jesus are absorbed without remainder into a single virtual object and understood to be multiple copies of one model, who is Jesus Christ. This Jesus Christ is the Christian God incarnate in a human body, a unique being whose unjust death and supernatural resurrection guarantees to those who believe in him a heavenly afterlife.

I argue that the gospels of Luke and John are specially important in the construction of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There are curious and important connections between Luke and John, so that Luke is compatible with John in ways that neither Matthew nor Mark are – indeed, in ways that overwhelm and obscure differences and similarities that appear in those gospels. The compatibility between Luke and John is augmented by Luke’s sequel, the Acts of the Apostles. For my present purposes I treat Luke and Acts as a single work, and insofar as there is a Jesus simulacrum in Acts, I regard it as continuous with that of Luke. The inclusion in the New Testament of the book of Acts (as well as of the Johannine epistles, regardless of whether those letters were all written by the same author as the gospel) further reinforces the intertextual christology of Luke and John. As Bailey notes, John sometimes anticipates in its story of Jesus what Acts narrates as the formation of the church (Bailey 1963, 105). For example, in John, Jesus announces that a spirit will ‘be with you forever’ and ‘teach you all things’ (14:16-17, 26; see also 20:22), in effect completing the gospel and guaranteeing the successful comprehension of its meaning (16:12-15), and in Acts 2, the holy spirit arrives at Pentecost and transforms the gathered followers of Jesus into the church, guaranteeing that differences of language will not hinder the proclamation of the apostles’ message.⁴ In addition, the word *Ioudaios* (‘Jew’) is used much more often in either John (71 times) or Luke-Acts (84 times: 5 in Luke and 79 in Acts) than it is in the remainder of the New Testament (40 times, with 5 in Matthew and 7 in Mark). In both John and Acts, ‘the Jews’ are usually the enemies of Jesus or of the early church. Dwight Moody Smith notes that in comparison to the synoptic gospels, ‘John’s Jesus is a more distinctly Christian figure who stands over against “the Jews”’ (Smith 1990, 234), but this description also applies well to Luke-Act’s Jesus, far better than it would to the Jesuses of either Matthew or Mark. Pierson Parker notes other connections between John and Acts.⁵

INTERTEXTUAL EFFECTS

Intertextual effects between Luke and John take various forms.⁶ At the level of the signifier, or the code of the semes, as Roland Barthes would say (Barthes 1974, 16–21), in both Luke and John, Jesus is described in narrative diegesis as the ‘Lord’ (*kurios*: Luke 2:11, 7:13, John 6:23,⁷ 11:2). In contrast, Matthew uses ‘the Lord’ in diegesis exclusively to refer to God, and Mark does not use this phrase in diegesis at all, except at 16:19–20 in the longer added ending, which is similar to the ending of Luke, and where the term refers to Jesus. In each of the four gospels, various characters address Jesus as *kurios*, but only in both Luke and John do the implied authors in effect announce that Jesus is the Lord. Matthew and Mark require the reader to decide whether the characters who speak in this way have chosen the best term. In addition, in both Luke-Acts and John, various characters describe Jesus as the ‘Savior’ (*sōtēr*, Luke 2:11, John 4:42, Acts 5:31, 13:23), and *sōtēria* (‘salvation’) is frequently used in these texts. Neither Matthew nor Mark uses either term, except for *sōtēria* in the shorter added ending of Mark. Furthermore, for both Luke and John, Jesus knows from the beginning that he belongs in his (divine) ‘Father’s house’ (Luke 2:49, John 2:16, with some variation in the Greek),⁸ a phrase which Jesus uses to refer to the Temple in Jerusalem. Neither Matthew nor Mark uses the phrase ‘Father’s house’ at all. Both Luke 4:22 and John 6:42 specifically raise the question of Jesus’s status as ‘son of Joseph’ (see also Luke 3:23 and John 1:45), but neither Mark nor Matthew ever uses this phrase. In each of these further similarities between Luke and John, either Jesus’s role as God’s divine son is emphasised or his role as Joseph’s human son is diminished. Although both Matthew and Mark describe Jesus as the ‘son of God’, the significance of this phrase is less clear in each of those gospels. Thus already at the level of the signifier, the ideological control of meaning appears.

These semic resonances extend to words and phrases that Luke and John do not use, in contrast to Matthew or Mark. ‘In not a few cases the agreement [between Luke and John] is a matter of a common silence or suppression of information, or departures from what we find in the other Gospels’ (Smith 1990, 86).⁹ Control takes the form of what is not said as well as of what is said. Neither Luke nor John contains Jesus’s difficult saying in Mark 3:28, with its christologically troublesome plural phrase, ‘sons of men’. (Matthew 12:31–32 has the saying in a different version without the plural phrase. Often among the biblical gospels it is Mark, not John, that is the ‘odd man out’.) Furthermore, unlike Matthew and Mark, neither John nor Luke uses the word *euaggelion* (‘gospel’) at all. In Luke 8:1, Jesus is ‘preaching and bringing the good news’ (*kērussōn kai euaggelizomenos*), and the parallel to this verse in Matthew 9:35 has ‘preaching the gospel’ (*kērussōn to euaggelion*). Since *euaggelion* is a very important word in the New Testament and in Christian thought, its non-appearance in these two gospels is striking. Is it perhaps a word that they both wish to reserve for something else? The Acts of the Apostles uses the term *euaggelion* twice: in 15:7, Peter uses the word to describe his preaching to the Gentiles, and in 20:24, Paul mentions the gospel ‘of the grace of God’. For Acts, *euaggelion* is well on its way to becoming the ideology of the Christian church – that is, ‘the Gospel’. By avoiding the word, ‘gospel’, both Luke and John open up a space for the Gospel.

There is one more semic connection between the gospels of Luke and John, in the form of a manuscript puzzle. Scholars have long noted that the story in John 7:53–8:11 of the woman taken in adultery presents textual problems. The entire passage does not appear in many ancient manuscripts, including nearly all of the oldest ones. In other manuscripts this story appears in dif-

ferent places in John's gospel, and most importantly for my purposes here, in members of manuscript family 13 it appears at the end of Luke 21, where it 'fits' quite neatly into the larger narrative.¹⁰ Since both the language of this story and its Jesus simulacrum are arguably more Lukan than Johannine, this in turn raises questions about the extent of the text of each of these gospels.¹¹ While modern editions of the Bible print John 7:53-8:11 following 7:52 and before 8:12, many scholars treat this passage as not truly part of John. In cases such as this one, the fact that this passage at one time slid back and forth relatively easily between these two gospels raises further questions about not only their historical but more importantly their ideological relationship. The story's proper textual location is uncertain; there is a softness in the canon, a porousness on the boundary between Luke and John.

Other intertextual effects between the gospels of Luke and John reach beyond the code of the signifier into the codes of the signified. Barthes's hermeneutic code treats the story as an answer to one or more questions: 'the various (formal) terms by which an enigma can be distinguished, suggested, formulated, held in suspense, and finally disclosed' (Barthes 1974, 19). One ideologically important question that drives each of the gospels is the question of Jesus's identity, and Luke and John give very similar responses to this question, in contrast to Matthew or Mark. Not only is Jesus 'the Lord' in both Luke and John, but Jesus and his divine Father are in complete harmony; indeed, they are so closely aligned as to be nearly indistinguishable. As Luke's Jesus says, 'he who rejects me rejects him who sent me' (10:16). This is not unlike John's portrayal of Jesus's relation to God: 'I and the Father are one' (10:30; see also 12:44). These verses are not equivalent to Mark 9:37 (contra Dunn 1980, 40, 44), unless one reads Mark in the light of Luke or John – for example, as directed by the canon. It is problematic in Mark who sent Jesus (3:21-22, 11:27-33), but both Luke and John make his divine origin clear from the start. The Jesuses of both Luke and John recognise the Temple as 'my Father's house', and they both also know from the story's beginning what their fate will be, on earth and in heaven. Luke and John agree that

by virtue of his resurrection and exaltation Jesus the man of the Spirit became Lord of the Spirit; the one whose ministry was uniquely empowered by the (eschatological) Spirit became by his resurrection the one who bestowed the Spirit on others; or more precisely, by his resurrection he began to share in God's prerogative as the giver of the Spirit (Dunn 1980, 142, his emphasis).

Another hermeneutical question concerns the story's truthfulness and reliability, and this too is an important focus of both Luke and John. Luke's preface (1:1-4) creates an appearance of historical reliability, and John is obsessed throughout with the question of its own truth – for example, 'This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true' (21:24). Both gospels stress the value of the 'witness' (see also Acts 1:8, 22, 2:32, etc.). Neither Matthew nor Mark attempts to ground its truth in the reliability of a witness. The appearances of a resurrected Jesus, who sends 'the promise of my Father upon you' (Luke 24:49, plus the discourse and apotheosis of Acts 1), or who blesses those 'who have not seen and yet believe' (John 20:29), open these texts toward a decisive but already-decided future, in which these gospels as revelations of the truth about Jesus will play an important part (John 20:31). Matthew also narrates a promise of a greater, Christian

future (16:18-19, 28:18-20), but Mark offers only unfulfilled foretellings of an encounter with the resurrected Jesus in Galilee (14:28, 16:7).

Other intertextual effects appear at the level of the plot or action of the story, Barthes's proairetic code. The code of actions is often interlaced in the gospels, as it is in other narratives, with the hermeneutic code as well as with what Barthes called the code of the symbol, 'the place for multivalence and for reversability... making depth and secrecy problematic' (Barthes 1974, 19). One striking feature of Barthes's analysis is that often multiple codes apply to a single textual unit, interweaving like the notes of a musical score, as Barthes says (1974, 20–21): 'This analogy can be carried even further. We can attribute to two lines of the polyphonic table (the hermeneutic and the proairetic) the same tonal determination that melody and harmony have in classical music' (1974, 29–30). Given the theological implications of the canon, the ways that John and Luke play (with) these codes allow them to 'harmonise' very well in the Christian ideology.

In terms of plot, both Matthew's and Luke's birth stories make it explicit that Jesus is both physically and spiritually the son of God. Thus Mark's derogatory phrase, 'son of Mary' (6:3), is neutralised. However, important differences between Matthew's and Luke's Christmas stories run contrary to Christian harmonising tendencies. Matthew's emphasis on Joseph and his all-too-human reaction to Mary's mysterious pregnancy downplays the divine element in Jesus's birth, which is barely mentioned (1:18). In contrast, Luke highlights the supernatural dimension of Jesus's conception (1:11-20, 26-38), and this resonates strongly with John's opening story of supernatural incarnation (1:1-18). As was noted above, in Luke and John, Jesus is really God's son, not Joseph's son. Although not usually thought of as a Christmas story, John's prologue emphasises the divine *archē* of the Word that becomes flesh in Jesus Christ. Scholars often note that nothing in Luke's birth story implies the Johannine pre-existence of Christ, but Gabriel's claim in Luke that the spirit of God will overcome Mary and impregnate her fits comfortably into John's mythic hymn of the incarnation of the divine Word.

Indeed, if Mary's impregnation according to Luke is understood as a miracle analogous to God's creation of the universe in Genesis 1, as Raymond Brown suggests (Brown 1993, 314, 531) – that is, if God does not use physical semen to impregnate Mary – then there is a great deal of compatibility between Luke and John here, since John 1:1-3 in effect rewrites Genesis 1. A Genesis reading of Luke's birth story is also supported by Luke's genealogy for Jesus, which traces his lineage through Joseph ('as was supposed', 3:23) to 'Adam, the Son of God' (3:38). Perhaps an ironical point of the language of Luke 3:23 is that Jesus's true lineage runs only through Mary and the Holy Spirit, and thus he is the son of God in a way that no normal human being could ever be, not even Adam. Instead, Luke's supernatural foetus is something more like John's Word, who 'was in the beginning with God' and who was God (1:1-2). Thus Genesis 1-3 serves as an 'intertext' between the opening scenes of Luke and John, functioning in quite different ways in each gospel and yet uniting them with each other and distinguishing them both from either Matthew or Mark.

Although John's gospel does not provide a story of spiritual impregnation as such, it does describe an aboriginal, transcendent Word through which 'all things were made' (*panta... egeneto*, 1:3) and which therefore is implicitly not itself a 'thing'. The Word is 'the light' (1:4-5, 9) that enters into the dark world (compare Luke 11:35-36, 22:53, and Matthew 6:23). For John, the Word and the world are two fundamentally different orders of reality: 'That which is born of

the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit' (3:6, see also 20:22). The primeval Word is not physical 'flesh', but rather it 'became flesh [*sarx egeneto*] and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth' (1:14). According to Christian belief, the divine Word becomes flesh in Mary's womb due to the action of the spirit of God. Commentators get rather nervous at the thought that God had physical intercourse with Mary, injecting supernatural seed into her womb.¹² Nevertheless, if Luke's Holy Spirit (1:35) could be a creative agent such as John's pre-existent Word, that was in the beginning with God, and that was God (John 1:1-2), then in effect, the Word is that seed. This suggests a further allegorical level beyond Jesus's interpretation of the sower parable in Luke 8:11-15: 'The seed is the word of God.' Mary is the 'good soil' *par excellence!* The sower parable and its interpretation have parallels in Matthew and Mark, but those gospels lack anything like John's prologue or Luke's dialogue between Gabriel and Mary.

Even though John never mentions Mary by name, its story of incarnation nicely complements the supernatural special effects of Luke's Mary-centered story. In this way the disturbingly 'pagan' overtones of Luke's Christmas story are spiritualised and absorbed into Johannine logocentrism. This complementarity between the gospels of Luke and John serves a single, larger understanding in Christian thought. The Word of light comes into the dark world when the non-physical divine spirit miraculously impregnates the physical human woman. Luke's account of Jesus's birth is both more concrete and less overtly theological than John's hymn of the Word's incarnation, which never describes specifically how the Word becomes flesh. Nevertheless, the combination of the two stories asserts that contrary realities – divine, transcendent spirit and physical, human flesh – have joined together in a mysterious and marvelous fashion. For the Christian ideology, this is an essential characteristic of the incarnate deity that results, Jesus Christ, and not far from the Gospel of Christ as divine-human hybrid, god-man.

To be sure, this weaving of stories requires some theological sleight-of-hand, for in Christian trinitarian language, the Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity and the Word is the Second Person. However, in the daily life of the churches, and of most Christians, such distinctions may not matter. Indeed, the intertextual weaving of Luke's and John's stories has been going on since at least the second century, well before either the doctrine of the Trinity or the Christian canon are established.¹³ Jane Schaberg quotes *Epistula Apostolorum* 3: 'the word, which became flesh through the holy virgin Mary, was carried (conceived) in her womb by the Holy Spirit'. Schaberg also notes the blending of Luke and John in the Christian additions to the *Sibylline Oracles*. In a third, later instance, Mary is impregnated by the Holy Spirit and gives birth to light, which then becomes 'outwardly an infant', in the medieval text, 'The Birth of Jesus'.¹⁴

Both Luke and John emphasise a connection between Jesus and John the Baptist at the beginnings of their stories. In the gospel of John, John the Baptist is sent by God to 'bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him' (1:7, see also 1:15, 19-20), and in Luke, he will 'give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death' (1:79). In both cases, John the Baptist's importance as a theological sign pointing toward Jesus is emphasised (see also Luke 1:41-44), even as his secondary status in relation to Jesus is made clear. The gospel of Mark begins with Jesus coming to be baptised by John, and it also emphasises a connection between the two men until John's death. However, unlike Luke or John, specific details of this connection are never clear in Mark. Indeed, Mark's Jesus may even think that John is the 'son of man' (see 9:12-13).

The complementarity between Luke and John is strongest at the beginnings and endings of their stories. In the middle of each gospel's story, the similarities between the synoptic gospels (and their differences from John) are most evident. Most of the parallels between Matthew, Mark, and Luke concern pre-passion material. However, at a few intermediate points in their plots, Luke and John again contrast sharply to the other two canonical gospels. Bailey notes that neither Luke's nor John's Jesus ever passes through Gentile territory, unlike the stories of Mark and Matthew (Bailey 1963, 108, ff 1). Bailey attributes this to Luke's and John's rejection of theological implications of the story of the Syrophenician woman in Mark 7:24-30 and Matthew 15:21-28 – that is, that Jesus was interested mainly (or only) in the Jewish people. Thus the more universal Jesus of Luke or John correlates to Luke's and John's presentation of 'the Jews', noted earlier. Indeed, 'Luke and John agree that the Jews' failure to give heed to Jesus is of a piece with their failure to heed Moses and the prophets (cf. Luke 16:29-31 and John 5:46-47)... In both John and Luke, "Israel" as a theme is closely related to Christology' (Smith 1990:108, summarising Maddox's views). In addition, in neither Luke nor John is there a significant conjunction of the cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the Temple, as there is in Matthew and Mark. John has nothing comparable to the cursing of the tree, and Luke has instead a parable of a fig tree in which the tree is not destroyed but spared for another year (13:6-9, echoed in John 15:2). The result in either case is a narrative in which the disturbing juxtaposition of the tree that is withered for no good reason ('for it was not the season for figs', Mark 11:13) and Jesus's violence in the Temple does not appear. As a result, in Luke and John, Jesus is untouched by the stain of irrational miraculous cursing, and the Jewish Temple, Jesus's 'Father's house', is properly cleansed by its true Owner, the universal Lord.

Nearly all of the 'common traditions' that Bailey identifies as shared by the gospels of Luke and John are found in the passion, crucifixion, and resurrection stories.¹⁵ To be sure, John's passion story has much in common with each of the synoptic gospels. However, Bailey argues that John used Luke as a source for its passion narrative 'to a far greater degree' than it did Mark, and even that John's author was provoked by 'his' reading of Luke into writing the gospel of John (Bailey 1963, 20, 114). Similarly, Cribbs claims that 'Luke's degree of verbal/factual/sequential agreement with Matthew/Mark is *much lower* in these three chapters [Luke 22-24] than it is in most other sections of his gospel' (Cribbs 1979, 241, his emphases). Furthermore, Luke's passion story 'possesses a sizeable quantity of material that the third evangelist shares only with John... in virtually every pericope in which their passion/resurrection traditions overlap' (Cribbs 1979, 242).

In contrast to Matthew and Mark, both Luke and John separate the story of the anointing of Jesus from Judas's betrayal of Jesus, and they both attribute that betrayal to Satan (Luke 22:3, John 13:27).¹⁶ Judas's actions, which are unexplained in Matthew and Mark, are presented as the workings of supernatural powers, and this further emphasises Jesus's own supernatural status. Both Luke and John also emphasise the responsibility of 'the Jews' for Jesus's execution, and they each minimise the responsibility of the Roman, Pilate, the representative of imperial, universal order. Perhaps even more significant, both Luke's and John's Jesus simulacra explicitly offer themselves as vicarious sacrifices, and in both gospels this sacrifice is essential to the story of Christ as saving, divine incarnation. In both Luke and John, Jesus is calm and assured as he approaches his death, both in the garden and on the cross. He is strengthened by 'an angel from

heaven' in Luke 22:43-44,¹⁷ and in John 12:27-29, he hears a voice from heaven, identified by bystanders as that of an angel. Nothing like this appears in the Gethsemane scenes in Matthew or Mark. In Luke, Jesus is composed and forgiving even when nailed to the cross, and he promises to be with the faithful thief 'today in paradise' (Luke 23:43, see also 23:34 and John 19:26-27).¹⁸ In John, Jesus calmly completes the task for which he has come and fulfills the scriptures on the cross (19:36-37). Each of these Jesuses is comfortable on the cross, and although Luke and John put different last words in their mouths, in each case the words connote Jesus's closeness to God.¹⁹ Luke's Jesus's final words are 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!' (23:46), and John's Jesus says serenely, 'It is finished' (19:30). Each of these Jesus simulacra dies knowing full well that he will be rescued from the grave. Hence his 'betrayal' is illusory both for Jesus and for his heavenly father, but for the Satan-possessed disciple Judas the betrayal leads to damnation. Despite the verbal variations, again there is a kind of complementarity between Luke and John, especially when compared to the contrary and theologically much more difficult final phrase that appears in both Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34, 'my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

Although John's and Luke-Acts's post-resurrection stories are once again different from each other, each of them underlines Jesus's supernatural power and avoids the sketchiness of Matthew's Easter story as well as Mark's disturbing final scene, from which the resurrected Jesus is absent. Luke's and John's stories of post-resurrection encounters between Jesus and various followers are detailed and intimate. Each story addresses the ongoing problem of doubt and faith far more extensively than Matthew's passing remark, 'but some doubted' (28:17), and far more positively than the flight and silence of Mark's women (16:8), which also raises fundamental questions about that story's truthfulness. In Luke's story of the Emmaus road and John's story of doubting Thomas, initial doubts on the part of one or more disciples give way to statements of faith provoked by direct, personal encounters (witnesses again) with the risen Jesus, who is now clearly 'Lord' and 'Christ'.²⁰ For both Luke and John, 'The death of Jesus marks a crucial turning point, for he thenceforth enters into his glory' (Smith 1990, 108). John's disciple Thomas even calls the resurrected Jesus 'God'.

Despite this, for both Luke and John, the risen Christ is still fully incarnate; he is no ghost or spirit. In this regard, the similarities between Luke 24:36-43 and John 20:19-29 and 21:12-13 are especially striking.²¹ In Luke, the disciples suppose that Jesus is a 'spirit' (*pneuma*, 24:37), but Jesus rejects their supposition by inviting them to touch his body, as he does in John 20:27. In contrast, in comparable scenes in Mark 6:49 and Matthew 14:26, prior to Jesus's death, the disciples cry out because they think that Jesus is a ghost (*phantasma*) when they see him walking on the sea. In each of these stories, Jesus responds to the disciples' cry by saying, 'I am [*egō eimi*]'.²² Although 'I am' is a favorite phrase of John's Jesus, the word *phantasma* does not appear in John's version of the story, and the entire episode is absent from Luke. According to Deleuze, the phantasm is a simulacrum, 'a phenomenon which is formed at a certain moment in the development of surfaces' (Deleuze 1990, 216). Deleuze even identifies one type of phantasm as 'oneiric': namely, simulacra that 'are apt to merge together, to condense and dissipate... all of the images which correspond to desire or... dream images' (Deleuze 1990, 276). When Jesus walks on the water in Matthew or Mark, he is such a dream image. However, according to Deleuze, another type of phantasm is theological: 'Being very far from the objects from which they emanate, and having lost with them any direct connection, they form these grand

autonomous figures... [O]ne might say that they dance, that they speak, that they modify ad infinitum their tones and gestures' (Deleuze 1990, 275–276). The Jesus simulacra of Luke and John are such 'grand autonomous figures', already on their way to becoming the theological simulacrum of Jesus Christ.

THE CANONICAL CHRIST SIMULACRUM

Despite many differences between the Jesuses of Luke and John, the intertextual effects described above play an important part in the construction of the Bible's Christ simulacrum. The compatibility between Luke and John is essential to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Both Smith and Lamar Cribbs argue that 'Luke shows a strong tendency to depart from, alter, or omit the Markan (or Markan/Matthean) tradition, which he follows for much of his Gospel, at those points where it is contradicted or otherwise called into question by the Fourth Gospel' (Smith 1990, 100). Rudolf Schnackenburg's summary of John applies equally well to Luke-Acts: 'The earthly Jesus is understood as the Christ who continues to be present in his community' (Schnackenburg 1980a, 43). This intertextual compatibility between Luke's and John's Jesus simulacra works powerfully within the New Testament framework. Luke and John share elements of a perspective that dominates the Gospel. Whenever the four gospels are blended together, as they often are, whether in reading practices or in more formal harmonies, the harmony that already exists between Luke and John will have an advantage over the other two gospels.

However, the gospels of Luke and John do not amalgamate the four Jesus simulacra of the gospels into the one Christ simulacrum of the Gospel entirely by themselves. Indeed, in addition to the four Jesuses of the gospels, distinct Jesus simulacra appear elsewhere in the New Testament. The book of Revelation and especially the letters of Paul contribute significantly to the construction of the canonical Christ simulacrum. Indeed, Paul is far more likely than any of the gospels to conjoin 'Jesus' with 'Christ' or 'the Lord'. In Paul's letters, the simulacrum that is Jesus Christ has absorbed Jesus, so much so that Jesus can hardly be considered a virtual object in them. Furthermore, Paul's use of the word 'gospel' (*euaggelion*), one of his favorite terms, comes closer to the theological sense of the Gospel as described above than do any of the biblical gospels.²³

However, Paul's letters have very little to say about Jesus's life, deeds, or teachings. Instead, his concern appears to be with Jesus's death and resurrection, which are crucial to Paul's understanding of Jesus as Lord and Christ and therefore which are 'the gospel' for Paul. Jesus's death and resurrection are also major ingredients in the complementarity of Luke and John, but those two gospels also both construct harmonious Jesus simulacra with lives composed of sayings and actions that eventuate in passion and resurrection. By identifying each of these more developed Jesus simulacra as 'Christ the Lord', Luke and John crucially supplement Paul's efforts. The intertextual compatibility between their Jesus simulacra constructs a 'Jesus Christ' who can be quite comfortably fitted to Paul's 'Christ Jesus' to become the single 'Jesus Christ' of the New Testament as a canon. For Luke-Acts and John as for Paul, Jesus is not only a Jewish figure, a fulfillment of Jewish scriptures, but more importantly (for them both), he is a cosmic figure, the Lord of the world, and he has been so from his conception or even from the beginning of time. He is the Christ of Christianity.

Whether by design or accident, the New Testament canonical sequence wedges John between Luke and Acts, a massive intercalation that further encourages the blending of their stories. This

christological juggernaut is immediately followed in the New Testament by the letters of Paul, who has already appeared in the Acts of the Apostles as an especially significant figure in Acts' story of the God-inspired formation of the Christian church and of its understanding of Christ.²⁴ The stories about Paul in Acts serve as a link connecting Paul's message to that of Luke's gospel (and perhaps also to John, as was noted above). The resulting Luke-John-Acts-Paul sequence provides the framework through which Christ the Lord can be pasted on to Jesus. Thus the Gospel of Jesus Christ stands at the ideological center of the New Testament.

Although Matthew and Mark are also included in the canonical New Testament, they contribute little if anything to the canonical Christ simulacrum. If Matthew or Mark were the only gospel(s) in the New Testament, even if Paul's letters and the rest of the New Testament remained as they are now, then Christian beliefs about Christ would surely be very different. From the standpoint of orthodox christology, Matthew's main value is to connect Jesus to the Old Testament (that is, the Christian appropriation of the Jewish scriptures), which itself concludes with prophecies of the Christ to come. Once the decision is made not to accept Marcion's hostile view of Judaism and the Jewish scriptures, Matthew serves as a valuable bridge between the two Christian canons, and it enables the New Testament's universal Christ to absorb the Jewish messiah. That leaves the difficult gospel of Mark, which has no value for Christianity unless it is read through a canonical lens. Mark is sandwiched between Matthew and Luke/John/Acts so that its numerous similarities to Matthew or Luke can be emphasised and its many theologically troublesome bits can be overwhelmed by or absorbed into the emerging orthodoxy. This sequence then firmly supports a canonical Gospel of Jesus Christ as a universal and divine figure.²⁵

ENDNOTES

- 1 See Schnackenburg 1980a, 32. As far as I can tell, Bailey never wrote the 'companion piece' that he speaks of in the epigraph to this essay. For a helpful review of scholarship on the relationship between Luke and John, see Smith 1990.
- 2 As defined by Kristeva, intertextuality has nothing to do with intentionality (Kristeva 1984, 59–60).
- 3 Similarly, modern biblical scholarship constructs the concept of the unique 'historical' Jesus from out of these four different gospel texts. Both concepts necessarily reject the thought of four distinct Jesus simulacra.
- 4 See Schnackenburg 1982, 136, 325–326, 359–360, and Bultmann 1971, 692–693. All Bible quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.
- 5 Described in Smith 1990, 97–99.
- 6 For lists of connections between Luke and John, see Parker 1960, 99–100; Brown 1966, xlvi–xlvii; Schnackenburg 1980a, 30–34; and Smith 1990, 85–87. Perhaps the most complete survey is that of Cribbs 1979, who identifies numerous verbal parallels, common items of factual information, sequential agreements, and other strong indications of connection between Luke and John. See also Smith 1990, 100–101, discussing the work of Cribbs, and 105–108, discussing the work of Robert Maddox.
- 7 This word is missing from this verse in the oldest mss. of John, but it does appear in Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis.
- 8 See also John 14:2. The capitalisation of 'Father' is an artifact of translation, but it emphasises that the phrase does not refer to Joseph's house.
- 9 Smith 1990 lists several of these agreements. See also Cribbs 1979, 232–234.

- 10 See further Brown 1966, 333.
- 11 See also Smith 1990, 189–190; Brown 1966, 335–336. John 21 appears in no manuscripts of Luke, but it too has resonances with Luke, and it may have been added on to John. See Bailey 1963, 12–17; Brown 1970, 1079–1082.
- 12 For example, Brown 1993, 124; Schaberg 1987, 76, 117; and perhaps Bultmann 1971, 62–63, ff 4.
- 13 Dunn 1980, 42, 50–51; Brown 1993, 314, ff 48. For a recent, postmodern weaving of these texts, see Moore 1992, 116–120.
- 14 Schaberg 1987, 180–181, 190. For ‘The Birth of Jesus’, see Cartlidge and Dungan 1980, 104–106.
- 15 See also Smith 1990, 3; Schnackenburg 1982, 37–39; and Cribbs 1979, 219, 237, 241–250.
- 16 See Bailey 1963, 29–31; and Schnackenburg 1980a, 31; Schnackenburg 1980b:78; Schnackenburg 1982:31.
- 17 This passage is missing in many ancient manuscripts, but like John 6:23 (see note 7, above) it is found in Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis.
- 18 See also Brown 1970, 906.
- 19 See Schnackenburg 1982, 284–285; and Bultmann 1971, 673–674, 677.
- 20 See Bailey 1963, 104, ff 4.
- 21 See Cribbs 1979, 249–250, 254, ff 33; Bultmann 1971, 691–692; Brown 1970, 1031–1033. In Mark’s longer added ending, similar to Luke, Jesus ‘appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at table’ (16:14). Later in this ending, Jesus is described as ‘the Lord’ (*ho... kurios Iēsous*, 16:9, see above).
- 22 See Schnackenburg 1980b, 86–89; Brown 1966, 533–538; and Aichele 2006, 138–145.
- 23 See further Aichele 2006, 85–104.
- 24 I am not interested here in the differences between the Paul simulacrum of Acts and the Paul simulacra who appear in Paul’s letters. The canon tends to unite these simulacra just as it unites the various Jesus simulacra.
- 25 I am indebted to Adele Reinhartz, Jeffrey Staley, and Richard Walsh, and to the reviewers for *Bible and Critical Theory*, for helpful suggestions during the preparation of this essay.

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Cite this article as: Aichele, George. 2008. 'Simulating Christ: Luke and John, and the canonical control of meaning' *The Bible and Critical Theory* 4 (1): pp. 3.1–3.13. DOI: 10.2104/bc080003.