

# Spaced out: “Territoriality” in the Fourth Gospel

Jerome H Neyrey<sup>1</sup>

University of Notre Dame, USA

Research Associate: Department of New Testament Studies

University of Pretoria

## Abstract

*The Fourth Gospel is inordinately involved with places and spaces, valuing some, but dis-valuing others. The task of interpreting all such references is greatly aided by the use of the anthropological model of “territoriality” which shows how all peoples 1) classify space, 2) communicate this and 3) control access to or exit from this territory. The classifications might be: public-private, sacred/profane, honorable/shameful, clean/unclean, fixed/fluid, center/periphery and the like. Where appropriate, these classifications are used to interpret the Johannine data on spaces and places, particularly 1) Galilee/Judean, 2) public/in secret, 3) not on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, 4) whence/whither, 5) in my Father’s house there are many rooms, 6) “in-dwelling” and “being-in” another; and 7) two different worlds.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION: STATUS QUAESTIONIS AND FOCUS

The geography in the Fourth Gospel differs from that in the Synoptics. Early on, after Jesus confronts the Jerusalem temple, he proclaims that should his enemies “destroy this temple,” “in three days I will raise it up” (2:19). Jesus was not speaking of a physical building erected in geographical space, but “the temple of his body” (2:21). All subsequent visits to the temple should be read in light of this saying. Paralleling this,

---

1 Paper presented at the International Context Group Meeting at the University of Pretoria, June 2001. Prof Dr Jerome H Neyrey is a member of the International Advisory Board of *HTS Theological Studies*. He visited South Africa as Research Associate of Prof Dr Stephan Joubert, Department of New Testament Studies, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria.

Jesus answers the Samaritan woman who questioned him on the correct place to worship with a denial of fixed sacred space: “Not on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem” (4:21). Thus from the Gospel’s beginning, Jesus rejects certain space but elects other. Similarly, the most mis-understood item about Jesus has a spatial element. Whence comes he? From Nazareth (1:46)? From heaven (6:41-42)? Whither does he go? To the diaspora (7:35)? To his suicide (8:22)? To heaven and his Father? In the Farewell Address Jesus states that “In my Father’s house there are many rooms” and “I go to prepare a place for you” (14:2-3); “house ... rooms ... place” all suggest space articulated as buildings of some sort, somewhere – which would be a wrong conclusion! Finally, Jesus describes the world in terms of binary opposites: “I am from above, you are from below; I am not of this world, you are of this world” (8:23). This suggests that one’s characterization and thus one’s ability to appropriate Jesus and the word of God he brings is fully reflected by one’s place or one’s location.<sup>2</sup>

The Fourth Gospel contains these and other significant data about place that deserve to be treated as redundant examples of the phenomena called “territoriality”. I propose to use the model of “territoriality” found in current anthropology because it is suited both to gathering data and assessing their social significance. This enterprise will make a contribution to Johannine studies, inasmuch as many spatial data relate to the Gospel’s high christology and membership in the group. The mapping process of the Johannine author reinforces the view of Jesus as an alien and his disciples as living in “no where.”

## **2. THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL MODEL “TERRITORIALITY”**

What is “territoriality”? Robert Sack, a representative of modern research, defines it as: “Territoriality will be defined as the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting

---

2 The slanderous stereotypes are all familiar to us: “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons” (Titus 1:12); “What good can come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46); “No prophet is to arise from Galilee” (John 7:52).

control over a geographic area. Territories require constant effort to establish and maintain."<sup>3</sup>

He emphasizes the attempt *to control* some place or some persons. Control presumes that the controlling group has in some way labeled or classified some place in relationship to itself. Sack notes that the controlling group tries to "affect, influence or control" places, and the object of control might be "people, phenomena, relationships." "Territory," then, may be geographical or trans-geographical. Some knowledge of the history of "territoriality" may help us understand its significance and utility. Modern research into "territoriality" began with studies of animal behavior, especially that of birds.<sup>4</sup> From the beginning, certain concepts emerged which remain integral parts of all models of it. Birds could be observed performing some conspicuous behavior which was interpreted as communication of an exclusive claim to a certain area, and which resulted in control of that territory. For example, a male bird becomes intolerant of other males as he confines himself to a certain area for the purposes of ensuring an adequate food supply and safe nesting space for his mate.<sup>5</sup> Even as anthropologists later focused on human patterns of "territoriality," the three foci of the model remain: (1) *classification* of places, (2) *communication* of these, and (3) *control* of the places so classified.

## **2.1 Classification systems**

The classification system, the key to the model, refers to the ways in which humans invest space with meaning or label it for some purpose. For example, people declare this space "ours," but that space "yours," thus making "our" space sacred and set apart from other, profane spaces.<sup>6</sup> Parents often classify their bedroom as "off limits" for their children, thus distinguishing adult from family space. Muslims and Israelis both claim

---

3 See Sack (1986:19). Other important definitions have been given by Casimir (1992:19) and Taylor (1988:6).

4 See Hall (1966:7-22); Calhoun (1966:46-58).

5 See Carpenter (1958:224-250).

6 For a broad discussion of "sacred and profane," see Malina (1993:149-183, esp 149-152 and 176-178).

that the temple mount in Jerusalem is their own sacred space, and thus see the presence of the other there as profaning it.

Anthropologists provide many general patterns for classifying territory, all of which contain binary opposites which set certain spaces apart as restricted and unrestricted, ours and yours, holy and profane, and the like.<sup>7</sup> These labels are intended to have dramatic impact on how we and others think of and behave in regard to a certain space. Typical inventories of classification systems would include: 1) public/private, 2) sacred/profane, 3) honorable/ shameful, 4) clean/unclean, 5) fixed/fluid sacred space, 6) center/periphery<sup>8</sup> and 7) civilization/nature.<sup>9</sup> Inasmuch as only the first five have direct bearing on this study, they alone will be examined here.

### 2.1.1 Public and private<sup>10</sup>

The Greco-Roman world used these and similar labels to indicate when males were engaged in “public” civic affairs or “private” social events such as symposia. This “public/private” distinction also applies to situations whereby honorable men speak boldly in public, while the fearsome speak only in private. Jesus boasts to Annas that he has spoken publicly (παρρησίᾳ) in synagogue and temple and has *not* spoken in private (κρυπτῶ) (18:20). Thus he has acted honorably according to expected male behavior in the culturally appropriate space for honorable males.

---

7 A full inventory should include internal/external, inside/outside, above/below, up/down, heaven/earth, right/left, center/periphery, close/far, and here/there.

8 In his study of the early Roman empire, Nicolet (1991) showed how Rome (the center) classified its conquered territories (the periphery) for maximum tax collection. In this not-untypical case, resources are controlled on the periphery and forwarded to the center.

9 Some of the ancients contrasted “natural” land with cultivated and civilized territory. The difference lies in the presence of a human intellect imposing restraint and order on empty land, thus civilizing it. This same classification was replicated in ancient understandings of gender, males being considered “civilized” because they are ruled by reason, whereas females were associated with “nature” because ruled by passion. (see Ortner 1974:67-87; Foley 1981:140-148; see also Bunbury 1959).

10 I am in the process of collecting and interpreting the variations of the basic “public/private” classification of space in Greco-Roman literature. Some of the more obvious examples are:

(1) κοινός / ἴδιος, δημόσιος / ἴδιος, ξυνός / ἴδιος, δημόσιος / κατοικίδιος, τά τε ἰρὰ καὶ τὰ ἴδια; (2) δημόσιος / οἰκούριος, πολιτικός / οἰκούριος; (3) ὑπαίθρος / στεγνῶν, ὑπαίθρος / ἔνδον; (4) ἔξω / ἔνδον; (5) πόλις / οἶκος, πολιτεία / οἰκονομία; (6) foris / domi; (7) publice/privatim (8) privatus/communis.

### **2.1.2 Sacred and profane**

These categories, long used in the study of religion, have tended to have a religious connotation. Mircea Eliade, for example, declared that a theophany or revelation transformed a profane space into a sacred one, and thus it became locally fixed.<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Z Smith (1987:96-116) countered that sacred space is founded through ritual and thus is a human choice based on cultural distinctions. He goes on to say: "Within the temple, the ordinary (which to any outside eye or ear remains wholly ordinary) becomes significant, becomes sacred, simply by being there ... there is nothing that is inherently sacred or profane (Smith 1987:104)." A more functional definition is given by Bruce J Malina, who attempts to give modern college students a broad, cross-cultural sense of "sacred" in their lives. Sacred = something set apart, such as a temple or a house, or even my jeans and my toothbrush.<sup>12</sup> The Samaritan woman's remark about "this mountain" and the one in Jerusalem as places of worship depends on some notion of the sacredness of each place. Ethnic myths about these mountains explain why each is classified as holy or sacred space.

### **2.1.3 Honor and shame**

All are familiar with Nathanael's slur about Jesus' place of origin: "Can any good come from Nazareth?" (1:46), an excellent example of a classification which denies honor to someone based on an honor-less home-of-origin. Correspondingly, Paul boasts of being "a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no low-status city" (Acts 21:39). These are representative examples of a pattern taught in rhetoric.<sup>13</sup> Villages, moreover, are mean places in which to live, utterly lacking the amenities found in Greco-Roman cities for elite citizens. Richard Rohrbaugh cites Pausanias about what makes an honorable city, emphasizing how honor is tied to the city's public architecture: "... if indeed one can give

---

11 Mircea Eliade (1959:23) writes: "Revelation of a sacred space makes it possible to obtain a fixed point and hence to acquire orientation in the chaos of homogeneity, to 'found the world' and to live in a real sense."

12 For the use by early Christians of the term "common" to indicate profane, see House (1983:143-153).

13 Place and Honor: Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian; Progymnasmata, esp Menander Rhetor.

the name of city to those who possess no public buildings, no gymnasium, no theater, no market-place, no water descending to a fountain, but live in bare shelters just like mountain huts on the edges of ravines”.<sup>14</sup>

#### 2.1.4 Pure and polluted

All Israel know that Jerusalem’s holy temple was once polluted by a non-Israelite conqueror who sacrificed an unclean animal there (see 1 Macc 1:54; 2 Macc 6:1-2). Its restoration as a pure place was commemorated at ἐγκαινία, the Feast of the Rededication, which John 10:22 cites as the occasion of one of Jesus’ arguments with the Jerusalemites. A holy place may be made polluted and then re-sanctified. Similarly, the behavior of the high priest and cohorts illustrates this classification when they hand Jesus over to Pilate: “They themselves did not enter the praetorium so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover” (18:28). This passage contains both a *classification* of Pilate’s official space by elite Judeans according to their elaborate purity system.<sup>15</sup> The *praetorium* is unclean, and the mere entering of it contaminates. By remaining outside, the elite Judeans communicate this and claim respect for observing the purity code.<sup>16</sup> The author, however, sees irony in the fact that while they observe purity, they nevertheless instigate the murder of Jesus, which is vastly more defiling than entering Pilate’s chambers. Thus both the author and his characters label space clean/unclean, but from different classification systems.

---

14 Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece*, X.iv.1 (cited in Rohrbach 1991:127). Some cities enjoyed the honor of being called a “metropolis” or “mother city”; see Magie (1950) and Neyrey (1996b:251-279). For rhetorical instructions on how to praise an honorable city, see *Menander Rhetor* (Russell & Wilson 1981:33-75). See also Dio Chrysostom’s oration on Tarsus (*Or* 33.17-18, 21).

15 On Jewish attitudes to Gentiles as unclean, see Schürer (1986, III:54); on Christian use the same classification system, see Act 10:28. Also helpful here is the article of A Büchler (1926:1-81). On native Judean classification of space, see *m. Kelim* 1.6-9.

16 On the purity code, see Malina (1993:149-183; see also Neyrey 1986:91-128; 1988a:63-91; 1988b:72-82; 1991:271-304).

### 2.1.5 Fixed/fluid sacred space

Anthropologists and students of religions have developed various notions of this classification.<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Smith, for example, contrasts two types of space, *locative* and *utopian*.<sup>18</sup> *Locative* space focuses on a "center"; it is closed and centrifugal in direction, (186-87).<sup>19</sup> *Utopian* space refers to an "open" society, periphery (not center) in focus, and centripetal in thrust (Smith 1978:101).<sup>20</sup> Smith's energies and insights are with *utopian* space, characterized by rebellion, freedom, and breaking of limits and boundaries by humankind.<sup>21</sup> Yet his insights must be supplemented from the works of Bruce J Malina. Expanding Mary Douglas' model of "group/grid," Malina provides many descriptive characteristics of *fixed/fluid* sacred space. Of *fixed* sacred space, Malina (1986:31) write:

Just as persons have their statuses by ascription and perdure in that status indefinitely, the same holds true for places. The topography of the main places where people in this script live out their lives is rather permanent. A palace location, a temple location, and a homestead stay in the same place and with the same lineage through generations.

---

17 In addition to Malina (1986:31, 38, 50, 58-59), see Lyman & Scott (1968:240-241). In a series of places Jonathan Z Smith (1978:xi-xv, 67-207) articulated a theory of "two world views, the "locative" and the "utopian" (see also Cohen 1991:74-75).

18 See Jonathan Z Smith (1978:xi-xv, 88-103, 130-142, 147-151, 160-171, 185-189, 291-294, 308-309; 1990:121-142).

19 His clearest examples of *locative* space derive from the Pan-Babylonian school, namely the ancient agrarian empire-cities such as Nineveh and Babylon, and Jerusalem as well.

20 *Utopian* space is really Smith's (1978:186) interest, as he admits: "In a series of articles, I have set forth correlative models of religious persistence and change in the Mediterranean world of Late Antiquity: native/diaspora; locative/utopian; celebration/rebellion".

21 Smith (1978:101) offers the following clues to his classification enterprise: "I have toyed with the distinction centrifugal and centripetal, central and peripheral, considering adopting Bergson's classic distinction between the closed/static society and the open/dynamic one, or Eric Voegelin's contrast between a "compact" and "differentiated" experience of the cosmos. With some hesitation I have settled for the present on the dichotomy between a *locative* vision of the world (which emphasizes place) and a *utopian* vision of the world (using the term in its strict sense: the value of being in no place)." This same juxtaposition of these categories occurs also on pp 131, 186-87 and 309.

Thus *fixed* sacred space correlates with *fixed* roles and statuses. All of this is characterized by redundant aspects of stability, permanence and continuity. The temple-city of Jerusalem exemplifies this well.<sup>22</sup> Of *fluid* sacred space, he (Malina 1986:38) writes:

This situation of porous boundaries and competing groups stands in great contrast to the solid, hierarchical, pyramidal shape of strong group/high grid [fixed space] ... as groups form and re-form anew, permanence is no longer to be found outside the group; and where the group is, there is stability. Sacred space is located in the group, not in some impersonal space like a temple. The group is the central location of importance, whether the Body of Christ, the church, for Christians, or the synagogue gathering for Jews, or the philosophical “schools”..... Discourse within these groups, whether the words of a portable Torah, the story of Jesus, or the exhortations of the philosopher-teacher, becomes the mobile, portable, exportable focus of sacred place, in fact more important than the fixed and eternal sacred places.

For our purposes, we note four things. 1) “Group” becomes the equivalent of fixed space, and so the interpersonal dynamics of a “group” rise in importance, namely, loyalty (πίστις, + ἀλήθεια), love (ἀγάπη), service, etc. 2) Since stability and permanence are not found outside the group, we are clued to consider the “spatial” quality of “remain” in the Fourth Gospel. 3) The group might be a scholastic enterprise, either a philosophical school or a midrashic one (see Culpepper 1975). If worship entails the reading and hearing of sacred writings, then it can occur anywhere; thus, sacred space is mobile and portable. 4) The group, then, is the central location of importance; and so it is not accidental that the New Testament often calls the Christian group a “temple” and “the household of God.”

---

22 Malina’s description of a leading city such as Jerusalem is similar to Smith’s attention to “archaic urban cultures.” As noted, the latter constantly appeals to the Pan-Babylonian School at the end of the nineteenth century, whose focus was the archaic, agricultural city-empire (see Smith 1978:132-133, 160-161, 293).

## **2.2 Communication and control**

Communication of these classifications could be relatively simple. All a prosperous city need do to communicate that it is honorable, wealthy, or civilized is to build a wall around itself with a well guarded gate (e.g., Jos 2:1-21). The same would apply to sections within cities where various trades or occupations or ethnic groups were separated from each other and from the elites by interior walls and gates (e.g., Ac 19:23-25). Non-elites are thus kept away from the urban elites, as well as from other non-elites with whom there might be rivalry or conflict. Similarly, what a wall and gate are to a city, a barred door manned by a guard would be for a house or residence (see Jn 18:15-17; 20:19, 26; Ac 28:16).<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the most dramatic example we have of this principle of communication and control is the balustrade in the Jerusalem temple which prohibited Gentile access to the court of the Israelites. Recent temple archaeology has recovered samples of the inscription carved on the balustrade, which reads: "No foreigner is to enter within the forecourt and the balustrade around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his subsequent death (Segal 1989:79-84)."

Both Philo and Josephus comment on this, indicating that it was a well-known device for controlling access within the Temple.<sup>24</sup> Thus by the very building of a door to secure a building, a fence and gate to protect animals or property, and a wall and gate around a city, people communicate that the space within is "ours," "sacred," "pure," et cetera. The major reasons for control of space seem to be protection and taxation.

---

23 The parables about the gatekeeper, the sheepfold, its door, the shepherd and the thief (Jn 10:1-4, 7-10) exemplify "control" or its failure; Jesus on the one hand is "the door," and so the control of access; but he is also the shepherd whom the gatekeeper knows and so gives access to the sheep within. Similarly, the Beloved Disciple acts as a shepherd by talking to the maid on duty at the door of Annas' palace; he persuades her to let Simon enter. Yet he is profoundly "out of place" here and denies knowing Jesus.

24 Philo (*Embassy to Gaius* 212) says: "Still more astounding and peculiar is the zeal of them all for the temple, and the strongest proof of this is that death without appeal is the sentence against those of other races who penetrate into its inner confines. For the outer are open to everyone wherever they come from" (see Josephus, *Ant* 12.146; 15.417; see also *Wars* 5.193-194).

### **3. JOHANNINE “TERRITORIALITY”**

We turn now to the Fourth Gospel and from the many instances of “place” we choose the following seven as the most significant. Some reflect actual geographical places, such as Mts. Gerizim and Zion; other depend on cultural notions of appropriate male behavior, that is, “public and private.” “Galilee” and “Judea” seem at first to refer to actual geographical places, but redactional study of this Gospel turns us in another direction. “Whence” Jesus comes is understood by some characters in terms of actual places; but the true “whence” and “whither” of Jesus take us out of this world. Special consideration will be given to “my Father’s house” with its many rooms. Finally we must consider the repeated assertions that some persons are “dwelling in” or “being in” another – the cryptic basis of the evangelist’s definition of sacred space for the group.

#### **3.1 Galilee and Judea**

Our questions about these two places are not at all topological<sup>25</sup> or traditional.<sup>26</sup> We ask instead with what meaning has the author invested each place, their “symbolic” meaning if you will.<sup>27</sup> Yet this study is more than redaction criticism of John, although such studies will be valuable in the course of this inquiry. It has been observed that, while Jesus is described as “remaining” in various towns in Galilee and even in Samaria, he never “remains” in Jerusalem. Using μένειν as a clue,<sup>28</sup> we observe that disciples “remain” with Jesus (1:38-39); Jesus “remains” at Cana (2:12), Samaria (4:40) and in Galilee (7:9). Conversely, Jesus urges his disciples to “remain” in the vine (15:4), in Jesus himself (15:5-7) and in his love (15:9-10). Thus, if “remaining” indicates loyalty and adherence to Jesus, then the Gospel tells us that this happens in “Galilee,” wherever that might be. But it does not happen in “Judea.” Thus scholars assess these two places, not simply as geographical locations, but as classified places: in “Galilee” Jesus is

---

25 For example, Kundsinn (1925); Dodd (1963:233-247).

26 Judea, not Galilee, is the place of Davidic royal messiah traditions; on this point, see Meeks (1966:159-163).

27 Labels such as “theological” or “symbolic” are regularly used in regard to Johannine topology; see Meeks (1966); Fortna (1974:58-95); Scobie (1982:77-84); Mollat (1959:321-328).

28 See Rudolf Schnackenburg (1963:105-109).

accepted, gains disciples and remains; in "Judea" he is harassed, put on trial, and killed.<sup>29</sup> He does *not* remain in "Judea."

"Territoriality" bring to this conversation a careful search for the *classification* or meaning invested by the author in these two places. The author labels each place in terms of some dualism or binary opposite: "love/hate" or "friendly/hostile" or "remain/not remain." The *communication* of this comes in the course of the narrative: it is a matter of discovering what place is welcoming or hostile; by noting whether Jesus "remains" or not, one learns the code. Some places in "Galilee," such as Cana, are friendly and safe, but not the synagogue in Capernaum (6:59); and while Jesus generally finds hostility in "Judea," not so in Bethany (11:1ff; 12:1-8). As regards *control* of these spaces, the author does not prohibit disciples from residing in any place, nor does he encourage them to migrate to other places. Unlike Mark 13:14, Jesus does not urge the disciples to leave Jerusalem; nor is it clear that he wishes them to flee to Galilee and safety.<sup>30</sup> He does not pray that God take them out of the world (17:15), but protect them from the evil one. Thus "Galilee" and "Judea" indicate that the disciples have friends and foes everywhere, and the *control* that issues from the classification governs the disciples' association with this or that group, not this or that place.<sup>31</sup>

What is communicated by "Galilee" and "Judea", therefore, is not *classification* of real or topological space, but rather social space, the Jesus group and the synagogue. Thus no specific geographical space is identified. Moreover, groups need not have a fixed place, as they can meet in various places at diverse times.<sup>32</sup> Yet "Galilee" and

---

29 This is, of course, no new idea; in the conclusion of "Galilee and Judea," Meeks (1966:169) stated: "... the geographical symbolism of John is not dominated by Jerusalem to the exclusion of Galilee, but it is shaped by the apparently deliberate dialectic between Jerusalem, the place of judgment and rejection, and Galilee and Samaria, the places of acceptance and discipleship" (similarly, Bassler (1981:243-257).

30 Yet, although ch 21 finds the disciples in Galilee, we do not know why they went there, In John 21 we have no command either by Jesus (Mk 14:28) or an angel (see Mk 16:7).

31 Yet if a disciple goes to certain places, such the local synagogue, this may result in being expelled from it for one's confession of Jesus (9:22; 12:42; 16:1-2), presumably according to a *classification* based on notions of purity/pollution. Thus the synagogue would be classifying its gathering as a place where Jesus should not be acclaimed; and it exercises its *control* by expelling anyone who does so.

32 Does the gospel indicate that Jesus goes to some place more than once? Twice he was at Bethany, the residence of Martha, Mary and Lazarus; Cana is mentioned twice (2:1-11; 4:46-54). The narrator tells us that Judas knew the place of Jesus' arrest, "for Jesus often met there with his disciples" (18:2). And, of course, he was often in the temple. But these afford no help in imagining sacred Christian space on the basis of Jesus' words and deeds there.

“Judea” are genuine *classifications*, informed by the dualistic system which contrasts friend/enemy, ours/theirs, or love/hate. Some *control* is exercised because this classification creates a sharp boundary between disciples and foes which functions as a dividing wall or a fence/gate which make up a sheepfold (10:1-11).

### 3.2 Public and private: παρρησία / κρύπτω

Investigation of Johannine territoriality next leads us to a native *classification* of space which is *communicated* by Jesus himself. When his captors question Jesus about his teaching, he answers: “I have spoken openly (παρρησία) to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple ... I have said nothing in secret (κρύπτω)” (18:20; see 10:23-24). This juxtaposition of “public” vs “private” may be taken in two senses: 1) acceptable speech = “public,” but subversive speech = “private”<sup>33</sup> and 2) “public” = authorized speaking role, whereas “private” = no such authorization. In general, this classification pertains to males gathered in public places such as courts and assemblies who have “public voice” to speak on certain matters.<sup>34</sup> The issue of who has “public voice” is no minor matter in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>35</sup> For if it could be maintained that Jesus lacks appropriate schooling (7:15), then he should not be acclaimed as “teacher” (διδάσκαλος: 3:2; 13:13-14) or “Rabbi” (1:38, 49; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:3; 20:16).<sup>36</sup> Moreover, if Jesus breaks the Sabbath Law, he should be disqualified from public speech as a malefactor. From one point of view, Jesus “leads the people astray” (7:12), a judgment confirmed by the neutralization of the soldiers sent to apprehend him

---

33 The citation from Philo cited in 2.1 above deals with “public” and “private” only in terms of a gender division of societal space: males in “public,” females in “private.” The present classification of “public” and “private” has only males in view.

34 For an excellent study of what it means to have public voice in antiquity, see Rohrbaugh, (1995:192-195).

35 John the Baptizer’s authorization to baptize and to speak is challenged from the very beginning: Priests and Levites ask him “Who are you?” to discover by what authority he gives his “testimony” (1:19-23); later John declares Jesus “the Lamb of God,” which the author would have us understand as heavenly authorized speech, just like his testimony about the spirit remaining on Jesus. As a result of his heavenly authorization, John enjoys bold public speech.

36 We note that only Jesus’ disciples call him “rabbi,” never his enemies; Nicodemus, a would-be disciple, addresses him as “teacher.”

(7:45-47). Indeed, from ch 5 on, most of Jesus' "public speech" is a public forensic duel with his accusers, Jesus both defending himself and judging his judges.<sup>37</sup>

Jesus often claims "public voice" on the basis of his authorization:<sup>38</sup> "He whom God has sent utters the words of God" 3:34 (see 5:30, 38; 7:18; 8:42). God precisely authorized him "what to say and what to speak" (12:48-49; 7:16-17). In his Farewell Address, Jesus honorably claims "to have given them your word" (17:14). Yet a quick look at the formal aims of various speech episodes by Jesus indicates a broad range of things Jesus claims authorization to say: 1) to proclaim God's word, 2) to conduct a *cognitio* of those who claim to be his disciples (3:3-20; 8:31-58), and 3) to mount a public defense of his claims and actions (5:19-46; 10:25-39; see 9:8-34). Jesus, one might say, speaks as long as he pleases, where he pleases.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, those who accept Jesus as "prophet" accord him "public voice" (7:40); they argue that he must be from God (3:2; 10:21). His "speech," moreover, results in his hearers having eternal life (5:24) and in being made clean (15:3). The evangelist, then, *classifies* Jesus as authorized for public speech, which is *communicated* by Jesus' bold public behavior (παρρησία). The *control* of space from the narrator's point of view both honors Jesus' bold public speech, and shames those hiding in private who will not publicly acknowledge Jesus. The issue of public space, then, is situational: in certain circumstances (and places): public speech is both legitimate and urged.

Many, however, deny Jesus "public voice," for they classify him as a deceiver and a false prophet who leads the people astray.<sup>40</sup> At Tabernacles the crowds divide in their judgments of Jesus: the positive evaluation of him ("he is a good man") is countered by

---

37 See Neyrey (1987:509-542; 1988c:9-37; 1996a:107-124; see also Harvey 1977 and more recently, Lincoln 2000).

38 To this point we cite several studies of Jesus as "agent": Borgen (1968:137-148) and Buchanan (1986:172-182).

39 The fact that Jesus continues to speak in public despite the extreme displeasure of the temple elite is narrated to the audience. In 7:15, they challenge his right to speak; in 7:32 they send soldiers to seize him, which would silence him; but in 7:43-48, they admit that Jesus' "public" speech was very persuasive, which drew a sharp rebuke from the Pharisees. Later at the feast of the Rededication, the same elites demand that Jesus speak boldly about whether he is the Christ (10:24), only to have Jesus foil their traps.

40 These are labels of another sort, not *classifications* of space. On the power of such deviant labels, see Malina & Neyrey (1988:34-67).

those who claim that “he leads the people astray” (7:13; 7:43; 10:19-21; see 9:16). If this were sustained, then Jesus would surely be removed from this space. More proof that “he leads the people astray” comes with the failure of the troops sent to capture Jesus; they blame it on his speech: “No man ever spoke like this man!” (7:46), which the Pharisees interpret as more evidence that Jesus deceives the people (7:47). It goes without saying that in the Fourth Gospel the Pharisees and the Jerusalem elite *classify* public space in the Temple as sacred or restricted, such that Jesus should have *no* “public voice” there.<sup>41</sup> They *communicate* this in a variety of ways: 1) by questioning Jesus’ credentials;<sup>42</sup> 2) by sending soldiers to arrest him (7:32, 45-49); 3) by charging him with breaking the Sabbath (7:21-23); 4) by scrupulous examination of his speech to find errors so as to discredit him; and 5) by direct questioning of him (10:22-25). On the side of the temple elite one finds a series of cultural norms which allow “public voice” only to adult males (not women and children), and only to males of a certain status (to elites, not to non-elites, and to rabbis/pharisees/ teachers, but not to the *am ha-aretz*).<sup>43</sup> Thus they seek to *control* Jesus’ speaking in the Temple and elsewhere in Jerusalem, labeling Jesus as a non-observant, self-important, sinner and deceiver.

So much for “in public.” But what if Jesus had only nighttime visits with people “in private”? What if, for fear of the repercussions that speech “in public” would bring, either Jesus or his disciples “hid themselves” (8:59; 12:36) or met secretly? This Gospel repeatedly *classifies* such “private/secret” behavior as cowardly fear of discovery, along with the sanctions imposed on those professing to speak publicly on behalf of Jesus (see 9:22; 12:42). Thus when the reader hears Nicodemus’ confession of Jesus as “a teacher come from God,” which is given “at night,” that is, “in private,” he is classified as a cowardly person. Even when he appears in public, carrying spices to bury Jesus, he

---

41 Luke records the same phenomenon in Acts 4-5, where the apostles teach and preach in the temple, but are imprisoned, beaten, and threatened harm if they continue speaking. Needless to say, they kept up their public voice, despite the hostility of the temple elite (see Ac 4:18-21; 5:12-13, 18, 25, 27-32, 40-42).

42 Many times we hear Jesus acclaimed as “a prophet” in the gospel (4:19; 6:14; 7:40; and 9:17), which label acknowledges Jesus’ right to speak “in public.” He is, moreover, treated like all prophets, namely, rejected in his home land (4:44).

43 In Acts 4:13, the elites perceive that “they (Peter and John) were uneducated, common men (ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται).” This is enough to deny them public voice, or at least to disqualify them in the eyes of the assembly of the elders.

retains the stigma of the one "who had at first come to him by night" (19:39). "In private," then is *classified* for the Johannine group as un-holy, un-virtuous space. Both Jesus' public behavior and the scorn directed against those afraid to speak (9:22; 12:42) *communicate* this evaluation. *Control* in this instance means urging or requiring bold public speech by authentic members and scornful sanctions upon those afraid to speak.<sup>44</sup> It is doubtful how welcome such persons would be in the circle of disciples.

In summary, the *classification* "in public" is clear to all the characters in the narrative. It was *communicated* by Jesus himself who claimed ascribed authority from God about "what to say and what to speak." Since "in public" refers to many specific places such as synagogue, Temple and the like, *control* over them for Jesus means that he and others demand access to places where they are not wanted. In short, they insist that the boundaries be porous, not firm. In contrast, the Pharisees and the Jerusalem elite dog Jesus whenever he appears "in public." Because they *classify* the public areas of the Temple as holy and sacred, they judge the presence of a deceiver such as Jesus as a pollution. The *communication* of their *classification* may be observed in 7:13 where people are afraid to speak of Jesus "for fear of the Jews" (once more: 9:22; 12:42). *Control* means the attempt to remove Jesus from public space, such as in 7:32, 45-49, and finally to kill him (11:45-50).

### **3.3 Whence (πόθεν) and whither (πού)?**

Johannine territoriality addresses not only space and place, but also the directional markers which indicate the place whence Jesus came and whither he goes. These markers function like other double-meaning words, admitting a literal, but erroneous meaning, as well as an in-group and correct meaning. "Whence" and "whither" have everything to do with Jesus' fundamental "territoriality," the bosom of the Father (1:18; 17:5).

Did it matter to the ancients where one was born? In the *progymnasmata* we find detailed instructions stating that the encomium, a genre of praise, regularly begins with

---

44 "Public" is the operative factor: thus the Beloved Disciple's presence at the foot of the cross clearly labels him as courageous and faithful, even though he says no words to or about Jesus. Similarly, the man born blind speaks boldly and courageously on Jesus' behalf, which causes him to be "cast out" (9:34).

information about the origin and birth of the person being honored.<sup>45</sup> Quintilian's (*Inst Orat* V.x.23-25) remark exemplifies this, as he tells of the importance of knowing whence a person comes:

... then there is nationality, for races have their own character and the same action is not probable in the case of a barbarian, a Roman and a Greek; country is another, for there is a like diversity in laws, institutions, and opinions of different states".

This is so because people born in certain places are affected by the balance or excess of the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water. Thus place of origin was a significant piece of information which served to communicate a person's person, worth, honor and status.

When outsiders hear about or ask whence Jesus came, their literal understanding serves as a *classification* which would *control* Jesus by disqualifying him as prophet or Christ. For example, Philip told Nathanael that "we have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (1:45). But the fact that Jesus comes from Nazareth trumps the claim that he could be this unique person: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (1:46).<sup>46</sup> Nathanael's *classification* of whence Jesus comes argues against his having any significant role or status. It is to Nathanael's credit that when he discarded this erroneous classification, he could come to Jesus and earn praise as one "without guile." Later, when some bystanders wonder if the authorities believe that Jesus is the Christ, they resolve the issue by claiming to know whence Jesus comes. But "when the Christ appears, no one will know whence he comes"(7:26-27). So Jesus cannot be the Christ! An arbitrary *classification* it would seem, but one which would *control* Jesus' activity by rejecting his role as "Christ." In the same episode, some acclaim Jesus as the Christ, but others counter, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee?" (7:41-42), a mantra repeated by the Pharisees, "Search and you will

---

45 For fuller exposition of "origins" and place as indicative of character, see Neyrey (1998a:79-80) and Malina & Neyrey (1996:25-26, 113-124).

46 The classification of someone on the basis of place of origin was a standard part of the way persons were described or announced. For examples of this from ancient authors, see Aristotle, *Rhet* 1.5.5; Ps-Aristotle, *Rhetoric to Alexander* 35; Cicero, *Inv* 1.24.34-35; Quintilian, *Inst Orat* 3.7.10-11; 5.10.24-25 (see Pelling 1990:213-214).

see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee" (7:52). Speaking like this to would-be believers, Jesus *communicates* a *classification*, on the basis of which Jesus' role and status are degraded and he is thus *controlled*.

But the Fourth Gospel offers another *classification* of Jesus' place of origin, this time from the side of the author. At a low level, Jesus' signs serve as his authorization by God: "If this man were not *from God*, he could do nothing"(9:33). But at a higher level, the Gospel tells us that he came into the world *from heaven* (1:9); he is both the bread which came *down from heaven* and the Son of Man who first descended from heaven. Thus, Jesus' true "whence" is the realm of God. Both Jesus and John *communicate* the full, spiritual sense of "whence" Jesus came, which serves to legitimate Jesus's works and words, thus *controlling* access to Jesus. Only insiders, drawn by the Father, know this, thus admitting them, but excluding others Thus group access is *controlled* on the true *classification* of "whence" and "whither."

"Whither" goes Jesus? Like "whence," "whither" serves as a double-meaning word which admits some, but excludes others from the group. The classic instance of this arises during Tabernacles in ch 7. After overhearing the misunderstanding of "whence" Jesus comes (7:26-27), we observe a comparable difficulty with "whither" he goes: "I will go to him who sent me; you will seek me ... where I am you cannot come" (7:33-34). Outsiders guess that Jesus "intends to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks" (7:35), but in fact they do not know what he means when he says "Whither I am going you cannot come" (7:36). Later the crowd offers another literal, dumb interpretation, suggesting that Jesus' "going away" means that he will kill himself (8:22). These and other *classifications* are *communicated* by the Gospel characters to its audience. Were they successful, they would *control* Jesus by wishing him off the scene (to the Diaspora, dead), gone from their midst, and thoroughly discredited.

As with the positive meanings of "whence," so also we have positive *classifications* of whither." The Farewell Discourse provides the richest ore on "whither" Jesus goes. Jesus "goes away" ... "to prepare a place for you" (14:2-4). He explains his "whither," *classifying* and *communicating* it to his disciples and the audience. He is going to God "to prepare a place for you"(14:2); "I am going to him who sent me" (16:5). Finally, Jesus delivers the most complete explanation of "whither" he goes: "Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was

made” (17:5). This insider, positive *classification* of Jesus’ “whither” means the bosom of God (1:18); it is of course *communicated* only to insiders. And it thus *controls* their loyalty during his passion by affirming that they have “rooms” in God’s house and thus God’s benefaction and protection. Knowing “whence” and “whither” serves to *control* authentic or elite membership in the Johannine circle by defining it as group sacred space.

### 3.4 “Not on this mountain nor in Jerusalem ...”

The Samaritan woman said: “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet” (4:19) and so asks his opinion on the *classification* of “this mountain” or Jerusalem as “the place where one should worship.” Both mountains compete for the label “holy,” “sacred,” and “set apart” according to native, traditional classifications (4:20). Jesus, however, completely *de-classifies* both mountains as “holy” or “sacred” space (4:21), even as he *classifies* a replacement for temple-situated sacred space when he declares that “true worshipers will worship in spirit and truth” (4:23). *Communication* of this facilitates the process whereby the Samaritans later acclaim Jesus as “the Savior of the world.” (4:42). By Jesus’ dealings with the Samaritans, which are contrary to custom (4:9), and by the de-classification of both we learn that there is no “holy land,” no sacred turf, and no chosen place. In *de-classifying* all and every space, Jesus also *de-classifies* the entire system represented by a temple, and logically abolishes *control* of “this mountain.”

True worshipers “will worship the Father in spirit and in truth” (4:23), but is there a specific, fixed place for this? At Jesus’ first Passover, he says: “[You] destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up” (2:19). His opponents misunderstand him to mean the physical temple, thus proving themselves to be outsiders who take his words literally (2:20). The author *communicates* the hidden meaning, “He spoke of the *temple of his body*” (2:21). Thus from the beginning, the author *classifies* a place (his body) as “holy,” even as the new “temple.” But the author also *communicates* that this equation of new temple and body of Jesus will be made clear after Jesus’ resurrection. Thus the body of the risen Jesus is in view. In what sense is this “new temple” a place? Inasmuch as Jesus shows himself bodily after his resurrection in a great variety of places, there is no fixed, sacred space like Mt Zion. It is a fluid sacred space, which materializes at no fixed time or place. Moreover, is there *control* of the risen Jesus? Since only insiders believe

that he was raised, they alone have access to Jesus. In this first remark about temple, the audience learns that the "body" of the Risen Jesus is its new temple, which is not located in Jerusalem or any other fixed geographical place.

### **3.5 In my Father's house there are many μοναί**

Does the Gospel provide any clues about a sacred "place" for this? One attempt to answer this takes us to parts of the Gospel where God is said to have a dwelling. Of Nicodemus Jesus demands: "unless one is born again. ....of water and of spirit," one cannot either see or enter "the kingdom of God" (3:3, 5). This "kingdom," *classified* as sacred and holy because it is God's, is *controlled* by admission restricted to those born "from above." But this is hardly a place such as the land of Israel or its Temple. Thus God's "kingdom" is where initiated disciples gather, the household of God.

Later Jesus states that "in my Father's house (οἰκία) there are many 'rooms'" (μοναί, 14:2). He goes "to prepare a place (τόπον) for you," after which he declares "I will take you to myself, that where (ἔπου) I am you may be also" (14:2-3). The reference would be to a "household," that is, a community of disciples. Then Jesus' remark that he would come and "take you *to myself*" is adequately explained as the risen Shepherd gathering his sheep around him.

What, then, are the μοναί in the Father's house? If we accept οἰκία as household/temple, then μοναί indicate ample space for the disciples in God's residence, that is, "rooms." Jesus, of course, is going to prepare a τόπος for the disciples, which suggests insider status for them. Jesus does not promise to take the disciples to the μοναί in the Father's house; he only says "I will take you *to myself*, that there I am you may be also" (14:3). Just as 2:18-20 spoke of Jesus' body as the new temple, so too being attached to him means belonging to "the Father's house(hold)."

Clearly Jesus *classifies* a certain place as sacred, the very dwelling place of God. His discourse in 14:2 and 23 *identifies* the place and *communicates* its sacred quality. Inasmuch as only disciples are told of this, *control* operates here in the sense of exclusivity: insiders, not outsiders, belong.

### 3.6 “In-dwelling” and “being in” another

Certain words in the Fourth Gospel carry an enriched meaning, such as “light,” “hour,” “true” and “dwelling” (μένειν), the verb from which μονή comes. Raymond Brown argued for two basic meanings for “dwelling”: (1) permanence and (2) immanence/relationship.<sup>47</sup> For example, the Spirit of God “dwelt/remained” on Jesus (1:33), indicating a permanent relationship with him (see 8:35; 12:34; 15:16); Jesus, on the other hand, promises to “dwell” with his disciples (14:25) and demands that they “dwell” in the vine (15:4, 5, 7) – all of which express both permanence and closeness.<sup>48</sup> The majority of the references to “dwell” occur in the Farewell Address and function to balance Jesus’ unsettling remarks about “going away” and “coming back” with a strategy of loyalty and faithfulness. Several important usages then emerge: “dwell” refers to “the Father dwelling in me” (14:10), implying that Jesus is like a shrine or temple where the presence of God dwells. But turning to the disciples, Jesus commands them to “dwell” in him in an immanent relationship as branches remain in the vine. Aspects of this relationship include (a) having “the Spirit dwelling in you” (14:17) or the “words of Jesus dwelling” in you (15:7), and (b) “dwelling in Jesus’ love” (15:9, 10) which is achieved by keeping his commandments. Thus “dwell” connotes strong relational ties, but not spatial location. Yet, we were told, “dwelling” in Jesus means corresponding proximity to the Father who “dwells” in Jesus. This dwelling-as-relation is not located in any fixed place, yet it is treated as such. Truly it points to Jesus as pontifex, mediator, broker, and priest uniting both God and the disciples.

The relationship is *classified* (God in Jesus and they in the disciple = maximally holy), *communicated* by Jesus’ very discourse, and with *control* envisioned (members only). The unfruitful branches, on the other hand, are “taken away and cast forth” (15:2)

---

47 Raymond Brown (pp 510-512) cites two important studies: Percorara (1937:159-171) and Schnackenburg (1963:105-109) (see Neyrey 1998b:96-105).

48 Two additional references may help clarify the meaning of “dwell”. Disciples must “dwell” in Jesus’ love (15:9-10), in the sense of loyal adherence to the group; on this social meaning of love, see Pilch & Malina (1993:110-114). Second, Jesus said “if you dwell in me and my words dwell in you, ask for whatever you will ....” (15:7). This is a worship context, for “ask” is petitionary prayer; moreover, the “words of Jesus dwelling” suggests a worshipful setting where sacred writings are heard and studied. Thus one senses that “dwell” implies worship within the group, both in petitioning and studying Jesus’ words.

and "gathered, thrown into the fire and burned" (15:6). Fruitful branches remain, even if they are purified (15:2).

In addition to "dwell in," the author speaks about persons "being in" another, which resembles the immanence/relationship idea of "dwell in." For example, one stream of this speaks of "being in" God and Jesus: "believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (14:10, 11). This expresses a profound relationship: "I am in the Father" states that Jesus is with, alongside, in the bosom of, or in union with the Father – the holiest possible position in all the world (see 1:18). If that expression looks to the world above, from which Jesus descended, then the second part, "the Father is in me" seems to reverse that direction and envision God enfolding Jesus and empowering him with powers to do God's works (10:38; 14:10) while on earth. Again, Jesus is positioned as the bridge between the heavenly and earthly worlds.

Several highly significant references remain. Jesus states that on a future day the disciple will "know" the ultimate knowledge: "I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you" (14:20).<sup>49</sup> The triple "being in" expression, of course, refers to relationships. "I am in my Father" and "I am in you" describe Jesus's bridge position as the link binding him to the Father and then to the disciples. Thus the Father is intimately joined to the disciples *through Jesus*. Other New Testament writings call Jesus *μεσίτης* (1 Tim 2:5) and priest (Heb 7:26-28), two different ways of explaining Jesus' *pontifex* role. But where is this? Although the Fourth Gospel does not talk of a heavenly temple, a sacred space is localized when disciples gather to worship as God's household, and when the risen Shepherd gathers them around himself.

### **3.7 Two different worlds, we live in two different worlds**

In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus divided the world into two antithetical halves: "that which is born of flesh is flesh and that born of spirit is spirit" (3:6). Since the issue is being "born," we learn that some are born to flesh and others to spirit, who alone may "enter the kingdom of God." We have here an instance of boundary language which separates insiders from outsiders, namely, those born of spirit with relationship to God's

---

<sup>49</sup> A complete inventory of this motif includes: 14:10-11; 17:21, 23.

household are juxtaposed to those born of flesh who know only this world. Note how this boundary language replicates the “whence” and “whither” categories. “The wind blows where it wills and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know ‘whence’ it comes and ‘whither’ it goes” (3:6-7). Those born of flesh know something, but not “whence the wind comes and whither it goes.” Others born of water and spirit know quite accurately whence and whither Jesus comes and goes. We have authentic Johannine dualisms here which separates two different worlds, two kinds of people, and insiders from outsiders.

But is “territoriality” involved here? This antithesis of two different worlds truly serves as a *classification* of groups, that is, insiders and outsiders. Its very *communication* to Nicodemus serves to *control* his access to Jesus.<sup>50</sup> Because Nicodemus knows in a limited, fleshly manner, he is shown *not* to be a denizen of the real world of spirit, but of the world of flesh. The Johannine elites, who look down upon the Nicodemuses of this world, have access to the world of spirit and true gnosis, that is, the “kingdom of God.” Two different worlds, and the insiders live in the better one.

This mechanism of boundary making and separation matures later in the narrative when Jesus is confronted by enemies who seek to arrest him or lie to him or kill him. He says: “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world; I am not of this world” (8:23). The issue has escalated from incomprehension of Jesus’ words to open hostility to him. Jesus’ remark serves to *classify* each world, one as worthy and holy, and the other as worthless and profane. The manner in which Jesus *communicates* this classification creates a legal norm, whose sanction is to “die in your sins” (8:24). Thus Jesus *controls* entrance into the kingdom of God. Being “from below” and “of this world” now are sins or crimes, which preclude one’s access to God and God’s world.

What makes Jesus’ remark so frightening and definitive is a quick glance at how the “world” is treated in this Gospel. We all know the beginning of the story, how “God so loved the world that he sent his only son ....” (3:16). *Classified* as the object of God’s compassion, this world does not experience *control*, that is, no attempt is made to keep heaven and earth separate or saints and sinners apart. For, the Son came to save all in the world (3:17; 4:42; 12:47), to give life to the world (6:33, 51), to be the Lamb which takes

---

50 Once more issues of secrecy arise: who knows what remains an important marker of who belongs within the circle of disciples. Not all qualify for membership (see Neyrey 1998b:96-105).

away its sin (1:29), and to be its light (8:12; 9:5). In this view, while heaven is still separated from earth, the boundary between them is porous and allows the benevolence of God to enter the world.

This changed, of course, as the world proved to be a hostile place. As Raymond Brown remarked, "The reaction of those who turned from Jesus was one not simply of rejection but also of opposition." Correspondingly the world came to be seen as controlled by Satan, who enters in to a disciple of Jesus (6:70; 13:2, 27) and whose offspring both lie and murder like their father (8:44). Balancing statements that Jesus did not come into world to judge (3:17) are statements insisting that he does judge (9:39; 12:31). Thus, the *classification* of this world changes. It is a place of unmitigated hostility and obtuseness; using the Judean purity system as classification, this world is profane, corrupt, polluted, and ruled by the evil one. The *communication* of this occurs when Jesus unmask its crimes and stands in judgment of it. In this context, 8:23, with its declaration of two different worlds, both *communicates* the new labeling of "the world" and establishes *control* over it in the sense that a radical boundary is drawn between "above" and "below"/"not of this world" and "this world". Later Jesus prays for his own, but *not* for the world (17:9). Because he gave the disciples God's word, the world hates them because they are not part of it (17:14). He does not pray that God take them out of the world, but only keep them from the evil one (17:15). Thus Jesus' *classification* creates a boundary radically separating him and his disciples from their enemies. Because it would definitively *control* access to God's world, it must be taken with utmost seriousness. But it also means that Jesus and his disciples are out of place here. They are aliens in an alien land.<sup>51</sup>

But where is this other world? The world "below" may be some specific place such as Jerusalem, the Capernaum synagogue, and the like. But in fact, "this world" and "below" really refer to wherever Jesus is rejected, such as we saw earlier in the

---

51 Appropriate here is the article of Meeks (1972:44-72) in which he first describes how Jesus is an alien in the world and then how his followers find themselves comparably situated: "The depiction of Jesus as the man 'who comes down from heaven' marks him as the alien from all men of the world. Though the Jews are 'his own,' when he comes to them they reject him, thus revealing themselves as not his own after all but his enemies; not from God, but from the devil, from "below," from "this world" (p 69). And of the disciples he says: 'The book defines and vindicates the existence of the community that evidently sees itself as unique, alien from the world, under attack, misunderstood" (p 70). The experience of the alien leader-hero, Jesus, is replicated in the comparable alienation of his followers.

classification of “Judea” and “Jerusalem.” Two different worlds, then, are not so much about space as about welcome to and acceptance of Jesus and disciples.

#### 4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

##### 4.1 Summary

The model of “territoriality” allows us to see things in the narrative of John which would otherwise go unnoticed and undigested. Moreover, it enables us to relate and coordinate data that are generally treated discretely. The model, we saw, consisted of three items: 1) *classification* of space, 2) *communication* of the same, and 3) *control* of it. In regard to *classifications*, the Fourth Gospel uses the following ones: public/private; sacred/profane; honor/shame; pure/polluted and fixed/fluid. Many of these relate directly to Jesus: 1) Jesus’ speech is always in “public” and not in “private,” thus *classifying* him as a male with public voice. 2) His homeland (Nazareth and Galilee) is *classified* by others as “shameful,” a classification that would *control* his ability to function as sage, prophet, or Christ. His true “whence,” however, is in the presence of God, hence “honorable,” sacred and pure. 3) “Sacred/ profane” refers to what many narrative characters considered the most dedicated and most “pure” place on earth, the Temple. But Jesus *de-classifies* (i e, profanes) all temples and mountains as sacred, even as he presents his own body as the new temple, the new sacred space. Hence his body becomes the dwelling of God which is most “sacred” and “pure.” But other classifications, such as “public/private,” relate both to Jesus and the disciples, namely public speech on Jesus’ behalf. But the most useful classification of space in the Fourth Gospel is fixed/fluid sacred space. This shifts our focus to the group which is truly no-where: neither in the temple nor the synagogue. When it meets, it does so around Jesus-the-temple, and here worship of God takes place through prayer, by listening to Scripture, the Words of Jesus, and utterances of prophets. It is likely that this group has entrance rituals as well as sacred meals. Yet this remains fluid space, as the components of sacred space disperse immediately after worship; and the gathering site could be anywhere.

Each of these *classifications* would exercise *control* over the place so classified. "In public" is a value statement that urges disciples to imitate Jesus in bold, public speech, even if it results in expulsion from synagogue space. Similarly, knowing "whence" Jesus came and "whither" he goes belongs to elite insiders in the group, a mark of distinction. Inasmuch as this is insider knowledge, *control* in this case means that it is off limits to all non-members and non-elites. They cannot enter the kingdom of God, nor do they have dwellings in the Father's house. *Classified* as creatures "of this world" and "of the world below," they are *controlled* in the sense that they cannot know Jesus' "whence" and "whither" nor find this "way". Knowledge, then, becomes a door, a wall, a gate, a boundary.

Jesus' very group is space that is variously *classified* as pure ("kingdom of God"), honorable (true children of Abraham) and sacred (vine). Aalen's article argued that these classifications overlap in meaning: kingdom = household; son of Abraham = legitimate member of the household; vine = the people. Access to Jesus and to the household of God is *controlled* by many "unless ..." demands: "unless one is born of water and the spirit ..."; "unless one eats my flesh and drinks my blood ..."; "unless you confess that 'I AM' ..."; "unless I wash you ..." These function as doors, barriers, and checkpoints which prohibit admission unless the criteria are met. And *control* also functions in Jesus' boundary-making remark: "No one can come to me except the Father draw him" (6:44, 65) – the most radical of all boundaries.

## **4.2 Conclusions**

What do we know if we know this? First, there is relatively little geographical or topological space of concern in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>52</sup> "Galilee" and "Judea" are not real places, but code names for welcome or rejection. "Not of this world ... not from below" likewise indicate non-geographical but social space. The very classification of these spaces in this manner reinforces the group's sense of dislocation from synagogue and temple, and its positioning of itself totally with Jesus.

---

<sup>52</sup> Not all places identified participate in the author's understanding of "territoriality," not the fact that Jesus speaks near the "treasury" (8:20), nor his walks under the "Stoa of Solomon" (10:23), or frequents a certain garden with his disciples (18:2).

Second, we call attention to the classification which distinguishes between *fluid* and *fixed* sacred space. Although current anthropology of space does not pay much attention to this, it is a classification of considerable use to New Testament scholars who note that the Jesus group is regularly called “house,” “household,” and “temple,” but not in the sense of fixed sacred space. It provides a scenario for imagining how, when the disciples gathered, they formed a sacred space, albeit a fluid one, which reverted to profane use after their gathering was completed. Thus the Jesus group becomes the prime example of fluid sacred space.

Third, with his *de-classification* of the temples on Mt Gerizim and Mt Zion, Jesus erased the category of *fixed* sacred space for the Fourth Gospel’s audience. We saw, however, that he replaced what the old temple represented by his body, which, because of the nature of bodies, is *fluid*. This new temple is not something to which disciples make pilgrimage, but which comes into being when the circle of disciples is gathered. In Johannine terms, this group can be called “household,” “kingdom”= household, or the place where one “worships in spirit and truth”. This is *fluid* sacred space, for the group can gather anywhere. The alternative space is the synagogue, to which Johannine disciples may not go any more, another instance of fluid sacred space.

Many of the spatial categories we examined point to a new temple in which worshipers will worship in spirit and truth. “Dwelling in” and “being in” either God or Jesus refers to their presence with the disciples. Jesus’ body, which is now a temple, is “where” God comes and is found. Finding the Risen Jesus, one finds the presence of God. Jesus is understood in the role of mediator (or priest), thus forming a link between God/Patron and Disciples/Clients. Jesus serves as consummate broker between heavenly patron and earthly group.

Ultimately “there is no ‘there’ there.” There is no mountain nor building where the Johannine group worships. Even Jesus’ remarks about above/below and “*not* of this world/of this world” do not point to specific geography, but classify and communicate a cosmic dualism. Jesus may return whence he came, but again there is no “there” in the sense of fixed sacred space. When he “goes away” and “comes back,” it is to meet disciples in a variety of places, none of which appear to be canonized as pure, sacred

space. Hence consideration of where Jesus is by John 20-21 indicates that his presence and so the presence of God is attached to the group of his disciples. Again, there is no "there" there; the classification labels are transferred to the social body of disciples.

Are the disciples any different, then, from the synagogue? In one sense, no. The synagogue which gathers in a regular place, would be accustomed to classify this space as "ours," which is made "sacred" when Torah is read and prayers are made. Yet the synagogue members could likewise make the pilgrimage feasts to Jerusalem and its Temple. In contrast, the Johannine disciples likewise have gathering space, but increasingly less and less in the local synagogue; and one wonders if they continued to attend the pilgrimage feasts in Jerusalem. What is different between disciples and synagogue is the rejection, hatred, and excommunication the disciples experience. This increases their self-understanding as "aliens in an alien world".

### **4.3 Further questions**

This article only studied what I consider the main spatial references in the Fourth Gospel. A complete study would consider motifs such as *congregational places* which become off limits to Jesus and his disciples (temple, synagogue) and *houses* (where the wedding was held in Cana, where Jesus was staying in 3:1; the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus; and the houses of Annas and Caiaphas). Since the disciples are likened to a flock of sheep, it would matter if they were gathered safely together (10:15-16; 12:32) or scattered (10:12; 16:32). One suspects that Johannine interest in houses and households (4:53; 8:35; 14:2) provides further definition to what we are calling *fluid* sacred space.

Consideration of the type of social group represented in the Fourth Gospel offers a further sharpening of our analysis of *fluid* space. Scholars now generally agreed that the Johannine group can profitably be called a sect.<sup>53</sup> "Faith in Jesus, in the Fourth Gospel, means a removal from 'the world,' because it means transfer to a community which has totalistic and exclusive claims (Meeks 1972:70-71)." But although they are not of this

---

53 Brown's *Gospel According to John* resists this, and to a lesser degree his influential *Community of the Beloved Disciple* (1979:7, 14-16, 61-62, 89-91). The classical proponent of sectarian identity for the Johannine group is Wayne Meeks, whose "The Man from Heaven" made the case for considering Jesus as an alien and thus his disciples as alien also in this world (see Meeks 1972:69-70).

world, they must remain in it as greater hostility rises against it. Such experiences affect how a group understands itself and locates itself. Moreover, if the cultic hero is an alien here below, this is replicated in the way the disciples likewise experience hostility. They too are aliens, but like Jesus they may not leave the world.

Worship, although not strictly a spatial concern, would mimic a temple system. With the rejection of fixed sacred space, other aspects of the system likewise fall away: there is no need for an order of priests, animal or grain sacrifices, calendar, sacred garments and vessels, and tithes or taxes for support. Important in this context is the role of Jesus as the ideal broker between God-Patron and the disciples-clients.

Jesus' remark to Annas about speaking only in public might well be extended to the circle of disciples to see if any of them speaks boldly and in public about Jesus. We know that Pharisees tried to *control* confessional behavior in some synagogues by declaring that anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Christ would be expelled (9:22; 12:42). And this enjoyed considerable success, if we examine who Jews kept their mouths shut for fear of the Jews: both the parents of the man born blind, but also "many even of the authorities believed in him but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it" (12:42). The otherwise noble Joseph of Arimathea, who buried Jesus, was "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews" (19:38). These characters did not imitate Jesus' bold, public speech, and they did not have courage to violate the control extended by the Pharisees. Yet of course, there are other characters, such as the man born blind, who speak boldly about Jesus and for this is thrown out. *Classification* and *control* are most evident here.

Finally, I would suggest a closer look at physical proximity to the body of Jesus. Not just anyone may touch Jesus; this is reserved for special characters, such as Mary (12:1-8), the Beloved Disciple (13:23), Magdalene (20:17) and Thomas (20:27-29). Two of these characters are identified as those whom Jesus loved: Mary and Martha and Lazarus (11:5) and the Beloved Disciple (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). They also are most intimate with his person: Mary anoints his feet; the Beloved Disciple leans on his chest. We are invited, then, to arrange the status of the disciples in terms of physical proximity to Jesus, thus envisioning a fully articulated map of persons.

## **Works consulted**

- Bassler, J 1981. The Galileans: A neglected factor in Johannine research. *CBQ* 43, 243-57.
- Borgen, P 1968. God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel, 137-148, in Neusner, J (ed), *Religions in antiquity*.
- Brown, R 1979. *Community of the Beloved Disciple*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Buchanan, G W 1986. Apostolic Christology. *SBLSP* 172-82.
- Bunbury, E H 1959. *A history of ancient geography*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Calhoun, J 1966. The role of space in animal sociology. *Journal of Social Issues* 22(4), 46-58.
- Carpenter, C R 1958. Territoriality: A review of concepts and problems, in Rose, A & Simpson, G (eds), *Behavior and evolution*, 224-250. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Casimir, M J 1992. *Mobility and territoriality: Social and spatial boundaries among foragers, fishers, pastoralists, and peripatetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, D 1991. *Law, sexuality and society: The enforcement of morals in classical Athens*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Culpepper, R A 1975. *The Johannine school*. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press.
- Dodd, C H 1963. *Historical tradition in the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eliade, M 1959. *The sacred and the profane: The nature of religion. The significance of religious myth, symbolism, and ritual within life and culture*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Foley, H P 1981. The conception of women in Athenian drama," in *Reflections on women in antiquity*, 140-148. New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers.
- Fortna, R T 1974. Theological use of locale in the Fourth Gospel. *Anglican Theological Review* Supp 3, 58-95.
- Hall, E T 1966. *The hidden dimension*. New York: Doubleday.
- Harvey, A E 1977. *Jesus on trial: A study in the Fourth Gospel*. Atlanta: John Knox Press.

- House, C 1983. Defilement by association: Some insights from the usage of κοινος/κοινοω in Acts 10 and 11. *AUSS* 21, 143-53.
- Kundsinn, K 1925. *Topologische Überlieferungstoffe im Johannes-Evangelium*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Lincoln, A T 2000. *Truth on trial: The lawsuit motif in the Fourth Gospel*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Lyman, S M & Scott, M R 1968. Territoriality: A neglected sociological dimension. *Social Problems* 15, 240-41.
- Magie, D 1950. *Roman rule in Asia Minor*, 2 Vols. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Malina, B J 1986. *Christian origins and cultural anthropology: Practical models for biblical interpretation*. Atlanta: John Knox.
- Malina, B J & Neyrey, J H 1988. *Calling Jesus names: The social value of labels in Matthew*. Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press.
- Malina, B J 1993. *The New Testament world: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox.
- Malina, B J & Neyrey, J H 1996. *Portraits of Paul: An archeology of ancient personality*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox.
- Meeks, W A 1966. Galilee and Judea in the Fourth Gospel. *JBL* 85, 159-63.
- Meeks, W A 1972. The Man from Heaven in Johannine sectarianism. *JBL* 91, 44-72.
- Mollat, D 1959. Remarques sur le vocabulaire spatial du quatrième évangile, in Aland K (ed), *Studia Evangelica, 1: Texte und Untersuchungen* 73, 321-328. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- Neyrey, J H 1986. The idea of purity in Mark's gospel. *Semeia* 35, 91-128.
- Neyrey, J H 1987. Jesus the Judge: Forensic process in John 8:21-59. *Biblica* 68, 509-542.
- Neyrey, J H 1988a. A symbolic approach to Mark 7. *Forum* 4(3), 63-91.
- Neyrey, J H 1988b. Unclean, common, polluted, taboo. *Forum* 4(4), 72-82.
- Neyrey, J H 1988c. *An ideology of revolt: John's Christology in social-science perspective*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress.
- Neyrey, J H (ed) 1991. *The social world of Luke-Acts*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

*Space Out: "Territoriality" in the Fourth Gospel*

- Neyrey, J H 1996a. The trials (forensic) and tribulations (honor challenges) of Jesus: John 7 in social science perspective. *BTB* 26, 107-24.
- Neyrey, J H 1996b. Luke's social location of Paul: Cultural Anthropology and the status of Paul in Acts, in Witherington, B (ed), *History, literature, and society in the Book of Acts*, 251-279. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Neyrey, J H 1998a. *Honor and shame in the Gospel of Matthew*. Louisville, KY: Westminster.
- Neyrey, J H 1998b. The Sociology of Secrecy and the Fourth Gospel, in Segovia, F (ed), *What is John?, Vol II: Literary and social readings of the Fourth Gospel*, 96-105. Atlanta: Scholars Press.
- Nicolet, C 1991. *Space, geography, and politics in the early Roman Empire*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Ortner, S B 1974. Is female to male as nature is to culture? in Rosaldo, M & Lamphere, L (eds), *Women, culture and society*, 67-87. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Pilch, J J & Malina, B J 1993. *Biblical social values and their meanings*. Revised edition. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Pelling, C 1990. *Characterization and individuality in Greek literature*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Percorara, G 1937. De verbo "manere" apud Joannem. *Divus Thomas* 40, 159-71.
- Rohrbaugh, R L 1991. The pre-industrial city in Luke-Acts, in Neyrey, J H (ed), *The social world of Luke-Acts*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Rohrbaugh, R L 1995. Legitimizing sonship – A test of honour: A social-scientific study of Luke 4:1-30, in Esler, P F (ed), *Modelling early Christianity. Social-scientific studies of the New Testament in its context*, 192-195. London: Routledge.
- Russell, D A & Wilson, N 1981. *Menander Rhetor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press,
- Sack, R D 1986. *Human territoriality: Its theory and history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Segovia, F 1998 (ed). *What is John?, Vol II: Literary and social readings of the Fourth Gospel*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.
- Schürer, E 1986. *The history of the Jewish people in the age of Jesus Christ*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

- Scobie, C H H 1982. Johannine geography. *Studies in Religion* 11, 77-84.
- Segal, P 1989. The penalty of the warning: Inscription from the temple of Jerusalem. *IEJ* 39, 79-84.
- Smith, J Z 1978. *Map is not territory: Studies in the history of religions*. Leiden: Brill.
- Smith, J Z 1987. *To take place: Toward theory in ritual*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, J Z 1990. *Divine drudgery: On the comparison of early Christianities and the religions of late antiquity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Schnackenburg, R 1963. *Die Johannesbriefe*. 2nd ed. Freiburg: Herder.
- Taylor, R B 1988. *Human territorial functioning: An empirical evolutionary perspective on individual and small group territorial cognitions, behaviors and consequences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.