

Liturgical Immersion

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Abstract: An intriguing feature of the Eastern Orthodox liturgies is that the activity of reenacting central elements of the core Christian narrative figures so prominently. In this essay, I address two main questions about liturgical reenactment as it occurs in the Eastern Christian tradition: First, how should we understand its character, what it is that occurs when one competently engages in liturgical reenactment? And, second, what are its purposes, its dominant functions in the context of liturgical action? After canvassing some models of liturgical reenactment that I deem unsatisfactory, I develop an alternative, which I call the immersion model. The immersion model, I maintain, nicely captures the types of actions and attitudes that the liturgical script calls forth.

Call that story, central to the Christian tradition, which presents the history of both the ways in which human beings have engaged God and the ways in which God has engaged human beings the *core narrative*.¹ The ancient Christian liturgies engage the core narrative in a striking variety of ways: they retell it, interpret it to explore its meaning, reenact elements of it, celebrate it, and creatively extend it in some surprising ways. It is as if, despite their highly scripted character, these liturgies are restless, determined to explore the core narrative from as many angles as they feasibly can.

An intriguing feature of the Eastern Orthodox liturgies is that the activity of reenacting central elements of the core narrative figures so prominently. When I say that these liturgies reenact elements of the core narrative, I have something fairly specific in mind. I mean that there is a sequence of act-types that is prescribed by the liturgical script – what I call the *liturgical sequence* – and a sequence of event-

¹ There are at least two different ways to understand the ontological status of the core narrative. According to what we can call the *object theory*, the narrative consists in those events reported in scripture and the oral tradition and their properties and relations to one another. According to the *content theory*, the narrative consists in a representation of these events and their properties and relations to one another (where "representation" is not taken to be a success term). The latter view has the advantage of allowing for there being elements of the narrative that do not refer to any actual events or their properties and relations. Given its flexibility, I will think of the core narrative along the lines of the content theory, although I will often speak loosely of the actions and events that compose the core narrative. (I use the term "event" broadly enough so that it can refer to either events that are acts or those that are not.)

types that belong to the core narrative – which I call the *narrative sequence* – that bear the following relations to one another: the performance of some segment of the liturgical sequence represents some segment of the narrative sequence because either (i) the former imitates and repeats the latter or (ii) the former, via the use of non-linguistic symbols or props, imitates the latter but does not repeat it. An example of the first type of reenactment would be the actions that compose the eucharistic rite. During this rite, the celebrant imitates and repeats a sequence of act-types that the Gospels attribute to Jesus at the Last Supper, which includes taking bread, breaking it, blessing it, distributing it to his followers, and eating it with them. An example of the second type of reenactment would be the actions that compose the Orthodox service of Holy Friday. In this service, the assembled use props – such as an icon of the entombed Christ and a "tomb" that is constructed, adorned with flowers, and placed in the nave – to perform actions that signify the act-sequence of burying the body of Jesus but without repeating that act-sequence.²

Two main questions face anyone wishing to understand liturgical reenactment: First, how should we understand its character, what it is that occurs when one competently engages in liturgical reenactment? And, second, what are its purposes, its dominant functions in the context of liturgical action? As should be apparent, these questions are very closely related, for there is no neat separation of the descriptive from the normative in liturgical action: to explain what it is, you need to understand what it is for. While these two questions are closely related, it is nonetheless possible to devote the bulk of one's attention to one question rather than the other. In this discussion, I focus on the first question, exploring the second question at more length elsewhere.³

Those who have theorized about the ancient Christian liturgies have offered some deeply puzzling accounts of the character of liturgical reenactment. In what follows, I will spend some time engaging with some of these theories, explaining why I find them unsatisfactory. The primary purpose of doing so is to introduce an alternative model, what I call the *immersion model* of liturgical reenactment. This model, I believe, puts us in a much better position to tackle the larger question of what the dominant functions of liturgical reenactment might be.

I. Liturgical reenactment

The fact that the Orthodox liturgies incorporate liturgical reenactment does not distinguish them from many other Christian liturgies. Nearly all the Christian liturgies that bear any sort of affinity to the ancient liturgies incorporate elements of liturgical reenactment to some degree or other. Rather, what sets the Orthodox

² Here I use the term "icon" loosely. Typically, what is used in this service is the epitaphion, which is an oblong piece of cloth on which is painted or embroidered the figure of the dead Christ laid out for burial.

³ In Cuneo (forthcoming).

liturgies apart from so many of these other liturgies is – as I indicated earlier – the prominence that they give to the activity of liturgical reenactment. It will be helpful, I think, to begin by giving you a taste of the place of reenactment in the Orthodox liturgies. In doing so, I should note that there is a venerable history of liturgical commentary and many who have contributed to this project – such as those who operate within the "mystagogical" tradition, including Theodore of Mopsuestia, Maximus the Confessor, and Germanus – work with an extremely permissive account of liturgical reenactment.⁴ These thinkers find liturgical reenactment at nearly every turn in the liturgy, interpreting actions of all sorts as signifying actions depicted in the core narrative. I will not be working with anywhere near such a permissive approach.

Let us begin with the obvious cases of reenactment. These would include the services of Holy Week, such as the rite of foot washing, which is celebrated by many Orthodox on Holy Thursday, and the burial of Christ, which is celebrated the day thereafter, on Holy Friday. In the first rite, by washing the feet of the parishioners or the deacons, the celebrant reenacts the biblical story in which Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. The hymnody leaves no questions about the rite's significance: "Humbling yourself in your compassion, you have washed the feet of your disciples, teaching them to take the path that you have followed."⁵ In the second rite, by the employment of a series of props, the assembled reenact the burial of Christ. The reenactment typically involves a deacon or priest reading the Gospel account of Jesus's burial ("and taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in a white cloth") while the Priest removes a wooden corpus of Christ from a replica of the cross, wrapping it in a white cloth. The priest then chants a mourning hymn: "Down from the tree Joseph of Arimathea took you dead, who is the life of all, and wrapped you ... in a linen cloth with spices."⁶ Once again, in this case, there is no ambiguity concerning the significance of the liturgical acts performed. It is interesting to note, though, that the cases of reenactment just mentioned incorporate elements not found in the biblical narrative, creatively extending it in certain directions. At various points, for example, the people sing hymns from the perspective of Joseph: "How shall I bury you, O my God? How can I wrap you in a shroud? . . . What songs can I sing for your exodus, O Compassionate One?"⁷ At other points, the people sing hymns from the perspective of Mary Theotokos, who is present at the burial, lamenting: "In my arms I hold you as a corpse ... I long to die with you ... for I cannot bear to look upon you lifeless and without breath....Where are you going now, my son? Have you left me

⁴ These commentaries date from the 5th, 7th, and 8th centuries respectively.

⁵ And: "let us remain at the Master's side, that we may see how he washes the feet of the disciples and wipes them with a towel; and let us do as we have seen, subjecting ourselves to each other and washing one another's feet"(*The Lenten Triodion*, South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2002), 550, 552. I have modernized the English used in the translation. In what follows, I will refer to this work as *LT*.

⁶ *LT*, 614.

⁷ *LT*, 615.

here alone?"⁸ In these passages, then, the liturgical script invites the participants to take up something like Joseph of Arimathea's and Mary's first-person perspectives on Jesus's death and burial.

Other liturgical actions lack the overtly dramatic elements of the rite of foot washing and the burial of Jesus but are plausibly viewed as cases of liturgical reenactment nonetheless. These would include the eucharistic rite in which the celebrant performs the act-sequence that the Gospels attribute to Jesus at the Last Supper of taking bread, breaking it, blessing it, distributing it to his disciples, and eating it together as well as – somewhat more controversially – the baptismal rite, which is said to be "after the pattern" of Christ's burial and resurrection.⁹ Arguably, however, some of the more interesting cases of reenactment are more subtle and interspersed throughout the liturgy. Some of these are actions performed by the celebrant. At various points during the liturgy, for example, the priest turns from facing the altar, moves toward the assembled, and blesses them uttering Jesus's words to the disciples gathered together in the upper room: "Peace be with you" (Luke 24: 36, John 20: 19). The Gospels report that, immediately after uttering this blessing, Jesus "breathed on them and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" Anyone who has witnessed the Orthodox baptismal rite and knows of its pneumatological dimensions will recognize that this is exactly the act-type that the priest performs with regard to the one to be baptized: he breathes on him or her three times, making the sign of the cross with his actions.

Other examples of reenactment – also not decisively clear cases but suggestive nonetheless – are actions performed not by the priest but by the assembled. During the procession of the eucharistic gifts, for example, the assembled will often reach out to touch the hem of the priest's vestments, just as the woman with a hemorrhage is said to have touched Jesus's garments (Matt. 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-35; Luke 8:43-48).¹⁰ Moreover, it is customary for those entering the nave to venerate the icon of Jesus by kissing it, imitating the action, which the tradition attributes to Mary of Bethany, of kissing Jesus's body (Luke 7: 38; John 12: 1-8).¹¹ Interestingly, on Wednesday of Holy Week, the hymnody explicitly identifies the actions of the assembled with Mary's, taking poetic liberties with the biblical text: "I will kiss your most pure feet and wipe them with the hairs of my head, those

⁸ *LT*, 619, 620.

⁹ *Service Book of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church according to the use of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America* (2002), 156. See also, Gregory of Nazianzus' comments on baptism in his (2008), 125. There is an interesting question of the role that intentions play in liturgical reenactment. If some act-sequence counts as a liturgical reenactment, must it be inserted in the liturgy with the intention that it functions as a reenactment? Although I won't defend the point, I am assuming that it needn't.

¹⁰ Interestingly, the Lenten prayers also refer to the event: "O wretched soul, do as the woman with an issue of blood: run quickly, grasp the hem of the garment of Christ; so shall you be healed of your afflictions and hear Him say, 'Your faith has saved you'" (*LT*, 396).

¹¹ For a discussion of the matter, see Stump (2010), ch. 12. Although the liturgical script simply refers to this woman as "the woman who had sinned," I'll refer to her as Mary of Bethany for ease of reference.

feet whose sound Eve heard at dusk in Paradise."¹² Finally, the phrase of repentance issued by the Publican in Jesus's story of the Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18: 9-14) is repeated over and over in the liturgy when the assembled respond to the petitions with their "kyrie eleison." On the Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican, the church's hymnody draws the connection between this phrase and the biblical story: "In days of old, humility exalted the Publican who cried aloud lamenting 'Be merciful', and he was justified. Let us follow his example, for we have fallen down into the depths of evil. Let us cry to the Saviour from the depths of our hearts: We have sinned, be merciful, O you alone who loves humankind."¹³

II. How should we understand reenactment?

If our primary project were the descriptive one of illustrating the extent to which the Orthodox liturgies incorporate reenactment, there are a good many other examples to which we could appeal. Let us, however, move from the level of description to the level of interpretation in which we address the question of how to understand the character of these reenactments. To do so, unfortunately, is immediately to leave *terra firma* and step into a philosophical void, for philosophers have had next to nothing to say about the issue of ritual reenactment. Indeed, I am aware of only one essay that addresses the topic and that is Nicholas Wolterstorff's "Remembrance of Things (Not) Past." As it happens, this is an excellent place to start, so let's begin our exploration with Wolterstorff's discussion.¹⁴

Wolterstorff frames his wide-ranging essay by presenting and rejecting two accounts of the character of liturgical reenactment.¹⁵ The first account, which I'll call the *anamnetic theory*, takes several forms, but its guiding idea is that by reenacting in the liturgy event-types that belong to the core narrative, the events belonging to the core narrative are made present to those assembled at the liturgy.¹⁶ In the hands of the influential anthropologist of religion Mircea Eliade, the view tells us that by engaging in ritual events, those who perform them take themselves to enter into a different time frame – so-called sacred time – in which these events originally occurred. Moreover, when they so enter, they understand their performance of

¹² *LT*, 540.

¹³ *LT*, 103.

¹⁴ Wolterstorff (1990).

¹⁵ These are not the only two views that Wolterstorff considers, but they are the ones on which he focuses.

¹⁶ Literally rendered, the Greek term "anamnesis" (ἀνάμνησις) means *memorial*. But as numerous liturgical commentators point out, the term expresses the idea of a memorial – a remembering – that makes what is remembered present. It is this last idea of making present that I am picking up in my use of the term "anamnesis."

these ritual events to actualize the events they appear to be reenacting.¹⁷ By contrast, in the hands of Church Fathers such as Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia – at least under a certain reading – the performance of some segment of the liturgical sequence somehow makes mystically present to those assembled at the liturgy the corresponding events that belong to the narrative sequence. It is as if, under this view, event-tokens are the sorts of things that can be conjured from the past (or, in the case of Theodore, the future) by repeating the types under which they fall.¹⁸

The second view that Wolterstorff considers, what he labels the *dramatic representation theory*, is much less exotic. At the heart of this view is the claim that by performing some segment of the liturgical sequence, the assembled reenact a corresponding segment of the narrative sequence. They do so, moreover, by *playing the roles* of those agents who act in the core narrative. No entrance into sacred time, no mystically making present what is past; rather, liturgical reenactment consists in the dramatic performance of event-types of the same sort that compose the core narrative.

Neither of these views, Wolterstorff maintains, is satisfactory. Begin with the anamnetic theory and, in particular, Eliade's version of it. This position, Wolterstorff charges, is oddly imperceptive. When Eliade develops his theory, he does so with the aim of providing an account of the character of not liturgical reenactment in particular but religious ritual reenactment in general. And, at a certain point, he indicates that his theory applies to the Christian liturgy, since the liturgy retains elements of the mentality characteristic of "archaic" ritual.¹⁹ But even a moment's reflection reveals that Eliade's account of ritual reenactment does not apply to the Christian liturgy. For, according to the Christian tradition, the sequence of event-types that compose the core narrative occurs not in some other temporal dimension – so-called sacred time – but in the same temporal dimension that you and I presently occupy. Hence the oddly imperceptive character of Eliade's interpretation; it fails to take into account the historically-embedded character of the core Christian narrative.

In principle, Eliade's account could be modified to allow for the fact that, according to the Christian tradition, the core narrative occurs not in sacred time but in the same time frame that you and I occupy. However, if Eliade's account were so modified, Wolterstorff charges, the view would be fantastic. For Eliade's theory implies that the performance of the liturgical sequence actualizes the corresponding segments of the narrative sequence; strictly speaking, then, in Eliade's view, there is no liturgical reenactment, as the performance of those act-tokens that compose the liturgical sequence is numerically identical with the occurrence of those act-tokens

¹⁷ Wolterstorff (1990), 125, 129. In his discussion, Wolterstorff distinguishes two readings of Eliade. I am working with the second interpretation that Wolterstorff identifies, the "actualization" interpretation.

¹⁸ See, for example, Finn (1969) and Harrison (2008). The figure who seems to be chiefly responsible for propagating this reading of the church fathers is Odo Casel; see Casel (1962).

¹⁹ Wolterstorff (1990), 127.

that compose the narrative sequence. If it were correct, Eliade's theory would imply (among other things) that the Christian tradition takes those who participate in liturgical reenactment to engage in time travel, transporting themselves to those times at which events of the core narrative occurred, such as that time at which the Last Supper occurred. By all appearances, however, this is not so. The tradition does not hold that when engaging in liturgical reenactment, the assembled engage in time travel.²⁰

Wolterstorff has little to say about the second version of the anementic theory, despite its presence within the Christian tradition itself. Since the view may be even less familiar than Eliade's, let me quote a recent elaboration of it, in which the view is attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus:

Anamnesis means re-presentation of God's saving works so that the worshipers can participate in these events as present realities and thereby receive the eschatological salvation, new life and sanctification divinely accomplished through them. Anamnesis thus unites past, present and future in a single present event of worship....

If this is so,

Anamnesis is historical but is not primarily looking back to the past. Festal celebration is not nostalgia, it is not a commemoration of what once took place but is now present only as a memory, a mere mental phenomenon that the worshipers work to reinforce in order to preserve it from oblivion. Rather, anamnesis is an encounter in the present with the Lord who transfigures and transcends history ... it is important to note that the saving *events* are made present in their liturgical celebration, not only the persons who once participated in those events . . . Since God's saving actions transcend the limitations of temporal sequence, the historical events in which God has acted can be present now and in the future ... In festal celebration the boundaries of sequential time are transcended as the original saving events and the present experience of the congregation join together. The past events of Christ's incarnate life and the Spirit's descent, the present experience of the Christian community, and the future participation in God's kingdom are made one.²¹

Under a natural reading, the view is not that liturgical reenactment renders past events present in the way that, say, film footage of the Normandy Invasion makes that historical event present to viewers of it here and now. Rather, the position seems to be that, in liturgical reenactment, something extraordinarily unusual takes place: the ordinary temporal divisions between past, present, and future no longer

²⁰ Wolterstorff (1990), 129.

²¹ Harrison (2008), 24-25.

hold; liturgical reenactment somehow binds together all three temporal dimensions in one time frame.

Given what Wolterstorff says about Eliade's position, it is not difficult to discern what he would say about this second version of the anamnestic theory. For one thing, rather than feel like an explication of the tradition's understanding of what occurs in liturgical reenactment – and what various figures such as Nazianzus have said about such reenactment – it feels more like interpolation. When N. V. Harrison, for example, attributes the anamnestic theory to Nazianzus, she cites passages in which Nazianzus writes such things as:

Christ is born, give glory; Christ is from the heavens, go to meet him.

And:

Today salvation has come to the world, to things visible and to things invisible. Christ is risen from the dead; rise with him.²²

But liturgical data of this sort radically underdetermine the anamnestic interpretation of liturgical reenactment. There is just no way to squeeze the theory's understanding of liturgical reenactment out of pronouncements such as these, evocative as they may be.

The deeper worry about the view, however, is this: there might be models of time and our relation to it that render the anamnestic theory coherent. For example, it might be coherent to claim that, in liturgical reenactment, we enter some other temporal dimension, "liturgical hyper-time," in which we can simultaneously experience past, present, and future events of ordinary time. But it is one thing to say that such models are coherent; it is another thing altogether to maintain that, when engaging in liturgical reenactment, participants in the liturgy regularly enter into such a temporal dimension.²³ This proposal, like Eliade's position, is extravagant.

When compared to the anamnestic theory, the dramatic representation theory looks pedestrian. Even so, Wolterstorff finds the view no more compelling than the anamnestic theory, albeit for different reasons. One concern, says Wolterstorff, is that when one actually looks at the liturgical scripts of the ancient liturgies, they do not conform to the theory's account of their character. Consider, for example, the eucharistic rite. Proponents of the dramatic representation theory would be correct

²² Harrison (2008), 25. See also Mantzaridis (1996).

²³ This is not to deny that the Christian tradition has advocated claims regarding the eucharistic rite, such as the doctrine of transubstantiation, that also appear fantastic. Regardless of what one thinks of such doctrines, they seem to belong to a different category, as they are the attempt to work out a deep commitment of the church, namely, that the bread and wine used in the eucharist become the body and blood of Christ. That liturgical reenactment makes event-tokens of the core narrative present, by contrast, does not have this sort of pedigree; it can hardly be considered part of the tradition's self-understanding.

in their observation that, in the ancient Christian traditions, the priest not only represents Christ but also quotes Christ's words in this rite, saying such things as "This is my body which is broken for you" and "Do this in remembrance of me." But, Wolterstorff maintains, this would not imply that the priest *plays the role* of Christ in the eucharist rite. To represent a figure and to quote what he has said needn't be to play the role of his saying it.

To this first point, Wolterstorff adds a second, which is worth quoting. The theory, Wolterstorff writes, "feels all wrong," for the

celebrant actually blesses; he does not play the role of Christ blessing. We actually give thanks; we do not play the role of the disciples giving thanks. What matters is that the celebrant actually gives bread and wine, not that he plays the role of Christ long ago giving bread and wine to his disciples. What matters is that we actually eat the bread and drink the wine, not that we play the role of the disciples long ago eating the bread and drinking the wine distributed to them by Christ. The dramatic representation theory displaces the focus from the actuality of what is presently taking place.²⁴

While I find the objections that Wolterstorff presses against the anamnetic theory decisive, I find neither of the reasons offered against the dramatic representation theory persuasive, at least in their present form. Let me explain why, since doing so will help to throw into sharper relief the model I wish to defend.

Begin with the first objection. When one takes account of the full range of rites performed in the Orthodox liturgies, which includes not simply the eucharistic rite but also the rites of foot washing and the burial of Christ, it is, I submit, difficult *not* to be struck by the fact that they bear the marks of being dramatic reenactments of events that compose the core narrative, segments of the narrative sequence. Interestingly, many of the early liturgical commentators agree. Earlier I mentioned that Theodore of Mopsuestia is sometimes presented as an advocate of the anamnetic theory. But the case for his being a proponent of the dramatic representation theory is, arguably, more impressive. Commenting on the eucharistic rite, Theodore writes:

The duty of the High Priest of the New Covenant (i.e., Jesus) is to offer this sacrifice which revealed the nature of the New Covenant. We ought to believe that the bishop who is now at the altar is playing the part of this High Priest....²⁵

Concerning the Great Entrance in which the Gospel is brought to the altar, Theodore says: "By means of the signs we must see Christ now being led away to His passion

²⁴ Wolterstorff (1990), 146.

²⁵ Quoted in Meyendorff (1984), 29.

... you must imagine that Christ our Lord is being led out to His passion."²⁶ And regarding the baptismal rite, Cyril of Jerusalem maintains: "You ... submerged yourselves three times in the water and emerged: by this gesture you were secretly re-enacting the burial of Christ's three days in the tomb."²⁷ By quoting these figures, I am not suggesting that their interpretations of liturgical reenactment are correct or normative. I wish only to advance the point that these thinkers found something like the dramatic representation theory, with its emphasis on role-playing, to be the natural interpretation of important elements of the liturgy.

Why would one disagree? Here is a diagnosis: when Wolterstorff offers his reasons for holding that the eucharistic rite is not a dramatic reenactment, he focuses almost exclusively on the acts of speech performed in this rite. In the context of the liturgy, to perform the same speech act-types as Jesus, Wolterstorff points out, is not perform to play the role of Jesus performing those speech act-types. Suppose, though, we were to focus our attention on not the verbal actions performed in the rite but the non-verbal ones. Were we to do so, I submit, the dramatic representation theory would begin to look considerably more attractive. For, as we noted earlier, the rite consists in the celebrant performing the same act-type sequence that the Gospels report Jesus as having performed, namely: taking bread, blessing it, breaking it, distributing it, and eating it with his followers.²⁸ This last observation, admittedly, hardly vindicates the dramatic representation theory, but it should give its opponents pause; any case against the view has to consider carefully the character of the non-verbal actions performed in the liturgy.

Let's now turn to the second objection that Wolterstorff offers against the dramatic representation theory, which is contained in the longer passage I quoted a few paragraphs back. As I read it, this objection contains two sub-arguments. Let me postpone engaging with the first sub-argument and consider the second, which is that if role-playing were central to participating in the liturgy it would displace "the focus from the actuality of what is presently taking place." The idea seems to be that by directing our attention to role-playing, the theory offers us a distorted depiction of what is going on in the performance of the liturgical rite. What is fundamental to the performance of the rite is not playing the role of blessing but actually blessing, not playing the role of thanking but actually thanking, and so on.

I doubt, however, that the dramatic representation theory displaces, obstructs, or overshadows what actually takes place in the performance of liturgical action. At least it needn't. By drawing our attention to the fact that the celebrant plays the role of Jesus in the rite of foot washing, the theory needn't obstruct or distort the significance of what is happening in the rite, namely, that the celebrant is expressing Christ-like humility in washing others' feet and setting an example for the rest of us. In fact, in this case, I suspect that the opposite is true. If a model of liturgical reenactment were to disassociate the celebrant's actions from those which

²⁶ Quoted in Meyendorff (1984), 31.

²⁷ Quoted in Meyendorff (1984), 34.

²⁸ Wolterstorff is aware of the point; see Wolterstorff (1990), 151. But I am not sure why he does not bring the point to bear upon his treatment of the dramatic representation theory.

Jesus performed when he washed the disciples' feet, then it would genuinely displace or obstruct appreciation of the actuality of what takes place. It is precisely because the dramatic representation theory draws our attention to the fact that the celebrant, by imitating Jesus's actions, plays the role of Jesus that we can better appreciate the rite's significance, and what it is to express humility.

The dramatic representation theory, then, seems to me not vulnerable to the objections that we've been considering. Nonetheless, I do not think that we should accept it, for I share Wolterstorff's underlying suspicion about its adequacy. The problem with the dramatic representation theory, I believe, is not that it somehow displaces, obstructs, or overshadows what actually takes place in the performance of liturgical action. Rather, it is that the theory is insufficiently illuminating. For what we ultimately want from a model of liturgical reenactment is an account of its dominant functions, what it is for. The dramatic representation theory, however, does not give us any sense of why role-playing is especially important or apt in the liturgical context. If, for example, the point of liturgical activity is to do such things as bless and give thanks, the dramatic representation theory owes us an explanation of what it is about role-playing that helps us do these things.²⁹ It provides no such explanation.

III. The immersion model

In the last section, we considered two theories of liturgical reenactment: the anamnestic theory and the dramatic representation theory. By engaging with Wolterstorff's treatment of these views, we found that there is ample reason to reject the first view: it is, among other things, extravagant. We also saw that the second position is not so much clearly wrongheaded as incomplete; we need more from an adequate model of liturgical reenactment. One of the lessons that emerged from our discussion, I believe, is that given the diversity of types of liturgical reenactment, we should probably be wary of trying to identify a single model that covers all cases of the phenomenon. Some models might be suited to explain some cases, while other models might be suited to explain other cases. Still, we're looking for models that smoothly accommodate a wide range of liturgical data and are supple enough to incorporate the best insights and commitments of rival models. At this point, we're in search of such a model.

²⁹In his essay, Wolterstorff focuses on the liturgical activity of commemorating, recommending what he calls *the imitation/repetition interpretation*, according to which commemorative liturgical reenactment is a matter of not playing roles but imitating the behavior represented in the core narrative by repeating the act-types performed in that narrative (Wolterstorff (1990), 150-52). If the imitation/repetition interpretation were offered as a general model for understanding liturgical reenactment, I think it would be vulnerable to the same type of worries just raised regarding the dramatic representation theory. Imitation can, after all, be used to many different ends. To be satisfactory, the model would have to give us insight into why, in the context of liturgical action, imitation is so important.

It might be worth stepping back for a moment to identify what we want from a satisfactory model of liturgical reenactment. I think any such model will have at least three characteristics. In the first place, it will be both sensitive to the diversity of liturgical actions and fit the liturgical data, not distorting what the model is trying to explain. Unlike Eliade's theory, then, it won't impose an interpretation on the liturgical data that is incompatible with core commitments of the Christian tradition, such as the claim that important elements of the narrative sequence occur not in sacred time but in ordinary history.

Second, any such model will not simply describe what participants are doing – or what they think they are doing – when engaging in liturgical reenactment. Much of what we actually do – and think we are doing – when participating in the liturgy is, after all, defective, the expression of false or inapt views about the significance, value, or role of liturgical action.³⁰ Nor will such a model simply reiterate what the liturgical script says about the character of such reenactment, since the liturgical script is typically silent on this matter. Rather, an adequate model will identify those ways of engaging in liturgical reenactment that the liturgical script *calls forth*. Admittedly, it is not easy to specify precisely what this "calls forth" relation is, but actors and musicians are very familiar with it. Scripts and scores prescribe actions. But there are more or less fitting ways to perform these actions, ways of acting about which scripts and scores say little or nothing. Given a script or score, good actors and musicians will not simply identify the actions prescribed by that script or score but also interpret that script or score in such a way as to identify fitting or apt ways of performing those actions. A good model of liturgical reenactment, then, will be one that identifies the sorts of attitudes and behaviors called forth by the liturgical script – with this qualification: the attitudes and behaviors called forth are those of competent participants in the liturgy, these being those who are sufficiently familiar with the performance-plan of the liturgy and the character of the core narrative. In what follows, I'll assume this qualification to be understood.

Finally, a good model will identify what the purposes might be of engaging in liturgical reenactment. That is, it will identify why it is that imaginative engagement of the sort that the liturgical script calls forth is important for the ethically and religiously-committed life – what it is supposed to accomplish. Unlike the dramatic representation theory, then, a satisfactory model will illuminate why liturgical reenactment takes the form it does.

In this section, I introduce what I believe is a promising model of liturgical reenactment. As will be apparent, this model, which I referred to earlier as the *immersion model*, has affinities with but is not simply a variant of the dramatic representation theory. Let me introduce the immersion model somewhat indirectly by returning to Wolterstorff's discussion of role-playing in the liturgy. My point in doing so is to identify an important element of the liturgical data that a good model of liturgical reenactment should accommodate. Once we have identified this element, we will be in a better position to appreciate the attractions of the immersion model.

³⁰ On this matter, see Schmemmann's comments on liturgical piety in Schmemmann (1966).

Recall that Wolterstorff raises the worry that given its emphasis on role-playing, the dramatic representation theory misrepresents the character of liturgical action. In liturgical reenactment, the priest does not play the role of someone who blesses, he actually blesses; the people do not play the role of those who thank, they actually thank, and so forth.³¹ While there is something to this worry, it is important to recognize that roles come in different varieties.

One sort of role – the type on which Wolterstorff seems to have his eye – is a *pretense role*. In occupying a pretense role, one pretends to act or be some way; one "plays the part" in the sense of pretending to act or be some way. Another sort of role, of a rather different sort, is what I shall call a *target role*. When one assumes a target role, one acts the part of being some way for the purpose of *being that way*, becoming like or identifying with that which one imitates. One doesn't pretend to be that way; rather, in acting in that way, one thereby aspires to be that way.³² Despite what commentators such as Theodore of Mopsuestia seem to suggest in places, my own view is that pretense roles have almost no place in the liturgy. The scripts of the eucharistic rite and the rite of foot washing, for example, do not call forth the activity of pretending to be a disciple at the Last Supper. Nor, for that matter, does the performance-plan of the liturgy call forth the activity, when venerating the icons of Christ, of pretending to be Mary of Bethany. Any such interpretation of the liturgical performance-plan strikes me as forced, requiring of those assembled at the liturgy to engage in rather extraordinary feats of imagination, the success of which threatens to distract from the actuality of what is taking place. Participation in the liturgy shouldn't require the skills of an expert Shakespearean actor!³³

By contrast, that the liturgical script invites those participating in the liturgy to assume target roles is, I believe, apparent in the script itself. Consider, for example, just a sample of texts from the services in Holy Week. The script from the Monday of Holy Week has the assembled sing:

When the Lord was going to his voluntary passion, he said to the Apostles on the way, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up, as it is written of him." Come, then, let us

³¹ Under a natural reading, Wolterstorff seems to rely on the principle that if one plays the role of one who Xs, in playing that role one does not thereby X. Applied to the case at hand, the claim seems to be that if, in the liturgy, the priest plays the role of being one who blesses, he does not actually bless. The principle just enunciated, however, is false – and it is false no matter how one thinks of roles. Suppose, in a dramatic reenactment, I pretend to be someone who amuses others, playing the role of a comedian. That's compatible with my being such that, in virtue of playing that role, I am actually amusing others.

³² As I am thinking of them, target roles come cheaply. I assume that when one identifies with a character by imitating her in one's own actions for the purpose of being like her – "playing the part" of being some way – one thereby assumes a target role. Nothing more is needed.

³³ There are other reasons to resist the suggestion that the liturgical script calls forth the activity of assuming pretense roles, which I canvass in Cuneo (forthcoming).

also go with him, purified in mind. Let us be crucified with him and die for his sake to the pleasures of this life.³⁴

On the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee the people sing:

In our prayer let us fall down before God, with tears and fervent cries of sorrow, emulating the Publican in the humility which lifted him on high ... Let us make haste to follow the Pharisee in his virtues and to emulate the Publican in his humility....³⁵

In some places, the script does not so much exhort the assembled to assume a target role as direct the people then and there to assume such a role, such as that of the Prodigal Son:

As the Prodigal Son I come to you, merciful Lord. I have wasted my whole life in a foreign land ... With the words of the Prodigal I cry aloud: I have sinned, O Father; like him, receive me now in your embrace ...³⁶

Or the righteous thief:

But we, imitating the righteous thief, cry out in faith: Remember us also, O Savior, in your kingdom.³⁷

And, as we saw earlier with the cases of Joseph of Arimathea and Mary Theotokos, sometimes the script has the assembled take up something like the first-person perspective of one or another character in the core narrative, such as Adam:

In my wretchedness I have cast off the robe woven by God, disobeying your divine command, O Lord, at the counsel of the enemy; and I am clothed now in fig leaves and in garments of skin.³⁸

And Jesus:

I who am rich in Godhead have come to minister to Adam who is grown poor. I who fashioned him have of my own will put on his form. I ... have come to lay down my life as a ransom for him.³⁹

³⁴ *LT*, 514.

³⁵ *LT*, 107, 105.

³⁶ *LT*, 113, 116.

³⁷ *LT*, 589.

³⁸ *LT*, 168.

³⁹ *LT*, 513.

A good model of liturgical reenactment, I believe, needs to take these texts into account. It needs, moreover, to recognize that the liturgical script appears to call forth from those assembled a type of imaginative engagement with the core narrative in which, when engaging in liturgical reenactment, they assume target roles of various sorts. But – to say it again – it seems to me that the model ought not to interpret the liturgical script so that it calls forth behavior of such a kind that when the assembled engage in activities such as the rite of foot washing, the burial of Jesus, the eucharistic rite, or the uttering of the words of the Righteous Thief, they thereby pretend to be characters such as Joseph of Arimathea or pretend to be present as their ordinary selves at the events that these rites reenact. But if this is so, what other options are available? What sort of imaginative engagement with the core narrative could the script be calling for?

Let us look for analogues. A helpful analogue, I believe, is the activity of reading. More exactly, a helpful analogue is the activity of reading works that present narratives, what I'll call "narrative-works." The reason why this makes for a good analogue is that often narrative-works call forth the activity of immersing oneself in the narrative presented in a work – or to look at the same phenomenon from the opposite angle, they often call forth the activity of allowing oneself to be *absorbed by* the narrative of a work.⁴⁰ But the activity called forth needn't involve anything like pretending to be a character in the work or pretending to be present in one's own person at the events described in the work. The territory we are exploring is imaginative engagement without pretense.

Let's call immersion of this sort *non-fictive immersion*. (I use the modifier "non-fictive" to distinguish it from fictive immersion, which would be immersing oneself in a work by pretending to be a character of the work or be present in one's own person at the events represented in that work.) And let's specify more exactly what is it to engage in non-fictive immersion, at least when reading narrative-works. In the first place, it means attending to the content of the narrative of the work – what it is communicating – and properties of that content – such as how its various elements hang together – while not attending to features of the presentation of the narrative, such as the author's word choice or use of certain grammatical constructions. Or to put this point about attending somewhat more guardedly: we all have the capacity rapidly to direct our attention to rather different aspects of any given situation that we may occupy, first attending to this and then attending to that. The sort of attention required in non-fictive immersion is that of prioritizing the content of a narrative in such a way that, when one directs one's attention to features of its presentation, it is for the purpose of better attending to the content of the narrative itself. So, when reading, for example, one can momentarily marvel at the use of an unusual metaphor, asking oneself why the author would use it in this context. But the point in doing so is to better engage with the content of the work in

⁴⁰ In what follows, I've been helped by Liao (n. d.) and Harris (2000) but the view I sketch differs from theirs in some important ways. Stephen Grimm has pointed out to me that the philosopher of science Peter Lipton also works with the concept of immersion to explain his own engagement with the Jewish liturgies. See Lipton (2007).

which the metaphor is being used. If this is right, non-fictional immersion is compatible with one's attention floating between the content of a narrative and features of its presentation provided that attention to the former assumes a certain kind of priority. Or so I say initially; in a moment, I will add an important qualification.

If this is so, non-fictional immersion involves "screening off" certain features of the presentation of a work. The screening-off might, however, involve more than simply not attending to these features. Depending on the character of the narrative, it might also require bracketing or suspending doubts, questions, or incredulity regarding one or another feature of the narrative itself, these all being the sorts of considerations that can divert one's attention from the content of the narrative presented by the work. Still, non-fictional immersion is more than just attending to the content of a work in such a way that one screens off certain features of its presentation and properties of the narrative itself. It is also to take up a certain kind of vantage point with regard to the narrative presented by the work.

It is difficult to capture this phenomenon of taking up a vantage point, but the idea is that when non-fictionally immersing oneself in the narrative of a work, one imaginatively enters the narrative of the work by situating oneself within it.⁴¹ In taking up such a vantage point, one does not take oneself to be a character in the work or to be present in one's own person at the events described in the work; nonetheless there is a sense in which one is "inside" it. Its characters and events loom large in one's consciousness and one becomes emotionally engaged to some significant degree with the happenings of the narrative. In a wide range of cases, taking up the vantage point of not a spectator or a critic but of one inside a work who is emotionally engaged with it is called forth by the work itself. For, as Noël Carroll points out, in the typical case, the characters and events in narratives are not merely described. Rather, the narratives themselves are typically emotionally colored, as an evaluative stance – whether explicitly or implicitly – toward their characters and events is built into the description.⁴² When, for example, the Gospels present the event of Mary of Bethany's washing Jesus's feet with her tears, her actions are presented admiringly, in a way intended to call forth admiration from the audience. To be immersed in this narrative is to allow one's emotional response to be shaped by these features of its presentation. Indeed, it might be that to understand the story properly, to genuinely grasp its import, more is required than that one allow one's emotional response be shaped by the narrative. For, arguably, understanding a narrative such as this one requires that one's emotions already be mobilized while immersing oneself in that narrative; it requires that one positively construe Mary's action as at once bold, beautiful, and bracing. If this is right, experiencing the emotions that a narrative calls forth would be constitutive of understanding that narrative itself.

⁴¹ Harris (2000) offers some interesting empirical data that supports this way of thinking about immersion.

⁴² See Carroll (2011), 376 and (2001), 281-84.

Participating in liturgical reenactment, I realize, is not to engage in the activity of reading a narrative-work. It is, rather, to insert oneself into a complex sequence of scripted action performance. In its use of various sensory modalities and bodily movement, it is more similar to both dramatic performance and the observation of such performance (perhaps it is most similar to audience-participation dramatic performance). Still, I trust that the analogy with reading which I have presented helps us to see the structure of what I am calling the immersion model of liturgical reenactment.

According to the immersion model, liturgical reenactment involves non-fictional immersion. When one participates in the rite of washing feet, for example, the script calls for a great deal of imaginative activity. One does not approach the rite as an observer or a cultural critic but as a participant. But – to say it again – the activity called forth is not that of pretending to be a disciple present at the rite or pretending to be present at the rite in one's own person. Rather, what the script calls for is that those assembled attend to and take up a vantage point within the core narrative, screening-off various features of the presentation of this narrative and sometimes certain features of the narrative itself. Or, to state the phenomenon from the opposite angle, what the script calls for is that those assembled allow themselves to be absorbed by those elements of the core narrative presented by the performance of liturgical action, taking up a vantage point within them.⁴³ Needless to say, imaginative engagement of this sort does not come intuitively for many. Participating in liturgical reenactment is as much about training and conditioning as it is competent engagement.

As I noted a moment ago, the disanalogies between immersing oneself in liturgical reenactment and immersing oneself in reading narrative-works are important. Perhaps the most obvious disanalogy is that immersing oneself in liturgical reenactment typically involves using one's body in certain ways, responding to the bodily movements of others, and engaging with symbols and props of various sorts. One sings, kisses, eats, touches, and bows, and does so not only when responding to the actions of others but also when engaging with icons, replicas of the cross, water, candles, and the like. Because of this, the sort of attention that is required in liturgical reenactment is, I would say, of a different character than that required in reading narrative-works. Let me elaborate.

Some cases of liturgical engagement are such that, by the performance of actions of various sorts, elements of the core narrative are presented to those assembled. For example, in the eucharistic rite, the celebrant's actions present that segment of the core narrative that consists in Jesus's eating with his disciples. And, in the rite of foot washing, the celebrant's actions present that segment of the core

⁴³ The view I am presenting, then, differs significantly from "simulationist" proposals in the aesthetics literature that attempt to understand immersion in terms of taking up the perspective of the characters in a narrative. In my view, while simulation of this sort might have a limited role to play – such as when liturgical script invites us to see things from the perspective of a character such as Joseph of Arimathea or Mary Theotokos – we ought not to understand the phenomenon of immersion in terms of it. For a development of the simulationist view, see Currie (1994).

narrative that consists in Jesus's washing the feet of his disciples. In other cases, elements of the core narrative are not presented to those assembled. Rather, the reenactment is simply a matter of engaging in actions whereby one immerses oneself in the core narrative. So, for example, when someone kisses the icon of Christ, she does not respond to an element of the core narrative that is presented to her by the icon or the actions of the priest. Rather, she simply enacts part of the performance-plan of the liturgy, which is to engage in act-types that signify elements of the core narrative – in this case, the actions of Mary of Bethany. The sorts of attention that are required in the two types of cases are different; in the first case, one has to attend to a presentation of elements of the core narrative, while in the second case one does not. That noted, when engaging in reenactment of the first type, a certain type of suppleness of attention is required. To perform the actions called forth by the script, one has to be able to negotiate between attending to features of the presentation of elements of the core narrative – such as the celebrant's actions – and the content of what is being presented. It is not as if one "reads past" the actions of the celebrant. Rather, one *responds* to them. In this sense, the actions of the celebrant call attention to themselves in a way that words often do not.

This last observation requires that we now enter an important qualification to what I said earlier about what it is to attend to the content of a narrative. A moment ago, I said that one immerses oneself in a narrative-work by bracketing certain features of the presentation of the narrative in order to attend to the content of the narrative itself. But if what we just said is correct, it would be better to say that sometimes immersion requires attending to certain features of the presentation of the core narrative *for the purpose of* immersing oneself in the narrative. Indeed, it shouldn't escape our attention that, in the Orthodox liturgies, the vast majority of the content of the liturgical script is sung. When the script instructs the assembled to repeat the words of the Publican, the Righteous Thief, or the Prodigal Son, the repetition it calls forth is typically performed in song. In these cases, then, the response that the liturgical script calls forth is not one that ignores or brackets the musical dimensions of these reenactments. Rather, the response called forth is that one enter into the narrative by way of its musical presentation; one simultaneously immerses oneself in the musical presentation of the narrative and the narrative itself.⁴⁴

On this occasion, I am going to have to rush past many of the issues raised by the role of music in the presentation of the core narrative to note two points. The first is that if immersion typically consists in allowing oneself to be emotionally engaged by the content of a narrative, the emotional engagement called forth in liturgical reenactment is that of responding not simply to the content of the

⁴⁴ In this regard, perhaps the closest contemporary analogue to what I am describing occurs when watching an art form such as opera, for the response called forth is one in which one enters into the narrative presented by way of its musical presentation. The crucial difference is that liturgical reenactment often takes the form of not simply listening to someone present some segment of the core narrative in song, but also engaging in the reenactment by singing the content of that narrative.

narrative but also to features of its presentation. If this is so, what I have been calling the liturgical sequence is emotionally colored in two distinct respects: in both its content and its presentation. Both the narrative description and its musical presentation call forth a range of emotional responses on the part of those assembled. Indeed, one of the more striking elements of liturgical reenactment is when these two types of colorings come apart but in complementary ways. For example, in the rite of the burial of Jesus, the content of the narrative calls forth something like sorrow. Its musical presentation, by contrast, calls forth that difficult to describe emotional reaction characteristic of being in the presence of something of great beauty. When combined, the reenactment calls forth something like a moved-by-beauty-sorrow state. In this respect, the musical features of the presentation of some segment of a narrative may play a crucial role in understanding the narrative itself. For by presenting an episode of the core narrative such as Christ's burial as not only sad but also beautiful, two disparate elements of the episode – ones that we might not have appreciated or held together – are fused in one's experience of it.

The second point I wish to make is that, when applied to liturgical reenactment, any adequate account of non-fictive immersion must offer a highly nuanced account of what it is to attend to the content of the core narrative. For, if the foregoing is along the right lines, what immersion often requires is that one attend to features of the presentation of the narrative, such as its musical form, for the purpose of immersing oneself in the narrative itself. In some cases, then, the script calls for a type of dual attention that is simultaneously focused on both the content of the narrative and certain features of its presentation, much in the way that we can simultaneously attend to both the bass lines and the harmonies of a musical work. In fact, I suspect that the type of immersion called forth by the script is even more complex than this. For, arguably, what the script calls forth is not simply that one simultaneously attend to the musical features of the presentation of some segment of the core narrative for the purpose of immersing oneself in that segment of the core narrative but also that one immerse oneself in the music itself – where musical immersion is a matter of not simply attending to the musical properties of the performance of some work, but also being absorbed by the musical properties of the performance of that work, where this consists in allowing oneself to be emotionally moved by the musical properties of the performance of the work. If this is so, the thing to say is that often the liturgical script calls forth not simply dual attention but *dual immersion*: immersion in the narrative itself and certain features of its presentation.

In the last few paragraphs, I have called attention to some salient disanalogies between immersing oneself in a narrative-work, on the one hand, and liturgical reenactment, on the other, the most important of which being that liturgical immersion requires an especially nuanced sort of attending. Let me now call attention to yet another disanalogy. The core narrative with which one engages in liturgical reenactment is unusual in important respects. While it is a narrative, it is also studded with metaphors, "uncrystalized" images and tropes that resist

anything like being unpacked in propositional terms without remainder – images such as wine, water, bread, and blood.⁴⁵ At one point, for example, the liturgical script blends the images of blood and water, inviting us to view the blood that flowed from Jesus's side as a river of paradise: "As though from some new river of Paradise, there flows from it the quickening stream of your blood mingled with water, restoring all to life."⁴⁶ Shortly thereafter, it invites us to view water in a much different light: "I am swimming in the deep waters of destruction and have come near to drowning ... save me as you saved Peter."⁴⁷

Attending to the core narrative, then, often requires not simply that one keep track of its flow or significance but also that one engage with its uncrystalized elements, images that can unite disparate things (a river in Eden, Jesus's blood) and admit of considerable ambiguity (water as both life-giving and life-destroying). Here the disanalogy is not so much with reading as such as with reading narrative-works, as the attention required in liturgical reenactment is often more similar to that called forth by poetry. In attending to the content of a poem, rather often one does not try so much to understand or unpack it – such content is frequently too difficult for this! – as to latch onto metaphors, images, and tropes, allowing them to settle in one's mind, resonate, and color one's experience of the fine details of the world. Having done this, these elements of the poem are now there, available to consciousness as the objects of meditation, reflection, and emotional engagement.⁴⁸

Let me now come full circle, returning to the topic that I used to introduce the immersion model, namely, the place of target roles in liturgical reenactment. Although it is easy to overlook the point, reading narrative-works requires bodily action; one must do such things as focus one's eyes on the words of the page, for example. But, unless a narrative-work is also an instruction manual of an unusual sort, it rarely calls forth, while reading, actions such as kissing, touching, or bowing. Neither, for that matter, does a narrative-work typically call forth, while reading, imitating the actions depicted in the narrative that it presents. The sort of immersion that the liturgical script calls forth, then, is of a different order, for it calls forth precisely these sorts of activities.

Return, once more, to cases of liturgical reenactment such as the rite of foot washing, the burial of Jesus, baptism, the repetition of the words of the Publican, the Prodigal, and the Righteous Thief. In each case, the script appears to call for participants in the liturgy to immerse themselves in the core narrative by identifying to some degree or other with its characters and their situations, assuming what I've called target roles. Admittedly, not all cases of liturgical reenactment call for this sort of response. And some cases of liturgical reenactment

⁴⁵ I borrow the term "uncrystalized" from Wettstein (2012).

⁴⁶ *LT*, 254. In the Orthodox tradition, some of the uncrystalized images to which I refer take a visual form in its art – bring to mind the image of Theotokos with Child, for example.

⁴⁷ *LT*, 410.

⁴⁸ In his (1997), Peter Kivy argues that a "full literary experience" of a work such as *Pride and Prejudice* must include some significant "literary afterlife" in which one reflects on the themes that it raises (134). A full liturgical experience, I believe, is similar.

such as the eucharistic rite are fairly difficult to characterize. In this rite, does the liturgical script call forth the response that the assembled are to identify with the disciples? I am not sure. However that may be, it is worth noting that, in the eucharistic rite, the reenactment lies in large measure with the actions of the celebrant, as it is the celebrant who repeats the act-sequence attributed to Jesus in the Gospels. Once we recognize this, however, the model seems to capture important elements of even this rite. For while the script seems to call for the celebrant to identify with Jesus's actions of sharing food with those close to him, this is compatible with the celebrant's *acting on behalf* of Jesus, as there is no tension between assuming a target role in which one identifies with a figure and acting on behalf of that figure. In fact, the reenactment that occurs in the eucharistic rite might be a case in which in acting on behalf of someone, one identifies with the person on behalf of whom one is acting by imitating him.

IV. What reenactment is for

I began this essay by noting the prominence of liturgical reenactment in the Orthodox liturgies, noting some of the different forms it can take. Along the way, I expressed dissatisfaction with various accounts of such reenactment, eventually identifying what a good model of liturgical reenactment should accomplish: it should smoothly accommodate the liturgical data, identify the behaviors the liturgical script calls forth, and identify why it is that the liturgical script calls for these behaviors. When presenting what strikes me as the most promising model of liturgical reenactment – namely, the immersion model – I have mostly had my eye on the first two components of a good model, as I have been interested in illustrating the degree to which the model takes into account the liturgical data and identifies the behaviors that the liturgical script calls forth. What the script often calls forth, I have been claiming, is assuming target roles of various sorts, imaginatively identifying with characters in the core narrative. The remaining task is to take the next step, identifying what the purposes might be of immersing oneself in liturgical reenactment in these ways.

The topic calls for a discussion unto itself. So, let me say only this: by immersing themselves in the core narrative, participants in the liturgy fundamentally alter their relation to that core narrative. They are not outsiders to it, onlookers, or spectators of its events and characters. Rather, they inhabit the narrative, engaging with it, perhaps even wrestling with dimensions of the narrative that call for such a reaction. What might be the purpose of immersing oneself in the core narrative in this way? The short answer, I believe, is that immersion in liturgical action is in the service of receptivity and appropriation. The dominant purpose of immersion is to let the assembled open themselves up to and

appropriate the riches of the narrative, often by identifying with its characters in such a way that the assembled construct and revise their narrative identities.⁴⁹

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⁴⁹ This is a theme I develop in Cuneo (forthcoming). I thank an anonymous referee, Lori Wilson, and Nick Wolterstorff for their comments on an earlier draft of this essay. Work on this essay was supported by the John Templeton Foundation's Character Project.

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