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THE GENRE OF THE REVELATION OF JOHN: A CULTURAL PLAUSIBLE FRAMEWORK

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION: EVALUATION OF TRADITIONAL COMMENTARIES AFTER 1995

In 1995 Malina's monograph on Revelation, *On the genre and message of Revelation: Star visions and sky journeys*, was published. One would assume that a publication by such a prominent scholar[1] in social scientific criticism would have initiated a new interest and direction in *genre* research concerning Revelation. But when surveying commentaries after 1995 there is little to no references made to the work of Malina (1995), nor to that of Malina and Pilch (2000). In short both Malina (1995) and Malina and Pilch's (2000) works start from the following presuppositions: That John was an astral prophet who was able to undergo a sky journey (soul flight) by means of altering his consciousness. This alteration is referred to as entering altered states of consciousness (hereafter ASC). In this ASC John had religious experiences. And Revelation is a visionary report of what John, the astral prophet, saw in the heavens on these sky journeys.[2]

[1] This evaluation is based on the amount of publications concerning social scientific criticism by Malina (Malina & Pilch 2000, 2006, 2008, 2013; Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998, 2003; Malina 1982, 1986, 1996, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2007). As well as on the evaluation of the work of Malina (Pilch 2001; Van Aarde & Joubert 2009:422-424).

[2] Viewing Revelation as a visionary report isn't something envisioned for the first time by Malina (1995; Malina & Pilch 2000). Prior to Malina (1995), Rowland (1982) in his work on apocalypticism from the Judean (Jewish) and Jesus-groups (Christians), he notes: 'The mysteries of heaven and earth and the real significance of contemporary persons and events in history are also the dominant interests of the apocalypticists.... [The] key to the whole [apocalyptic] movement is that God reveals his mysteries directly to man and thereby gives them knowledge of the true nature of reality so that they may organize their lives accordingly' (Rowland 1982:2, 11). Throughout the work of Rowland (1982) it is clear that he takes the claims of the reports given in apocalyptic literature seriously as reflecting actual experiences being reported on. Talbert (1994), contra to the evaluation of Collins (1979b, 1979c), notes that: 'Ancient Jewish and Christian apocalypses are of two types: type one, those with an otherworldly journey ... and type two, those without such a journey.... The Apocalypse of John reflects both of them' (Talbert 1994:27). See also the anonymous writing entitled *Horus oder astrognostisches Endurtheil über die Offenbarung Johannis* (*c.* 1783, Horus or astral Gnostic judgment in the Revelation of John; available in PDF from https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=dul1.ark:/13960/t1hh9q39p;view=1up;seq=3), Lepsius (1911:160-180, 210-230); and Charles (1915:50-54).

In describing the *genre* of Revelation, Aune (1995) gives the work of Malina (1995) in the general bibliography of this section, but then reverts to the predominant work of the genre-decade and thereafter. Aune (1997) primarily works with the master paradigm as well as the definition postulated in Collins (1979b; Aune 1997:lxxi-xc). Beale (1999:42-43) takes note of Malina's (1995) proposition and sees it as a 'creative, well-researched, and intriguing' work that needs further development. He also gives a short but well balanced and grounded critical evaluation of the work of Malina (1995).[3] Both Reddish (2001) and Koester (2014) in their discussion on the *genre* of Revelation focus on the traditional work of the *genre* projects between 1979-1989 with no reference spared for the idea that Revelation is related to a genre known as revelatory-visionary reports of star visions (Malina 1995).[4]

As will become clear in the research, these traditional commentaries and works on Revelation primarily focuses on it as an apocalypse from a literary perspective (i.e. from a traditional literary critical point). And although it is stated that apocalyptic entails 'both a formal type of literature and a mind-set of the group that follows the apocalyptic belief' (Osborne 2001:14; see also Aune 1997:lxxxix-xc), the emphases is placed on apocalyptic as a 'formal type of literature' that needs to be distilled, structurally analysed and interpreted to understand Revelation and other apocalyptic writings.

[3] The three points of criticism that Beale (1999:42-43) gives come down to: One, the domination of the astral imagery that Malina (1995) focuses on pushes the Hebrew Testament's influence to the background and ignores some of the more important influences from this tradition. Two, Malina (1995) takes a very literal one-to-one comparison of the figures described in the sky and what John of Patmos saw, thus missing the entire symbolic dimension of Revelation. Three, the absolute exclusive focus on the meaning of the figures in the heaven above misses the fact that many of the visions also occur on earth. As will become clear in this study some of these evaluations have grounds that need to be considered. When looking at Beale's (1999) choice of interpretative paradigm for his commentary (a combination of the preteristic and idealistic approach), it makes sense that he sees Malina's (1995) propositions as reductionistic with regard to the symbolic and 'spiritual' meaning of the text. In fairness to Malina (1995) it needs to be noted that: *On the genre and message of Revelation* was the first book-length publication in recent years taking this view of Revelation. And when considering Malina's (2000) publication on Revelation looking at the symbolic meaning of the city imagery in Revelation it is clear that he doesn't ignore the symbolic interpretation. Further in Malina and Pilch (2000:22-24) it is stated in the introduction that their commentary 'is a simplified social-scientific commentary' and that other traditional commentaries, such as that of Aune's (1997, 1998, 1999) still needs to be used to supplement their own.

[4] Reddish (2001:5), when listing sources that are helpful in understanding apocalyptic literature, gives no reference to the work of Malina (1995). Osborne (2002) in his discussion on the genre of Revelation does refer to Malina's (1995) proposition but only in a foot note. Osborne (2002), while agreeing that Malina has a valid point in pointing out the astral imagery, sees this stance of Malina as an overstating of 'his case when he makes this the key to the book rather than one specific aspect' (Osborne 2002:13, fn. 2).

1.2 AIM OF RESEARCH

When considering some of the advances in Biblical research that social scientific criticism has contributed to our understanding of ancient documents and phenomena, it is strange considering that these insights haven't been utilised in interpreting Revelation to a greater extent. When comparing the amount of literature that has been published in relation to traditional literary critical studies on the genre of Revelation (see Chapter 2 below), those that identify the Hebrew Testament background (Charles 1915; Collins 1981; Fekkes 1994) as well as the Roman imperial background to Revelation (Howard-Brook & Gwyther 1999; Friesen 2001, 2004, 2005; Ulery 2011), to that of social science in Revelation (Malina 1995; Malina & Pilch 2000; Pilch 2011), it is clear that this area of critical research lacks behind.

The presumption from which this research is departing in this regard could be stated as follows: Traditional social scientific studies built forth on the foundational works such as the monographs of Malina (2001a, 2001b) and Pilch (1999). The commentary series, *Social science commentary on...*, all follow a set pattern of reading scenarios that include the core aspects of what social science in Biblical studies focus on. For example honour and shame (DeSilva 2000:23-93; Malina & Pilch 2006:368-371; Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:121-124, 147-148, 2003:369-372), kingship (DeSilva 2000:157-239; Malina & Pilch 2003:262-263, 2008:201, 204-207; Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:86-89, 166-167), and the dyadic personality type of the first century Mediterranean person (Malina & Pilch 2003:343-347, 2008:234-235). Important for the social science commentary series is that each one of these social values are highlighted in the specific texts where they are applicable, but also explained in more detail in the back of the commentaries. Malina's (1995) monograph as well as the social science commentary of Malina and Pilch (2000) presupposes the social scientific model concerning altered states of consciousness. A model that incorporating work done on the neurobiological

basis of religious experiences[5] and cross-cultural anthropological studies (Winkelman 1997; Goodman 1969, 1990).[6] This model is not presented in full in any one of these writings of Malina (1995) nor in Malina and Pilch (2000). And although the aim of these writings wasn't to present this model, the lack of this contributes to the absence of this interpretative method in other commentaries, monographs and articles on Revelation.

A further problem that can be identified in this regard comes from the presuppositions based on psychological insights of modern thinking. 'Modern' in this sentence should be seen as the worldview (cosmology) that came to be accepted as normative after the so-called industrial revolution and the enlightenment (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:5-8). Borg (2002:14-15) rightfully states the following in this regard:

> We are modern people. By this I mean simply that we live in that period of Western cultural history known as "modernity." Modernity is the cultural mind-set that began with the Enlightenment of the seventeenth century and continues into the present ... modernity is characterized by scientific ways of knowing.... [This] yields a material understanding of reality. What is real is the space-time world of matter and energy. Reality is made up of tiny bits and pieces of "stuff," all of them interacting with each other in accord with "natural laws".

This cosmological epistemology based strongly on scientific empirical research is also seen in the psychological and anthropological epistemology[7] where there is certain 'stuff' that one needs to adhere to in order to be deemed normal and accepted. This in turn leads to experiences being measured by the same standardised criteria. If an experience doesn't fall into these criteria it would be deemed as a disorder, a disassociation from the norm. With such a standardised criteria as guidance the *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (2013:291), describes dissociative disorders as a 'disruption of and/or discontinuity in the normal integration of consciousness, memory, identity, emotion, perception, body representation, motor

[5] The research on this bases has expanded greatly after the publication of Malina and Pilch's (2000) commentary as can be seen in the work of Winkelman (2004, 2010b, 2011b, 2013b, 2013c) and will be looked at in more detail in the Chapters to follow.

[6] See Craffert (1999, 2010, 2011), Groenewald and Van Aarde (2006) and Pilch (1995, 2002a, 2002b, 2005, 2011) for studies focusing on the interpretation of Biblical passages also using this model. See also from anthropology.

[7] The anthropological epistemology doesn't refer here to the methodology followed in cultural anthropological studies, but to the view of who is deemed a 'normal human' being. Thus, what is the criteria one needs to adhere to in order to be seen as 'normal?'

control and behavior.' Most of these characteristics seen from a cross-cultural anthropological point of view would be deemed as normal behaviour for a person going into ASC (Goodman 1990). In the end Western societies deem these experiences as abnormal and see them as neurological disorders. Thus the research on these experiences, are stanched by, misinformation and, a predisposed evaluation of them as disorders rather than representing authentic religious experiences.

Considering this view taken by modern commentators the aim of this research could be formulated as follow: To work from a cross-cultural anthropological point of view in evaluating the cultural plausibility of ASC religious experiences in the ancient world.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question of this study could be formulated as follows: With regard to the *genre* of apocalyptic in general and that of Revelation in particular, how does a cultural plausible understanding hereof influence one's understanding of these texts, and what contribution can such an understanding make to the discussion of these texts?

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis that is being worked from is that: If a firm foundation for the ASC model is laid from which a culturally plausible understanding of apocalyptic and Revelation could be build up, this will lead to a higher degree of plausible interpretations for Revelation and also apocalyptic texts from the ancient world.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The structures and methodology that will be followed in each of the chapters will be:

Chapter 2 – A survey of some of the most influential work that has been carried out on the *genre* or apocalyptic and Revelation. The leading questions for this Chapter will be: One, what is the critical hermeneutical method used in most of these studies to postulate, proof, gain and amend the definition and understanding of the *genre* in apocalyptic and Revelation? Two, how was the view of *genre* concerning apocalyptic

and Revelation developed through the ages and how did the choice in hermeneutical paradigm have an influence on the understanding of their *genre*?

Chapter 3 – In Chapter 3 an etic description will be given of the foundational model that will be used in postulating a cultural plausible understanding for the *genre* of Revelation. This model will consist out of integration of the neurobiological and cross-cultural anthropological basis of religious experiences from which altered states of consciousness is to be understood.

Chapter 4 – After giving the etic perspective in Chapter 3 it is needed to see if the emic descriptions of these experiences concur with this model and if this model can help in clarifying the emic descriptions (Pilch 2011:6-7). This will be completed in this Chapter where a more emic perspective will be taken. The focus will be on the phenomenon of the prophets, holy men, men of God and apostles that are found in the Hebrew Testament as well as in the Greek Testament.

Chapter 5 – In the penultimate Chapter the insights from the previous chapters will be applied to Revelation. Different texts will be read alongside the report in Revelation. The focus here will be on the identity of John as a prophet, and his experience of seeing an open door in heaven, that he was in the spirit and that he saw the throne of God. Instead of just comparing and finding allusions in Revelation and other apocalyptic texts, this study will read these texts as cultural plausible reports of ASC experiences that were reported. This in turn will give a foundation from which a more cultural plausible understanding and reading of Revelation can be given.

Chapter 6 – In the concluding chapter of the study a short discussion will be given on the hermeneutical implications for starting an interpretation with the question: What would a cultural plausible reading of the text sound like? After this the chapter will give a summary of the previous chapters. And in conclusion a cultural plausible understanding for Revelation's *genre* will be postulated. This will incorporate the research executed in a previous study by Van Niekerk (2014) and will build upon on this.

Appendix – In an appendix the neurobiological basis of religious experiences will be discussed in more detail. Here the focus will be on: One, the so-called *via negativa* and *via Positiva* of D'Aquili and Newberg (1993a, 1993b). Two, the influence association areas have on ASC experiences.

1.6 CONCLUSION

A final note on the work of Malina (1995) and the commentary by Malina and Pilch (2000) is needed here. The aim is not to give an evaluation of these two publications, nor to look at the theological implications of them. Rather this research is an attempt to take a step back and strengthen the foundation on which these works are built. It is an attempt to make the model that is implicitly used by them in interpreting Revelation more explicit. At the same time it is also an attempt to contribute to the discussion surrounding the *genre* of Revelation in general and in more broad strokes the discussion on the apocalyptic *genre*.

But to do this an understanding of the foundational research on apocalyptic *genre* is needed. The research will now turn to this in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2

Genre in apocalyptic and Revelation

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Longman (1985:67) states that, when it comes to *genre* analysis, there

> is no escape from genre analysis. The question for the exegete is whether his or her analysis will be conscious and methodical or unconscious. Whenever we read anything we make at least an unconscious genre identification which triggers a certain reading strategy in our mind.

When looking at *genre* analysis of Revelation two points are clear: One, the choice of *genre* has a clear influence on the methodology of interpretation. Two, the choice that is made for the *genre* of Revelation is anything but an "unconscious *genre* identification." This becomes abundantly clear when looking at studies that explicitly focus on the *genre* of Revelation (Aune 1986; Barr 2006; Hellholm 1986; Linton 2006; Malina 1995; Mazzaferri 1989), apocalyptic literature's *genre* in general (Collins 1979b, 1998; Rowland 1982), and the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Revelation in particular (Mathewson 1992; ed. Pate 1998; Van Niekerk 2014).

The same holds true when looking at the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of *genre* criticism; *genre* criticism functions as classification, epistemology, and ontology (Osborn 2005). Through *genre* criticism, literary works are classified into different groups and forms "part of the process of coming to understand (epistemology) and develops a literary world into which one enters (ontology)" (Osborn 2005:252; cf. Engle 2000; Osborne 2004:474; see also Rajan 2008[8]).

[8] This survey of Rajan (2008) on the theories of *genre* in the romantic period of literature gives important insights into the view of *genre* and how *genre* was, and in some ways still is, understood. Brown (2008) is partially correct when writing of this period of literary criticism that ""Romanticism is often regarded as the root of contemporary attitudes ... and likewise, not infrequently, as the source of the troubles from which we are now at least freeing ourselves. Obviously, no period of the past has a monopolistic claim to be the origin of the modern (or the postmodern); nor do modernism and postmodernism begin in and as anything other than themselves, whatever elements in the past may have inspired them. Still, it is generally agreed that the writing about literature from the period between 1980 and 1830 has a special bearing on the present"" (Brown 2008:1).

On the basis of what has been said above, the following postulations are made in this Chapter:

1. Most of the *genre* theories on apocalyptic literature, and Revelation in particular, primarily focus on apocalyptic as a *written literary genre*.
2. Research carried out on the *genre* of Revelation that does not follow the traditional and authoritative understanding of apocalyptic *genre* is deemed methodologically erroneous and rejected (Pearson & Porter 2002).[9]

The aim of the discussion below is to sketch some of the more enduring and landmark contributions made to the discussion of the *genre* of apocalyptic in general and the *genre* of Revelation in particular.

2.2 GENRE

2.2.1 Introduction

Before looking at the work done on apocalyptic as a literary *genre per se* it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the hybridity of Revelation.[10] Linton (2006:25) shows that it is the hybrid nature of Revelation, from a literary point of view, that leads to it being "open to multiple interpretations." It is because of this hybrid nature of Revelation that Schüssler Fiorenza's (1985:183-184) criticism of Perrin (1974) is justifiable.

[9] This statement at the beginning of this Chapter is supported by some of the Reviews on Malina's (1995) view of Revelation as belonging to the "genre of astral prophecy." DeSilva (1996a:91) states that while "many of his other insights are redeemable after a careful study of ancient texts and a refinement of his models in light of these, Malina's tendencies have resulted in a wholesale misorientation to the text of Revelation itself." Morton (1997) evaluates Malina's efforts as bold, but also states that his focus on the astral aspects of Revelation, the rejection of traditional categories of "eschatology" and "apocalyptic" (cf. Malina 1995:10-12), and the postulation of a different *genre* "has provided the reader with little more than a caricature of John's vision and message" (Morton 1997:167; cf. also the reviews of Bauckham 2000; Munger 1998; Pearson 1997; also see Duff 2001 and Skemp 2001 on Malina & Pilch's (2000) *Social-science commentary on the book of Revelation*).

[10] A text that would be deemed as a hybrid in *genre* is a text with 1) a high level of intertextuality, 2) which leads to it being hard to group with other generic texts (Linton 2006:21). On the most uncomplicated level for Revelation, this is most apparently reflected in the question of whether it should be read as an apocalypse, prophecy or letter, or read as being all of these at once? (cf. Aune 1997:lxx-xc; Koester 2014:103-112). For discussions on this three *genre* classifications, see Van Niekerk (2014:13-43).

Perrin (1974), working with the theories of Wheelwright and Ricoeur[11] on symbols, makes a distinction between a stenosymbol and a tensive symbol (both terms of Wheelwright 1962:32-69). The former is a symbol with an exact one-to-one representation; when one decodes the symbol and find its one-to-one counterpart, the symbol's meaning will become clear. A tensive symbol, on the other hand, can never be exhausted since it has multiple meanings. Regarding Jewish and Christian apocalyptic, Perrin states that

> in ancient Jewish apocalyptic in general—and for that matter in early Christian apocalyptic in general—the symbols used are ... "stenosymbols".... Typically, the apocalyptic seer told the story of the history of his people in symbols where each symbol bore a one-to-one relationship with that which it depicted.
>
> (Perrin 1974:11)

Schüssler Fiorenza (1985) is correct in her view that Revelation contains symbols that are not stenosymbols as viewed by Perrin (1974) who, according to Schüssler Fiorenza (1985:184), "perpetuates the dichotomy between apocalyptic language and eschatological content or essence that has plagued scholarship in the past two hundred years". Revelation should not be seen as a stenosymbol, but rather a tensive symbolic text with a diverse symbolic universe written in poetic language. Approached from this perspective, the ambiguity, openness and indeterminacy of Revelation, and all literature, is acknowledged (Schüssler Fiorenza 1985:186).[12]

Lindon (2006:22, 24) states that a

> hybrid *genre* provides so many possibilities to readers that they must choose one on which to focus their attention.... When reading a work with mixed convictions [i.e., a hybrid text], the reader must choose which conventions to follow and which to ignore, which one to foreground and which to background.

[11] Perrin (1974) primarily uses the language and understanding of Wheelwright (1962).

[12] This same view is also reflected in Schüssler Fiorenza's (1991) commentary *Revelation: Vision of a just world*. Herein she writes that the "strength of Revelation's mythic symbolization and world of vision ... lies primarily in neither its theological reasoning nor its historical information but in the evocative, persuasive power of its symbolic language compelling imaginative participation. The multivalent images and tensive symbols of Revelation elicit emotions, feelings, and convictions that cannot, and should not, be fully conceptualized" (Schüssler Fiorenza 1991:31; cf. also DeSilva 2009:2-6; see also Linton's 2006:24 reference to the polyvalent character of such texts).

In light of the insights of Schüssler Fiorenza (1985; 1991), and building on previous research (Van Niekerk 2014), it can be postulated that regardless of Revelation's hybridity, finding a balanced view of the *genre* of Revelation is essential to an ethical evaluation of past and present research, [13] as well as for interpreting the text.

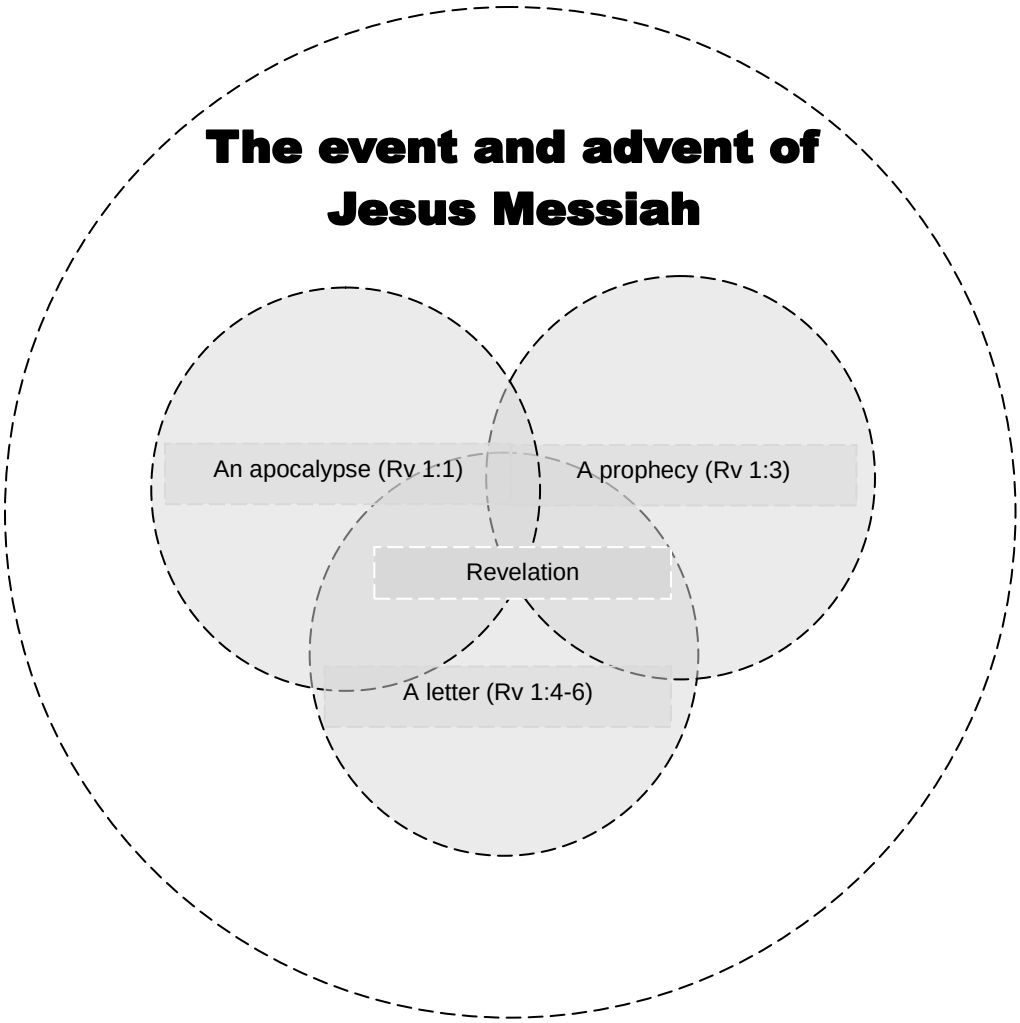
The conviction of this study is that the *genre* of Revelation is simultaneously an apocalypse, a prophecy, and a letter, and that these elements cannot be separated from one another. Therefore, "a balanced understanding of the *genre* of Revelation is needed" (Van Niekerk 2014:42). As Van Niekerk (2014:135) concludes:

> Each of the three *genre* types (apocalyptical, prophetical and epistolary[14]) works in tandem with one another. These three are unified by the experience of Jesus Messiah, who was a present reality in the present moment. This then needs to be taken into consideration when interpreting Revelation.

The following schematic representation of the *genres* in Revelation is given by Van Niekerk (2014:42), based on the work of Du Rand (2007:18):

[13] Ethical here refers to critical exegesis that is accountable with regard to the various aspects that are involved in the process (the text, i.e., textual world; the world behind the text; i.e., contextual world, and also the world in front of the text; i.e., the context of the interpreter). So Patte (1995:21): "Critical exegetes must be accountable to all those who are directly and indirectly affected by their work and teaching, as well as to the academy and the guild for the critical character of their work." This is also the point of view of Schüssler Fiorenza (1991:3): "Once Biblical scholarship begins to acknowledge its own social location and interest, whether of race, gender, nation or class, then scholars become [ethically] accountable to their wider audience for favouring one particular interpretation over other possible readings."

[14] Of these three *genres* the epistolary character of Revelation has received the least attention in recent commentaries. So *inter alia* Osborn (2002:12), who, after acknowledging these three *genres* in Revelation, states that the epistle *genre* of Revelation, although helpful, is the least important *genre* in Revelation (cf. also Aune 1997:lxxii; Charles 1920:37; Collins 1979b:6; Reddish 2001:7; see Koester 2014:103-112 and Van Niekerk 2014 for alternative views). When the epistolary aspect of Revelation is the focus of exegesis, the scope of texts being analysed is the seven letters in Revelation 2-3 (cf. Hemer 1986; Ulery 2011), or Revelation is read as a pastoral letter with as a result that the apocalyptic and prophetic aspects are moved to the background (cf. Boring 1989). Not all, however, who take note of the epistolary *genre* of Revelation evaluates Revelation 2-3 as letters. So DeSilva (2009:9, 10, n. 34), after noting that "John gives a clear signal that Revelation is to be read as a letter, specifically a pastoral letter" continues by stating that "I reject the tradition of calling these [Rv 2-3] 'letters'." DeSilva (2009) sees these letters prophetic callings.



As will become clear in the discussion below, this scheme is based on the view of apocalypse and prophecy as written literary *genres*, originating from classical literature (see, i.a., Collins 1979b, 1998; Hellholm 1986). The following points need to be noted for the discussion below:

1. As Van Niekerk (2014) postulated, these *genres* should work in tandem with one another, and each one of them has an influence in Revelation, contributing to a fuller understanding of the document.
2. To come to this fuller-balanced understanding of Revelation, these *genres* should be read within the specific cultural context in which they were composed.

The first important result of work done on apocalyptic *genre* from 1979 to 1989[15] was "the misuse of the term 'apocalyptic' as a theological concept ... having any number of definitions and no controls ... has been corrected by restricting the term to a body of literature, a *genre*" (Osborne 2004:475). The work done on apocalyptic *genre* in this decade brought much-needed focus to the discussion of apocalyptic literature. This focus could be understood in relation to the above three-fold division of *genre* into classifying, epistemology and ontology as falling into the classification and epistemological category of *genre*.

2.2.2 Prior to the *genre*-decade[16]

The use of apocalyptic as a theological concept becomes apparent when looking at classic works such as that of Beckwith (1919), Charles (1920), Ladd (1957) and Mounce (1977) that appeared prior to the *genre*-decade.[17]

Two presuppositions that are present in these works (Beckwith 1919; Charles 1920; Ladd 1957; Mounce 1977) are, first that apocalyptic is concerned with eschatology, which leads to a linear understanding of time and history. Second, apocalyptic literature and apocalyptic in general, are to be distinguished from the prophetic traditions and literature of Israel.

Beckwith (1919) begins his discussion of the introductory question of Revelation with a survey of the eschatological hope in the Hebrew Testament (Old Testament) and the Greek Testament (New Testament). From the start it is clear that he reads Revelation as a text speaking of the fulfilment of this eschatological hope: "As the central topic of the apocalyptic is the consummation of the [eschatological] hope of God's people; we

[15] During this period the SBL's *genre* project (1979), the Colloquium on Apocalypticism in Uppsala, (1979), the work of the SBL on Christian apocalypticism (1981-1987) and the SBL's symposium (1989) was conducted and published (cf. Osborne 2004:475).
[16] The term *genre*-decade will be used as shorthand in this study for referring to the studies and insights from the research done in 1979-1989.
[17] Instead of using the word "misuse", these studies choose to refer to the theological use of the term apocalyptic. Although the *genre*-decade project's findings that would not agree with some of the uses, it will become apparent that within the interpretive paradigm each scholar chooses their use of the term "apocalyptic" is used ethically (cf. n. 6 above for an explanation on the term ethical).

naturally begin our study with a survey ... of that hope" (Beckwith 1919:3). In a broad sense, Beckwith (1919:3-4) uses the term eschatological as referring to the hope of the Last Days (ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν).[18]

Before Beckwith (1919:156-165) continues to discuss apocalyptic literature, he identifies what he calls standing features of apocalyptic *prophecy*. For Beckwith (1919), apocalyptic and prophetic are two terms that need to be distinguished from each other. Regardless, however, of his insistence to make this distinction, the standing features Beckwith (1919) identifies forces him to speak of apocalyptic prophecy. Beckwith (1919:157), *inter alia*, refers to the messianic woes explicitly as a, "standing feature in apocalyptic prophecy" that belongs to the Great Day (יום יהוה). These woes are apocalyptic[19] in the sense that they refer to the *future eschatological* plagues preceding the establishment of the *future eschatological* kingdom (new heaven and earth) of God. At the same time, however, they cannot be separated from the prophetic traditions as they occur in the prophetic books of the Hebrew Testament[20], but not in Daniel, the only canonical apocalyptic book of the Hebrew Testament (cf. Beckwith 1919, referring to Driver).[21]

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[18] According to Kittel (1964:697-698), the concept of the last days is partially explained by the Hebrew Testament's reference to the באחרית הימים (in the final days; cf. Is 2:2; Ezk 38:16; Dn 2:28, 10:14; Hs 3:5; Mi 4:1 for texts in which the expression באחרית הימים is used with regard to the eschatological concept as discussed above. See Seesbass (1974:211-212) for a discussion on these six texts. The motive of the final day is partially influenced by the יום יהוה (day of Yahweh; cf. Is 13:6, 9; Lm 2:22; Ezk 3:3; Jl 1:15, 2:1, 11, 31, 3:14; Am 5:18, 20; Ob 1:15; Zph 1:7, 14; Ml 4:5; see Sæbø 1990:29-31 for a discussion of this concept).

[19] See Revelation 8:13 (x 3), 12:12, 18:10 (x 2), 16 (x 2), and 19 (x 2) where οὐαί is used as a reference to an exclamation, and Revelation 9:12 and 11:14 (x 2) where οὐαί is referred to as a noun.

[20] See Isaiah 3:9, 11, 6:5, and 24:16, Jeremiah 4:13, 31, 6:4, 10:19, 13:27, 15:10, 45:3 and 48:46; Ezekiel 16:23, 24:6 and 24:9, Hosea 7:13 and 9:12 where the Hebrew word יאו is used for woe, and Isaiah 1:4, 24, 5:8, 11, 18, 20-22 (x 3), 10:1, 17:12, 29:1 (x 3), 15, 33:1 (x 3), 45:9-10 (x 2), and 55:1, Jeremiah 22:13, 18 (x 4), 30:7, 34:5, 48:1 (x 2) and 50:27, Ezekiel 13:3, 18 and 34:2, Amos 5:18, Nahum 3:1 (x 3), Habakkuk 2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19, Zephaniah 2:5, and 3:1, and Zechariah 2:6 and 11:17 where the Hebrew word הוי is used for woe.

[21] See, *inter alia*, also the parallels between the "new heaven and earth" (cf. Is 65:17, 66:22; Rv 21:1 where the new heaven(s) and earth are explicitly named; see also Is 30:26, 60:19-20; Rv 3:12, 21:2, 23 where the idea of a new age is also found), the nature of the plagues associated with the Day of Yahweh/Final Days (cf. Jr 14:12, 15:2, 18:21, 21:7, 9, 24:10, 27:8, 13, 29:17, 18; 32:24, 36, 34:17, 38:2, 42:17, 22, 44:13; Ezk 5:12, 6:12, 7:15, 12:16; Rv 6:4, 13:10 for the three-fold plagues of the sword, i.e., war, hunger and pestilence; see, also, Ezk 5:17, 14:21, and Rv 6:8 where wild animals are also added), the darkening of the heavenly bodies (Is 13:10; Ezk 32:7; Jl 2:10, 31, 3:15; Rv 6:12, 8:12), and the idea that this Day is "near" (Is 13:6, Ezk 12:23, 30:3; Jl 1:15, 2:1, 3:14; Ob 1:15; Zph 1:7, 14; Rv 1:3; 22:10).

Beckwith (1919), in discussing the characteristic traits of apocalyptic literature, distinguishes between apocalyptic and prophecy:

> The noun *apocalyptic* in distinction from *prophecy* is the term now commonly used to denote that group of eschatological hopes and believes ... as belonging to the *latest* development of Judaism – a development in which a universal and transcendental outlook appears as the principal characteristic instead of the national and earthly.
>
> (Beckwith 1919:166)

This same distinction is also to be found in the article of Ladd (1957:192), who refers to apocalyptic literature as a, "literary *genre* which contains revelations, real or alleged, of the spiritual word [i.e., the transcendental world] and of the future kingdom of God [i.e., eschatological hope]".[22] The prophetic hope, on the other hand, is seen as the hope for "an earthly kingdom within history" that was not realised and this led to the "post-prophetic eschatological literature," that is apocalyptic literature, which advocated a kingdom different in kind (Ladd 1957:193). This distinction is present in the commentary of Mounce (1977); the primary orientation of apocalyptic is to the future. In identifying the "basic elements" of the literary "*genre* apocalyptic" Mounce (1977:19) states:

> In the first place, it [i.e., apocalyptic] *is always eschatological*. It treats a period of time *yet future* when God will break into this world of time and space to bring the entire system to a final reckoning. While prophecy was also predictive (contrary to the opinion that the prophets were preachers only) [*sic*.], a distinction remains.[23]
>
> (Mounce 1977:19-20)[24]

Charles (1920), in his commentary on Revelation, also places it within an eschatological framework and sees it as predicting future events: "The future events depicted in the Apocalypse are not to be treated symbolically or allegorically ... but as definite concrete events" (Charles 1920:clxxiv).

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[22] Also Beckwith (1919:168): The adjective apocalyptic refers "to all writings whether Jewish or Christian which possess in common certain characteristic forms appearing in the Apocalypse of John and which contain an unveiling, a Revelation, real or fictitious, of events and doctrines of the Last Things as these are conceived in the later, transcendental eschatological hopes and believes."

[23] See Van Niekerk (2014:19-33) for a discussion on the prophetic dimension of Revelation. See also Friedrich (1968:828-861) for further discussion on the word group προφήτης κτλ.

[24] The other elements that Mounce (1977:20) distinguishes in the *genre* of apocalyptic are a strong dualism in the transcendental world (God on the one side and the forces of evil, Satan, on the other) and a rigid determinism which is directly linked to the eschatological orientation of apocalyptic: "Apocalyptic ... [shows] everything moves forward as divinely preordained according to a definite time schedule and toward a predetermined end" (Mounce 1977:20).

With regard to the function of apocalypses, Beckwith (1919) also makes a distinction between prophecy and apocalyptic, and again the description he gives forces him to speak of prophetic and apocalyptic prophecy. The

> *older* prophecy [i.e., that of the Hebrew Testament] is chiefly concerned with the call to present duty, and the prediction of the future is subordinate; while *apocalyptic* prophecy, though containing a moral and religious appeal to its readers, is occupied predominantly with the future.
>
> (Beckwith 1919:168)[25]

2.2.2.1 Summary

From the above it is clear that in the period prior to the *genre*-decade apocalyptic as a *genre*, with regard to *genre* as classification, epistemology and ontology (see above, Osborn 2005:252), the following could be stated: Apocalyptic should be classified as something different from the traditional prophetic literature.[26] Apocalyptic's epistemological focus is on the communication of eschatological hopes and beliefs.

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[25] This could also be behind the much stronger distinction that Mounce (1977:21) makes between the prophets and preachers telling the community what their present duties were, normally introduced by an open declaration: 'so says the Lord" (יהוה כה־אמר). Whereas apocalyptics were literary men, writing down their "preaching" (predictions), thus having a moral dimension, it was primarily concerned with the future eschatological kingdom. There is a certain degree of discontinuity or ambiguity in the work of Beckwith (1919) when considering the above quote referring to the older prophets and apocalyptic prophecy and what he writes on Revelation as a prophetic work: "The office of the prophet, was in abeyance for some centuries but brought back again in one of the greatest of the order, John the Baptist.... But while there were prophets in the apostolic Church and prophetic elements in the New Testament writings generally, the Apocalypse stands alone as a distinctively prophetic book. Here the author claims the name of prophet and emphasises his special commission from God, as the bearer of an inspired message to the Church; his standing characterisation of the book is 'words of prophecy.' In keeping with these claims the book is seen to be parallel in its fundamental character with the Old Testament prophecies" (Beckwith 1919:292-293). In keeping with the focus on *genre* in this research, this ambiguity could be a reflection of the hybridity of Revelation's *genre* of which Linton (2006:24) writes: "A text that is highly intertextual and intergeneric [i.e., has a hybrid *genre*] has as a result a high degree of polyvalence and also as seen here, ambiguity."

[26] This distinction is also found in the work of Von Rad (2001:301, 303, 306-307). Apart from the sporadic references given in the translation of Stalker in The Old Testament Library Series, there is also Von Rad's (1960:323) statement that, "it must be said that in the Apocalyptic, due to very different theological presuppositions, a conception of the divine sway over history appeared on the scene, which differs fundamentally from the prophets" (own translation). The *ganz anderen theologischen Voraussetzungen* respectively refers to the "*Unvereinbarkeit*" of the "*Geschichtsverständnisses*" of the prophetical and apocalyptical literature. For the prophetic message their understanding is anchored in the "*heilsgeschichtlichen*" (salvation history) whereas for the apocalyptic view of history "*das gesamte Heilsgeschehen eschatologisch-zukünftig*" (Von Rad 1960:321; see again Beckwith's 1919:168 strong distinction between the prophetical and apocalyptic literature quoted above).

Ontologically its aim is to draw those who are suffering into an eschatological hope in the face of suffering (cf. Beckwith 1919:198-207, 208-215).[27]

Before looking at the understanding of apocalyptic in the *genre*-decade and beyond, two observations are necessary: First, Beckwith (1919), Charles (1920), Ladd (1957) and Mounce's (1977) methods of describing apocalyptic derives from comparing, contrasting and reading different written texts. For Mounce (1977:21) apocalyptic as written literature is so prominent that he writes: "While the prophets were primarily preachers whose messages were written down at a later time, the apocalyptists were literary men who put their confidence in the written word as a method of propagating their point of view".

Second, when evaluating the commentaries of Beckwith (1919), Charles (1920) and Mounce (1977) in light of Patte's (1995) ethics of Biblical interpretation, these commentaries seem to be ethical. The reason for this is that each acknowledges his method of interpretation and follows this through in their interpretation of the text. Thus, working from such a consciousness hermeneutical point, none of these interpreters deny their own pre-understanding and thus does not ignore their own *history of the effect* (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of their own socio-cultural traditions (Patte 1995:5, 20).

2.2.3 The *genre*-decade

2.2.3.1 The *genre* group of the *Society of Biblical Literature* (SBL) (1979)

The *genre*-decade began[28] with the work of the apocalyptic workgroup of the *Society of Biblical Literature* (SBL) in 1979, and was made public in the same year with the publication of *Semeia 14*. This was not only the start of a definition that will keep on

[27] This evaluation of the distinction between the eschatological vision of the prophets and apocalypticism should not be seen as stating that apocalyptic does not have any eschatological dimensions. Rather, the criticism should be seen as aimed at the strong futuristic orientation given to apocalyptic eschatology over the historical and present orientated eschatology of the prophets. Apocalyptic is just as orientated to the past and present when talking about the eschatological hope as the prophetic texts.

[28] It should be noted that this does not mean that this understanding of apocalyptic and apocalypses only began in 1979. There are publications that already reflected on some of the insights of this decade in the time leading up to the *genre*-decade (cf., i.a., Collins 1976; Collins 1977). At the same time, however, it cannot be denied that "1979 was a landmark year in the study of apocalypticism" (Collins 1991:10).

contributing to the progress of apocalyptic research, but also the start of viewing apocalyptic as something more dynamic than just a collection of core traits.

> The identification of a *genre* "apocalypse" is an attempt to bring some order into a rather chaotic area of study.... Hence it should be clear that the identification of the common elements of the *genre* is not intended to reduce the apocalypses to that common core. Rather it is an attempt to provide perspective on the individual works by which both the typical and the distinctive elements can be more fully appreciated.
>
> (Collins 1979a:iv)

This is clear from the different articles of *Semeia* 14; although there is a common element[29] in all contributions, each contribution should be viewed as a stand-alone contribution focusing on the specific topic and group of writings it is dealing with (cf. Collins 1979a:iii-iv).

The basic element that the working group of the SBL wished to identify and define was a "literary *genre* apocalypse." Although not stated as explicitly by Collins (1979b), it is clear that the taskforce worked with the conscious pre-understanding that *genres* "are not metaphysical entities that live independently of texts or readers" (Linton 2006:17; see also Collins 1979a:iii-iv, 1998:8). In line with this, Collins (1979b:1) defines a literary *genre* as "a group of *written texts* marked by distinctive characteristics which constitute a recognisable and coherent type of writing" (Collins 1979b:1). When considering the number of texts that the SBL group used in their research[30], one can already see the problem of looking for a *coherent type* of writing. Again the *genre* group did not work unconsciously with this problem. As a solution they postulated a master paradigm with certain traits that may or may not occur in a writing that could be apocalyptic (Collins 1979b:6-8), and a further distinction between two types of apocalyptic writings (Collins 1979b:13). The comprehensive definition postulated by the SBL working group is the first comprehensive contribution to the *genre* discussion on apocalyptic, and reads as follows:

> "Apocalypse" is a *genre* of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a

[29] Collins (1979b:1) defines this common element as "to identify and define a literary *genre* 'apocalypse'."
[30] Although the group limited themselves to texts composed *circa* 250 BCE-250 CE, this is still an enormous body of literature from which a coherent distinctive literary *genre* is to be distilled.

> transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.
>
> (Collins 1979b:9)

This definition, along with the master paradigm and typology, is applied throughout the rest of the publication to various *written* documents to classify them as apocalyptic.

2.2.3.2 Colloquium on apocalypticism Uppsala (August 1979)

After the publication of *Semeia* 14 in 1979, the next landmark publication saw the light in 1983 after the *Colloquium on apocalypticism* in Uppsala in August of 1979. The purpose of this Colloquium was to give a comprehensive survey of the situation in apocalyptic research, to put forth new thoughts and methods to analyse apocalyptic texts, and to contribute to the stimulation of further research in this field (Hellholm 1983:2). Although, *contra* to previous conferences, "no agreement upon a definition of Apocalypticism could be reached during the conference", and that each paper in this volume could be seen as standing alone, there was still a central focus to be found in all of the articles, namely a stronger focus on the function of apocalyptic texts in their contexts (Hellholm 1983:2).

Smith (1983), for example, in the first article of the publication, starts by giving a critical evaluation of the lexical use of the words ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΩ and ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ. After looking at the use of these words in the *Septuagint* (LXX), the Roman Empire, the writings of Paul and the Deutero-Pauline letters, he concludes that, as far as the preserved evidence goes,

> we must say that the literary form we call an apocalypse carries that title for the first time in the very late first or early second century A.D. From then on, both title and form are fashionable.
>
> (Smith 1983:19)

This fashionableness is ascribed to the "fairly familiar social background" in which the terms were used (Smith 1983:19). Important to note from Smith's contribution is that he states with certainty that the "Septuagint does not use ἀποκάλυψις to refer to what we should call 'an apocalypse'" (Smith 1983:10). The reason for this assessment is that in

the time the LXX was translated the "fairly familiar social background" did not associate ἀποκάλυψις with divine revelations as later on in the Roman Empire and patristic period. Smith's (1983) evaluation should be understood in terms of the larger field of research done on apocalyptic. His evaluation of the LXX's use of ἀποκάλυψις and its usage in the time before the first or early second century hinges on the fact that he understands apocalyptic in the modern sense of the word (cf. Smith 1983:10), that is, a revelation of *new* insights from a transcendental entity or world, mediated by a heavenly figure (cf. Collins 1979b).[31] With such an understanding as the basis of apocalyptic, Smith (1983) is correct in his evaluation. Oepke (577) makes this clear:

> In general Judaism does not expect any direct revelation [ἀποκάλυψις] from God in its own day. Prophecy is over.... Isolated ecstatic phenomena counts for little. Attention is focused all the more on the past. And the future [*sic.*]. Israel has in the Thora a revelation which is valid for all ages.

This "revelation which is valid for all ages" could be extended to the whole of Hebrew scripture, as indicated by Josephus (AD 37-*c.* 100) in *Against Apion* 1.38-40.

This "fairly familiar social background" figures again in the article of Hartman (1983), where he focuses on the "problems that have to do with the fact that *genre* is a *literary* phenomenon" (Harman 1983:329). According to Hartman (1983:331-332), this fairly familiar social background should be seen as a "given cultural context."

It is within this "given cultural context" that the most important aspect of *genre* as a literary phenomenon comes to the fore. According to Hartman (1983), in apocalyptic literature an unspoken contract between the author and the reader/hearer is established. For the author this unspoken contract gives him or her the freedom to use certain *genres* in an irregular fashion,[32] and for the readers it means that they have a certain *Leseerwartung* (reader's expectation) when reading (or hearing) a text written in

[31] See also Rowland's (1982) influential work that clearly places the emphasis of apocalyptic on new divine mysteries/secrets that will be revealed *via an ἀποκάλυψις* (see, e.g., Rowland 1982:3, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14).

[32] A story, for example, is written to jeer at politicians instead of being written for the entertainment of readers in the traditional sense, but is accepted as authoritative because of the implicit contract between reader and author.

a specific *genre*. Whether a *genre* is used in a regular[33] or irregular fashion, the *Leseerwartung* has to be institutionalised in some way (Hartman 1983:331). This *Leseerwartung*, that is present among the audience, whether ancient or modern, influences the way in which they would go about constructing, reading and understanding a certain *genre*. *Ergo* there is no objective universal understanding for a certain *genre* type; the function of the *genre* is rather determined by the given cultural context.[34]

In Bergman's (1983:54) contribution, focusing on Egyptian apocalypticism, he shows that most of the Egyptian texts display, "a complex tradition history" that lies behind its composition. The absence of certain typical apocalyptic traits in these texts is due to specific Egyptian ideas of time and cosmological view (Bergman 1983:55-58).[35] Again, which Egyptian texts should be seen as apocalyptic should not only be determined by a "master paradigm" of traits, but should also take into account the specific cultural context in which the texts were composed and read. Even Collins (1983:532), after reaffirming that he still takes the generic and general definition of apocalypse as a starting point, and that, "it is in fact possible to identify a literary *genre* apocalypse", states that one needs to note that

> this definition makes no claim about the function of the *genre*. We will consider the function of these apocalypses [i.e., Slovonic Enoch, Apocalypse of Baruch and the Testament of Abraham] and consider what light it throws on our understanding of their *genre*.
>
> (Collins 1983:532)[36]

In the end, one of the stimuli provided by the *Colloquium on apocalypticism* in Uppsala was on the area of the function[37] of apocalyptic texts. This becomes clear from research carried out on apocalyptic after these two landmark seminars.[38]

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[33] Regular here refers to a story as a story without any underlining jeering.
[34] Sanders (1983:459) also concludes his article on the *genre* of Palestinian Jewish apocalypses with a reference to the importance of identifying the "authorial intent" (Hartman's 1983 illocution of the text) and the audience expectancy (Hartman's 1983 *Leseerwartung*).
[35] See also the more recent article by Hilberd (2011) that focuses on texts of prophetic speech in the Egyptian royal cult.
[36] This was also stated by the SBL group of 1979, admitting this "shortcoming" of their project from the start, thus working with this in mind (cf. Collins 1979a).

2.2.3.3 *Genre* and social setting (1986)

The next major contribution to the study on apocalyptic was published in *Semeia* 36 (ed. Collins 1986). The aim of this contribution was to continue the work of the workgroup of the SBL's *Genre Project* of 1979, as well as that of the *International Colloquium on Apocalypticism* held in Uppsala in August 1979 (Collins 1986:1). The definition of apocalyptic literature postulated by Collins (1979b) is not rejected in the contributions of *Semeia* 36, but critically engaged with by adding some elements (cf. Hellholm 1986) or by subtracting and replacing other elements (cf. Aune 1986).

After discussing the contribution of Collins; (1979b) definition[39], critique of this definition, Hellholm's (1986) proposition in *Semeia* 36, and the relevant contributions from the Uppsala Colloquium, Aune (1986) begins his own discussion on the *genre* of Revelation by stating the following: "The purpose of this section is to suggest that the problem of the *genre* of ancient texts must be approached in a manner sensitive to the ancient cultural systems which such literature reflects" (Aune 1986:76). Aune's reference to ancient cultural systems is directly related to the "fairly familiar social background" of Smith (1983), or Hartman's (1983) "given cultural context". In his article, Aune (1986) makes a twofold contribution to the discussion of *genre*.

First, most of the ancient writers, especially Greek authors, were composers for the ear. They wanted their writings read aloud, performed to an audience.

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[37] See Collins (1983), Meeks (1983), and Schüssler Fiorenza (1983). It is also in this focus on function that Brown's (2008:1) reference to Romanticism (see fn.1 above) as the root of contemporary attitudes becomes clear. As Rajan's (2008) survey of theories of *genre* in the Romantic period shows, genre criticism's focus at this point in history was on the function of *genre* within a certain community. *Genre* was seen as a "negotiation between subject [reader] and object [author and text]" (Rajan 2008:226). In the same way apocalyptic, in the modern sense and within the ancient historical sense, is seen more as a negotiation between the author (the illocution of the text) and the readers (*Leseerwartung*).

[38] It falls outside the scope of this study to review all the developments in the field of apocalyptic since the *genre* decade. For such a discussion, see the collection of essays by Collins and Charlesworth (eds. 1991), and that of Barr (ed. 2006).

[39] In his critique of Collins, Aune (1986) concludes that, although it is an important step forward, there are two major problems with the definition postulated by Collins (1979b); the function of the *genre* apocalyptic that does not feature, and the "hierarchical arrangement of various generically salient literary features of apocalypses" (Aune 1986:70).

> One of the features of ancient reading which closely links literature to rhetoric[40] is the fact that texts were almost always read aloud, and authors knew that their works would be "performed" in such a manner and could design them accordingly. Ancients who read "silently" ... were an elite minority.... Thus in many ancient texts, the terms "hear" and "read"[41] are often used as synonyms.
>
> (Aune 1986:77)

This feature of ancient texts becomes all the more important when considering that both Revelation and the *Shepherd of Hermas* were intended for oral performance in Christian congregations.

These kinds of texts, however, were not meant for all to read and all to hear, much less to understand. Aune (1986:81) refers to Merkelbach's (1962) postulation that an ancient novel was "in fact a mystery text [*Mysterientexte*], completely comprehensible only to the initiates [*Eingeweiht*]"[42].

When looking at the text of Revelation, it makes sense that the text was written for a certain *Eingeweiht* group of people. In Revelation there are three texts (Rev 1:20; 7:13-17; 17:6-18) where an explanation is given for symbolic language being used. This shows that the readers were trained in the *Leseerwartung,*[43] and knew how to interpret and contextualise these symbols (Aune 1986:85-86).[44]

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[40] It is because of Aune's (1986) reference to rhetoric that he is able to add to the definition of apocalyptic the element of legitimisation of the message and authority who sends it, as well as the compelling characteristic of the message, for this was in the end the aim of any rhetorical piece of writing (see discussion below on rhetoric criticism).

[41] Adding to the terms "read" and "hear", one could also refer to the expression: "Look/behold" which occurs in prophetic and apocalyptic texts (cf., e.g., Rv 1:7, 18; 2:10, 22; 3:5, 9 (x 2), 20; 4:1, 2; 5:1; 6:2, 5, 8; 7:9; 9:12; 11:14; 12:3; 14:1, 14; 16:15; 19:11; 21:3, 5; 22:7, 12). See also the Egyptian oracle, *The Admonition of Ipu-wer* 7:1-9:5, where the expression "Behold" is repeated 17 times.

[42] See Hägg (1983:101-104) for a critical discussion of the view of Merkelbach (1962). Hägg (1983) does not see the novel as a mystery text only meant for the initiator as Merkelbach (1962), but does state correctly that the contribution of Merkelbach (1962) makes the modern-day reader attentive to the fact that novels "and mystery religions flourished at the same time and in the same milieu; the same people were the basis of existence for both" (Hägg 1983:104). Thus a dichotomy between a religious life and say entertainment (performance of a novel) would not even have been considered by ancient readers and hearers.

[43] As Aune's (1986) reference to rhetoric enables him to add certain aspects to the definition of the *genre* apocalyptic, so does this view of a text written to a specific group enables him to omit others. When working from the premise that Revelation was written for an *Eingeweiht* group of people there is no need for a heavenly figure that needs to interpret the message, only a *Uneingeweiht* would need such a figure.

[44] Although Aune (1986) does not make use of Halliday's (1976) work on anti-language, what Aune argues strongly agrees with the work of Halliday (1976). As stated earlier, whether a *genre* is used in the

Second, Aune (1986:82) does not only focus on the unique elements of each reading context, but also on the fact that Revelation most probably was read and placed within the larger context of texts reflecting the "phenomenology of revelatory experience" from the ancient world.

Hellholm (1986), in his contribution, accepts the definition of Collins (1979b), but only if, on the same level of abstraction, the functional aspect is added that an apocalypse is "intended for a group in crisis with the purpose of exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority" (Hellholm 1986:27).

By this addition Hellholm (1986) provides "a definition of function which is on the same level of abstraction as the definition of form and content" (Collins 1986:6). Important to note of Hellholm's (1986) contribution is 1) the connection he makes between the semantic distinctive characteristics (*semes*) and the context in which they are used (i.e., how the *semes* and the context has an influence on one another); and 2) how one concept (*sememe*) can have multiple meanings depending on the context in which it is used.

As an example Hellholm (1986:14) uses the *sememe* "chair" of which he lists a few basic *semes*: "1) with solid material; 2) raised above the ground; 3) with a back; 4) for one person; 5) to sit on." However, as soon as more characteristics (*semes*) are added, 6) with arms and 7) with upholstery, then the "chair" becomes an "armchair." One could just as easily exchange one of the characteristics which then would lead to a different *sememe*. For example, to change the *semes* "for one person" to "for two or more

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regular or irregular fashion, the *Leseerwartung* has to be trained (Hartman 1983:331). The readers and the author have to be on the same literary level and must have the same connotations of certain words. It is only when this requirement is met that the text will have meaning, a meaning that will only be clear to those who are part of the congregation (the initiates). Anti-language, according to Halliday (1976), is a so-called relexicalisation of certain words; the same word can be used in a certain community with a specific meaning, but can mean something different in surrounding outsider communities. Only the "initiates" will know the relexicalised meaning of the word. "The principle is that of same grammar, different vocabulary; but different vocabulary only in certain areas, typically those that are central to the activities of the subculture and that set it off most sharply from the established society" (Halliday 1976:571).

persons" changes the "chair" into a "couch." One could even go further into the abstract domain and use fewer *semes*, which then will produce not the *sememe* "chair", but rather 'seat'." This leads Hellholm (1986) to make a distinction between *archisememe* and *superachisememe*, where the first term is less abstract (i.e., chair, armchair or couch) than the second (i.e., seat).[45]

It is also important to note that the meaning ascribed to, for example, "chair", is also dependent on the social-semiotic perspective that is taken from the word (cf. Halliday & Hasan 1989:3-5). The meaning of a word is determined by the given cultural context within which the word is used. As stated by Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:3) "wording is not meaning.... The meaning that languages express is not in the wording level. Rather, meanings themselves always derive from some social system." In staying with "chair" as *sememe*, Nerbonne (1996:*ad loc.*) correctly states that the "word *chair* is ambiguous, possibly referring to a piece of furniture but also to the head of an organization, as in the chair of the committee." Thus the specific context in which a word is used determines its meaning; meaning is not inherent to the word itself.

These insights of Hellholm (1986) bring to the fore important aspects that need to be considered when working with *genre* constructions while interpreting texts. When constructing a *genre* it is important to note that, "we usually work with models and not with reality" (Hellholm 1986:14). Collins (1998:8)[46], focusing more specifically on the *genre* of apocalyptic, states that:

> The study of the *genre* is designed to clarify particular works by showing both their typical traits and their distinctive elements. It is not intended to construct a metaphysical entity, "apocalyptic" or *Apokalyptik* in any sense independent of the actual texts.

This remark of Collins brings much-needed caution in constructing an interpretive *genre* paradigm, all the more when considering that most of the apocalyptic texts are

[45] Which one of the *sememe* (seat, chair, armchair, couch) falls under which category (*archisememe* or *superachisememe*) depends on which *semes* one uses to describe the *sememe*. If one were to work with the *semes* that describes a chair, then a chair would be the *superachisememe* (most abstract concept), and the armchair and couch would be the *archisememe* (less abstract concept).
[46] This publication of Collins (1998), *The apocalyptic imagination*, was first published in 1984, thus two years before the publication of Hellholm's (1986) article.

saturated with symbols that can be classified as “multivalent images and tensive symbols” (Schüssler Fiorenza 1991). Rather than just postulating an abstract definition, without considering the function of the text in a given culture, one should rather find a balance between the highly abstract nature of a definition and the concreteness thereof in a given context. This leads to the basic question regarding a definition and understanding of *genre*: For who does it function, and in what way, or how does it function? (Hellholm 1986:16-17).[47]

2.2.4 Post genre-decade[48]

Two trends in the research gained momentum after the *genre*-decade:

1. How rhetoric criticism can help illuminate and understand Revelation and its symbolic language.
2. How apocalyptic literature is related to prophetic literature, and if a dichotomy between these two phenomena of the ancient word can be maintained in light of new findings.

The first trend mentioned above will be discussed below, and the second will be attended to in Chapter 5.

Not many scholars have worked as much with rhetoric criticism and the book of Revelation as DeSilva[49]. Although it is true that, “Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza presided over the first fruitful wedding of rhetorical criticism and the interpretation of Revelation” (DeSilva 2009:15), her contribution to Revelation (which can be seen as her *magnus opus*) lies in her research on the phenomenon of early Christian prophecy and how this stands in relation to the apocalyptic phenomenon (cf. Schüssler Fiorenza 1980, 1983, 1985:133-158, 2001).

[47] For a further development on this thesis of Hellholm (1986), see his article *Methodological reflections on the problem of definition of generic texts* (Hellholm 1991).
[48] The following discussion will not focus as much on the methodological issues surrounding the construction of an apocalyptic *genre* (cf. Barr 2006; eds. Collins & Charlesworth 1991; Linton 2006; Mathewson 1992; Sturm 1986 for more on this). Rather the focus of this discussion will be on how the insights form the *genre*-decade has been applied and used in research thereafter.
[49] See DeSilva’s (1992a, 1992b, 1998, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e, 2009) articles focusing specifically on Revelation.

2.2.4.1 David A. DeSilva

When looking at the work of DeSilva on rhetoric in Revelation (DeSilva 2008a, 2008b, 2009), it is important to read these in the light of his previous work on the social setting of Revelation (DeSilva 1992a, 1992b).

DeSilva (1992a) reviews the typical understanding of apocalyptic literature which leads to the underlying assumption,

> that apocalyptic is always a response to a desperate social situation, a sort of last hope of the despairing. It is often regarded as the bitter consolation of a defeated people through the envisioning of the punishment and overthrow of their enemies and promise of reward outside the boundaries of an unredeemable history.
>
> (DeSilva 1992a:276)

It cannot be denied that some of the apocalyptic literature did come into existence under such circumstances, but the research done by Thompson (1990) and Carey (1999) in this regard cannot be ignored. Working from the premise that apocalyptic literature is always a response to a desperate social situating of a despairing group DeSilva (1992a, 1992b) builds his (re)construction of the social setting of Revelation. The view that Revelation was written in a time of great persecution, however, is not a modern view, so Eusebius:

> When Domitian had given many proofs of his great cruelty and had put to death without any reasonable trial no small number of men distinguished at Rome by family and career, and he punished without a cause myriads of other notable men by banishment and confiscation of their property, he finally showed himself the successor of Nero's campaign of hostility to God. He was the second[50] to promote persecution against us [i.e.,

[50] When critically engaging with this statement of Eusebius in the light of writings such as Pliny's *Letter* 10.96-97, it is difficult to accept Domitian as the "δεύτερος" who took up arms against the Christians, especially official state arms. Dowing (1988), in referring to other cases of persecution in Pliny's *Letter* 10.6, 8, 18 and 29, shows that whenever Pliny encountered a strange case he felt bound by duty to look for other cases and proceedings that will help him to understand the present case. When he encountered such a case, and reviewed previous cases, but was still unsure how to precede, he would diligently quote these previous proceedings before asking Trajan for advice. If Domitian led an official persecution against the Christians, the second to do so after Trajan, one would expect Pliny, when dealing with the cases of Christians, to find these official persecution cases and use them as a basis for his own. Instead he writes in *Letter* 10.96: "It is my custom to refer all my difficulties to you, Sir [i.e., Emperor Trajan], for no one is better able to resolve my doubts and to inform my ignorance. I have never been present at an examination of Christians [*Cognitionibus de Christianis*]. Consequently, I do not know the nature or the extent of the punishment usually meted out to them." A *Cognitionibus de Christianis* refers to an official trial that was held. At the time of Trajan's (98-117) rule, there is evidence showing that any "hunting out of these people [Christians]" or even local propaganda against them was frowned upon by Trajan:

> Christians][51].... At this time, the story goes, the Apostle John was still alive, and was condemned to live in the island of Patmos for his witness to the divine word.
>
> (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.17-18)

Thompson (1990:101-115, 133-137) convincingly shows that the sources (e.g., Suetonius, Dio Cassius and Nerva) which depict Domitian (91-96) in a negative light were meant as propaganda texts to highlight the new era ushered in by Trajan (98-117).

> The opposing of Trajan and Domitian in a binary set serves overtly in Trajan's ideology of a new age as well as covertly in his praise. Newness requires a beginning and therefore a break with the past; such a break is constructed rhetorically through binary contrast. Propagandists for a new age have to sharpen both edges of their two-edged sword: both the ideal present and the evil past have to be exaggerated.
>
> (Thompson 1990:115)[52]

In the light of this, DeSilva (1992a:281) concludes that Revelation should retain a date of composition of 95 or 96 near the reign of Domitian, "but we would not ... attach the document to a particular official persecution of Christians as Christians under Domitian, nor posit such a persecution on the basis of Revelation's contents" (cf. also DeSilva 1992b:380). This leads us to "seriously consider the Apocalypse as *prophecy* for the situation of the seven churches and as a call for the response God would have them make" (DeSilva 1992a:281). In reference to the *genre* of Revelation, DeSilva (1992a, 1992b) focuses on the apocalyptic[53] and prophetic aspects of Revelation, with emphasis on the latter. With regard to the epistolary dimension of Revelation, DeSilva (1992a:281, 286; 2009:9, 10, n. 34 is of the opinion that the "so called 'seven letters'" play a minimal role, from a literary perspective, in the interpretation of Revelation.

Pamphlets, "circulated anonymously ... create the worst sort of precedent and are quite out of keep with the spirit of our age" (Pliny, *Letter* 10.97).

[51] The first being Nero (54-68) of whom Eusebius writes: "When the rule of Nero was now gathering strength for unholy objects he began to take up arms against the worship of the God of the universe.... Nero was the first to persecute [i.e., let the imperial sword rage against] this belief [i.e., Christianity]" (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.25).

[52] See also Carey's (1999:135-164) discussion on how John depicts his opponents.

[53] Even when referring to the apocalyptic dimension of Revelation this is understood in the light of John being a prophet who speaks out against the social systems of the time, a prophet in the sense of one who "reads the signs of his time, and as an astute social analyst, has understood where the relationship of the Christian communities and the political and social forces around them were heading" (DeSilva 1992a:281). Thus apocalypse, for DeSilva (1992b:375), is "a special literary form in that it is interested in creating a whole cosmos that lends meaning to experience of the visible world [i.e., what John observed] and that often undermines the dominant social power's legitimation of its order and confidence in its destiny."

According to DeSilva, the authority of John comes from his charismatic or rhetorical skills. John of Patmos "appears to base his appeal – both his claim to the right to define the counter definitions and his claims to the right to define salvific action – *solely upon charismatic legitimation through the work* [i.e., Revelation]" (DeSilva 1992b:386). Thus the authority of Revelation comes from the rhetorical techniques used by John.

The uniqueness of DeSilva's (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e, 2009) contribution to rhetorical criticism in Revelation lies in his combination of social scientific- and rhetorical criticism.[54] This leads him to use the interpretive strategy of so-called socio-rhetoric. The starting point, since 1996, for socio-rhetorical analysis of texts is a rhetographical interpretation of the text. Rhetography is a term which was born alongside so-called rhetology (DeSilva 20078b:273).

Rhetology,[55] in rhetorical criticism, can be typified as the basic argumentation of the text. Thus, in rhetoric criticism, enthymematic argumentation is directly linked to rhetology. The use of enthymematic-argumentative reasoning, in relation to John of Patmos, "involves the assessment of the cultural premises and ideological convictions John presumes that his hearers will share and will be willing to supply in order for John's logic to be persuasive" (DeSilva 2008a:125). DeSilva (2008a:126-127) states of general enthymematic-argumentative reasoning that

> an enthymeme does not state what the hearer can be expected to supply ... thus subtly enlisting the hearer's aid in partnership in effect, in the construction and completion of the argumentation.... [The] orator assumes that the hearers can and will supply the missing link that makes the logical transference [to the full meaning of the argument].[56]

[54] This DeSilva (2009:15) builds on the work of Schüssler Fiorenza (1991:22) when she states that a "critical rhetorical analysis of Revelation seeks to trace its ideological practices and persuasive goals and to identify the literary means by which they are achieved.... It must therefore concern itself with reconstructing both Revelation's rhetorical world of vision and the rhetorical socio-political situations in which this imagery can be understood to have developed as an active and fitting response."

[55] Rhetology is made up of the Greek words expressible (ῥητός) and reasoning (λόγος)

[56] One form of enthymematic-argumentation is an incomplete syllogism (Thesis: We ought to confer the honour of the wreath upon Demosthenes. Rationale: For all benefactors deserve honour. Completion supplied by hearer: Demosthenes is a great benefactor (cf. DeSilva 2008a:127). Enthymematic-argumentation, however, is also more than just incomplete syllogisms. It can also be a thought that the hearers need to complete, a maxim supported by a reason, an inference from consequents or contraries, or a rhetorical syllogism (cf. Aune 2003 for more detail on these). Important here to note is that through the use of enthymeme John assumes that the readers and hearers of Revelation will be able to understand the images and arguments he employs.

When the hearers DeSilva (2008a) refers to, are the first century hearers, it leads to the following question for the modern hearer of the text: What were these unspoken logical assumptions that the first century hearers would have formulated without them being spelled out? Or to reformulate this in the terms used above in the work of the *genre*-decade: What was the fairly familiar social background (Smith 1983) of the first hearers where their own *Leseerwartung* (Hartman 1983) was implicitly available to them, for understanding and interpreting the illocution of the text (Hartman 1983)?

The first hearers of these texts, including Revelation, knew what was expected of them without having to be educated in the rhetology of the text, whereas the modern reader needs to be informed regarding the so-called rhetology being used in the text. This is then where rhetography comes in. Rhetology could be seen as the skeletal structure of the argument, while rhetography, "constitutes the flesh that gives life to the skeleton and sinews" (DeSilva 2008b:273). Rhetography concerns the "pictorial narration" or the "expressible graphic images" that are being used by the author or orator of a text or speech. In this sense, rhetography, "refers to the features of a spoken or written communication that creates a picture (graphic image) in the mind of a hearer or reader" (DeSilva 2006:274, quoting Robbins). When considering that it was only a small portion of the elite in the first century that were able to read (Aune 1986:77), and that the rest were dependent on iconographic propaganda, a rhetographic investigation of a text like Revelation is of great importance.

DeSilva (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e, 2009) utilises socio-rhetoric alongside rhetology and rhetography to analyse the inner texture[57], intertexture[58], social and

[57] The inner texture analysis of the text focuses on the meaning of words, and how these words are used to convey meaning to the hearers and readers of the text. It is the element of a text that resides in the language of the text itself; words that are repeated, dialogues between characters, that is, the verbal texture of the text (Robbins 1996:7).

[58] Intertexture refers to the interaction of the text with the "world" outside the text. This world includes linguistic material, physical material (objects), historical events, customs, values roles, institutions and systems from the world in which the text came into being, that is, the referential world of the text (Robbins 1996:40).

cultural texture,[59] and ideological texture[60] of Revelation. The advantage of this analysis is that it does not read Revelation only as a purely literary work, but also focuses on the social aspects that lie behind the text. As Robbins (1996:4) states of socio-rhetorical criticism:

> Underlying the method is a presupposition that words themselves work in very complicated ways to communicate meanings that we only partially understand. It also presupposes that meanings themselves have their meanings by relation other meanings.

This short discussion on the rhetorical reading of Revelation by DeSilva (i.a., 2008a, 2008b) shows the influence the *genre*-decade has on interpretive methods. The *genre* revelation is directly linked to a literary text that can be analysed through the use of literary exegetical methods. The text needs to be placed in its specific cultural context, one needs to take the intent of the author of the text seriously, and at the same time ask the question of what the *Leseerwartung* of the audience could have been. By combining this strong literary analysis of texts with social scientific methods, it also becomes clear that wording in itself does not convey meaning, but that the wording also needs to be placed in a larger and specific socio-historical context.

One aspect that needs to be balanced out in such a rhetorical analysis is the ascribed authority of the author John. It cannot be denied that John wanted to assert his authority in the communities to whom he wrote. By giving the epistolary dimension of Revelation just as much weight as the apocalyptic and prophetic, it does not make sense for John of Patmos to base his claim to an authoritative position in the community "*solely upon charismatic legitimation through the work* [i.e., Revelation]" (DeSilva 1992b:386).

[59] In this section the insights from sociology and anthropology are utilised to investigate the social systems in which the language of a text is embedded. The fundamental question that this section wants to investigate is: "What kind of social and cultural person lives in the "world of a particular text?" (Robbins 1996:71).

[60] The ideological texture of a text is best understood in contrasting it to the inner texture of the text. Robbins (1996:95) argues in this regard that "analysis of the ideological texture of a text exists at the opposite end of the spectrum from the analysis of the inner texture of a text. Inner texture concerns the words, phrases, and clauses of the text itself; ideological texture concerns the biases, opinions, preferences, and stereotypes of a particular writer and a particular reader."

Carey's (1999:93-133) understanding of John's narrative ethos also postulates that John needs to construct a certain rhetorical ethos to win the trust of his audience.[61]

2.3 CONCLUSION

From the above discussion the following can be deducted:

1. A definition is needed for apocalyptic as a distinctive *genre* within the corpus of available literature. This definition should help in grouping together, but also to distinguish, these texts from others (e.g., short-stories, wisdom literature, historical writings or gospels).
2. The definition of *genre* should not be too abstract as to exclude the function of a text, and should always take into account the context in which and for which the researcher is constructing his or her genre definition, as well as the context in which the document originally came into existence and how it functioned therein.
3. This construction needs to be a hermeneutically ethical construction, in that the researcher is conscious of his or her own pre-understanding of the text and what *genre* entails, but also the *Wirkungsgeschichte* concerning the specific *genre* which he or she is working with (apocalyptic in this case).
4. When analysing a text such as Revelation where hearing, listening and seeing plays a prominent role, socio-rhetorical criticism is an indispensable tool in the analyses of the text; especially taking seriously the intent of the author and the *Leseerwartung* of the readers and hearers.
5. In the pre-*genre*-decade, in the *genre*-decade itself, and after the *genre*-decade, one presupposition is present, namely that the construction of an apocalyptic *genre* should be done from a literary point of view. The *genre* is constructed through analysing the *genre* as a network of literary works connected to and distinguished from one another. This will be the starting point of the following Chapter.

[61] A critical discussion of John's narrative ethos to win the trust of his audience will be presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 3

The etic paradigm (in other words)

3.1 INTRODUCTION: THE LEGACY OF *FORMGESCHICHTE*

3.1.1 Genre as a literary network

In the previous Chapter it was shown that the construction of the *genre* "apocalyptic" has been accomplished in the past by primarily focusing on the literary network that exists between extant apocalyptic writings. It is from these literary comparisons that a master paradigm and foundational definition are distilled (cf. Collins 1979b). The aim and usefulness of such a definition for studying apocalyptic literature cannot be denied. Having a clear definition of a *genre* helps in identifying other texts of the same *genre* and these in turn help to clarify and interpret the text on which a researcher focuses. Such a definition also helps in distinguishing specific texts from other texts, and in doing so, gives researchers a canon of texts to work with. It thus needs to be noted from the outset that the usefulness of such *genre* (re)constructions is not meaningless; an analysis of revelatory (apocalyptic) literature from a literary stance (focusing on the written text itself) has important contributions to make and to postulate a *genre* for apocalyptic and gives insightful interpretations.[62] The importance of written sources is emphasised by Oppenheim (1956) in his work on the interpretations of dreams in the Ancient Near East.

> The dream-experiences of a civilization dead for many millennia must be studied in the reflections which they have produced in the literary documents of that civilization. Hence, for the breaking of the ground, philology and, for the exploration of those subtle nuances and complex implications often so revealing, literary criticism are the only possible approaches. Their success, however, depends necessarily on the accidents of survival of pertinent and sufficient text material.
>
> (Oppenheim 1956:184)

[62] See Bandy (2009), Biguzzi (2003), De Villiers (2000, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2009), Hall (2002), Jauhiainen (2003), Longenecker (2001) and Riekert (2003), all of whom approach Revelation's interpretation from a strong literary point of view (for these researchers the key to understanding Revelation lies in the literary structures of the text). See also Du Rand and Song (2004), who combines a literary analysis of Revelation with a partial preterist reading.

For the most part of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of *genre* research on apocalyptic, it was seen as a network of literary writings that stand in relation to one another. In recent years, however, these foundations have been shaken, and new insights from the social sciences have led to new avenues that need to be explored in the construction of the *genre* of revelatory literature.

3.1.2 Genre as an expression of social conventions

In the previous Chapter it was noted that not much attention has been paid to construct a *genre* for Revelation from a social scientific perspective. One possible reason for this can be the same reason why Biblical scholars' interest in social aspects of the Bible decreased in the 1920s; the rise of *Formgeschichte* as an interpretive paradigm (exegetical method) of the historical-critical approach to Bible interpretation.[63] In *Formgeschichtliche* exegesis the focus is to identify a particular "sociological" context (*Sitz im Leben*[64]) in which a narrative was transmitted. This led to the postulation that a "particular social need (the *Sitz im Leben*) brings about the selection of a 'form' (*Gattung/Form*) as the appropriate carrier for the message" (Van Aarde & Joubert 2009:421; cf. also Van Aarde 2007a:54).[65]

The working methodology of *Formgeschichte* is exemplified in the works on apocalyptic that links this literary *genre* explicitly to prosecution or some form a crisis that the community endures, which in turn functions as the *Sitze im Leben* which serves as the motivation for this *genre* choice of the author (Collins 1979b:6-7[66]; Du Rand 2007:20-21;

[63] The term *Formgeschichte* was introduced to New Testament scholarship by the work of Martin Dibelius published in 1919 under the title *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* . Before Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann's use of *Formgeschichte* in New Testament scholarship, Herman Gunkel (1892-1932) applied this method to the narratives in Genesis. See Aune (2010:140-145) for more on the history of *Formgeschichte* in New Testament scholarship (see also Catchpole 2002).
[64] Herman Gunkel was the first to use the term *Sitz im Leben*, although he referred to the *Sitz im Volkleben* (situation in the life of a people), by which he meant "the roles played by particular groups of specialists, such as priest, wisdom teachers and singers, who formulated laws, wisdom sayings and songs ... [that] arose within and was determined by a particular social situation" (Aune 2010:144).
[65] See also Catchpole (2002:168), who states that *Formgeschichte,* "recognizes that source material may have been in written form, but that it was not necessarily so. It aims therefore to separate out the distinct units of material that the compilers of the sources selected, to establish the earliest forms of those units, to classify them on the basis of 'family likeness' [i.e., *genres*], and, by the exercise of informed imagination, to posit for each a setting [*Sitze im Leben*] and a purpose in the life of a community."
[66] With regard to Collins (1979b:6-7), see § 7.1 in the master paradigm he postulates.

Roloff 1993:3).[67] This is true whether the persecution is seen as actual (Mounce 1977; Osborne 2002:7-9), or perceived (Thompson 1990:105-109). This, in turn, leads to the assumption that to understand the message of apocalyptic literature, one needs to describe the *Sitz im Leben* of the community to which it was written; then from there, a correct interpretation can be given (cf. Hemer 1986). Placing apocalyptic texts in relevant *Sitze im Leben* contributes to the understanding of apocalyptic literature, and cannot be ignored if one wishes to have a comprehension of apocalyptic. However, considering resent insights from social scientific research on various New Testament topics[68] and Revelation, a reconsideration of the *genre* of Revelation (and apocalyptic), in light of these studies, can contribute to the ongoing discussion of Revelation's *genre* (see Malina 1995; Malina & Pilch 2000; Pilch 1992, 2011:216-230).

3.1.3 Structure of Chapter

Following below, first the basic elements of social science criticism will be given so that a clear understanding of each term and the methodology to be followed in the study is clear. Next, a discussion is presented on the specific model that will be used in distilling a social scientific understanding of the *genre* of Revelation and apocalyptic in general.

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[67] See also Murphy (2012:1-4), who indicates that the rise of the Jewish apocalyptic *genre* coincides with external as well as internal changes in the Jewish communities; internally because of conflicting priestly ideologies in Jewish Palestine's, and externally due to the conquest of Alexander the Great (333-323 BCE) which brought about momentous changes in the political, economic, religious and cultural world of the Judean people. The use of the apocalyptic *genre* in this *Sitze im Leben* "was one way to resist the inroads of empire in Israel" (Murphy 2012:3). This link of apocalyptic with a *Sitze im Leben* of crisis is seen today in the film industry of so-called apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic films. The plots of these films usually centre on a worldwide crisis that is taking place (e.g., a virus that kills most of the population or climate changes that make the world virtually inhospitable). After the crisis there is a lone hero or small heroic group who survived the initial crisis and he, she, or they, now carry on in a post-apocalyptic world (cf. the films *I am legend* [2007], *The book of Eli* [2010; with a clear Biblical theme], *The day after tomorrow* [2004], *Resident evil* [2002; of which the second series is called *Resident evil: Apocalypse* 2004], and *Snowpiercer* [2013]). As will become clear, these representations of apocalyptic and the link of an apocalyptic event with utter destruction and hopelessness, are gross misrepresentations of a phenomenon which focused on hope, salvation, and viewing the world from anew.

[68] See, *inter alia*, the series of social-science commentaries on the New Testament by Malina and Pilch (2000, 2006, 2008, 2013) and Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998, 2003). See also the collection of essays and entries in Pilch and Malina (eds. 1993); Neufeld and De Maris (eds. 2010) and Stegemann, Malina and Theissen (eds. 2002). For more specific studies focusing on the social conventions and norms of the first century Mediterranean world, see *inter alia* Esler (1994), Malina (1996; 2001a, 2001b), Pilch (2012), Malina (1999; investigating Jesus' walking on the sea from a cross-cultural social psychological perspective), and Van Eck (2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2013) for work done on the parables of Jesus from a realistic and social-scientific perspective. See also Van Eck (1995) for social-scientific analysis of Mark.

The aim of this Chapter is solely to describe the hermeneutical model that will be applied in this study. This will be done by looking at previous research and social scientific models that have already been applied to the interpretation of Revelation (cf. Malina 1995; Malina & Pilch 2000; Pilch 2011).[69] This discussion will not be a simple repetition or reproduction of the work of Malina (1995), and Malina and Pilch (2000), on Revelation. Rather, as stated in Chapter 1 (§ 1.6), this is an attempt to take a step back and strengthen the foundation on which the works of Malina (1995), Malina and Pilch (2000) and Pilch (2011) are built.[70]

3.2 SOCIAL SCIENCES AND BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

3.2.1 The importance of language

To study the culture of antiquity in general, and specifically the apocalyptic phenomenon, a focus on written material is a necessity (Oppenheim 1956). This was made clear in Chapter 2. In this regard, social scientific criticism's insights into the use of language, and how ancient texts should be read and understood, can make a decisive contribution.[71]

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[69] See also Esler (2014), focusing on the social function of apocalyptic literature, and Flannery (2014), who focuses on the literal aspects of apocalyptic (i.e., dream-vision or revelatory) reports.

[70] Although a comprehensive critical evaluation of these works falls outside the scope of this research, the following can be stated: 1) Malina's (1995) monograph, titled *On the genre and message of Revelation: Star visions and sky journeys*, seems to be the framework and almost a first draft of Malina and Pilch's (2000) *Social-scientific commentary on Revelation*. This is clear when the two publications are compared with one another; 2) In addition to Malina's (1995) work, the commentary that followed gives more information on why Revelation could be read as a revelatory report of an astral prophet who had alternate states of conscious experiences (Malina & Pilch 2002:2-8, 41-44). Regardless of these additions, some of the important aspects of such experiences do not come to their full right in the commentary as a whole; 3). There are some discrepancies between the monograph of Malina (1995) and the commentary which, in the broader interpretation of Revelations, have certain ramifications. So, for example, Malina (1995:81, 89, 90) states that the cultural knowledge needed to understand the visions of John in Revelation should not be regarded as esoteric in nature and exclusively available to privileged initiates of a group. Rather this knowledge was readily available to anyone who grew up in the first-century Mediterranean world In Malina and Pilch (2000:12-13), the knowledge that John reports in Revelation is limited not only to some Christians, but even further, it is limited exclusively to John's fellow prophets to whom he is writing; 4) When reading Malina's (1995) monograph, the title can be misleading by giving the impression that the monograph will argue for a new understanding of the *genre* of Revelation and how this understanding would influence the message. The focus is rather more on the message of Revelation, and Malina (1995) gives no argument for why one should accept this understanding of the *genre*. Malina (1995:72) hopes to "set out the theology of the book of Revelation as it emerges from the perspective of astral prophecy."

[71] The history of the development of social-scientific criticism will not be presented here; the focus will only be on that aspects that will contribute to the discussion below. For such an overview, see Barton

In Herskovits' (1955:287-289) *Man and his works: The science of cultural anthropology*, important observations are made regarding the relationship between language and its cultural embeddedness:

1. The way in which people of any culture expresses there understanding of reality reflects the categories of their thoughts. These categories stem from their linguistic view. Stated differently: A person can only speak of reality in words and sounds that make sense and is understandable according to the cultural-linguistic categories that are available to them.
2. The second observation is directly linked to the first, namely that "language is not instinctive" (Herskovits 1955:288). The only language that anyone can use is the language learned from the culture in which they grow up in.
3. The third observation focuses on dividing and analysing the language system of any culture into three parts.

> The first consists of its sounds and makes up its phonemic system. The second is the combinations of sounds into units that have distinct significance, its vocabulary. The third is the manner in which these sound combinations are themselves combined and recombined into larger units, and is what is ordinarily meant when we speak of grammar. There is no system of speech that lacks any of these.[72]
>
> (Herskovits 1955:288)

4. Last, Herskovits (1955:289) quotes a statement from one of his students, G.A. de Laguna, who states that speech (the use of language to communicate) is a mode of action, and not merely a mode of expression.

When looking for a model that can give a cultural plausible *genre* postulation for Revelation, it is necessary to find a model that takes into consideration all of the above.

(2002), Elliott (1993), Neyrey (2010), Van Aarde and Joubert (2007), and Van Aarde (2007a, 2007b, 2007c). See also Overholt (1996) on the use of cultural anthropology for interpreting the Old Testament texts. For critical engagements with elements pertaining to social-scientific criticism, see Craffert (1991, 1992, 1994, 1995).

[72] The acceptance of such a universal triad of characteristics for any system of speech should not be seen as a redactionistic way of looking at the complex nature of language. The complexity of this is clearly illustrated by anthropological (el-Aswad 2010; Winkelman 2005, 2011b, 2013a), linguistic (Halliday & Hasan 1989; Halliday 1976), and neurological studies (D'Aquili & Newberg 1999:32-33; cf. also D'Aquili & Newberg 1996). See below for a discussion of these insights.

The model needs to take into consideration the complexity of the constructions that are explicit and implicit in any written text.

> Biblical texts, like all text, embed, encode and presume elements of the social and cultural systems in which they are produced, which means the *genre,* content, structure and meaning of these texts are all socially and culturally determined.
>
> (Elliott 2011:1)

Stated differently: the texts used to study the phenomena of the ancient world is "cultural specific wording patterns that derive from the social system" (Pilch 2004:52).[73]

3.2.2 Models, emics and etics

3.2.2.1 Model

In choosing a model to interpret the historical Jesus from a social scientific perspective, Malina (2002:3, 15, n. 1) states:

> Social-scientific interpretation of New Testament documents involves reading some New Testament writing by first selecting a suitable model accepted in the social-scientific community, and using the model to form adequate scenarios for reading the document in question.... I still stand behind the principle that if a social-scientific model is called into question or rejected by reputable social scientist, we [the interpreters] would do well not to apply it in social-scientific interpretation.

When working from this principle, the justification for using the alternative state of consciousness model (ASC) to define the *genre* of Revelation is justifiable because of its use by anthropologists (el-Aswad 2010; Winkelman 2005, 2013b), neurologists focusing on the behaviour of different cultures (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b, 1999), as well as "reputable social scientists" in Biblical interpretation (Malina 1999; Pilch 2004).[74]

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[73] See Malina (1982; 1986; 1996:1-31; 2001a:1-26). See also Schnelle (2009:31-32) who states: "For human beings, there is no path from language to an independent, extra-linguistic reality, for reality is present to us only in and through language.... Language itself ... is in turn culturally conditioned and subject to constant social transformation." The importance of Schnelle's (2009) statement is that it makes the fact cognisant that an interpreter's wording to convey a certain meaning of his or her interpretation of a text is also culturally conditioned. Such a view falls into the working methodology of social-scientific criticism, which aims to explain how "meanings are imposed on men and seek to explain human behaviour in terms of typicalities... [The historical models in the social sciences focus] upon the "that," "how," and "why" men created meaning in the past that affect our present with a view to our future" (Malina 1982:232-233).

[74] See also, for example, Craffert (1999, 2011), Groenewald and Van Aarde (2006), Malina (1999), and Pilch (2002b, 2004, 2005).

When working with models, it is also necessary to understand the nature of models in general. A few remarks can suffice in this regard:

1. Models are constructed by using data and knowledge that are well-known to explain a less known phenomenon (Mouton & Marais 1990:142). This element of a model is of great importance when studying a culture like that of the first century Mediterranean world to which the researcher does not have direct access. The use of tested models, "allows scholars to make controllable deductions and (re)constructions of missing information on the basis of known data about the interaction between the earliest Jesus-followers and their surrounding contexts" (Van Aarde & Joubert 2009:430).
2. This representational nature of models should not be understood as a claim that a model is a direct representation of the reality to which it refers. Rather, these models are viewed as a "high level of abstraction derived from certain presuppositions" (Malina 2001a:19) that are highly selective replicas of the reality it represents (Van Eck 1995:159). It is this abstract and selective nature of models that enables them to identify, isolate, systematise and investigate a certain question (Mouton & Marais 1990:144; cf. also Van Eck 1995:159). Put differently: "The use of models are like the use of tools; in this sense models are question-specific constructs" (Malina 1982:237).[75]
3. Considering the high level of abstraction of models, the fact that any model is constructed from a certain presupposition and its high selectivity (question-specific focus), it stands to reason that a model is not readily at hand to use but needs to be constructed (Van Eck 1995:160).
4. Through the construction of models, using the language that is available to researchers in their specific culture, it could be postulated that models provide a new universe of discourse (Mouton & Marais 1990:144). This universe of discourse is used to explain the phenomenon under investigation.

[75] An enduring contribution of social-scientific criticism is the explicit explanation of the model beings used, thus working with a conscious hermeneutical perspective (see Neyrey, in Van Aarde & Joubert 2009:431; see also Van Niekerk 2014). This is important not only for a methodological point of view, but also when considering that "the use of any model establishes one specific point of view and necessarily excludes others" (Van Aarde & Joubert 2009:432).

In combining the above remarks with the work on models by Elliott (1993:132), Malina (1982; 2001a), Mouton and Marais (1990:141-145); Van Aarde and Joubert (2009) and Van Eck (1995:158-162), the following can serve as a working definition for a model: A model is a conceptual construction which aims to 1) represent, in a highly abstract manner, a social phenomenon that is under investigation; 2) to identify, investigate, clarify and explain the phenomenon from a certain perspective; 3) in the language (universe of discourse) provided by the model to produce a heuristic framework for the investigator(s).

3.2.2.2 Emics and etics

The terms emic and etic was coined by the linguist Kennith Pike in his *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behavior* (1967). He used the terms in analogy with the concepts phon*emic* and phon*etic* (Craffert 1994; Harris 1968:569-572[76]; Van Eck 1995:162). Phonemic, from a linguistic perspective, refers to sounds that are meaningful to a specific culture, and phonetic to the "elements of language ... [and] the perspective and classifying systems of the external investigator" (Elliott 1993:129). Put differently, emic refers to the view of the native, that is, how the culture would describe itself, and etic to the view of an outsider; how a non-native would speak about the culture. The definition given by Elliott (quoted by Van Eck 1995:163) for these terms is as follows:

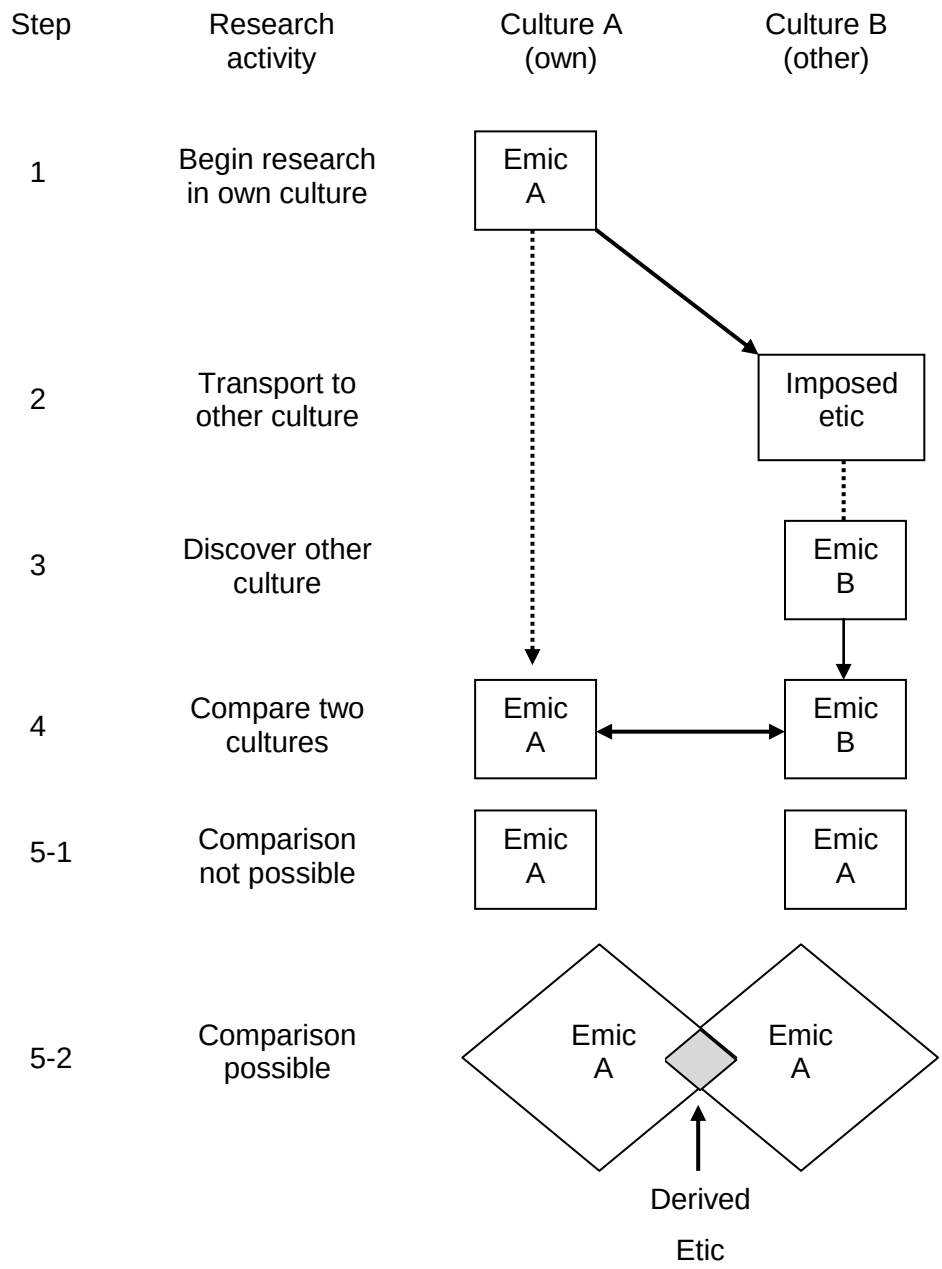
> The term "emic" identifies information provided by a native from a native's point of view as determined by his/her cultural setting, experience and available knowledge. The term "etic" identifies the perspective and categories of thought of the investigator or interpreter as determined by his/her different social, historical and cultural location, experience and available knowledge.

Or, as defined by Pilch (2011:5):

> The terms emic and etic are two different viewpoints from which one studies human behaviour: etic is a view from outside the system under study; emic is a view from within the system under study. Both viewpoints or approaches are an integral part of the discipline of cross-cultural psychology.

[76] See the work of Harris (1968:568-604, 1976) for a discussion of the development and history of the use of emic and etic in anthropological research.

This integral part that emics and etics play in cross-cultural studies is an integral part of a social scientific study of the New Testament documents. In Pilch's (2011:5-7) monograph on alternate states of consciousness, the following schematic representation is given of how emics and etics are elated to one another, and how the working methodology of these two terms flow:



Pilch (2011:6)[77]

1) The researcher begins in his or her own specific culture to describe and investigate a certain phenomenon, for example ASC, by using the language he or she knows (Emic A).
2) The researcher then transports this analysis to culture B (the one that is being investigated) which leads to an imposed etic.[78]
3) This step is the point where the researcher should come to a halt and suspend the reading from his or her own culture. The aim now turns to discovering the social and cultural script of culture B.
4) After these discoveries the researcher will be able to compare emic A and B with one another.
5) In the final step there can be one of two results from this comparison: 1) There are no points of commonality between emic A and B, and they are incompatible with one another. This will result in returning to step 1 and starting again. 2) If a comparison is possible between emic A and B there will be an overlap between them. "The overlapping segment of the comparison is the 'derived etic'; that aspect of human behaviour that can be considered universal" (Pilch 2011:7).

One further remark can be added to the explanation and diagram of Pilch (2011). In the overlapping of emic A and B it is important to note that there will always be segments that do not overlap. This serves as a reminder to the researcher that any understanding, interpretation or explanation always have a certain amount of cultural specific presuppositions (the non-overlapping sections). Although the derived etic can be

[77] See also the discussion of Berry (*et al.* 2002:291-292).
[78] This imposed etic is seen in the *genre* research when the images and symbols of revelation is described as being "supernatural" and "out of this world", when it is seen as standing apart from reality. Where in actual fact for the author of Revelation, as for the entire first century Mediterranean person there is "no word ... that can be correctly glossed "supernatural."..... [The] major distinction for the ancients was between the Creator [i.e., God] and creation [i.e., the physical and spiritual world]" (Pilch 2011:4). This is also clear in translations of the texts such as *inter alia* Revelation 1:10 where the phrase "ἐν πνεύματι" is translated as "in the Spirit," with "Spirit" capitalised (ESV; KJV; NLT; NIV; RSV). The implication being that this "Spirit" refers to the "Holy Spirit" (the third of the Trinity). When this phrase could just as easily be translated as "being in a sky power / wind" or "in a prophetic spirit" (Cf. Malina & Pilch 2000:37).

considered as universal, it always stands in a dynamic relationship with that what is particular of each culture.

3.3 ALTERNATE STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

3.3.1 Introduction: Defining alternate states of consciousness

When describing ASC experiences, it is important to note the plural form "states", and not "state", in ASC's. The use of "states", instead of "state", takes cognisance of the fact that there are "various kinds and degrees of altered consciousness … available in each culture and even in each subset" (Pilch 2002a:106). For example, ASC could include states of consciousness such as dreaming, sleeping (without dreaming), hypnagogic (drowsiness before sleep), hypnopompic (semi-consciousness preceding waking), hyper alert, lethargic, hysteria, fragmentation, meditative states, trance states, ecstatic states[79], reverie, daydreaming, internal scanning, coma, and hypnosis (Craffert 2010:129; see also Malina & Pilch 2000:5).[80] The *Human Relations Area Files* at Yale University has estimated that these panhuman experiences (ASC) are experienced in an institutionalised form in 80% of societies in the Mediterranean world (Pilch 2002a:104).[81]

[79] It is important to take note of the difference between trance and ecstatic states. A trance state would be one induced by meditation (the *via negativa*), calming activities and an exceptional high tuning of the trophotropic activity in the brain which could lead to a so-called hypertrophotropic state (see below for more on this state). Ecstatic experiences are brought on by an exceptional high tuning of the ergotropic activity in the brain by way of, for example, frenzied dancing which leads to an eruption of euphoria and/or very strong emotions that could lead to a so-called hyperergotropic state (the *via positiva*; Pilch 2002a:108; D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b:8-9, 22-31; see also Appendix A).

[80] In this list the limitations of language can be seen with regard to the naming of the different states. Although hypnosis and trance are separated from each other, one of the subgroups of trance experiences listed by Pilch (2002a:106) is a hypnotic or dazed state of consciousness. It also shows the importance of retaining the plurality of states. Hypnosis can further be specified by categories such as regression hypnosis (for recovering lost memories), a hypnotic state where the person being hypnotised is susceptible to suggestions (suggestion hypnosis), and neuro-linguistic programming (cf. Cannon n.d.; Concept hypnotherapy 2014; Ledochowski 2008).

[81] This estimate is supported by cross-cultural research from anthropological publications such as Adams (1997), El-Aswad (2010), Csordas (1997), Goodman (1969, 1990), Saethre (2007), Winkelman (1986, 2004, 2011, 2013c), and Winkelman (*et al.* 1982). See the discussion below (§ 3.3.4) for more detail on the anthropological basis of ASC.

Apart from the problematic question of which experiences should be considered as ASC experiences and which are not[82], there is also the problem regarding the definition of ASC. James (2010), in 1902, preferred to speak of "mystic experiences", and define these by listing four characteristics that such an experience needs to include to be classified as "mystic": First, *ineffable* meaning; one cannot really put these experiences into words. Only those who themselves have had such an experience can truly understand when listening to a description by someone who had such an experience. Second, it has to have a *noetic quality*; this gives these experiences an authoritative epistemological quality which leads to new insights into the self and life. Third and fourth, they are *transient* in nature and a *feeling of passivity* is felt by the "participant" when he or she is in such a mystical state (James 2010:343-344). For James (2010:349) these mystical experiences are of such a profound nature that he states: "No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness [ASC] quite disregarded."[83]

Charles T. Tart (1969:1-2) defines an "altered state of consciousness" as a state in which a person "clearly feels a *qualitative* shift in his pattern of mental functioning, that is, he feels not just a quantitative shift (more or less alert), but also that some quality or qualities of his mental processes are *different*". In light of his description of "normal consciousness", as the state in which a person is certain that he/she is in when awake, but does not need to think that he/she is now in *this normal state* of consciousness, one

[82] William James' remarks concerning ASC in 1902 already highlighted the problem of which states should be regarded as ASC. He states that "our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the flimsiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different" (James 2010:349). This makes it clear that, when speaking of ASC experiences, it is important not to confuse "altered" with "alternative"; alternative implies that a different consciousness is entered, whereas ASC is an alteration of the same consciousness, another type of consciousness over the one special type of consciousness that man is normally living in (cf. D'Aquili & Newberg 1996; Newberg & D'Aquili 2000; Swaab 2014; see also Winkelman 2013c).

[83] When looking at the life and work of James the deeply personal nature of these experiences becomes clear. Lectures 16 and 17 of James (2010:342-386) begins with a personal confession that he himself has never truly had first-hand experience of these forms of consciousness and that he "can speak of them only at second hand" (James 2010:342). This does not mean that James did not experience any of these forms of consciousness. In 1882 he submitted a paper to the journal *Mind* on the philosophy of Hegel. After the submission he induced a "mystical state" by the use of "nitrous-oxide-gas", of which he writes in an appendix to the article that this mystical state made him "understand better than ever before the strength and the weakness of Hegel's philosophy" (James 1882:206; cf. Presti 2011:22-23).

understands Tart's (1969) description of consciousness as being "conscious of being conscious."[84]

Ludwig (1969:9), in the same publication as Tart (1969), regards altered states of consciousness

> as any mental state(s), induced by various physiological, psychological or pharmacological manoeuvres or agents, which can be recognized subjectively by the individual himself (or by an objective observer of the individual) as representing a sufficient deviation in subjective experience or psychological functioning from certain general norms for that individual during alert, waking consciousness.

In both the understanding of Tart (1969) and Ludwig (1969), as in the case of James (2010) above, it is important to note the strong individualistic nature of these experiences.

Pilch (2011:1), working with the insights of Erika Bourguignon (1924-2015) on ASC, postulates a definition of ASC as:

> ASCs are defined as conditions in which sensations, perceptions, cognition and emotions are altered. These are characterized by changes in seeing, perceiving, thinking and feeling. In addition, these states modify the relation of the individual to the self, the body, one's sense of identity and the environment of time, space or other people. They are induced by modifying sensory input either directly or indirectly.

From these definitions it is clear that what ASC experiences all have in common is that they alter the person's perception of consciousness in such a way that he or she becomes conscious of being conscious in a qualitative different way than what they perceive as normal. This alteration has a direct influence on the person's understanding of himself/herself, the world in its totality and their understanding thereof, as well as their relationship with other people.

[84] An analogy to this would be a fish in water. The fish lives its life in water without realising that it is in water, Tart's (1969) understanding of being in a normal state of consciousness. But when this fish realises that it is in water, when it comes to a *qualitative* different understanding of this water in which it is in, this would be an altered state of consciousness.

3.3.2 Neurological insights

3.3.2.1 Introduction

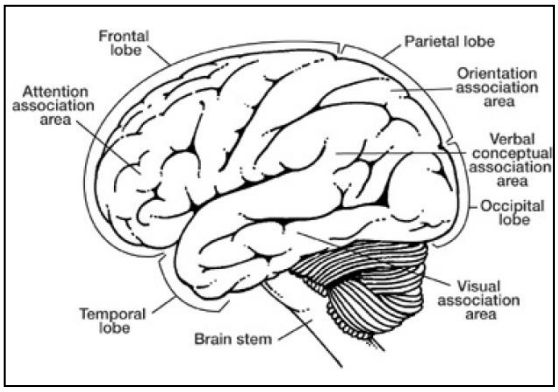
Tart (1969:1), in 1969, stated that "our knowledge of ASCs is too incomplete at this time for a tight conceptualiszation" of this phenomenon. However, because of neurological advances, researchers are now in a position to talk more specific, exact and cognisant when discussing ASC.[85]

In neurological research, the term ASC is referred to as Absolute Unitary Being (AUB). AUB defines and describes the same phenomenon as ASC experiences. The AUB state is the highest form of ASC experience. Baseline reality is deemed as normal consciousness, and from there follows different levels of unitary states (US) a person can enter into; the highest of these being AUB. AUB is experienced by a person if he/she loses all sense of the self and becomes one with the Universe, the Void or God, depending on the religious tradition the person is from (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b).

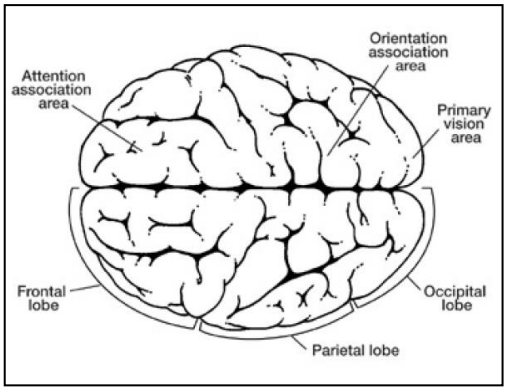
D'Aquili and Newberg (1998) notes that there are those in history who could be deemed as being more mystical and in touch with the mystical realms of God and gods, being able to reach *unio mystica*, the Void or Nirvana. They, however, also note that all human beings are essentially hard-wired, and therefore able to experience profoundly deep religious experiences (mystic experiences) because of the working of the structure and mechanics of the brain (D'Aquili & Newberg 1998:198).

[85] It should not be taken as a presupposition that through research we are able to dismiss the mystical aspects of these experiences. Neurological research is not meant to be taken as saying that these ASC experiences can be reduced and fully understood in terms of neuropsychological processes. As observed by D'Aquili and Newberg (1993b:33), neuropsychology cannot give an answer as to which state of reality, normal or alternate, is more real. "Whatever is anterior to the experience of God and the multiple contingent reality of everyday life is in principle unknowable, since that which is in any way known must be a transformation wrought by the brain. One can only stand speechless before reality: the *Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans*" (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b:34). This same awe of reality is also expressed by Presti (2011:21), who observes that a person "sometimes speaks of 'ordinary consciousness' as the awareness that accompanies 'ordinary' waking life, as if there is anything merely ordinary about such an awesome phenomenon." Thus it should be clear that the neurological basis that is given below is not a reductionist view of ASCs as merely something conjured up by the imaginative brain of the one who experiences it.

3.3.2.2 Structure and mechanics of the brain



A view of the brain from the side



Top view of the brain

The front of the brain in both figures are to the left

(Newberg, D'Aquili & Rause 2001:19, 20)

On the most basic levels of the brain, the neural system of all living beings is quite similar. The most basic function, or the most basic of unit, which the brain relies on to function (the nerve cell), is the same for all living beings with a brain (Newberg *et al*. 2001:15). What separates man from animals is the development of the so-called cerebral cortex, which is normally considered as the seat of human nature. It is in the cerebral cortex that the processing centres or association areas of the brain are situated (see figures above), as well as the "neo cortex." Of this neo cortex, Newberg (*et al.* 2001:19) writes that it, "gave us the cerebral intelligence that separates humans so decisively from other animals and enables us to create language, art, myth and culture":[86]

> The *Homo sapiens* neocortex, so much larger than in any other species, has added all that is distinctly human. The neocortex is the seat of thought; it contains the centres that put together and comprehends what the senses perceive. It adds to a feeling, what we think about – and allows us to have feelings about ideas, art, symbols, imaginings.
>
> (Goleman 1995:11).[87]

[86] See the illustration given by Joseph (1990:88) on the neocortex and limbic cortex of a human, monkey, cat and rat. It should be noted that this does not mean that the consciousness of animals is less complex than that of humankind (cf. the pioneering work of Darwin, 2015, originally published in 1872; Montgomery 2015; Winkelman 2011a:29-30). See also Chevalier-Skolnikoff (2006).

[87] See Goleman's (1995:9-12) short but excellent discussion on the evolution of the brain and how this is reflected in the development of the brain in an embryo. See also the more specialised work of Swaab (2014).

Of all these centres (association areas in the figures above) four of them are of great importance in constructing a model for the neurophysiological basis of human behaviour and mystical or ASC experiences. These tertiary association areas[88] are the visual-, orientation-, attention- and verbal-conceptual association areas.

The importance of these tertiary (third) association areas becomes apparent when considering how the brain receives and interprets incoming stimuli. The primary receptive areas of the brain receive an external input directly, without any interpretation or association. At this point, only patterns of lines, shapes and colours are identified. There is no conscious understanding and identification of the stimuli input. These inputs are then relayed to the secondary visual cortex. On this level an association is made between the patterns of lines, shapes and colours, to produce an image that is consciously "known" by the observer (D'Aquili & Newberg 1999:31-32).[89] On this secondary level of association there is no personal or emotional connotations to the image; this will only happen once the sensory input moves to the tertiary association areas. It is the tertiary association areas "in conjunction with the limbic system and autonomic nervous system, [that] help generate these emotional responses to the objects that are identified by the tertiary centres" (D'Aquili & Newberg 1999:32).

The first association area in the tertiary level is the *visual association area*. This area receives the bulk of information from the secondary association area. As soon as the information is received and processed by the visual association area, an appropriate emotional response is given. The reason for this immediate emotional response is because of the situation of the amygdala and hippocampus within this area. It is

[88] These areas are called association areas because "they help associate all the complex processing that occurs in the brain" (Newberg & D'Aquili 2000:58).

[89] So-called visual agnosia can serve here as an illustration of the complexity of brain function and association areas. In this condition objects are detected via the primary association area, but the observer loses the ability to evoke meaning and cannot identify these stimuli input (Joseph 1990:240-241). At the same time the person would have the full ability to navigate through a congested room without any problems (D'Aquili & Newberg 1999:32). Thus, in essense, the "precept becomes stripped of its meaning" (Joseph 1990:240). This not only illustrates the complexity of the brain, but also warns against a reductionist view on how the brain works. At the same time it highlights the import of the secondary and tertiary association areas.

because of this visual association area that a person is able to fix his/her visual focus on an object and determine whether it is of importance or not.

> Thus, visual association area neurons are activated when an object of interest enters the visual field. This, coupled with an area of the brain that helps in visual fixation and orienting ourselves with regard to the object (the orientation association area), allows for objects of interest to be detected and fixated upon.
>
> (D'Aquili & Newberg 1999:33)

The o*rientation association area* is the second area of the tertiary level of the brain. Although this area primarily receives somaesthetic information (stimuli via touch and body position), it is also able to receive and analyse visual, auditory and verbal-conceptual information. This area functions as an interpretative centre in the brain and interprets the stimuli that it receives (whether somaesthetic, visual, auditory or verbal-conceptual) specifically in relation to the self (the knowing subject). It is through this association area that higher-order information is analysed and integrated. With regard to ASC experiences such as the out of body phenomenon, it is the orientation association area that allows a person to generate a three-dimensional body image characteristic of such experiences (D'Aquili & Newberg 1999:33; see also Newberg & D'Aquili 1994).

The third association area, the *attention association area*, is the one with the most intricate and broadest connection with the rest of the brain. It is richly interconnected with the limbic system, but also with all the other secondary and tertiary sensory association cortices. It is through this area that a person has the ability to focus his/her attention intently on a goal. Through this area external somatic movement can be directed to achieve a certain goal (for e.g., reaching for a certain object), and cognitive functions such as conscious thoughts can also be intently focused on a certain abstract idea. The importance of this area is its intricate nature. Because of the strong connection with the limbic system, and secondary and other tertiary association areas, it follows that if any sensory stimuli, abstract or concrete, is the focus of this area, it will determine the actions of the person in a profound way. The *attention association area*

can be seen as the seat of the will of a person, but also the seat of intentional decision making and intentional-purposeful action (D'Aquili & Newberg 1999:37).[90]

The final association area is the *verbal-conceptual association area*. This area is rightfully called the association area of the four association areas (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993a:182; 1999:37; Newberg & D'Aquili 2000:61). Here all the other association areas in the brain converge, and a person is able to make certain connotations, draw parallels, and come to a fuller understanding of the stimuli input. The verbal-conceptual association area is,

> responsible for the generation of abstract concepts and relating them to words. It accomplishes this task through rich interconnections with the language centre.... [It] is also involved in conceptual comparisons, the ordering of opposites, the naming of objects and categories of objects, and higher-order grammatical and logical operations.
>
> (D'Aquili & Newberg 1999:37)

Thus, it is because of the *verbal-conceptual association area* that abstract models can be constructed and brought into relation with the world that these models represent.

3.3.2.3 The limbic system

The association areas of the human brain are some of the most recent developed areas of research in the neocortex from an evolutionary point of view. To understand the full implications of these association areas, and how they are associated with ASC experiences, it is necessary to look at the more primitive brain structure[91], namely the limbic system.[92]

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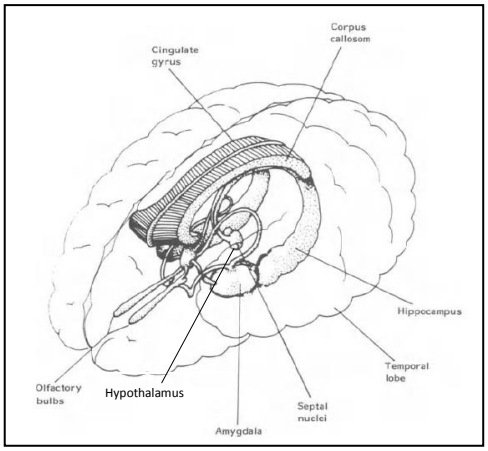
[90] It is not difficult to see how insights regarding this association area of the brain can contribute to the understanding of a text that aims to convince its hearers to be motivated to intentionally and purposefully choose a certain lifestyle (Collins 1984; DeSilva 1996, 1998, 2008a, 2008b; Howard-Brook & Gwyther 1999), and to evoke certain intentional emotions in the hearers (Decock 2004; DeSilva 2008d, 2008e; Hanson 1993).

[91] Primitive should not be interpreted as referring to a less complex brain structure, nor as a derogatory term. The limbic system is only termed "primitive" because of its position in the evolutionary line of the brain. The limbic system is the part of the brain referred to by some as the "reptilian brain" (Joseph 1990:87), from the "Age of the Reptiles" (Goleman 1995:10). This part of the brain is "a series of nuclei that first made their phylogenetic appearance long before man walked upon the earth. Although over the course of evolution a new brain (neocortex) has developed, *we remain creatures of emotion"* (Joseph 1990:87).

[92] Regardless of the progress being made in neurology over the decades, and the development of the unparalleled complex neocortex in man, researchers have only started to discover the strong influence that the limbic system has on a person's actions and the complexity of emotions that accompany this (cf.



Limbic system nuclei, superior-lateral aspect

(Joseph, 1990:111; with addition from D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b:13)

Two terms need defining before continuing with the discussion, namely trophotropic and ergotropic. The trophotropic, or energy conserving system in the brain, "is involved with the homeostasis of the organism, with vegetative functions and with a subjective sense of quiescence" (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993a:183). Trophotropic tuning is seen as a top-down process, meaning that the stimulus for the ASC is brought about primarily from the brain (top) and then flows out to the rest of the body (down). An example of tuning methods in this top-down process would be intense concentration or meditation of sorts (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993a:8, 1993b:186-191). The stimulation of the trophotropic system leads to an ASC experience brought about by hyper*trophotropic* tuning, that is, a "state of 'slow' ritual behaviour as opposed to 'rapid' or even frenzied ritual behaviour" (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b:8). An ergotropic state, on the other hand, is an energy expending system (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993a:182-183). Hyper*ergotropic*[93] is brought

Darwin 2015; Ekman 2003; ed. Ekman 2006, 2013; LeDoux 2003; Montgomery 2014; Swaab 2014). See also Ekman (2014) and (Ekman & Rosenberg 2005).

[93] Apart from hypertrophotropic and –ergotropic tuning, there is also what is known as hypertrophotropic tuning with ergotropic eruption, and hyperergotropic tuning with trophotropic eruption. In the first case the trophotropic (top-down) stimulus results in a "spill over" and the ergotropic system becomes activated. The result of this would be a feeling of absolute bliss or tranquillity accompanied by a tremendous amount of energy being released. With the second tuning the same results would occur, but with the ergotropic tuning being the primary stimulus. Thus, through rapid ritualistic behaviour (e.g., sufi dancing or marathon running), the ergotropic system is stimulated to such an extent that spill over takes place and the trophotropic system is activated. The result of this would be a tremendous release of energy

about by “various circumstances where output of motor activity is continuous and rhythmical, as in ‘rapid’ ritual behaviour, dancing, long-distance running, swimming, rock climbing” (D’Aquili 1993b:8). Whereas the trophotropic state is one induced by a top-down process, the ergotropic state is a bottom-up experience. The stimulus of the rapid ritual behaviour through which the body (bottom) goes provides the catalyst needed for the brain (up) to enter into an ASC. When the practitioner enters into an ergotropic state it “feels as if he were channelling vast quantities of energy effortlessly through his consciousness” (D’Aquili & Newberg 1993b:8).[94]

Both the trophotropic and ergotropic systems are connected in an intricate way to the limbic system of the brain, as well as to the entire brain (cf. Joseph 1990:87-137). The limbic system was part of the earliest evolutionary part of the brain. This part of the brain was, and still is, essentially linked to appropriating the correct emotional responses to a situation to ensure the survival of the living organism. Thus, it makes sense that emotion and memory plays an important part in this structure. Joseph (1990:97) states of the limbic system:

> Many members of Western civilization experience emotion as a potentially overwhelming force that warrants and yet resists control – as something irrational that can happen to you... Perhaps in part, this schism between the rational and the emotional is attributable to the raw energy of emotion having its source in the nuclei of the ancient limbic lobe – what some have referred to as the reptilian brain, a series of nuclei that first made their phylogenetic appearance long before man walked upon this earth. Although over the course of evolution a new brain (neocortex) has developed, we remain creatures of emotion... The old limbic brain has not been replaced. [The limbic systems] are pre-eminent in the mediation and expression of emotional, motivational, sexual and social behaviour and that controls and monitors internal homeostasis and basic needs, such as hunger and thirst.[95]

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accompanied by a feeling of “flow” or “blissful calmness” (D’Aquili & Newberg 1993b:8-9; see also Goleman 1995:90-95).

[94] Ergotropic tuning is associated with the so-called *Via Positiva*, where the meditator intently focuses on a specific image. Trophotropic tuning is associated with the so-called *Via Negativa,* where the meditator intentionally focuses on emptying the mind. See also D’Aquili and Newberg (1993a, 1993b), and Appendix A of this study for a more details of ergotropic and trophotropic tuning.

[95] Again it is important not to view this description of the limbic system from a reductionist view, thinking that these “raw emotions” which motivates “sexual and social behaviour” and “hunger and thirst” are only instincts that need to be satisfied. The depths of the emotional brain of man and animal are only just beginning to be discovered. The anthropologist and behavioural-psychologist researcher, Paul Ekman, observes that emotions “determine the quality of our lives.... Emotions can override what most psychologists have rather simple-mindedly considered the most powerful fundamental motives that drive our lives: hunger, sex and the will to survive. People will not eat if they think the only food available is disgusting.... Emotions trump the hunger drive.... And despair can overwhelm even the will to live,

The structures of the limbic system that are important for this discussion are the hypothalamus, reticular activating system, the amygdala, and the hippocampus.[96] Of all the structures in the brain the *hypothalamus* is one of the most ancient and has kept a consistent structure throughout the entire evolutionary process of the brain (Joseph 1990:91). Although it is made up of several nuclear subgroups, the hypothalamus can be divided into lateral and medial nuclei (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b:12). The primary function of the hypothalamus is the involvement of aspects of endocrine, hormonal, visceral and autonomic functions; all of which form a part of the homeostatic function in the brain. This structure further mediates and/or exerts control over certain emotions and functions that have parasympathetic activities with regard to homeostasis (e.g., controlling one's reaction to anger; Joseph 1990:91). Therefore, the medial hypothalamus has a trophotropic function in the limbic system.

In contrast the *reticular activating system* has an ergotropic function in the limbic system. This system primarily receives important stimuli from the lateral hypothalamus and other limbic structures, which it then relates to the neocortex for optimal wakefulness.

In the evolutionary process of the brain the *amygdala* is more recent than the hypothalamus, and has a mediation function with regard to higher-order emotion and motivation (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b:12, 14; cf. also LeDoux 2003). Although the amygdala is first ergotropic in function, it also has some trophotropic functions (Greenstein & Greenstein 2000:324-325). One of the key functions of the amygdala with regard to ASC experiences is the link it has to ritualistic behaviour. The amygdala, in relation to the ergotropic function, "acts to perform environmental surveillance and to trigger orienting responses as well as to mediate the maintenance of attention if

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motivating a suicide. Emotions triumph over the will to live" (Ekman 2003:xii, xvi). See also Goleman (1995, 1998) and http://www.paulekman.com/ for more work done by Ekman on the importance of emotions.

[96] An in-depth discussion of these neurological structures falls outside of the scope of this study. For a more detailed discussion, see Joseph (1990) and the illustrated discussion of Greenstein and Greenstein (2000:316-335). From a more religious perspective, see D'Aquili (1978), D'Aquili and Newberg (1993a, 1993b, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000), Newberg and D'Aquili (2000), and Newberg (*et al*. 2000).

something of interest or importance appears in the environment" (D'Aquili & Newberg, 1993b:14). In this the link between the association areas discussed above the amygdala becomes clear. Through the primary, secondary, and tertiary association areas, a person is able to see the surrounding environment. Certain "rituals" and "symbols" would be identified and seen in a religious context. The amygdala would then be able to associate these with the correct emotional response (for e.g., awe, fear or disgust depending on the association being made).[97]

The last structure that needs to be briefly noted is the *hippocampus*. The hippocampus consists of an anterior and posterior region, and resembles the shape of a telephone receiver. The hippocampus is greatly influenced by the amygdala, and important functions are assigned to this structure such as "memory, new learning, cognitive mapping of the environment, attention and some orienting reactions" (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b:16). The primary functions of the hippocampus are homeostasis and trophotropic, but as with all the other structures discussed above, it is not solely trophotropic in that it can also be ergotropic.

This above discussion of the neurophysiological structures, which are to be found in all of humanity, shows that mankind has the "hardware" to experience an ASC, as long as the correct stimuli is provided. Stated differently, the above discussion on neurophysiological structures provides a universal neurobiological basis for ASC experiences. In the next section the insights from anthropologists, using this neurological data for studying different cultures, will be discussed (Goodman 1990; Saethre 2007; Winkelman 2013b, 2013c).

3.3.3 Anthropological insights

3.3.3.1 Introduction

Winkelman (2011a:23) observes that cross-cultural perspectives,

> show both similarities in the experiences of altered consciousness (AC) that implicate biological factors as the basis for similarities across cultures, time and space, as well as cultural differences in the manifestations of these potentials that implicates social factors.

[97] For this kind of association made with symbols in Revelation, see Decock (2004) and Hanson (1993).

> Individual and group experiences of altered consciousness may vary in many ways, but it is commonalities and recurrent patterns, rather than unique differences, that are crucial to understanding AC.

The above discussion on the neurobiological basis for ASC experiences, "provides the foundation for an approach that characterizes AC in terms of an *integrative mode of consciousness* that reflects systemic features of brain function" (Winkelman 2011a:23).

Working with the cross-cultural research of Winkelman (1986, 2004, 2011a, 2011b, 2013a, 2013b), it is important to be cognisant of the data used in compiling these studies. Winkelman (2013a:51) explicitly states that he proposed, "to empirically determine the validity of the *shaman* concept by a study using the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample (SCCS)." This SCCS, that forms the basis of Winkelman's (2013a) study, as well as his previous work (cf. Winkelman 1986), clearly states that two "of the great world regions – the Circum-Mediterranean and South America – were seriously under-represented" (Murdock & White 1969:332, 336; cf. also Winkelman 2013a:52). Regardless of this under-representation, the data contained in the SCCS and research such as that of Winkelman's (2013) which builds on it, is of great importance for understanding ASC in more detail.

3.3.3.2 ASC, shamans and shamanism

Felicitas D. Goodman (1990:11) started her anthropological studies in religions of native societies under the guidance of Erika Bourguignon (1924-2015). Before attending Bourguignon's lectures, Goodman had already completed some extensive reading on the religious systems of non-Western societies. In the lectures of Bourguignon, Goodman came to a different understanding of ASC. This understanding of Goodman underlines the cross-cultural anthropological research in this area, namely that such ""altered states of consciousness" or "trances" were entirely normal.... [Such] behaviour ... was institutionalized in many societies, part and parcel of a large number of religious observances" (Goodman 1990:11). In 1973 Goodman and Bourguignon collaborated in a study in which they compared 488 indigenous societies around the world and found that 90% of them used some form of institutionalised method of inducing alternate

states of conscious experiences (see The Cuyamungue Institute 2016a).[98] This stands in stark contrast with some of the views of Western societies[99] where most of these methods and states of consciousness is seen as some form of psychological disorder,[100] disease, or as belonging to the realm of abnormalities (Ackerknecht 1943).[101]

Although, from a neurobiological perspective, these ASC experiences are available and accessible to everyone, each culture through the ages identified a certain person or persons (in some cases an entire lineage) as possessing special abilities in accessing these states of AC. This person or persons are known as shaman(s) or belonging to the institutionalised system of shamanism.[102]

A group's understanding of a shaman, shamanism and/or ASC, is closely related to the cosmology[103] of the group, as well as the group's epistemology.[104] These aspects are imperative for understanding AC and ASC.[105]

[98] See also the blog post of the Cuyamungue Institute's website of Alden (2016), and the contributions of Andreas (2016), Bukker (2016), Dashu (2016), Fenkle (2016), Pilch (2011) and Neville (2016) for discussions on shamans and shamanisms in different time periods and different cultures.
[99] In contrast to previous editions of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* the 5th edition does take into account the cultural differences of different societies when classifying mental disorders (DSM 201:14-15)
[100] In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), in the section on the disorder of dissociative identity, it states as a first criteria a disruption "of identity characterized by two or more distinct personality states, which may be described in some cultures as an experience of possession. The disruption in identity involves marked discontinuity in sense of self and sense of agency, accompanied by related alterations in effect, behaviour, consciousness, memory, perception, cognition, and / or sensory-motor functioning. These signs and symptoms may be observed by others or reported by the individual" (DSM-5 2013:292). In fairness to psychology and the DSM-5 (2013) it needs to be noted that the when discussing the general definition of hallucination the DSM-5 (2013:87-88) states that hallucinations "may be a normal part of religious experience in certain cultural contexts."
[101] Winkelman (2013:48) states in this regard: "The sceptical perspectives of Europeans provide a view of shamanistic phenomena as a representation of the irrationality of the non-Western "other", with the sensationalistic approaches characterizing the shaman as a theatrical performer who used deceit to control a simple-minded community" (see also Winkelman 2011b:159).
[102] The terms shaman and shamanism originated in the language of the Tungus of North-Central Asia, and came to be used in English via Russian (The Cuyamungue Institute 2016b). For discussions on the controversy of the use the terms shaman and shamanism, see Winkelman's (2013a) well balanced article on shamanism from a cross-cultural perspective.
[103] Cosmology here not only refers to a group's worldview (for e.g., created as heaven, earth and underworld). It also includes their understanding of the relationships between the visible reality and the spiritual reality, thus, how the spirits (and the shaman) influence the lives of humans. With regard to the shaman, the question is how the shaman is chosen by the spirits for his or her task as mediator.

3.3.3.2.1 Cosmology

A short definition of the shaman and shamanism can be stated as follows: A "shaman" is a person with a natural and sensitive disposition to the connectedness of the physical reality with the spiritual reality.[106] "Shamanism" is the rituals, practices and characteristics that are inherently part of a shaman's life. These two short definitions are supported by research done on the shaman-complex.[107] Winkelman (2004, 2013) does not give a definition of the shaman-complex, but describes it by means of a specific complex of characteristics[108] found in the magico-religious practitioners in the hunter-gatherer, simple pastoral and agricultural societies. These characteristics are the result of a synthesis of a body of ethnographic studies on shamanistic practices (Winkelman 2013:48). Of all the characteristics identified and incorporated into the understanding of the shaman-complex, *soul flight* or the ASC experience is the most common and well attested.[109] Soul flight forms such an integral part of this complex that it is seen as its

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[104] The discussion of the relationship between epistemology and ASC to follow will focus on the more general connotation between epistemology and ASC. The cultural determinacy of epistemology will be discussed in the Chapter 4.

[105] The important relationship between cosmology (a person's or persons' relationship with the spiritual world), the understanding of reality (cosmological epistemology), and specific social-cultural knowledge (ethno-epistemology) to understand AC and ASC finds support in the research of El-Aswad (2010) who studies dreams in the Egyptian cities Tanta and two adjacent villages (Shibshir al-Hissa, 8 km north of Tanta; and al-Rajdiyya, 6 km northeast of Tanta). In his study on dreams in these geographic locations his focus is not on the psychological and/or religious interpretations of the dreams, but rather on taking "seriously the triple dimensions of Egyptian worldview: the person, society, and cosmos" (El-Aswad 2010:442). The spiritual dimension is not the focus of El-Aswad's study, although this dimension is noted and taken seriously. "Dreams embody multidimensional aspects and as such serve as cultural means of dialoguing with the visible and invisible, constructing and reconstructing the reality.... Though dreams form personal experiences, they can be socially narrated, discussed, and interpreted as a cosmic entryway into different realms of reality as well as a symbolic means of transforming that reality" (El-Aswad, 2010:442)

[106] The use of the term "reality", and not "realities", is a deliberate choice. In cultures in which shamanism is part of the norm of the day, the physical reality and the spiritual reality does not form two different realities. It is only by knowing both of these realties, experiencing both and accepting both on the same level that a person can hope to grasp reality in its entirety.

[107] A "shaman-complex" includes the terms shaman and shamanism.

[108] See Winkelman (2013b:79), building on the work of Mircea Eliade (Shamanism: Archaic techniques of ecstasy) who "characterized shamanism as a universally distributed practice involving use of ritual techniques to induce an alteration of consciousness (ecstasy) in order to enter into the spirit world." These ritualistic ecstatic experiences are part of the "society's most important cosmological, spiritual, religious, social and healing activities, providing the context for establishing the relationship of the individual to the group and bringing the spirits into the community" (Winkelman 2013a:48).

[109] Apart from the soul flight, that will be the focus of the discussion below, the following characteristics also form part of the shaman-complex: 1). The shaman is normally a charismatic group leader; female

signature feature (Winkelman 2011b:160, 172-173). Winkelman (1986:192) defines a soul flight or soul journey as “a trance state in which some aspect of the experient – soul, spirit or perceptual capacities – is thought to travel to or be projected to another place, generally a spirit world.” This indicates that a soul flight is essentially the same as an out of body-experience (OBE).[110]

It is not only important to take note of the neurobiological basis[111] for these kind of experiences, but also to look at the cultural-defined reasons why OBEs would be undertaken by the shaman. Neville (2016), referring to the abilities of the shaman to be a mediator between spirits and human beings via ASC experiences, writes the following: “The shaman would use his [or her] power to bring the people of the tribes closer and in harmony with the spirit world.... Often, in times of stress, hunger, chaos the shamanic belief system is relied upon to reduce tension and stress.” This shows that in times of crisis the community would come to the shaman, and they would use their ASC visions to perceive the world from a different perspective (Winkelman 2011b:173). Although the perspective of the world from the perspective of an OBE “invariably leads

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shamans are restricted in this sense to the non-reproductive periods. 2) The only form of “institutional” training a shaman undergoes is a visionary quest in which he or she is being inaugurated by the spirits via the spiritual world. 3) During the training period the shaman would induce deliberate states of ACs, and at the end of the training period a very specific initiation death-and-rebirth trance is induced. 4) Shamans have great power in controlling and warding of spirits. 5) The ability to be able to transform themselves into animal spirits. 6) Shamans have “professional” abilities such as healing, diagnosis, divination and assistance in hunting, all of which are integrally linked to the spiritual world (list composed from Winkelman 2011b, 2013a, 2013b). Neville (2016) compresses these characteristics into three common aspects found in shamanism: “[1] The belief in the existence of a world of spirits, mostly in animal form, that are capable of acting on human beings. The shaman is required to control or cooperate with these good and bad spirits for the benefit of his community. [2] The inducing of trance by ecstatic singing, dancing and drumming, when the shaman’s spirit leaves his or her body and enters the supernatural world. [3] The shaman treats some diseases, usually those of a psychosomatic nature, as well as helping the clan members to overcome their various difficulties and problems.”

[110] The most common form of OBEs is the so-called near-death-experience (cf. Newberg & D’Aquili 1994 for a neurological understanding of these experiences). In this study OBEs refer to any form of soul flight which can be undertaken at will by the shaman of a community.

[111] These kind of experiences are directly related to the orientation association area of the brain which allows a person to generate a three-dimensional body image (D’Aquili & Newberg 1999:33; Newberg & D’Aquili 1994). Important here is to keep in mind the interconnectedness of the entire brain structure and how all of the associate areas are connected to each other, how meaning is formed in the brain, and the intricate connection all of these structures have with the limbic system of the brain which is the seat of emotional reactions and the seat of memory and meaning (Joseph 1990). All of this will have an influence on what a person would see and encounter in their out of body journey.

to dualist perceptions of reality" (Winkelman 2011b:174), it would be erroneous to conclude that the spiritual and physical world is essentially separate from one another.

The cosmological basis of the shaman, as well as the community in which they exercise authority, is an animistic view of the world. This animism should not only be seen as the "attribution of human mental, personal and social qualities to unknown and natural phenomena" (Winkelman 2004:203). The animistic understanding of the shaman-complex is to be understood in a holistic cosmological view of nature, man and the spiritual. So Neville (2016):

> [I]t is obvious that the Shamanic Inuit[112] has a deep admiration and respect for their environment. Many natives believe that at the beginning humans and animals were the same and could morph back and forth between either forms. They believe that throughout time they made a full separation into two different types of entities. This, then, essentially supports their point that humans and their animal friends need to have a profound admiration of each other and protect each other's way of life.

Thus, in cultures with an institutional practice of ASC, the cosmological understanding is not a fragmented one; both the physical and the spiritual are inextricable intertwined with one another. This, in turn, relates to the epistemology of the group, also known as ethno-epistemology.

3.3.3.2.2 Ethno-epistemology

For a comprehensive reflection on alternate states of consciousness, a reflection on epistemology is also necessary. "Consciousness can be understood from an epistemological perspective as involving a knowing system[113], entailing relationship between knower and known mediated by self-object relationships" (Winkelman 2013b:82).[114] The link between a specific epistemological system and ASC becomes

[112] The designation Inuit (plural of Inuk), which can be translated as "the people", refers to the indigenous group of people inhabiting the Arctic regions of Greenland, Canada and Alaska.

[113] This knowing system could be expanded by referring to the awareness of a person of what he or she is capable to process and to place within a meaningful association frame of reference. These associations can include relations to the environment (how perceptions, thoughts and memories serve as a form of a template), and the self (how a person understands himself or herself and how this organism understands the identity of self and others; Winkelman 2013b:82).

[114] According to D'Aquili and Newberg (1993b, 1999), in AUB the dichotomy between the self and the object disappears, and a feeling of "absolute unity" is experienced (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b:10). This absolute unitary state, however, is still influenced by what the participant knows. Thus, a person's

clear when considering the definition of consciousness given above. For James (2010:349), a full understanding of the universe can only be achieved by taking ASC into account along with normal states of consciousness. Tart (1969) defined ASC as being aware or consciously knowing of being conscious in a qualitative way (cf. also Ludwig 1969).[115] Pilch (2011:1) defined ASC as "conditions in which sensations, perceptions, cognition and emotions are altered." Sensations, perceptions, cognition and emotions are all regulated by the brain, that is, the mind/consciousness of a person, and is thus also clearly linked with the neurobiological basis to what is known (epistemology).[116]

Out of body (OB) ASC experiences in the shaman-complex is differentiated from OB experiences such as the near death phenomenon, in that the first uses certain techniques of ecstasy in the interaction "with the spirit world on behalf of the community, particularly in healing divination, protection and finding game" (Winkelman 1997:394; see also Newberg & D'Aquili, 1994). Last, it is also important to note that the shaman has full control over his and her own consciousness as well as his or her quest and reason for undergoing such a quest to the spirit world via ASC.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In the above discussion, insights from neurology and anthropology were used aiming to find a basis for a neurobiological cross-cultural model that can be used to understand

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epistemology will influence the experience. This is an example of ASC *par excellence*, for although AUB results in such an absolute unity, the involvement of consciousness still needs to be taken into account.

[115] This stands in opposition to normal consciousness where a person does not need to think that he or she is in this state of consciousness (Tart 1969:1-2).

[116] A discussion of the distinction between the definition of brain and mind, and the distinction between the mind and consciousness/self, falls outside the scope of this research. Worth noting is D'Aquili and Newberg's (1999:22) point of view that there is "no method of experiencing the world, which includes the soul, other than through our senses, emotions and thoughts. These are certainly functions of the mind and brain. Thus, even if there is a sensible soul, our cognitive and emotional experiences of it must be mediated ultimately by the brain. Every other aspect of human experience that can be documented in living human beings must also be generated and modulated by the human brain and mind. This includes our daily experience of baseline reality [i.e., normal consciousness]... and 'extrasensory' abilities that might be possible, near-death-experiences [i.e., ASC], emotional responses and feelings, attitudes, thoughts" (cf. also Newberg & D'Aquili 2000; Winkelman 2010a). See also Swaab (2014:127-158, 167-188, 285-312) and the collection of essays in ed. Gallagher (2011:157-179, 204-227, 339-351, 633-653).

the phenomenon of ASC and accompanying experiences. In this regard, the following is deemed as important:

1. From a neurobiological perspective all people has the necessary “hardware” (neurological pathways), association areas and limbic system (brain structure) for experiencing an ASC.
2. ASCs, typified as a panhuman experience, occurs in an institutionalised form in 80-90% of societies. These ASC’s have common characteristics.
3. From a cross-cultural perspective, these common characteristics can best be grouped under the so-called shaman-complex. Of this shaman-complex, the ability to enter ASC and undertake a *soul flight* is one of the key characteristics.
4. Within the shaman-complex a soul flight occurs with a very specific aim in mind, namely to gain new insights (an epistemological aim) within a crisis situation, from an alternate (spiritual) reality for this physical reality (cosmology). In societies in which institutional forms of ASC occur, a holistic understanding of the world can only be achieved by taking into account the material world and spiritual world, that is, a holistic epistemology of the cosmos.

Most of the studies on ASC’s discussed above use ethnographic information from existing cultures and insights from neuroscience. Can these studies and insights be used to study ASC reports stemming form from the first century Mediterranean world? This question is the focus of Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Moving towards the emic paradigm (in their words)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 Nature, culture, and person

A common presupposition taken by the personality psychologists Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry Murray is that everyone "is in certain respects like all other people, like some other people, and like no other person" (Kluckhohn & Murray, in Little 2014:1). Malina (2001a:7) builds on this presupposition and states that all "human beings are entirely the same, entirely different and somewhat the same and somewhat different at the same time" (see also Pilch 2004:2). This study takes into account three areas that contribute to the formation of a person's personality and understanding of him-/herself: Nature (biological), cultural and personal. This can be presented schematically as follows:

The basic presupposition – Nature, Culture, Person

ALL PEOPLE ARE

↓

100% THE SAME = Nature – The area of the "objective", of physical "sensations", of Its.

↓

50% THE SAME
50% DIFFERENT = Culture – The area of the "social", of group-shared "conceptions", of We.

↓

100% DIFFERENT = Person – The area of the "subjective", of unique "perceptions," of I.

AT THE SAME TIME, SIMULTANEOUSLY, CONCURRENTLY

(Malina 2001a:8)

A comprehensive understanding of a society and its inhabitants, past or present, needs to take all three presuppositions seriously.

In Chapter 3 the 100% sameness of all people was discussed in the neurobiological basis for ASC experiences. According to this model, any person of past or present has the neurological capacity for experiencing ASC. Although not all societies will use the terminology and categories used in the descriptions of Chapter 3, the basis of an etic perspective justifies the use of terms unknown to a society. Winkelman (2013a:50) states that when "similar concepts are found cross-culturally, terminology must be developed to convey the similarity found in diverse places." This is stated in connection to the shaman-complex (Winkelman 2013a), but clearly also applies to the neurobiological basis described in Chapter 3.

The 50% sameness and 50% difference has also been addressed in Chapter 3, though not explicitly. From a cross-cultural perspective the shaman-complex[117] is seen as a universal phenomenon. But the meaning imbued to the shaman-complex and the accompanying aspects (ASC) comes from the specific cultural laden discourse.

> The society, country or culture of origin influences the way in which the visionary interprets an experience.... The experiences of one person are not the experiences of another ... neurophysiological events are not really vacuous, but always occur in the context of a belief system, a mythology and ideology. Trance experiences are thus filled with cultural significant and expected scenarios.... The understanding and interpretation of a vision derive from the culture, more specifically from what anthropologists call culture's latent discourse, or traditions of the culture, or "cultural dogma."
>
> (Pilch 2004:3-5)

With regard to ancient texts, along with society, country and culture of origins that influences the way a visionary interprets his or her experiences, the difference in time also needs to be considered. This gap in time needs also to be bridged. Most of the research done on the shaman-complex focuses on recent cultures, some of which still exist today. The people of the first-century Mediterranean world have long passed

[117] The shaman-complex includes ASC experiences. On the one hand these kind of experiences are taken as a universal phenomenon. On the other hand it is also needed to take into account how strongly the culture embeddedness "influences how our capacities [for such experiences] are developed. Some cultures extol these experiences while others vilify and block access to them" (Winkelman 2011a:24). But even "when there is cultural repression of altered consciousness, these experiences are nonetheless manifested because they reflect a biological basis and its inevitable expression in human experience" (Winkelman 2011a:24; see also Newberg & D'Aquili 1994; Whitehead 2011).

away, and their cultures' latent discourses have been silenced. All that researchers have are the texts, and this is what researchers need to work with (Oppenheim 1956).

4.1.2 Structure of Chapter

The first part of this Chapter will describe "culture latent discourse", and how this influences a person's understanding of him-/herself, others, and the self-world relationship. The second part presents witnesses on the occurrence of the shaman-complex phenomenon in the Ancient Near East (ANE) and the first-century Mediterranean world. The aim of this part of the Chapter will be to show that the shaman-complex, and accompanying phenomena such as soul flights and ecstatic experiences (ASC), can be identified in textual witnesses.

4.2 CULTURE, EPISTEMOLOGY AND PERSONHOOD

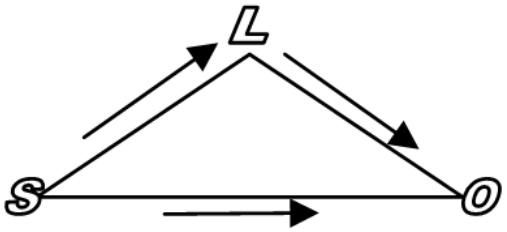
4.2.1 Importance of language

Chapter 3 gave a short discussion on the importance of language and how language is always connected to a specific culture. This shows the cultural connection to language. What needs further elaboration is the participants who form part of the speech-act (Herskovits 1955). Herskovits (1955:288) identifies three elements that "no system of speech" lacks; the sounds (phonetics), how these sounds are combined to form words, and how these combinations are connected to form meaningful grammatical constructs (semantics). All three these elements form the so-called "speech-act."[118] Referring to the act of verbal expression as a speech-act, it is emphasized that through the use of language a person is engaging in an act of constructing reality. "For human beings, there is no path from language to an independent, extra linguistic reality, for reality is present to us only in and through language.... Language itself ... is in turn culturally conditioned and subject to constant social transformation" (Schnelle 2009:31-32).

The implication of seeing a verbal action as more than just an expression of sounds, but as a concrete constructing action, implies that there should be certain actors

[118] The term "speech-act" is not used by Herskovits (1955) himself, but is derived from his understanding of any speech as a mode of action and not merely a mode of expression.

(participants) in this act. Wheelwright (1962) identifies these actors as the subject, the one who is expressing him- or herself, the object, thing that is being expressed, and the linguistic medium, the words that are being spoken. Of these three the "subject, object and linguistic medium play irreducible and inter-causative roles in the formation of what ... we may call reality" (Wheelwright 1962:26). He expresses this as follows in a schema:



(Wheelwright 1962:26-27)

In this scheme 'S' stands for the knowing subject, 'L' for the language in a broad sense that is available to 'S', and 'O' is the situation or object that 'S' wishes to express by means of 'L'. Wheelwright (1962:26-27) remarks that the "point to be stressed is that neither S or L nor O can be conceived as existing alone, apart from interplay[119] with both of the other two factors."

This same thought is expressed in the short statement by Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:3) that "wording is not meaning." Meaning (epistemology) rather derives from the social systems (culture) in which the wording (language) is phrased (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:3; see also Halliday 1976; Malina 2001a:15). Caputo (2013:14), whose statement is important to note for the discussions to follow, also states:

> We sublunary beings down below ... have to take our truths [i.e. understanding of reality] one at a time, depending on the where [i.e. space] and the when [i.e. time] (the language, culture, gender, body etc.) in which we find ourselves. We are always "situated", and that situation imposes a limit on us; but that limit also gives us an angle of entry, an approach, a perspective, and interpretation.

[119] When considering this interplay that "S", "L" and "O" has on one another it would be possible to replace the single arrows (→) in Wheelwright (1962) with double arrows (↔) to indicate the bilateral influence each has on the other.

4.2.2 Culture, epistemology and personhood

In the scheme of Wheelwright (1962:26-27) the 'S' stands for the knowing subject. Caputo (2013) and Schnelle (2009) are also of the opinion that there has to be such a knowing subject situated within a certain context in the process of speaking about reality. Regardless of which state of consciousness (normal or altered) one is referring to, there needs to be a conscious being knowing that he or she is in a normal or altered state of consciousness (Tart 1969). In short, there has to be a knowing 'self' that can witness what the 'self' is experiencing:

> For a while I was very quiet, then my entire body began vibrating very strongly. There was a strange pulling sensation coming from my ears and going towards my mouth, and a severe cramping of my face. Even after the rattle stopped, I had an awful time trying to open my mouth. It seemed to be locked and sealed.
>
> (Goodman 1990:48)[120]

If this self is long dead the experiences can be seen in the form of a written account: "Ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης ... ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι" (I John ... I was in the spirit; Rev 1:9a, 10a). Here then the relationship is not only between epistemology and culture, but between epistemology, culture and personhood (the I).

This relationship of epistemology, culture and personhood is epitomized by the so-called social constructionist theory of the self (Gergen 2011).[121] Since the publication of landmark works in sociology[122] it has become all the more apparent that the construction of the 'I' in the self is always done within a relational epistemological framework. The 'I' cannot be constructed without taken the influence of the 'we' into account.[123] This insight is important when considering the strong dyadic personality of the first-century Mediterranean world (Malina 2001a:58-80).[124]

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[120] This is a witness account of Doris given in Goodman's (1990) publication of a ritual posture that they performed in the 1980's for a television show. For more of these kind of reports see the rest of Goodman's (1990) work and also Koren's (2016) witness.

[121] See also the articles by Brislin and Lo (2006), Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre (1980), Chin and Kameoka (2006), and Super and Harkness (1980).

[122] See among others the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966) and Berger (1976).

[123] This should not be understood as a denial of an autonomous self (I) in a person's identity (see Campbell, 2011 for a discussion on this). In working with this relationship between the "I and we", certain "taken-for-granted realities" become explicit and are critically evaluated such as ideologies. The relationship between the autonomous self and the social constructed I is clearly expressed in the work of Buber (1937): "I perceive something. I am sensible of something. I imagine something. I will something. I

4.2.2.1 Epistemological origins

One of the significant contributions from the social construction theory of the self is that

> what we take to be knowledge of the world and self finds its origins in human relationships. What we take to be true as opposed to false, objective as opposed to subjective, scientific as opposed to mythological, rational as opposed to irrational, moral as opposed to immoral is brought into being through historically and culturally situated social processes.
>
> (Gergen 2011:635-636)

In this quote from Gergen, again the link between epistemology, cosmology and human relationship becomes clear. All of these categories are taken together in the construction of personhood. Super and Harkness (1980) has looked at the social and cultural structuring that is at play in the development of child behaviour. Here it has become clear that a child's understanding of his or her role in the community is determined by the "immediate settings, including the people with whom children routinely interact, the places where they spend time together and the roles they are assigned" (Super & Harkness 1980:6). The importance of these social roles that are ascribed to children is that they are not explicitly spelled out. There is no explicit orientation that has to take place in teaching each person his or her role in the community. Rather, the "important sources of cultural messages in this view include the ordinary behavioural routines and everyday organization of living that are regarded as customary" (Super & Harkness 1980:8). These customaries refers to certain habitual, automatic and preconscious or even subconscious social behaviour and cultural organisation of a society. These cultural organisations determine the knowledge that a person is then able to discern and determine the values leading to statements such as 'I think that' or 'I believe that.' In this way categories can be established by which a person is able to claim membership to a certain cultural group. And it can also lead to certain personality traits that a person who belongs to a group should have or strive to have

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feel something. I think something" (Buber 1937:4), but at the same time: "There is no I taken in itself, but only the I of the primary world I-Thou and the I of the primary word I-It. When a man says I he refers to one or other of these. Further, when he says Thou or It, the I of one of the two primary words is present" (Buber 1937:4).

[124] This aspect of the social world of the first century Mediterranean will be looked at in more detail in Chapter 5.

(Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre 1980:48). In combining the definition of Brislin and Lo (2006), with these implicit unspoken customs[125], culture comprises of unspoken, implicit or customary "ideals, values and assumptions that are shared among people and that guide specific behaviors and their interpretation" (Brislin & Lo 2006:45). Interpretation, thus essentially flows back to epistemology, which in turn derives from a cultural determined perspective.

4.2.2.2 Shaman-complex and culture

Felicitas D. Goodman (1914–2005), linguist, anthropologist and founder of The Cuyamungue Institute (see http://www.cuyamungueinstitute.com/) has done most of the ground-breaking work on ASC. Although she does not specifically focus on the shaman-complex in her writing, the insights she gives in her book *Where the spirits ride the wind* (1990)[126] are applicable to the shaman-complex and its relation to the cultures in which it occurs, ancient or modern. In this work she states that whenever she gave a lecture on ASC experiences, there were frequent references to her field work, especially her observation regarding "the religious trance" and the importance that such trances were deemed by countless societies as a learned behavior" (Goodman 1990:15). This cultural embedment of such ritual postures is shown clearly in the account of Goodman presented at a workshop at the Buddhist Centre in Scheibbs in 1985. The flyer distributed in promoting this workshop clearly read that all who participated in the workshop have "taken part in an introductory course on trance and the religious altered state of consciousness with Felicitas Goodman" (Goodman 1990:141).[127] But

[125] These unspoken customs is equivalent to so-called dominant narratives, sacred stories (Meylahn 2011) or as Berger (1967) referred to this, the "sacred canopy" of a society. These are narratives that structure the very fabric of existence for a certain community. Not only for their understanding of the community, but also of the world. Alongside the constructing nature of these narratives/customs they are also meant to maintain order in the community. Thus the reason why Berger (1976:3-52) is correct in talking about world-construction and –maintenance when referring to these institutions (see also Douglas 1966).

[126] See also Goodman and Nauwald (2003), and Goodman (1969, 1972) for a publication more in the linguistic field than anthropology on the phenomenon of glossolalia (i.e., speaking in strange tongues).

[127] Also moments before the trance workshop began in which Goodman would shake a rattle in combination with a ritual posture to induce the trance states, one of the participants told her: "All right, Felicitas, so why do not you just describe some native ritual to us and we'll proceed from there" (Goodman 1990:141). Thus the participants do not enter these workshops with no prior knowledge of what to expect, they enter with a certain expectation. In relating this to what has been said above regarding culture, there is already a certain set of customs that would be expected of them to adhere to

regardless of such introductory courses on rituals and body postures for ASC experiences, Goodman (1990:141) rightfully notes that "such rituals could indeed serve as models, but that they were *embedded in a social context* that we could never replicate and therefore we had to do something different, something that would be our very own."

Thus the ritual that a shaman would use to induce such a trance state would be culturally embedded and which has specific meaning for the culture in which it is being performed. Winkelman (2013a:48) writes of this ceremony/ritual that,

> the night time ceremony[128] was attended by the entire local group and was of central importance as a social gathering in society....[129] Shamanic ritual and the associated beliefs involved the society's most important cosmological, spiritual, religious, social, and healing activities, providing the context for establishing the relationship of the individual to the group and bringing the spirits into the community.

This activity of the shaman is not some objective ascribed attributes that a shaman possesses, but is the attributes or characteristics that the community associate with and ascribe to such a person. This would be equal to the idea of roles ascribed to children investigated by Super and Harkness (1980). When considering all the characteristics ascribed to the shaman, it will not be erroneous to group them all under the collective denominator of 'healer' or 'healing trait.'

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when entering a "trance state culture" and forming a new sort of in-group. This strong group unity (almost exclusivity) is seen in an account of a workshop done a few years earlier (1977). The participants of this trance group "developed an urgent need to be close to each other at all times" (Goodman 1990:44). Anyone who was not part of the group was seen as a member of the out-group.

[128] The ceremonies which the shaman performed to induce a trance in him- or herself, as well as that of the community, is clearly explained by the neurobiological basis given in the previous Chapter. The shaman, along with *group participation*, would give dramatic enactments of the past as well as core myths of the community (see below for more on myth). These enactments would take on the form of exhaustive dancing, chanting, beating of drums and singing, all activities associated with ergo-tropical stimulation of the brain or energy expending stimulation of the brain (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993a:182-183). This would lead to a hyperergotropic tuning in which the shaman and community members would collapse in exhaustion into an ecstatic state where communication with the spiritual world is sought.

[129] Eliade, quoted by Winkelman (2013a:48), adds here that this night-time ceremony was a "spectacle unequalled in the world of daily experience." This should not be seen as something that would not have formed part of the sacred canopy of such a community. On the contrary, precisely because this was part of the sacred canopy of the community such a night-time ceremony would have spectacular and unparalleled meaning to the community.

This healing practice of the shaman covers the entire spectrum from physical, mental and spiritual of the shaman self, a single member of the group or the collective group (Andreas 2016; Winkelman 2013a:57-58). The healing can also be that of the relationship between an individual and the community or even the community and the spirits (Neville 2016). Thus it is clear that to bring about holistic healing is a trademark of the shaman-complex.[130]

To conclude this discussion, the following concluding remarks need to be made. The reason why these healing trademarks would make sense to the communities, why an account of such experiences would be culturally acceptable to them[131] and why the shaman would have such great authority, is:

1. The cosmological view of these societies support and promote such a view. For them there is no separation between the communities and the world of the spirits. If indeed there was a separation, if the spirits would withdraw their favor in any way, this would mean that there is a problem (sickness) that needs to be addressed.
2. The one who addresses this problem for the community, the one who is authorized by the community to be the mediator between them and the spiritual world would be a shaman. The shaman receives his authority not from him- or herself, but from the collective acceptance of the community.

[130] This trait as healer is also found in the Vodou religious system of Haiti. The Vodou priests or priestesses (i.e. shamans) must treat a wide range of the *pwoblèm* (problems) of a person. But before a person can be treated it is needed to determine if the sickness comes from God. If the problem is determined to have come from God it would be deemed as a natural sickness, and not the right of the shaman to heal. On the other hand if the sickness does not come from God, then it would be deemed as a "supernatural" cause. In this regard it is important to note the relationship between natural and supernatural as it also pertains to the discussion above on the shaman-complex and also the discussion below on ASC in the first century Mediterranean: "Haitians do not live in a two-story universe. God and the spirits are an intersecting dimension of life; they are not denizens of a separate realm. When they call a problem "supernatural," it means two things: the problem is not part of the natural order, meaning part of what is fated to be, and it is likely to have been caused by the spirits" (McCarthy Brown 2006:192).

[131] If the witnesses of such phenomenon would not be deemed as culturally plausible then the utterance would be grammatically correct, but cultural nonsense (Gergen 2011:637). Again, if this had to be applied to the neurobiological basis discussed in the previous chapter, the final association area of the brain is the verbal-conceptual one. This area enables a person to make certain associations of words and accounts he or she hears of. These associations are made by parallel comparisons to known objects and concepts (abstract models) which are produced by this association area. These concepts come from the sacred canopy in which a person grows up. If there is no reference point, no "model" to which the person can associate the utterance to, regardless of the grammatical correctness thereof, it would be utter nonsense that he or she is hearing (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993a:182; 1999:37; Newberg & D'Aquili 2000:61).

4.3 ASC IN ANCIENT SOCIETIES

4.3.1 Myth

As stated above, the ceremonial rituals performed by the shaman is deeply influenced by the so-called sacred canopy of the community in which they occur. Stated differently, it can be said that such ceremonial rituals is saturated by the core myths of the community. Because of this, one needs to have a clear understanding of what is meant by myth.

Schnelle (2009:180-181) defines a myth as follows:

> [1] Myth is a hermeneutical system, within a given culture, that aims to interpret world, history and human life in a meaningful way, leads to identity-formation and provides a guide for living.... [2] Myths are an experiential system, a means of explaining and ordering experience.... [3] Myths permit the bringing of different realities into relation with one another and thus allow them to be understood.[132]

D'Aquili and Newberg (1999:79), at their turn, define myths as "stories that purport to explain ultimate aspects of reality either in terms of efficient causality (creation or foundational myths) or in terms of final causality (salvation or apocalyptic myths) or in terms of both."

The two common elements in both these definitions are 1) that myths are stories or narratives, and 2) that they intend to explain reality in the full sense of the word in relation to the identity of the community. With regard to the first it is important to note that the term myth as a narrative or story

> is not a synonym for "fantasy" or "fable." It does not specifically imply falsehood or fabrication. Instead, in its classical definition, the word has an older, deeper meaning. It comes from the Greek *mythos,* which translates as "word," but one spoken with deep, unquestioned authority.
>
> (Newberg, D'Aquili & Rause 2001:56)[133]

[132] Schnelle (2009:181) gives two further characteristics of myths: (1) Myths are primarily presented in narrative forms, these narratives are constructed to explain why the world is as it is. (2) Myths pose its own rationality, normally associated with a reality that is presented in symbolic language. These symbols would make little to no sense outside of the mythic narrative world that is constructed, but in the textual world these symbols would be absolute sensible and rational.

[133] It is clear when reading ancient texts that the people of ancient times knew that myths were not factual truths in the sense of real history but rather interpreted history, a narrative that is told to explain why things are the way they are, or why something happened the way it did. Furthermore there is a clear

With reference to the second common element, the explanation of reality in relation to the identity of the person or community, the concept of social memory[134] may be of great help here.

4.3.2 Dyadic personalities and social memory

In the general sense of the word social memory refers to "the many ways that social groups – families, clans, tribes, societies and nations – are shaped *consciously and unconsciously* by the past" (Williams 2001:191). The unconscious shaping of a community takes place by means of the unspoken manners and customs (the sacred canopy) which belong to each community. These, although unconscious, play an integral and important role in a community. The focus here will be on the conscious recollection of past events.[135] Thus, the focus here is not on remembering the past for the past as such, but rather on mnemohistory. Bosman (2014:2), referring to Jan Assmann's understanding of mnemohistory, writes that unlike "history proper, mnemohistory is concerned not with the past as such, but only with the past as it is remembered.... Mnemohistory is not the opposite of history, but one of its branches."

Put differently, and building on Van Eck's (2011d) understanding of the link between social memory and social identity it could be stated that what is remembered from the past (memory) is remembered so that the present can be understood differently (the identity of the community in their context) by the retelling (mythologisation) of the mnemohistory. This form of remembering (i.e,. social memory) is thus concerned with "who wants whom to remember what when and why" (Van Eck 2011b:204). Such social remembering, or social memory, would lead to the construction of a social identity. The reason why this is so important to take note of and why such a method of constructing the self in the ancient world would have been so effective is because of the collective

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distinction in the ancient texts between foundational myths (e.g., Gn 1:1-2:4a; 6:1-4) and texts that are seen as fables (e.g., Jdg 9:8-15) or legends (e.g., *Epic of Gilgamesh* 3.1-4).

[134] The aim here is not to give a full discussion on the dynamics and complexities regarding the field of social memory (see Halbwachs 1992; Le Goff 1992). For reflections on the history and methodology of social or collective memory, see Baker(2012), Van Eck (2011d:201-205), and Williams(2011). The focus here will be on some of the insights already gained by applying social/collective memory to different aspects of Biblical interpretation.

[135] For studies which focus on making such unconscious manners and customs or sacred canopies more explicit see the work of Caputo (2007) and Meylahn (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014).

nature of these societies. “In collective societies individuals belong to very few groups and offer rather full allegiance to the very few groups to which they belong” (Malina 2007:105).

The full implication of social memory’s relation to the construction of the identity of a person becomes clear when considering the dyadic nature of the first century Mediterranean personality. In the first century Mediterranean world an individual is, “not known or valued because of their uniqueness, but in terms of their dyad, that is, some other person or thing. Dyadism, therefore, is a means value by which one’s honor can be continually checked, affirmed, or challenged” (Neyrey 1998:54).

This becomes of great importance when considering a phenomenon such as ASC in the Biblical text and the first-century Mediterranean world. These reports of a specific individual would only have meaning and authority in the community in forming their identity and relation to the present if such a person was seen as authoritative by the community.

Today most of these experiences would have authoritative meaning for a person regardless of what the community says. The reason for this is that The authority and the uniqueness of each person’s experiences depend not so much on what the larger community says, but what it means for the individual person. If the community to which a person belongs in a more individualistic society does not agree with a person’s experience, he or she would simply leave that community. This is possible, because “in individualistic societies, individuals belong to many groups and offer total allegiance to none of them” (Malina 2007:105).

In relation to the shaman-complex, the shaman would be the ‘who’ that wants the ‘whom’ (community) to remember a certain event from the past (mnemohistory) ‘when’ they come to him or her with a problem of an imbalance in their relationship to the spiritual world or another crisis (why).

Before looking at the shaman-complex in the Biblical world, the following, finally, should be noted:

1. *The shaman:* The shaman of a community occupies an authoritative position. This position on the one hand gives him or her the ability to present the past in mythical re-enactments, which in turn serves to construct and reconstruct the identity of the community. These enactments take on the form of a (night time) ritual which leads to an ASC experience. These experiences are authoritative to the community and lead them to a new understanding of reality and can be mediations between them and the spiritual world.
2. *The community:* Although the shaman holds a special position in the community, a position that flows from his or her ability to communicate with the spiritual realm, this position has to be accepted and authorized by the collective support of the community. Each community has a collection of implicit canonized manners and customs, rituals, values and sacred stories. If an account of ASC experience does not adhere to these implicit canonized concepts, it would not be accepted as a cultural plausible account of such an experience.
3. *Identity:* Only through the dynamic interplay between the authoritative shaman and authorizing community does one come to a full understanding of how such communities form their identity. For although the shaman-complex can be seen as a universal one, just as identity, personhood, the self, culture, ASC experiences (i.e., 50% sameness), each one of these also has a specific cultural content (50% different) that one needs to consider for a balanced understanding thereof (see esp. the work of Craffert 1999; and also Craffert 2010).

4.3.2 The shaman-complex and neurobiological basis in the Bible

4.3.2.1 Introduction

From the previous chapter and the discussion above relating to the shaman-complex, it is clear that giving a workable definition of who a shaman is, or what exactly the shaman-complex entails, is difficult to develop. But it will not be erroneous to take the definition given by Pilch as a point of departure for the discussion to follow: “Above all, the purpose of a shaman is to

interact with the spirit world for the benefit of those in the material world.[136] This is accomplished chiefly by means of ASC" (Pilch 2002:106).

This short but workable definition of Pilch will serve as a bridge between the discussion of the shaman-complex in societies that still exist today and the societies of the ANE, including the first-century Mediterranean society. It will become clear in the discussion below that the term shaman can rightfully be applied to the Hebrew Testament's נביא (prophet) and חזה (seer), and also to the Greek Testament's ἀπόστολος (apostle).[137]

4.3.2.2 Ancient Near East[138]

In trying to understand the shaman-complex in the Hebrew Testament the best place to start is to look at the witnesses of the persons who would be deemed a "shaman" today, but called differently in the Hebrew Testament. Three aspects would have to be looked for: 1) Mediating between the spiritual and the physical world; 2) the use of ritualistic actions in stimulating a trance experience; and 3) the key aspect of the shaman-complex, namely soul flight.

4.3.2.2.1 Mediation

In his work of on the prophetic phenomenon, Von Rad (1965:6-7) indicated that a clear distinction in the Hebrew Testament between the words נביא (prophet) and חזה (seer)

[136] Two observations are needed to be noted here. First, the reference to the shaman being the broker between the spiritual world and the community links up with what has been stated above that the shaman's main purpose is a healing one; whether this be physical healing, mental healing or the healing of a broken relationship between the community and the spirits. Second, this interaction between a shaman and the spiritual world should not be seen as referring to actions that would make the shaman vulnerable to spirit possession in a negative sense. A shaman who holds an authoritative position in the community would be one who will be in total control even when in a state of AC. "The shamanic soul journey (soul flight) is distinct from the possession experiences associated with the altered states of consciousness of more complex societies. Possession involves experiences in which a person's sense of personal consciousness and volition is replaced by the controlling influences of a spirit entity which possesses the person's body and controls it" (The Cuyamungue Institute 2016b).

[137] For the application here of the term προφήτης (prophet), see the discussion below in § 5.?.

[138] It would be an impossible task to cover all the literature from the ANE which pertains to the phenomenon of ASC. Thus the discussion will be limited to that of the Hebrew Testament itself with some references to extra Biblical literature in footnotes. For works focusing on the manners and customs that highlight this phenomenon in the ANE see Geller (2010), Oppenheim (1956), Rochberg (1998, 2004), and Ruggles (2005). See also the collection of essays in Flanery, Shantz & Werline (eds. 2008) and Lenzi & Stökl (eds. 2014).

cannot be given. As an example he refers to 2 Samuel 7 where Nathan is in the court of King David and is known as the נביא.[139] Nathan the prophet (נתן הנביא) is selected and sent along with Zadok the priest (צדוק הכהן), indicating that there was some sort of connection between prophets and priests.[140] The task of Nathan is just as important to understand the prophetic phenomenon. In 2 Samuel 7:4 it is said that after the "word of Yahweh" (דבר־יהוה) came to Nathan the prophet (נתן הנביא) he goes to David to prophesy: "Thus says Yahweh" (כה אמר יהוה).[141] Then in 2 Samuel 7:17, after Nathan's speech to David, it is stated that he said these things "according to all these words and all these visions"[142] (See 1 Chr 17:15; and also 1 Chr 29:29) – thus mediating the דבר־יהוה (word of Yahweh) from the spiritual world to the king in the material one.

A final remark before looking at some of the texts with reference to seers. In 1 Kings 13 a narrative is told about a "man of God" (איש אלהים) who did not do as the Lord commanded (1 Ki 13:20-22). This man of God is met by an old prophet (נביא זקן). What is interesting in this narrative is the way in which this old prophet names the man of God: "I am also a prophet like you*"* (גם־אני נביא כמוך; 1 Ki 13:18) and then "my brother" (אחי). With regard to these texts, Von Rad (1965:7) writes:

> This remarkable fluctuation in the terms employed [i.e. נביא, חזה, איש אלהים] warns us against regarding any specific text as an altogether direct reflection of what the actual usage was. The narrators' own preconceptions [*Auffassungen der Erzähler*] always play a

[139] See 2 Samuel 7:2 and 12:25, 1 Kings 1:8, 10, 22, 23, 32, 34, 38, and 45, 1 Chronicles 17:1, 2 Chronicles 9:29 and 29:25.

[140] See also 1 Kings 1:44-45 and in 1 Kings 4:5 where a kinship affiliation is made between the prophet Nathan and Zabud the son of Nathan who is a "כהן" (priest or principle officer) himself.

[141] In the Hebrew Testament this exact phrase occurs 158 times. When taking the division of the Hebrew Bible supplied by Josephus (see *Ag. Ap.* 1.38-40; Van Niekerk 2014:18, fn., 17) then only five of these occurrences are outside of the prophetic corpus (Ex 4:22; 7:17; 8:1, 20; 11:4) and the remaining 153 times are in the prophetic corpus (Jos 7:13; 1 Sm 2:27; 15:2; 2 Sm 7:5, 8; 12:11; 24:12; 1 Ki 11:31; 12:24; 13:2, 21; 17:14; 20:13, 42; 21:19; 2 Ki 1:6; 3:16; 4:43; 7:1; 9:12; 19:6; 22:16; 1 Chr 17:4, 7; 21:10; 2 Chr 11:4; 21:12; 34:24; Is 8:11; 18:4; 37:6; 43:16; 45:14; 49:8; 50:1; 56:1; 65:8; 66:1; Jr 2:2, 5; 6:6, 9, 16, 21, 22; 7:21; 8:4; 9:7, 17, 23; 10:2; 11:11, 22; 12:14; 13:9; 16:9; 17:5, 21; 18:11, 13; 19:1; 20:4; 21:8, 12; 22:1, 3, 30; 23:38; 25:8, 15, 28, 32; 26:2, 4; 27:16, 19, 21; 28:16, 19, 21; 28:11, 13, 16; 29:4, 8, 17, 31; 30:12, 18; 31:2, 15, 16, 35, 37; 32:3, 15, 28; 33:4, 10, 20, 25; 34:2; 35:29; 37:9; 38:2, 3; 42:18; 44:30; 45:4; 47:2; 49:1, 7, 28, 35; 50:33; 51:1, 33, 36; Ezk 31:3; 30:6; Am 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; 3:12; 5:4; Mi 2:3; 3:5; Hg 1:2, 5, 7; 2:6, 11; Zch 1:3, 4, 14, 17; 2:8; 6:12; 7:9; 8:2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 14, 20, 23; 11:4; Ml 1:4).

[142] The reference here in 2 Samuel to a החזיון (vision) is translated in the *Septuaginta* (LXX) as τὴν ὅρασιν.

part; and more particularly, the terms used in the various text-groups are those current in the place where the texts originated.[143]

Regarding the relation between prophets and seers, Isaiah 29:10 is important, and reads as follows:

כי־נסך עליכם *יהוה* רוח תרדמה	10a	for *Yahweh* has poured out a deep sleep over you,
ויעצם את־עיניכם את־הנביאים	10b	and he has closed your eyes the prophets,
ואת־ראשיכם החזים כסה	10c	and he has covered your heads the seers.

Because of the nature of Hebrew parallelisms “your eyes” (עיניכם) and “the prophets” (הנביאים) in Isaiah 29:10b, and “your heads” (ראשיכם) and “the seers” (החזים) in Isaiah 29:10c are internally parallel to one another. But so also “your eyes the prophets” are parallel to “your heads the seers” in Isaiah 29:10a and 10b. This demonstrates, the same as the discussion above, that these two vocations were seen as parallel to one another.[144] Last the text indicates clearly through the use of the verbs from whom the prophets and seers both received their capabilities: It is Yahweh (יהוה) who closes (ויעצם) and covers (כסה) and pours out a deep sleep (נסך ... רוח תרדמה).[145]

This shows that the dispensational view (see Van Niekerk 2014:44-82) has some merit in reminding interpreters that the phenomenon behind prophetic and revelatory text was the conviction that a “person” (whether i.e. נביא, חזה, איש אלהים), received a word from God, a revelation, dream or vision and that this had to be proclaimed. But the view of the “word of God” ascribed by this interpretive paradigm (i.e. dispensational) does not take into account the complexity of the society of ancient Israel nor the complexity of the

[143] See again the discussion above of the importance of the social context in which the shaman-complex has to be understood.
[144] This relationship is also found in the Egyptian prophetic literature. In a prophecy ascribed to Neferti (or Nefer-rohu; see transl. Wilson 1969:444, fn. 1) dating from the Middle Kingdom delivered to the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Snefru (*c.* 2575 – 2465 BCE), Neferti the prophet is brought to the king after a so-called lector-priest. Neferti and the lector-priest belonged to the same group. This lector-priest was literally seen as ““he who carries the ritual” ... was initiated into the sacred writings and thus was priest*,* seer*, and* magician” (transl. Wilson 1969:444, fn. 2; see also Hilber 2011:44).
[145] For more on classic Hebrew poetry parallelism see Watson (1984:114-159), and Crossan (2010:4-7) for the Biblical parallelism, and Willis (1987:49-76) for a discussion on parallelisms in the Psalms and prophetic literature.

shaman-complex and adjoining phenomenon hereof. This complexity is expressed by Overholt (1996:3) as follows:

> Neither this society nor any other was (or is) a stable and homogeneous entity. Societies are composed of numerous individuals and groups each with a potentially different way of understanding, valuing, and acting on the legacy of culture and that they all in some sense share, and each of these ways is subject to change over time.

The above shows that: The understanding of נביא, חזה, איש אלהים should be done within the culture in which these terms developed. It is also velar that these נביא, חזה, איש אלהים had a mediating role between God and the people of their society. They needed to heal the relationship between God and the people, between the spiritual world and the physical world. They were the ones who would mediate divine favor for the people (see 2 Ki 4).[146]

4.3.2.2.2 Ritualistic stimuli for ASC

In 1 Samuel 10 Samuel the prophet[147] comes to Saul and anoints him as the king of Israel. He then sends Saul on a journey on which he would meet three men who are on their way to בית־אל (Bet-El). From there Saul went on to a place called גבעת האלהים (Gibeah of God). As he would enter the city Samuel tells Saul that he will come upon a חבל נביאים (company of prophets) who are descending from the מהבמה (high place), busy playing songs on lyres, timbrels, pipes and harps (1 Sm 10:5). The end result of Saul's journey will be that the רוח יהוה (spirit of the Lord) will be on him, and he will

[146] This role of mediation is best expressed in the prophetic message to the people of Israel to turn back to God (שוב). For uses of the terms שוב (translated as convert) see Hosea 7:16, 8:13 and 14:5, Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13, 2:1,4, and 6, Micah 2:4, Jonah 3:8, 9 and 10, Nahum 2:2, Zephaniah 2:7, Zechariah 1:4, Isaiah 5:25, 9:12, 13, 17, 21, 10:4, 6, 12:1, 14:27, 30:15, 35:10, 36:9, 37:7, 8, 9, 29, 34, 37, 38:8, 43:13, 44:25, 45:23, 51:11, 55:10, 11, 57:9, 58:13 and 59:20 Jeremiah 2:35, 3:10, 19, 4:8, 28, 8:4, 5, 14:3, 18:11, 20, 22:27, 23:14, 20, 22, 25:18, 26:16, 35:3, 36:10, 37:3 [x2], 18, 24, 38:8, 21 [x2], 23 and Ezekiel 3:18, 19, 20, 13:22, 14:6, 16:53, 18:8, 17, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 21:5, 30, 29:14, 33:9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 34:4, 6, 16, 38:8, 39:25 and 27. See also Hosea 3:5, 5:4, 15, 6:1, 7:10, 11:5, 14:2, 3 and 8, Amos 4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 9:14, Micah 7:19, Isaiah 6:10, 19:22, 31:6, 44:22, 46:8, 49:6, 55:7 and 63:17, Jeremiah 2:24, 27, 3:10, 12, 14, 22, 4:1, 5:3, 6:9, 8:4, 5, 11:10, 12:15, 15:19, 18:8, Ezekiel 7:13, 8:17, 14:6, 18:30, 32, 34:4, 16, 38:12, 44:1, 47:7.

[147] Note that Samuel was acknowledged by the כל־ישׂראל (entire Israel; the whole community) as לנביא ליהוה (prophet of the Lord; 1 Sm 3:20). The same is seen in the *Prophecy of Neferti*. The only reason why the authority of Neferti as a lector priest was accepted was because he was known to all as being a mediator between the realm of the gods and those of mankind: "A great lector-priest of Bastet, O sovereign our lord, whose name is Nefer-rohu – he is a commoner valiant [with] his arm, a scribe competent with his fingers; he is a man of rank, who has more property than any peer of his. Would that he [*might be permitted*] to see his majesty!" (transl. Wilson 1994:444).

והתנבית (prophecy) along with this חבל נביאים, but also he will return as a איש אחר (different / new person).

By placing this text within the interpretative paradigm of ritualistic stimuli for ASC experiences, it contains almost all the necessary elements as well as descriptions of what normally happens in such ASCs.

1. Saul is being sent to Bet-El and Gibeah of God and the prophets are coming down from the high place. The first of these places, Bet-El (house of God), is a well-known holy place in the Israelite tradition, where a door or staircase is to be found into the realm of God (Gn 28:10-22; Butler 2005).[148] Gibeah of God can also be translated as the mountain of God, or the hill of God (Brooks 2005). This is again linked to the high place from which the prophets come. All of these refer to a mountain-like structure on which the ancient people believed a deity or deities would stay[149], and from where one had access to the world of the deity (Dever 2005:92-95, 135-139, 155-158).[150]
2. When Saul encountered these prophets they are busy singing, probably dancing, and playing musical instruments. Such dancing and singing is typical of ergotropic stimulation that would lead to a hyperergotropic state, which in turn results in an ASC experience (Pilch 2011:73-88).[151]

[148] See Malina and Pilch (2008:19-20, 224-225) on the importance of knowing where the veil is the thinnest and entrance to the spiritual world is possible. But also it should be noted here how important the cultural understanding is for such a holy place as noted by Malina and Pilch (2008:19): "For Israel, the centre of the known world was Jerusalem in general, the temple specifically. The God of Israel was presumed to be beyond the uppermost reaches of the sky, notably over the Jerusalem temple, and could be accessed through an opening in the sky found above Jerusalem."

[149] For high places (במה) see 1 Samuel 9:12-14 [x3], 19, and 25, 1 Kings 3:2-4 [x3], 11:7 (where Solomon build a high place [במה] on a hill [הר] for the god Chemosh), 12:31-32 [x2, where there is also a reference to בית אל], 13:2 and 13:32-33 [x3], see also among others Isaiah 15:2, 16:12 and 36:7, and for references to a mountain being a place of encountering the divinity see Exodus 3:1, 4:27, 18:5, 19:11, 18, 20, 23, 24:13, 16, 31:18, 34:2, 4, 29, and 32, Joshua 8:30, 1 Kings 19:8.

[150] This becomes all the more clear when comparing a text like Genesis 11:1-9 to the Mesopotamian background in the ANE. The Mesopotamians constructed enormous ziggurats with the idea that this would be the staircase to the heavenly realm. Thus in Genesis 11:1-9, when the people came to a place where there were no mountains, the presence and favour of the deity would not be able to descend on them. Thus from their cultural knowledge they decided to construct such an artificial mountain structure (Walton 1995; see also Dershowitz 1994; Van Niekerk 2016:8-9).

[151] See also Exodus 15:20 where the timbrel is connected with Miriam the prophetess. And see 2 Samuel 6:5 where a description is given of a typical ergotropic stimulus within a religious context. For a narrative witnessing to typical trophotropic stimuli see the narrative of Elijah in 1 Kings 19 where he went into the

3. Last to note here is the result of this experience of Saul where he will return as a איש אחר (different/new person). Thus there would have been a transformation of his identity; he would understand his relation to God (the spiritual) as well as to other people in a different light.

In summary: This encounter of Saul in 1 Samuel 10 clearly shows that ritualistic stimulus was common in the Israelite prophetic tradition. This ritualistic aspect of religious experiences has stayed a constant throughout the history of the Israelites, Christians and other religious traditions (Goodman 1988, 1990; Miller & Strongman 2002; Penman & Becker 2009; Pilch 2012:253-290).

4.3.2.2.3 Soul flight

As point of departure the following understanding of of a soul flight by Philo of Alexandria (c. 25 BCE – 50 CE) is taken: A person undertaking a soul flight are those who's "bodies [τὰ σώματα] are firmly planted on the land [while] they provide their souls [τὰς ψυχὰς] with wings, so that they may traverse the upper air and gain full contemplation of the powers which dwell there" (*Spec.* 2.44-45). The call narrative of Ezekiel (Ezk 1-3), along with that of Isaiah (Is 6:1-7), is the most well-known report of such a soul flight in the Hebrew Testament. Not all, however, see these texts as reflecting an ecstatic experience. Habel (1965:310), for example, states that neither the call of Isaiah nor Ezekiel depicts an "ecstatic trance in the proper sense of the term, for rational reflection and dialogue are possible during the encounter." Habel's (1965) analysis of the call narratives of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah reflects the typical *Formgeschichte* approach. The callings of these three prophets are compared to that of Gideon (Jdg 11:6-17) and Moses (Ex 3:1-12). This leads Habel (1965:316) to conclude that by "using the same call *Guttung* the prophets in question establish a specific link with the past history of Israel." They had to establish such a link so that their authority in

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wilderness. It can be assumed on the basis of 1 Kings 19:5-6 that Elijah did not eat anything and was intently concentrating on the problem at hand (1 Ki 19:1). Along with this, going into the wilderness Elijah withdrew from society (Pilch 2011:64). This led to a typical ASC experience of the angel of the Lord coming to him in a dream (see among others Gn 20:3, 6; 31:10, 11, 24; 37:5, 6, 9; 40:5 where a dream is used as a means of revelation, referring to an accepted ASC experience in the research; see Oppenheim, 1956; and also Krippner, Bogzaran & de Carvalho 2002).

the community as mediators of the salvation of God was not brought into question. Of Ezekiel, Habel (1965:317) writes:

> In recounting their own call they preserve the ancient dialogue character of the experience which is typical of the mediatorial office. In this way the prophets also guard against classifying their experience as an ecstatic suspension of the personality. Inasmuch as the various formal elements of the call accounts, including the opening confrontation, are so basic to an understanding of the material, it is virtually impossible to analyze the psychological dimensions of the prophetic calls. The form does not merely reflect the inner emotions of the prophet; it reflects the *Gattung* appropriate for his message.

Two things are clear from Habel's (1965) analysis: First, any experience that would be equal to an ecstatic trans-like state would be a suspension of the personality of the person who is experiencing this. Such a suspension would result in them not being able to have given a rational reflection and have a dialogue with God.[152] Second, the call narratives are analysed clearly from a *Formgeschichte* approach, by identifying formal literary elements in the written material (see also Long 1972).

In light of the above discussion on ASC, as well as the work of Pilch (2011:30-47),[153] such a view on ecstatic states cannot be upheld. It is clear that within the shaman-complex the shaman will not lose the ability to have a rational discussion with the spiritual world, although a loss of time and confusion of chronological time of the occurrence is characteristic of these experiences (Goodman 1990:16-17).[154]

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[152] Although not expressed explicitly it is clear that Habel (1965:310) sees an ecstatic trance as belonging to the false prophets who have no access to the council of God in Jeremiah 23:18, 22.

[153] See also the collection of essays by Tart, Puthof and Targ (eds. 2002) where ASC experiences are investigated from a scientific perspective. The findings of these studies, although deemed as "parapsychological research" were published in prestigious scientific journals such as *Nature*, *The Proceedings of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers* and *The Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science*. Further, those who conducted the research did not approach it uncritically as is clear from Targ's statement in the preface: "As one of the scientist who conducted the research, I do not have to *believe* in extrasensory perception (ESP). I. have seën it occur in the laboratory on a day-to-day basis for decades. As a physician, I do not have to *believe in* the phenomenon any more than I have to believe in lasers – with which I have also worked extensively" (eds. Tart, Puthof & Targ 2002:xv-xvi).

[154] The focus here is to identify whether Ezekiel had a soul flight, but it is possible to identify certain elements in the text of Ezekiel that could also fit into the above discussions. The text begins in describing the location where Ezekiel sat as "among the exiles by the Kaber River" (1:1). Of these specifics the Kaber River could be of importance but more important here would be reference to Ezekiel among the exiles. As exiles it is clear that they have gone through a traumatic event and was now in a situation of crisis. In a study of Smith-Christopher (2002:89-94) Ezekiel's visions are read as the results of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is classified by the DSM-5 (2013:104-105) as a disorder that may "include flashbacks that have a hallucinatory quality and hypervigilance may reach paranoid

Ezekiel describes beings that had the דמות (likeness)[155] of ארבע חיות (four living beings) and further had the דמות of looking like men. He goes on and describes them in great detail (Ezk 1:6-18).[156] These beings not only indicated that Ezekiel went quickly from stage one of ASC to stage three, but they also helped in understanding what sort of trance Ezekiel had, for in Ezekiel 1:19-21 he reports:

> When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels (NIV).

The only way for Ezekiel to be able to see the movement or static state of these beings would be if "his vantage point was high above the entire cosmos" (Pilch 2011:37). Thus Ezekiel must have had the ability to anchor his body (σώματος) firmly on the ground

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properties." Later on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (2013:194) also states that a central symptom of this disorder is that the patient would avoid or disassociate from memories which is linked to the traumatic event. When Ezekiel is interpreted through the model of ASC experiences (i.e. the neurobiological and shaman-complex) as well as the discussion on collective memory above such a view of Ezekiel suffering from PTSD cannot be upheld. Rather Ezekiel is the shaman (holy man / prophet) of the community in exile. They are suffering the loss of identity by the destruction of the temple, which Smith-Christopher (2002), is correct in that the destruction of the temple was a traumatising event in the history of Israel. Ezekiel interprets the memory of this destruction (Ezk 4-5) in light of his new insight he gained from visiting the vault in the sky and entering the throne room of God (Ezk 1-3). Thus he did play a mediating role in the community to bring about healing and as catalyst for his ASC experience he would have been sitting and contemplating (top-down) the events of the past, thus providing a stimulus for a hypertrophotropic state. See also the *Prophecy of Neferti* where it is stated clearly that before Neferti began to prophesy, "he brooded over what (was to) happen in the land, as he called to mind the state of the east" (transl. Wilson 1969:44). The relation between psychological conditions, traumatic experiences and ASC will be looked at in some detail in the final Chapter of this study.

[155] By referring to the term דמות it is postulated here that Ezekiel is most probably in the end of the second stage and moving over into the third stage of the trance experience. He has already gone through the first in describing pulsating, flickering and blending colours (Pilch 2011:36; see also Pilch 2002b). After the first stage Ezekiel now "attempts to make sense of the geometric forms by imagining or illusioning them into significant objects" (Pilch 2002b:696; Pilch 2011:37). This of course comes from the association area of association areas (also called the verbal-conceptual association area; D'Aquili & Newberg 1993a:182; 1999:37; Newberg & D'Aquili 2000:61). Though by the use of the word דמות (Ezk 1:5 [x2], 10, 13, 16, 22, 26 [x3], 28) Ezekiel is expressing that his description is only to be understood as him saying "this is what I saw, but not exactly like that" (Pilch 2011:37), not recognising what is seen in the alternate reality at first is quite common (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:282-283).

[156] The detailed descriptions of these beings and what their meaning would have been in the cultural context of Ezekiel falls outside of the scope of the study, for some interpretations on these beings see the work of Odell (2005:13-38), Pilch (2011:36-38), Rowland (2007), and also that of Christman (2005) and Halperin (1988:90-93).

while giving his soul (ψυχῆς) wings so that he may traverse the upper air and gain full contemplation of the power (i.e. דמות כבוד־יהוה[ה] – [the] likeness of the glory of the Lord; Ezk 1:28) which dwells there.[157]

Ezekiel was not the only person in the history of Israel who had the ability to undergo a soul flight[158], but for the purpose of this study it is sufficient to note his flight in detail. The following insights have been shown in the above discussion:

1. There are clear records in the Hebrew Testament of persons being mediators between the spiritual and physical word. These mediators had the task of healing the relationships between the divine world (i.e., God) and the physical world (i.a., the prophets Nathan and Ezekiel). They also had the power to act as brokers for the favor of God in physical healing (i.e., Elijah).

[157] In Ezekiel 3:15, after the experience of the glory of the Lord it is said that Ezekiel sat between the people at Tel Aviv near the Kebar River for seven days משמים. Normally the word משמים is translated as referring to Ezekiel sitting in desolation, in waste or in great fear. However, when reading Ezekiel in the light of the shaman-complex, neurobiological basis (with the ASC model) such a translation would not make sense. Experiences placed within the Shaman-complex could possibly go along with fear, do not result in the persons being desolated, wasted or in great fear. One of the aims of these experiences is to give a person a new sense of his or her identity (Pilch 2002b:692; see again 1 Sm 10). They lead from a feeling of fear to a feeling of comfort or even astonishment (משמים can also be translated as being astonished; see Ezk 32:10). Neurobiological basis: The trance state in which Ezekiel went is one that was probably induced by a top-down stimulus, that is to say that it was a trophotropic stimulus which led to a hypertrophotropic state, but the result of such a state would normally not be exhaustive amazement, but a feeling of being energised and refreshed. Ezekiel is clearly not so, for he sits for seven days. The reason for this is that in some cases it is possible for a state to occur that is a hypertrophotropic state with ergotropic spill over (eruption). The result would be that "the meditator enters a state of oceanic bliss, and, by intensifying his concentration upon an object of meditation, he experiences absorption into that object ... an experience inevitably accompanied by the sense of tremendous release of energy" (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b:8-9). Although Ezekiel's experience would not be what D'Aquili and Newberg (1993b) calls AUB, it moves in that direction as Ezekiel moves closer and closer to the glory of the Lord.

[158] Other known figures from the Israelite tradition with the ability for soul flights are Isiah who according to Isiah 6:1 also "אראה את־אדני ישב על־כסא" (saw God sitting on a throne). The prophet Daniel who according to Daniel 7:1 it is told that he "חלם חזה וחזוי" (was in a dream and vision state). In this dream state Daniel saw "עתיק יומין יתב" (an Ancient of days sitting; Dn 7:9), and this being was sitting on " כרסיה שביבין" (a throne of flames; Dn 7:9). Others include Enoch (Gn 5:24; *1 & 2 Enoch*) who according to Pilch (2011:62) is "the most sky-traveled of ancient authors), Elijah (2 Ki 2:1-12) and Ezra (*2 Ezra 8:19*). Of these names mentioned the following two remarks need to be noted: 1) Although Ezekiel, Isiah, Daniel, Enoch, Elijah and Ezra all fall within the classification of holy men of Israel (Pilch 2012:205) a distinction should still be made between them. Ezekiel, Isiah and Daniel are holy men who according to tradition completed their sky travels. They went up into the heavens and returned again to earth. Enoch (according to Gn 5:24), Elijah and Ezra on the other hand are sky travelers who did not complete their sky journeys according to tradition. They only ascended, but there is no dissension when they returned to earth (Pilch 2012:205; see also Segal 1980 for a discussion on this). 2) In the Hebrew Testament there isn't many attestations for Enoch and Ezra's sky journeys, but they would still have been very prominent figures in the cultural laden discourse of the Israelite tradition.

2. There are clear indications of typical ergotropic (i.a., singing and dancing) as well as trophotropic (i.a., intense concentration, fasting and sleep deprivation) ritualistic stimuli in the Hebrew Testament.
3. Clearly there were persons who were able to undergo a soul flight and enter the realm of God.
4. All of these cumulates and leads to the conclusion that the shaman-complex, as well as the neurobiological basis, is helpful models in understanding the ASC experiences in the ANE. Also, ASC experiences are a well attested phenomenon in the ANE.

4.3.2.3 First-century Mediterranean world[159]

4.3.2.3.1 Introduction

Before moving on to the discussion of ASC in the Greek Testament, this study will first look at the work of Hanson (1980) on dreams and visions in the Graeco-Roman world. As Habel (1965) exemplified a *Formgeschichtliche*[160] approach to the Hebrew Testament's text on ASC, so Hanson.

4.3.2.3.2 John S. Hanson

Hanson (1980) is in agreement with Oppenheim (1956) that the extant written records of dream-vision reports are the primary data when these visons are being investigated. Working from this presupposition, Hanson (1980) postulates a literary pattern that all typical dream-vision reports follow. This form-analysis postulates the following elements (Hanson 1980:1405-1413):

1. Setting the scene: Here the dreamer, time when the dream occurred and the mental state of the dreamer are identified. Occasionally the mental state of the dreamer is

[159] The texts of Philo of Alexandria will not be discussed in detail, but they will be taken note of where needed. So *inter alia* Philo in his *De Vita Mosis* 1.156 comments on Exodus 33:11 where Moses is called a friend of God and he writes that a friend of God is also the prophet of God. But Moses was seen as a prophet in more than just name. For in *Questions on Exodus* 2.28 he writes of Moses as having "the most perfect and prophetic mind" and this allows him to "enter the dark cloud and to dwell in the forecourt of the palace of the Father" (see *Mos.* 1.158 on Ex 20:21; and also the elaborate allegorical interpretation and discussion of Philo on dreams in his *Som* 1; 2; Borgen 1996).

[160] This is made explicit in considering the title of Hanson's (1978) PhD-dissertation, namely *The dream/vison report in Acts 10:1-11:18: A form-critical study*.

connected directly to the subject matter of the ensuing dream. So Apollonius in Philostratus (*Vita Apollonii* 4.34) is "busy pondering" whether he should go to Rome or not. He is in Malea after the Olympic festival (place), after winter was over at the beginning of springtime (time). It is at this moment when the "dream" (ὄναρ) came to him. In Plutarch (*Lucullus* 12.1-2), Lucullus enters the place called *Cyzicus* from where he travelled to Hellespont, from there he debarks and sets up camp "ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης" (in the temple of Aphrodite). The dream (ὀνᾶρ) comes to Lucullus, "κατακοιμηθεὶς δὲ νύκτωρ." Although the state of mind of Lucullus is not given explicitly in the text it is stated that he enters into Cyzicus as ἀπέλαυσεν ἡδονῆς (enjoying a pleasant welcome).

2. Technical terminology used in dream-vision reports: There are certain technical terminologies that can readily be discerned and distinguished as belonging to dream-vision reports. In Plutarch's texts when Lucullus awakes from his sleep, after the ὀνᾶρ (dream), he calls his friends and tells them about "τὴν ὄψιν ἔτι νυκτὸς" (the vision from the night) he had. This then shows that the terms ὄναρ (dream) and ὄψις (vision) are used interchangeably to refer to the same phenomenon. This leads Hanson (1980:1407, 1408, 1409) to the following conclusion:

> While the idiomatic ὄναρ ἰδεῖν is unequivocal, there are variations on it and numerous synonyms for ὄναρ/ὄνειρος are attested: ἐνύπιον, ὅραμα, ὄψις, φάσμα, φάντασμα, φαντασία, ἀποκάλυψις, ἐπιφάνεια, ὀπτασία, ὅρασις[161].... [These] indicate the difficulty, if not impossibility, of distinguishing between a dream and a vision.... The rather rigid modern distinction between the terms dream (a sleeping phenomenon) and vision (a waking phenomenon) is not paralleled in antiquity.[162]
>
> (Hanson 1980:1407, 1408, 1409; see also Long 1972:496)[163]

[161] For uses of these terms see *Herodotus* 7.12 where after falling asleep Xerxes, according to the Persians, receives as vision (ὄψιν) from a "ἄνδρα οἱ ἐπιστάντα μέγαν" (goodly man). See further references to these words in *Herodotus* 1.38 and 7.15 for ὄψις and φάντασμα, interesting is the negative emotive connotation made by Xerxes here to his ὄψι as a φαντάζεταί that "haunted" his sight.

[162] Apart from these dream reports Hanson (1980) also looks at audio-visual dream-vision reports where the focus is not only on the one who receives the dream(s) but on the dream figure him- / herself. Again it is shown that, regardless of the stylistic differences between an audio dream-vision and the clear emphasis difference (rather hearing the dream-vision than seeing it), a rigid dichotomy cannot be upheld. Thus the reports should be seen as referring to the same phenomenon in the Graeco-Roman world.

[163] In working on the prophetic call tradition and reports of visions that accompany these calls in the Hebrew Testament Long (1972:496) writes: "But in so far as dreams, and the reporting of such, carried revelatory import, as did visions, there seems to have been little functional difference between phenomena." He also comments on the prophecies of Mari, stating: "It is worth noting that in the so-called "prophecies" of Mari, dream (*šuttum*) and vision (*pānū*) cannot be readily distinguished" (Long 1972:496, fn. 8).

3. The dream-vision proper: The dream-vision itself normally consists of (1) the identification of the dream figure. This figure is normally the deity that brings the dream revelation. (2) Linked to the manifestation of such a deity is a description of the dream figure. (3) The position of the dream figure is given. (4) The speech or message that the figure gives to the dreamer is recounted after (5) which the dream figure would depart. (6) After the departure the dreamer would wake up and recount what he or she had dreamt, or come to know. Almost all of these elements are found in the recount of Plutarch of Lucullus' dream (*Lucullus* 12.1-2): After Lucullus

> fell asleep in the night, he thought he saw [1][164] the goddess [i.e. Aphrodite] [2] standing [3] over him and [4] saying: 'Why do you sleep, great lion? The fawns lie near.' Rising up from sleep and calling his friends, [6] he narrated to them his vision, while it was still night.

So also in the recount of Brutus' μέγα σημεῖον which he saw:

> Once, accordingly, when he [Brutus] was about to take his army across from Asia, it was late at night, his tent was dimly lighted, and all the camp was wrapped in silence. Then, as he was meditating and reflecting, he thought he heard someone coming into the tent. He turned his eyes towards the entrance and beheld [1] a strange and dreadful apparition, a monstrous and fearful shape [2] standing silently by [3] his side. Plucking up courage to question it, "Who are though," said he, "of gods or men, and what is thine arrant with me?" Then the [1] phantom answered: [4] "I am thy evil genius, Brutus, and thou shalt see me at Philippi." And Brutus, undisturbed, said: "I shall see thee." [5] ... the shape had disappeared.... As soon as it was day ... [6] he sought Casius and told him of the apparition.
>
> (Plutarch, *Brutus* 36.3-37.1)

4. Reaction: A usual reaction to the dream-visions is fear on the part of the dreamer. Although there is not a reaction of fear in neither *Lucullus* 12.1-2 nor *Brutus* 36-37, on the contrary, Plutarch tells that when Brutus saw the "ἀλλόκοτον ὄψιν ἐκφύλου σώματος καὶ φοβεροῦ" (a strange vision of a strange and dreadful body) he plucked up courage and spoke to the shape. Even after the message of the ἐκφύλου σώματος καὶ φοβεροῦ Brutus ὐο διατραχθείς (was not disturbed). But that there is a reaction from the one having the dream-vision is a certainty.

[164] These numbers correspond to the numbers in the paragraph above of each element in a dream-vision proper.

5. Response: Each one of the responses given “will obviously depend on the particular message or meaning of the dream-vision proper” (Hanson 1980:1413).

After identifying all of these elements, Hanson (1980) continues to apply them to some of the early Christian writings which report dream-visions (Mt 1:18-25, Lk 1:5-25; *Shepard of Hermas* and a single paragraph on Rev). No detailed analysis is made of any of these texts by Hanson (1980). Hanson (1980:1425) concludes that “the Christian evidence is congruent, on a formal level, with the parallel dream-vision material of the Greeks and Romans.” On the one hand such a formal literary analysis of these texts contributes greatly to our understanding thereof and cannot be denied. On the other it can easily lead to just seeing these texts taking on such a literary form because it is the most appropriate *Guttung* that is called for in the specific *Sitze im Leben*.[165]

4.3.2.3.3 Greek Testament

Building on the insights of Hanson (1980) the elements of a typical dream-vision proper will be used in structuring the following discussion. This will indicate, first, the clear parallels between this phenomenon in the Greek Testament and the Graeco-Roman world. Second, these discussions will also be supplemented with the insights from the ASC model proposed above. This, in turn, will, indicate the cultural plausibility of such reports and thus shows that “such literary forms are culturally specific wording patterns that derive from the social system” (Pilch 2004:52).

It cannot be denied that the Greek Testament contains dream-vision reports. Aside from the the texts that are the most evident of dream-visions, there are also texts that could be classified as dream-visions, although they do not refer to a ὄναρ or a ὄψις[166] that occurred. These text would be, for example, the baptism of Jesus (Mt 3:13-16//Mk 1:9-11//Lk 3:21-22), the transfiguration of Jesus (Mt 17:1-13//Mk 9:2-13//Lk 9:28-36), appearances of the risen Jesus to his followers (i.a. Mt 28:16-20; Lk 24:13-53; Jh 20:11-

[165] For further in depth critical analysis and work building on that of Hanson (1980) see Dodson (2006) and Maxon (2011a, 2011b).
[166] See Matthew 1:20, 2:12, 13, 19, 22 and 27:19 where an ὄναρ (dream) is named explicitly. And John 7:24, 11:44 and Revelation 1:16 where an ὄψις (vision) is named explicitly.

29; 21), the ascension of Jesus (Lk 24:50-53; Ac 1:6-14), Paul's call to be a holy man (Ac 9:1-19//22:6-16//26:12-18), Stephan seeing the heavens open, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Ac 7:54-60).[167]

Setting the scene – When looking at the scene that is set for such reports, in light of the ASC model discussed earlier, these scenes become more than just a formal literary element; it becomes clear that the scene is set exactly right for ASCs to be experienced. In the transfiguration of Jesus, Matthew 17:1 (and *par*.) reports that Jesus took Peter, James and John "εἰς ὄρος" (up a mountain). As shown above, important events take place on mountains, for mountains were seen as abodes and holy places of the deities. Luke 9:28 reports further that the company went up the mountain προσεύξασθαι (to pray). Praying would be classified as a typical trophotropic stimulus of the brain.[168] A different experience is reported in Matthew 14:22-33 (see also Mk 6:45-52//Jh 6:16-21) where Jesus walks on the sea.[169] In this report it is stated that the waves were beating against the boat in which the disciples were and that the wind was against them. Mark 6:48 reports that Jesus saw that the disciples were struggling against the waves. This would fall into a typical bottom-op stimulus of the neurological pathways (i.e., ergotropic stimulus; energy expending).

Technical terminology used in dream-vision reports: Hanson (1980:1407, 1408, 1409) working from a strong literary perspective is correct in pointing out that the meaning of words such as ὄναρ[170], ὄψις, ἐνύπιον[171], ὅραμα[172], φάσμα, φάντασμα[173], φαντασία, ἀποκάλυψις[174], ἐπιφάνεια[175], ὀπτασία[176], ὅρασις[177] are difficult to distinguish or define

[167] Each one of these topics have been looked at by using an ASC model to interpret them. See Craffert (2011), Malina and Pilch (2008:19-20, 60-61), Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:278-281, 282-285; 2003:35-36, 89, 145-148, 183-184, 237-238, 265, 322-323), and Pilch (2002a; 2002b; 2004; 2005; 2011). See also the work of Flannery (2014) and Malina (1999).
[168] The experience of Paul on the road to Damascus in Acts (9:1-19) would also fall into this category (Pilch 2002b:698).
[169] For a cultural plausible interpretation of this texts see Malina (1999).
[170] See Matthew 1:20, 2:12, 13, 19, 22 and 27:19.
[171] See Acts 2:17, quoting Joel 3:1-5 from the *LXX*.
[172] See Matthew 17:9, Acts 7:31, 9:10, 12, 10:3, 17, 19; 11:5, 12:9, 16:9, 10 and 18:9.
[173] See Matthew 14:26, Mark 6:49.
[174] See 1 Corinthians 14:6 and 26, 2 Corinthians 12:1 and 7, Galatians 1:12 and 2:2, Ephesians 1:17 and 3:3, Revelation 1:1, see also possibly Romans 16:25, 1 Peter 1:7, 13 and 4:13.

from one another on a literary level. Although this difficulty is not lost when placing these terms within the hermeneutical model of the phenomenon of ASC in the first-century Mediterranean world, this model does help to view these terms in a more cultural plausible understanding as belonging to a single phenomenon, namely that of ASC. This in turn makes the researcher conscious of the fact that these technical terminology should be seen as referring to dynamic and living phenomena of the first-century Mediterranean world.[178]

The dream-vision proper: The three overlapping stages through which a person goes when entering ASC have already been discussed above in reference to Ezekiel's call narrative. These stages are well attested in the dream-vision reports that are found in the Greek Testament. If a person would see a pale (white) or a bright (white) light this would be an indication that he or she is in a trance state. In Matthew's transfiguration narrative (see Mt 17:2), Jesus' face ἔλαμψεν ὡς[179] ὁ ἥλιος (shone like the sun) and his clothes became λευκὰ ὡς τὸ φῶς (white like light). Paul saw on his way to Damascus a φῶς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (light from the heaven; Ac 9:3).

Reaction – Most of the reports in the Greek Testament tells of the person or persons reaction as being fearful of the dream-vision. The disciples see Jesus walking on the sea καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου ἔκραξαν (and they cry out in fear; Mt 14:26). So also in the

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[175] See 2 Thessalonians 2:8, 1 Timothy 6:14, Titus 2:13 which refers to the second coming of Christ which would have been perceived as an ASC experience, see also Matthew 24:3, 27, 37 and 39, 1 Corinthians 15:23 and 16:17, 2 Corinthians 7:6, 7 and 10:10, Philippians 1:26 and 2:12, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 3:13, 4:15 and 5:23, 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 8 and 9, James 5:7 and 8, 2 Peter 1:16, 3:4 and 12, 1 John 2:28 for references to the same event through the use of the word παρουσία.

[176] See Luke 1:22, 24:23, Acts 26:19, 2 Corinthians 12:1.

[177] See Acts 2:17, Revelation 4:3, 3 and 9:17.

[178] By the very nature of these phenomena represented in ASC experiences and the realm to which they refer a clear and absolute definition would not be possible. This is attested to by the textual witnesses themselves (see the use of the term דמות in Ezk 1-3. See also the discussion in Pilch (2011:37) and Malina & Rohrbaugh (1998:282-283)). James (2010:343) calls this indefinability of mystical experiences "the handiest" way of understanding a mystical state of mind. He goes on in stating that the subject of such a state of mind "immediately says that it defies expression, that no adequate report of its contents can be given in words." (see also Gaskill 2010:1-5, 121).

[179] The use of ὡς (like) in these reports attest to the fact that the images in such an ASC are not always clearly visible and, as with Ezekiel, these reports state through the use of ὡς that this is what they saw, but not exactly like this. See also Matthew 3:16 (Mk 1:10) and 28:3, Rev 1:10, 14, 15, 16; 2:18; 4:1, 3 and 6 where ὡς is used in relation to ASC experiences, see also the more detailed discussion in the following Chapter on technical terminology.

transfiguration after the voice from heaven proclaimed Jesus as the son of God the disciples ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα (had a great fear; Mt 17:6).

Response – An important response to ASC experiences is a new understanding of the self and of the relationship one's self has to another (Malina 1999:366). Paul's call to be a holy man changed his understanding of himself as well as his understanding of his "self's" relationship with the Jesus-group's collective self but also with the out-group outside of the Jesus-group (Pilch 2002b, 2005). After Jesus' baptism and his ASC experience he understood himself clearly as a holy man of Israel and as belonging to the household of God, as the son of God (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:35-37, 145-148, 237-241 see also Groenewald & Van Aarde 2006; Van Aarde 2001:51-81). Further, although it is possible and there is a need to look at these reports from a literary critical perspective,[180] it would be erroneous to work from the presupposition that, "literary criticism are the only possible approaches" (Oppenheim 1956:184) to clarify these texts. Literary criticism is one part of the greater scheme of understanding these texts. The author of these texts did not select the *Guttung* of their reports solely, or even primarily, to resemble other literary units of texts. Rather these reports were given in similar forms, in a similar *genre* form, because these "literary forms are culturally specific wording patterns that derive from the social system" (Pilch 2004:52). It is because of this cultural embeddedness that these reports were accepted as authoritative and cultural plausible reports of true experiences of reality in its totality (Pilch 2002a, 2004; Malina 1999).

4.4 CONCLUSION

The discussion above has indicated the following:

1. From a cross-cultural and neurobiological basis the shaman-complex can be seen as a universal phenomenon. The universality is not only applicable to present societies being studied and used as a cross-cultural sample, but also the cultures of the ancient world. This universality would account for the 50% sameness. The

[180] See Attridge (1979), Hanson (1980), Long (1972) and Oppenheim (1956) who works with these texts from a literary perspective.

consistency is also seen in the way that reality is constructed and given authority in each of the different cultures.

2. Regardless of this uniformity that occurs, the 50% difference is just as important to keep in mind when working with different cultures, and all the more so when working with a culture from the past that is no longer evident. This 50% difference refers, in short, to the sacred canopy of each of the respected societies. That is to say what the content of the reality is that they construct, how this content is organised and what the sources (i.e. collective memory consisting out of myths, customs and manners) are, from which they draw when constructing their reality.
3. When looking at the ANE and first-century Mediterranean world, the shaman-complex and accompanying phenomena (characteristics and practices) are clearly attested to in the textual witnesses that are available. But it is required to use the language and understanding of the ANE and first century Mediterranean world when speaking of these phenomena. This leads to the fact that if one were to speak of a shaman, one would have to speak of a נביא (prophet), חזה (seer), an ἀπόστολος (apostle) or a προφήτης (prophet)
4. The choice of *genre* for such reports of visions, dreams or revelations (i.e., experiences of alternate realities) was not made based primarily on literary considerations by the authors. Rather they chose a form (*genre*) that was imbedded and found its meaning in the cultural laden discourse of their communities.

In the following chapter these insights will be applied to Revelation with the aim of postulating a cultural plausible understanding for Revelation's *genre*. The implications of such an understanding of the *genre* of Revelation will be looked at in the final concluding chapter.

Chapter 5

Revelation's *genre* – A cultural plausible perspective

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter it will be shown that John of Patmos stands in the prophetic tradition of the Hebrew Testament's prophets (§ 5.2). Further, that Revelation could be seen as a cultural plausible revelatory-visionary report by a prophet whom underwent a sky journey (soul flight) into the realm of God (the highest abode in the heavens). This will also show that John's visions could be understood within the shaman-complex, not only structurally but also functionally (§ 5.3). These insights will have to be brought into focus by highlighting the relationship of John to the seven communities (§ 5.4).[181]

5.2 I JOHN ... A PROPHET

The aim here is neither to give a definitive identity of John of Patmos as for instance one of the twelve apostles, nor what the relationship is between Revelation and the Gospel of John and the epistles of John. The aim is to discern the possible relationship between John's vocation as holy man[182] and that of the Hebrew Testament's holy men, and how this fits into the paradigm discussed with regard to the ANE and first-century Mediterranean world in Chapter 4 above.

5.2.1 Introduction

From the start, when looking at the authorship of Revelation with a focus on the prophetic vocation of John, it should be made clear that John himself typified his work as being prophetic.[183] At the same time it should also be noted that the dichotomy

[181] Although the neurobiological basis of religious experiences in general and that of an ASC specifically will not be discussed here, a discussion on this will be given in the appendix of this study at the end.
[182] The term "holy man" should be seen here as a collective nomination of the prophets, men of God, apostles, prophets and holy ones in the Hebrew and Greek Testament. A holy man in short is seen as "someone who had relatively easy access to God and who could obtain and do many favors for fellow human beings" (Pilch 1999:79).
[183] So Revelation 1:3, 22:7, 10, 18, 19 which clearly refers to the text as being λόγους τῆς προφητείας.

between the prophetic works of the Hebrew Testament and Revelation[184] has led to misunderstandings of the prophetic phenomenon in the "early" Jesus-groups in general, and specifically with regard to Revelation.[185]

This misunderstanding of prophecy in Revelation is illustrated in the following comment of the Church Father Oecumenius (*c.* end of the 5th century AD):

> "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable," a sacred text said somewhere [1 Tm 3:16]. For it was by the Spirit that all those who proclaimed to us the saving gospel – prophets, apostles, and evangelists – were given wisdom. But blessed John was certainly holier than all other preachers and more spiritual than any other spiritual person.[186]
>
> (*Oecumenius* 1.1)

The reason for John's blessedness is that he was a true prophet, for 'even those who are not Christians introduce their own seers who knew "the events of the present, the future and the,"' (*Oecumenius* 1.2), but John had knowledge of everything; past, present and future. This understanding of John being a prophet, who fully knew the future, got carried over prominently into the so-called dispensational interpretation of Revelation. In the most extreme form of this interpretive paradigm anyone who views Revelation differently and not as predicting future events is typified as attacking the authority of Scripture.[187] This shows that the dichotomy is not only between the prophetic works of the Hebrew Testament, but also between the prophetic phenomenon in the Christian communities and the surrounding non-Christian, or pagan, communities.[188]

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[184] See the discussion in Chapter 2 on the works of Beckwith (1919), Charles (1920), Ladd (1957), and Mounce (1977) in this regard. See also the work of De Smidt (2004) and Larkin (2007).

[185] See Schüssler Fiorenza (1980:04-107, 1983:295-297, 1985:133-134, 2001:1-6) for similar criticism.

[186] This not only distinguishes John the Prophet from the non-Christian prophets but also from any other prophet in the Hebrew and Greek Testament. Something of this distinction is also to be found in the article of Friedrich (1968) on προφήτης κτλ. in the *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. Of John and Revelation Friedrich (1968:851, 852) writes: "The many visions and auditions make him [John] more of an apocalyptic seer than a primitive Christian prophet. The prophet is very different in Paul.... For the prophets of the Pauline Epistle exhortation is paramount and predictions are mentioned only incidentally; in Revelation prediction is central and the exhortations are more or less on the margin" (see Van Niekerk 2014:27-33; see also the work of Fekkes 1994, and the remarks of Schnelle 2009:768-769).

[187] This attack includes not only those who see Revelation as non-predictive, but also those who read the Revelation as referring to certain historical events. So Garland (2004:24) criticises Osborn (2002) of relating passages that is clearly prophetic passages "which reveal events in a potentially distant future" to contemporary events of John of Patmos (see also Christopher 2006; for a critical evaluation of this view on prophecy and Revelation see Van Niekerk 2014).

[188] Van Gemeren (1990) makes this distinction by referring to the prophecies of other cultures as being a purely "religious phenomenon" that comes from the self and with the aim of manipulating the hearers of

It cannot be denied that there is clearly a distinctive phenomenon of προφητείας within the Jesus-groups that has to be understood separately from the phenomenon of, for example, μαντεία of the surrounding Graeco-Roman world. Such a dichotomy makes it impossible to place the revelatory-visionary report[189] elements of Revelation within the larger phenomenon of the ancient world. The consequence of this is that the cultural richness of the text is lost and interpretations could easily be made from an anachronistic and ethnocentric[190] perspective which leads to a reductionist reading of the text.[191]

5.2.2 "Early Christian" prophecy

When looking from a conscious historical perspective at the phenomenon of prophecy and prophets in the "early Christian" communities, the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1980, 1983, 1985, 2001) is indispensable. Although she is not the first to work on the subject (see Hill 1972; Long 1972; Rowland 1979), her working methodology can be distinguished in that it takes into consideration the fact that 'from a history of religions point of view no such phenomenon as early Christian apocalyptic exists. All early apocalyptic texts are expressions of Jewish apocalypticism and therefore do not constitute an independent phenomenon – "early Christian apocalyptic"' (Schüssler

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these prophecies" understanding of humanity, the gods and the world. Over and against this stands the "revelations" found in the Hebrew and Greek Testament which comes from God to whom mankind, the self and world is submitted. So he states that "Religion is an attempt to explain what has happened, is happening and what may happen.... Religion is manipulative" (Van Gemeren 1990:22, 23). Revelation on the other hand is divinely guided by the one true God, contains divine wisdom and is countercultural (Van Gemeren 1990:25).

[189] This nomination for Revelation as a revelatory-visionary report based on the work of Hanson (1980) discussed in the previous Chapter. Hanson (1980) worked with dream-vision reports. John of Patmos clearly did not have any dreams (ἐνυπνίους, ὄναρατα) which he reports, but received a revelation (ἀποκάλυψιν; see Rev 1:1) in visions (ὁράσιν; see Rev 9:19). Thus instead of talking about dream-vision reports it should be renamed here as revelatory-visionary reports.

[190] Ethnocentrism is the "tendency to judge all cultures through the lens of one's own culture.... *Anachronism* is understood to be the imposing of one's own worldview on that of another" (eds. Kok & Van Eck 2011:2; see below for more on this).

[191] An anachronistic and ethnocentric reading of ancient documents are the two main follies that a social-scientific reading wants to prevent (Elliott 1993:7-16; eds. Kok & Van Eck 2011:2-3; Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:1-17; Malina 2001b:1-26) and the question of the cultural plausibility of a *genre* postulated for a text comes directly out of social scientific criticism (Malina 1999; Pilch 1995, 2011, 2002a).

Fiorenza 1983:295).[192] Moreover, Schüssler Fiorenza's analysis of this phenomenon does not end with the history of religions point of view; she also uses a *geschichtstheologisch* (history of theology) interpretative method in working with this phenomenon (see Schüssler Fiorenza 1985, 2001). With this *geschichtstheologisch* method it is possible to discern the distinctiveness of early Christian apocalyptic/prophecy. For although there is no independent phenomenon of early Christian apocalyptic/prophecy, the prophets of the Jesus-groups would have differed from those of the Judean (i.e., Jewish) communities because of the importance of the events and advent of Jesus the Messiah (see Rev 1:1).

The removal of the dichotomy between Christian and Judean prophecy, seeing the first as a continuation of the second, do not exclude the "newness" of the first. In this regard Schüssler Fiorenza (1983:296) notes that a

> delineation of early Christian apocalyptic as something "new" affirms its continuity with Jewish apocalyptic while at the same time maintaining its own distinctive perspective.... "New" only means that these characteristic elements have achieved a new special constellation or configuration and emphasis within early Christian apocalyptic.

The same holds true for Christian prophecy. Although it is filled with new meaning, which derives from the event and advent of Jesus the Messiah, the continuity with Jewish prophecy cannot be denied.

This continuity is firstly affirmed by the clear literary allusions[193] in Revelation to the Hebrew prophetic texts. Bauckham (1993a:4), for example, states that the "whole book

[192] Although this article of Schüssler Fiorenza (1983) focuses on the phenomenon of early Christian apocalyptic it will become clear in the discussion below that for Schüssler Fiorenza the choice is not "either apocalyptic or prophetic" but both at the same time (Schüssler Fiorenza 1980:111, 1985:138). Thus the insights applied here to apocalyptic are just as applicable to the phenomenon of "early Christian" prophecy.

[193] The use of the traditions reference to these allusions as "literary" of nature should not be seen as taking them to be a specific literary genre or *Guttung* chosen by John of Patmos. Rather these allusions and the discussion on them should be understood in the light of the insights of Chapter 3 on the tertiary association areas which is found in all human brains, especially the *verbal-conceptual association area* (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993a:182; 1999:37; Newberg & D'Aquili 2000:61). When placing these allusion in this association area frame of interpretation one sees that what John of Patmos saw (first visual association are) is analysed and conceptualised by what he has experienced and knows from past experiences and the cultural sacred canopy, which included the sacred Scriptures, to which he belongs (second orientation association area). This orientation of him leads to the intentional action of wanting to

[of Revelation] is saturated with allusions to Old Testament prophecy". These allusions would have been all the more clear for the hearers in the seven communities to whom John wrote because of the shared "sacred canopy" or "myths" in the community. Second, John's own self-understanding as a prophet clearly places him alongside the prophets of the Hebrew Testament. This is affirmed by the parallels between the calling of John (Rev 10) and Ezekiel (Ezk 2:8-3:3), and the commissioning of John to prophesy to the nations and kings (Rev 10:11) like Jeremiah (Jr 1:10; see Johnson 1986:520-523; Fekkes 1994:37-39; Hill 1972; Schüssler Fiorenza 1980:107-114, 1983, 1985:135-140 see also Schüssler Fiorenza 1977).[194] John's call to the communities for repentance (μετανοέω)[195] also clearly shows that Revelation was meant to be understood as being part of the Hebrew Testament's prophetic tradition.[196] Thus John did not mean to write a new book that needs to be added to the canonical prophets of the Hebrew Testament (Hill 1972:403). Rather John used the sacred texts (sacred narratives) of his community, which forms part of their collective memory, and presented it as mnemohistory (Bosman 2014).

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report on what he has experienced (third attentional association area). This expression is done by the verbal creation of abstract concept and relating them to words via the language centre of the brain (final verbal-conceptual association area). It is clear from short discussions that these areas cannot be separated from one another, and that any discussion on them cannot capture the complexity and speed with which these areas work in the brain (D'Aquili & Newberg 1999).

[194] This could also be expanded to include the same roles that Nathan had in the court of king David as a prophet who needed to prophesy to the king (2 Sm 7) and to a certain extent also the Egyptian prophet Neferti also forming an integral part of the king's court.

[195] In Revelation John uses the term μετανοέω when calling the communities to repentance (Rev 2:5 [x2], 16, 21 [x2], 22; 3:3, 19). Although μετανοέω is never used in the LXX for religious and moral conversion (Behm 1967:989), ἐπιστρέφω and ἀποστρέφω, which are semantically linked to μετανοέω are used throughout the prophetic literature in referring to repentance in the same way John does. *See inter alia* Hosea 7:16, 8:13 and 14:5, Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13, 2:1,4 and 6, Micah 2:4, Jonah 3:8, 9 and 10, Nahum 2:2 (2:3 – LXX), Zephaniah 2:7, Zechariah 1:4, Isaiah 5:25, 9:12 (9:11 – LXX), 13 (12 – LXX), 17 (16 – LXX), 21 (20 – LXX), 10:4, 6, 12:1, 14:27, 30:15, 35:10, 36:9, 37:7, 8, 9, 29, 34, 37, 38:8, 43:13, 44:25, 45:23, 51:11, 55:10, 11, 57:9, 58:13 and 59:20, Jeremiah 2:35, 3:10, 19, 4:8, 28, 8:4, 5, 14:3, 18:11, 20, 22:27, 23:14, 20, 22, 25:18 (49:39 – LXX), 26 (46 – LXX):16, 35 (28 – LXX):3, 36 (29 – LXX):10, 37 (30 – LXX):3 [x2], 18, 24, 38 (31 – LXX):8, 21 [x2] and 23, Ezekiel 3:18, 19, 20, 13:22, 14:6, 16:53, 18:8, 17, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 21:5 (10 – LXX), 30 (35 – LXX), 29:14, 33:9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 34:4, 6, 16, 38:8, 39:25, 27 where ἀποστρέφω is is the translation of the Hebrew term שוּב, and Hosea 3:5, 5:4, 15, 6:1, 7:10, 11:5, 14:2, 3 and 8, Amos 4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 9:14, Micah 7:19, Isaiah 6:10, 19:22, 31:6, 44:22, 46:8, 49:6, 55:7 and 63:17, Jeremiah 2:24, 27, 3:10, 12, 14, 22, 4:1, 5:3, 6:9, 8:4, 5, 11:10, 12:15, 15:19 and 18:8, Ezekiel 7:13, 8:17, 14:6, 18:30, 32, 34:4, 16, 38:12, 44:1 and 47:7 where ἐπιστρέφω is the translation of the Hebrew term שוּב, which is connected to the religious and moral conversion of the hearers.

[196] As already indicated, this repentance should not only be seen as the confession of sins as understood today, but should be understood as healing a relationship between the spiritual world (i.e., God) and the community (i.e., seven communities of Asia), a key concept in the Shaman-complex.

A final remark is needed to be made on John's use of, not only the Hebrew Testament, but also other sources that he worked with:

> John uses OT text as he uses Jewish apocalyptic[197], pagan mythological and early Christian materials in an allusive "Anthological" way.... John's task is not the exposition and interpretation of the OT prophets by the prophetic proclamation about many peoples, kings and nations.... Not the OT prophets but his own historical-theological situation is his locus of revelation.
>
> (Schüssler Fiorenza 1980:109)[198]

In the light of the misunderstanding of Revelation as a predictive-prophetic text, the last statement quoted above of Schüssler Fiorenza (1980:109) is of great importance. For in the same way that the Hebrew Testament's prophets were not John's locus of revelation, neither was some future-blessed generation his locus of revelation. Rather, just as the prophets of old, John wrote/prophesised for his own time, from his own context, and uses his own historical-theological context as his frame of reference.

Thus it is clear that John the prophet stands in the tradition of the Hebrew Testament's נביא, חזה, and איש אלהים.

5.3 I JOHN ... SAW A DOOR IN HEAVEN ... IMMEDIATELY IN THE SPIRIT

In the revelatory-visionary report of John the spirit (πνεῦμα) occupies a prominent position. There are seven spirits (ἑπτὰ πνεύματων) before the throne of God through which the grace and peace (χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη) of God from the spiritual world (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου) comes from to the seven communities to whom John writes (Rev 1:4; see also Rev 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). John is in the spirit (ἐν πνεύματι) when receiving his revelation

[197] A formal analysis of the parallels between the Jewish apocalyptic texts and that of Revelation falls outside the scope of this study. Such analyses have been prominent in the past literature focusing on the *genre* of Revelation (see Collins 1979a, 1979b, 1981, 1983, 1991, 1998; and also Bandy 2011 for parallels to other literature). Aune (1983; 1997) also looks for parallels between the Apocalypse of John and the surrounding culture, but focuses not only on the literary parallels (Aune 1997) but also looks at the time-space-system in which John lived (Aune 1983). Such an approach falls closer to the method that this research is following.

[198] One of the interesting features of the *Social-science commentary on the book of Revelation* by Malina and Pilch (2000) is the total absence of the Roman imperial context in their interpretation. When reading Revelation as a revelatory-visionary report, as they do (Malina 1995; Malina & Pilch 2000; Pilch 2011:216-230), in the light of the neurobiological basis (100% sameness) and taking into consideration the association areas as discussed above it would not make sense to state that the Roman imperial context does not feature in some way in the report of John.

(Rev 1:10; 4:2) and the spirit is the one who carries John away to the wilderness to receive a vision (Rev 17:3; see also Rev 14:13; 21:10; 22:17). Each community is called to listen to what the spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα) says to them (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22), for this spirit is the τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν προφητῶν (Rev 22:6; see also Rev 19:10).[199] The spirit (πνεῦμα) is the one who gives life whether for good (the two witnesses; Rev 11:11) or bad (the image of the beast; Rev 13:15). In contrast to John, who is called by the spirit to witness to the kings, three unclean spirits (πνεύματα τρία ἀκάθαρτα) go out to the kings of the world and gathers them to make war against God (see Rev 16:13-14; 18:2).

Revelation 4:1-2 could serve well as a test case in which the advantages of the insights form a cultural plausible *genre*-reading of Revelation becomes clear; that is, reading Revelation as a revelatory-visionary report. In reference to John being in the spirit (Rev 4:2a) there is agreement that this refers to an ecstatic/trance[200] state John experienced.[201] Less agreed upon is whether this report of John refers to an actual phenomenon or if it is just a literary allusion to the Hebrew Testament's prophetic works. Beale (1999:319) sees this as John who identifies himself with the prophets of the Hebrew Testament, and also as an actual report of John gaining access to the world of God. Of importance for the discussion below is what Beale (1999:319) identifies as the

[199] This same spirit of the prophets (τὸ πνεῦμα τῶν προφητῶν) that is upon John of Patmos in Revelation is also the spirit who will be with John the Baptist according to Luke 1:17. John the Baptist will be filled with the holy spirit (πνεματος ἁγίου πλησθήσεται) and he will turn (ἐπιστρέψει) Israel back to God in the spirit and power of Elijah (ἐν πνεύματι καὶ δυνάμει Ἠλίου). Elijah who is a well attested holy man/prophet of Israel from the Hebrew Testament (i.a., 1 Ki 17:18, 24; 18:1, 15, 22, 36).

[200] Aune (1997), Bauckham (1993b), Mounce (1977) and Beckwith (1919) all see the expression ἐν πνεύματι as standing in relation or even parallel to the expression in Acts that a person came ἐπ' ἔκστασις (into a trance/ecstatic state; Ac 10:10) in which a person could see an ὁραμα (vision; Ac 11:5; 22:17).

[201] Aune (1997:83) translates the phrase ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι in Revelation 1:10 as "I fell into a prophetic trance" and then works from there on further (see discussion to follow for more on Aune's (1997) insights). So also one can note the following comments on Revelation 1:10: "*I was in* (lit. *Came to be in*) *the Spirit*: *i.e.* caught away by the power of the Spirit into an ecstasy" (Beckwith 1919:435). "John records that he was "in the spirit" on the day of his revelation. This expression refers to a state of spiritual exaltation best described as a trance" (Mounce 1977:75). "Vs. 10 suggest that the revelation that follows came to John in a state of ecstasy" (Witherington 2007:80). Beale (1999:319) does not state explicitly that this is a reference to an ecstatic state but links it to "Ezekiel's repeated rapture in the Spirit". He also make an important statement because of John's role as a prophet, after receiving the revelatory-visionary insights "he is to go back and communicate God's hidden purpose to his people and tell them what part they are to have in carrying it out" (Beale 1999:319).

content of what John sees, namely a symbolic predictions of present situations and of "what will come to pass."[202]

Bauckham (1993b:158) is of the opinion that John's claim to be ἐν πνεύματι "must certainly be taken as indicating that real visionary experience underlies the Apocalypse", but that the revelatory-visionary report that is given in Revelation should not be seen simply as a transcript of these visionary experiences. The emphasis for Bauckham (1993b) falls on the literary aspect of this revelatory-visionary report. This is seen when Bauckham (1993b:159) states that out "of his visionary experience John has produced a work which enables the reader not to share the same experience as second-hand, but to receive its message transposed into a literary medium." Reddish (2001:94) states it stronger when referring to Revelation 4:1 where John saw a θύρα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ.

> One should be careful ... in taking too literal John's claim that these revelations came to him through visions, as if he actually saw the event he describes. Divine revelation mediated through dreams and visions is a stock literary device of apocalyptic literature. John uses this device as a literary vehicle to convey his theological message to his readers.
>
> (Reddish 2001:94)

The consequences of these traditional approaches to the Revelation 4:1-4 are the following: One, the phrase ἐν πνεύματι serves either as an indication that John was in an ecstatic state, (Rev 4:1) then went out and again in (Rev 4:2; Morris 1987:85).[203] Or that John was in a continued ecstatic state and does not come out of it (Beckwith 1919:495-496; Mounce 1977:133-134).[204] Two, this leads to some chronological problems when looking at Revelation 4:1-2. This would be that if John had seen a θύρα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ (Rev 4:1) which opened, he had to be in a form of ecstatic trance

[202] This is to be expected when considering the interpretive paradigm that Beale (1999:48-49) postulates for his commentary, that is eclecticism or modified idealism. In this he tries to combine the preteristic and culture-historical interpretation paradigms with the idealistic view. But in the end makes the statement that "certainly there are prophecies of the future in Revelation" (Beale 1999:49).

[203] See also Baljon (1908:63) who states that here in 4:2 *"een nieuw visioen begint na het voorafgaande spreekt vanself."*

[204] Although not stated explicitly by Osborn (2007:225, fn. 4) he would also settle for the interpretation where John does not come our of his trance state. The focus for Osborn (2007) is much more on showing that John is again enjoined with the Prophets of the Hebrew Testament, such as Ezekiel (Ezk 11:1-5) and Amos (Am 3:7; see also Beale 1999:319).

experience (i.e. ἐν πνεύματι). Thus when he states that after seeing (εἶδον) this open door, he was ἐν πνεύματι; the solution can only be one of the above named two views with regard to the ecstatic experience of John. From a literary perspective the solution would be provided by either John, who had woven in earlier material, or a redactor, who wrote Revelation 4:1 in order to connect Chapters 1-3 with 4-5 (Charles 1920:110-111).[205]

An alternative to these views is touched upon, but not fully expounded by Beasley-Murray (1994:112), Du Rand (2007:228-229) and Koester (2014:359-360). Koester (2014) also links John with the prophet Ezekiel but not in a literary sense. The parallel between them is that John "portrays himself like Ezekiel, who was moving through stages of a vision by the Spirit (Ezk 8:3-4; 11:5)" (Koester 2014:360). Thus when John states that "εὐθέως ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι" (immediately I was in the spirit) it signals not only a special change in scenery (earth to heaven), but a different ecstatic experience than given in Revelation 4:1. This experience, that is clearly different from Revelation 1:10, is only named in passing by Beasly-Murray (1994:112) and Du Rand (2007:229) as John being transported ἐν πνεύματι through the door in heaven on an out of this world experience.[206]

[205] When looking at other commentaries the complexity of these two verses become clear. Roloff (1993:68-69) takes the opposite stance from Charles (1920). The only relation between John being ἐν πνεύματι in Revelation 1:10 and 4:2a is that one cannot give a precise temporal and spatial description of these visions; in the end the only thing one can be clear about is that the ἐν πνεύματι in Revelation 4:2a "has no direct relationship to the commissioning vision (1:9-20)" (Roloff 1993:68; see also Wall 1991:89). Boring (1989) again does not give the use of ἐν πνεύματι any consideration in his commentary and rather focuses on the vision as a whole and what the pastoral implications are for the communities as well as the present day readers. Henry (1999:56), although seeing John's reference to being ἐν πνεύματι as a reference to an ecstatic experience similar to that of other Greek Testament characters, takes a more allegorical interpretation of the text. His interpretation begins with the command for John to go up into heaven of which he then writes: "We [humans] must not intrude into the secret of God's presence but stay where we are until we are called into it.... The more we withdraw [i.e. to be more and more ἐν πνεύματι] from all bodily things, the more we are fit for fellowship with God" (Henry 1999:56).

[206] The influence of the *genre* decade and post-*genre* decade is clearly seen in the work of Du Rand (2007) at this point. In regard to John being ἐν πνεύματι in Revelation 1:10, Du Rand (2007:135) states the following: "Some interpreters view this as an ecstatic state, a trance or even a dream. But we should rather understand this as John having an experience of community with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit took over John's sensory observation while he was fully conscious" (translated from Afrikaans). But when Du Rand (2007) then refers to John being ἐν πνεύματι in Revelation 4:2 he writes: "This entails a visual revelation to John during an out-of-this-worldly journey [*buitewêreldse reis*]" (Du Rand 2007:229). Although Du Rand (2007) never explicitly quotes the official *genre* definition given by Collins (1979b) it is clear that his understanding of Revelation's revelatory (apocalyptic) character is influenced deeply by this

When reading Revelation 4:1a and 2a in light of an ASC model the following insights are gained: 1) The problem concerning the chronology of these two verses falls away, because the order in which the events are reported on would have made logically sense to a reader of the first-century world.[207] 2) A cultural plausible understanding of both expressions (i.e., θύρα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ and ἐν πνεύματι) is gained. 3) From the cultural perspective of the first century, John falls into the category of "holy men" in the ancient world and this in turn leads to seeing that John can be understood in the light of the shaman-complex.

5.3.1 Θύρα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ

In the previous chapters[208] the importance of taking the cosmological view into account when working with revelatory-visionary texts such as Revelation and the shaman-complex in cross-cultural studies was noted. In past *genre* research on apocalyptic literature (revelatory-visionary texts) this is already present in the realisation that the information revealed in these documents are of a transcendent reality mediated by other-worldly means. Among the many changes that occurred in the social, intellectual and political climate at the time that John was writing (the Roman era, well after the advent of the Hellenistic Age) was the replacement of the older cosmology with a new vision of the organisation of the universe.

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definition. One of the key features of revelatory literature according to this definition is that revelations are mediated by another worldly being (implying that a journey to another world has to be taken in some way) and also the reality that is being disclosed, is not of this world, but of "a transcendent reality" (Collins 1979b:9; see also § 10 of the master paradigm postulated by Collins 1979:7).

[207] DeSilva (2008a) argues along this same lines when working with looking at the appeal to the reason of the seven communities in his article, *Out of our minds? Appeals to reason (logos) in the seven oracles of Revelation 2-3*. His focus is on the enthymematic-argumentative reasoning John employs in Revelation 2-3. An enthymematic argument 'does not state what the hearer can be expected to supply ... thus subtly enlisting the hearer's aid and partnership in effect, in the construction of completion of the argument' (DeSilva 2008a:127). Further such enthymematic arguments would not have made sense if: 1) The orator did not assume that the hearers can and will be able to supply the missing cultural premises and ideologies necessary for the argument to make logically sense and 2) the logic of such arguments will "remain largely 'insider' logic" (DeSilva 2008a:129; see also DeSilva 2008b, 2008d, 2008e)

[208] See Chapter 3 (§ 3.3.3.2.1) above and also Chapter 4 (§ 4.2.2).

The older classical Ancient Near Eastern cosmology was seen as follows: The earth is a flat table or disc floating upon the sea or situated on pillars.[209] Above the earth arched the dome[210] of the heavens (שמים) which held back the waters above the heavens.[211] This dome also rested on pillars (i.e. mountains in the seas).[212] Within this dome in the sky (heavenly dome) lived the heavenly bodies some of whom provided the light to the earth (i.e. sun, moon, stars, planets).[213] The gods also lived in this heavenly realm.[214] Beneath the earth was the underworld where the souls of the people went to dwell when they died[215] (Cargal 1994:805-806; Pilch 1999:2012:1-26).[216]

Regardless of the development in the cosmological view from the Hebrew Testament to the Greek Testament[217], the views of the heavens remained relatively the same throughout. Pilch (1999:148) states that all agreed that the

> universe was a closed system enclosed by a vault or firmament. The high god or gods lived on the other side,[218] and there was an opening that allowed access to the other side.

[209] 1 Samuel 2:8, Job 9:6, Psalm 75:3.
[210] Cargal (1994) only here refers to the single dome (i.e., the רקיע) mentioned in Genesis 1:6-7 (see also Gn 1:8, 14-15, 17, 20; Ps 19:1-2; 150:1; Ezk 1:22-23, 25-26; 10:1; Dn 12:3). But apart from this רקיע (firmament) there are also other heavens which are mentioned in the Hebrew Testament, all of which would form part of the reality known then as the שמים (heavens). *Vilon/Wilon* which is the opening for the sun and moon respectively to enter and exit in the morning and evening (Is 40:22; and also *1 En.* 72:2-3; 74:5). *Shechakim* (שחקים) in which the miller is for the heavenly manna for the righteous (Ps 78:23-24). *Zebul* (זבל) the home of the heavenly Jerusalem (1 Ki 8:31; Is 63:15). *Moan* (מען) where a chorus of angels sing the entire night and stop out of respect for Israel (Dt 26:15; Ps 42:8). *Machon* (מכון) is where God stores the rain, hail, snow and wind of the earth (1 Ki 8:39) *Araboth* (ערבות) is where the throne of God is situated (Ps 58:4; Cohen 1961:30-40; see also Van Niekerk 2014:116-117). See also the description in the *Mishnah B. Hagigah* 12b.
[211] Genesis 1:7, see also Genesis 7:11, Exodus 20:4.
[212] Job 26:10-11, 38:8 and 10-11.
[213] Genesis 1:14-15, 17.
[214] Psalm 103:19.
[215] Job 26:5-7.
[216] In this regard the following should be noted: In a previous study Van Niekerk (2014:116) noted with regard to John's cosmological view that when "comparing the cosmological view of Revelation with other views, we find that John had in actual fact a very simplistic understanding of the cosmos." When looking at work done on the cosmological view of the first century Mediterranean world (see among others Cargal 1994; Pilch 1999:147-152, 2011, 2012:1-26; and also Rowland 1982), then it would be erroneous to evaluate John's single layer heavenly view (Rev 4-5) as "simplistic." Rather as will be indicated in the discussion to follow John's view of the heavens was strongly influenced by the cultural laden discourse in which he lived and thought about the heavenly world.
[217] For most of the populace in Greek Testament times (i.e. first century Mediterranean world) the Hellenistic view of the universe which was dominant from the fourth century BCE was the norm. For them the "earth was a still and stable sphere located at the centre of the universe, surrounded by the sun, moon and five planets, which travelled around the earth in separate orbits" (Pilch 1999:148).
[218] See for Psalm 11:4, 80:1-2, 99:1, 103:19 and 123:1, Isaiah 37:16 and 66:1, Ezekiel 1:26 and 10:1, Matthew 5:34 and 23:22, Acts 7:49, Hebrews 8:1, Revelation 4-5 where it is explicitly stated that the

> That opening, of course, was located over the place where the deity's temple on earth was located.[219]

Whether a person subscribed to the older ANE cosmological view or the Hellenistic views, for both of these this opening in the heavens was accepted as a matter of fact. For example, in Genesis 28:11-13a such an opening is described, although no reference is made here to an opening. God stands at the top of a ladder (סלם) leading into heaven and speaking to Jacob on the earth. In Ezekiel 1:1 the prophets begins by stating that while he was at the river of Chebar the heavens were opened (נפתחו השמים/ ἠνοίχθησαν οἱ οὐρανοί) and he saw a vision (מראות אלהים/ὁράσεις θεοῦ) of God (see also Ac 7:55-56). Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10 and Luke 3:21 all report that after Jesus was baptised the heavens opened[220] and he saw a vision of the spirit descending on him. *1 Enoch* 17:2-3 reports that before he saw the vision in heaven he was taken "into a place of whirlwind in the mountain[221]; the top of its summit was reaching into heaven." In the *Testament of Levi* 5:1, before he sees a vision of the Holy Most High sitting on his throne, it is reported that "the angel opened for me the gates of heaven" (see *T. Levi* 2:6; see also Ps 24:7-10).

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throne of God, where God stays, is in the heavens (i.e. on the other side of the firmament). See also the text of Isaiah 14:13 where criticism is given to the king of Babylon that he wanted to ascend to the heavens and exalted his throne לכוכבי־אל (above the stars of El). So also in *1 Enoch* 14:18 Enoch is taken up into the heaven (*1 En.* 14:8) where he then sees two houses; in the inner house he sees "a lofty throne.... And the Great Glory was sitting upon it" (*1 En.* 14:18, 20; and also *T. Levi* 3:45:1; all translations of Pseudepigrapha works are from ed. Charlesworth 1983).

[219] With regard to this opening which is connected to the temple it is important to note that the opening in heaven which gave one access to God's realm was not only connected to a temple structure. This was also to be found in so-called sacred places. So in the Hebrew Testament there is Bet-El which was the house of God in Genesis 28:11-19. There was the land of Shinar where the tower of Babel was build according to Genesis 11:1-9. Here also there had to be an opening in the heavenly firmament for God to come through and inspect the work of the men on earth (Gn 11:5). Mount Horeb, known also as the mountain of God (הר האלהים) served as a place where God could come down from heaven to earth (Gn 3:1-2; Dt 1:6; 4:10; 1 Ki 19; see also Ex 17:6 and *1 En.* 25:3). Jeremiah 3:17 expresses the idea that later on became normative for the people of Israel that Jerusalem will be called the throne of the Lord and that the Name of the Lord (i.e. the Lord self) will be in Jerusalem. This is then again seen in the ascension narrative of Acts where the disciples are on the Mount of Olives close to Jerusalem where the "hole in the sky" would be in Israelite tradition and it is here that Jesus is taken up into heaven (Acts 1:1-14; see also Luke 24:50-53).

[220] Matthew 3:16 says ἠνεῴχθησαν ... οἱ οὐρανοί (the heavens were opened), Mark 1:10 states again that σχιζομένους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς (the heavens were split/torn open), and Luke 3:21 again states that ἀνεῳχθῆναι τὸν οὐρανὸν (the heavens were opened).

[221] This can also be translated as a "whirlwind in darkness" which is a possible reference to Moses who entered the "ערפל" (cloud-darkness) in which he spoke to God (Ex 20:21; see also Philo's comment on this text in *Mos.* 1.158).

The order in all of these texts agrees with that of Revelation that first the opening in heaven (i.e., θύρα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ) is opening (ιnпת/ἠνοίχθησαν) or split open (σχιζομένους) and only after this the mysteries of heaven are revealed. Only after the opening has been opened is the prophet or seer taken into heaven. Before looking at what follows after a θύρα ἠνεῳγμένη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ (door that is opened in heaven), namely being ἐν πνεύματι, the following observations of Aune (1997) and Rowland (1982) need to be taken note of.

Rowland (1982) sees the conviction found in apocalyptic literature that the seer has the potential to pierce the vault in the sky as one of the most distinctive features thereof. As shown, above Rowland (1982) concurs that this motive is expressed in the fact that the heavens is opened which clearly implies that there is a door, entrance (gate) or hole in the sky which is opened for the seer to see through or to enter by. What needs to be taken into account here is the fact that the "origins of such ideas [i.e. an opening in the heavenly vault] lie deep within Israel's past" (Rowland 1982:78).

Aune (1997) also stresses this cultural embeddedness and indebtedness of the sky opening concept:[222] "The motive connecting divine epiphanies [i.e. the heavens being opened] with a heavenly door is particularly important in southwest Asia Minor in the Hellenistic and Roman periods" (Aune 1997:281).

In the so-called Mithras Liturgy in the *Magical Greek Papyri* from southwest Asia Minor, the following instructions are given to enter the spiritual world, to see beyond the door in heaven into the world of the gods:

> Say all these things[223] with fire and spirit, until completing the first utterance; then, similarly, begin the second, until you complete the 7 immortal gods of the world.[224] When

[222] Both of these terms, embeddedness and indebtedness, are of great importance. On the one hand the expression in Revelation 4, as any utterance, has only meaning when it is expressed within a certain culture, thus imbedded within a cultural system of meaning. But at the same time, an expression cannot be used to express an idea without also acknowledging the indebtedness of it to the culture from which it came. There is a tradition in which any expression evolves in and is thus indebted to that cultural tradition for its existence so to speak.

[223] "All of this" refers to a long list of magic words given in *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 4:585-615.

> you have said these things, you will hear thundering and shaking in the surrounding realm; and you will likewise feel yourself being agitated. Then say again: "Silence!" (the prayer). Then open your eyes, and you will see the doors [τὰς θύρας] open and the world of the gods which is within the doors [τὸν κόσμον τῶν θεῶν, ὅς ἐστιν ἐν τὸς τῶν θυρῶν], so that from the pleasure and joy of the sight your spirit runs ahead and ascends [συντρέχειν καὶ ἀναβαίνειν]. So stand still and at one draw breath from the divine into yourself, while you look intently [ἀτενίζων].
>
> (*PGM* 4:616-630)

To conclude, the numerous textual witnesses given above of revelatory-visionary reports of different kinds, as well as the instruction given in the magical papyri, makes it clear that before a visionary can see or hear anything from the heavenly realm the door or opening needs to be opened first. Thus, when John states in Revelation 4:1 "εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ θύρα ἠνεῳγμένη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ" before stating "εὐθέως ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι" (Rev 4:2a) this was a cultural plausible order in which such reports were given, regarding a phenomenon that was well attested to and known in the communities to whom John wrote.

5.3.2 Ἐν πνεύματι

Reading the above quoted text form *Magical Greek Papyri* 4 in light of the shaman-complex model, it becomes clear that the instruction to "stand still and at one draw breath from the divine into yourself, while you look intently [ἀτενίζων][225]" (*PGM* 4:630a) is meant to induce a soul journey. For this will bring about the spirit of the practitioner συντρέχειν καὶ ἀναβαίνειν (to run and ascend). This is confirmed when the following instructions are read: "Thus, when ἀποκατασταθῇ (it returns) σου ἡ ψυχή say" (*PGM*

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[224] These refer to the seven planetary gods along with the seven levels of initiation (ed. Betz 1986:50, fn. 86).

[225] To look intently (i.e. to stare) is a typical trance neurological stimulus from the "bottom up" (i.e. ergotropic stimulation/over stimulation of the senses). This is witnessed also in the Greek Testament reports where multiple occurrences are described as resulting in an ASC experiences (Pilch 2004:9). The disciples stand on the Mount of Olives with the ascension of Jesus and ἀτενίζοντες ἦσαν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν (while they stared into heaven) two men in white clothes stood next to them (Acts 1:10). Peter ἀτενίσας (stared), as did John, at a man begging alms and by this act were able to mediate the favour and power of God from the spiritual world and so heal the man so that he can walk again (Acts 3:1-10). ἀτενίσαντες (while staring) at Stephen the whole council in court saw that his face shone ὡσεὶ πρόσωπον ἀγγέλου (like that of an angel; Acts 6:15). Stephen πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου ἀτενίσας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν (full of the holy spirit stared into heaven) and there, as Ezekiel (Ezk 1:1), he saw the glory of God (Acts 7:55). Peter while in Joppa saw something like a great sheet and ἣν ἀτενίσας (while staring) at it he saw all the unclean animals in it and gained new insight into clean and unclean customs (Acts 11:6; and also Acts 13:9; 14:9).

4:630b) followed by magical words. It is thus clear then that the soul has ascended in order to be able to return again.

The question[226] here is whether it is possible to take John's report of being ἐν πνεύματι as a reference to him undergoing a sky journey. Stated in other words: When reading the report of John, following his statement in Revelation 4:2a that he was ἐν πνεύματι, can it be deemed as an authentic, cultural plausible revelatory-visionary report after he underwent a sky journey (i.e. soul journey) "to gain a view of this universe from God's perspective" (Pilch 1999:149)? In the quote "this universe" refers to that of the first century Mediterranean world with which John and his readers were well-known.

In Chapter 3 a reference was made to the imposed etic when reading that John was in the spirit. In this imposed etic "the spirit" (πνεῦμα) is seen as referring to the Holy Spirit in the sense of the third person of the Trinity.[227] So Osborne (2002:83) comments on Revelation 1:10 that it "almost certainly refers to the Holy Spirit as the source" of inspiration, and that this is clearly linked to the Holy Spirit who is also present in the Hebrew Testament (see (according to Osborne 2002) Nm 24:2; 1 Ki 18:12; Jl 2:28 and then especially Ezk 3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 37:1; 43:5). Again on Revelation 4:2a he notes: "As stated in 1:10, this phrase [i.e. ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι] points to a Holy Spirit-sent visionary experience in which God reveals His mysteries" (Osborne 2002:225). When looking at the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the early Christian community, and also the use of the spirit in the Judean witnesses, such a view cannot be upheld. Peerbolte (2015:2) rightfully notes that the "preferred combination that the early Christians gradually begin to use [in referring to the Holy Spirit] ([τὸ] πνεῦμα [τὸ] ἅγιον) is not at all widespread in early Jewish sources." The Judean texts prefer

[226] The following discussion's aim is not to look at the role that the spirit plays in the book of Revelation from a theological perspective, rather it will be to establish whether John's reference to being ἐν πνεύματι can also be seen as a revelatory-visionary report of a soul journey. For a discussion on the role the πνεῦμα has in the prophetic context of Asia Minor see Kleinknecht's (1968:345-359) discussion. See also Goodman (1990) for reports on the important role that the spirit or spirits play in ASC experiences.
[227] This imposed etic is also present in Schnelle's (2009:760) comment on the pneumatology in Revelation where he concludes: "On the whole, Revelation's statements about the Spirit are shaped by a single fundamental conception: the exalted Christ participates in the spiritual reality that emanates from God and thus enables the powerful, Spirit-inspired testimony of the prophet John."

speaking of τὸ πνεῦμα θεοῦ or τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, but as a reference to an essential component for the giving of prophesies. When looking at the texts there is no basis for accepting these texts as proof texts referring to the Holy Spirit as understood by Osborne (2002).

For example in Numbers 11:25-26 LXX[228] Moses[229] took seventy men from the elders into the tent where the Lord came down and spoke to him. The Lord then took off the spirit that was on Moses (ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος) and gave it upon the seventy men (Nm 11:25a). As τὸ πνεῦμα (the spirit) rested ἐπ' αὐτούς (upon them) they also (as Moses) ἐπροφήτευσαν (prophesied; Nm 11:25b). Apart from the seventy men two others, Eldad and Modad, were still in the assembly of Israel; they did not go into the tent with Moses, but the ἐπανεπαύσατο ἐπ' αὐτούς τὸ πνεῦμα (the spirit also rested on them) with the result that they also were able to prophesy (Nm 11:26).[230]

Josephus sees this divine spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα θεοῦ) as the source of inspired utterances (*Ant.* 4.5.118)[231] and a given presence among a person (*Ant.* 6.2.166) or group of prophets (*Ant.* 6.5.221) προφητεύειν (to prophesy). Also a true prophet would be one who has the divine spirit and receives through this the power to prophesy (*Ant.* 8.4.408).[232]

[228] All textual references to the LXX will follow the names given to the books in the LXX with the Hebrew Testament names in square brackets: For example 1 Kings [1 Samuel], the same for textual references from the LXX.
[229] See the discussion below on the texts of Philo for the tradition surrounding Moses, see also Borgen (1996).
[230] See in the LXX also 1 Kings [1 Samuel] 10:6, 10; 19:20 where the πνεῦμα κυρίου (10:6) or πνεῦμα θεοῦ (10:10; 19:20) is the source of prophesies and needed to be upon the one who is prophesying (see also Nm 24:2; Jl 2:28). So also in Genesis 1:2 and 41:38, Exodus 31:3 and 35:31, Numbers 23:6, 24:2, 1 Kings [1 Samuel] 19:9, 2 Chronicles 24:20, Job 33:4 where there are references to forms of τὸ πνεῦμα θεοῦ. And Judges 3:10, 11:29, 13:25, 14:6, 19 and 15:14, 1 Kings [1 Samuel] 16:13, 14; 2 Kings [2 Samuel] 23:2, 3 Kings [1 Kings] 18:12 and 22:24, 4 Kings [2 Kings] 2:16, 2 Chronicles 15:1, 20:14 and 36:22 where there are references to forms of τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου.
[231] See also Deuteronomy 18:15-22 and Jeremiah 18, 26 and 28 for more criteria for discerning true and false prophets and prophecies, see also Hibbard (2011).
[232] *Jewish Antiquities* 9.3.33-35 gives an account of Jehoram's alliance with Jehoshaphat against Moab narrated in the Hebrew Testament in 2 Kings 3. Jehoshaphat is described as a holy (ὅσιον) and righteous (δίκαιος) man (*Ant.* 9.3.33, 35), when Jehoram asked Jehosephat προφητεύειν for him, Jehoshaphat agreed to this. It is told that Jehosephat became ἔνθεος (divinely inspired) πρὸς τὸν ψαλμὸν (by way of the psalm/harp play), which he himself asked for. This concurs with the research done by Goodman

Philo, when speaking of Moses who was truly a prophet[233], says that with the arrival of τοῦ θείου πνεύματος (the divine spirit) leads to a state of ἔκστασιν (ecstasy) and divine frenzy (θεοφόρητον; *Her.* 265). In *De Vita Mosis* 2, Philo again refers to this state of θεοφόρητον but in the sense of being divinely inspired when Moses spoke of the holiness of the seventh day (*Mos.* 2.264). Of these utterances of Moses, Philo then states that they are closely related, if not a form of, προφητείας, and that these claims would not have been possible if not guided by θεῖον πνεῦμα (*Mos.* 2.265; see also *Mos.* 2.275). In Philo's comments on the ninth commandment of the Decalogue Οὐ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις (you shall not give false witness; *Spec.* 4.41) he comments on all the different interpretations given of this law and then writes that,

> no pronouncement of a prophet [προφήτης] is ever his own; he is an interpreter prompted by another in all his utterances, when knowing not what he does he is filled with inspiration, as the reason withdraws and surrenders the citadel of the soul to a new visitor and tenant, the Divine Spirit [τοῦ θείου πνεύματος] which plays upon the vocal organism and dictates words which clearly express its prophetic message [προθεσπίζει].
> (*Spec.* 4.49)[234]

In the short survey above on texts from the LXX, Josephus, and Philo's writings, it is clear that there was a view of the divine spirit in relation to prophetic utterances. At the same time it is also clear that none of them can be used in justifying an interpretation of John being ἐν πνεύματι as referring to John being inspired by the Holy Spirit as traditionally understood as the third of the Trinity.[235] To find the meaning of this state of John one needs to take into account the preceding verse stating that he saw a θύρα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ and also what follows thereafter, meaning what does John see, inside or on the other side of the door when he is ἐν πνεύματι.

(1990) and Pilch (2011:73-88) on the use of music stimulation to induce ASC experiences, in this case to prophecy.

[233] Philo sees Moses as the "ἀνδρὸς τὰ πάντα μεγίστου καὶ τελειοτάτου" (greatest and most perfect man; *Mos* 1.1) but also the most perfect of the prophets whom God self-selected and "ἀναπλήσας ἐνθέου πνεύματος" (filled with the divine spirit; *Decal.* 175).

[234] For more text of Philo referent to the divine spirit, but not in relation to prophetic utterances, see *De Opificio Mundi* 135, 144, *De Gigantibus* 47 and 53, *Quod Deus immutabilis sit* 1, *De Plantatione* 23, *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres* 55 and 57.

[235] When reading the text of Revelation and consciously focusing on the question "from where does the authority of the text as truthful and trustworthy come from?" one cannot conclude from the spirit. Rather the authority of the revelatory-visionary report of John as πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί comes from ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ (He that sits on the throne) because He is trustworthy and true (Rev 15:3; 16:7; 21:5; 22:6).

After John tells the community that he was ἐν πνεύματι he immediately states "καὶ ἰδοὺ[236] θρόνος ἔκειτο[237] ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ" (and behold a throne that is in heaven Rev 4:2b). Boring (1989) states concerning this vision of John that it is, "not a reporter's account of something he "actually" saw; here, as elsewhere, it is the literary expression in traditional terms of his prophetic experience, carefully composed to communicate his theological meaning" (Boring 1989:102). Witherington (2007) also sees it as being based on the imagery of the Hebrew Testament prophets, but with a difference.

> Much of the imagery is a new version of Ezekiel's throne-chariot vision ... but a careful comparison will show how flexible the images are.... We are dealing here with highly metaphorical speech meant to convey a heavenly message by vivid images ... unlike the case with Ezekiel, John does not try to describe God at all or what form he might have taken. This is not an exercise in satisfying overly curios piety.
>
> (Witherington 2007:116)[238]

[236] Osborne (2002:225) correctly notes that the use of ἰδοὺ here, as elsewhere in Revelation (1:7, 18; 2:10, 22; 3:8, 9, 20) "draws the reader's attention to the action" (see also the use of the expression "behold" in the *Admonitions of Ipu-wer* 4.8; 7.1-9.1). The use of the expression ἰδοὺ does not only place emphasis on what follows, but it can also function to bring what is being said thereafter closer to home, closer to the contexts of those who read and heard what John is reporting (see the comments of transl. Wilson, 1969:442 fn. 23).

[237] The translation of ἔκειτο is nuances and interpreted differently by different commentators. Beale (1999:320) sees the use of ἔκειτο as referring to the throne that was set up in the past which he traces to Daniel 7 and Ezekiel 1. He does note the nuances meaning and translation of the term by referring to the other occurrences of the term in the Greek Testament (Beale 1999:320 fn. 29). The translation that is followed in this study is that of Aune (1997:284) who sees ἔκειτο functioning as a verbal copula as for instance εἰμί or γίνομαι "so that the prepositional phrase "in heaven" is used as predicate with κεῖμαι." Such a view is supported by the verbal parallel found in Cebes' *Tabula* Chapter 5 line 79: "Ὁρᾷς οὖν παρὰ τὴν πύλην θρόνον τινὰ κείμενον κατὰ τὸν τόπον" (Thus, behold alongside of the gate a certain throne was standing at the place; see also Osborne2002:225 fn. 5).

[238] Du Rand (2007) also sees the report of the throne in heaven as something not meant to be seen as a report of what John actually saw. Rather this is a symbolic literary construct, influenced by the Hebrew Testament prophets (i.e. Ezekiel and Isaiah), to convey the theological message of Revelation that God alone rules (Du Rand 2007:14-15, 229-231). DeSilva's (2009) view, working from a more conscious social scientific and rhetorical hermeneutical point, of the throne motive agrees with that of Du Rand (2007) in that it expresses an answer to the question: "Who is in control of this human world of which we are part of?" (Du Rand 2007:14). This is referred to in DeSilva (2009), quoting Russell Morton (2001), when commenting on Revelation 4's reference to the 24 elders around the throne of God that these depict lesser deities who no longer represent "star gods... in their own right but elders in the heavenly court, totally subservient to God" (DeSilva 2009:97). Important for DeSilva (2009) is that this vision of John does not only stay in the heavens above but the "readers [i.e. the seven communities] find themselves located in the picture as well, among the creatures "on earth" (Rev 5:13)" (DeSilva 2009:98; see also DeSilva 2009:165-169, 260-263 where the sovereignty of God linked to the throne of God is also discussed). See also Schüssler Fiorenza (1991:58) who notes that "Chapters 4-5 lay the rhetorical foundation and provide the key symbolic images for all that follows. The central theological question of Chapters 4-5 as well as of the whole book is: Who is the true lord of this world?"

That the description of the throne is of great importance for John cannot be denied. Of all the occurrences of θρόνος in the Greek Testament 47 of the 62 occurrences are in Revelation.[239] One would not err to see the throne motive as an important part of the message that John wanted to convey to his community within their specific context (Beckwith 1919:208-216, 496-497; Beale 1999:320; Beasley-Murray 1974:112-113; Mounce 1977; Roloff 1993:68-69). But as with the θύρα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ it would be erroneous to see this exclusively as a literary construct[240] by John that does not report an actual phenomenon that he experienced. As with the opening in the heavenly vault, the throne in the heavens is well attested to in other ancient revelatory-visionary reports.[241]

Baljon (1908:63) comments on this throne vision, that

> de ziener zich hier bepaald aansluit aan de godsraken van een Jez. 6:1, Ez. 1:4, 26, 27, Dan. 7:9. In de ecstase werkt op hem evenals op ons in den droom onze phantasie, maar ook ons geheugen of onze herinnering.[242]

This comment of Baljon made in 1908, already stressing the importance of taking into consideration the memories, both individual and collective, when considering what John writes in his revelatory-visionary report. In the ancient writings of Israel there is a long

[239] The term θρόνος in different forms occurs five times in Matthew (5:34; 19:28 [x2]; 23:22; 25:31), three times in Luke (1:32, 52; 22:30); twice in Acts (2:30; 7:49); once in Colossians (1:16) and four times in Hebrews (1:8; 4:16; 8:1; 12:2). Of the occurrences of θρόνος in Revelation 20 of the 47 are found in Chapters 4-5 (4:2 [x2], 3, 4 [x3], 5 [x2], 6 [x3], 9, 10 [x2]; 5:1, 6, 7, 11, 13, 16) of which 17 refers to the throne of God. For a discussion on the throne motive in Revelation in light of this motive in the Hebrew Testament, Jewish Literature, and Graeco-Roman sources see the monography of Gallusz (2014). See also Aune (1983), Hannah (2003).

[240] Beckwith (1919:496) and Mounce (1977:134) both see this report as deriving and being constructed from the literature that John had at his disposal. As will become clear in the discussion to follow in the appendix on the neurobiological basis, the influence of this literature is not denied by this study, rather it is seen in a more dynamic way than just seeing John as composing a written literary passage by integrating the different material in a creative and flexible manner.

[241] So DeSilva (2009:97) writes that this vision of the throne "extends the conceptual map of the hearers outward into the realm beyond the visible heavens, figuratively accessed through a door that must clack open in the dome of the sky before mortals can observe the activity and personnel in that realm." For John this door in the heaven would not only have been a figurative access point through the dome of the sky. When this is integrating into the neurobiological basis of ASC experiences this door would have been seen as a reality for John that forms part of the totality of reality that needed to be taken note of if the whole of reality were to be understood.

[242] The seer connects this vision of God of his with that of Isaiah 6:1, Ezekiel 1:4, 26, 27, Daniel 7:9. In his and our ecstatic states of dreaming our imagination works in on it, but also our memories (i.e. personal memories) and traditions (i.e. collective memories/social memories).

standing tradition that God does not govern/rule (κατοικέω)[243] with or even alongside heavenly beings such as the cherubim (כרבים/χερουβιν). Rather, he is "Κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ισραηλ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ χερουβιν" (the Lord God of Israel who sits upon the cherubim; 4 Ki [2 Ki] 19:15.)[244] Ezekiel's revelatory-visionary report given in Ezekiel 10:1 LXX is of importance to note here: "Καὶ εἶδον καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐπάνω τοῦ στερεώματος τοῦ ὑπερ κεφαλῆς τῶν χερουβιν ὡς λίθος σαπφείρου ὁμοίωμα θρόνου ἐπ' αὐτῶν" (and I saw, and look, above the firmament over the head of the cherubim was something like lapis lazuli stone, a likeness of a throne was upon them). This then shows that God is ὑπερ (over or above) the head of the cherubim, and that they along with God are clearly ἐπάνω τοῦ στερεώματος[245] (above the firmament).[246] The texts that specifically state that God sits on his throne use the same phrasing as that of God sitting on the cherubim. So Jehoshaphat states that he saw "τὸν κύριον θεὸν Ισραηλ καθήμενον ἐπὶ θρόνου αὐτοῦ" (the Lord God of Israel sitting on his throne; 3 Ki [2 Ki] 22:19; 2 Ch 18:18). Based on the tradition surrounding Jehoshaphat (see *Ant.* 9.3.35) one can infer that he saw this while being in an ASC and undergoing a soul journey into heaven, ἐπάνω τοῦ στερεώματος. That God's throne was seen as being above or in heaven, ἐπάνω τοῦ στερεώματος, is confirmed also by two internal parallelisms occurring in Psalm 10 [11]:4b and 102 [103]:19.[247] From the first line of Isaiah 6:1 it is clear that Isaiah had to move ἐπάνω τοῦ στερεώματος in order to state: "εἶδον τὸν κύριον καθήμενον ἐπὶ θρόνου" (I saw the Lord

[243] See Psalm 122 [123]:1 where the Psalmist confesses of God that he looks to Him as "τὸν κατοικοῦντα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ."

[244] See also 1 Kings [1 Samuel] 4:4, 2 Kings [2 Samuel] 6:2, 1 Chronicles 13:6, Psalm 79:2 [80:1] and 99 [98]:1, Isaiah 37:16 that also uses the same expression.

[245] Στερέωμα in Ezekiel 10:1 refers is a translation of the Hebrew word רקיע, which according to Genesis (1:6, 7 [x3], 8, 14, 15, 17, 20) was created by God.

[246] This tradition is also attested to in Josephus when he refers to the Ark of the Covenant on which cherubim is depicted. These are creatures that are "sculptured upon the throne of God" (*Ant.* 3.6.137; transl. Thackeray 1930:381) or creatures that are "near the throne of God" (*Ant.* 3.6.137; transl. Whiston 1987:88). When considering the witnesses from the LXX it is more likely that either: 1) the cherubim is to be seen as the seat/throne of God themselves or 2) as seen by Ezekiel, the ones holding up the firmament on which the throne of God stands.

[247] Psalm 10 [11]:4b reads (numbering for parallelism inserted): "κύριος^{A}, ἐν οὐρανῷ^{B} ὁ θρόνος^{A1} αὐτοῦ^{B1}." Thus κύριος and αὐτοῦ are parallel to one another referring to the Lord. Οὐρανῷ is not only parallel here to θρόνος but also to the 4a which states that the Lord is "in the holy abode of his." Thus the abode of God is heaven, and this in turn is then parallel to the θρόνος which is in heaven. The same poetic parallelism occurs in Psalm 102 [103]:19. See also Isaiah 66:1 where the prophet explicitly states that the Lord says: Ὁ οὐρανός μοι θρόνος (the heaven is my throne). *1 Enoch* 18:8 which alludes to this tradition in stating that he, Enoch, while on a sky journey to see the earth and underworld (*1 En.* 17:1) saw stone that "were pressing into heaven like the throne of God" (*1 En.* 18:8).

sitting on a throne). Also so for Ezekiel who reports “ἰδου φωνὴ ὑπεράνωθεν τοῦ στερεώματος τοῦ ὄνος ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς αὐτῶν” (behold a voice above the firmament that was over their [the four living beings] heads; Ezk 1:25). After this he looks and sees τοῦ ὁμοιώματος τοῦ θρόνου (the likeness of a throne; Ezk 1:26) on which one like a man is seated (see also Ezk 10:1; 43:1).

From the onset of the *genre* project and the publication of *Semeia* 14 in 1979 the reports found in *1 Enoch*, parts of *2 Enoch*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and the *Testament of Levi* were all classified under the type of literature that has another worldly journey in them, that is a soul flight journey (Collins 1979b:15; 1979c:23). Pilch, in his book on ASC in the Biblical world published in 2011, also holds this same position on *1* and *2 Enoch*. “Enoch is perhaps the most sky-travelled of ancient authors” (Pilch 2011:48).[248] Enoch is cast from the beginning of the book as a “blessed and righteous man” (*1 En.* 1:2; see also *1 En.* 15:1).[249] Then in *1 Enoch* 14:8 the report is given that he saw the clouds and “the winds [spirits] were causing me to fly and rushing me high up into heaven” (*1 En.* 14:8; see also *1 En.* 14:9). After Enoch came into heaven he saw an empty house (*1 En.* 14:13). Before Enoch moved into the second house (possibly into a next level of heaven) he sees “lightning between which (stood) fiery cherubim and their heaven of water” (*1 En.* 14:11). When considering the cosmology described in Ezekiel (see Ezk 1; 10:1; 43:1) that the cherubim are under the firmament, which was made by God to separate the water below and above it (Gn 1:7), then these cherubim could also be seen in the same light as that of Ezekiel holding up the firmament. The firmament which is also the place where God’s throne is situated. Enoch continues in like fashion of John when considering the order of his next report. First by seeing an opening, than the throne of God and last the one sitting on the throne: “And behold there was an opening before me.... And I observed and saw inside it a lofty throne.... And the Great Glory [God] was sitting upon it” (*1 En.* 14:15, 18, 19).[250]

[248] See also Pilch’s (2011:61-72, 73-88) chapters on *Enoch* and how a social scientific model of sky journeys contribute to a better understanding of this document’s content.
[249] Some of the manuscripts also read: “Enoch the righteous man” (see ed. Charlesworth 1983:13, fn. c)
[250] *2 Enoch* 1a (in the longer version, J) begins with the words: “The story of Enoch: how the Lord took him to heaven ... that he might see the highest realms ... the Lord’s immovable throne.”

In the *Testament of Levi* the revelatory-visionary report begins in stating that while Levi was attending to a flock "a spirit of understanding from the Lord came upon" him (*T. Levi* 2:3).[251] After this, in the same manner as Enoch and John, the author writes: "And behold, the heavens were opened, and an angel of the Lord spoke to me": "Levi, Levi, enter!" (*T. Levi* 2:6). Upon this Levi enters the first heaven, and thereafter the second heaven (*T. Levi* 2:7-8). But the angel who accompanies Levi told him that he should not be astonished at what he sees in these two (lower) heavens for "you shall see another heaven more lustrous and beyond compare. And when you have mounted there (i.e. gone up there), you shall stand near to the Lord" (*T. Levi* 2:9b-11). This then happens in Chapter 5 where again the vision of the throne is preceded by an angel first opening the gates of haven for Levi (*T. Levi* 5:1a) followed by Levi stating: "I saw the Holy Most High sitting on the throne" (*T. Levi* 5:1b).[252]

Thus in these two texts it is clear that sky journeys was part of revelatory-visionary reports, and that certain elements are to be found in all of them: The person is in the spirit, or receives a spirit from God, or a spirit/wind takes them up into heaven. This ascension is preceded by the heavens, an opening or a gate being opened in the firmament. The only time when a person is able to report that he saw the throne of God is when he went up to the highest abode in heaven, with the result that they saw the universe (reality) from God's perspective, from the other side of the firmament (Pilch 1999:149).

[251] Daniel (who also saw the heavenly throne of God; Dn 7:8) is also reported in Daniel 1:17 to receive from God insight into "every vision and dream in all wisdom."

[252] In the writings of Qumran, the Dead Sea Scrolls, 4Q505 (Frag. 20 Col. 2:8) and 11Q17 (Frags. 3-6:8) attested that the "Cherubim bless the image of the chariot-throne that appears above the firmament (רקיע)." Also in the *Magical Greek Papyri* 77.1-14 it is written: "If you wish to receive a revelation [χρηματισθῆναι – to receive answers after deliberating] concerning whatever you wish, say this formula to yourself, saying nothing aloud: "I call upon you, who are seated [καθήμενον] in the middle of a field, you who with power direct the universe, at whom the daimons tremble, whom the mountains dread, *whom angels fall down to worship* [ὃν προσκυνοῦσιν ἄγγελοι], whom the sun and moon fall down to worship, you who have *heaven for your throne* [ὁ οὐρανὸς θρόνος], either as a place for your dancing, and earth as your footstool.... [magic words].... Holy, [holy,] boundless, boundless, star organiser, [fire-breathing, Santhenor, gold]-sandaled [god], reveal." In the Greek Testament the motive that God (i.e. the Father) is in heaven is also to be found: See Matthew 5:16, 45, 48, 6:1, 9 (Mk 11:25; Lk 11:2), 7:11, 21, 10:32, 33, 12:50, 16:17, 18:10, 14, 19 and 23:9, Mark 11:26 for the variations on the expression τὸν πατέρα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (the father in the heavens); see also Luke 2:14. See also Matthew 5:34 and 23:22, Acts 7:49, Romans 1:18 and Hebrews 8:1 for the tradition that the throne of God is in heaven.

Above it was stated, when reading John's revelatory-visionary report in the light of the discussion that followed, three problematical aspects of Revelation 4:1-2 fall away. This was the chronological problem of these verses, which in turn leads to asking the question whether John was in a trance when seeing the θύρα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, then came out of it, and went into a new trance in Revelation 4:2 when he was ἐν πνεύματι. Or if 4:1-2 is to be seen as a continued trance report. It also leads to seeing Revelation 4:1 in some cases as an introductory clause interposed by an editor. Along with this it was also stated that a cultural plausible understanding can be gained when looking at other visionary journey reports. From the above it is clear that whether Revelation 4:1 was or was not an interpolation of an editor, the order of these two verses would have made perfect cultural sense to anyone in the first-century Mediterranean world who would have read or heard them. An opening, door or gate needs to be opened in the firmament before any revelation could be given to mankind. Only those who are able to underwent a sky journey and move to the other side of the firmament or the highest of the heavens, were able to see the throne of God which stood there. This upward movement or soul journey was undertaken with the help or under the guidance of a spirit, or in the language of the ancient authors: While being "in the spirit."[253]

John's report in Revelation 4:1-2 reads as follow:

> Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ θύρα ἠνεῳγμένη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἡ πρώτη ἣν ἤκουσα ὡς σάλπιγγος λαλούσης μετ' ἐμοῦ λέγων· ἀνάβα ὧδε, καὶ δείξω σοι ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα. Εὐθέως ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι, καὶ ἰδοὺ θρόνος ἔκειτο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον καθήμενος.[254]

[253] As stated in Chapter 4 this interaction of a holy man with a spirit or spirits cannot be seen nor interpreted as referring to a form of spirit possession. Any interpretation that views this phenomenon as such would fall outside of the shaman-complex and not stay true to the model of ASC experiences used in social scientific interpretation of ancient texts.

[254] John follows in Revelation 4:3 with a so-called theophany starting to describe "ὁ καθήμενος ὅμοιος..." (he that sits is like...). The use of the term ὁ καθήμενος and also ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ in referring to divine epithet is well attested to in the *Magical Greek Papyri* texts: In a spell meant to bring a god down, the god is referred to as: "You who are seated on the top of the world and judge the universe, surrounded by the circle of truth and honesty" (*PGM* 4.1012-1013). Also as the ones "seated on a lotus" (*PGM* 4.1110), Orion and Michael are those who "sits on high" (*PGM* 4.2768). When calling on Asklepios a person should engrave his image on a ring of iron and take the ring and "show [it] to the pole star saying this spell 7 times: "Menophri who sit on the cherubim, send me the true Asklepios..." (*PGM* 7.633-635; see also *PGM* 12.87-88, 12b.10-13, 35.1-12, 36.4, 77).

Reading these verses in the light of the above discussion the command of the ἡ φωνὴ ἡ πρώτη (first voice) who spoke to John telling him ἀνάβα ὧδε (come up here) followed by John being εὐθέως ἐν πνεύματι (at once in [the] spirit), and then a vision of a θρόνος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ is: 1) a clear and cultural plausible report of a visionary quest to the other side of the firmament into the home, or in front of the seat, of God. 2) A clear indication that John underwent a sky journey or a soul journey to see the throne of God on the other side of the firmament.

As noted above in Chapter 3, of all the characteristics that have been identified and incorporated into the understanding of the shaman-complex, soul flight undertaken while in an ASC, is the most common and well attested to (Winkelman 1986:192; 2011b:160, 172-173).[255] Because of the importance that this characteristic plays in the shaman-complex and the clear indication that John of Patmos underwent such a soul flight, it can be concluded that from an etic perspective that John the prophet, in other words, can be seen as a shaman. The emic perspective is expressed in the words of the angel in Revelation 22:9 when he states that he is a servant "τῶν ἀδελφῶν" (of the brothers) and "τῶν προφητῶν" (the prophets). Thus, in their words, John would have been a προφήτην τῶν ἐκκλησίῶν (a prophet of the communities).

5.4 BEHOLD! LISTEN!

5.4.1 John the rhetor

With regards to John's authority to write this revelatory-visionary report, DeSilva (1992b:386) states that John "appears to base his appeal – both his claim to the right to define the counter definitions and his claim to the right to define salvific action – solely upon charismatic legitimation through the work [i.e. Revelation]." This view of DeSilva (1992b) is taken further by Carey (1999), when writing of the narrative ethos[256] of John.

[255] One can also see this in the title of both Goodman (1990), *Where the spirits ride the wind: Trance journeys and other experiences*, and Pilch's (2011), *Flight of the soul: Visions, heavenly journeys, and peak experiences in the Biblical world*, books on the subject.

[256] Carey (1999) defines the term ethos (ἦθος) from a more rhetorical perspective rather than a general one. "The term ἦθος applies of course to character in general, in the sense of a person's nature, qualities, or disposition, but in rhetorical theory its special significance relates to the persuasive capacity of a speaker's character. Ethos, then, is an attempt to grasp power, the authority to represent oneself and the world in a given rhetorical situation" (Carey 1999:45, fn. 1)

Carey (1999) works from an ideological-critical perspective when looking at Revelation with the aim of laying bare the use and misuse of authority.[257] After reviewing the classical Greek and Latin literature on rhetoric, and how these authors understood ethos (Carey 1999:61-46),[258] Carey (1999) comes to the following conclusions: When John tells his community all that he has seen (Rev 1:2), the community only learns, hears and sees "what John chooses to or is allowed to tell[259] them" (Carey 1999:61-62). All that John tells the community, and how he presents is employed "in a way that provides insight into John's attempt to win his audience's trust" (Carey 1999:64).[260]

Carey (1999:74), building on the work of Booth and Laser, states it is because of a concern for his own authority in the community. With the result that it becomes possible for Carey (1999:77) to give a plausible postulation in his book that when John claims to reveal, '"the things that must happen shortly" (1:1), one can imagine the audience's response: "Who says so?" or "How do you know?"' This kind of imaginary dialogue between the community and John is only possible and plausible[261] because Carey

[257] This is not only the authority that John exercised in writing Revelation and in so doing "demanded absolute obedience" to his (John's) view of the world, but also the authority of interpretation of modern day readers, who claims to have the correct interpretation and in what way do they present it as authoritative (Carey 1999:1-5).

[258] Carey (1999) does not work from the preconceived idea that John and his audience were well versed with the classical rhetorical works such as *inter alia* Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (*c.* 341 BCE), Cicero's *De Oratore* (*c.* 54 BCE) or the *Thetorica ad Herennium* (*c.* 84 BCE). But what is important for Carey (1999:47) in describing these is that "these texts reveal more than abstract theory produced by Greek and Roman elites; they claim to represent what was commonly practiced in the public courts and assemblies of the day." What he is trying to describe in this survey is ancient cultural conventions in the establishment of rhetorical authority (Carey 1999:51, fn. 16).

[259] Even when John reports that it is a heavenly figure who tells him to write to the communities (Rev 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5) or not to write (Rev 10:4); Carey (1999:62, 114-117) sees this as John who uses a narrative ethos (the use of another more authoritative voice than his own in his narrative) to convince the community of what he has "seen."

[260] See also Carey's (1999:93-133) fuller discussion on how John gives his self-representation to his audience by use of his narrative ethos. Again this is done according to Carey (1999:93) so that John can win his audience's trust.

[261] Carey (1999:5) states the twofold aim of his book as follows: "(a) it is a plausible reconstruction of how Revelation might have sounded to John's intended audience and (b) it provides insight into certain conflicts among contemporary scholarly and popular interpretations." With regard to the first an attentive reader will conclude that Carey (1999) himself contradicts this in his book. So he states on his understanding of the *genre* of Revelation: "I do not assume ... that the actual author of Revelation ever intended to create the effects I describe, nor do I propose that he (?) had a highly developed sense of generic distinction" (Carey 1999:94). A page further he focuses on John and how he has "seen not only past earthly events but future and heavenly ones as well" (Carey 1999:95). If one wishes to reconstruct a plausible model for how the readers of Revelation, and also John for that matter, would have understood the document, then the reconstructions of the *genre* should also take into account what would have been

(1999) sees the text of Revelation as one in which John wishes to win the trust of his audience and establish his authority in the community. Or states as answers to these questions: When the audience ask: “Who says so”? John answers them: “The Alpha and Omega.” And if the audience then retorts with the question: “But how do you know?” John’s answer, by way of constructing a narrative ethos, is: “Because I was in the spirit, I went up to heaven and I heard the voice of the One sitting on the throne and the heavenly servants proclaiming these things” (see Carey 1999:77-164).[262]

5.4.2 Revelation an epistle ὡς the Pauline epistles

It is not only the shaman-complex (see below § 5.4.3) within which John of Patmos is placed that speaks against this interpretation of Carey (1999), but just as much the epistolary dimension of Revelation. Van Niekerk (2014:33-40) has shown that the epistolary dimension of Revelation is just as important as the prophetic and apocalyptic dimension if a balanced understanding of this document is to be given.[263] When reading Revelation with a focus on the epistolary dimension, it appears that John of Patmos had some or other knowledge of the Pauline letters (Witherington 2003:4).[264] The full

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plausible and what not in the first century Mediterranean world. So for example when considering the first century Mediterranean person’s orientation to time, then the focus of John’s revelatory-visionary report would certainly not be on future events. If it were on future events these would flow out of events from the past and possibilities discernible in the present which would make the future forthcoming (see Maier 2002:18-20; Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:37-38, 148; eds. Kok & Van Eck 2011:96-111; Malina 1989 and Bosman 2014).

[262] This imaginative questions postulated by Carey (1999:77) although of great importance would certainly not be culturally plausible questions asked by the communities to whom John wrote (see discussion to follow). What is of importance for these kinds of questions is that they link up with the second aim of Carey (1999:5) quoted above (§ b). This becomes all the more clear when considering that Carey (1999) bases these questions on the works of O’Leary (1994). O’Leary in turn argued not so much the point of the rhetology of ancient apocalypses as the development of the rhetoric of the millennialism movements in the late 19th century and that of Hal Lindsey in the 20th century (Strand 1997). Thus the contribution of Carey (1999) is not so much on a plausible reading and understanding of the text of Revelation within a first century Mediterranean context as on providing a framework and interpretive tool for evaluating authoritative and exclusivist hermeneutical approaches to Revelation (Carey 1999:1-5). Stated differently: Carey’s (1999) insights help any modern day interpreter of Revelation to lay bare his and her own ascribed authority of his and her interpretation of the text.

[263] DeSilva (2004) after a careful and balanced criticism on the typical interpretation of the “seven assemblies” as representative of the universal church, though not denying the symbolic meaning attached to the number seven in Revelation, also stresses the importance of reading Revelation as an epistle written to seven concrete communities in Asia Minor: “A grounded and responsible reading of Revelation begins ... where it does for every other New Testament epistle – with an understanding of the historical situation of these seven churches and the problems besetting them, and the ways that Revelation interacts with and reorients the first-century addressees toward that situations” (DeSilva 2004:886)

[264] See also Fekkes (19993:39), Kümmel (1975:247-249, 459), Mathewson (1992:211-212).

discussion and argument for the epistolary dimension of Revelation falls outside of the scope of this study (see Van Niekerk 2014 for this), but what is of importance here are the following:

1. John, like Paul, did not write his letters out of hobby or a pleasant diversion but because of a specific need, something that they needed to act, or likely react, on[265] but could not be present in person.[266]
2. This shows that the letters, typified as occasional letters, were written with the purpose of bringing about change in the community. As Achtemeier (*et al.* 2001:558) states in connection with Revelation as a circular letter, "like the writings and word of all the prophets, [Revelation] intends to admonish, correct, and encourage" (see also Witherington 2003:12; Fekkes 1994:39).[267]
3. John, like Paul, wanted his letters to be read to the entire community gathering during a liturgical worshipping service (Rev 1:3; 22:7, 18; 1 Cor 12-14; Col 4:16).
4. As with the Pauline letters, the communities to whom John wrote had a pre-reading with which they would have approached the document. Even those that were not able to read, when hearing it is a letter from John the prophet, would have certain "pre-reading" conceptions of what to expect. Thus they knew John, they saw him as an authoritative figure and would not be surprised by the images and style in which he presented his revelatory-visionary report (see Malina & Pilch 2006:20-21).

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[265] Carey (1999:117) in reference to the letter to Thyatira writes that "the risen Jesus chides, "I gave her time to repent" (2:21). But, inquiring readers want to know, how did Jesus speak to Jezebel, if not through John?" This is a legitimate question, and if the epistolary dimension is taken into consideration it is easily answered. Although it is not stated explicit as in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (5:9), one can postulate that when John writes that the Christ says he gave Jezebel time to repent, this could refer to a previous letter he wrote. This view finds support in the comments of Aune (1997:204), Beasley-Murray (1974:91), Beckwith (1919:467), Mounce (1977:104), Osborne (2002:158), Reddish (2001:65), Roloff (1993:55). Beale (1999:263) concurs with this and ads that Revelation 2:21's admonition indicates that the false prophetess and her followers "existed longer as a deductive group in the church [of Thyatira] than had the teachers in Pergamum." This shows that Revelation is not the debut admonition writing of John. There must have been previous contact in which admonition against Jezebel was given, and in the time the teachings of Balaam had risen in Pergamum, and now John also has to react on this.

[266] See also for example 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, 4:1-12 and 4:3-7, Galatians 1:2, 8-9 and 15, 1 Corinthians 1:77 and 8:1, and Revelation 1:9. See also Johnson (1986:252) and O'Brien (1993:551).

[267] John "chooses the letter from not so much in imitation of Paul as for the same reason as Paul: He has something important to say which he cannot say personally to the congregations because he is absent. As in the case of Paul, the letter is a substitute for the personal presence of the prophet. His voice is made present and real even though he is absent" (Boring 1989:7; see also Aune 1986:86-87, 89-91; Jackson & Redmon 2006; Kellerhals 1962:21-23; Reddish 2001:2, 4; Schüssler Fiorenza 1986; Wilcock 1975:22-23).

Some of the factors which would have influenced this "pre-reading" of Revelation will be looked at now.

5.4.3 Honour and shame

From a social-scientific perspective it is imperative that the fact that honour and shame "are the core values in the Mediterranean world in general and in the bible as well" (Plevnik 1998:106[268]) forms an integral part of one's research. This view is not just held by modern researchers, but also by ancient authors. Seneca (*c.* 4 BCE – 65 AD) wrote regarding honour in *De Beneficiis* 4.16.2: "The fixed point from which the rest of our proofs proceed is this: What is honorable is revered for no other reason than because it is honorable" (transl. Griffin & Inwood 2011:95).

Applicable for the discussion here is not the full range of research completed on honour and shame but the public nature of these values in any society in which they stand central. Thus honour would be "a claim to worth that is publicly acknowledged*....* [and shame], as opposite of honor, is a claim to worth that is publicly denied and repudiated" (Plevnik 1998:107).

As shown above (§ 5.3.1), John of Patmos complies with the criteria required to see him as a shaman or holy man in the communities. To take on the role of shaman in modern day cultures, and that of a holy man, in antiquity, would place a person in a position of great honour. So for example in modern day Haitian Vodou most of the population go to medical practitioners to be *cured* of their physical sickness, but then also to the priest or priestess who heals the *pwoblèm* (McCarthy Brown 2006). In this case when a person goes to such a healer they do

> not present themselves to Vodou healers with a detailed list of their symptoms. According to tradition, nothing more is required than a statement such as: "*M'pa bon. M'pa genien chans*" ("I'm not well. I don't have any luck"). From this point, it is up to the priest or

[268] See also DeSilva (2000:23-93; 2004:125-130), Kok & Van Eck (eds. 2011:13-15), Malina (2001b:27-57), Van Eck (1995:165-166), all whom sees honour and shame as pivotal values, see also Gilmore (ed. 1987).

> priestess [*sevitè*] to determine the nature of the problem [*pwoblèm*], as well as its cause and cure. This is usually accomplished through divination [*sèvis*].
>
> (McCarthy Brown 2006:19)

When looking at the first-century Mediterranean world, where honour and shame was pivotal values, it is important that these values were determined and ascribed, or not, by the interplay of a person's self-image and that of the group. So Malina (2001a:58) writes of a person who lives in such a society that they would always see "himself or herself through the eyes of others ... honor requires a grant of reputation by others." Of further importance here is that a person in this society would need the opinions of the significant other for any meaningful existence. Thus

> a meaningful human existence depends on a person's full awareness of what others think and feel about oneself, along with one's living up to that awareness.... [The aim of a meaningful existence is then the] awareness to one's public ego-image along with the purpose of striving to align one's behavior and self-assessment with that publicly perceived image.
>
> (Malina 2001b:58)

This relates then to honour as being "the value of a person in his or her own eyes (that is, one's claim to worth) *plus* that person's value in the eyes of his or her social group. Honor is a claim to worth along with the social acknowledgment of worth" (Malina 2001b:30).[269]

The honour of being a holy man could come from ascribed honour, meaning honour that one is born into (Van Eck 1995:165-166). Examples of this would be the descendants of the Levitical priesthood (Ex 40:15; Nm 36:13) or a person's honour for being born into Israel, the nation with a special honorific relationship to God (Ex 4:22, 23Is 43:1-7). Thus a holy man's honour could indeed come from ascribed honour if he or she is born

[269] With regard to Carey's (1999) view of John trying to win the trust of his community this "plus" would be seen as an exclusive "or", where the focus then falls on the first part, meaning the honour that John sees belonging to himself. In Carey's (1999) analysis the dynamic interplay of one's own claim to honour and the public acknowledgment of this claim are missed. This leads to the conclusion that the view expressed in Carey's (1999) work cannot be seen as a cultural plausible understanding of how the hearers of Revelation would have heard the message.

into a family of holy men (priests), but even then the larger community still needs to validate this honour of a person.[270]

The other form of honour that a person could possess in the first-century Mediterranean world was so-called acquired honour; this "is the socially recognized claim to worth that a person acquires by excelling over others in social interaction" (Malina 2001b:33; see also Van Eck 1995:166). This social interaction is what is known as the challenge-response interaction.[271] In short the challenge-response comes down to an accepted social pattern of competing for limited goods[272] in the first-century Mediterranean world (Malina 2001b:33-36; Van Eck 1995:166). The idea of limited goods means that everything that is of advantage to a person is only available in limited supply. Different from the world of today, the resource of honour was deemed to be the most precious of goods in antiquity that one could acquire (Malina & Pilch 2008:217; Neyrey 1998:124).

Thus when John writes in opposition to the teachings of Balaam (Rev 2:14) and the prophetess Jezebel (Rev 2:20) he is competing in a well-established and culturally acceptable challenge-response social pattern. If John was the holy man of the

[270] The two sons of Eli, Phinehas and Hophni, would have had ascribed honour because they were the sons of Eli, a priest of God. But this honour turned to shame because of all that they did to Israel (1 Sm 2:15-17, 22-26). Everyone in the community, through the gossip network of the ancient world (1 Sm 22b; see Rohrbaugh 2001) would have known of these indiscretions of them (i.a. stealing the best of the sacrificial meat (1 Sm 2:15-17) and sleeping with the women at the entrance of the tent of the Lord (1 Sm 15-17)). This public acknowledgement of a person's position of honour is also seen in the Egyptian text of the *Prophecy of Neferti* (transl. Wilson 1969:444 fn. 1). The King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Snefru asked the procession in his court to bring to him "a friend of yours who has performed a good deed, one who may say to me a few fine words or choice speeches" (*Neferti* 8-9a). As a reply the procession describes the known characteristics of Neferti (Nefer-rohu) to the King as: ""A great lector priest of Bastet ... whose name is Nefer-rohu – he is a commoner valiant [with] his arm, a scribe competent with his fingers; a man of rank, who has more property than any peer of his" (*Neferti* 9b-10). This shows that Neferti was born into the priesthood of Bastet "initiated into the sacred writings and thus was priest, seer and magician" (transl. Wilson 1969:444, fn. 2). But at the same time he was publicly known as an honourable person as well. Again, both personal self (what Neferti was born into) worth and the worth through the eyes of the community are intricately connected to one another.

[271] For fuller discussion on this see the discussions of Malina and Rohrbaugh (2003:325-326, 334-335, 369-372), Malina (2001b:33-36), Van Eck (1995:166-168), and also Pilch (1998:158-161).

[272] The perception of limited goods in peasant and small, closely knit groups are that "all goods and resources are in scares and limited supply, resulting in the notion that on party's gain can occur only at another's loss and hence resulting in on-going competition and conflict and the valorisation of generosity and condemnation of miserliness and envy" (Elliott 1993:131; see also Malina & Pilch 2008:217-218; Malina 2001b:97-107). That John and the communities form a close knitted group is clearly seen in the use of terms such as ἀδελφὸς (brother; Rev 1:9; 6:11; 12:10; 19:10; 22:9), συγκοινωνὸς (partner; Rev 1:9) and σύνδουλοι (fellow bond servant; Rev 6:11; 19:10; 22:9; see also DeSilva 2004:137-143).

community, as John sees himself, the community also had to authorise this position of honour for John, because John sees himself through the eyes of others.

This study concurs with DeSilva (2009) that John presents to the communities a model both of how the cosmic reality is and also a model for understanding this cosmic reality. This is done throughout Revelation by the use of expressions such as ἰδοὺ (behold)[273] and ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις (he that has ears to listen should listen to what the spirit says to the communities).[274] Through the use of these expressions, John pulls the community into the two primary sensory experiences that he himself had.[275] But at the same time he is also telling them that this is how they should view the cosmic reality; this is the epistemology with which they should approach their cosmology.

In light of the discussion on honour, shame, and how these would be used in constructing a person's identity in the first-century Mediterranean world, the view of John given in his revelatory-visionary report would not have been accepted solely upon a charismatic characteristic that he had.[276] Nor would Revelation serve as a type of debut writing in which John is trying to win the trust of the communities in Asia Minor. John writes with the certainty that how he sees himself and presents himself along with what he mediates to the community would be acknowledged by the community as words worthy of listening to. Stated differently: For John the author, his private self agrees with his self that is known to the in-group to whom he writes. For the information that he writes, his private self-experiences would be accepted because these and what

[273] Revelation 1:7, 18, 2:10, 22, 3:8, 9, 20, 4:1, 2, 5:5, 6:2, 5, 8, 7:9, 9:12, 11:14, 12:3, 14:1, 14, 16:15, 19:11, 21:3, 22:7 and 12.
[274] Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 20 and 22, see also Revelation 1:3 and 22:17-18.
[275] Revelation 1:2, 12, 17, 19, 20, 4:1, 5:1, 2, 6, 11, 6:1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 12, 7:1, 2, 9, 8:2, 13, 9:1, 17, 10:1, 5, 12:13, 13:1, 2, 11, 14:1, 6, 14, 15:1, 2, 5, 16:13, 17:3, 6, 8, 12, 15, 16, 18, 18:1, 7, 19:11, 17, 19, 20:1, 4, 11, 12, 21:1, 2 and 22 for seeing (εἶδον) and Revelation 1:10, 4:1, 5:11, 13, 6:1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 7:4, 8:13, 9:13, 16, 10:4, 8, 12:10, 14:2, 13, 16:1, 5, 7, 18:4, 19:1, 6, 21:3 and 22:8 for hearing (ἤκουσα).
[276] This is not to say that John was not a charismatic leader seeing as this is also one of the characteristics of a shaman (Winkelman 2004:195, 2013a:52). But to see this as the sole reason why the community would listen and accept John's authority does not take into account the social values of the time.

the in-group expects John to experience stand in congruency with one another (see Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:403-408).[277]

5.5 CONCLUSION

In this Chapter it was shown that:

1. John of Patmos can be seen as a prophet like the prophets of the Hebrew Testament. This similarity is not only based on the literary parallels between Revelation and the Hebrew prophets, but rather on the prophetic phenomenon witnessed to in the Hebrew Testament prophets and the "early Christian" prophets. This continuity is clearly seen when looking at the functionality of the prophets of Israel and the "early Christian prophets." They are called to prophesy (deliver criticism) to kings and the community in which they functioned (Rev 10; Jr 1:10). These prophesies are not meant to be seen as predictions of the future but rather a call to repentance, to turn back to God. Meaning to come to a renewed understanding of their relationship with God (the spiritual) mediated through the words and working of the holy man (prophet). Regardless of this continuity it was also indicated that within the known tradition (Israelite prophets and early Christian prophets) there is also a newness that needs to be taken into account; this will come from the specific cultural laden discourse or sacred canopy comprising out of the collective, or social memory, of the group in which the prophet is active.
2. The text of Revelation 4:1-2 was then read within this understanding of John as a prophet or holy man of Israel. The discussion was also expanded to include some of the traditions surrounding other holy men such as for example Enoch, Levi and Moses. This demonstrated that John's report that he saw θύρα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, after which he was ἐν πνεύματι by which means he saw a θρόνος in heaven is a cultural

[277] In this Chapter the focus characteristic of the shaman-complex was that of the sky journey as this is seen in cross-cultural studies as the central characteristic of the shaman-complex (Winkelman 2011b:160, 172-173). But apart from this characteristic others of this complex are also to be identified in Revelation with regard to John. The shaman takes on the role of mediator of grace and favour (χάρις) from the spiritual world to the community (Lewis 2003:41, 128; Neville 2016), so also John as a holy man (Rev 1:1, 22:2). A shaman brings the community to a new understanding of their own identity as well as their relationship to that of the spiritual world (Neville 2016; Winkelman 2004:205); John also wants the communities to come to a new understanding of who they are and how they stand in relation to the spiritual world, with God (Rev 2-3).

plausible report of a holy man undertaking a sky journey. This sky journey's end destination was the throne room of God, the uppermost heaven. Along with showing that this report of John's revelatory-vision would have been a cultural plausible one, it also showed that the order of this report would have made chronological sense to any reader or hearer in the first-century Mediterranean world. As with the discussion on the prophetic phenomenon in the early Jesus-groups the cultural laden discourse is also of great importance for John's report in Revelation 4:1-2. The primary cultural discourse that was looked at here was the cosmological view of antiquity. The fact that John needed to undergo a sky journey (soul flight) to see the throne of God also gave the needed grounds to support the postulation that John can be understood within the shaman-complex.

3. In the final discussion it was indicated that like the letters of Paul the community knew John, he reacted on a certain situation and addressed the letters to a specific group of people in a specific context. John and his community to whom he wrote had shared certain similar believes. One of the key beliefs to this discussion was John's position as a holy man or prophet (shaman) of the communities. This was not primarily based solely on him being an expert rhetor or charismatic leader. Neither was Revelation a debut writing of John to the seven communities to win their trust. Rather John wrote to the community as a person who, from their view, held an honourable position. This understanding of John's position in the community is based on the core values of honour and shame in the first-century Mediterranean world and how these functioned on a personal and public level. So a person could only live an authentic life if his (or her) personal view was in agreement with that of the in-groups view of him (or her). In the same way this can also then be extended to a person's personal experiences that are conveyed to the in-group. Such experiences will only be seen as authoritative, accepted and integrated into the in-group's identity if they agreed with what the group accepted as plausible experiences.

This then shows that Revelation, as it is presented in the Greek Testament, would give a cultural plausible revelatory-visionary report of a holy man, John of Patmos, of the

seven Jesus-groups in Asia Minor. For a reader or hearer of these words of John in the first-century Mediterranean world, in the seven communities they would not have asked what the literary parallel was that John was alluding to. For them John of Patmos, the prophet, truly did see and hear what he reported on in Revelation.

In the final Chapter, a summary of the research will be given as well as some of the important consequences of reading Revelation within this hermeneutical module unpacked above. Along with these concluding remarks it will become clear that some cautionary remarks are needed when reading Revelation within such an interpretive paradigm.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: Implications, cautions and summary

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the concluding Chapter the following will be looked at: 1) Some of the hermeneutical implications for reading Revelation as a revelatory-visionary report given by a holy man from Asia Minor. The importance of this will be brought to light by looking at the importance of determining a *genre* for a document and how this has an influence on the interpretation thereof; 2) some cautionary remarks that need to be considered when Revelation is read as a cultural plausible revelatory-visionary report of the first-century Mediterranean world; 3) in the conclusion of this Chapter, an explained schematic representation of Revelation's *genre*; and 4) a concluding summary of the study.

6.2 HERMENEUTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study started out in Chapter 2 by giving a summary of some of the most influential studies on the *genre* of Revelation. A key characteristic of these studies were the literary comparison of apocalyptic writings with one another from which a so-called master paradigm was distilled of what constitutes an apocalyptic *genre* (see Collins 1979b). Although the definition postulated by Collins (1979b:9), as well as the body of literature seen as apocalyptic and worked with is largely agreed upon[278], there is less consensus on where one should start to work from to come to a full understanding of the *genre* of apocalyptic. What there is consensus about in all *genre* research is that one's understanding of *genre* will have an influence on your hermeneutical engagement with a document.

> An interpreter always begins with an assumption about the *genre* of a text. If our expectations are fulfilled, the assumption will need no revision. If they are not fulfilled, we must revise our ideas of the *genre* or relinquish the attempt to understand. There can be no understanding without at least an implicit notation of *genre*.

[278] Even those who wish to modify certain aspects to the definition of Collins (1979b) still see his definition as being foundational for any further work on the *genre* of apocalyptic literature. See, for example, the critical stance of Aune (1986, 1997) and Hellholm (1983, 1986) who both still use this definition as their starting point.

(Collins 1998:8)[279]

A next aspect of importance in *genre* research is highlighted by the work of Barr (2006). Barr (2006), working on the *genre* of Revelation, not only works with the understanding of *genre* as distilled from the literary writings of antiquity, but also with how an interpreter's own understanding has an influence on the construction of a *genre* type. "We can never eliminate this world in front of the text, but one of the primary tasks of any interpreter is to be conscious of it and to criticise it" (Barr 2006:73). Thus Barr (2006) highlights the importance of the cultural determinism that is present in any definition of a *genre* for Revelation.

Whenever the starting point for a definition of *genre* is the comparison of written literature, as is the case for Revelation, the end result would always be a list of traits (cf. Collins 1979b; 1998).[280] This study showed that rather than beginning with a comparison of literature, the search for a *genre* of Revelation should start with the question: What would be a cultural plausible understanding of the *genre* of Revelation? When starting from here a definition and understanding of Revelation's *genre* and other revelatory-visionary reports would incorporate one of the most important criticisms on the works of the *genre* project published in *Semeia* 14 (1979); the function of a document should be taken into account. At the same time this will also help with moderating the amount of anachronism and ethnocentrism present in the definition of the *genre*. One example of this will be suffice to illustrate this point.

[279] See also in Aune (1986, 1997:lxxi-lxxii), Beasley-Murray (1974:12), Collins (1981), Du Rand (2007:17-27, Gundry (ed. 1998:10-12), Malina (1995), Mathewson (1992:208), Osborne (2004:474-479), Schüssler Fiorenza (1980), and Van Niekerk (2014:14) who all express the same understanding of ***genre's*** influence on interpretation.

[280] This can also be seen in the work of Bandy (2011) where patterns of prophetic lawsuits are identified in Revelation 2-3. Here Bandy first identifies the typical structure, patterns and traits of prophetic lawsuits in the Hebrew Testament (Bandy 2011:180-184). These are then applied and identified in Revelation 2-3 (Bandy 2011:186-201). Again it needs to be noted that this identification of traits should not be seen as meaningless, but rather there should be a question accompanying these identifications concerning the plausibility of them (see below).

6.2.1 Revelation as a new "type"

In the work of the *genre* project, Collins (1979b) uses typological categories to classify the different apocalyptic texts into different types. According to this typology Revelation, seen as the "most obvious example of this type," is classified as a Type 1b apocalypse – an apocalypse "with cosmic and/or political eschatology (which has neither an historical review nor an other-worldly journey)" (Collins 1979b:14). When asking what would be a cultural plausible understanding of the *genre* of Revelation, the answer to this will have an influence on all three aspects of this typological classification. Here only the implications for the other-worldly journey will be looked at as this is the focus of the discussion above:[281]

Although the view of Collins (1979b), namely that there is no other-worldly journey to be found in Revelation, has be challenged and disputed by several scholars (cf. Aune 1997:lxxxii; Du Rand 2007:229; Koester 2014:105; Osborne 2002:14; Reddish 2001:89-90, 351, 359), this insight plays a minimal role in the interpretation of Revelation or it is only seen as a literary device to allude to the apocalyptic literature of the past.[282] When

[281] With regard to the eschatological aspect, this is normally associated with the future, coming, judgment on the evil spirits (cosmic) as well as the evil empire serving these evil entities (political; Rev 6:1-8:1, 8:2-9:21; 11:15-18; 15:1-16:21; 17:12-14; 19:17-21). On the other hand this is also associated with the eschatological cosmic and political order which will come into being at the end of days (for example in Rev 21-22; see Aune 1997:lxxxv-lxxxvi; Beale 1999:144-151, 171-177, Beckwith 1919:100-165; Osborne 2002:12-13, 34, 38-42; and also Elwell & Yarbrough 2005:382-384; Schnelle 2009:768-771; Hagner 2012:769-771). This view of eschatology as pointing towards the future consummation of history, coupled with the conviction that Revelation isn't a pseudonymous writing leads to the conclusion that it cannot be a review of history. The link between pseudonymity and a review of history is as follows: Apocalyptic writings were usually presented under a pseudo name with the intent of lending the document more authority. The pseudo name would be a venerable and prestigious figure from the past history of the culture in which the apocalyptic report came into existence (for example Ezra, Enoch, Daniel, one of the patriarchs). This then leads to history being reviewed in the form of prophecy *ex eventu* (Collins 1977; 1979b:6; see also Aune 1997: liii-lvi, lxxxiv, lxxxv; and also Van Niekerk 2014). When considering the cultural understanding of time in the first century Mediterranean world (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:37-38, 148; eds. Kok & Van Eck 2011:96-111; Malina 1989) such understandings of a dominant future orientation would have to be revised. An understanding of the *genre* of Revelation which places the dominant focus on future eschatology and which does not take note of the past events of the community to whom John writes would certainly not concur with a cultural plausible understanding from the first century Mediterranean world.

[282] Aune (1997:lxxxii-lxxxiii) acknowledges that there is an other-worldly journey in Revelation but that "the other-worldly journey motive has been used to introduce a series of discrete visions or revelatory narratives ... which suggests a conscious editorial attempt to create an apocalypse." Du Rand (2007) again admits that there is such a journey but that this should not be taken as reporting an actual event in the life of John. Reddish (2001:89-90) also acknowledges this motive in Revelation. But again this has little influence on the interpretation of Revelation, for Reddish (2001:28) the focus falls on the socio-

placing these revelatory-visionary reports of John in the social historical context of the first-century Mediterranean world, and moving beyond the normal typical understanding of the *Sitze im Leben* as the motivation for writing, and looking for the cultural discourse (the sacred canopy), which includes the cultural norms, values and conventions (such as honour and shame, holy men and their roles in the community), the following consequences arises for the other-worldly journey aspect of Revelation: First, any cultural plausible interpretation of Revelation would acknowledge the reference in Revelation 4-5 to John undertaking an other-world journey is not only a literary motive employed by the author; it rather reflects an actual experience of John that was normative and culturally influenced and accepted in the first-century Mediterranean world. Second, this motive and cultural understanding of the revelatory-visionary report of John should serve as a guide in constructing an understanding of the *genre* of Revelation. This means that any understanding of the *genre* of Revelation that does not concur with a cultural plausible understanding that was most probably part of the first-century Mediterranean world, would have to be reviewed. This in turn will lead to minimise anachronism and ethnocentrism in a reconstruction of the *genre* of apocalypticism and that of Revelation.[283]

It may seem as if such a cultural plausible understanding of the *genre* of Revelation limits the way in which Revelation can be interpreted. To a certain extent it cannot be denied that indeed this is what such an understanding would entail, but at the same time it can be said as for the interpretation of the transfiguration of Jesus given by Pilch (1995:61):

> [T]he choices [for interpreting the *genre* of Revelation] that remain have a high degree of Mediterranean cultural plausibility and would make good sense to illiterate peasants who constituted 90 per cent of population of first-century Palestine.... For people who have no

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historical setting (that is to say the typical *Sitze im Leben* of the Roman Empire) and the *literary genre* of Revelation.

[283] Again an example of this would be to see the other-worldly journey as only a literary motive alluding to other apocalyptic writings and so "suggests a conscious editorial attempt to create an apocalypse" (Aune 1997:lxxxii). Such an understanding reflects a culture that is dominated by literature that is easily accessible to anyone and where most of the populace are able to read, write and appreciate a literary work for themselves, which includes the Bible (see Borg 2002:8-9). Considering the evidence that less than 10% of the early Jesus group members were able to read and write (Duling 2002:542-545; Malina & Pilch 2002:12-13), such a strong focus on the literary sophistication of Revelation would need to be reviewed in light of such insights.

> control over their lives and who believe that God alone is in charge of life, ASCs like ecstatic visions are as essential to well-being as aspirin or Tylenol are to modern Westerners.

In other words, a cultural plausible hermeneutical paradigm for Revelation will on the one hand limit the interpretation possibilities for Revelation, and other apocalyptic writings. But, on the other hand, an interpretation that will agree with and fit into such a paradigm will give the interpreter a cultural plausible interpretation of the texts and thus greatly limit the possibility for misinterpreting, misrepresenting and misuse of the texts.

6.3 CAUTION

Along with what this hermeneutical paradigm can contribute to the interpretation of Revelation and apocalyptic literature, there is also a cautionary side that needs to be considered.

6.3.1 Against reductionism

The first is caution against seeing the shaman-complex, ASC hermeneutical model and the neurobiological basis of religious experience from a reductionist perspective. From the earliest articles presented by D'Aquili and Newberg (1993b) they have made it clear that their research on religious experiences from a neurological basis should not be seen as a reductionism of these experiences to merely "neural tuning" in and of the brain (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b:32). When considering the complexity of the brain itself (LeDoux 1998, 2003; Joseph 1990; O'Shea 2005; Seung 2012) along with the association areas discussed in Chapter 3, these alone speak against any form of reductionism with regard to the neurobiological basis of ASC experiences. Further, when considering the direction in which this line of research is moving,[284] and the contributions from diverse fields,[285] one would be hard pressed to find any form of reductionism of religious experiences[286] in this hermeneutical model.

[284] One of the more prominent directions applicable to religious studies is the emergence of so-called neurotheology of which Newberg is one of the most prominent figures (see Alston 2007; Ashbrook 1984; Newberg 2010).
[285] See the collection of essays in Tart, Puthof and Targ (eds. 2002) as well as the book of the cell biologist Bruce H. Lipton (2015).
[286] See also the lecture collected of William James (2010).

6.3.2 Against literalistic and uncritical application

The second caution that one needs to take in reading Revelation is different from the one mentioned above but not unrelated to it. Rather the folly that can be committed here would be a consequence if Revelation as a cultural acceptable revelatory-visionary report is taken reductionist, namely that Revelation came directly infallible from God and that it is as the dispensational hermeneutical paradigm sees it, the direct word of God of what must take place in the future. Again, such a view would not take the cultural embeddedness and indebtedness of religious experience into consideration. Also this will clearly be a reductionist view of the neurobiological basis of religious experience. Thus, in presenting Revelation as a revelatory-visionary report it does not support the view that Revelation, or the Bible, is directly and mechanically inspired by God and infallible.

6.4 CONCLUDING SUMMARY

In the first Chapter of this study it was shown that most commentators see Revelation as a report of an ecstatic experience. Some see this as being a literary allusion used by the author of Revelation to create a link between his writing and that of the Hebrew Testament's prophets such as Ezekiel and Isaiah (see Bauckham 1993b, Charles 1920; Reddish 2001). Still others see Revelations report as actual visions being reported but that the focus should fall on the literary traditions that they allude to (Beasley-Murray 1994; Du Rand 2007; Koester 2014). The monograph of Malina (1995), which was expanded and further developed in the commentary of Malina and Pilch (2000), represents an attempt to give a cultural plausible understanding of the book of Revelation. The basis of their thesis is that Revelation is the report of John who was an astral prophet in the seven communities of Asia Minor (Malina 1995:25-46; Malina & Pilch 2000:1-24). Regardless of these new insights, few commentaries after Malina and Pilch (2000) have paid attention to the work of Malina (1995) or Malina and Pilch (2000). The thesis of this research, and the contribution that it aims at was given as follows: The work of Malina (1995) as well as Malina and Pilch (2000), although representing an important new development, lacks the methodological and hermeneutical foundations

when comparing these works with that of other *genre* research on Revelation. This study aims to contribute to this foundation, and to show that viewing Revelation as a revelatory-visionary report of actual ASC experiences would be a cultural plausible reading thereof.

The aim of Chapter 2, using the commentaries of Malina (1995) and Malina and Pilch (2000), was to postulate a new understanding for the *genre* of Revelation. With this in mind, Chapter 2 presented a summary of the most important moments in the working history of the *genre* of apocalyptic in general and Revelation specifically. This summary was divided into three main sections. The first was the time prior to the *genre*-decade. In this period the main feature of the studies on Revelation was driven by two presuppositions: First, that apocalyptic, and Revelation in particular, was concerned with eschatology. Eschatology being taken as referring to the end times. Second, that apocalyptic literature should be distinguished from prophetic literature (Beckwith 1919; Charles 1920; Ladd 1957; Mounce 1977). With the advent of the *genre*-decade beginning in 1979 a new direction was taken in looking at the *genre*: Apocalyptic. The main working methodology and findings of 1979 were presented in the publication of *Semeia* 14 (ed. Collins 1979). The aim of this working group was to identify a "literary *genre*" which could be seen as constituting an apocalyptic corpus. This led to the postulation of a core definition of what an apocalyptic writing was about as well as the so-called master paradigm (Collins 1979b). These insights were further developed and critically viewed in the *Colloquium on Apocalypticism Uppsala* of 1979. When looking at some of the contributions published in 1983 (Bergman 1983; Collins 1983; Harman 1983; Smith 1983) it becomes clear that the realisation began to take root that both the author and recipients of the apocalyptic document played an integral part in the meaning of that document. These ideas that only began to take root in 1983 were then exemplified and developed further in *Semeia* 86 (ed. Collins 1986). Here the focus was on the social setting of apocalyptic work and how this had an influence on the selection of the *genre.* The literature that was used in the research was also broadened, and some (Aune 1986) realised that to come to a fuller understanding of apocalyptic, the larger phenomenon of apocalyptic (revelations) should be taken into account. Last the

work of DeSilva (2008a, 2008b, 2009) was looked at, who works from a rhetorical hermeneutical point. Here the realisation of the social setting and the social world in general are exemplified by DeSilva (2008a, 2008b) utilising so-called socio-rhetoric criticism when working with Revelation. But regardless of these insights, it is clear when reading the works of DeSilva (1992a, 1992b, 2008a) that, as with the *genre*-decade and thereafter, the *genre* of Revelation was constructed and seen as representing a literary *genre* type and was read as a literary peace of work, alluding to literary works and should be understood in the light of these literary allusions. Thus the authority of John the prophet stemmed from; his rhetorical and charismatic use of words, and his masterful use of literary allusions (Carey 1999; DeSilva 1992).

Chapter 3 represented what started to split from the traditional literary critical methodology approach worked from the presupposition that *genre* should be seen as being culturally imbedded. Oppenheim (1956), quoted here, is indeed correct when stating that all that is left of an ancient culture to study today is their literary writings. But he is also incorrect when stating that “literary criticism is the only possible approach” (Oppenheim 1956:184). Thus it was set out to give a model in etic terms (that is to say in word derived from modern research) that could help in postulating a more cultural plausible understanding for the *genre* of Revelation. The model chosen for this was that of ASC and how these relate to religious experiences. First it was shown that ASC experiences relate to a holistic change in the consciousness of a person which leads to a new understanding of the self, world and the relationship between the self and the world (James 2010; Ludwig 1969; Pilch 2011; Tart 1969). This describes the neurological basis, the seat of human consciousness and how the brain is stimulated to induce such ASC experiences. An important part of this description is the so-called association areas that play a vital role in ASC experiences. These areas are not only formed by biological factors, but how they associate certain experiences (internal association) and objects to certain words (external association) is deeply influenced and formed by the culture in which a person grows up (D’Aquili & Newberg 1993a, 1993b, 1999). With this neurobiological basis established, the research from anthropology shows and supports the universality of ASC experiences. From cross-cultural studies it

has been shown that between 80-90% of cultures around the world, has some or other institutional form of ASC experiences. These also include a so-called shaman who is a mediator in this, and is well versed in the inducing, using and interpreting of these experiences. A key characteristic of this shaman is the ability to induce a so-called soul flight (Alden 2016; Andreas 2016; Bukker 2016; Dashu 2016; Fenkle 2016; Goodman 1990; Pilch 2011; Neville 2016; Winkelman 2013a; 2013b). Important of these experiences is their relationship to the cosmology and epistemology of a certain group in which they occur. Also that cosmology and epistemology should not be seen as standing separate from one another. For these groups, like their understanding of normal reality and the alternate reality, a holistic understanding (epistemology) of the world (cosmology) leads to new insights (epistemology) of the heavens and earth (cosmology). Thus each one has its purpose but only when understood as a whole, then one comes to a holistic understanding of reality.

In Chapter 4 it was indicated that all people across cultural and even time lines are on the one hand 100% the same. This sameness is to be found in the neurobiological basis of ASC experiences. But also at the same time all people are 50% the same, 50% different and 100% different. The first (50/50) is to be found in the cultural structures of societies. All societies have some form of cultural structures (family, friends and rulers). But how each culture and group fills these structures will differ from one another (50% different). The 100% difference takes into account that each person is also an individual and this shows that all people are also 100% different from one another (Malina 2001a; Pilch 2004). The 50/50 aspect of this was shown to be expressed specifically in the way that language is used in different cultures and different times. Building on the insights of Wheelwright (1962) it was shown that the person who wishes to express him- or herself can only do this in language, but that language is derived from the culture in which this person is embedded. This leads to the insight that the known subject, language and what the subject wants to express cannot exist separate from one another. This is also shown in social scientific and linguistic studies (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:3; Halliday 1976) as well as philosophical studies (Caputo 2013). The aim of these discussions was to build a theoretical bridge between the so-called etic perspective, where the language

of the present is used, to the emic perspective, that which is expressed in the ANE and the first-century Mediterranean world. It was shown that the shaman-complex as described by present day research (Goodman 1990; Winkelman 2013a, 2013b), is also to be found in both the ANE and the first-century Mediterranean world. In the first place the shaman (etic description) takes on the form of a man of God (איש אלהים), prophet (נביא) or seers (חזים); that is the emic description. In the first century Mediterranean world there are also people exhibiting these characteristics from the Greek Testaments such as the so-called ἀπόστολοι in the book of Acts (Pilch 2004).

In Chapter 5, the final chapter, the focus returned to Revelation. Here it is shown that John stands within the prophetic tradition of the Hebrew Testament, but at the same time also the broader prophetic tradition of the culture in which John of Patmos was embedded (Schüssler Fiorenza 1980, 1983, 1985, 2001). Further it was indicated that the strong dichotomy between the Christian, Judean (Jewish) prophets and pagan prophets cannot be maintained. Further that Aune (1986) was correct in stating that texts such as Revelation reflect the phenomenology of revelatory experiences from the ancient world. From this point John stands on par with the Hebrew Testament's נביא, חזה, and איש אלהים and the other witnesses from the Greek Testament of ἀπόστολοι (apostles) and προφῆται (prophets). After this a discussion of Revelation 4:1-2 was given. Here it was shown that when Revelation is read as an actual revelatory-visionary report, in the light of other textual witnesses many of the hermeneutical problems fall away from these texts. The difference between the reading given in this Chapter and those of commentaries could be stipulated as follows: Other commentaries that compare the Revelation with pseudepigrapha and apocalyptic texts read them as *genres* reflecting a literary composition. The reading method of this research is that these texts reflect not primarily a literary choice, but reflect reports that took on a certain form because of the cultural conventions that determined what is to be experienced (such as an open door in the firmament) and how these things were to be experienced (that is to say in an ecstatic spirit). The conclusion of this discussion was that John's report in Revelation 4:1-4 (which can be extended to the rest of Revelation) indicates that John was capable of educing ASC experiences and thus falls into the shaman-

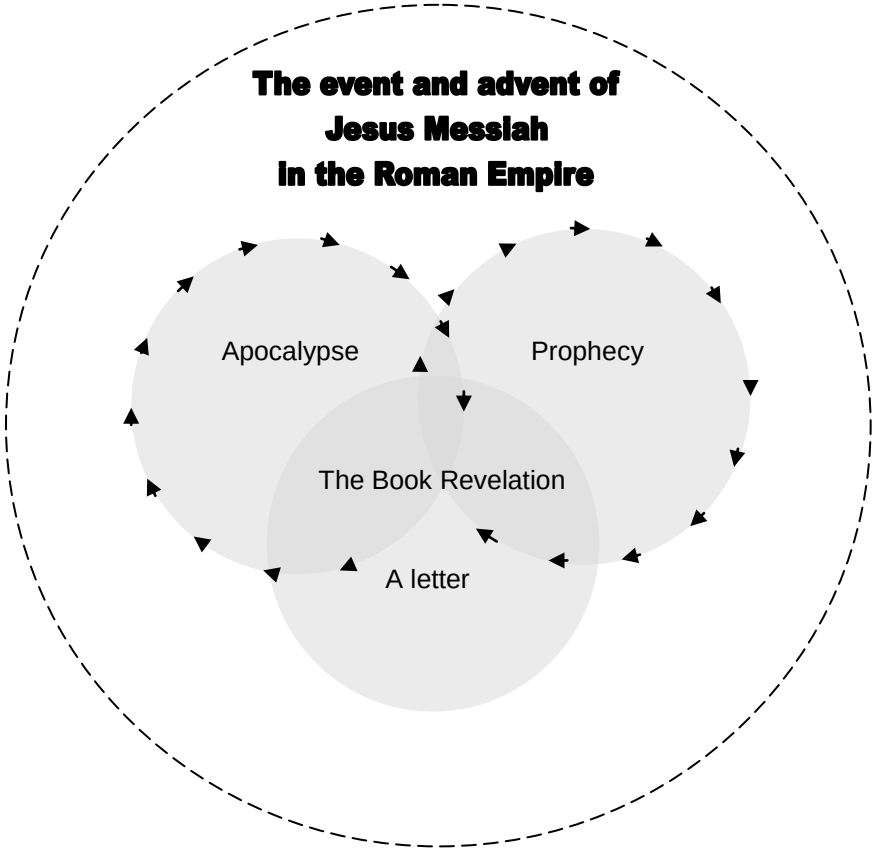
complex postulated in Chapter 3. Because of the cosmological understanding of the culture in which John was embedded and the cultural laden discourse in which his report took form, John had to undergo a sky journey (soul flight) to be able to report what he reported (among others the throne of God standing above the firmament). Thus John of Patmos was a holy man, man of God, prophet or apostle in their terms (emic) and a shaman in other's words (etic). Last it was shown that within the cultural norms and values of the first century Mediterranean world such as honour and shame and the dyadic personalities, John's report could only be deemed as authoritative within the community if the in-group accepted it as such. Thus, although John had to speak out against certain pseudo-authoritative figures in the communities of Asia Minor, his own authority was already established in these communities. Also, if he had to establish trust among the community, this wouldn't have come solely from his rhetorical skills, this also, but rather it would have come from the group's acknowledgement of the claim to honour and value that John had of himself. Stated differently: John's authority was established in his own claim to honour (self-worth) plus the claim to honour which the group gave to him (Malina 2001b).

6.5 CONCLUSION

When reading Revelation in the light of the model postulated here (Chapter 3-4) the question is not what parallels, explicit and/or implicit allusions are to be found between apocalyptic writings. Nor what would be the literary structure and how does this influence the message that John wanted to convey. Rather the focus falls on what would be a plausible understanding of the text for a first-century Mediterranean hearer, how would they hear Revelation and what would be a normal understanding for them? This will give an interpreter a hermeneutical paradigm within one can work. On the one hand interpretations that already have been given can be weighed and placed within this grid. In this way these interpretations can be evaluated for their plausibility, and in so doing reduce the presence of anachronism and ethnocentrism. On the other hand when asking what would be a cultural plausible understanding for the *genre* of Revelation it can also help one's own interpretation of Revelation. It gives a basis from which to work and begin by seriously taking the *genre* of Revelation as a starting point

for plausible, ethical and responsible engagement with the text (Chapter 5). All of this does not mean that the research prior, within and after the *genre*-decade, should not be taken into consideration. It is only by taking these research outputs into account and building on their findings that new insights can be gained. So for instance the demarcation of a canonical corpus of apocalyptic literature gives one a body of works to analyse and use in looking for the most plausible understanding (Chapter 2).

Van Niekerk (2014) used the *genre* of Revelation, working mostly from a literary comparative and descriptive departure point, to give a critical discussion of the different approaches to Revelation. In the end he concluded that any responsible interpretation of Revelation would take into account John's use of the prophetic, apocalyptic and epistolary *genre* types. In light of the above the schematic representation given by Van Niekerk (2014:42) would need to be revised as follows:



The most important additions to this model are the following:

1. The arrows that are added to the prophet and apocalyptic dimension of the book are an attempt to supplement the limitations of such a two-dimensional representation. Apocalyptic and prophetic, which are closely related to one another, represent a collection of persons and phenomenon that were a dynamic, lively and moving phenomenon in antiquity.[287]
2. The change of the outlines from broken lines used by Van Niekerk (2014:42) to no lines here for the representations of apocalyptic, prophecy and letter is to indicate the cultural embeddedness of *genre* as understood here. John of Patmos did not select three *genres* from a variety of *genres*. Rather, the experiences that he had (that of an altered state of consciousness) and to whom he wanted to report it was expressed in the form that it is presented in Revelation because of the cultural accepted norms. The culture determined the form in which he presented his revelatory-visionary report.
3. The addition to the context in which John wrote and to what had an influence on the message of John is an attempt to give short but critical evaluation of the foundational work of Malina (1995) and Malina and Pilch (2000). In both these works the Roman Empire plays a minimal role. It is almost as if John was lifted up in the spirit, into the throne room of God and the earth below was forgotten. The Roman Empire, its propaganda and its gospel that it proclaimed does not have any say in their astral interpretation. When considering the enormous influence the heavens and spiritual realm had on the ideology of the Roman Empire (see Virgil's *Aen.* 8.700-705, 715, 720; *Ecl.* 9.45-50) as well as the insights from research carried out on the Roman Empire and Revelation (Aune 1997; Gallusz 2014:77-96; Howard-Brook & Gwyther 1999; Friesen 2001, 2004, 2005) such a view cannot be upheld. These influences also need to be taken into account if one is to come to a full understanding of Revelation.

[287] This can even be dated back as far as the prehistoric ages. Armstrong (1993:3) indicates that man "started to worship gods as soon as they became recognisably human; they created religion at the same time they created works of art." Rahmani (1981:171-173) shows that the religious and ritualistic burial of the dead can be dated back so far as the 6th millennium BCE. And where religion is, where such burial rituals are, one is sure to find a "holy man" who is to be a mediator between the tribe and the gods or God depending on culture.

To conclude, if one were to read Revelation with this in mind, start and measure the hermeneutical methodology and results yielded from such a reading it does place restrictions on what is considered a more plausible interpretation of Revelation. Some of the past results, which have become a sort of sacred narrative of interpretation for Revelation, would have to be reviewed and in some cases deemed as implausible interpretations. But in the end, to quote Pilch (1995:61) again, “the choices that remain have a high degree of Mediterranean cultural plausibility and would make good sense to illiterate peasants who constituted 90% of the population of first century Palestine.”

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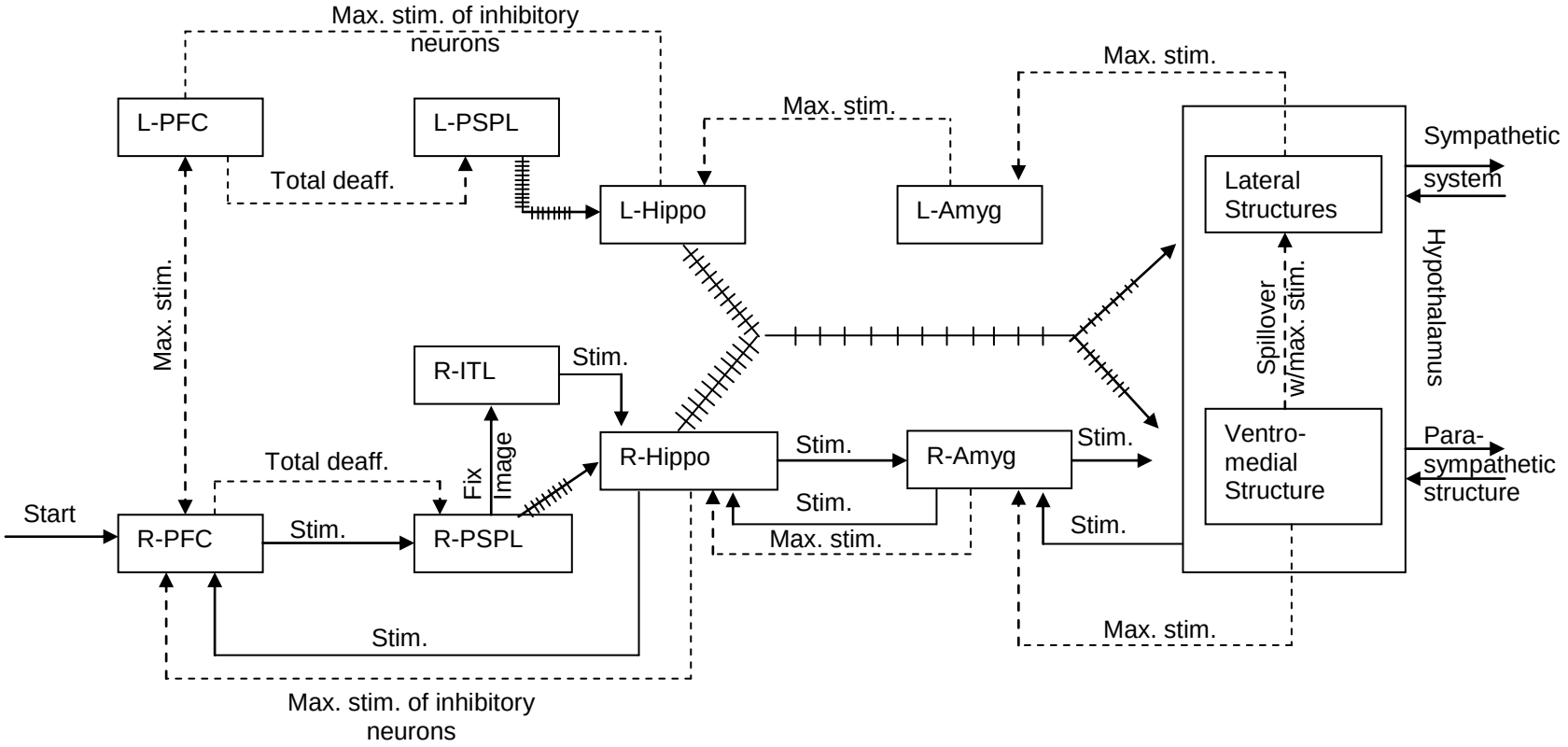
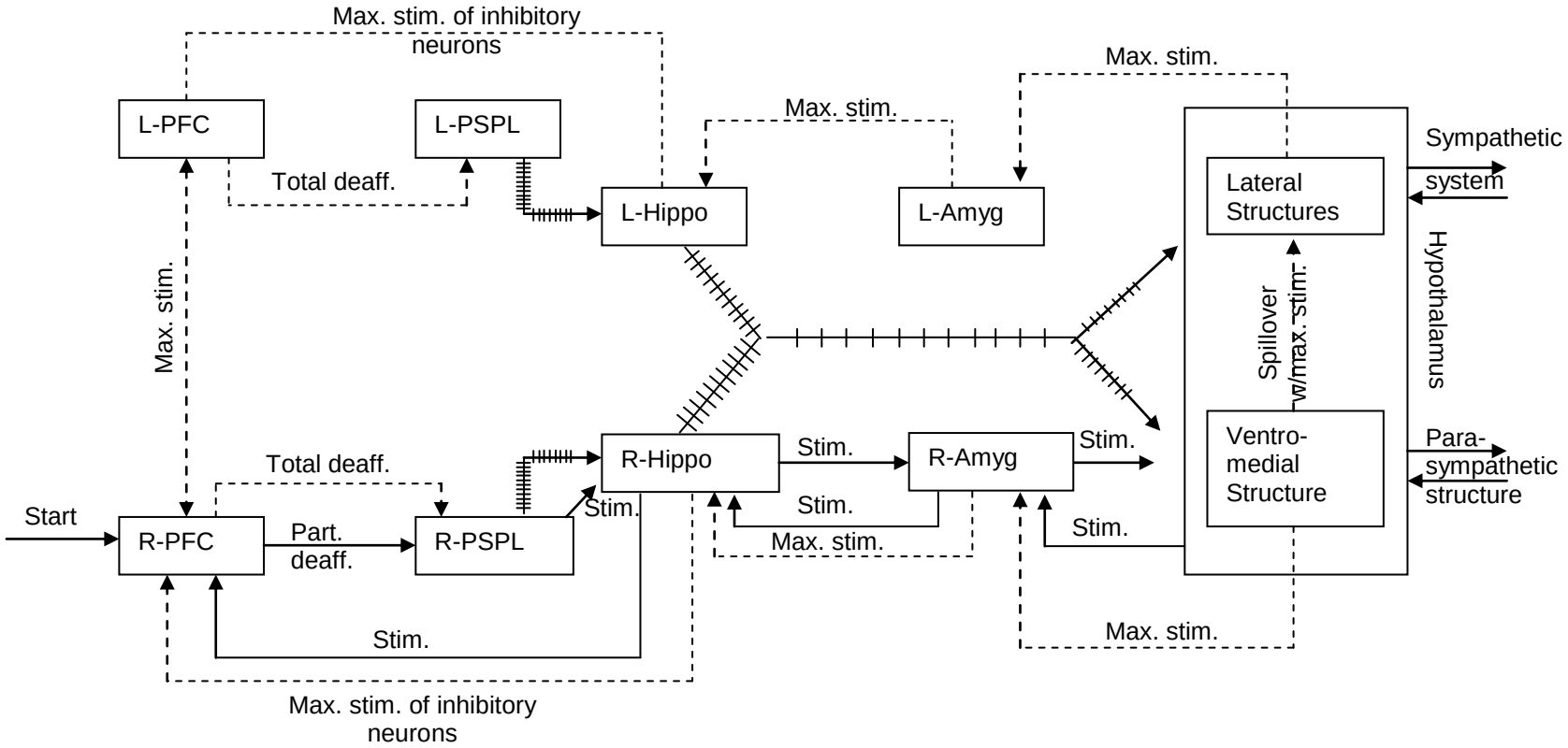
Appendix A – Neurobiological basis for alternate states of conscious experiences



A schematic drawing of the neural events occurring during active and absorptive meditation – the *via Positiva.* Meditation starts the R-PFC by "intending" the focus on an image. Hence the first step from the R-PFC → R-PSPL is stimulation, not partial deafferentation (inhibition) as in the case of *via Negativa*.

Plain Arrow → initial neural paths forming a recurrent loop of progressively increasing intensity prior to spill over.
Dashed arrows - - -→ neural paths of maximal stimulation between spill over and the generation of AUB.
Hatched arrows ⇢ neural paths following AUB establishing either ergotropic or trophotropic dominance while AUB lasts.

PFC	=	Prefrontal cortex	ITL	=	Inferior temporal lobe
PSPL	=	Posterior-superior parietal lobule	Amyg	=	Amygdala
Hippo	=	Hippocampus	Stim	=	Stimulation
AUB	=	Absolute Unitary Being	deaff.	=	Deafferentation



A schematic drawing of the neural events occurring during passive meditation – the *via negativa*. Meditation starts the R-PFC by 'intending' to clear the mind of thoughts.

Plain Arrow → initial neural paths forming a recurrent loop of progressively increasing intensity prior to spill over.
Dashed arrows - - - → neural paths of maximal stimulation between spill over and the generation of AUB.
Hatched arrows ⫶⫶⫶→ neural paths following AUB establishing either ergotropic or trophotropic dominance while AUB lasts.

PFC	=	Prefrontal cortex	ITL	=	Inferior temporal lobe
PSPL	=	Posterior-superior parietal lobule	Amyg	=	Amygdala
Hippo	=	Hippocampus	Stim	=	Stimulation
AUB	=	Absolute Unitary Being	deaff.	=	Deafferentation

Both of the above schematic representations were taken from the article of D'Aquili and Newberg (1993a:188, 192); the following summary is also from this article by them supplemented by another publication on the same topic (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b).[288] It needs to be noted that both of these schemes are models that represent the neural events which occur under each one of the stimuli that is described below.

The *via Negativa* represents intentional and passive meditation. This is a top-down induced ASCs, meaning that the origin thereof is in the brain (top) and flows over (spills over) into the rest of the body (down). The starting point of this is in the right prefrontal cortex (R-PFC) with the practitioner intently focusing on emptying his or her thoughts. This leads to partial de-afferentation[289] in the right posterior superior parietal lobe (PSPL). This de-afferentation occurs because the practitioner intentionally attempts to minimise the attention that is being paid to something, whether this be an object or thought. In turn the partial de-afferentation results in stimulating the right hippocampus (R-Hippo)[290]. The stimulation of the R-Hippo, via the connection to the PSPL, results in a stimulation of the right amygdala's trophotropic or energy conserving centres. This results in a stimulation of the hypothalamus which in turn leads to stimulating the parasympathetic system. The end result of this is what would be a profound feeling of relaxation and calmness[291].

The second form of stimulation is what is known as the active meditation or *via Positiva*. Whereas in *via Negativa* the practitioner begins by emptying his or her mind, usually with closed eyes, in *via Positiva* the practitioner begins by intentionally focusing on a certain object. This intentional focus doesn't lead to partial de-afferentation in the R-PSPL via the R-

[288] It is important to note that this summary will not be looking at all these complex systems in full, only a broad understanding is needed of each for the purpose of the following discussion. For the full discussion on these see D'Aquili and Newberg (1993a, 1993b), and also the further contributions and expansions in D'Aquili and Newberg (1996, 1999); D'Aquili (1978); Newberg, D'Aquili and Rause (2001).

[289] De-afferentation comes down to cutting off certain neural input within the nervous system. This can be caused by lesions on certain parts of the brain or by so-called functional de-afferentation. Examples of such functional de-afferentation would be if a certain part of the brain is cut off from the rest to prevent epileptic seizures (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993a:185).

[290] The R-PSPL and the R-Hippo have rich and strong neuro-connections to one another thus resulting in the model proposing this stimulation (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993a:187).

[291] In relation to total de-afferentation the same meditative state will be taken in, but total de-afferentation in the *via Negativa* will lead to hypertrophotropic tuning, or as seen in Buddhist psychology this will be what is known as access concentration (a profound relaxed state in which concentration comes effortlessly). With regard to the *via Positiva* total de-afferentation will lead to hyperergotropic tuning in the brain. This will be a state in which tasks that would normally take an enormous amount of energy to complete (for example long-distance running or a strenuous exercise routine) seem effortless (a lot of energy is used but a person doesn't feel as if he or she is using as much; D'Aquili & Newberg 1993a, 1993b).

PFC, but rather leads to a stimulation of the R-PSPl. The rest of the route of stimulation is the same as with *via Negativa* but because of the intentional focus on an object the stimulation and spill over will occur in the ergotropic or energy expenditure system. The result is a burst of energy that will be released into the neuro paths of the practitioner resulting in an ASC experience. The *via Positiva* could thus be seen as a bottom-up stimulation, that is to say the stimulation begins from outside the brain to a certain degree through the intentional focus on an external object[292].

Although it isn't possible to investigate and look at brain scans of the people reported in the Bible, when working from the assumption that all people are 100% the same, biologically speaking, the insights discussed above and in Chapter 3 (§3.3.2) can be convincingly applied to explain certain texts[293].

In Ephesians Paul writes to the community and tells them not to be foolish (μὴ γίνεσθε ἄφρονες) but rather that they should look for the will of the Lord (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου). This he supplements then with the statement that they should not become drunk with wine (μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ) but rather be filled with the Spirit (πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι). This they must do through 'λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς [ἐν] ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς, ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ' (Eph 5:17-19). To be πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι was a typical expression for referring to a holy man and a state of consciousness prior to ASC experiences (see also Lk 1:15, 41; Ac 2:4). Speaking together, thus being together, is not only a reflection of typical dyadic and group orientation personality, but this also contributes to the inducing of ASC experiences through group experiences (cf. Pilch 2004)[294]. Then the calling to the community comes to speak, not in words but rather in psalms (ψαλμοῖς), hymns (ὕμνοις) and spiritual odes (ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς). In terms of the neurobiological bases discussed above and in Chapter 3 this comes down to: A bottom-up stimulation, there is intentional focus on certain actions (in this case singing). This exertion of energy, through

[292] It should be noted that this stimulation can also occur from within the brain when a practitioner wishes to focus intentionally on an object from the past, thus focusing on a memory of an object (D'Aquili & Newberg, 1993a:193).
[293] See Croffert (2011) for a discussion on the witnesses of the resurrection, Malina (1999) for a discussion on Jesus' walk on the sea and Pilch (1995) for a discussion on the transfiguration of Jesus, all of which works with the same neurological basis used in this study (see also Pilch 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2005, 2011).
[294] This is also seen in the book of Goodman (1990) reporting on numerous occasions where they induced ASC experiences, and how this was strengthened by the presence of group participation.

singing[295], just as in the case of Jehoshaphat using the play of psaltery according to Josephus (*Ant.* 9.3.35), would have led to a state of ergotropic stimulation which would have led to an ASC experience. One of the results of such an experience is that a person comes to a new understanding of him- or herself, as well as his or her relationship to the divine. Thus, not through ἄφρονες will the community learn the θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου, but through an institutionalised form of inducing an ASC experience. Another more intimate form of ASC induced by the, *via Positiva* is to be found in the nativity story given in Matthew 1:18-21. Here the text states that after Joseph found out that Mary was having a child, being a δίκαιος (just) man, he decided to divorce her. Then Matthew 1:20 reads: 'ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος (he was busy brooding over) ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου κατ' ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ λέγων.' An experience of ἄγγελον κυρίου κατ' ὄναρ (angel of the Lord in a vision) is clearly something that occurs in an ASC, and seeing that Joseph ἐνθυμηθέντος over his predicament, it is clearly linked to what is described above under *via Positiva*. That is to say the practitioner focuses intently on and external object or a thought[296]. For the *via Negativa* there aren't really any examples to be found in the Greek Testament, one could try and make a case for prayer to be a form of this. But when reading the witnesses of this it is clear that the practitioners of this always had God as their absolute focus point[297].

Last something needs to be stated on the relation of the association areas in the brain and these ASC experiences reported about in the Bible; more specifically in Revelation. In reference to Bosman (2014) it was stated in Chapter 5 above that John used the sacred texts of his community, which formed part of their collective memory, and presented it as mnemohistory. In Bosman's (2014:2) article the focus falls on that of the pharaoh and how this figure was connected to the collective memory of Israel in the construction of the Exodus narrative. The importance here for Israel was not to identify a specific Pharaoh of Egypt from

[295] It can be stated plausibly that this singing went along with dancing of a sort. See in this regard the Hebrew Testament's witness of singing and dancing which went together in 2 Samuel 6:16 and 1 Chronicles 15:29. So also Josephus' witnesses in *Jewish Antiquities* 7.4.80; 19.1.104 (Pilch 1999:33-39; 2011; 2012:253-268).
[296] The etic description of all of these phenomena would be that the stimulation of the neuro paths leads to these ASC experiences. It is because of the 'stimulation' of the brain, for the brain is the seat of consciousness and intentional thought. When reading the texts from Ephesians and Matthew their emic description will be that these experiences come from the 'heart'; they flow from that which is τῇ καρδίᾳ (in the heart), for the heart is the seat of intentional thinking. So also ἐνθυμηθέντος can be translated as 'to lay to heart' (Liddel & Scott 1889:263; see Mt 9:4; 12:25).
[297] See in this regard Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane as reported in Luke 22:39-46. After Jesus prayed to God in verse 42, verse 43 states that 'ὤφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ἄγγελος ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐνισχύων αὐτόν.' Thus Jesus' intentional focus on God induces an ASC experience wherein a sky servant appears to him.

the past, but the mere memory of this figure rather was connected to their collective memory of oppression, slavery and a pervasive dominant royal figure over many generations of Israel.

If this were to be related to the association areas discussed above in Chapter 3, new light is shed on this. For Israel the association area of association areas would associate the pharaoh with negative feelings, because of the cultural influence on the association areas. On the other hand, the pharaoh was perceived in a much higher esteem and associated with great honour from the Egyptian side because their association areas associated the word pharaoh with other meanings than that of the Israelites; again the influence of cultural background and collective memory plays an integral part in this.

When looking at Revelation in this light two things become clear. One, to a large extent the context of John and the community, which formed and moulded their own association areas, plays an important role in what John saw and how he presented it to the community. This then leads to the second important insight which is related to the authorship of Revelation. If one were to take a strong classical dispensational view of Revelation and accepted selectively from the research on ASC, a case can easily be made that the author of Revelation was God. It can then be stated that John of Patmos' reports are actual reports of actual sky journeys to the realm of God and thus Godself was the one dictating what needed to be written. But in light of the neurobiological basis of this model, the insights regarding association areas, how language functions and is related and derives its meaning from the culture in which it is and is used; such a view cannot be held.

This then leads to a final remark. Through the entire study it was sporadically stated that this study does not deny or wishes to reduce the importance of literary allusions and studies focusing on apocalyptic literature. When considering the association areas and how they are formed by past memories and in turn the hippocampus, which plays an important role in memory, all of which plays an integral role in ASC experiences, then one would have to consider each aspect that would have formed part of John's and his communities' collective memory (D'Aquili & Newberg 1993b). For this is where the experiences of Revelation come from, this is what gave meaning, sound and form to the ASC experiences that John reported.