

The Foot Washing in John 13:6-11; Transformation Ritual or Ceremony?

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I. Introduction and Hypothesis

The narrative in John 13:4-20 is notoriously complicated.⁽¹⁾ The evangelist narrates Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet (13:4-5), a conversation with Peter (13:6-11), and then a general discourse about footwashing (13:12-20). But the remarks in vv 12-20 hardly serve as an adequate or proper commentary on the events in vv 6-11.⁽²⁾ Similarities abound between 13:6-11 and 12-20, but the differences deserve attention.⁽³⁾ (1) Peter becomes Jesus' conversation partner in vv 6-9, whereas all the disciples are addressed in vv 12-20. (2) Peter is told "You do not know" (v 7) but will understand later, whereas all of them are clearly "in the know" during the general explanation of the rite: "You know what I have done" (v 12) . . . "If you know these things, honored are you if you do them" (v 17). (3) Jesus tells Peter, "Unless (ei mĒ) I wash. . ." (v 8), whereas they "ought" (opheilete) to wash others' feet (v 14) -- different notions of obligation. (4) Jesus' action will make Simon and others "pure" (katharoi, vv 10-11), whereas their washing of others' feet will make them "honored" (makarioi, v 17). (5) The remark in v 10 identifies someone who is not pure, "You are clean, but not every one of you." The evangelist says that this refers to Jesus' betrayer: "He knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, 'You are not all clean'" (v 11). In contrast, when Jesus mandates washing of feet, he alludes to a traitor, "I am not speaking of you all; I know whom I have chosen" (v 18); he quotes Ps 41:9 about a treacherous table companion. "Clean" and "chosen" are different things, as are Jesus' own words and a snatch of psalm. (6) The "now/later" distinction functions differently: Peter does not understand now, but will later (v 7), whereas all of them know "now," so that "later" when the prophecy comes true, they will remain faithful (v 19).

The action in 13:6-11 signifies something quite different from what is discussed in vv 12-20. Some event on Jesus' part warrants notice as an "example," which Jesus commands to be repeated (vv 15, 17).⁽⁴⁾ But what was described in vv 6-11 is a distinctively Johannine conversation⁽⁵⁾ about an unrepeatable action. Jesus' action in vv 6-11 and his remarks about "purification" simply do not parallel what is discussed in vv 12-20, an action repeated whenever the group gathers.

Notions of "ritual" and "ceremony" from cultural anthropology can serve as important lens for sharpening our perception of 13:6-11 and explaining the differences between the two accounts of Jesus' symbolic action. "Ritual" refers to rites of status transformation, such as baptism, marriage, consecration, in which individuals change status and role. "Ceremony" refers to rites which confirm roles and statuses, such as anniversaries, priestly rites, triumphal parades, and the like. In 13:6-11 Peter is urged to undergo a status transformation ritual to become "wholly clean" and so have a special inheritance or place with Jesus. In 13:12-20, however, the disciples are told to practice a ceremony in which their role and status is confirmed by acts of hospitality to group members. Peter's footwashing ritual has to do with his transformation into the role of an elite, public witness to Jesus with accompanying risk of death - a one-time event. Conversely, the ceremony which the disciples will perform to members of their circle confirms their role and status as

leaders of the group - an action to be repeated regularly. Two different rites are described in 13:6-11 and 12-20, and the use of materials from anthropology offers a fruitful way of clarifying the social dynamics of the narrative.

II. Cultural Anthropology: Rituals and Ceremonies

Victor Turner described the difference between ritual and ceremony:

"I consider the term 'ritual' to be more fittingly applied to forms of religious behavior associated with social transitions, while the term 'ceremony' has a closer bearing on religious behavior associated with religious states. . . Ritual is transformative, ceremony confirmatory."⁽⁶⁾

The following diagram compares and contrasts the elements of status change rituals and ceremonies which confirm status.⁽⁷⁾

ELEMENTS OF A RITUAL

1. frequency: irregular pauses
2. schedule/calendar: unpredictable, when needed
3. temporal focus: present-to-future
4. presided over by: professionals
5. purpose: status reversal; transformation roles and statuses in institutions

ELEMENTS OF A CEREMONY

1. frequency: regular pauses
2. schedule/calendar: predictable, planned
3. temporal focus: past-to-present
4. presided over by: officials
5. purpose: confirmation of status

(1) Frequency: Both rituals and ceremonies represent pauses in life's rhythms. Certain pauses occur irregularly (sickness, uncleanness), which we call rituals, that is, pauses which allow us to assume new and different roles and statuses. Other pauses, which occur routinely in our lives, we call ceremonies (meals, festivals). These do not effect change of role or status, but confirm them. (2) Calendar: Ritual pauses occur unpredictably; we undergo them when necessary. No one plans to be ill or unclean; but when sickness or pollution occur, rituals for changing from those states are handy. Some rituals are unrepeatable status changes, such as birth, coronation, death and the like. On the other hand, ceremonial pauses occur on fixed calendar dates, such as Sabbath and Passover. We anticipate and plan for them. (3) Time Focus: Ritual pauses take us from present needs to the future, as we change our current status and assume a new role in the future. Ceremonies, however, look to the past and celebrate its influence on the present. Past roles and statuses continue to exist in the present and influence present social dynamics. (4) Presiding: Different kinds of people preside over rituals and ceremonies. Professionals (physicians, prophets) preside over or direct status transformation rituals. These are the "limit breakers" whom society allows to deal with marginal people as they cross fixed social lines.⁽⁸⁾ Officials (father at Passover meals, temple priests) preside over or direct the appropriate ceremonies in their institutions. (5) Purpose: Ceremonies leave in place the lines of the maps of society, because they function to confirm the values and structures of society and to celebrate the orderly classification of persons, places and things in the cosmos.⁽⁹⁾ For example, birthdays, anniversaries, pilgrimage feasts and the like confirm the roles and statuses of individuals in the group as well as the group's collective sense of holy space and holy time which pertain to its festivals. Ceremonies look to the stability of the lines of society's maps. Conversely, rituals attend precisely to those lines, but focus on their crossing. Rituals are stable ways of dealing with necessary instability in the system: a boy and a girl cross lines to become husband and wife in a marriage ritual; sick people cross lines and become healthy (Lev 14; Mark 1:44); sinners become purified (Luke 18:13-14). The converse is also true: a seemingly innocent person may become guilty through a ritual trial. The status of those who cross lines is thereby changed, and so these rites are called "status transformation" rituals. If ceremonies look to the center of the map and the stable lines which make up the map, rituals look to the map's boundaries. These should be stable, but may be legitimately or fraudulently crossed.

A. Footwashing (13:6-11) as Ritual of Status Transformation

Using our model of a ritual, let us examine Jesus' washing of Peter's feet. (1) Frequency: this ritual occurs just once in the Fourth Gospel.⁽¹⁰⁾ Since the meal had begun when Jesus rose to wash his disciples' feet, this ritual occurs as an irregular pause in a ceremonial meal. (2) Calendar: the narrator locates the general meal in the context of Passover, a fixed calendar date (13:1). Because the footwashing in 13:4-5 is not a fixed element of Passover or any other known Jewish meal, it is an irregular, unpredictable pause; it arises then because it was needed ("Unless. . ."). (3) Time Focus: the present footwashing looks to the future: "Unless I wash you, you have no part in me" (13:8). The narrator evokes no past action of Jesus here, as in 13:14-15; rather a new status with Jesus depends on what is presently happening. (4) Presiding: Jesus presides over the ritual. Were this an act of etiquette which welcomed guests to a ceremonial meal, Jesus would be an official of the kinship institution which celebrated its commitment through commensality. But his washing of Peter's feet has nothing to do with welcoming etiquette or meal participation. This action will make Peter "wholly clean," a status which he cannot now enjoy, unless Jesus performs this ritual. Jesus, then, acts here as a professional, not an official. He allows Peter to cross from one status ("already bathed") to a better status ("wholly clean"). (5) Purpose: Whatever role and status Peter enjoyed prior to 13:6, Jesus requires that he undergo this ritual for two reasons. First, unless he accepts this, "You will have no part in me." Second, when completed, Peter will be "wholly clean." As regards the former purpose, this footwashing resembles other status transformation rituals in the Fourth Gospel, many of which are presented under the rubric of "unless":

3:3 Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

3:5 Unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6:53 Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,
you have no life in you.

8:24 Unless you believe that 'I AM,' you will die in your sins.

12:24 Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

13:8 Unless I wash you, you have no part in me.

15:4 As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you,
unless you abide in me.

John 3:3 and 5 refer to the status transformation ritual of baptism.⁽¹¹⁾ Outsiders become insiders by virtue of this entrance ritual.⁽¹²⁾ Jesus demands of prospective disciples in 8:24 that they acclaim him by a confession of his divinity, thus changing status from outsiders or luke-warm disciples to that of first-class insiders. Later even this confession is deemed insufficient; something more is required. Like grains of wheat, disciples must be willing to die (12:24; see 16:1-2; Mark 8:34-37). Jesus tells Peter, who is already a member of the circle, that still more is needed, that his current status is inadequate, and that while he is "bathed," he is not yet "wholly clean." Finally, unless branches abide through thick and thin, they bear no fruit.

Most of these "unless" statements, then, describe status transformation rituals. Some represent the radical change of status from that of outsider to insider (3:3, 5). Others indicate a change of insider status, from less complete to more complete disciple and from imperfect to perfect follower. Indeed, there seems to be a sense of escalation in these statements: first, mere membership (3:3, 5); then, elite confession (8:24); then, elite behavior (12:24).

According to the story's logic, Peter is a disciple who has passed one loyalty test (6:67-69) and so enjoys basic membership and is part of the general circle of disciples (see 9:28). The "part" Jesus offers in 13:8

would seem to be a new elite status.⁽¹³⁾ The footwashing, then, stands as the last, and perhaps the climax of these transformation rituals.

As regards the second stated purpose of this ritual, what does it mean to be "wholly clean?"⁽¹⁴⁾ Purity and cleanness are issues of considerable importance in this gospel. The references are clustered in John 2-3 and 13-15. Jesus' initial sign has to do with "purification," for the six jars at Cana which he filled stood there "for the Jewish rites of purification(katharismou)" (2:6).⁽¹⁵⁾ The gospel's logic argues Jesus replaces former rites, feasts, places of worship, etc. with new and better ones.⁽¹⁶⁾ The sign at Cana heralds the beginning of new and better "purification" rituals, even status transformation rituals. The narrator then presents a discussion of baptism between Jesus and Nicodemus (3:3-5), a status transformation ritual for "entering the kingdom of God" (3:5). A brief notice is then made of "a discussion between John's disciples and a Jew over purification (peri katharismou)" (3:24). The gospel argues that Jesus' "purification" is superior to all others, as well as essential for special status.

Talk about purification occurs again in 3:6-11 and 15:1-3. In the latter place, Jesus states that the vinedresser "takes away" unfruitful branches, but "prunes" fruitful one (15:2). "Pruning" masks the actual verb used, namely, "to purify" (katharizein). Hence more cleansing awaits disciples, despite the fact that they were already cleansed in baptism. In 13:10 Jesus affirmed that some have already "bathed and do not need to wash"; nevertheless they still need to have their feet washed so as to become "wholly clean." Likewise in 15:3 Jesus affirms, "You are already made clean (katharoi) by the word which I have spoken to you"; nevertheless they will be made "clean" when pruned/cleansed by the vinedresser. In 15:1-3, then, a status transformation ritual is envisioned, whereby an already "clean" disciple will take on a new status of "cleanness" (a branch which bears more fruit), when cleansed by the vinedresser. This ritual transforms mere insider status to that of elite or perfect insider status. This status transformation occurs through suffering (see 12:24 and 16:1-2).

These references to purification influence how we interpret "wholly clean" in 13:10. At a minimum, Jesus' washing of Peter's foot is a washing, whose aim is purification. Like other washings, it too is a status transformation ritual, not a mere entrance ritual, but a ritual whereby an insider gains a better status, a more perfect role. Peter will be wholly clean, something impossible without this ritual. The comparison of 13:6-10 with 15:1-3 suggests that this footwashing is more than a mere washing ritual; perfect katharismos comes about by public confession and even risk of death (16:1-2).⁽¹⁷⁾

B. Footwashing (13:12-20) as a Ceremony

If 13:6-11 describes a ritual of status transformation, a different type of ritual action is portrayed in 13:12-20. Because this does not involve change of role or status but rather confirmation of them, let us read vv 12-20 according to the model of ceremony.⁽¹⁸⁾

(1) Frequency: Jesus mandates in 13:12-15 that the feet of church members be regularly washed as a standard part of their gatherings. Whereas Peter would be washed once and then be "wholly clean," the feet of the members of the group would be washed again and again. How often? If this footwashing is, as I suspect, an act of etiquette which welcomes people to a ceremonial meal (see Luke 7:44-46; 1 Tim 5:10), then it would be repeated whenever the group gathered. We simply do not know how frequently they gathered, whether only at Passover (13:1) or at Sabbath or the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). But as often as they gathered, this act of etiquette would be appropriate. (2) Calendar: this footwashing is expected with every gathering, and should occur regularly at the beginning of the ceremony. It is not the emergency ritual which interrupted the meal in progress when Peter's feet were washed. (3) Time Focus: it harkens to the past example of Jesus which should be presently imitated by the group's leaders. Jesus calls attention to his past action as the warrant for its continuation in the present: "Do you know what I have done to you? . . . If I have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet" (13:12, 14). Present roles and relationships among the Johannine group depend on the past action and example of Jesus. (4) Presiding: Jesus presides at this footwashing as an official. If footwashing belongs in the orbit of etiquette and etiquette denotes commensality, then Jesus presides over that ceremony. (5) Purpose: The purpose of this

footwashing in 13:12-16 is manifold. Jesus confirms his own role and status by this act: "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord'; and you are right, for so I am" (13:13). Then he alludes to himself as "Master" (13:16). Yet the appropriate act of this Teacher-Lord-Master is to wash the feet of disciples and servants, thus offering them welcome. By presiding at this ceremonial washing, Jesus confirms his unique role as Teacher-Lord-Master and his exalted status, even if the action done is "humble" in our eyes. Only the person of this exalted role and status within the group is expected to perform this action.

So when those whose feet Jesus has washed in turn wash the feet of others, they do so precisely as leaders of the group. In Jesus' absence, they enjoy roles and status comparable to that of Jesus, who enjoyed a superior role and exalted status. Hence, Jesus' word legitimates their position. In their ceremonial actions they are like the master; they are not "greater than their master" so as to avoid this action. Rather as "servants" they imitate their "master": "A servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him" (13:16). They too will be officials presiding at this ceremony. Their performance of this action will serve to confirm their role as leaders and teachers of Jesus' group. Moreover, they wash the feet of members of the church, and so the status of those washed is confirmed as authentic members of this Jesus synagogue.

III. Who Participates in These Rituals & Ceremonies?

Who gets elevated to what role or status in the ritual in 13:6-11? Was the transformation successful? Was the new status acknowledged? I ask these questions in light of recent studies which argue that readers must attend to the whole of the story in John 13.⁽¹⁹⁾ Although focussing on Peter, we compare and contrast him with other candidates for ritual transformation in John 13. The narrator highlights four characters: Jesus, who presides at all the rituals and ceremonies, and three candidates for the rituals: Peter (vv 6-10, 36-38), Judas (vv 11, 18, 24-29), and the Beloved Disciple (vv 23-26). Since Collins' work⁽²⁰⁾ readers are sensitive to the representative nature of the dramatis personae of the Fourth Gospel. This pertains to our analysis of status transformation rituals, for we should inquire about the characterization of the candidates for ritual transformation.

Peter He is typically presented in this gospel in terms of comparison and contrast.⁽²¹⁾ On the narrative level, he is contrasted in 13:6-11 with Judas, just as he was in 6:67-71. If Jesus washes him he will be "wholly clean," which juxtaposes him with Judas, who is "not clean." Yet he is also contrasted with the Beloved Disciple. In seeking to know the traitor's identity, Peter asks the BD to ask Jesus.⁽²²⁾ Peter's alleged primacy among the Twelve stands in contrast with the actions of the Beloved Disciple. He is "in the know," Peter is not; he enjoys the place of honor next to Jesus, whereas Peter reclines further away. As we shall see, the BD and Peter will be contrasted first as shepherd and sheep (18:15-16) and then as loyal disciple (19:26-27) and disloyal coward (18:17, 25-27).

Jesus converses with Peter again in 13:36-38. His remark to him there resembles that in 13:7. Peter cannot follow Jesus now, just as he does not know now what Jesus is doing. But "you will follow afterward," just as "afterward you will understand." This suggests that Peter remains in a liminal or candidate state of transformation, incomplete both in knowledge and following. Jesus refuses acknowledgment that Peter has achieved the new status signalled in 13:6-11. He will not prove a loyal disciple, willing to die for the Master.

Thus, the narrator compares and contrasts Peter with both Judas and the Beloved Disciple. The BD knows and follows most closely -- not so Peter; Judas disguises himself and plots malice -- not so Peter, who openly professes loyalty, but fails the test of courage. Yet the narrative says that Peter will know afterward and follow afterward. Hence he remains in a liminal stage of the ritual; his status and role have not yet been transformed. He is not yet an elite figure, but neither is he a hostile outsider.

Judas Readers were told that the devil had already put it into Judas' heart to betray Jesus (13:2), a remark which echoes 6:70-71 where loyal and disloyal disciples were contrasted. Jesus then labels him "not clean"

(13:10b-11). Despite Jesus' washing of his feet, Judas certainly will not be transformed to elite status, especially if it means public loyalty to Jesus. Judas, then, appears disloyal and demonic (3:27).

According to 13:12-15 Jesus' ceremonial washing of the disciples' feet confirms both membership status and specific roles. But this does not apply to Judas. After giving the mandatum, Jesus excepts Judas from the ceremony: "I am not speaking to you all; I know whom I have chosen" (13:18). Indeed he identifies Judas as the one who violates the basic laws of commensality: "He who ate my bread has lifted up his heel against me" (13:18b). He certainly did not participate in the status transformation ritual (he was not made "clean") nor was he confirmed as a group member in the ceremony. He fails as regards both ritual (vv 6-11) and ceremony (vv 12-20).

Beloved Disciple We learn abruptly that he is "the one whom Jesus loved." His intimacy is symbolized by "lying close to the breast of Jesus" (13:23); from Jesus he receives special information hidden to all else: "Lord, who is it?" (13:25-26). Thus, he acts as Peter's broker or mediator; what Peter lacks, the Beloved Disciple has or can get. He is, then, the consummate insider, a true elite, who has access to knowledge of deviants in the group. Finally, he follows Jesus most closely, both to Caiaphas' house and to the cross, displaying public loyalty at the risk of his life. He would appear to have achieved the new status suggested by the footwashing ritual in 13:4-5, as well as confirmed group membership according to 13:12-20.

When we survey the characters in John 13 and ask about their participation in the rituals and ceremonies described there, we find the following characterization:

<u>Person</u>	<u>Ritual (13:6-11)/Ceremony (13:12-20)</u>	<u>Characterization</u>
Peter	1. ritual: still a candidate for failed status 2. ceremony: confirmed group member	transformation loyalty
Judas	1. ritual: no status transformation ("One is <u>not</u> clean") 2. ceremony: group membership denied ("I am <u>not</u> speaking of you all")	hostile disloyalty
BD	1. ritual: elite status transformation 2. ceremony: confirmed group member	courageous loyalty

IV. Peter: Claimant for the Role of Good Shepherd

We turn now to "the Noble Shepherd" materials, for these involve Peter and influence how we should read the narrative in John 13. Jesus enjoys the role of the Noble Shepherd. When calling the sheep by name, leading them out or laying down his life for them, he acts as the Noble Shepherd and confirms his role. Yet Peter too lays claim to this role.

In 13:37 Peter protests to Jesus that "I will lay down my life for you" (13:37), which is what the shepherd does. We compare this with Jesus' remark to Peter in 13:6-11, and note striking formal similarities between the two conversations.

13:6-8

1. Question by Peter: "Lord, do you wash my feet?" (13:6)
2. Answer from Jesus: Jesus answered and said to him: "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand" (13:7)
3. Peter's Boast: Peter said to him: "You shall never wash my feet" (13:8)

13:36-38

1. Question by Peter: "Lord, where are you going?" (13:36)
2. Answer from Jesus: Jesus answered him: "Where I am going you cannot follow now, but afterward you will follow" (13:36b)
3. Peter's Boast: Peter said to him: "Lord, why cannot I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you"

(13:37)

4. Response from Jesus: Jesus answered him: "Unless I wash you, you have no part in me" (13:8)

4. Response from Jesus: Jesus answered: "Will you lay down your life for me? Amen, amen I say to you, the cock will not crow, until you have denied me three times" (13:38)

Both conversations are formally similar in terms of topics discussed and rituals of status transformation described. In both, Jesus tells Peter that he does not know and cannot follow Jesus now; but afterward he will understand and follow. When Peter speaks in 13:36, he remains a candidate for the elite status which the "footwashing" symbolized. Yet his present boast of loyalty unto death implies that he presents himself as no mere candidate for elite status, but a tested and acknowledged holder of that status. Peter's boast of loyalty, moreover, denotes another claim, namely the role of a "noble shepherd, who lays down his life for another.

The Noble Shepherd (10:11)

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep

Peter, the Shepherd? (13:37)

I will lay down my life for you

After Jesus commands that his disciples "love one another" (13:34-35), he defines that "love" in terms of what the noble shepherd does: "Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (15:13). Noble Shepherds, then, love by laying down their lives for their sheep/friends. Peter claims in v 37 both the status of an elite disciple and the particular role of "noble shepherd." But has he been formally initiated to that role? Does anyone acknowledge it?

Jesus challenges his claim to this new status, indicating that Peter remains but a candidate for the new role and status. Instead he predicts that Peter, far from being the noble shepherd, will instead act like a hireling, who sees the wolf coming and flees (10:12). If this is true, then the narrator issues a serious challenge to Peter's role vis-à-vis the group. According to Johannine logic, the hireling has no relationship with the sheep: "He who is a hireling, whose own the sheep are not . . . He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep" (10:12-13). Whatever the Johannine group knew of the traditional role and status of Peter, that would be severely challenged by Peter's association here with the hireling and not the shepherd. Who, then, is the noble shepherd? The Beloved Disciple fulfills that ceremonial role. Returning to Jesus' parables of shepherds, doors, and sheep in 10:1-4 and 11-13, we learn that the true shepherd enters the door; the doorkeeper recognizes and admits him; and he calls the sheep by name. This fully describes what the Beloved Disciple does in 18:15-18.

Metaphorical Description of the Noble Shepherd

1. Shepherd Enters by the Door: "He who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep" (10:2)
2. Gatekeeper Recognizes Him: "He who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens." (10:2-3)
3. He Leads the Sheep In/Out: "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has . . . brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him" (10:3-4)⁽²³⁾

Johannine Description of the Beloved Disciple

1. BD Enters By the Door: "As this disciple was known to the high priest, he entered . . . while Peter stood outside at the door" (18:15)
2. Gatekeeper Recognizes Him: "So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the maid who kept the door" (18:16).
3. He Leads the Sheep In: "Peter stood outside the door. The other disciple spoke to the maid who kept the door and brought Peter in" (18:16).

In fact, using the perspective of this study, we should label the actions described in 18:15-18 as a ceremony. The respective roles of Beloved Disciple and Peter are confirmed as shepherd and sheep. Far from being either shepherd or noble, Peter acts out the inferior role of the sheep.

Yet the conflict over who is the group's shepherd ends only in John 21. There the evangelist presents Peter again in terms of rituals of status transformation. The scene opens with Peter assuming the role as chief fisherman: "I am going fishing" (21:3). When six others join him, Peter's role as leader of Jesus' followers is ceremonially confirmed (see Luke 5:1-11). Yet Peter's ideal role is not Fisherman, but Shepherd. Yet this scene alerts us to examine the role and status of Peter once more.

Jesus serves a ceremonial meal confirming his role as host and provider, that is, shepherd who feeds his flock. Then he addresses Peter in a way which signals a radical transformation of his status. Readers know that Peter failed thrice in loyalty (13:38; 18:17, 25-27). Despite his claims to the contrary (13:36-38), he has been presented, neither as "noble" nor as "shepherd," but as a hireling or sheep. Now Jesus questions Peter, and in doing so transforms his status to that of loving/loyal disciple and publicly acknowledges his role as shepherd.

<u>Question:</u>	<u>Answer:</u>	<u>Status Transformation:</u>
"Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"	"Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."	"Feed my lambs" (21:15a,16a,17a)
		"Tend my sheep" (21:15b,16b,17b)
		"Feed my sheep" (21:15c,16c,17c)

This gospel labors to affirm that Peter finally becomes the group's shepherd. Through ritual loyalty oaths, the status transformation of Peter is accomplished. Jesus himself acknowledges it as he invests Peter with the role and status of Shepherd of all the sheep ("Feed my lambs . . . Feed my sheep").⁽²⁴⁾ It is now legitimate for Peter to act as "shepherd." But is he also a "noble" shepherd?

The scene concludes with the prediction of Peter's death (21:18-19). Earlier Peter had boasted that he would lay down his life for Jesus, only to have this challenged (13:38). Now Jesus' prediction acknowledges Peter's earlier claim. But is this too a status transformation ritual? Does it add anything to the role and status of Peter?

At this point, we should ask about the relationship of 13:6-11 to 21:18-19. In the former passage, Jesus would make Peter "wholly clean." But at that point, can Peter be "clean," much less "wholly" clean, for he will fail in loyalty (13:36-38)? Jesus told Peter "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand" (13:7). When did Peter finally know? These questions call attention to the problem of understanding fully what is being communicated in 13:6-11. It narrated an incomplete ritual, whose completion lies later and whose meaning will only be understood "afterward." But when?

The answers come in 21:18-19. Peter becomes "wholly clean" though a death whereby "God will be glorified" (21:19). The failure in loyalty is replaced by a declaration of "love" (21:15-17).⁽²⁵⁾ The ungrasped meaning of Jesus' actions is met with full understanding of Jesus' words in 21:19.

According to ritual analysis, Peter the initiand should experience status elevation by becoming "wholly clean" (13:10); but Jesus refused to acknowledge any change of status (13:36, 38). Peter remains a candidate for status transformation, as Jesus twice tells him that completion of the ritual lies in the future ("afterwards you will know," v 7; "you will follow afterward," v 36). In 21:15-17 and 18-19 the Fourth Gospel finishes Peter's status transformation. He is finally acknowledged to be the official and unchallenged Shepherd ("Feed my lambs . . . Feed my sheep," 21:15-17). Likewise his status as "noble"

shepherd is acknowledged; he can truly "follow Jesus" and "lay down his life for him" (13:37). His death as faithful witness will seal his status as an elite disciple, courageous, loyal and perfect according to the canons of this gospel. In his death, he will become "wholly clean."

In conclusion, by itself cultural anthropology cannot fully interpret the symbolic meaning of the footwashing in 13:6-11. Nothing replaces the study of background materials⁽²⁶⁾ and redactional inquiry.⁽²⁷⁾ But its use aids in clarifying what Jesus intends for Peter in vv 6-10 (a status change) and what his example means for the disciples in vv 12-20 (confirmation of their ceremonial roles).

A model of rites of status change and status confirmation greatly assists our reading of the Fourth Gospel. This gospel records precious few successful ceremonies. Since attention is focussed on boundary crossings and status changes (i.e. "unless . . ."), we are urged to focus on the social conflict within and without the Johannine community; this is helped by noting the shifting demands made of disciples, which are expressed in terms of new rites of status transformation. This model, moreover, greatly clarifies the rivalry between the symbolic figures Peter and the Beloved Disciple, when we see the latter successfully if temporarily acting as the ceremonial Noble Shepherd. The figure of Peter, moreover, remains in a state of change and uncertainty until the final ritual in 21:15-19.

NOTES

1. On the distinction between 13:6-11 and 12-20, see Fernando Segovia, "John 13:1-20: The Footwashing in the Johannine Tradition," ZNW 73 (1982) 31; Arland Hultgren, "The Johannine Footwashing (13:1-11) as Symbol of Eschatological Hospitality," NTS 28 (1982) 539-40; Karl Kleinknecht, "Johannes 13, die Synoptiker und die 'Methode' der Johanneischen EvangelienÜberlieferung," ZTK 82 (1985) 366-68.
2. Rudolf Bultmann (The Gospel of John [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971] 466-67) insisted that there are two interpretations of the footwashing, vv 6-11 and 12-20. Similar observations can be found in Edwyn Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel (London: Faber and Faber, 1947) 436-39; M.-E. Boismard, "Le lavement des pieds (Jn, XIII, 1-17)," RB 71 (1964) 5-24; and Herold Weiss, "Footwashing in the Johannine Community," NovT 21 (1971) 301-2.
3. Commentators distinguish the two interpretations in vv 6-11 and 12-20 in three basic ways: Boismard ("Le lavement," 6-8, 18-20) contrasted sacramental with moral interpretations (see also Rudolf Schnackenburg, The Gospel According to St. John [New York: Crossroad, 1982] 3.21); Georg Richter (Die Fusswaschung im Johannesevangelium [Regensburg: Pustet, 1967] 252-78) distinguished a christological interpretation from a sacramental one; Bultmann (The Gospel of John, 467) juxtaposed a cleansing by hearing of the revealer's word with a gesture of humility.
4. Some identify 13:4-5 as the "action" which is then interpreted; see Robert T. Fortna, The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel (SNTSMS 11; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 155-56.
5. The Johannine redactional elements include: (1) Simon Peter as a "representative character" (see R.F. Collins, "Representative Figures in the Fourth Gospel," DRev 94 [1976]: 26-46, 118-32); (2) statement/misunderstanding/clarification (see J.H. Neyrey, An Ideology of Revolt [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988] 42, 234 # 10 & 11); (3) dialogue with a disciple (see R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel According to St. John, 3.18); (4) knowing vs not knowing; (5) purification (2:6; 15:3); (6) "unless. . ." demands (see Neyrey, An Ideology of Revolt, 41, 138); (7) laying down/taking up (see R. E. Brown, The Gospel According to John XIII-XXI (AB 29A; Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1970) 551.
6. Victor Turner, The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967) 95 (emphasis added); see also Raymond Firth and John Skorupski, Symbol and Theory: A Philosophical Study of Theories of Religion in Social Anthropology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) 164.

7. See Bruce J. Malina, Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology. Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986) 139-143. See also Jerome Neyrey, Paul in Other Words (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990) 76-80, and Mark McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts: The Case of Jesus the Prophet," The Social World of Luke-Acts. Models for Interpretation (J.H. Neyrey, ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991) 334-36.

8. "Limit breaker" is the term Bruce Malina (Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology, 144-54) uses to identify the professional presider at rituals of status transformation, whom society authorizes to lead people across lines and boundaries usually judged dangerous.

9. On "purity systems" and "symbolic universes," see J. H. Neyrey, "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts: They Turn the World Upside Down," The Social World of Luke-Acts. Models for Interpretation, 271-304 and Paul. In Other Words, 21-55.

10. We should contrast it with two others in which Jesus is the recipient of the action. In Luke 7:37-38 a woman interrupts a meal to wet his feet with her tears; Luke interprets this as a ceremonial act of welcoming etiquette which the host failed to extend to Jesus (vv 44-46); such actions should confirm his status as "honored guest." In John 12:1-8, Mary interrupted Jesus' meal with the family to anoint Jesus' feet (vv 2-3). Although this is an anointing and not a "footwashing," we label it as a status transformation ritual, for it constitutes part of Jesus' burial ritual (v 7). Ceremonial etiquette can be extended repeatedly, not so ritual anointing for burial.

11. See Ignace de la Potterie, "'To be Born Again of Water and the Spirit' -- The Baptismal Text of John 3,5," The Christian Lives by the Spirit (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1971) 1-36; David Rensberger, Johannine Faith and Liberating Community (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988) 57-59, 66-70.

12. Rensberger (Johannine Faith and Liberating Community, 40) indicates that Nicodemus is a symbolic character, namely, a representative of Jewish leaders who are unwilling to come publicly to Jesus. See Raymond E. Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple (New York: Paulist Press, 1979) 68-73, 77-82, 89. Nicodemus' "baptism" would elevate his status to that of a confessing member of Jesus' circle (see 9:22; 12:42), truly the elite "inner circle."

13. Meros has been particularly difficult to interpret. Often it means (1) a region or place (Matt 2:22; 15:21; Mark 8:10; Acts 2:10; Eph 4:9; Rev 16:19), (2) a party or faction (Acts 23:9; Josephus B.J. 1.143), (3) an inheritance (Rev 21:8; 22:19), or (4) a member of the body (Eph 4:16). All of these meanings find a ready equivalent in Johannine symbolic world: (1) Jesus speaks about "where" he is going and the mansions awaiting his disciples (14:2); (2) we recognize many factions within the Johannine church, among them the elite (12:24) and the cowards (9:22; 12:42); (3) rewards and inheritance ("peace," 14:27; the Holy Spirit, 15:26; "bring forth much fruit," 15:2-6); and (4) member of Jesus' group (i.e., vine and branch, 15:1-7).

14. "Clean" is one aspect of the semantic word field that has to do with purity and pollution; see J.H. Neyrey, "Unclean, Common, Polluted and Taboo," Forum 4,4 (1988) 72-82 and Paul. In Other Words, 54-55. Generally "clean" either has to do with the removal of pollution, consecration for entrance or participation in a holy rite.

15. These presumably include the washing of hands and perhaps vessels (see Mark 7:2-4); the volume of the six jars correlates with a house filled with wedding guests needing to wash their hands before the wedding feast.

16. See J.H. Neyrey, An Ideology of Revolt, 130-41. See James VanderKam, "John 10 and the Feast of the Dedication," Of Scribes and Scrolls (Harold Attridge, John Collins and Thomas Tobin, eds.; New York: University Press of America, 1990) 203-14. See Francis Moloney, "From Cana to Cana (Jn 2:1-4:45) and the fourth Evangelist's concept of correct (and incorrect) faith," Salesianum 40 (1978): 817-43.

17. J.A.T. Robinson ("The Significance of the Foot-Washing," Neotestamentica et Patristica [Supp NovT 6; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962] 144-47), noted the parallel between Mark 10:32-45 with its offer of "baptism" to James and John; Jesus' "way of the cross/way of glory" must be imitated by his disciples. Robinson also links Peter's remarks in John 13:36 about willingness to follow Jesus, even unto death.

18. Although we focus on only one ceremony (13:12-20), this gospel notes two other types which correspond to two key social locations: (1) the temple and pilgrimage feasts to the nation's shrine and (2) the household and meals. As regards the temple, Jesus participates in certain feasts such as Passover (2:13ff; 13:1ff), Tabernacles (7:2-8:20), Dedication (10:21), and an unnamed feast (5:1ff). Ideally these should confirm his membership, role and status in the political institution, but in the Fourth Gospel he challenges and replaces them, thereby disrupting their function as confirming ceremonies. As regards the household, Jesus confirms his association with circles of intimate friends (12:1-8; 13:1-17:26; 21:9-13) and general disciples (6:1-15). Meals confirm his special role as host and provider when he feeds others or his status as honored guest when they fete him. This sketch suggests that in this gospel ceremonies are not functioning properly on the public level of participation in the nation's ongoing socialization, which indeed is challenged by Jesus. But on the level of private associations in households they do function to confirm membership, as well as specific roles and statuses. On the importance of the temple/household distinction, see John H. Elliott, "Temple versus Household in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions," The Social World of Luke-Acts, 212-17, 230-38.

19. In particular, Francis J. Moloney, "A Sacramental Reading of John 13:1-38," CBO 53 (1991) 242-48 and F. Manns, "Le lavement des pieds: essai sur la structure et la signification de Jean 13," RevScRel 55 (1981) 159.

20. "Representative Figures in the Fourth Gospel," 26-46, 118-32 and These Things Have Been Written (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991) esp. 38-46; see Alan Culpepper, The Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) 105, 118-123.

21. Increasingly New Testament scholars are studying the rhetorical device called synkrisis or comparison, especially as this is found in the progymnasmata; see James Butts, The Progymnasmata of Theon. A New Text with Translation and Commentary (diss. Claremont Graduate School, 1986) 494-512. See Christopher Forbes, "Comparison, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric," NTS 32 (1986): 1-8; Peter Marshall, Enmity at Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians (WUNT 2.23; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987) 53-56, 325-29, 348-65; D. A. Russell, "On Reading Plutarch's Lives," Greece and Rome 13 (1966): 150-151; P. A. Stadter, "Plutarch's Comparison of Pericles and Fabius Maximus," GRBS 16 (1975): 77-85.

22. Compare this with a parallel process in 12:20-23. Certain "Greeks" ask to see Jesus. They ask Philip, who asks Andrew, who takes them to Jesus. Hence certain people in this gospel function as mediators or brokers of access and information, thus indicating their special role and status.

23. According to the parable, the sheep know the voice of the shepherd (10:4-5); this seems to be ironically illustrated in 18:15-18 when the maid recognizes the voice of Peter and identifies him as a follower of Jesus, an association he denies.

24. Just as Jesus acted as the host of the ceremonial meal just finished (21:13), so Peter will assume that role too, as Jesus tells him, "Feed my lambs. . . Feed my sheep" (21:15,17). Whether we understand Jesus' command literally (Peter as host at genuine community meals) or symbolically (Peter as shepherd who pastures the flock), Jesus designates him as a ceremonial official.

25. Recall "greater love no one has than 'to lay down one's life'" (15:13); but "laying down one's life for the sheep" is the mark of a noble shepherd (10:11). Hence "love" is linked with the heroic loyalty of the shepherd. It is hardly incidental, then, that Jesus asks Peter "do you love me?"

26. For example, the Torah speaks of two kinds of footwashings: (1) a ceremonial act of hospitality to travelers before they eat (Gen 18:4; 24:32; Judg 19:21) and (2) a ritual purification of priests before entering and ministering to the Lord (Exod 30:19-21; 40:31). Philo gave a moral meaning to priestly footwashing, namely, blamelessness or walking in the way of the Lord (Mos. 2.138; Q. Exod. 1.2); when a sacrificial animal's feet are washed, the true follower of God no longer walks on earth, but in God's realm (Spec. Leg. 1.206); see Herold Weiss, "Foot Washing in the Johannine Community," 315-17.

27. On the relationship of the footwashing in 13:6-11 to Jesus' death, see Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, 435; Brown, The Gospel According to John, 2.551; J.D.G. Dunn, "The Washing of the Disciples' Feet in John 13,1-20," ZNW 61 (1970) 249.