MODELS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND PASTORAL FORMATION: A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

This paper seeks to outline and evaluate four models of theological education in the history of the Church. It then focuses on recent developments in theological education in Ghana that exposes the tension and challenges among the various models. After this the paper introduces a fifth model which is being developed at the Pentecost Theological Seminary in Ghana.

Formal Theological Education

In universities that offer formal theological education as one of the academic disciplines, the course is subject to all the requirements of the university, including the standards of the faculty and of admission. The objective of the programme is usually to develop the academic and intellectual capacities of the ministers and students so that they can face the rising challenges that confront the church, most especially the heresies.

Theological education is not new. By the end of the third century, there were notable catechetical schools in Alexandria, Cappadocia, Edessa, Jerusalem, Antioch, Caesarea and Rome. While Rome played a significant role in the development of Christian apologetics, including the doctrinal explanation of the person of Christ and the Trinity, the schools of Antioch and Alexandria were particularly important in the intellectual formation of early Christian thought, and they had the most profound impact on early Christendom.

The school of Alexandria, in Egypt, founded around AD 150, was renowned for its allegorical approach to the Scriptures. Drawing on Platonic philosophy for biblical interpretation, "it saw the world

around us as but shadows of the real spiritual world behind it, and in the search for a 'deeper meaning' saw the literal meaning as but a shadow of the more spiritual one."[1] The leading exponents of this approach to theology were Origen and Clement. Clement sought a synthesis of Christian thought and Greek philosophy, thus "ensuring the acceptance of the church of scholarly thinking,"[2] whilst Origen was regarded as the first systematic theologian with his publication, *On First Principles*.[3]

The School of Antioch, in Syria, founded about five decades later in AD 200, preferred the literal interpretation of biblical texts and was very critical of the Alexandrian approach with its use of Platonic mysticism and allegory. The mixture of philosophy and Christianity led to the famous question by Tertullian, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What do the church and the academy have in common?" Although all of these early catechetical schools were not intended to become permanent institutions, they played import roles in the development of early Christian thought, especially regarding the person of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity, which characterized the Western Catholic church.

In the early years of church life, theological education was not simply education for a selected few for the ministry but was rather a process whereby the whole church received the divine *paideia* (cultural education). Andrew Walls observes that the history of theological education goes back to the Old Testament times, where "the Torah was understood as the instrument of education." Walls maintains that

> The Old Testament is not only the first textbook of Church history, it is the oldest programme of theological education on record. Addressing originally a single Mesopotamian clan, the programme, which lasted many centuries, was extended to a group of related tribes and then to a whole nation.[4]

Approaches to theological education have undergone tremendous changes in the history of the church.[5] The early schools of theology, such as those at Antioch and Alexandria, began to arise shortly after close of the apostolic age. Although these were not academic institutions in the classical sense of the word, that is, having a well

laid-out curriculum or syllabus leading to a degree or diploma, they were nevertheless committed to providing a deeper understanding of the Christian faith.[6]

Dirkie Smit brings to our attention three training patterns—or "social locations"—that heavily influenced not only biblical hermeneutics but also theological education and ministerial formation. First were the monasteries, second were the cathedral schools, and third were the medieval universities[7]. These social locations, also described as "public places," developed one after the other, and most of the time in opposition to one another. What is significant about the rise of these social locations is how they were influenced by the wider socio-political developments of their time. Smit observes that "whatever happens outside in society and the world often has a major impact on how Christians read and interpret the Bible behind their church doors!"[8]

The Basel Mission & the Pietistic Worldview

This influence of society on training was particularly evident in the training adopted by the Basel Mission.[9] Looking at the Basel Missionary Training Institute (BMTI) founded in 1815, which became the model for later institutions in Britain, Herppichargues that the Pietistic approach of a closely knit community with clear authority structures in relationships, cleanliness, hard work, and contemplative spirituality largely cultivated the attitudes and behaviours of the graduates. The emphasis on morality that condemned any excess in joyful expression and stressed humility that bordered on humiliation were characteristic of such models of training. "When the missionaries who had received this preparation engaged the African context, they found the new culture contrary and offensive to their values and their worst ideas of the 'dark continent confirmed'"[10]

Herppich's insight to the consequences of a particular model of training is of relevance to my argument that tension and other challenges exist among the various models which ultimately impact on the training of people for ministry. The "Apprenticeship Model" or "Asamankese Model," seeks to address some of these prevailing challenges, and I will give it considerable attention in this paper.

Drawing on the sociological studies of Jon Miller, Herppich makes the point that students can become victims of a particular model of education and acquire "trained incapacity." Miller maintains that "trained incapacity" contributes to the lack of "quick intelligence and flexibility" which are critical for engaging and learning from other people and cultures in order to understand and respond to their needs. Thus proper engagement with the African context and its emerging challenges becomes important in the formation of a religion and construction of theology.[11] The "apprenticeship model" is one way of equipping ministers out of the mire of "trained incapacity" to a more rapid, productive engagement with the cultures in which they are working.

Pastoral Formation versus Theological Education

Pastoral Formation has now become a specialized discipline in which the main objective is training men and women for ordained ministry, church planting, and other mission activities. In this paper, I make a distinction between formal theological education and pastoral or ministerial formation.Whilst pastoral and ministerial formation may be used interchangeably, formal theological education is at an accredited university or college where graduates receive academic diplomas and degrees. In these institutions, theology is one of the academic disciplines which is intended to produce graduates, not only for the work of the ministry or the church, but for any field of the humanities. In this case, one studies theology just as one would study economics, political science, or history, simply to obtain academic qualifications.

Pastoral formation, however, has a different objective. Here, although the programme may be subject to intellectual rigor and satisfy the requirements for a degree or diploma, the inherent and explicit objective is to prepare men and women for the work of the ministry. Personal spiritual development and the application of Scripture through pastoral care to human needs are core to the curriculum. The Bible is viewed not as a textbook but as the living word of God which speaks to all people and their needs everywhere. Ministerial or pastoral formation often carries denominational biases, and emphasizes not only pastoral care and counseling but also prayer, evangelism, and the administering of the sacraments. Ministerial or pastoral formation often precedes ordination for most churches.

The tension that exists between formal theological education and pastoral formation has existed for years but was discussed heavily in the 1980s. This period saw an extensive debate on the nature and models of theological education in North America. Ironically, the debate did not focus on how theological education might serve the needs of the church or the most effective way to teach in theological education but instead asked the question, "What is theological about theological education?"

Four Models of Theological Education

In his book, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate*, David Kelsey introduced to us what he described as the Classical and Vocational—or "bipolar"—approaches to theological education. The two geographical poles: Athens and Berlin, which Kelsey used as a historical typology representing two different approaches or models.

Athens or Classical Model

By Athens, Kelsey explains that the goal and methods of theological education are derived from classical Greek philosophical educational methodology, and he argues that the early Church adopted and reconstructed this model. The primary goal was the transformation of the individual. Thus it focused on character formation, cultivation of excellence, and knowing God. In the Greek context this meant personal development oriented toward a public good and was taken in the context of the academy. The early church adopted this model because of its particular orientation toward holiness and the formation of individual character.[12]

In using this model, the sacred text for the Church was Scripture rather than the philosophers, although the study of the philosophers was still encouraged with the view that it produced some desirable benefits. At the centre of this model for the early church and today, therefore, is a curriculum that seeks to address personal moral formation, and that morality defines the values of the faculty and the institution.

Berlin or Vocational Model

Unlike the Athens model which developed from antiquity, the Berlin model is derived from the Enlightenment. This model gets its name from Berlin because the University of Berlin was specifically founded as a form of *research* university as part of the Prussian reform of education along the Enlightenment ethos. In the new Enlightenment research universities, theology has to justify its place in the university. In the past, theology was regarded as the queen of the sciences because it was understood to be derived from divine revelation rather than from natural observation or deduction.[13] However, the Enlightenment exalted reason over revelation. Whereas the Athens or classical model accepted the sacred text, whether Scripture or the philosophers, as revelation containing truth and wisdom essential to life, now reason demanded that these texts be subject to critical enquiry.[14]

In this model, the goal is no longer pastoral formation based on the study of authoritative, classic texts but to train people in research, rigorous enquiry, developing theories, and applying those theories to solve practical problems. Academic degrees such as the PhD are the standard educational achievement with the aim of establishing a scientific theory that can be applied to specific problems. Theology in the research university has to demonstrate that it has both a body of theory and a practical function.

In this paradigm, theology is an area of theoretical study rather than of personal development, and its practical function is the building up of the church, primarily through the formation of ministers. Theological education, therefore, is ministerial training, rather than spiritual formation. The content of theological education emphasizes the development of hermeneutical skills for interpreting scripture and for developing visionary leadership.[15] It eventually became apparent in this model that *while a strong understanding of theory and practice is important to the life of the church, the vocational model does tend to leave personal, moral, and spiritual development in the background.* Graduate ministers of this model preach more like university professors than pastors who could address the needs of the church. Thus the vocational model is intrinsically connected to the research university.

Jerusalem or Missional Model

Robert Banks[16] is credited with describing the Missional or the Jerusalem model.This third model takes the view that "missiology is the mother of theology." In this case, theological education is holistic and is seen as a dimension of mission, and the goal is the discipling of the nations. Understood this way, mission has reference to all dimensions of life: family, friendship, work, and community. It encompasses the whole ministry of the whole people of God. A missiological approach to theological education emphasizes not only the importance of mission to the life of the church but also seeks to transform the process of theological education by reworking the methodology. All Nations Christian College in the United Kingdom is an example of this model. Biblical studies are taught through a missional lens and the whole learning experience is designed to nurture transformation of the whole person. The slogan "head-heart-hands"describes an intention to develop transformed thinking (the head), renewed emotions and attitudes (the heart), and creative skills to communicate across cultures (the hands).

Geneva or Confessional Model

According to Brian Edgar, a fourth model of theological education is the Geneva or the Confessional model of education. This approach was built on Kelsey's models of Athens and Berlin and the subsequent development of the Jerusalem model by Robert Banks[17]. In this model, the goal is to know God through the use of the creeds and the confessions, the means of grace and the general traditions that are utilized by a particular faith community. The content of the teaching tends to focus on the founders, the heroes, the struggles, the strengths, and the traditions that are distinctive and formative for that community of faith. Formation occurs through information about the tradition and enculturation within it. This model also takes all dimensions of life seriously, namely, family, friendship, work, community and ministry.[18]The appropriate context for the Geneva model is the seminary, and this is contrasted with the Athens/Classical academy, which is not denominationally defined, and the Berlin/Vocational model, which takes the research university as the context.

The Creative Tension in the African Context

The beginning of the 21st century marked a special dispensation for the church in Africa. The number and quality of theological institutions across the continent has grown significantly, especially in the east, west and south. For example, in Ghana, nearly all the major Pentecostal and Charismatic church denominations have upgraded their Bible colleges to university colleges, and the original schools are now departments or faculties of the larger universities.

This transition, however, underscores the tension in training models. Bible colleges can be run simply and inexpensively with a faculty of minimal academic credentials. But some—even the students—can view the quality of training with suspicion. So there is pressure to upgrade. Once the Bible college becomes a university college, many new pressures arise. First, there is the dire need of qualified faculty. Accreditation standards require that university teachers have high academic credentials, and Pentecostals have lagged far behind in developing their own people to fill those posts. To cope, many theology departments in these Pentecostal universities turn to scholars from other denominations who were often trained in Europe or America in the context of the Berlin or Athens models.

Pentecostals are generally very suspicious of, and paranoid about, scholars from mainline Protestant denominations, but they have little choice but to hire them in their universities because such individuals are needed to maintain accreditation status with their respective governments. In the past, most Pentecostal groups criticized the seminaries of the mainline churches and other formal models of theological education, describing them as "cemeteries." The caricature was that if a believer went through such an institution, he or she would lose the spiritual vitality needed to impact men and women for Christ.

A similar belief in North America led to the Bible College movement in the late 19th century. These schools emphasized Bible studies, practical ministry, prayer, fasting, evangelism, and church planting. The first Bible college in North America was the Nyack College, established in 1882 by Albert Benjamin Simpson. This was followed by the Moody Bible Institute in 1887.

The teachings of A. B. Simpson led to the development of the theology of the Fourfold Gospel of Christ our Saviour, Christ our Sanctifier, Christ our Healer, and Christ our soon-coming King, which gave modern Pentecostalism its unique character.

In Ghana, the entry requirement for ministerial formation at the seminaries of mainline or historic churches is demonstration of an ability to engage in academic study and a recommendation from church leaders that the candidate has a "calling" upon his or her life for the ministry. The selection of faculty at these seminaries is subject to credible experience in ministry, often a PhD, and a commitment to the tenets and vision of the particular denomination. Pastoral formation often takes place in these seminaries rather than in the universities, which also offer theological instruction.

The existence of these various options—Bible colleges, Christian university colleges, seminaries, and universities—is evidence that the tension between the nature and models of theological education is abiding. This is partly because we have failed to make a clear distinction between formal theological education and pastoral formation. The distinction can be understood by knowing the *purpose* of each model, which determines its *content and method.* A significant factor for the various models of training is the *context* in which the education takes place. As already noted, the geographical and social location or community within which a particular theological or missionary training takes place has profound impact on the mentality and activity of the trained.

From Africa to Berlin

The challenge facing new Pentecostal institutions of higher learning for ministerial training is the gradual shift and emphasis toward rigorous academic reflections, which is producing students with higher academic credentials. Students study higher biblical criticisms and even liberal theologies. The argument here is that the modern minister must understand current trends, and be able to present the gospel not only in power but also persuasively, relevantly, and intelligently. The danger here, however, is that the university professor is the preferred instructor even if he has no experience in pastoral work or mission, and the graduates, with their high degrees, lose touch with the ordinary people in their churches.

Many Bible colleges, which always emphasized pastoral formation and character development, now struggle to stress these issues because they have been dwarfed within large institutions that are under the push of academia and accreditation[19]. The Central Bible College in Ghana was established by the vibrant International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) and its founder Dr. Mensa Otabil. When the school transitioned to Central University College, only a few of the experienced ministers, who had been teaching in the Bible college, were qualified to teach in the School of Theology and Mission, which was now part of the university. And some of the qualifying instructors, who were pulled from outside, did not necessarily hold to the views of the church or its founder!This challenge compelled Dr. Otabil to quickly withdraw his ministerial students from the university and provide them with training in another context, which he eventually called the "Daniel Institute."

This situation is not unique to ICGC. Nearly all the Pentecostal and Charismatic theological colleges in Ghana, which offer higher academic diplomas or degrees, face similar challenges. This problem has come about for two main reasons: First, in the early years of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement, most leaders did not consider formal education as relevant for ministry and therefore did not develop the requisite human capital; second, a good number of Pentecostal and Charismatic institutions were generally less endowed, and they were unable to send their people to obtain higher formal theological training.

The Fifth Model of Theological Education and Ministerial Formation: Pentecost Theological Seminary and the "Asamankese Model"

Asamankese or Apprenticeship Model

This article has described four models of theological education: the Athens or Classical model, the Berlin or Vocational Model, the Jerusalem or Missional Model, and the Geneva or Confessional Model. I now introduce a fifth model, which I call the "Apprenticeship Model" and I have identified it geographically as "Asamankese."

This model takes it roots from the informal ministerial training that ministers of The Church of Pentecost in Ghana received from the 1940s to the early 1970s. Asamankese is located in the Eastern Region of Ghana and is where James McKeown, the Irish missionary who founded the church, began his ministry[20]. In this model, the context was wherever people were found and the method was to raise ministers who would be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The syllabus was prayer, fasting, and preaching. Emphasis was placed on holiness, modesty, frugality, and respect for leadership and authority. There was no formal classroom teaching except that the minister-in-training simply learned by following.

In 1972, a three-month formal theological training was introduced, and this was later extended to six months, and then again to nine months. For practical training at the "Pentecost Bible Institute" (PBI), students were attached to local congregations to work under senior and experienced ministers.

In 2003, PBI was upgraded to become the Pentecost University College (PUC) and the context for the training of the ministers of the Church became the university campus and the Faculty of Theology and Mission had the direct responsibility for the ministerial training. The PUC was affiliated to the University of Ghana and accredited by the National Accreditation Board. With this development, PUC was able to offer students a BA in Theology and an MA in Pentecostal Studies. *In effect, Asamankese had yielded to Berlin.*

Within a decade of this development, the leadership of the Church observed that the university context was not ideal for ministerial formation, although it provided good opportunities for students to broaden their minds through the wide scope of academic study and through the interactions with faculty members, staff, and students. There was also the evangelistic opportunity for the ministerial students and faculty to witness to those in the general student body who did not know Christ.

However, using the university as a venue for propagating the faith resulted in a serious challenge when the general student body revolted against the idea of a "mandatory" once-a-week chapel service. The college had established and required this as an opportunity for all

students and staff to worship together. The argument from the student body was that the decision by the University undermined freedom of worship and association which was enshrined in the Constitution of Ghana. The matter was reported to the National Accreditation Board in 2005, which cautioned PUC against any religious act that contradicted the Constitution of the State.

The next challenge came in 2012 from the University of Ghana (UG), to which PUC is affiliated. The UG directed that all of its affiliated institutions, irrespective of their leanings, had to incorporate the following eight (8) specific, three-credit courses into their curriculum and these had to be taken by the students in their first two years: Introduction to African Studies, Academic Writing I, Academic Writing II, Introduction to Literature, Critical Thinking and Practical Reasoning, Understanding Human Society, Numeracy Skills, Science and Technology in our Lives.

As much as these courses were useful, the fact that they were deemed core courses meant that PUC had to remove mission or theology-related courses to make space for the UG requirements. Granting that a total of 72 and 120 credits were required for a diploma and degree respectively, taking up to 24 credits to satisfy the requirements of the UG posed a threat to the integrity of the theology programme, especially at the diploma level. Thus, training ministers on the university campus and within the framework of a typical public academic institution proved to be a major challenge.

In response, in 2013, The Church of Pentecost tried to recapture the Asamankese motif and established the Pentecost Theological Seminary (PTS) at a different location with the primary responsibility of providing ministerial formation and training for the lay leaders of the church. This time Trinity Theological Seminary was chosen as the affiliator institution and PTS was not under obligation to meet the requirements that the University of Ghana demanded.

Pentecost Theological Seminary, apart from the benefit of a different location and space for innovation within the mission and theological framework of the church, has the cooperation of Trinity Theological Seminary, which understands the principles of spiritual and ministerial formation.

The model of ministerial training being used at PTS draws on the "apprenticeship model," which The Church of Pentecost used in its formative stages. All learning is placed within the context of Christian devotion, practical theology, and hands-on ministerial activity. Here, theology is more applied and missiological than confessional. On the campus, the faculty includes senior ministers who bring their experiences to bear on the teaching, and they spend additional time with students in small pastoral groups and tutorials. Off campus, students work with selected churches, and this is especially so in their second year.

A typical week begins on Monday morning with students having their own personal devotions or quiet time followed by some cleaning work at the hostels. By 8 am students are seated for a time of reflection and exhortation with the Principal or any of the senior ministers, after which normal classes begin at 9 am until 12:30 pm.

The first period on Tuesdays between 8 am and 8:50 am is dedicated to presentations on global missions and prayer. Here, international students or missionaries on furlough are invited to share their experiences and may ask for specific prayers and also indicate items for praise. Lectures continue from 9 am until 5 pm with a lunch break of two and half hours. Community worship is on Wednesdays, and all staff and faculty are expected to participate together with the students. 8 am to 8:50 am on Thursdays is dedicated to pastoral group meetings, which are led by members of faculty. Here, students are placed in groups of no more than fourteen. Normal lectures continue from 9 am until 5 pm.

Two subjects of three credit hours are normally taught each day, except for Mondays and Fridays. Fridays are dedicated to fasting and prayer from 8 am till mid-day, after which students break for a light meal and proceed to what we normally refer to as block placements in selected local churches in nearby regions of the country and return to campus on Sunday afternoons or evenings after church services.

Members of the community are welcomed to take part in the Friday prayer meetings and may bring special requests for prayers. An all-night prayer meeting is held with the students at least once every

month. The community church established by students and staff operates fully on Sunday mornings during the third term of college, when the block placement is completed.

The ministerial formation programme runs for two years. The first year is residential and the second year is modular, in which students come on campus twice a year for five weeks of intensive study to complete a diploma programme. The seminary also runs a training programme for ministers' wives, as well as refresher courses for serving senior ministers, who normally come to reside for two weeks at a given time. Specialised programmes are also offered for marriage counsellors, children's ministry leaders, and youth ministry leaders. These programmes are offered in collaboration with the directorates of the respective ministries of the Church. Plans are far advanced to begin a music school which will focus on the theology of music, music appreciation, and repertoire, as well as sound engineering. The objective is to equip song leaders and ministers of the church for effective ministry.

It is important to note that the training of ministers for The Church of Church of Pentecost begins not at the seminary but in the local assemblies. At the local level, persons are expected to give some evidence of their call to the ministry through their active involvement in the church's activities, such as evangelism, prayer meetings, and the teaching of the Word. Their personal witness must be evident not only in the church but also in the local communities in which they live or work. It is taken for granted that the prospective ministerial candidate must have had a personal faith in Jesus Christ and also had an encounter with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues and the manifestation of other gifts of the Spirit as indicated in 1 Corinthians 12:1-9.

Such qualifications are formalized through interviews and the recommendations of the local presbyteries to the district levels where there are subsequent interviews. If the candidate passes that stage, he is recommended to the area level for the same process. If successful there, the candidate is finally handled at the National level by the National Ministerial Committee.

In others words, the seminary does not *make* pastors but *trains* pastors. Prospective ministerial candidates must first show evidence of their calling and ministry in their local congregations, and the seminary then equips them to be more effective in their ministries without withdrawing them from local congregations. Thus the ultimate objective of the Apprenticeship Model is better understood in the words of the Apostle Paul, when he explained how much pain and trouble he went through (as in the case of a childbirth) in teaching and guiding the believers so that in the end, Christ would be *formed* in them (Gal. 4:19). The *formation* of the minister in the nature, character and mission of Christ defines pastoral formation, and this is the goal of PTS. It is hoped that this approach would recapture the dynamic of the initial training at Asamankese while adding the wisdom the church has gained through the years. In contrast to "trained incapacity," because our graduates are constantly engaging with the real world and learning from proven mentors, they are demonstrating "trained capacity" for quick intelligence and effective Christian leadership.

Conclusion

The previous five models provide us with a typological map from which we can locate specific theological education or pastoral formation models.These models or typologies are intended as a guide or a theoretical framework rather than entrenched positions in understanding theological education and pastoral formation. Much of the theological education we see today appears to be a mixture of two or more of the various models. The nature of the mix is what makes a particular programme distinct.

Throughout church history and into the present, different models of theological education have been used, taking into consideration the context and the purpose or goal of the training programme. The appropriate *context* for theological education in the Athens or Classical Model is the academy, in which the Scripture is studied as revelation and the *goal* is knowing God and individual transformation. The *context* of the Berlin-Vocational model is the research university, in which the sacred text is subjected to critical inquiry, and the *goal* is not necessarily personal transformation. The *context* of the Geneva-Confessional model is the seminary, where the Scripture and the

creeds are studied through a denominational lens, and the *goal* is knowing God (as with the Athens model). The *context* of the Missional and Apprenticeship models is the wider community in which the Scripture is to be holistically applied, and the *goal* is the conversion of the world through the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Against these models, churches and Christian educators can decide what factors and ethos inform their own theological education and pastoral formation needs, and what might be the way forward in the light of a constantly changing society and the commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to be salt and light of the world (Mt. 5:13-16) and to make the nations His disciples (Mt. 28:18-19).

Endnotes

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[16] Banks, Robert. *Reenvisioning Theological Education* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999)

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[18] Edgar, "*The Theology of Theological Education*".

[19] For details of one way the Church of Pentecost had sought to address the growing needs of theological education for its ministers see, Opoku Onyinah and Emmanuel Anim. "Pentecostal Theological Education: A Ghanaian Perspective" in Apawo, Isabel and Werner, Dietrich (eds) *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa* (Dorpspruit, South Africa: Cluster Publications, 2013), 393-401.

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