

# Aesthetics of persuasion: global

## Christianity and Pentecostalism's sensational forms.



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One of the key features of Pentecostal/charismatic churches is their sensational appeal. Taking as a point of departure the experience of the Holy Spirit as a “portable,” embodied power source, this essay seeks to contribute to developing alternative concepts that expand our view of Pentecostalism as it emerges through a “Protestant lens.” First, I critically discuss the severance of aesthetics and Protestantism, and the concomitant dismissal of “form” in the work of Max Weber. I argue for the need to recapture an understanding of religion as aesthetics, albeit taken in the broad sense of *aisthesis*, advocated by Aristotle. Calling for the reappraisal of form as absolutely essential to religious experience, I then introduce the notion of the *sensational form*, which allows us to grasp how the Holy Spirit operates according to Pentecostal understanding and experience. Presenting the term *aesthetics of persuasion*, I address the question of how aesthetics is relevant to broader modalities of binding and politics of belonging—paying attention to Jacques Rancière's “distribution of the sensible.” Taking Pentecostalism as a prominent representative of global Christianity, I seek not only to enhance our understanding of its particular sensational religiosity but also to outline new directions in the broader study of Protestantism and Christianity in general.

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