# Marks of an Apostle:
## Context, Deconstruction, (Re)citation and Proclamation in Philippians

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## Thesis Summary

**Title:** Marks of an Apostle: Context, Deconstruction, (Re)citation and Proclamation in Philippians

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Philippians is used by Paul to create a sense of ease about his imprisonment and thus also about his gospel. He finds his impetus for this activity within the constraints of his social discourse. The thesis presents Paul in terms of the Greco-Roman psychagogue as a means to understand the culturally constrained, cognitive procedures present to him. The immediate effects of this are the usual ones; Paul can only think and say what the language and structures of his culture allow. The implication is that Paul's 'theology' can only ever be based upon a logocentric pre-text: the immanent features of his social discourse. Thus, the thesis attempts to describe assumptions associated with the moral philosophers as the cultural pre-text for Philippians.

This then operates as the context for another activity: Phil 1.12–18a holds within itself a crisis, since Paul attempts to both affirm and deny the metaphysics of presence within re-citations of the gospel. The approach by commentators has been to gloss the problem with a hierarchy in which Phil 1.18 governs Phil 1.15–17. This only succeeds in exacerbating the problem, leading to another crisis. The thesis seeks to argue that the text itself appears to be written deliberately to create a point of undecidability in which the text deconstructs itself while leaving the ethical imperative of proclamation unscathed. This then is shown to demonstrate that there is more going on in Philippians than is typically thought to be the case. Paul is using Philippians to secure his ideo-theological agenda at Philippi. This subtextual activity is first seen in the disclosure formula in Phil 1.12, which is at once an opening and a closing of the epistle's semiotic activity; it thus becomes (dis)closure. This hidden activity is shown to work its way underneath the text until appearing in Phil 1.18a, where Paul erases the essential lines of difference between ἀλήθεια and πρόφασις.

## Acknowledgements

I wish to extend my gratitude to the committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom who were so gracious so as to grant the Overseas Research Scholarship to me during my years of residency at the University. I wish also to thank the Edward Boyle Memorial Trust for the Edward Boyle Research Scholarship complementing the ORS award. Together these scholarships funded my tuition, and thereby enabled me to complete my research. I wish also to offer a special thanks to Jerry and Gloria Green for supplying me with the necessary technology to do my research.

I am ever so grateful to the faculty and staff of the Department of Biblical Studies. In particular, I wish to thank Prof. David Clines for directing me towards Paul in the first place, Dr. Loveday Alexander for her insights and support in my research on the Greco-Roman world, and of course Dr. Stephen Moore whose encouragement and patience enabled me to find my way, and whose keen insight provided a much-needed edge to my understanding of how this thesis needed to come together.

My friends at the Department were a constant blessing to me: Fiona and Andrew, John and Katie, Mark and Lisa, James, Andrew and Jo, Ruth-Anne, Noel, Chris, and Todd and Liz. My parents, Lyn and Kevin Smith, have never tired in their encouragement and have demonstrated great patience. My parents-in-law, Rob and Jean Milligan, have been remarkably tolerant with me, and a source of unflagging support. I am indeed grateful to Cincinnati Bible College & Seminary for allowing me to continue my research while working there full-time, and being willing to employ me without a completed degree.

Finally, there is no other person to whom this thesis is indebted more than my friend and wife, Mandy. Through times of deep personal tragedy, and through days of pure joy, you have remained constant and steadfast. This thesis could only ever be yours.

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## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AARTTS | American Academy of Religion Text and Translation Series |
| *ABD* | *Anchor Bible Dictionary* |
| *AET* | Abraham Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists.* |
| *AJP* | *American Journal of Philosophy* |
| *ANRW* | *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* |
| AV | Authorised Version |
| BAGD | W. Bauer, W. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* |
| BECNT | Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament |
| BDF | F. Blass, A. Debrunner and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Gammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* |
| BNTC | Black's New Testament Commentary |
| *BSac* | Bibliotheca Sacra |
| BZAW | Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenshaft |
| BZNW | Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenshaft |
| CNT | Commentaire du Nouveau Testament |
| *CPh* | *Classical Philology* |
| *DPL* | *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Eds. Gerald F. Hawthorn, Ralph P. Martin. |
| *ExpTim* | *Expository Times* |
| FFNT | Foundations and Facets: New Testament |
| HNT | Handbuch zum Neuen Testament |
| HNTC | Harper's New Testament Commentaries |
| HTKNT | Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament |
| *ICS* | *Illinois Classical Studies* |
| ICC | The International Critical Commentary. |
| *INT* | *Interpretation* |
| *JAC* | *Jahrbuch für Antike Christentum* |
| *JETS* | *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* |
| *JHS* | *Journal of Hellenic Studies* |
| *JJS* | *Journal of Jewish Studies* |
| *JRS* | *Journal of Roman Studies* |
| *JTC* | *Journal for Theology and the Church* |
| *JTS* | *Journal of Theological Studies* |
| LEC | Library of Early Christianity |
| LCL | Loeb Classical Library |
| LSJ | Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon (with a Supplement)*. Rev. by Henry Stuart Jones, et al. |
| MeyerK | Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Tetsament* |
| *MGWJ* | *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenshaft des Judentums* |
| NASB | New American Standard Bible |
| NCB | New Century Bible |
| NICB | New International Biblical Commentary |
| NICNT | New International Commentary on the New Testament |
| *NIDNTT* | *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Colin Brown, ed. |
| NIGTC | New International Greek Testament Commentary |
| NRSV | New Revised Standard Version |
| NTC | New Testament Commentary |

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|---|---|
| NTD | Das Neue Testament Deutsch |
| *OCD* | *Oxford Classical Dictionary* |
| *OED* | Lesley Brown, ed. *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.* |
| *RestQ* | *Restoration Quarterly* |
| *RTR* | *Reformed Theological Review* |
| SBLRBS | Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study |
| SBLSBS | Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study |
| SNTSMS | Society for New Testament Studies Monagraph Series |
| TB | Theologische Bücherei |
| *TDNT* | *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*; ed. Gerhard Kittel. |
| *ThTo* | *Theology Today* |
| TLG | Thesaurus Linguae Graecae |
| TNTC | Tyndale New Testament Commentaries |
| *USQR* | *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* |
| WBC | Word Biblical Commentary |
| *WTJ* | *Westminster Theological Journal* |
| WUNT | Wissenschaftliche Unterschungen zum Neuen Testament |
| *WZUJ* | *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Universität Jena* |
| *ZAW* | *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenshaft* |
| *ZNW* | *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenshaft* |
| *ZThK* | *Zietschrift für Theologie und Kirche* |

## The Last Word First: An Introduction

These are the last words I am writing for this thesis. I have spent some five years working on it, although for two of those years I actually suspended my research, since I moved countries, took a full-time job, and became a father all at once. What drove me to write this thesis was a burning question that had nagged me ever since I took a prison epistles course as an undergraduate: how can Paul say that he is able to 'rejoice' in proclamation regardless of whether it is done in truth or in pretext?!

In my undergraduate years I had developed an interest in the nature of rhetoric, and then for my master's thesis I wrote on the 'rhetoric of power' which was an attempt to read Acts in light of critical theory moving from structuralism to poststructuralism. My interest in critical theory was well-piqued by that project. Naturally, the biblical studies department at the University of Sheffield presented itself as an ideal place to go and do research on the Bible and critical theory. I was most elated, then, when upon my arrival I discovered that Stephen Moore had been drafted by the department, and even more delighted to discover that he would be my supervisor.

As I began my research I suddenly became aware of an awful truth: there were not very many people who cared very much about critical theoretical approaches to the Bible. With much lamenting, I almost gave up. My supervisor, Stephen Moore, indicated to me that the real problem was that not many people doing critical theory were taking seriously the work of the historical critics (easily the primary 'order of knowledge' in biblical studies) and were thus being dismissed by the major body of biblical studies. This led to a decision whereby I attempted to integrate the critical theory that I had been doing with historical criticism. (It is interesting to note that a large portion of those doing critical theoretical type works in biblical studies are people whose pedigree was historical criticism and who then made the 'shift'.)

The results of my decision to interact my interests in critical theory with historical critical approaches are largely manifested in this thesis. In some ways, I have taken some risks that I'd rather not have taken in my attempt to weave in and out of both disciplines. The degree to which that has been successful, will only be known by its readers. Naturally, there are points where it seems that one discipline is winning out. All I can say to that question is that my argument in this project is long and slow, so the 'weaving' is hardly 'ducking and diving', it's more like 'a sway to the left and a sway to the right'.

On another note, Pauline studies is one of the few real strongholds of the historical critics into which critical theorists seldom dare to go. I am acutely aware of the hulking mass of Pauline studies and Pauline theology and of the volumes of brilliant work which that institution has turned out. So, it is with great fear and trepidation that I embark on this project, and dare to offer a critical squeak inside the cavernous halls of Pauline scholarship.

# Chapter One

# The Marks of an Apostle: Writing about Paul

> *The Philippian Epistle may be taken to exhibit the normal type of the Apostle's teaching, when not determined and limited by individual circumstances, and thus to present the essential substance of the Gospel. Dogmatic forms are the buttresses or the scaffold-poles of the building, not the building itself.*
>
> *J. B. Lightfoot*[1]

> *Words block up our Path.—Wherever primitive men put down a word, they thought they had made a discovery. How different the case really was!—they had come upon a problem, and, while they thought they had solved it, they had in reality placed an obstacle in the way of its solution. Now, with every new piece of knowledge, we stumble over petrified words and mummified conceptions, and would rather break a leg than a word in doing so.*
>
> *Friedrich Nietzsche*[2]

## *1. Introduction*

Within Paul's letter to the Philippians there resides a crisis. Or, perhaps it would be more accurate to say that a solution resides in Philippians and that this is precisely the problem. Paul expresses 'splendid magnanimity' and 'large heartedness' and 'magnificent optimism', to list a few of the descriptions of scholarly surprise at Paul's solution in Phil 1.18a: 'whether by pretext or by truth, Christ is proclaimed'.

At first glance, it appears that the solution in Phil 1.18a to the crisis stated in Phil 1.15–17 is of little consequence, confined to a small, forgettable section of the Pauline corpus and to an even smaller and less memorable section of Pauline theology. However, upon further investigation, it appears that the ease with which readers have dealt or not dealt with this text is not representative of an ease with the semantic content of the text itself but an ease with the art of glossing. To be sure, a number of scholars have drawn attention to some of the peculiarities of this passage, and many have confessed their surprise at Paul's comments, but most[3] fail to take Paul 'seriously'.[4] The trend is rather

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[1] Lightfoot, J. B, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953), ix.

[2] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Dawn of Day* (trans. J. M. Kennedy; vol. 9 of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*; Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1911), §47.

[3] These will be noted as the argument develops.

[4] On 'seriously', see pp. 34, 39ff.

to observe an apparent theological discord between Phil 1.15–17 and Phil 1.18a, and then quickly retool Phil 1.15–17 into a harmonised comment on what becomes in Phil 1.18 a flash of Paul's recently acquired magnanimity.

To excavate the 'truth' or 'meaning' of this text, is to unearth a fracture within the unity of the historical excavating process, namely the hermeneutical processes by which we prise from the text its 'meaning' or 'significance'. After having discussed the two kinds of preachers in 1.15–17, Paul then says, 'What does it matter?[5] Except that in every way, whether by[6] pretext (πρόφασις) or by truth (ἀλήθεια) Christ is proclaimed and in this I rejoice'.[7] The striking point is that Paul is willing to affirm or even validate a gospel proclaimed through motives and intentions which are inherently contrary to it: a gospel proclaimed in/by pretext (πρόφασις).

To state the thesis of this project, Paul writes the letter to the Philippians in order to encourage them at a time when they themselves were suffering for the faith that they had placed in Paul's message of Christ, namely the gospel.[8] His own imprisonment served only to exacerbate their trials, since they could hardly take comfort in the knowledge. Paul therefore attempts to head off any disillusionment that the Philippians may have had towards the gospel which he had proclaimed among them, and towards himself as one whose words are equal to his life and deeds.[9] Paul does this by inserting a

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[5] Unless otherwise stated, all translations from the Greek New Testament are my own and are based on the NA$^{27}$. Τὶ γάρ here functions as an exclamatory question. See the comments in BDF §299 (3): 'What does it matter? or What difference does it make?'.

[6] While the locative tends to be the received rendering, it seems more appropriate to understand the dative as representative of the means, since it highlights the process of proclamation: by means of truth or by means of pretext Christ is proclaimed.

[7] Τί γάρ; πλὴν ὅτι παντὶ τρόπῳ, εἴτε προφάσει εἴτε ἀλήθειᾳ, Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω. The text-critical issues here are minor: P$^{46}$, ℵ, A and several other uncials and minuscules support this text; whereas B omits πλήν, while D and Ψ omit ὅτι. P$^{46}$ and bo$^{ms}$ insert ἀλλά before the clause, καὶ ἐν κτλ. (clearly as a balance to the final clause). Apart from these rather minor deviations, there is nothing which offers a significant alternative to Paul's comment; more importantly, there is nothing which seems to mitigate it.

[8] This is stated explicitly in the text (1.27–30) and is commonly noted by commentators.

[9] Greco-Roman philosophy was overtly ethical in nature (all philosophy was eventually *moral* philosophy) and as a result there was an emphasis on the psychagogic principle that a philosopher's deeds ought to match his words. For Seneca, 'God' is an ever-present witness to our words and deeds (*Ep.* 83.1, *De Vita Beata*, 20.5); for Musonius Rufus, the teacher's conduct should match the principles he teaches and demonstrate with his own body the lessons of his philosophy (82.28–30); and being good is the same as being a philosopher (104.36–37). See also Cicero *De Finnibus* 1.7.25; *Tusculan Disputations*, 5.24f; *De Officiis*, 1.43.153.

discourse into the situation which would cause the Philippians to understand the events in a way favourable to both the gospel he preaches and to himself as their spiritual leader.[10] This power play is unearthed when we dig beneath the surface of the text of Phil 1.12–18, and of Phil 1.18 in particular. I would further suggest that the evidence indicates that Paul is perceiving the problem along the lines drawn by Greco-Roman moral philosophical ideals. That is, it appears that the Greco-Roman moral philosophical topic of flattery and friendship is operative here as a cohering factor in Paul's understanding of potential problems and in his attempt to resolve them.[11] Finally, I suggest that Paul performs a radical, critical manoeuvre, the effects of which ripple through the eventual production of Pauline theology.[12]

In this chapter, I begin the task by considering contemporary writing practices and their impact upon the way we write about Paul. Chapters Two and Three then pursue the necessary background information pertinent to understanding the context of this passage of Philippians. The goal of those chapters is to locate Paul, the Philippians and the letter itself in their critical and social frameworks. The point of such an undertaking is not to present a definitive argument on all matters pertaining to these issues, rather I have in view the attempt to demonstrate something of those *constraints* placed upon Paul which necessarily *precede* his thought and thus his writing. Finally, in Chapter Four, I begin a re-writing of commentary on this text by attempting to follow the text down into its moments of impasse and allow its difficulties to operate within the commentary. The goal here is to show how commentary has failed to take Phil 1.12–18a 'seriously', and has overlaid a problematic hierarchy onto the text, which glosses the real, undecidable problems of the text. In revealing that gloss and tracing the contours of the text as it deconstructs itself, we actually gain far more than we have lost.

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[10] I invoke here Lloyd F. Bitzer, 'The Rhetorical Situation', *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 1–14.

[11] While there are numerous references in the moral-philosophical literature of the relevant period to the difference between flattery and frank speech, or between a flatterer and a friend, Plutarch has dedicated an entire discourse to it ('How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend') and I use that discourse as paradigmatic.

[12] I discuss the ramifications of this in Chapter Four.

## *2. Writing about Paul's Writing*

While there are some micro-level[13] debates over such things as the identity of Paul's opponents and the nature of the Christ-hymn in 2.6–11, the macro-level interpretation of Philippians has not been something over which biblical scholarship has endured much angst. Philippians has rather been classified quite typically by the institution of Pauline studies. When discussing Pauline literature, the 'great epistles'[14] or the *Hauptbriefe* (Romans, Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians) if not explicitly stated, lurk in the background as a dominant and delimiting force.[15] This 'lurking' occurs not simply by virtue of the fact that the term both normalises and marginalises the respective Pauline texts, but also by virtue of the way in which that normalising process writes itself into the *institution* of Pauline Studies at the very point which provides the possibility of discussing Pauline texts as something in particular.

### *2.a. The* **Hauptbriefe** *and the Construction of a Pauline Point of Reference*

By no means do I intend to articulate a history of the interpretation of Paul. What I seek to do here is to consider briefly the fact that some of Paul's writings are privileged in the discussion about 'what Saint Paul really said'.[16] The problem of privileging in the Pauline epistles is hardly an obvious one, but I shall demonstrate later[17] how it effects commentary on how Phil 1.18 is either (re)presented as theology or forgotten altogether.

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[13] By 'micro-level' I refer to the fact that these are sub-sections of the letter's general theological interest, and do not imply 'insignificant' or 'simple'.

[14] For all practical purposes this privileging process started with F. C. Baur although he bases his own discussion partly upon on Eusebius' history and analysis of the formation of the canon in which there were said to be two classes of Pauline epistles: the Homologoumena and the Antilegomena. 'In the Homologoumena there can only be reckoned the four great epistles (*'Hauptbriefe'*, p. 276 of German edition) of the Apostle, which take precedence of the rest in every respect namely the Epistle to the Galatians, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Romans' (F. C. Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine. A Contribution to the Critical History of Primitive Christianity* [trans. Rev. A. Menzies; 2nd ed.; London: Williams and Norgate, 1875], 1.246, also 247).

[15] It is far more common these days for people to employ the phrase 'undisputed epistles' and by that title refer to Romans, Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon. We note, however, that the title 'undisputed' refers primarily to authorship and not perceived value. The idea of a 'big four' remains a somewhat prominent feature on the noetic landscape of Pauline studies, both theological and historical.

[16] An interesting phrase borrowed from the title of N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

[17] See the later discussion on 'Sur-prise', pp. 188ff.

The opening statement in the article on Romans in the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* claims that,

> Romans is both the least controversial of the major NT letters and the most important. . . . It is most important as being the first well-developed theological statement by a Christian theologian which has come down to us, and one which has had incalculable influence on the framing of Christian theology ever since—arguably the single most important work of Christian theology ever written.[18]

The question I entertain here is the degree to which the rather common working assumption that Romans is no less than 'the single most important work of Christian theology ever written' influences our treatment of other Pauline texts. The study of the theology of Paul has traditionally privileged Romans in a way that is good neither for the study of Romans nor for that of Paul. The privileging of Romans has a good pedigree. Note, for example, F. C. Baur's own panoptical vision of Romans: 'only from the standpoint of the Epistle to the Romans do we survey the rich treasures of the spiritual life of which the Apostle was the depositary and the organ'.[19] Dunn calls Romans our 'prompter and plumb line';[20] Günther Bornkamm understands it to be 'Paul's last will and testament';[21] Kümmel labels the epistle as 'the theological confession of Paul'.[22]

Calvin Roetzel offers a well stated *caveat*. His contention is that 'once Romans is established as the goal and quintessential expression of Paul's theology, then every other letter of Paul can be read as a preliminary or provisional statement of a Pauline theology that receives its most adequate expression in Romans. This letter then becomes the canon of Paul's mature theology'.[23] An example of this is the classic centralising of certain theological topics which subsequently place inappropriate demands on our

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[18] M. Reasoner, 'Romans', *DPL*, 838.

[19] Baur, *Paul*, 2.308.

[20] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 26.

[21] Günther Bornkamm, 'The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament', in *The Romans Debate* (ed. Karl P. Donfried; rev. ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995). Also see Günther Bornkamm, *Paul* (trans. M. G. Stalker; New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 88–96.

[22] Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (trans. Howard Clark Kee; rev. ed.; Nasville: Abingdon, 1975), 312–13.

[23] Calvin Roetzel, *Paul: The Man and the Myth* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 93.

reading of the Pauline epistles in general. Although there have been challengers,[24] historically, for the Protestant churches at least,[25] the predominant theological influence has been located in the treatment of justification by faith in Romans as the centre of Pauline thought.[26] This is quite clear in Bultmann's existential anthropotheological reading of Paul as the founder of Christian theology which refers not to a centre as much as to a 'basic theological position' which is 'more or less completely set forth in Romans'.[27] That position is, suggests Bultmann, the one which Paul developed as a response to his 'conversion' to the Christian faith and subsequent rejection of salvation by human accomplishment; namely justification by faith. Hence Bultmann's student Ernst Käsemann's synthesizing statement: 'The epistle to the Romans subsumes the whole of the preaching and theology of Paul under the one head—the self-revealing righteousness of God. In so doing, it undoubtedly gives to the unique Pauline message a nucleus and a name which bring its own peculiar nature into the sharpest possible relief against the background of the rest of the New Testament'.[28]

The problem here is primarily with the way Paul's letters, and Romans in particular, are thought to function. It is not with the answers theologians have

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[24] Wrede had a somewhat indignant reaction to the way the Reformation had enculturated theology with justification by faith as the Pauline point of reference. See William Wrede, *Paul*, (trans. Edward Lummis; Lexington, KY: American Theological Library Association Committee on Reprinting, 1962), 122–23. Schweitzer argued that 'by taking the doctrine of righteousness by faith as the starting point, the understanding of the Pauline world of thought was made impossible' and that the modern use of the doctrine was an 'unconscious' adaptation (Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* [trans. William Montgomery; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1967], 220; but see the whole discussion, 219–26).

[25] 'The tendency among Catholic scholars has been to identify the center in Pauline theology with Christ the Son of God' (Joseph Plevnik, 'The Center of Pauline Theology', *CBQ* 51 [1989]: 462).

[26] Plevnik, 461.

[27] Rudolph Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. Kendrick Grobel; 2 vols.; New York: Scribner's, 1951), 1.190.

[28] Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today* (trans. W. J. Montague; New Testament Library; London: SCM, 1969), 168. Käsemann represents something of a climax for the 'justification by faith' approach, see the rest of his chapter 'The Righteousness of God in Paul', pp. 168–82; see also his chapter 'Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans' in Ernst Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM, 1971), 60–78. Käsemann, notes that it has been observed that justification by faith is simply Paul's attack on Judaism; however, he then suggests that this is no reason to subordinate it to other Pauline theological concepts. In fact doing so, in Käsemann's mind, is to provoke schism between modern protestantism and the reformation itself (in so far as the reformation itself reflects a particular theology or interpretation of Paul), see Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul*, 70.

produced,[29] it is rather with the questions being asked—not prior 'theological' assumptions, rather prior assumptions about Paul and the nature of his letters. Hence the significance of Stanley Stowers' observation in the opening of his *A Rereading of Romans*, 'Romans has come to be read in ways that differ fundamentally from ways that readers in Paul's own time could have read it. More than any other writing of earliest Christianity, Romans, especially in the West, came to bear the major economies of salvation. These systems of sin and salvation reshaped the frame of reference that determined the reading of the letter'.[30]

The problem with privileging Romans is not a superficial one; after all, Romans is clearly a majestic epistle and a magnificent outworking of Paul's gospel in terms of certain issues present to him during its composition. There is, therefore, a great need for us to consider the reality of a difference between what has come to be the normal or institutionalised way of reading Paul's letters and the way Paul would have expected his letters to be read. A good starting point for this discussion is Dunn's recent work, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*.[31]

In a discussion on how we can move toward a theology of Paul,[32] Dunn posits a question which is not really a question at all because the answer is already engraved upon the cornerstone of institutional Pauline Studies. Nonetheless, Dunn feigns that 'one final point needs to be decided before embarking on the enterprise, that is, where one should best locate oneself within the flow of Paul's thought in order to begin the dialogue with it'. After a relatively short discussion, given the size of the book, the answer is said to be easily made, 'for there is one letter of Paul's . . . . And that is Romans'. Now this is perfectly legitimate in many respects; after all, as Dunn well states:

> [Romans] was written to a church which was not his own founding. It was written at the end of a (or, better, the) major phase of Paul's missionary work (Rom. 15.18–24), which included most of the other undisputed letters. It was written under probably the most congenial circumstances of

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[29] How could we question the skill with which the likes of Bultmann crafted ingenious responses to the questions presented to them?

[30] Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 1.

[31] Dunn's status within the realm of Pauline studies, the proliferation and excellence of his writing and thinking on Paul allows him to be used as representative of traditional Pauline studies. It should therefore also be noted that the subsequent focus on Dunn's work is really a focus on the institution of Pauline studies and not on Dunn in particular.

[32] Dunn, *Theology*, 23–26.

> his mission, with time for careful reflection and composition. And, above all, it was clearly intended to set out and defend his own mature understanding of the gospel (Rom. 1.16–17) as he had thus far proclaimed it and as he hoped to commend it both in Jerusalem and beyond Rome in Spain. In short, Romans is still far removed from a dogmatic or systematic treatise on theology, but it nevertheless is the most sustained and reflective statement of Paul's own theology by Paul himself.[33]

However, a complex of assumptions has led Dunn to the same point to which many others have come and which I find to be problematic. To begin with, let us observe that Dunn's ultimate goal is 'first of all . . . to get inside the skin of Paul, to see through his eyes, to think his thoughts from inside as it were, and to do so in such a way as to help others to appreciate his insight and subtlety and concerns for themselves'.[34] We may note here that Dunn's ultimate goal is indeed the ultimate goal of virtually everyone who approaches Paul, since it is well-noted that culture, time, and language conspire to create a significant, perhaps impenetrable, barrier between us and *understanding Paul on his own terms*. The fact that this is Dunn's primary 'endeavour' exposes the problem with his attempt to provide a defence of Romans as *the means* for beginning this endeavour; that is, Dunn gets ahead of himself, he puts the hermeneutical cart before the exegetical horse. Note for example, the statement and question, 'one final question needs to be decided *before* embarking on the enterprise. That is, where one should best locate oneself within the flow of Paul's thought in order to *begin* the dialogue with it'.[35] The problem terms are those italicised; they represent a rhetorical difference between a question of where Dunn says he wants to begin and the fact that this has already been decided and the conversation begun.

Dunn wants 'to get inside the skin' of the Apostle in order to locate himself in some Pauline *primordium*, and the suggestion is that Romans is the doorway through which he plans to enter into that activity, but herein lies our problem. What Dunn actually attempts to 'defend' is whether Romans is a sufficiently stable text which represents a 'statement of Paul's own theology by Paul himself'.[36] He does not defend Romans as the point through which he may enter into and begin to possess Paul's corpus. He in fact assumes it and thus makes a classic bid for (interpretive) power over the

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[33] Dunn, *Theology*, 25.

[34] Dunn, *Theology*, 24.

[35] Dunn, *Theology*, 25 (emphasis added).

[36] Dunn, *Theology*, 25.

corpus, which is not a simple claim that 'my interpretation is better than yours'. By locating himself within the apostle as his hermeneutical starting point, Dunn seeks to rebuild Paul from the toes up, to precede other interpretations, and he spends 737 pages re-constituting someone/thing called 'Paul the Apostle' (a subtle set of institutional power-relations are thereby called into being[37]). There is an important and crucial difference here: it is not a given that the status of Romans as a stable text and its function as a privileged, primordial hermeneutical doorway are the same thing. The fact that Dunn assumes or suggests that they are is a problem, since at the very point of real decision in this process, the point at which even Dunn thinks a reading of Paul is made possible, he glosses the most important question with a statement on the text's apparent relative lack of historical interest. We shall return to Dunn, but for now, with respect to commentating upon objects of criticism, we ask, What is the role of the gloss?, or What is the role of concealment? Such queries are *Hinterfragen*, but nonetheless necessary.

### *2.b.* Hinterfragen

'When we are confronted with any manifestation which someone has permitted us to see, we may ask: what is it meant to conceal? What is it meant to draw our attention from? What prejudice does it seek to raise? and again, how far does the subtlety of the dissimulation go?'[38] Do we think Nietzsche has gone too far with his suspicion? Must we look at texts and see nothing less than sleight of hand? Freud believes that he has observed the most prestigious prestidigitation, nothing less than the Levitical legerdemain of the Hebrew Bible's ancient redactors, J.E.P.D. The redaction, the glossing, was a priestly act of mediation, a sanctified distortion, an act of biblical commentary, of replacement, of dominance, of power, and, observes Freud, this 'distortion [*Entstellung*] of a text is not unlike a murder. The difficulty lies not in the execution of the deed but in the doing away with the traces [*Spuren*]'.[39]

'*Entstellung*' (distortion) is an important word for Freud, and became a technical term for later psychoanalysts. It is a reference to 'the modification of forbidden thoughts,

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[37] A set of Nietzschean micrological power relations..

[38] Nietzsche, *Dawn of Day*, §523. 'Hinterfragen' is translated in various ways, here I prefer 'insidious questions' (see the German version, of *Morgenröte* in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden* [ed. Karl Schlechta; vol. 1; Munich: Carl Hanser, 1954], 1010–1279).

[39] Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (trans. Katherine Jones; The International Psycho-Analytical Library 33; London: Hogarth, and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1951), 70; also note that the German text is from Sigmund Freud, 'Wenn Moses ein Ägypter war . . .', *Imago: Zeitschrift für Psychoanalytische Psychologie, Ihre Grenzgebiete und Anwendungen* 23 (1937): 411.

impulses, or experiences to make them more acceptable to the ego',[40] or 'the disguising or modification of unacceptable impulses so that they can escape the dream censor'.[41] The important point is that alteration *precedes* manifestation. For example, 'forbidden wishes are frequently expressed in disguised or symbolic form: The innocent act of walking upstairs is more likely to pass the censor set up by the superego than the guilt-laden act of intercourse which it represents'.[42] Freud himself notes that he desires to bring into our understanding of his use of the term 'distortion', 'the double meaning to which it has a right. . . . It should mean not only "to change the appearance of", but also "to wrench apart", "to put in another place". That is why in so many textual distortions we may count on finding the suppressed and abnegated material hidden away somewhere, though in an altered shape and torn out of its original connection'.[43]

Nietzsche's suspicion of 'any manifestation which someone has permitted us to see' is bound up with Freud's 'distortion'. What Nietzsche suspects in a given manifestation is a prior distortion of something that *was* unsavoury or 'unacceptable' and thus was altered or disguised so as to sneak pass the censor, who would otherwise sound the alarm, and has *now* manifested itself as 'acceptable'. Indeed, Nietzsche's entire genealogical project is precisely the attempt to locate the points of what Freud calls 'distortion' and demonstrate the dependence of current 'acceptable' manifestations upon acts of distortion, that is, upon lies.

Is not biblical criticism very much 'distortion', our commentary writing in particular? Does not the commentary seek to isolate difficulties and smooth them over so as to represent, or 'manifest' the text as comprehensible and coherent? Does not the commentary seek to precede the text, to displace and eventually replace the text in favour of itself? Does not the commentary require a 'dissatisfaction with the work (conscious or unconscious)',[44] 'conceal an aggression' towards the work,[45] manifest a desire 'to replace

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[40] Robert M. Goldenson, ed., *Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry* (New York: Longman, 1984), 229.

[41] J. P. Chaplin, *Dictionary of Psychology* (2nd ed.; New York: Laurel, 1985), 134–35.

[42] Goldenson, 229.

[43] Freud, 70.

[44] Susan Sontag, 'Against Interpretation' in *Aesthetics* (eds. Susan L. Feagin and Patrick Maynard; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 253.

[45] Sontag, 251.

it by something else',[46] invoke a 'radical strategy for conserving an old text, which is thought too precious to repudiate, by revamping it'?[47] Is it not a classic manifestation of the Nietzschean will to power? It must surely be since 'no critic can evade a Nietzschean will to power over a text because interpretation is at last nothing else'.[48] It must surely also be Freudian 'distortion', since, through acts of replacement, it 'distorts' the ancient original. Could we go so far as to say that it is 'murder'? If so, of whom? Plato complained (through Socratic citation) that writing can be read and re-read by anyone while the 'father' of the ideas represented in writing is absent. Plato's fear is of a loose, pubescent text in the hands of an oily interloper, who, replacing (and forgetting) the father, produces ideas which the father never raised it to produce. 'Every word, once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself'.[49] Socrates' desire is for paternal control over the text, and he suggests that the text, with a sense of its heritage, also desires to be controlled. The act of reading is then constructed as an act of paternal replacement, a violent act upon the text and the father, a patricidal act. The Socratic fear of patricide and the desire to possess and master drives the Socrates character to castigate the possibility of a loss of power over the text through what appears to him as the possibility of a bastard text,[50] a text that does not know its father: writing. Ultimately, however, the problem is the possibility of, indeed, the need for, commentary. Commentary seals the father's fate.

Commentary is an expression of the will to power; it seeks to replace the text with itself; it thus desires a paternity over its readers. Commentary seeks to assist and guide, solving aporiae, bridging gaps, translating the unacceptable into the acceptable; thus commentary is an act of Freudian distortion. It therefore gives rise to Nietzsche's set of

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[46] Sontag, 253.

[47] Sontag, 251.

[48] Harold Bloom, 'From J to K, or the Uncanniness of the Yahwist' in *The Bible and the Narrative Tradition* (ed. Frank McConnell; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 21.

[49] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 275E [Fowler, LCL]). Phaedrus then, following Socrates' lead, goes on to announce that the written word (ὁ γεγραμμένος) is merely the 'image' (εἴδωλον) of the 'living and breathing' (ζῶντα καὶ ἔμψυχον) word (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 276A).

[50] Plato has Socrates argue that only speech is the legitimate child (γνήσιος) and writing desires a father, but has no one to help it (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 275E–267A).

'insidious questions': 'What is it meant to conceal? What is it meant to draw our attention from? What prejudice does it seek to raise? and again, how far does the subtlety of the dissimulation go?'.[51] Thus, Jameson devotes an essay to the need for 'metacommentary', a 'heightened and self-conscious' state in which 'we observe our own struggles and patiently set about characterizing them'.[52] It is to create a 'translation' that is always aware of its inability to transport, 'to carry to heaven . . . without death';[53] to see past the illusion 'that there exists somewhere, ultimately attainable, some final and transparent reading'.[54]

To say it yet another way, commentary is an act of consumption and thus of destruction. The attempt to 'bag' the text, to weigh and measure it, to tag it, and commentate upon it in the belief that we can mark out its territory, is, at the same time, to transform it, since, to cite Herman Rapaport's summary of Trinh Minh-ha, 'the approach of the Other prevents the real from being disclosed as merely something in itself'.[55] That is, just as critics came to recognise that there is no such thing as mere history, we also recognise that no real thing can ever be disclosed as merely something in itself. Metacommentary becomes, therefore, a prerequisite activity since, 'all thinking about interpretation must sink itself in the strangeness, the unnaturalness of the hermeneutic situation; or to put it another way, every individual interpretation must include an interpretation of its own existence, must show its credentials and justify itself: every commentary must be at the same time a metacommentary as well'.[56] Is this even possible? Culler suggests, yes: 'even if in principle we cannot get outside our conceptual frameworks to criticize and evaluate, the practice of self-reflexivity, the attempt to theorize one's practice, works to produce change, as the recent history of literary criticism

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[51] Nietzsche, *Dawn of Day*, §523.

[52] Fredric Jameson, 'Metacommentary' in *Situations of Theory* (vol. 1 of *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971–1986*; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 4.

[53] *OED*, 3371.

[54] Jameson, 4.

[55] Herman Rapaport, 'Deconstruction's Other: Trinh T. Minh-ha and Jacques Derrida', *Diacritics* 25.2:98-103, 108.

[56] Jameson, 5.

amply shows'.[57] Self-reflexivity, a form of suspicion about the self, another kind of *Hinterfrage* is required if we are to progress. For now, we investigate some acts of patricide.

'The writing of a commentary is a conspicuous (and sometimes dazzling) act of ministry to the church of Christ. But it is done inconspicuously'.[58] So goes Eugene Peterson's description in his introduction to an invitational symposium on writing commentaries. Before the symposium even begins, it is already troubled by a description of commentary writing as both 'conspicuous' (not hidden) and 'inconspicuous' (hidden). Precisely what does Peterson mean by this? Commentary writing, which has now become institutional interpretation, is conspicuous in that commentaries have a visible life within the Church. What is inconspicuous about commentaries is that 'no one watches the commentator at work'.[59] Peterson's concern here about the commentator's hiddenness is whether people get to know the 'real' commentator or not. Our question is whether the people get to know the 'real' text.

These essays on commentary reveal little self-reflexivity, and a good deal of totalisation. Pheme Perkins displays a desire for commentary as 'translation': 'like translating, writing a commentary demands that one decide the meaning of every word and phrase'.[60] The commentary provides 'a framework for our field of vision. . . . Those who write commentaries do so because . . . we would like to enable other people to share our view'.[61] F. Dale Bruner bypasses Perkins' slightly self-reflexive, though still paternal, phrase 'our view' and goes straight to saying that commentating is 'saying something about what *God* has said—responding ("what does God *mean* by this?!")'.[62] Bruner recants a little later pointing out that 'there is simply no such thing as coming to a text objectively'.[63] But wherein lies the answer to the problem of interpretative subjectivity?

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[57] Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (London: Routledge, 1982), 154.

[58] Eugene, H. Peterson, '"Preface": Symposium: On Writing Commentaries', *ThTo* 46 (1990): 386.

[59] Peterson, 'Preface', 386.

[60] Pheme Perkins, 'Commentaries: Windows to the Text', *ThTo* 46 (1990): 395.

[61] Perkins, 'Commentaries', 398.

[62] F. Dale Bruner, 'The Why and How of Commentary', *ThTo* 46 (1990): 399.

[63] Bruner, 400.

It is not within increased independence, but within the increased dependence upon the '*communio sanctorum*';[64] that is, upon a text-forming community whose own communal patricide is held up as the real text simply because it is born of the community. Bruner quickly divests himself of his communal policing, though, and returns later in the essay to 'the sheer delight . . . [of] rummaging in the thoughts and words of God'.[65]

> Suddenly . . . a new idea occurs to him one day, *his* idea; and the entire blessedness of a great personal hypothesis, which embraces all existence and the whole world penetrates with such force into his conscience that he dare not think himself the creator of such blessedness, and he therefore attributes to his God the cause of this new idea and likewise the cause of the cause, believing it to be the revelation of his God. How could a man be the author of so great a happiness? ask his pessimistic doubts. But other levers are secretly at work: an opinion may be strengthened by one's self if it be considered as a revelation; and in this way all its hypothetic nature is removed; the matter is set beyond criticism and even beyond doubt: it is sanctified.[66]

Such a patricide is unworthy of us, the author-god is dead and we have killed him, and 'who will wipe this blood off us?', cries Nietzsche.[67] The response: 'we will'. But how? We must ourselves become gods simply to be worthy of such a crime![68] That is, we must be able to engage in acts of (re)creation, and this is precisely what the commentary does and is.

### *2.c. Two Exemplary Reasons for* Hinterfragen

Some acts of patricide are more subtle yet more aggressive than others. In his review of Dunn's *Theology*, Matlock obliquely observed that Romans is obviously not the only choice we must make in constructing a theology of Paul and that 'a different choice would in turn bring different matters into prominence'.[69] This is a simple comment to be sure, but the simple fact of its legitimate possibility undermines the stability of Dunn's product and certainly calls into question the definite article employed in Dunn's title:

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[64] Bruner, 400.

[65] Bruner, 401.

[66] Nietzsche, *Dawn of Day*, §62.

[67] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom* (trans. Thomas Common; vol. 10 of *The Complete Works of Nietzsche*; Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1910), §125.

[68] Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom*, §125.

[69] R. Barry Matlock, 'Sins of the Flesh and Suspicious Minds: Dunn's New Theology of Paul', *JSNT* 72 (1998): 68.

'*The* Theology of Paul the Apostle'. This is especially true when Dunn himself alludes to the possibility of progression in Paul's thought,[70] which naturally causes him to resist a synoptic approach to structuring Paul's theology which would produce a 'mishmash—not the theology of Paul as he would have owned it at any particular time'.[71] Romans is then said to be precisely this observable occasion in which Paul reveals his own theology, being 'the most sustained and reflective statement of Paul's own theology by Paul himself . . . .' Hence the leading question, 'how to write a theology of Paul, then? Paul's letter . . . to Rome is the nearest thing we have to Paul's own answer to that question. . . . Romans provides us with an example of the way Paul himself chose to order the sequence of themes in his theology'.[72] Romans is the 'mature theology of Paul' and we cannot do better than to use Romans as a 'kind of template on which to construct our own statement of Paul's theology'.[73]

The fact remains, however, that Romans remains structured by its *occasional* reality, as is every letter written by Paul. Yet Dunn suggests that Romans is special, being written at the end of a major phase of Paul's missionary work, and probably under the 'most congenial circumstances of his mission, with time for careful reflection and composition'.[74] Certainly we can agree that Paul is probably already thinking of what he plans to do after he delivers the Gentile gift to Jerusalem, and even agree that perhaps a lot of the surface level tensions are in fact removed during the writing of the letter. Yet Dunn himself acknowledges that Romans is a 'defence' of Paul's understanding of the gospel,[75] a feature of Romans which should alert readers of Romans to the presence of a sub-surface rhetorical agenda. The implication is that the structuring forces of the rhetorical situation upon the form of the text are not a problem, or at least not as much of a problem in Romans. I would venture to say at this point that it is precisely when the occasion seems to be less intrusive that it is most intrusive because it is less obviously so.

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[70] Dunn, *Theology*, 25.

[71] Dunn, *Theology*, 25.

[72] Dunn, *Theology*, 25.

[73] Dunn, *Theology*, 26.

[74] Dunn, *Theology*, 25.

[75] Dunn, *Theology*, 25.

My point here is similar to the one made by Jane Schaberg in her commentary on Luke. It is precisely when things seem to be most congenial that they have the potential to be the most dangerous.[76] Schaberg's name for this process is 'seduction'. The fact is, ideological or 'interested' texts such as those found in the Bible, philosophy and history are always doing something and they are never innocuous. The prudent hermeneutical posture to assume is thus one of suspicion, not a jaded expectation, rather a posture in which we suspect that in fact something else may be going on than what is immediately apparent. While it is not necessary to employ a hermeneutic defined by and cohering around 'suspicion', I suggest that suspicion is a necessary part of the hermeneutical process.

For Ricoeur, suspicion is 'the critical instrument of de-mystification' by which he means that it is the process through which one analyses the product of socially discursive illusory forces manifested within the individual but certainly originating prior to and thus enabling the thought of the individual. Ricoeur refers to this as 'false consciousness', a term mainly derived from Marx, but, as he notes, easily applies to Freud and Nietzsche.[77] The 'hermeneutics of suspicion' is simply a way of reading so as to elicit certain forms of knowledge which were hitherto concealed. It is not meant to be a comprehensive hermeneutic, nor is it an attempt at totalisation given that the nature of the form of knowledge uncovered is not necessarily 'essential'. Its function is rather a *part* of something which would *resemble* something like Schleiermacher's vision of a hermeneutical circle: 'knowledge always involves an apparent circle, that each part be understood only out of the whole to which it belongs, and vice-versa'.[78]

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[76] Jane Schaberg, 'Luke', in *The Women's Bible Commentary* (eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 275; see also the later discussion of Schaberg on p. 138f.

[77] See his discussion in Paul Ricoeur, 'The Critique of Religion', *USQR* 28 (1973): 205–206.

[78] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts* (ed. Heinz Kimmerle; trans. James Duke and Jack Forstman; AARTTS 1; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 113 (the word 'complete' is deliberately omitted from the beginning of this quote). This concept, however, is better stated by Heidegger in whom we can already see the beginnings of hermeneutical suspicion. For example see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (trans., John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson; New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 153, and then later worked out in Gadamer (see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* [New York: The Seabury Press, 1975], 235ff.).

When Matlock presents Dunn with the observation that there is a lack of suspicion in his work on Paul,[79] Dunn responds by asking if Matlock is suspicious enough of suspicion.[80] Dunn's perception of 'suspicion' is therefore shown to be something more like linear, Cartesian doubt, rather than the genealogical, ideological, and illusional question of origins suggested by the Nietzschean, Marxist, and Freudian sense of suspicion catalysed in Ricoeur's hermeneutics of suspicion.[81] Dunn then goes on to state that he prefers the 'old term "criticism" which involves the attempt to take into consideration all that has gone into the making of the text . . . without excluding a *due degree* of *suspicion*'.[82] Who could ask for more? Well, the fact is that phrases like 'due degree' in this statement belie an uncritical, worthy-of-suspicion 'will to power' or totalising force on Dunn's part that articulates rather nicely the conditions upon which much of traditional or 'institutional' biblical studies is founded. This is indeed a delightful display of Nietzsche's idea of 'micrological power', elucidated by the simple question, what is the actual content of the phrase 'due degree'? Who decides where the boundaries for 'due degree' are, at what point is the degree not enough and at what point is the degree too much? The answer is of course, *Dunn* decides, or rather the subtle, micrological forces which Dunn has failed to observe as founding the conditions upon which he constructs his own knowledge decide for him.

The way in which this will to power works itself out in an attempt to master 'deviant' forms of inquiry is conveniently demonstrated for us in Dunn's response to Matlock, in which he points to Matlock's omission of specifying 'the meaning or perspective or method implied [by suspicion]'[83] and then proceeds to use the *very same word* in his critique of Matlock prefaced, however, by this empty and thus dangerous phrase 'due degree'. 'Due degree' in Dunn's response becomes the locale from which ubiquitous, and thus 'institutional' relations of power can operate in such a way so as to maintain proper surveillance over interpretive practices and thus also separate one set of

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[79] Matlock, 'Sins of the Flesh', 68–70.

[80] James D. G. Dunn, 'Whatever Happened to Exegesis? In Response to the Reviews by R.B. Matlock and D. A. Campbell', *JSNT* (1998): 113.

[81] See Paul Ricoeur, 'Two Essays by Paul Ricoeur: The Critique of Religion and The Language of Faith', *USQR* 28 (1973): 205–12.

[82] Dunn, 'Whatever Happened to Exegesis', 113–14 (emphasis added).

[83] Dunn, 'Whatever Happened to Exegesis', 113.

interpretations from another. The most important feature of Dunn's power play is the fact that, to cite Dunn's own complaint, 'the meaning or perspective or method is never spelled out'.[84]

What Dunn does here is not even slightly unusual, it is, in fact, quite the norm. Francis Watson, in his programmatic paper on 'The Scope of Hermeneutics',[85] says that he is articulating a 'view of hermeneutics as theoretical reflection on interpretive practice'.[86] He qualifies this by suggesting that 'contemporary theological hermeneutics must take as its main subject matter the distortions arising out of inappropriately drawn disciplinary boundaries, thereby mediating between the separated disciplines of biblical interpretation and Christian theology'.[87] In his argument, he places a great deal of weight upon the final form of the biblical ('canonical') text, since 'one of the tasks of theological hermeneutics is . . . to establish the reality of the canonical form of the texts, and to defend its integrity against interpretative practices that undermine it. Two such practices may be described as *archaeology* and *supplementation*'.[88] Watson's citation of the *word* 'archaeology' resonates with Foucault's, but of course as one follows Watson down through his excavation of the word, one finds that Watson has left Foucault at the surface. Watson uses the Foucauldian term 'archaeology' as a reference to getting back to 'origins'.[89] However, when Watson then says that the problem with this process is that it creates a situation in which the text is 'no longer fit for its customary uses'[90] he fails to see that this is precisely the point of such a process and that 'customary use' is exactly what is being called into question. That is, the whole idea of 'customary use' is a potentially hegemonic concept that needs to be called into question; it is also a concept that attempts to represent a sense of stability and thus a sense of stable origins, but we want to know what the nature of that origin is *before* we talk about 'customary use'. As with Dunn's

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[84] Dunn, 'Whatever Happened to Exegesis', 113.

[85] Francis Watson, 'The Scope of Hermeneutics', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (ed. Colin E. Gunton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[86] Watson, 'Scope of Hermeneutics', 78.

[87] Watson, 'Scope of Hermeneutics', 79.

[88] Watson, 'Scope of Hermeneutics', 76.

[89] Watson, 'Scope of Hermeneutics', 76.

[90] Watson, 'Scope of Hermeneutics', 76.

'due degree', we find that 'customary use' is an empty and dangerous phrase which reserves for itself the determining principle of what is and what is not 'customary'.[91] Who decides what is customary? Watson does.

Watson uses another word in conjunction with 'archaeology' which also resonates with French philosophy, namely the 'supplement'; a word used by Rousseau and then picked up by Derrida. Watson has in view a slightly different version of his 'archaeology' here, in that 'supplement' refers to the *incorporation* of the socio-linguistic milieu of the biblical text into what we would presume to be the 'customary' performance/use of the biblical text. In Watson's attempt to supplement the scope of hermeneutics he uses 'supplement' in precisely the same way Rousseau used it and thus practically begs us to apply Derrida's subsequent deconstruction of Rousseau's *supplément*. Derrida's argument ends up demonstrating that by virtue of Rousseau's attempt to resign writing to be a 'supplement' of speech he demonstrates the incompleteness of speech—the presence of a lack in speech which of course for Derrida becomes the lack of presence—and that what was at one point only 'supplementary' (in Rousseau's case 'writing') shows itself to have always been essential to it. Thus by virtue of the supplement, Derrida is able to implicate writing in the construction of speech.[92]

Nonetheless, 'supplement' is innocent in Watson's view, because to 'abstract the biblical texts entirely from their original environment would be to treat them docetically, as originating directly from above without the mediation of historically and culturally located human agency'.[93] It becomes that *dangerous supplement*, however, when it 'undermines the integrity of the biblical texts in their canonical form'.[94] How is this so? Well, 'the integrity of the text may be threatened by the *quantity* of the information with which it is supplemented'.[95] Watson began with the assumption that the biblical text naturally needs to be culturally contextualised in some way, and anyone interested in

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[91] If indeed we did excavate Watson's phrase here we would find that 'customary use' is *always* a use of the very origins that Watson prefers to suppress under the glossy, canonical final form.

[92] Derrida's discussion of Rousseau's supplement may be found in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 141–64; but see also the later comments on p. 192.

[93] Watson, 'Scope of Hermeneutics', 77.

[94] Watson, 'Scope of Hermeneutics', 77.

[95] Watson, 'Scope of Hermeneutics', 77 (emphasis added).

what the actual writers were saying would want to strongly affirm that. When Watson subsequently looked into the biblical text and saw the world behind it, he was not prepared for what he saw: a vast, endless sea of context and thus also endless disruption to 'customary use' (hence Watson's earlier call for a defensive hermeneutic[96]).

The problem with context is that as different signifying, and thus iterable, units are perceived with respect to what may be called a focalizing event—the event which brings into existence a context around itself, as every perceivable event does—they appear to be in a given and immediate context of interpretation. However, the possibility of distinguishing between the event and its context, and of distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant contextual units also enables new contextual units to be joined to them or replace them in the break between event and interpretation. The result is that interpretation changes with new information. Again, the possibility of change nonetheless prevents closure from ever taking place, and this possibility is also continuous because context itself is continuous. Derrida makes a contextually relevant comment here; 'no meaning can be determined out of context, but no context permits saturation'.[97] That is, meaning requires a point of reference, but there can never be a final decision regarding what that point of reference might be, since 'meaning is context-bound, but context is boundless'.[98] Each time one demarcates the so-called 'relevant' context, another context immediately appears along the borders of the demarcation. This new context was there all the time, but it becomes known through a process of differentiation brought into play by the line of demarcation. Thus, the context of any event is always beyond every description of it; thus Watson's hope for a comfortable, delimited, easy to handle context that sustains 'customary use' is a hope relying on the success of rhetoric and not upon the nature of context at all.

Like Dunn's 'due degree', we have in Watson's argument another dangerously empty structure, 'quantity': 'the integrity of the text may be threatened by the *quantity* of

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[96] The biblical text needs something 'to defend its integrity against interpretative practices that undermine it' (Watson, 'Scope of Hermeneutics', 76).

[97] Jacques Derrida, 'Living On: *Border Lines*', in Harold Bloom et al., *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1979), 81. Derrida makes a similar comment in Jacques Derrida, 'Signature Event Context', in Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 18; I use this translation of the essay and hereafter refer to it as SEC.

[98] Culler, 123.

the information with which it is supplemented'.[99] The implication is that if you add *too much* you are a poor hermeneut, but if you add the *right amount*, you are a good one. Whence comes this knowledge of good and evil? The fact is that the empty structure is inhabited by Watson, who becomes the one who distinguishes between good and bad hermeneutics.

There is indeed a need for suspicion when it comes to thinking about Paul, namely because Paul's own significance has produced so much writing that it has become difficult to distinguish between the writing and Paul. Again, we do not need a suspicion-for-the-sake-of-suspicion,[100] rather one that simply respects the fact that agendas develop, that history is ideologically 'interested' and is never 'pure'. The tradition of writing about Paul's writing is a tradition that bears the interests of the writing parties.

### *2.d. The Activity of Writing and 'Interpreting' Paul*

It has long been observed that understanding Romans as a complete outlaying of Paul's theology is untenable,[101] primarily because it does not actually include all of Paul's theology. The problem lies in the subtle shift from observing Romans as the out-working of Paul's thoughts on the gospel to using Romans as the occasion to observe what Paul is trying to *do*. There has been a fundamental hermeneutical failure to recognise the difference between function and information in the writings of Paul.[102] The problem that this introduces to Pauline studies has been observed before (albeit in other terms); note Furnish's comment: 'It is important to observe that the vast majority of works devoted to Pauline thought have sought to find its center in some particular *theological doctrine*. One must ask whether the diversity of proposals concerning that doctrinal center is not due at least as much to the character of Paul's thought and preaching as to the theological perspectives of Paul's interpreters'.[103] What Furnish observes is a preoccupation with arriving at theology, or 'information', and not with what Paul might actually be trying to

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[99] Watson, 'Scope of Hermeneutics', 77 (emphasis added).

[100] Reading for the sake of suspicion alone is not to be considered as an invalid approach to the text, namely because the nature of language and communication affirms a multiplicity of readings. The fact is, however, that this is just one reading of many and holds currency only for like-interested parties.

[101] See Kümmel, *Introduction*, 312.

[102] See the discussion on function and writing in the ancient world, pp. 121ff.

[103] Victor Paul Furnish, 'Pauline Studies', in Eldon Jay Epp and George W. MacRae, eds., *The New Testament and its Modern Interpreters (*Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 335.

achieve through his rhetoric. Note also Beker: 'we universalize . . . [the Pauline letters] and abstract them away from their immediacy into a set of propositions or doctrinal centers'.[104]

In the attempt to renegotiate some of the impasses we have encountered in the study of Paul, it is becoming more common for scholars to focus on Paul's 'theology' as the *result* of his apostolic activity and not as the starting point ('theologising' rather than 'theology'). For example, Roetzel attempts to understand Paul's thought not by trying 'to plot a progressively rising trajectory in Paul's theology so much as . . . to get some idea of the way Paul's thinking emerged through conversations with his readers. Regarded in this way his theologizing is an interactive process, dynamic and flexible'.[105] Thus also, P. Meyer suggests that 'instead of assuming most of the time that Paul's "theology" or "convictions" are the *resource* or starting point *from* which he addresses the issues placed before him, may one rather, as a kind of "experiment in thought", think of them more consistently as the end-product and result, the *outcome* to which he arrives in the process of his argument, his "hermeneutic", or his "theologizing"'.[106]

Engberg-Pedersen takes it to the next step (whether consciously or not). That is, he argues for this very thing, namely Paul's theologising as 'dynamic and open-ended', a 'symbolic universe *in the making*, not a fully worked out, static, and final one'.[107] Thus he comes close to a functional approach to Paul when he argues that 'whatever system we shall be able to discover in his letters will lie not in a fully worked out set of ideas but rather in Paul's *handling* of his theological conceptions in the different situations he is addressing'.[108] It is the reference to 'handling'[109] that is of interest here. The goal of Engberg-Pedersen's argument is to put forward a case for a more dynamic and less static

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[104] J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 35.

[105] Roetzel, *Paul*, 93.

[106] P. W. Meyer, 'Pauline Theology: Some Thoughts for a Pause in Its Pursuit', in *Society of Biblical Literature 1995 Seminar Papers*, (ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr.; Atlanta: Scholars press, 1995), 697.

[107] Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'Proclaiming the Lord's Death: 1 Corinthians 11:17–34 and the Forms of Paul's Theological Argument', in *Pauline Theology: 1 & 2 Corinthians* (vol 2; ed. David M. Hay; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 106.

[108] Engberg-Pedersen, 'Proclaiming the Lord's Death', 106.

[109] On which Engberg-Pedersen himself places emphasis.

view of Paul's theology. However, in so doing, he (along with the others attempting to do the same thing) necessarily shifts the emphasis from product to process. That is, he moves from a focus on the traditional search for pure information to a focus on how that information is produced.

The contention in this project is that once the focus has been removed from an already-established Platonic structure,[110] and fixed back onto Paul's dynamic activity as a letter writer, we are then free to advance in our understanding of Paul's thought.[111] The particular argument here is that we must continue along the lines established by those who see Paul as a 'theologiser' rather than a theologian, but not stop with that observation. That is, when Paul's 'activity' comes to the fore of our analyses, our attention is naturally drawn to what he sought to achieve by virtue of that activity; furthermore, only by incorporating the goals of Paul's 'theologising' may we understand more fully the content of that 'theologising'. In other words, if we are to be concerned about theology, then let us be concerned with a theology that arises out of the functional effects of a text rather than amputating the rhetoric at the level of the text.

It is the preoccupation with 'theological doctrine' that has clouded the fact that Paul was a man in history trying to achieve a very specific set of goals and that his writings were written as a *means* of reaching those goals. It is the gradual realisation that we cannot sustain such a preoccupation that causes Engberg-Pedersen to sigh with relief that 'scholars have gradually come to realize that in addition to the manifest meaning of Paul's statement as *importing information* and responding to the particularities of the letter situation at the level of direct communication, these statements have a number of functions that are more indirect, but no less important for that'.[112] He further suggests that 'functional aspects of Paul's statements are also part of the meaning of these statements simply because Paul is engaged in a specific communicative act between particular people'.[113] I would suggest that it is only *after* we discern the *function* of Paul's

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[110] Note, for example, the comments in Engberg-Pedersen, 'Proclaiming the Lord's Death', 107.

[111] See the later discussion on p. 48 in response to Furnish's call for 'new models'.

[112] Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'Stoicism in Philippians', in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 258 (emphasis added).

[113] Engberg-Pedersen, 'Stoicism in Philippians', 259.

texts can we even begin to consider issues of significance or 'theology'.[114] I would in fact suggest that a teleological (though not necessarily eschatological) approach to Paul's writing gives us the coherence we need to create an integrated approach to Paul's writing in general. I would further suggest that while Romans and the rest of the *Hauptbriefe* have been useful sources for thinking about Paul's thought, their academic treatment has in fact distracted us from the fundamentally important issue of what Paul himself was trying to do. Finally, it should be noted that a glaring problem in contemporary hermeneutics is the lack of appreciation for what the writers of antiquity were thinking when they themselves put texts together. It appears that ancient writers may have been more attuned to what their texts were intended to *do* as opposed to what they were intended to *mean*.[115]

### *3. Writing Performance as Logocentric Citation: Cite-Seeing with Derrida and Austin*

Language is given its value by virtue of its operation as the means by which we encounter and articulate 'reality'. Language resides 'above' us as a system prior to and thus structuring our experiences and 'below' us as a system reinforced by our collective use of it. As a collective, we use language to describe and prescribe our social realities and thus make language a social construct; its most important function is to enable us to achieve our social goals. That is, the social nature of language is a *performative* one. Thus Berger and Luckmann note that language is basically referenced by our 'pragmatic motive'. 'Language originates in and has its primary reference to everyday life; it refers above all to the reality I experience in wide-awake consciousness, which is dominated by the pragmatic motive (that is, the cluster of meanings directly pertaining to present or future actions) and which I share with others in a taken-for-granted manner'.[116]

A highly operative factor in the ancient perception of what a letter was doing was a sense of how the letter was appropriate for the particular set of social realities present to

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[114] Since I affirm that content and function are in a reciprocal relationship, I therefore agree with Engberg-Pedersen when he states that 'the meaning of a Pauline letter should be construed as a sort of conglomerate resulting from the interaction in it of *all* the different types of "saying and doing" that are active in Paul's statements' (Engberg-Pedersen, 'Stoicism in Philippians', 259).

[115] See pp. 121ff.

[116] Peter Berger, and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 38.

the letter's writer and reader. Critically attending to the function of a letter is necessarily attending to the rhetorical situation which gives occasion for the letter in the first place. The implications for this are similar to those found in the speech act theory of J. L. Austin.[117] The primary feature applicable here is the observation that the direction of critical interest is reversed. Typically, intentionality is accounted for by assuming that 'the meaning of a text be grounded on what is *in the text*'.[118] That is, the final point of critical analysis is the text. Speech act theory, however, sees the final point of critical analysis as the social realities impacted *by the text*; 'thus studying a text as a speech act involves taking into account *something which is not in the text*, and yet is a part of the communication of meaning by that text'.[119]

It is important to clarify the fact that what is not in view, for Austin, is simply any impact occasioned by the text. He rather has a sense of a performance realised by the text through the previously existing structures (social norms and institutions) which are understood and utilised by the speaker. The point is that it is not the text *alone* or the thing/person being impacted *alone* rather that these are a part of the performance of a larger communicative structure. Thus, Austin has not marginalised the material text, he has simply erased the traditional boundary around it, in order to consciously incorporate those features of which it is necessarily a part.

Speech act theory is a helpful voice to include in the chorus of biblical criticism. It is perhaps prudent at this point to lay out Austin's basic thoughts on the matter, and then to introduce Derrida's reading of Austin. Yet before that, let us restate the problem of the thesis[120] in terms appropriate to Austin: Why is it that Paul seems to think that an utterance spoken in a 'non-serious' mode (pretext) has the same value as one spoken in a 'serious' mode (truth)? This is a problem because the philosophical opposition between the serious and non-serious use of linguistic acts, as articulated by Austin, seems so fundamental to a theory of meaning, primarily because the notion of authorial intention, the possibility of a text meaning only what the author intended it to mean, is put in

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[117] Wittgenstein had already observed that language had a performative quality. Note for example Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (trans. G. E. M. Anscome; New York: Macmillan, 1953), §§491, 493, 498; II: ix–x.

[118] Daniel Patte, 'Speech Act Theory and Biblical Exegesis', *Semeia* 41 (1988): 90.

[119] Patte, 'Speech Act Theory', 90.

[120] See opening statement, p. 9.

question. Yet, as we closely follow the textual contours of Philippians, we find that the traditional concept of the relationship between an author's intention and the text is indeed undermined.

### *3.a. Reversal and Displacement in Derrida and Austin*

As I shall argue later, both Paul and Derrida re-write the difference between serious and non-serious utterances. But how far does this relationship go? In one simple move, Paul does away with the hierarchical structure altogether, whereas Derrida makes a few more preliminary and duly cautious moves. Derrida initiates, or intervenes with, a reversal and displacement of the two opposites. The hierarchy of the oppositional structure non-serious/serious is reversed so that it becomes serious/non-serious, showing the serious to be a special case of, or derived from, the non-serious. The hierarchy is then displaced to become (non)serious. For his part, Paul presents the two modes of speech in Philippians as in opposition, but also pragmatically suspended from cancelling each other out, displacing them in the Derridean sense.

This displacement is one side of a two-sided, yet single, deconstructive move: reversal or 're-placing' and displacement. Reversal is the overturning or inverting of hierarchical oppositions (speech/writing to writing/speech), and is an 'indispensable phase' of deconstruction.[121] Derrida finds justification for this action in terms of the 'violent' nature of hierarchies. That is, since one side of the philosophical binary opposition suppresses, marginalises, governs the other, Derrida sees no reason not to re-introduce (by reversal or replacing) the suppressed element back into the discourse allowing, momentarily, the governed to govern.[122] Reversal on its own, however, is rather pointless since it leaves the problem of violent hierarchies in place; thus, *dis*placement of the hierarchy is also a necessary part of this single but structured/stratified process. Displacement prevents the hierarchy from operating, it 'intervenes', 'disorganises', 'neutralises', the hierarchy. It suspends the two elements, intervening in the production of yet another violent hierarchy.[123] Thus, the process of deconstruction is one whereby binary opposites are re-written through a process which Derrida terms 'bifurcated

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[121] Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, (trans. Barbara Johnson; London: The Athlone Press, 1981), 6.

[122] See, Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (trans. Alan Bass; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 41.

[123] See Derrida, *Positions*, 41–42.

writing',[124] so as to allow both to operate in the text, albeit in mutually excluding acts as each opposite continuously effaces and is effaced by the presence of the other. Deconstruction must therefore, through this bifurcated writing or

> double gesture . . . double science . . . practice an *overturning* of the classical opposition *and* a general *displacement* of the system. It is only on this condition that deconstruction will provide itself with the means with which to *intervene* in the field of oppositions that it criticizes, which is also a field of non-discursive forces. . . . Deconstruction does not consist in passing from one concept to another, but in overturning and displacing a conceptual order, as well as the non-conceptual order with which the conceptual order is articulated.[125]

It is also important to note here that Derrida's desire for deconstruction is not born of malice. Derrida understands his use of Heidegger's *Abbau* and *Destruktion* as not referring to a destruction, and characterizes his relationship to the texts he deconstructs as 'loving jealousy and not at all . . . nihilistic fury'.[126] In fact, Derrida actually sees deconstruction as a positive and 'not a negative operation'.[127]

### *3.b. Austin's Deconstruction of Constative/Performative*

To inscribe Derrida's point, we must note Austin's own deconstructive behaviour which Derrida mimics in a classic display of deconstruction.[128] In his well-known book, *How to do Things with Words*—an outworking of the William James Lectures—Austin attempts to account for the meaning of utterances, when he discusses his distinctions between locution (actual utterance), illocutionary force (the performance of the utterance) and perlocution (the consequences of illocutionary force).[129] As Culler points out, Austin makes similar moves to those of Saussure. In the same way that Saussure sought to account for acts of signification, his *parole*, by describing the system which

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[124] Derrida, *Positions*, 42.

[125] Derrida, SEC, 329.

[126] Jacques Derrida, *Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation* (trans. P. Kamuf and A. Ronell; ed. C. V. McDonald; New York: Schoken Books, 1985) 86–87.

[127] Jacques Derrida, 'Letter to a Japanese Friend', in *Derrida and Différance* (eds. David Wood and Robbert Bernasconi; trans. David Wood and Andrew Benjamin; Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 3.

[128] I introduce Austin here, but I take up Derrida's interaction with him later, see pp. 39ff.

[129] J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 98ff. He also presents a discussion on the distinction between meaning and force, since there is already a question about the relationship of meaning and force set up in this description of his goals.

makes *parole* possible, his *langue*,[130] Austin poses a system of speech acts to account for illocutionary force.[131] But Austin's arguments are also in the vein of the later Wittgenstein. Both Austin and Wittgenstein sought to untie the knots that logical positivism had tangled, not only around meaning and language but also around the very investigation of meaning and language. Indeed, Austin is specifically contrasting his work with the logical positivists when he suggests that 'it was for too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a "statement" can only be to "describe" some state of affairs, or to "state some fact", which it must do either truly or falsely'.[132] Such a programme did not provide much, if any, space for the philosophical or critical discussions of aesthetics, religion, and ethics which were thought to contain an 'emotive meaning as opposed [to] cognitive or scientific meaning, and were held therefore as unamenable to a (further) philosophical assessment'.[133] Austin disagreed with the idea that if an utterance did not come under the category of 'statement'—that which can be verified either truly or falsely—then it was somehow less rational.

After pointing to the dogmatic practice of Western philosophers to exclude anything that was not classed as 'statement', Austin set about developing an argument for a distinction between what he termed the 'constative' and the 'performative', and then later for a deconstruction of the distinction.[134] However, during the course of the lectures, or, in our case, the re-citation of the lectures in book form, Austin repeatedly comes up against the problem—of which he was not unaware[135]—of not being able to draw effectively a line of distinction between performatives and constatives. The trouble lay in the fact that the distinctions kept disappearing, since either one of the oppositions

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[130] See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (eds. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, with Albert Reidlinger; trans. Wade Baskin; New York: Philosophical Library, 1959; repr. New York: Mcgraw-Hill, 1966), 7–17.

[131] Culler, 111.

[132] Austin, 1.

[133] Stanley Cavell, *Philosophical Passages: Wittgenstein, Emerson, Austin, Derrida* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 50.

[134] Austin, 1ff. for the distinction; 135ff. for the blurring of the distinction.

[135] Austin, 91, 146f, 152; also see Gordon C. F. Bearn, 'Derrida Dry: Iterating Iterability Analytically', *Diacritics* 25 (Fall 1995), 4–5.

could/would masquerade as the other.[136] Thus Bearn comments, somewhat nihilistically, that Austin 'determined to strip the masks from the masqueraders . . . found behind each mask another one,' as 'the distinction between constatives and performatives vanished twice, finally disappearing into a hall of illocutionary mirrors'.[137] Yet Derrida sees within these points of impasse the promise of Austin's work, characterising it as an 'analysis that is patient, open, aporetic, in constant transformation, *often more fruitful in the recognition of its impasses than in its positions*'.[138]

Performatives are utterances which cannot be described as simply true or false, rather there is only a performance—a particularly interesting perspective in light of Derrida's own desire to suspend the hierarchical forces operating within binary oppositions. In this case, the opposing structure true/false is suspended from causing new hierarchical striations to arise within utterances.[139] An example of a performative performing is the minister officiating at a marriage ceremony saying, 'I name you husband and wife'. The minister's words are an official act and are a part of the action of marrying. Such an utterance conforms to Austin's two conditions for performatives: 'A. they do not "describe" or "report" or constate anything at all, are not "true or false"; and B. the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not *normally* be described as, or as "just", saying something'.[140] That is,

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[136] See Bearn, 4–5. Bearn does not include the possibility that Austin came to see that a blurring of the distinction, a deconstruction of the two opposing categories, was in fact an appropriate conclusion to the project.

[137] Bearn, 23, 5. Bearn's article is concerned with analytically defending the basic premise of Derrida's SEC. The article suggests that Bearn relies on a success/failure oppositional structure remaining intact in the argument of SEC, whereas it seems to me that such a structure is precisely the sort of structure upon which Derrida is not relying and indeed is interested in deconstructing in SEC. Since Bearn's entire article presumes this structure, it ends up being a logocentric overlay which exposes the contours of the surface argument of SEC but which glosses over the cracks in which Derrida's argument really takes place.

[138] Derrida, SEC, 322 (emphasis added).

[139] See Austin, 9–11 for a discussion on the relationship of performative statements to the true/false structure. He uses a quote from Euripides' *Hippolytus,* ἡ γλῶσσ' ὀ μώμοχ', ἡ δϵ φρὴν ἀνωμοτός, which he translates 'my tongue swore to, but my heart (or mind or other backstage artiste) did not', to imply a metaphysical disjunction 'between saying and intending' (Cavell, 62). Interestingly, Cavell, in an essay generally suspicious of Derrida's SEC, points to the fact that this 'classic expression', as Austin calls it, is also cited in both Plato's *Symposium* and *Theatetus,* as well as in Aristophanes' *The Frogs,* thereby highlighting the operation of citationality or iterability. For Derrida on the suspension of hierarchical forces, see Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 114.

[140] Austin, 5.

performatives do things; they are in themselves actions and not reports of actions or of a given state of affairs. According to the philosophers against whom Austin wrote, such utterances did not have the same rational value as 'constative' statements which report on actions or a given state of affairs.

Austin further suggests that constatives, namely 'historical references',[141] are merely abbreviated forms of performatives.[142] That is, a constative is supposedly a statement in which one describes a state of affairs. For example, the statement 'my computer is made by Compaq' is a constative statement on the surface, but Austin shows that it is really an abbreviated performative statement *implying* a performative verb, such as 'I affirm,' or 'I tell [you]'.

By moving away from the positivistic notion that statements are only valid if they state a fact or describe something Austin began to dismantle the metaphysical structures ensnaring the Western philosophy of language—inadvertently deconstructing the traditional philosophical hierarchy which privileged constatives over all other kinds of statements ('pseudo-statements'[143]). He demonstrates, on the one hand, that the opposite is actually the case ('reversal'), insofar as these constatives are dependent upon or derived from the category of pseudo-statements, or his 'performatives'. On the other hand, he prevents a new hierarchy developing ('displacement'), by preventing the true/false opposition from participating in the illocutionary force of performatives by showing that constatives are a special case of performatives. Thus, Wolfgang Iser was later led to call for a general doing-away with these structures and 'replace ontological arguments with functional arguments, for what is important to readers and critics alike, is what literature *does*, and not what it *means*'.[144] Iser maintains an oppositional dichotomy between meaning and function here which may not be altogether confluent with his own desire for a functional approach, but the point is that Austin opened up a crack in the wall which many have tried clambering through in order to escape the oppression of the metaphysical in language and the question of meaning.

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[141] Austin, 6, n. 2.

[142] Austin, 135ff.

[143] Austin, 2, 3.

[144] Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 53.

### *3.c. Derrida's Deconstruction of Austin: Serious/Non-Serious*

But Austin, like Saussure, in offering a critique of the logocentric moves typically made by Western philosophy, and upon which traditional Western philosophy relies—acts of excluding and privileging elements of binary oppositions which thereby create violent hierarchies—does not himself move beyond logocentrism, rather he (necessarily) stays within it. Every critique of logocentrism will, at the same time, rely upon it; 'even a theory based on difference does not escape logocentrism but finds itself appealing to presence, not only because some concepts of analysis, demonstration, and objectivity involve such reference but also because in order to identify differences responsible for meanings one needs to treat some meanings as if they were given, as if they were somewhere 'present' as a point of departure'.[145] And we find Derrida affirms this when, in preparing to argue his case against Austin's text, he says that 'I must take as *known and granted* that Austin's analyses permanently demand a value of *context*, and even of an exhaustively determinable context'.[146] That is, in order for Derrida to critique an argument he must acknowledge that there actually is an argument which can serve as the point of reference for a deconstruction of the text. Thus, Derrida does not himself claim to be beyond the problems of logocentrism. He necessarily works within logocentric structures in order to critique them. This has been a common misconception of Derrida. Lionel Abel thinks that because Derrida uses logic to question truth and logic, his deconstructive project is consequently invalidated.[147] But, as Sherwood points out, Abel's criticism is ironic since 'by exposing the double logic at work in Derrida's texts . . . [he affirms] with him the universality of deconstruction'.[148] This is a part of the reason why deconstruction always employs the existing structure of the text to operate, and why Derrida is always having problems with his critics not remaining within the text.[149]

Derrida discusses Austin's *How to do Things with Words* in SEC and, in the second section of the essay, deconstructs the difference between serious and non-serious, the

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[145] Culler, *On Deconstruction*, 110

[146] Derrida, SEC, 322 (the first emphasis is added).

[147] See Lionel Abel, 'Jacques Derrida: His 'Difference' with Metaphysics', *Salmagundi* 25 (Winter 1974): 3–21.

[148] Yvonne Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet: Hosea's Marriage in Literary-Theoretical Perspective* (JSOTSup 212; Gender, Culture, Theory 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 153–54.

[149] See Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 24; also Derrida, *Ear of the Other*, 86–87.

original and the citation. Derrida repeats or mimics Austin's attack on logocentrism. That is, Derrida rigorously pursues the logic of Austin's text in its own terms, which causes his own argument to mimic or cite the turns of Austin's text as he pushes the logic of that text to its limits.[150] 'The movements of deconstruction do not destroy texts from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures. . . . Operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure'.[151] Indeed, 'deconstruction is . . . an activity of reading which remains closely tied to the texts it interrogates, and which can never set up independently as a self-enclosed system of operative concepts'.[152] We could summarise Norris by saying that deconstruction is a part of, or participates in, the text and is not a discussion *about* the text. The deconstructive argument is often the same argument operating within the text, and is performed in terms of the text, which is to say that it takes place within the text, but in order, as Culler says, 'to breach it'.[153] Interestingly, in an exchange with Searle, who criticised Derrida's reading of Austin, saying that Derrida was not being true to Austin's text,[154] Derrida points out that Searle is not offering a serious critique because he does not work within the terms of the text.[155] In contrast, note that in the course of Derrida's reply to Searle, *Limited Inc*, Derrida eventually cites Searle's argument in its entirety.

Insofar as Derrida does this, it could be said that he produces a text more 'true' to Austin's text than Austin's own. He does this by first affirming and stabilizing the argument of the text through a discussion (and praise) of what Austin was attempting to achieve, but then he goes beyond Austin and shows the way in which the logic of this same text undermines that argument. That is, Derrida shows how Austin's text exceeded him, not to poke fun at Austin, but to demonstrate a problem of language, to

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[150] 'Derrida drives Saussure's project to its ultimate conclusions and seeing where those conclusions work to challenge the project's conventional premises'. Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction Theory and Practice* (New Accents; London: Routledge, 1982), 30.

[151] Derrida *Of Grammatology*, 24.

[152] Norris, *Deconstruction*, 31.

[153] Culler, *On Deconstruction*, 86.

[154] See John Searle, 'Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida', *Glyph* I (1977): 198–208.

[155] See Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (ed. Gerald Graff; trans. Samuel Webber and Jeffrey Mehlman; Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), e.g., 105.

demonstrate that language escapes our attempts to tether it to our intentions and the presence of our conscious will to communicate. It is the nature of language to have within it opposing forces and aporiae arising from within the opposition of those forces, problematising a text's assertions, turning those assertions against themselves. And these are what Derrida brings to light in his reading of Austin; again, not to show Austin's failures, but those within philosophical discourse in general, since 'the reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of the language that he uses'.[156] Thus, deconstruction leads to exposing a problem, not with an author's logic, but with the logic of the relationship between what an author does have control over and that which an author does not, that is, a problem within the logic of language itself.[157]

For Derrida, the discourse of Western metaphysics has always relied on a system of exclusion and the establishment of violent hierarchies.[158] The history of truth, according to Derrida, has been a history of maintaining the illusion created by this kind of oppositional exclusion and suppression; indeed, says he, it has been 'the condition of the very idea of truth'.[159] For example, Derrida argues that

> 'the privilege of the *phonè* [the practice of exclusion] does not depend upon a choice that could have been avoided. It responds to a moment of *economy* (let us say of the "life" of "history" or of "being as self-relationship"). The system of "hearing (understanding) oneself speak" [*s'entendre parler*] through the phonic system . . . has necessarily dominated the history of the world during an entire epoch, and has even produced the idea of the world, the idea of world-origin, that arises from the difference between worldly and the non-worldly, the outside and the inside, ideality and nonideality, universal and nonuniversal, transcendental and empirical'. [160]

In this comment, Derrida portrays the structure which has been laid over Western perceptions of reality and consciousness, and in so doing indicates a problem inherent to that structure: that the economies of life, history, and perceiving oneself are dependent

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[156] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 158.

[157] See Barbara Johnson, 'Translator's Introduction', in Derrida, *Dissemination*, xv.

[158] E.g., Derrida, *Limited Inc*, 93: 'And this is not just *one* metaphysical gesture among others, it is *the* metaphysical exigency, that which has been most constant, most profound and most potent'.

[159] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 20.

[160] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 7–8 (the emphases are Derrida's, the brackets are added).

upon a set of oppositions for which the point of reference can be the phenomenon of *s'entendre parler*, the perceived ability to hear and understand oneself speak with no mediation. Since they are based on oppositions, such as presence/absence, this economy has been one of an illusion in which one element in the oppositional structure has been suppressed. It is an economy of exclusion. Moreover, this has not been an unavoidable structuring of philosophical discourse because these economies were founded—if I may be permitted to allude to an origin of sorts—on privilege and suppression.

Austin's deconstruction of the constative/performative opposition—showing that the previously privileged constatives were a special class of the previously excluded, or marginalised performatives—is an insightful critique of the logocentric structures operating within philosophical discourse by virtue of his reversal and displacement discussed earlier.[161] However, Derrida shows that Austin himself excludes or marginalises non-serious language and privileges the serious. Derrida then proceeds to demonstrate, in the manner of Austin, that the serious is a special category of, or parasitic upon, the non-serious, thereby displacing the oppositional structure set up by Austin through revealing the mutual contamination of the two opposites. To say that the serious ends up as a special case of the non-serious sounds like the results of one of Zeno's *reductio ad absurdum* paradoxes. But Derrida is not saying that everything is non-serious, or that reality is not real, or even, with respect to Austin, that intentionality does not exist. In fact, Derrida is quite sober about the necessity to accept such things as necessary. It is only when one attempts to base an entire philosophical system on these oppositional structures and upon language conventions that a problem arises.[162] Here I cite Derrida:

> Above all, I will not conclude from this [the general graphematic structure of every 'communication'] that there is no relative specificity of the effects of consciousness, of the effects of speech (in opposition to writing in the traditional sense), that there is no effect of the performative, no effect of ordinary language, no effect of presence and of speech acts. *It is simply that these effects do not exclude what is generally opposed to them term by term*, but on the contrary presuppose it in dyssemtrical fashion, as the general space of their possibility.[163]

Thus, and again, Derrida does not say everything is non-serious, but only that the effects of the serious or the non-serious do not exclude what has been traditionally

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[161] See p. 38.

[162] See Norris, *Deconstruction,* 110.

[163] Derrida, SEC, 327 (emphasis added).

opposed to them. He is not out to debunk intention or meaning altogether, rather to show what the discourse about them has excluded and suppressed throughout the last twenty centuries of philosophy. Derrida believes there has been a veil laid over philosophical discourse so that we might not look intently at that which was failing, and even today that same veil remains unlifted because it is only removed in the transcendental signified. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that this very discourse—the traditional philosophical discourse of the West—has simply ignored, in regular, regimented, and regulating fashion, certain phenomena of language and communication, thereby creating an illusion of realism. And this illusion has been put into service as a governing norm by which the oppression of the other—the marginalised, the different, whether in society, philosophy, or in theology—has received validation, and by which the failures of this discourse have been hidden.

### *3.d. Derrida's Deconstruction of Austin: Iterability, Citationality, Convention*

At issue in Derrida's essay is the iterable, or repeatable nature of signs which naturally brings to the fore two other important issues: intentionality and context. 'Intentionality' is discussed because if signs can simply be repeated anywhere, they are structured in such a way so as to deny the possibility of a total presence of intention in the (re)iteration of those signs. The relationship between iterability and intention harks back through the ages to Plato's comment that writing bastardizes speech,[164] which is another way of saying that the moment of the sign is the moment which marks the death of the author. The fact of a sign forces an irreconcilable space between the writer and the written. Thus, the sign never really belongs to the author, it is an escapee of his consciousness via the tyrannical passage of time and irreconcilable spacing. As sure as one moment is eternally divided from the next, the evolution of consciousness from presence to iterable sign eternally divides *signum* from *homo signifiens*. 'Context' is introduced because the iterability of signs naturally opens up the possibility of a boundless context, insofar as a chain of signifiers can be continually repeated, reiterated, cited in new circumstances. It is important to note here that the ability of a sign to be repeated, reiterated, cited in new circumstances is also that which enables it to signify in the first place; thus, iterability is not a mere secondary significance of the nature of signs as if the citation were somehow less than or even other than the supposed origination, and this underlies Derrida's argument in SEC.

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[164] See n. 50.

As previously mentioned, Austin argues that he will not consider non-serious utterances because they are 'void' and 'parasitic upon . . . normal use;' therefore, 'performative utterances, felicitous or not, are to be understood as issued in ordinary circumstances'.[165] With this utterance, Austin thus banishes the non-serious to the same philosophical fringe where he found performative utterances wandering around before he carried them off to fame and fortune and, supposedly, to live happily ever after at the centre of philosophical discussion. But Derrida finds the difference created between normal and abnormal use, the serious/non-serious opposition, to be ripe for deconstruction. Specifically, he finds that *the same structuring forces which afford the possibility of the abnormal or the non-serious are the very same which make possible normal or serious signification*: the structuring forces of iterability. 'A writing that would not be structurally legible—iterable . . . would not be writing'.[166] If a series of marks (aural, ocular, tactile) do not have within them the structure of repeatability they cannot signify, or we could say that they cannot constitute a form of communication.[167] Thus, says Derrida, for writing to be writing or communication to be communication, it 'must be able to function in the radical absence of every empirically determined addressee in general. And this absence is not a continuous modification of presence; it is a break in presence, 'death', or the possibility of the 'death' of the addressee, inscribed in the structure of the mark'.[168] The iterability of the mark—that which enables a mark to function as a sign, to function socially or intersubjectively—is that structure mentioned earlier which enables the separation of *signum* from *homo signifiens*.

Another aspect of Austin's work leading to Derrida's deconstruction of it, is the fact that Austin puts a lot of weight on convention (social iterability) in order for his performatives to work properly. Convention for Austin is normal or 'appropriate circumstances'.[169] The notion of convention, however, takes us back to iterability, since convention is ritualistic or ceremonial, a structure of repetition, recognizable, and

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[165] Austin, 21, 22.

[166] Derrida, SEC, 315. Derrida here uses the name, or paleonym, 'writing' in the sense of arche-writing. On paleonymy see also Derrida, SEC, 329; Derrida, *Positions*, 71.

[167] On the structure of experience in general, see Derrida, SEC, 318.

[168] Derrida, SEC, 315–16. Derrida does not mention the 'addressee' here to evoke a discussion of the reader.

[169] See Austin, 13–14.

performative only because of this repetition. Convention also raises the question of the difference between original and copy since it finds its possibility as copy or citation. If Austin questions the validity of the non-serious or cited performative he finds himself in some contradiction in his approval of convention which is itself a citation, a non-original. This possibility caused by the copy is the possibility caused by the iterability of the mark. At the very beginning, what makes an original possible is this structure of the iterable mark of signification. Thus, within the original is already the copy, that is, the structure of the copy. This then naturally leads to a blurring of the distinction between original and copy, a displacement and ultimately a deconstruction of the hierarchical structure that has opposed them to each other.

While maintaining his displacement of a true/false judgement of utterances, Austin employs what he calls 'the doctrine of the *Infelicities*' to account for the 'unhappy'—that is, neither true nor false, just 'unhappy'—circumstances in which a performative goes wrong.[170] Austin offers six rules which govern the happy functioning of the performative and a violation of any one of which will see unhappy performative results.[171] However, the fact that Austin acknowledges the possibility of the performative's failure is one thing, but, as Derrida argues, Austin does not acknowledge or investigate the *consequences* that the possibility of failure has upon our understanding of language performance and communication in general.[172] If there is a possibility of failure, then failure becomes a necessary part of the structure of the performative because, as a *possibility*, it is *always* possible; thus, Derrida asks, 'What is a success when the possibility of failure continues to constitute its structure?' The success/failure structure of the performative is, therefore, considered to be 'insufficient or derivative'.[173] That is, that which enables the success of the performative is also that which causes its failure. There is, therefore, a structuring of language *prior* to the very function which Austin analyses yet Austin does not consider it. Moreover, this structuring already distances the presence of intention from any utterance to the effect that Austin's argument—that there be a context

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[170] Austin, 14.

[171] Austin, 14–15.

[172] For Derrida, this is the point at which Austin's project was doomed to fail.

[173] Derrida, SEC, 324. 'Derivative' in the sense that it is derived from another, necessarily prior system or structure.

of an appropriate sincerity, or seriousness in the frame of the utterer's mind—is displaced.[174]

All communication relies on iterability, even if only for the very basic fact that an addressee must recognise the identity of the marks, or 'arche-marks'—any structure of differentiated and thus iterable marks—in order to then decode them.[175] The notion of 'death' is used by Derrida to communicate a sort of absolute disjunctive effect of the structure which iterability introduces into language. On one level, the marks which constitute, for example, the material aspect of the gospel, the marks of the apostle Paul, continue to have effect by virtue of their iterability even after Paul's death and, most importantly, have always contained within them this possibility as an inherent quality of their structure. On another level, and one that Derrida is most interested in, the marking of the mark marks the death of author or reader because it marks the 'essential predicate' to all communication: absence.[176] Derrida posits two hypotheses to account for this essential predicate:

> 1. Since every sign . . . supposes a certain absence . . . it must be because absence in the field of writing is of an original kind if any specificity whatsoever of the written sign is to be acknowledged. 2. If, perchance, the predicate thus assumed to characterize the absence proper to writing were itself found to suit every species of sign and communication, there would follow a general displacement: writing no longer would be a species of communication, and all the concepts to whose generality writing was subordinated (the concept itself as meaning, idea, or grasp of meaning and idea, the concept of communication, of sign, etc.) would appear as noncritical, ill-formed concepts, or rather as concepts destined to ensure the authority and force of a certain historic discourse.[177]

Derrida's point here is not to say that writing is not communication, rather that writing could be held up as the genus of communication and not a species, not subordinate (hence 'displacement') in some way. And again, not writing *per se* but writing as a reference to a structure, a structured absence. This writing-as-a-reference-to-structure is often referred to by Derrida as 'archewriting'. Furthermore, 'to write is to produce a mark that will constitute a kind of machine that is in turn productive, that . . . [an

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[174] See Austin, 14–16.

[175] See Derrida, SEC, 317–18.

[176] Derrida, SEC, 314.

[177] Derrida, SEC, 314–15.

author's] future disappearance in principle will not prevent from functioning and from yielding, and yielding itself to, reading and rewriting'.[178]

Derrida's argument against Austin's banishing of the non-serious is based on this prior structuring process of iterability which intrudes upon all communication with a measure of absence, thereby causing a general displacement of the opposition of what one could consider to be the original/serious/ present to the copy/non-serious/absent. I say 'displacement' because the metaphysical assumptions which had privileged the former categories over the latter are neutralized by locating within the former group the very structure which was said to cause the latter group to be treated as inferior. This structure of absence is the force that allows the mark to 'constitute a kind of machine' which can be set in operation, or turned on, without the presence of the one who assembled it; that enables the mark to produce effects in the general nonpresence of the author,

> for example the nonpresence of . . . [the author's] meaning, of . . . [the author's] intention-to-signify, of . . . [the author's] wanting-to-communicate-this, from the emission or production of the mark. For the written to be written, it must continue to 'act' and to be legible even if what is called the author of the writing no longer answers for what he has written . . . whether he is provisionally absent, or if he is dead.[179]

### *4. Concluding Summary*

Writing abut Paul's writing, (or commentary in general), has been a critically problematic endeavour when the attempt is made to commentate upon transcendent meaning. Due to this critical problem, we are in need of some 'insidious questions' to evaluate the glossing behaviour of traditional commentary (Jameson's 'metacommentary'), *and also of ourselves* with acts of self-reflexivity. Romans (and the *Hauptbriefe* in general) has been privileged by contemporary critics in a way that marginalises what was privileged by the writers of antiquity. The contemporary imbalanced focus on texts as informational or constative, over against functional and performative gives rise to an imbalanced treatment of the Pauline epistles. What I would like to suggest as something of a correction to the asymmetrical arrangement within the Pauline corpus is that we generate a reading of Paul based on the performative function of the text rather than information contained within it, but not to the exclusion of information. However, in considering language as performative, we also encounter language as iterable. We further find that the issues of

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[178] Derrida, SEC, 316.

[179] Derrida, SEC, 316.

performance and iterability are located within our analysis of Phil 1.12–18. Derrida has demonstrated that all language, in order to perform/mean anything, must be iterable; thus all language must be radically separated from its origins by the spacing inherent within its iterability. We find, then, that the two cited iterations of the gospel in Phil 1.12–18 are implicated in this dilemma through their being described as πρόφασις and ἀλήθεια respectively.

It is necessary for any discussion concerning Paul to be guided by our understanding of the nature of texts in general, and the functional nature of ancient texts in particular.[180] The panoptical privileging of Romans as the Pauline point of reference is plagued with a disproportionate focus on significance over function. In general, I would suggest that we can attain a far greater sense of coherence in Paul's texts, and greater social product if we think in terms of function and performance over significance. This discussion is usually a 'theological' discussion, as the title of the article in the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* testifies: 'The Center of Paul's *Theology*',[181] as opposed to, for example, 'the centre of Paul's *activity* or *mission* or *work* or *life*' and so forth. The term 'theology' in Martin's title is parallel to such terms as 'thought', 'mind', and so forth, in that they all represent a priority of significance and a certain metaphysical arrangement that suggests some one-to-one, continuous metaphysical correspondence between text and meaning.

While theology and meaning are needed and indeed desired, they necessarily are the products of a process more deferred than that suggested by the sort of theology which places the analysis of Paul in a questionable position by establishing a prior structure to the very process of asking the questions about Paul. That is, before the questions are even asked, they are already problematic. In view of this, Furnish comments that 'if the advances made in Pauline studies over the past forty years are to prove worthwhile, they must result eventually in some new models according to which 'Pauline theology' can be analyzed and presented'.[182] Why? Primarily because the old models were 'developed

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[180] See pp. 121ff.

[181] Ralph P. Martin, 'The Center of Paul's Theology', in *DPL*, 92–95 (emphasis added).

[182] Furnish, 'Pauline Studies', 338. While the idea of yet another 'model' is somewhat problematic, given the plethora of models with which we are presently faced, the need for development is certainly a reality.

largely as topics of "systematic theology"'.[183] Furnish continues, 'the real challenge for interpreters of Paul's thought lies just here: to find ways of respecting the situational and dialogical character of his theology without abandoning the attempt to understand its most fundamental convictions and its most pervasive concerns'.[184] The possibility for the 'new models', which Furnish understands to be necessary, is slightly problematised by the way Furnish issues his challenge. That is, the duality of Furnish's challenge may lead to re-inscribing within the structure of the attempt to rise to the challenge the force of the 'old model'. I say 'may' lead because I also see within Furnish's challenge a genuine possibility of a new model.

The challenge is not really about achieving one or the other of the two foci of 'situational and dialogical character', and 'fundamental convictions and pervasive concerns'. The challenge, of course, is to achieve them both at the same time. Again, I would suggest that functional readings of Paul's texts are going to achieve this goal much more efficiently than readings which focus on information. This will be the case since reading for information or significance (the 'old model' focus on the ontological qualities of Paul's texts) is unable to reconcile two differing positions of invariant significance found within the one writer. This wreaks havoc with the ontological, or ideal categories desired by this approach. The tactic is rather to privilege one of the positions (usually on the basis of some historical critical argument which is affirmed by some and denied by others) and on that basis dismiss the other as 'non-normative'—more commonly phrased as 'un-Pauline'.

Reading for the functional performance of Paul's letters will attempt to locate within Paul's letters overarching purposes of which those letters are the manifest means through which he attempts to realise those purposes. Such an approach maintains our focus on what Paul was trying to do to his readers, what actions he was trying to perform by writing what he wrote. It reminds us that Paul's texts are of this world and that they represent a person who, like all such people, was seeking to promote his personal ideology, but necessarily within the confines of a particular social discourse.[185] This is not to separate Paul's activity from his beliefs about God; the point is rather that Paul's

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[183] Furnish, 'Pauline Studies', 338.

[184] Furnish, 'Pauline Studies', 338.

[185] By 'social discourse' I refer to the complex of norms, expectations, assumptions, values, and so forth which a given society or cultural group shares.

ontological beliefs are naturally an integral feature of his ideology. It is just that the activity of asking about Paul's beliefs about God, his theology, his sense of how the ontological realm is classified, is different from asking about what Paul was trying to do in this, logocentric world. In order to begin that process, we must take stock of the historical and social and philosophical location of Paul, the Philippians and the letter. We now turn to that task in the following two chapters.

# Chapter Two

## The Historical Context of Paul, the Philippians and the Letter

### *1. Introduction*

In this chapter, I seek to contextualise Paul, the Philippians and the letter in terms of their historical location. I shall focus on the historical situation of the letter itself and the particular circumstances Paul finds himself in when he writes. In view here are the historical critical issues of literary integrity, provenance, purposes, character, the nature of Paul's imprisonment, as well as the nature of Paul's opponents, all of which go to assist our appreciation of the rhetorical situation [186] behind the creation of this particular discourse.

### *2. The Historical Situation of Philippians*

The authorial authenticity of Philippians is not under consideration here, since it is no longer a significant issue in contemporary criticism. However, it is worth noting that while the authenticity of Philippians currently enjoys a scholarly consensus, it has not always had the privilege.[187]

#### *2.a. Literary Integrity*

Inquiring as to the purpose of Philippians implies a certain singularity and thus tends to assume the epistle's literary integrity. It is not the purpose of this project to account for the epistle's integrity or lack thereof.[188] The issue has had its various

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[186] A 'rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence' (Bitzer, 6.13).

[187] F. C. Baur's suspicions are treated fully in Baur, *Paul*, 2.45–64 . They are also summarised in an 1849 *Theologische Jahrbücher* essay: 'What appears suspicious to me in the Philippian epistle may be reduced to the following three heads:—1. The appearance of Gnostic ideas in the passage, ii. 6–9. 2. The want of anything distinctively Pauline. 3. The questionableness of some of the historical data' (cited in Baur, *Paul*, 2.45, n. 2).

[188] For more comprehensive discussions on epistolary integrity see the major commentaries, also see in particular W. J. Dalton, 'The Integrity of Philippians', *Biblica* 60 (1979): 97–102; Victor Paul Furnish, 'The Place and Purpose of Phil III', *NTS* 10 (1964/64): 80–88; David E. Garland, 'Composition and Unity of Philippians: Some Neglected Literary Factors', *NovT* 27 (1985): 141–73; Joachim Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief* (HTKNT 10.3; Herder: Freiburg, 1968), 6–11; Robert Jewett, 'The Epistolary Thanksgiving and the Integrity of Philippians', *NovT*

advocates for both sides since 1803 when Heinrichs suggested a juncture at 3.1–2 representing an 'exoteric' letter (1.1–3.1a; 4.21–23) to the church and an 'esoteric' letter (3.1b–4.20) to closer friends.[189] There was (and still seems to be) some thought that it really began in the sixteenth century with a comment made by Le Moyne based on an observation concerning Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians, in which Polycarp referred to Paul's own epistolary activity towards the Philippians with the plural ἐπιστολάς.[190] However, it seems that the trend of attributing the division to Le Moyne has been more myth than fact, since it appears that Le Moyne's thinking has been misrepresented.[191] This of course is also in view of the fact that Polycarp's use of the plural suddenly becomes remarkably uninteresting when compared to other Greek writings.[192]

The argument derived from Polycarp is based on the idea that when he wrote to the Philippian church, he seems to have referred to a plurality of Pauline letters sent to them (οἵς καὶ ἀπὼν ὑμῖν ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολάς).[193] Lightfoot has prepared an impressive disputation against taking Polycarp's ἐπιστολάς to be a reference to more than one

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12 (1970): 40–53; Helmut Koester, 'The Purpose of the Polemic of a Pauline Fragment (Philippians III)', *NTS* 8 (1961–62): 317–32; Berthold Mengel, *Studien zum Philipperbrief* (WUNT 2.8; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck] 1982), 191–212; T. E. Pollard, 'The Integrity of Philippians', *NTS* 13 (1966/67): 57–66; B. D. Rahtjen, 'The Three Letters of Paul to the Philippians', *NTS* 6 (1959/60): 167–73; Jeffrey T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity* (JSNTSup 136; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); R. Russell, 'Pauline Letter Structure in Philippians', *JETS* 25 (1982): 295–306; R. C. Swift, 'The Theme and Structure of Philippians', *BSac* 141 (1984): 234–54; D. F. Watson, 'A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians and Its Implications for the Unity Question', *NovT* 30 (1988): 57–88.

[189] Cited in H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians* (trans. J. C. Moore and W. P. Dickson, with supplementary notes by T. Dwight; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1885), 6.

[190] Étienne Le Moyne, *Notae et Observationes, Varia Sacra* (vol. 2; Leiden: Daniel Gaesbeeck, 1685), 343; cited in V. Koperski, 'The Early History of the Dissection of Philippians' *JTS* 44 (1993): 599.

[191] See D. Cook 'Stephanus Le Moyne and the Dissection of Philippians', *JTS* 32 (1981): 138–42.

[192] See Lightfoot, 69, n. 1; Gnilka 6, n. 23.

[193] Polycarp, *Philippians* 3.2.

letter.[194] He cites texts from three different periods[195] in which the plural ἐπιστολαί is in the vicinity of the singular ἐπιστολή and both refer to the same letter.[196] The upshot of his argument is that using ἐπιστολή in the plural does not compel one to read it as a reference to more than one letter. The function of the plural, he suggests, is that it is employed to refer to 'a missive of importance' when used in the prose of a given letter. That Polycarp may refer to his own letter, is, as Lightfoot further points out, not confluent with the humble tone of his letter. Lastly, Lightfoot reminds us that if there were more than one epistle known to Polycarp and the church at Philippi, it is hard to explain why it may be that this was the last word on their existence; furthermore, it appears that Polycarp's pupil, Irenaeus, is aware of only one epistle.[197] However, the basis of the more recent question regarding the literary integrity really proceeds along the lines suggested by Heinrichs; namely a perception of an apparent rupture in the epistle's unity at Phil. 3.1 where the phrase τὸ λοιπόν seems to suggest that Paul is about to close the epistle, but instead of closing, 3.2 begins a new subject.[198]

The tradition of integrity is a strong one and is in fact becoming more commonly held. All extant copies of Philippians and all references to the epistle, so it appears, assume the epistle's integrity. The manuscript tradition has no argument against the epistle's integrity. $P^{46}$, the principle manuscript, is dated as early as the second to third centuries.[199] Note also the point made by Aland and Aland that the 'transmission of the

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[194] See his essay 'Lost Epistles to the Philippians', Lightfoot, 138–42.

[195] Thucydides 8.51; Josephus, *Antiquities* 12.10–11 (227–28); Alciphron, *Ep.* 19 (2.4) 1, 3.

[196] See also the following list of examples in which the plural form (typically ἐπιστολάς) is employed as a reference to a specific letter: Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Taurica* 589, 767; *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 111, 314; Thucydides 1.132.5; 4.50.2; Polybius, 5.43.6; Lucian *Amores,* 47; Julian, *Ep.* 70; 1 Macc 5.14; 10.3, 7; 11.29; 12.5; finally, note that ἐπιστολαί in Esther 3.14 is probably a translation of the singular noun כְּתָב (Lightfoot, 141).

[197] See also more recent arguments against the suggestion in Kurt Aland, 'Die Entstehung des Corpus Paulinum' in *Neutestamentliche Entwürfe* (TB 63; Munich: Kaisen, 1979), 349–50. Aland notes the simple point that the very same Polycarp who wrote the plural ἐπιστολάς in 3.2 seems to operate under the assumption of a singular correspondence (ἐπιστολή) in 11.3: '*derselbe Polykarp 11,3 vom Brief an die Philipper im Singular spricht*' (Aland, 'Entstehung', 349).

[198] Lightfoot accounts for this by postulating that just as Paul was about to say again the thing that was no trouble to say again, he was interrupted and reminded of some bad circumstances (Lightfoot, 69).

[199] Note the relatively recent attempt to re-date $P^{46}$ to the late first century by Young Kyu Kim, Palaeographic Dating of $P^{46}$', *Biblica* 69 (1988): 248–57.

New Testament textual tradition is characterized by an extremely impressive degree of *tenacity*. Once a reading occurs it will persist with obstinacy'.[200] The implication is that the fact we have no textual variants suggesting a redacted text is problematic from a transmission perspective.[201] While this proves little, it demonstrates a good degree of plausibility that the epistle is a single unit. It is important then to note that Loveday Alexander added further plausibility to the epistle's literary integrity through her demonstration that the problematic word (τὸ) λοιπόν functioned in at least some 'family letters' as a simple conjunction rather than a closing formula.[202] Λοιπόν also appears in 1 Thess. 4.1 and is typically translated the same way ('finally'), yet is nowhere near the end of the epistle. Alexander further cites two other family letters. The first is an early second century letter 'Sempronius to Gaius, His Son',[203] in which λοιπόν is employed clearly in the body and not the salutation and is translated by Winter as 'in the future'.[204] The second is a citation from the 'Letter from a Prodigal Son'.[205] Here λοιπόν clearly occurs in the mid-body of the letter and is translated by Deissmann as *Im übrigen*, 'besides', 'as to the rest', or 'furthermore' as the English translation has it.[206] Of course, the significance of this is that the function of the word has been understood in a way not necessarily confluent with generically parallel literature, and insofar as this is true, has been ill-used as a means for rupturing the epistle's integrity.

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[200] Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (trans. E. F. Rhodes; 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989): 291, emphasis theirs; note also the rest of their discussion, pp. 292–97.

[201] See also the excellent discussion in Moisés Silva, *Philippians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 21–27

[202] Loveday Alexander, "Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians", *JSNT* 37 (1989): 96–97; the following comments are derived from this article.

[203] P. Mich., 191.

[204] J. G. Winter, 'In the Service of Rome: Letters from the Michigan Papyri', *CPh* 22 (1927): 245–46.

[205] Archive no. 846 in the Berlin Koeniglichen Museen (III.) cited by Adolf Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten: Das Neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1909), 128–29, fig. 26.

[206] Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Greco-Roman World* (trans. from the 1909 2nd German edition by Lionel R. M. Strachan; New York: Hodder and Stoughton, N.D.), 177.

In this project, I shall be writing with the understanding that the epistle is probably a literary unit.[207] Even if this assumption is incorrect, it does not impact the objectives of this project in any significant way. The reason for this is simply that none of the suggested separate letters break up the first chapter, or Phil 1.12–18a in particular. Those who advocate a redacted epistle typically understand the redaction to have taken place along one of two lines: the two-epistle redaction,[208] and the three-epistle redaction.[209] Our passage falls into perhaps the longest unquestioned fragment, namely Phil. 1.1–3.1(a).[210]

### *2.b. The Purposes of Philippians*

The 'purpose' of Philippians, here is a reference to those functions which the epistle attempts to perform. There is a slight difference between the occasion of an epistle and the purpose(s) of an epistle. The occasion of Philippians is probably as simple as Epaphroditus' return to Philippi (Phil 2.25–30). Given this occasion, Paul now has an opportunity to perform some other necessary tasks. Critically speaking, the purpose of Philippians enjoys no scholarly consensus, although the variations are relatively minor ones. Furthermore, it is quite rare for someone to claim that Philippians has a single purpose; most scholars prefer to speak of the purpose*s* (plural) of Philippians. That is, most scholars refer to a number of circumstantial complexes which caused Paul to perceive an exigence requiring an epistle, rather than to one single circumstance. Kümmel, for example, after listing four of the more obvious functions, notes that 'the

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[207] For further discussion, see the literature cited in n. 188, and the following select bibliography: Martin Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher I, II; an die Philipper*, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 11 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1937); Garland, 'The Composition and Unity of Philippians', 141–73; Ernst Lohmeyer, *Der Brief an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an Philemon;* 'Beiheft,' by Werner Schmauch, MeyerK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964); Kümmel, *Introduction*; Peter O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians*; Watson, 'A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians', 57–88.

[208] Gnilka, *Philipperbrief*, 10; also Gerhard Friedrich, 'Der Brief an der Philipper', in Jürgen Becker, Hans Conzelmann, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Die Briefe an die Galater, Epheser, Philipper, Kolosser, Thessalonicher und Philemon* (NTD 8; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 128.

[209] See Jean-François Collange, *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians* (trans. A. W. Heathcote; London: Epworth Press, 1979), 6, also see 8–15.

[210] For discussions on the breakdown, see the cited literature in n. 188. Specifically, see the comprehensive lists compiled by Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians*, 127–30.

reasons for writing this very personal letter are so numerous that its origin[211] is readily understandable'.[212] Even a recent study of Philippians by G. Peterman that tends towards a single purpose understands that purpose to be in conjunction with another more encompassing purpose.

The major functions generally understood[213] to be the complex of purpose behind Philippians are (1) to respond to their gift, (2) to allay fears of his own welfare, (3) to warn of false teachers ('opponents'), and (4) to exhort them to be steadfast and unified in the face of conflict.[214] The first two of these are generally contextualised in terms of an intimate relationship between Paul and the Philippians.[215] The latter two suggested purposes reflect the general tone of Paul's apostolate which pervades all of his letters.

Given this relatively standard list, it is necessary to supplement the discussion with an overview of an important recent study by Peterman, who suggests that the primary purpose for writing was to contextualise the gift. Furthermore, for the purposes of this thesis, we must consider two other 'purpose' elements within the epistle that clearly speak to the activity Paul is attempting to perform upon the Philippians, namely reassurance, and the creation of Christ-centred *phronēsis*.

***2.b.i. The 'Gift'*** Peterman's hypothesis is that the primary purpose of Philippians is to contextualise the gift (Phil 4.10–20) in an overarching theological structure which helps the Philippians understand the significance of their generosity in terms of Paul's mission.[216] The distinctive nature of the thanks section in 4.10–20 has

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[211] It seems to make more sense to translate *Entstehung* (rendered here as 'origin') as 'formation'; see Werner Georg Kümmel; Paul Feine and Johannes Behm, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1965), 232.

[212] Kümmel, *Introduction*, 324.

[213] Even when the epistle is partitioned these typically emerge as the major functions of what would be the extant Philippian correspondence. For example, when we translate Collange's three partitions into terms of purpose, the letters produce the same categories as stated above; see Collange, 6, also see 8–15; and note that the above stated four-fold purpose is stated virtually everywhere: example discussions are Kümmel, *Introduction*, 323; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 35–38.

[214] For example, see the summary in O'Brien, *Philippians*, 35–37.

[215] On the intimate character of Philippians, see pp. 75ff.

[216] G. W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi: Conventions of Gift-Exchange and Christian Giving* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

given occasion for some to see it as a separate ('thank-you') letter entirely.[217] Beare, who is somewhat typical, generates this hypothesis on the basis that 'it is inconceivable' (to Beare) that Paul would have waited 'some months' to send off his thanks for the gift which Epaphroditus had delivered. Thus he dismisses Scott's suggestion that Paul had sent an earlier letter as well as the one we find in Philippians[218] as 'quite untenable'. Precisely why this is less tenable than his own position he does not say. While Beare's inability to conceive the delay as normative may reflect a valid problem, it has to be weighed against the overarching problems associated with the redaction hypothesis in general. If the latter proves to be incongruent with the extant evidence, then it really comes down to a matter of our having to alter our expectations of normal behaviour in the Greco-Roman world. Whether or not *we* can conceive that a certain ancient act is adequately polite is not a basis for criticism.[219] Indeed, with reference to Beare's argument, and any other argument about the position and nature of the thanks in 4.10–20, it is only on the basis of such work as Peterman's that we can make claims as to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of Paul's expression of gratitude in Philippians.

Peterman's much-needed work explores the social conventions of gift-giving in the Greco-Roman world. He sees the Philippians' gift as adhering to the structure of Greco-Roman norms of social reciprocity associated with the establishment and maintenance of friendship.[220] Clearly, early Christians adopted established social structures to carry on their basic activities. Thus, when it comes to the gospel, one of Peterman's main points is that the structures of reciprocity are employed to the effect that the Philippians are partners in the gospel with Paul by virtue of their gift-giving. Peterman understands this social convention and its relationship to the gospel to be so deeply connected that he

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[217] See, for example, Beare's commentary which was *one of* the earliest publications suggesting the partition, F. W. A. Beare, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 4, esp. 150.

[218] E. F. Scott, 'The Epistle to the Philippians', in *The Interpreter's Bible* (ed. G. A. Buttrick et al.; vol. 11; New York: Abingdon, 1955), 9–11, 121.

[219] Apparently independent of each other, no less than four authors suggested the 4.10–20 partition: Beare in 1959; Walter Schmithals, 'Die Irrlehrer des Philipperbriefes', *ZThK* 54 (1957): 306–309; J. Müller-Bardorff, 'Zur Frage der literarischen Einheit des Philipperbriefes', *WZUJ* 7 (1957/58): 591–604; Rahtjen, 167–73, esp. 172–73.

[220] See his summary of conventions associated with gift-giving (Peterman, 88ff.).

suggests that virtually the entire letter is a prelude to the offering of thanks in 4.10–20: 'In a sense, 1.1–4.9 are prolegomena to the response of 4.10–20'.[221]

Peterman's argument is appreciated because it combines social realities with certain Pauline ideals, specifically his attention to the spread and development of the gospel. The only criticism to offer is that it seems Peterman gives the balance of the emphasis to the 'thanks' section as opposed to the gospel. It seems preferable to say that the epistle is yet another attempt by Paul to promote his gospel; one of the ways he achieves this in Philippians is by recognizing and explaining the Philippians' participation in the gospel. This is necessary since there are other issues which do not fit into Peterman's reconstruction of an epistle which is nine parts prolegomena. Thus while the kind of reading Peterman has produced for Philippians is appreciated, the problem is that social reciprocity alone requires us to diminish the significance of topics within Philippians which have greater moment for Paul and his ministry in general.

***2.b.ii. Reassurance*** It is a position of this thesis that the activity of reassurance in Philippians is used in two different ways.[222] Thus, a discussion on whether the viability of reassurance is a feature of Philippians in general, and of our text in particular (Phil 1.12–18) is naturally warranted. The idea of reassurance involved in this letter is implicated in the formally rhetorical category of ethos (ἦθος). John Marshall has attempted to explicate Paul's development of ethos in Philippians. He argues that Paul is not really aware of the actual situation at Philippi and thus his ability to develop appropriately the logos and pathos aspects of a formal rhetorical unit is hampered. As a result, Paul is forced to rely more heavily on the remaining rhetorical element, ethos, which is developed within the speech unit. Marshall suggests that the primary way in which this is achieved is the usual one: identification with the audience.[223] This is necessarily going to be achieved in, though not confined to, the early stages of the epistle.

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[221] Peterman, 103.

[222] See the discussion on pp. 139ff.

[223] John W. Marshall, 'Paul's Ethical Appeal in Philippians', in *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht; JSNTSup 90; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 357–71.

We find that Phil 1.3–11 does that very thing as Paul expresses his strong personal affection for the Philippians.[224]

Ralph Martin has put the case for reassurance forward in oblique, but certain terms. He contends that 'Paul's picture of the Christian life is at odds with the sectarian viewpoints, and this explains the undertone of firm resistance to their ideas and practices which runs like a thread through this letter in all its chapters'.[225] What Martin is referring to here is the fact that there were obvious features of Paul's present condition as well as the present condition of the Philippians which contradicted normal assumptions of truth, success, and so forth. Paul's imprisonment, for example, does not immediately present itself as a great success story in the Greco-Roman world—nor, for that matter, does the suffering of the Philippians. Martin believes that these ostensibly negative points are being exploited by Paul's opponents in favour of 'a presentation of the believer's life in terms of triumphalism and present glory'.[226] Thus, Martin's suggestion is that Paul is creating a discourse in Philippians which is designed to 'supply a rationale for the Christians in time of persecution'[227] which subverts the discourse being presented by the opponents, and to reassure the Philippians that all is well with the gospel and its adherents.

More specifically, however, in her research on Hellenistic letter forms, Loveday Alexander has demonstrated that the formal structure of the epistle itself suggests that the central reason for writing is all about reassuring the Philippians concerning Paul's situation.[228] The argument is made on the basis that a 'disclosure formula' (γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι), subcategory of what John White calls 'informational formulas', signals the primary reason for writing.[229] Disclosure formulas seem to contain four standard features: a verb of desire such as θέλω (here βούλομαι); a verb 'to know' in the infinitive

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[224] That the opening section, the thanksgiving period in particular, reflects Paul's demonstrations of personal affection is everywhere attested in the commentaries; e.g., Fee, 72ff.; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 53ff..

[225] Ralph Martin, *Philippians* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1976), 34.

[226] Martin, *Philippians*, NCB, 34.

[227] Martin, *Philippians*, NCB, 34.

[228] Loveday Alexander, 'Hellenistic Letter Forms and the Structure of Philippians', *JSNT* 37, (1989): 95. Note that *formal* analysis is a reference to analysing the features of a letter's *form*.

[229] Alexander, 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms', 92.

(here γινώσκειν); the party addressed (in accusative, here ὑμᾶς); the information to be known (often announced by a ὅτι-clause, as is the case here).[230]

Alexander begins her argument by demonstrating that Philippians subscribes to the formal structure of the Greco-Roman 'family letter',[231] or more generally what Koskeniemi terms a *Verbindungsbrief*[232]—a letter intended primarily to convey information, usually between family members. What is important for the argument is that family letters seem to focus almost entirely on this exchange of information which, Alexander implies, leads to 'strengthening' family ties.[233] Importantly, within that formal structure, Alexander locates reassurance as a common feature of these letters, pointing to the fact that, within at least two of the family letters discussed,[234] the disclosure formula 'marks off this section as the information-bearing focus of the letter'.[235] Considering Philippians in these terms, when we add this focus to the more general features of the family letter, we end up with a letter 'with the primary purpose of strengthening the "family" links between the apostle and the Christian congregation in Philippi'.[236] On the basis of the formal structuring of the letter, the 'real business' of the letter is therefore said to be the 'exchange of news and reassurance'.[237]

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[230] T. Y. Mullins, 'Disclosure. A Literary Form in the New Testament', *NovT* 7 (1964): 49.

[231] Alexander, 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms', 90, 93–6; Alexander here describes the basic features of family letters. For a long discussion of Philippians as a 'letter of friendship', see the Introduction in Fee, *Philippians*, 1–24; also John L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (FFNT; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 196–79; J. L. White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter* (Missoula Montana: Scholars Press, 1972), 121–22; Stanley K. Stowers, 'Friends and Enemies in the Politics of Heaven: Reading Theology in Philippians', in *Pauline Theology* (ed. Jouette M. Bassler; vol. 1; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 107–14; Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (LEC 5; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 60; George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Studies in Religion; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 422; Mullins, 'Disclosure', 44–50.

[232] Alexander, 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms', 93; Heikki Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* (Annales Academiae scientiarum fennicae: Series B; vol. 102.2; Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Kirjapaino, 1956), 107.

[233] See 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms', 95 where Alexander expands on the matter as it relates to Philippians.

[234] See White, nos. 102 and 104B.

[235] Alexander, 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms', 92.

[236] Alexander, 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms', 95.

[237] Alexander, 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms', 95.

> It seems clear that the letter is not written to inform the church that Paul is in prison . . . but to reassure them that the situation is "all right" in three ways: *first* because "what happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel" (1.12–18); *second*, because death, if it should come, is not to be feared (1.19–23); and *third* and slightly contradictorily, because Paul will probably soon be released anyway (1.24–26).[238]

***2.b.iii. Christ-Centred** Phronēsis* According to Meeks, 'this letter's most comprehensive purpose is the shaping of a Christian *phrōnesis* [*sic*], a practical moral reasoning that is "conformed to [Christ's] death" in hope of his resurrection'.[239] Meeks has in mind that Philippians presents its readers with 'models to think from';[240] thus it provides a way for the Christian community to engage issues of internal unity and harmony, and external hostilities.[241] Meeks is entirely correct; the only problem, however, may be the fact that Meeks has not carried the role of the proposed *phronēsis* far enough.

Stephen Fowl, in his essay on 'Christology and Ethics', encounters Alexander's formal analysis of Philippians, and while citing agreement on the need for such formal study, suggests that 'too heavy a reliance on this formal analysis' may prevent the appropriate amount of attention being paid to the 'moral and theological work Paul's accounts of his own situation and his expressed desires for the Philippians are meant to do'.[242] Fowl then cites Wansink to lend support to his position. Wansink's assumptions about formal analyses, however, locate them within a discontinuous relationship between the theology of a text and the structure of a text. For his part, Fowl agrees that 'attention to formal analysis may be quite significant in resolving some interpretive debates regarding Philippians'; he nonetheless also suggests that 'such analyses will [not] do much to advance discussions about the relationships between the christology of 2:6–11 and the moral demands Paul makes in the epistle'.[243]

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[238] Alexander, 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms', 95.

[239] Wayne A. Meeks, 'The Man from Heaven in Paul's Letter to the Philippians', in *The Future of Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 333.

[240] Meeks,'The Man from Heaven', 333.

[241] Meeks, 'The Man from Heaven', 333–34.

[242] Stephen Fowl, 'Christology and Ethics in Philippians 2:5–11', in *Where Christology Began* (eds., Ralph P. Martin, and Brian J. Dodd; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998), 141.

[243] Fowl, 'Christology', 141.

While Fowl and Wansink both warn against the perils of privileging formal structure, they also set up formal analysis as somehow other than the theology of a text. It is possible that the idea of separating the formal structure from theology is a problematic one. In Wansink's account, the formal analysis of the epistle, while making some contribution, does little more than provide details about structure; he then describes the results of formal analyses in the subjunctive mood, but shifts to the indicative when he suggests that there '*is* much more at stake' than what formal analysis suggests.[244] However, it is not the design of formal analysis to take the place of further, theologically orientated analysis; it is rather the case that the formal analysis is necessarily a part of that study by virtue of providing a critical 'starting point'.[245] That is, one cannot have a christology of Philippians that is not in dialogue with the material means by which that christology is formed and presented; thus the formal analysis of an epistle is always a part of any theology generated by that epistle.

After (rightly) pointing to the 'potential pitfall of too heavy a reliance on . . . formal analysis', Fowl states:

> Unlike the standard family letter, at least one of the main points of 'business' of Philippians is Paul's attempt to get the Philippians to view things—such as Paul's imprisonment, God's activity in Christ, and the experiences of Timothy and Epaphroditus—in such a way that they themselves will be capable of thinking and acting in particular ways.[246]

This is clearly an accurate assessment of the situation. However, it is precisely due to the information provided by the formal analysis of the epistle—that reassurance is its 'real business'[247]—that we are able understand the nature of how Paul works to elicit the sort of ethical responses Fowl sees within the text. Fowl himself points out that by creating a change in the way the Philippians 'view things', Paul will then generate an ethical response. My suggestion is that reassurance is really quite a fundamental feature of the rhetorical ethos required to make the proposed necessary changes in the way the Philippians 'view things'. In fact, it is this sort of rhetorical operation that is the subject

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[244] Wansink, 106 (emphasis added).

[245] See Alexander's survey and discussion in Alexander, 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms', 88ff., in which she briefly describes the role formal analyses play in how we understand the general movement of the epistle.

[246] Fowl, 'Christology', 141.

[247] Alexander, 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms', 95.

of my later discussion of the opening in Phil 1.1–11,[248] and the (dis)closure of Phil 1.1–12ff.,[249] in which I suggest, among other things, that Paul is seeking the development of a certain hermeneutic which would enable them to 'view things' the way Paul wants them to.

In an earlier work, Fowl, albeit independently, comes to the same phronetic orientation of Philippians as Meeks.[250] Fowl presents the Christ hymn's operation in terms of an 'exemplar'. The story of Christ in Phil 2 is said not to be designed as a means by which an orthodox christology is related, nor is it even designed to present a model for imitation (since a Philippian Christian could hardly be required to imitate the exaltation suggested in Phil 2.9–11[251]). It rather serves to present a concrete situation from which the Philippians derive actual situational parallels regarding their own lives and consequently know how to act in those situations.[252]

Meeks and Fowl both present a perspective on Philippians which is confluent with the goals of this thesis. My only point of difference with them is that where they see a Christian ethic focussed on the salvation of the self (both the personal self and the local ecclesial self), I see a Christian ethic which, while based on this personal and communal salvation, extends to the larger pragmatic operation of the respective ministries of Paul and Christ.[253] As Fowl, for example, proceeds through his discussion of the relationship of the hymn to the earlier (Phil 1.27–2.5[254]) and later stages[255] of the epistle, the Philippians are everywhere said to be exhorted to a higher ethic (steadfast unity, heaven-based corporate sense of activity, worshipping in the spirit, boasting in Christ and not the flesh) with a view to when 'Christ will transform their bodies of humiliation into the body

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[248] See pp. 133ff.

[249] See pp. 137ff.

[250] Stephen E. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul: An Analysis of the Function of the Hymnic Material in the Pauline Corpus* (JSNTSup36; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990).

[251] Fowl, *The Story of Christ*, 80.

[252] See the discussion on exemplars in Fowl, *The Story of Christ*, 92ff.

[253] Note the comments on Paul's obligation to the Philippians, pp. 108f.

[254] Fowl, *The Story of Christ*, 85–92.

[255] Fowl, *The Story of Christ*, 98–101.

of his glory'.[256] It is clear that Paul does in fact exhort the Philippians to such ethical activity. The only problem I have with this is that it suggests that the ethic presented to the Philippians is not entirely descriptive of the actual ethics of Paul himself, nor of Christ, for that matter.

The Christian *phronēsis*, and its subsequent ethic, presented here, while rightly located within the self, remains within the confines of the ecclesial group, and does not represent the thinking and practice portrayed by the simple and concrete situations of both Paul and Christ: Paul is willing to subordinate his interests *for the greater benefit of others* (Phil 1.21–24), Christ is willing to subordinate his interests *for the greater benefit of others* (Phil 2.6–5). This 'greater benefit' is nothing short of the reconciliation of humanity, which is abbreviated by Meeks[257] and Fowl[258] as *personal* salvation or resurrection. I therefore assume that *some* soteriological reference is being made by the Christ hymn, in contrast to Fowl who contends that 'there is no specific indication that when Christ took on a human body it was for the purpose of ultimately freeing humanity from its subjection'.[259] Though there is clearly no indication on the poetic level of the hymn itself, surely in the context of Philippians (3.7–11, for example), Paul has this very thing in mind, or, at the very least, it is not absent from Paul's mind as he narrates the Christ story in Phil 2. Indeed, given the ease with which Fowl extends the ethical ramifications of the hymn to the other passages, is it not equally reasonable to extend the soteriological ramifications of the other passages to the hymn?

*Proclamation*, in the view of this thesis, is the means by which that 'greater benefit' is actualised by Paul and the church, and thus is the ultimate ethical goal that Paul has for himself and thus also for his churches (the later conclusions of this thesis will bear out the potential viability of my argument). Thus, with respect to the presentation of the purpose by Fowl and Meeks, I would argue that proclamation is the *ethical point* of the Philippians' ability to 'deploy their knowledge [*phronēsis*] of the gospel in concrete situations in which they find themselves'.[260] However, Fowl continues this sentence in a way that, as

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[256] Fowl, *The Story of Christ*, 101; note Meeks, 'The Man from Heaven', 333, 335.

[257] Meeks, 'The Man from Heaven', 333.

[258] Fowl, *The Story of Christ*, 89.

[259] Fowl, *The Story of Christ*, 60.

[260] Fowl, 'Christology', 145 (though he entirely agrees, Fowl is here summarising Meeks).

mentioned, potentially abbreviates the ethical imperative: 'so that they will be able to live faithfully'.[261] The problem lies with the content of 'live faithfully'. What I would add to this is that to 'live faithfully' extends beyond the sense of personal unifying activity and personal redemption,[262] and into the larger Christian responsibility envisaged and exemplified by Paul throughout his ministry and, in Philippians, exemplified by the stories of both Paul and Christ, namely *active* participation in God's overarching process of advancing the gospel.[263]

The argument of this thesis takes its leave from the assumption that the real business of the epistle is to reassure, and then proceeds to describe the role proclamation plays in the attempt to reassure.[264] The subsequent exegetical impact of this on Philippians is that the issue of Christian proclamation, which I understand in a fairly general way to be the attempt to further what God sought to achieve through the whole Christ story,[265] is a subtle but substantial one. In general, it is a shift away from the focus on personal benefit to a focus on personal responsibility not just to the local church but to the greater mission of the gospel, since for Paul '*everything* is subordinate to the preaching of the gospel'.[266]

Such a reading of the immediately surrounding text would look something like the following: Paul's shame (1.19) would be a reference to his inability to allow God to work through him to bring about his greater purposes[267] (achieved through the proclamation of the gospel). When Paul then goes on to elaborate on the relative value of life and death (1.21–26), he concludes that he should subordinate his own personal interests to those of the Philippians. He does not do this just because they are great people, but because the ministry of the gospel must be furthered among them, and Paul is subordinate to what he

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[261] Fowl, 'Christology', 145.

[262] For example, Fowl, *The Story of Christ*, 89; Fowl, 'Christology', 148.

[263] See, for example, the discussion of the Agon motif in V. C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif* (NovTSup 16; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 127–29; 191–95.

[264] See for example, the later discussion where I suggest that the sort of *phronēsis* found in Philippians is a hermeneutic Paul is attempting to give the Philippians to deal with certain kinds of conflict, pp. 90ff.

[265] See the later discussion on εὐαγγέλιον on pp. 148ff.

[266] O'Brien, *Philippians*, 117 (emphasis added).

[267] See O'Brien, *Philippians*, 114.

perceives to be God's greater interests. Thus Paul presents an example of what is necessary for God's ministry to operate in this world, the subordination of one's own interests to God's.

Paul's subsequent exhortation in 1.27ff. is an attempt to get the Philippians to subordinate their own interests to God's. Indeed, O'Brien contends that this exhortation 'stands as a rubric to the whole section 1:27–2:18, *with the subsequent admonitions and statements expanding and explicating what is involved in living worthily of the gospel*'.[268] This whole section (1.27ff) begins with an interesting adverb, 'only' (μόνον), which delimits the verbal activity[269] of 'conduct'; thus Barth argues that the real concern of the Philippians is to be the '*rectus cursus*', namely 'the *prokopē* (advance) of the Gospel or the faith'.[270] The verb 'conduct' (1.27) is here used by Paul not simply as a reference to membership in a heavenly commonwealth, but also to the responsibility that they actually have to do things. Here those things are to result in the progress of the gospel, and they do those things in an actual social/civic context.

The contrary interests of that context mean that in order for the gospel to progress, a 'struggle' (ἀγών) develops in the same way that it has for Paul in his own attempt to advance the gospel. Thus the Philippians are exhorted to conduct themselves 'in a manner worthy of the gospel'; such conduct would be manifested when they 'stand in one spirit, with one mind (ψυχή), striving together for the faith of the gospel'.[271] The *point* of standing and striving together is to promote the faith of the gospel in the context of a struggle (ἀγών) against the same kind of opposition Paul experiences for the same

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[268] O'Brien, *Philippians*, 146. With respect to the ethical outliving of the importance Paul places on the gospel, O'Brien's reading of 'gospel' in Philippians is largely confluent with my own. Apart from his commentary, note also the whole discussion in Peter T. O'Brien, 'The Importance of the Gospel in Philippians', in *God Who is Rich in Mercy* (eds. Peter T. O'Brien and David G. Peterson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986).

[269] BAGD, 528.

[270] Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (London: SCM, 1962), 45.

[271] Taking the genitive of the phrase τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου to be one of origin results in the translation, 'the faith which is based on the gospel' (O'Brien, *Philippians,* 152); as appositional, the result is 'the faith that is the gospel' (Gordon Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 167).

reason;[272] thus, by so standing and striving, Paul's followers 'show that their goals are the same as his own', namely the general progress of the gospel.[273]

As Paul continues the discussion of the exhortation to conduct oneself worthily of the gospel in 2.1ff., he begins with a series of particular conditions expressing his belief that what is necessary for the Philippians to achieve what he wants them to achieve is already present among them. Importantly, when in 2.2 he comes to the apodosis of the series of protases, in 2.1, the last phrase completes the structure with a focus on this Christian *phronēsis*: 'thinking the same' or 'intent on one purpose' (ἓν φρονοῦντες). That purpose or intention, in this reading, would naturally be the proclamation or progress of the gospel.[274] The particular Christian *phronēsis* Paul has in view is one which enables the Christians to create within them a set of conditions that enable the gospel to progress. This *phronēsis* is one in which the Philippians understand that they need to subordinate their own interests to the progress of the gospel. Paul then, in 2.6–11, presents the story of Christ who did this very thing. He subordinated the privilege of his heavenly state to the soteriological needs of humanity, which, of course, is the gospel in that it represents God's overarching goal in human history.[275]

The subsequent exhortations (2.12–18) turn to how the gospel is more specifically worked out in the lives of the Philippians themselves. Paul's sense of the progress of the gospel cannot be tied to proclamation alone, it must also carry with it the outliving of the gospel after it has been accepted—that is, after proclamation. Furthermore, the church's responsibility to advance God's purposes through proclamation necessarily includes creating the conditions for progress as well, which is enabled by Paul's focus on internal cohesion; hence Meeks' comment that 'the emphasis in Paul's paraenesis . . . is not upon the maintenance of boundaries, but upon internal cohesion'.[276] Thus, the sort of *phronēsis* we find in Fowl and Meeks, is clearly a necessary part of achieving what God

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[272] On the ἀγών motif in Philippians as a reference to a struggle for the progress of the gospel, see Pfitzner, 82–129, 191–95.

[273] O'Brien, 'The Importance of the Gospel in Philippians', 226.

[274] I briefly discuss the possibility that progress in Phil 1.13 should be defined as proclamation on pp. 145.

[275] See again the later discussion on εὐαγγέλιον on pp. 148ff.

[276] Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1983), 100.

wants to achieve. That is, God wants to provide salvation, but the (post-messianic) goal *and* means of that salvation is the same: people are the goal and people are the means.

Finally, this duality is not exactly foreign to the whole concept of gospel. It is apparently operative within the word εὐαγγέλιον itself. Becker has presented εὐαγγέλιον as a term which carries both a kerygmatic concept and an active concept of proclamation.[277] This is based on his prior argument that the New Testament usage of the term is derived from the Greek and not from the Hebrew sense (which tended to focus on the act more than anything else), or LXX usage (which separated the action from the content and weakened the meaning). He notes that, in the Greek usage, the term maintained a sense of its original usage, namely a confluence of the act of bringing good news and the good news itself.[278]

### *2.c. Provenance*

The issue of provenance remains a somewhat significant issue in our critical appreciation of Philippians. For the purposes of this thesis, provenance has a tangential role in the later discussion on Phil 1.13,[279] when Paul points to contextualising information about his circumstances that has spread throughout the 'whole praetorium' (ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ). However, it should be noted that while I take τὸ πραιτώριον to be a reference to the imperial guard in Rome, my later argument is based on the *communication* of information and not upon the specific audience to whom that information is conveyed.

It appears to me that the weight of the evidence rests with the traditional position that Paul wrote Philippians from a prison[280] in Rome. This appears to be the case primarily because it is entirely confluent with the external evidence[281] and none of the internal evidence is against it, indeed it is wholly compatible with it. Furthermore, the

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[277] U. Becker, 'Gospel, Evangelize, Evangelist', *NIDNTT* 2:111; also see the discussion on p. 149.

[278] Becker, *NIDNTT*, 2:108–9.

[279] See pp. 145ff., as well as the discussion on Paul's imprisonment on pp. 77ff.

[280] Thus also, with the vast majority of scholars, I hold that the phrase τὰ κατ' ἐμέ is a reference to Paul's imprisonment, as opposed to Paul's revelation (made from non-Roman prison) that he is a Roman Citizen, see Collange, 9–10.

[281] The Marcionite Prologues state that the epistle was written from Rome; see Robert M. Grant, trans., *Second-Century Christianity: A Collection of Fragments* (London: S.P.C.K, 1946), 19.

frequently presented alternatives (Caesarea,[282] and Ephesus[283]), simply require a more strained reading than Rome. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive discussion of that matter, I shall outline the basic issues and where I stand on them.

On historical issues such as this, the most appropriate path to follow is to begin by stating the basic data upon which there is general and necessary agreement: (A) Paul writes from a prison (Phil 1.12–14, 17); (B) the imprisonment probably poses a threat to Paul's well-being or even life (Phil 1.20–30); (C) there is a 'praetorium' (τὸ πραιτώριον) with which he has contact (Phil 1.13); (D) there are some Christians in the purview of Paul's imprisonment ministry who are specifically labelled in Phil 4.22 as being 'out of Caesar's household' (ἐκ τῆς Καίσαρος οἰκίας); (E) there has been correspondence and travel between Paul and the Philippians (Phil 2.26; 4.18); (F) Epaphroditus, a Philippian envoy, is presently with Paul (Phil 2.25); (G) Timothy is presently with Paul and about to be sent to the Philippians (1.1; 2.19). Unfortunately, all of these data are used in various ways to demonstrate the veracity of the respective hypotheses.

For example, an Ephesian provenance is typically presented on the basis of the suggested problem that Philippi was too far from Rome to account for the proposed number of correspondences (as many as seven[284]) between the two cities to occur within a reasonable time-frame.[285] Once the problem of correspondences *versus* time-frame is established, and subsequently solved by the suggestion of an Ephesian provenance, since Philippi is a lot closer to Ephesus than Rome, the agreed data is swiftly squared with the Ephesian hypothesis. Thus, the proposed visit by Timothy would fit well with the fact that he is known to the Ephesians (based on Acts 19) and appears to agree with Acts 19.22, that Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia while 'he himself stayed in

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[282] Initially suggested in 1799 by H. E. G. Paulus, see Kümmel, *Introduction*, 328.

[283] Initially suggested by H. Lisco in 1900, see Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (The Word Biblical Commentary; vol. 43; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983), xxxviii. On Corinth as an option, see a full discussion of the issues in Hawthorne, xl–xli.

[284] Four journeys before the letter, and three proposed journeys, see Kümmel, *Introduction*, 325.

[285] Suggested by Adolf Deissmann, see Adolf Deissmann, 'Zur ephesinischen Gefangenschaft des Apostels Paulus' in *Anatolian Studies Presented to Sir W. M. Ramsay* (ed. W. H. Buckler and W. M. Calder; Manchester: The University Press, 1923); Deissmann, *Light*, 229, n. 1; 230–31; Adolf Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (trans. William E. Wilson; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), 17 and the listed bibliography; for a slightly different version of the journeys see Collange, *Philippians*, 15–19; 119, n. 2.

Asia for a while'. The reference to the Καίσαρος οἰκίας works with Ephesus as well, since 'according to the prevailing usage', the term should be understood not as a reference to the Imperial family or their relatives, but to the members of the Imperial Civil Service, the *Familia Caesaris* and their attendants.[286] The presence and travelling of Epaphroditus fits just as, or even more, easily into the Ephesian hypothesis as it does the Roman.

Thus the Ephesian hypothesis appears to make use of most of the data generally agreed upon just as well as the Roman hypothesis does. The problem is this: the Ephesian hypothesis requires extending the historical references beyond the natural, or most simple reading of the text. In particular, the reference to τὸ πραιτώριον, while applicable to a Caesarean provenance, and of course to a Roman provenance, applies to Ephesus only under the most strenuous reading for the simple reason there does not appear to have been a πραιτώριον at Ephesus. F.F. Bruce and B. Reicke make some extremely helpful points here. To begin, the use of a Latin loanword (*praetorium*) signals technical usage. Furthermore, the word refers to 'the headquarters of the praetor, more particularly the commanding officer's headquarters in a military camp';[287] while in Rome it is a specific reference to the emperor's guard, outside Rome in the empire at large, it was a reference to the headquarters of the governor of an imperial province who had military forces at his disposal.[288] Bruce further states that 'there is no known instance in imperial times of its use for the headquarters of a proconsul, the governor of a senatorial province such as Asia was at this time'.[289] However, due to some inscriptions near Ephesus bearing reference to a member of the praetorian guard (*praetorianus*) there is the natural assumption of the presence of a praetorian guard itself. However, Bruce notes that the '*praetorianus* mentioned in three Latin subscriptions was a *former* member of the

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[286] BAGD, 557; see also Lightfoot, 171–78; James D. G. Dunn, 'Caesar, Consul, Governor', *NIDNTT* , 1:269–70; Deissmann, *Light*, 230, n. 3.

[287] F. F. Bruce, *Philippians* (NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hedrickson, 1989), 11; also see his discussion in F. F. Bruce, 'St. Paul in Macedonia 3. The Philippians Correspondence'. *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 63 (1981): 263–65, most of which is now found in his aforementioned commentary.

[288] Bruce, *Philippians*, 11.

[289] Bruce, *Philippians*, 11. Reicke notes that the governor of Ephesus was at the time 'not a propraetor, but rather a proconsul' (Bo Reicke, 'Caesarea, Rome, and the Captivity Epistles', in *Apostolic History and the Gospel* [eds. W. Ward Gasque, and Ralph P. Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970], 283).

praetorian guard who later discharged police duties as a *stationarius* on a Roman road in the province of Asia'.[290]

The crucial data provided by Bruce and Reicke demonstrate the strong unlikelihood of an Ephesian provenance, or as Hawthorne has it, 'the fatal flaw in the Ephesian imprisonment hypothesis is that is entirely built upon conjecture'.[291] Even though much of the data do in fact fit, if they cannot all fit, then we are left with having to look elsewhere. Rome, of course, resolves any difficulty of locating a πραιτώριον, but so does the only other viable option, Caesarea. Adding to the difficulty of discerning between Rome and Caesarea is the fact that the main problem cited against a Roman provenance, that it is too far from Philippi, is also true of Caesarea. However, I once again point to the fact that the external data supports Rome, none of the internal evidence is against it, so what would cause someone to elect Caesarea over Rome?

Essentially, the difference is one of the interpretation of the cumulative effect of certain 'small' data (while ignoring the most important piece of information). For example,[292] (A) there was a πραιτώριον at Caesarea (note the comment in Acts 23.35). (B) There is a specific reference in Acts 23 to a Caesarean imprisonment. (C) Acts 24.27 suggests a sufficient amount of time (two years), despite the distance, for a number of correspondences between Caesarea and Philippi to take place. (D) The reference in Phil 1.7 to an ἀπολογία could possibly refer to a situation where Paul has already given a defence, and thus κεῖμαι in Phil 1.16, on Hawthorne's reading, would suggest that Paul lay in prison in spite of the earlier ἀπολογία;[293] importantly all of this squares well with the Acts 24.24–27 account of Paul at Caesarea. (E) The strong tone of the polemic in Phil 3.2–6, if the object is taken to be Jewish opposition and not Judaisers, fits well with the account in Acts 21.37–26.32 of a bitter battle going on at Caesarea between Paul and his Jewish opponents. (F) The reference in Philippians to a desired visit from Paul (Phil 2.24), and his confidence that he would be released (Phil 1.24–26; 2.24) works with the statements in Romans (Rom 15.28) that Paul desired to get to Rome and then move west

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[290] Bruce, *Philippians*, 12; see also Reicke, 283.

[291] Hawthorne, xxxix.

[292] Largely taken from Hawthorne, who offers a recent and comprehensive argument in favour of a Caesarean provenance, Hawthorne, xli–xliv.

[293] Hawthorne, xli.

into Spain, rather than go from Rome back eastward. All this amounts to creating a cumulative effect which suggests a strong viability for a Caesarean provenance.

However, in spite of that strength, it simply does not match the cumulative effect of the very same data when they are applied to the traditional provenance, Rome, not to mention the failure to deal with the most problematic assumption: (A) while there was unquestionably a πραιτώριον in Rome, the reference to a πραιτώριον outside of Rome (as with Caesarea[294]) is not a reference to the personnel of a governor but to the governor's residence itself.[295] In Rome, however, it was a reference to the personnel making up the imperial bodyguard;[296] while the Acts 23.35 reference, τῷ πραιτωρίῳ τοῦ Ἡρῴδου, easily bears this sense of a governor's residence as opposed to personnel. Furthermore, and most importantly, Phil 1.13 clearly refers to a group of people among whom this information has been spread, and not to a building; thus this point alone counters the viability of the Caesarean hypothesis. (B) There is a specific reference to a Roman imprisonment in Acts. (C) Acts also suggests two years for a Roman imprisonment (Acts 28.30). (D) The reference to an ἀπολογία in Phil 1.7 does not require a previous specific defensive speech. Note that while the term does have a technical legal usage for a courtroom defence,[297] as in Hawthorne's reading, 'the language does not appear to be exhausted by reference to the trial proceedings'.[298] Apart from the connotative breadth of the term, the simple *possibility* that Paul is referring to a future trial, and not one that has passed is, again, a perfectly viable option.[299] (E) The suggestion that the reference in 3.2–6 is to Jews remains debatable—in this thesis I support the hypothesis that they are in fact Judaisers.[300] (F) The confidence represented in Philippians that Paul expected to be released is a matter I also discuss later.[301] In short, Rapkse has been able to demonstrate

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[294] Πραιτώριον is used in the Gospels in precisely this way, see Matt 27.27; Mark 15.16; John 18.28, 33; 19.9.

[295] Reicke, 283.

[296] Reicke, 283.

[297] BAGD, 96; O'Brien, *Philippians,* 69; Silva, *Philippians*, 54.

[298] O'Brien, *Philippians*, 69; note Silva, 8; and the translation in, Silva, 54.

[299] O'Brien, *Philippians*, 69.

[300] See the general discussion on pp. 85ff., and pp.86ff. in particular.

[301] See pp. 77ff.

that it is entirely reasonable for Paul to have expected to be released. The suggestion of a post-imprisonment visit to Philippi in Phil 2.24 is not problematic. The problem is based on the fact that when Paul wrote Romans he imagined that when he eventually arrived there, he would then go on to Spain. However, we recognise that the plain historical reality of the situation is that Paul did not get to Rome by the means imagined while writing Romans. The situation has already changed enough to suggest the possibility that Paul's plans themselves had been, at the very least, altered. Hawthorne clearly overstates his response to such a possibility when he suggests that 'to assume that Paul later changed his mind and made plans to return east from Rome would be a most perplexing assumption, and one entirely without foundation in fact'.[302] Furthermore, Hawthorne argues that going west 'loomed extremely large in his [Paul's] thinking because he believed that there was no more place for him to work in the east'.[303] Hawthorne's vigorous denial of this possibility rests upon the rather tenuous foundation of Rom 15.20, 23, 24. The use of Rom 15.20 to support this argument is problematic, since work done at Philippi could hardly be a reference to 'another man's foundation'. Rom 15.23–24 simply points to the fact that Paul has done what he wanted to do in the east, not that he did not ever want to go back there. They certainly do suggest, however, that Paul desired to move his mission westward to Spain. The question to be asked here is whether with a number of years of prison under his belt, and various forms of support from Philippi during that imprisonment (Epaphroditus, and the 'gift'), it would not be conceivable that Paul would go and spend some time with them before heading off once again. One can hardly argue that when Paul penned Romans, he was figuring into the equation what appears to have been a four-year prison term. In short, things have changed enough to warrant the *possibility* of altered plans. That there is no announcement of changed plans in Philippians, as Carson, Moo, and Morris expect,[304] is hardly a basis for suggesting there was no change of plans.

One last point on this matter needs to be made. It is that of the proposed journeys, since these are typically used to suggest the presence of internal evidence which is against the external. The matter comes down to two different sets of issues: the first is

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[302] Hawthorne, xlii.

[303] Hawthorne, xlii.

[304] D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 320.

the historical critical issue of how many trips the text suggests were made between Paul and Philippi, the second is the plain historical matter of the distance between the two points and the time it would take to cover the distance. A generous reading of the number of journeys allows for seven journeys: one to alert the Philippians that Paul is in jail; a second to send Epaphroditus with a gift; a third for the Philippians to hear about Epaphroditus' illness; a fourth for Paul and Epaphroditus to hear about the concern of the Philippians. The letter is then thought to suggest three more trips: two journeys for Timothy to get to the Philippians and to then return (Phil 2.19), and a third journey for Epaphroditus to get back to Philippi (Phil 2.24).[305]

The only question is whether it is possible to make these trips within the required time-frame of a Roman imprisonment which has the only external evidence in favour of it. The answer is that it is most certainly possible for the following reasons. Concerning a mainly land-based journey, through the major routes of the Via Appia and the Via Egnatia, the distance is 'more than 700 miles',[306] whereas a sea-based journey 'would be over 900 miles'.[307] The distances, of the possible individual legs for a land journey are carefully laid out by Lightfoot[308] using references and cross references from ancient writers. He then arrives at the conclusion that it would take about a month to travel one way between Rome and Philippi.[309] As to a sea journey, though it was a greater distance, it would have been covered in less time.[310] Pliny lists the time-frames of several sea-based trade journeys to and from various points around the Mediterranean, Egypt and Europe,

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[305] So, for example, Carson, Moo, and Morris, 318. However, just why the final journey of Epaphroditus needs to be accounted for in the time-frame is quite beyond me, since the time required would be subsumed by the time it would take Timothy to get there and back.

[306] Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1996), 495.

[307] Brown, *Introduction*, 495.

[308] Lightfoot, 38, n. 1.

[309] On the rate of travel by foot, see the detailed discussion in the article by William M. Ramsay, 'Roads and Travel (in NT)', *A Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with its Language, Literature, and Contents, Including Biblical Theology*, 386. Ramsay sees that an average of 17 Roman miles (15–16 contemporary miles) per day would be normal. While this would have been a base level of speed, other forms of travel in varying combinations would naturally alter the travel time.

[310] Lightfoot, 38, n. 1; Reicke, 284.

all of which are done over remarkably short periods.[311] The swiftness of the journeys in Pliny reflect what may have been *possible*; though any sea-based journey from Rome to Philippi would naturally include land components in varying degrees. Nonetheless, a sea-based journey would have been quicker than the one-month land journey.

What all this amounts to is that the slower journey time, around a month, and a generous reading of the number of journeys, seven, do not enable the internal evidence to present us with any chronological conflict. Furthermore, as Silva points, this is really a 'pseudo-problem' and it remains 'very difficult to understand why this argument against a Roman origin continues to be taken seriously. The matter should be dropped from any further consideration. If we do so, however, then the *only* clear argument against the traditional view disappears'.[312]

### *2.d. The Intimate Character of Philippians*

The intimate character of Philippians cannot be easily discarded from the evaluation of its general function. Indeed, it is a position of this thesis that intimacy plays an important role in how we ought to understand what is going on in Philippians.[313] The tone of intimacy is naturally set by the introduction and thanksgiving period. Thus O'Brien's comments that Paul's introduction is 'unusually earnest',[314] and that 'the expressions in vv. 7 and 8 show a depth not plumbed elsewhere'.[315] Beare, referring to letter C of a partitioned/redacted Philippians (Phil 1.1–3.1; 4.2–9, 21–23) claims that 'it is perhaps the most intensely personal of all Paul's letters'.[316] Indeed, this 'impression of intimacy and cordiality is echoed by all commentators, and forms the most noticeable characteristic which distinguishes Philippians in the Pauline literature'.[317] For example,

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[311] Pliny, *Natural History*, 19.3f. While Pliny's lists reflect swift travel, they are only cited here as a means of referencing possibilities for travel. Note the comments in Reicke, 284.

[312] Silva, 7. For more detailed discussions on the matter see the following: O'Brien, *Philippians,*19–26 (and his bibliography); Bockmuehl, 25–32; Hawthorne, xxxvi–xliv (and his bibliography); Reicke; Lightfoot, 30–46; Silva, 5–8; Kümmel, 324–32; Carson, Moo, Morris, 319–21, and most of the major commentaries.

[313] See pp. 135ff.

[314] O'Brien, 'The Importance of the Gospel in Philippians', 216.

[315] O'Brien, *Philippians*, 72–73; also see Fee, 93–95; Martin, *Philippians* (NCB), 67.

[316] Beare, 25; see also his comments on Phil 1.3–8, Beare, 52.

[317] Ralph P. Martin, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 45.

Vincent sees the letter as having a generally positive and 'happy' mode: 'The pervading tone of the letter is imparted by Paul's strong personal attachment to the church'.[318] Lightfoot claims that 'the Philippian church was bound to the Apostle by closer ties than even the Thessalonian. . . . But in the epistle to the Philippians the Apostle's commendation is more lavish, as his affection is deeper'.[319] For Deissmann, Philippians is 'the most gracious of all St. Paul's writing'.[320] Müller observes that the qualities of the letter 'all bear a very personal stamp, and make it—to a measure surpassing any other letter of the apostle—*a letter*, the effusion of the heart to a Church he loved'.[321] Coming from a Greco-Roman perspective, Stowers notes that while there are no generically pure letters of friendship in the New Testament, Philippians bears out the 'commonplaces and language from the friendly letter tradition';[322] he later notes that 'the letter is . . . densely packed with the motifs of friendship'.[323] Philippians would, however, remain 'intimate' regardless of its generic features. For example, a rhetorically obvious feature is the fact that the asymmetrical power structure, so overt in the patron-client language of the other Pauline letters, is muted in this epistle.[324]

Even with such generic influences in place, the language goes beyond their requirements. The use of 'joy' terms (χαρά and χαίρω) is comparatively concentrated in Philippians, employed fourteen times in Philippians and only thirty-six times throughout the rest of Paul's work.[325] In conjunction with a list of other words indicating intimacy and oneness, there is a high concentration of συν-prefixed words indicating Paul's

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[318] Vincent, xxxiv.

[319] Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 66.

[320] Deissmann, *Light*, 230.

[321] Jac J. Müller, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 20–21.

[322] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 60.

[323] Stowers, 'Friends and Enemies', 107.

[324] For a discussion on patron-client language see the chapter, 'The language and ideology of patronage' in Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 8–39, especially the discussion on the language of reciprocity and social roles, 22–26; see also Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (BNTC; N.P. Hendrickson, 1998), 34–35.

[325] Silva, *Philippians*, 12.

perception of their partnership: συγκοινωνός (1.7); συναθλέω (1.27; 4.3); σύμψυχος (2.2); συγχαίρω (2.17, 18); συνεργός (2.25; 4.3); συστρατιώθτης (2.25); συμμορφίζω (a reference to fellowship with Christ, 3.10); συμμιμητής (3.17); σύμμορφος (3.21); σύζυγος, συλλαμβάνω (4.3); συγκοινωνέω (4.14).

### *3. Paul's Immediate Context*

There is no disputing that the epistle is surrounded by suffering on the part of both Paul and the Philippians. Phil 1.27–30 indicates that Paul was under the impression that the Philippians were experiencing suffering. Paul himself, we believe, was writing from prison since he refers to himself as having 'bonds' (δεσμοί) in 1.7, 14 and, of course, to his intercourse with the Praetorian Guard in 1.13.[326]

On the details of Paul's imprisonment, I accept the argument of Brian Rapske[327] that Paul's imprisonment was relatively light and that he enjoyed a degree of freedom due to an expectation on the part of the Roman officials that his hearing would go in his favour, and that they expected him to be released. Furthermore, Rapske's argument collaborates claims made by Paul in the Philippians (1.24–26; 2.24), to the effect that Paul himself expected to be released. Rapske's argument, while obviously suggestive of the fact, does not require that Paul was released in contradiction to the tradition. His argument only holds that the Roman officials' estimate of the situation was that Paul would be released. Given the little we know of Nero, one could hardly require him to be consistent with this estimate. Nonetheless, considering (1) that it was the Jews who were bringing a case against Paul and their unfortunate reputation, and (2) that the *litterae dimissoriae* would have counted the case thus far in Paul's favour[328] and, finally, (3) that if the account in Acts is anything to go by (27.9ff.), Paul would have easily gained a rather healthy reputation among the Roman guard, then we can agree that Paul would have stood a good chance of gaining an expected release.

This of course is in some contrast to the deliberation going on in Phil 1.20b–24 which suggests that any expectation on Paul's part was qualified in his own mind by the fact that he was still in prison and subject to the whims of the Roman judiciary. That is,

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[326] On the nature of the Praetorian Guard and the letter's provenance see the earlier discussion on pp. 68ff.

[327] Brian Rapske, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody* (vol. 3; The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 174–91.

[328] See Rapske, 182–89.

while all seemed to bode well for his release, he nonetheless contemplated death as a real possibility. There is of course, the possibility that Paul was contemplating suicide which at the time was not entirely repulsive and often honourable. Craig Wansink has suggested the interesting possibility that Paul employs the language of voluntary death so as to indicate that he does indeed have a choice and that it is to go against what he desires ('to depart and be with the Lord', 1.23) for the sake of the Philippians and thus to offer himself as an example to the Philippians.[329]

These expectations on Paul's part are interesting because, in fact, Paul represents himself as being somewhat in control of his outcome. Phil 1.20–25 basically states that it is better for Paul personally if he dies and goes to be with the Lord, however, to remain alive would result in 'fruitful work'; thus Paul finds a dilemma: Is it better to die or to remain alive? He says that he is hard-pressed between the two options, he prefers to die (1.23), but in the end sees that it is better for the Philippians that he should remain alive (1.24). For this reason, he then says, 'being confident of this [that it is better for the Philippians], I know that I will remain and continue with you all'. Most commentators reject the idea that Paul had an actual choice because it is very difficult to imagine that, given his circumstances, he could have. However, a lot of problems develop from this because Paul does seem to suggest that he does have a choice. He suggests that he has two options and that one of them is better for him (1.23); of the two, he does not know which one to choose and thus has nothing to make known (καὶ τί αἱρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω, 1.22), but that he has settled on one of the choices, to continue living since this is better for the Philippians (1.24–26). The significant aspect of this is that Paul actively subordinates the power of the Roman government to the power he endeavours to construct with respect to his apostolic role.

Just what Paul means by καὶ τί αἱρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω is under some dispute. It could be a reference to a part of the conditional sentence in which the apodosis would be introduced by the καί,[330] or a separate sentence or independent clause which would

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[329] See Craig A. Wansink, *Chained in Christ: The Experience and Rhetoric of Paul's Imprisonments* (JSNTSup 130; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 125. On the possibility of suicide see in particular A. J. Droge and J. D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Fransisco: Harper, 1992), 168–83; also A. J. Droge, '*Mori Lucrum*: Paul and Ancient Theories of Suicide, *NovT* 33 (1988): 263–86; A. J. Droge, 'Did Paul Commit Suicide?', *BibRev* 5 (1989): 14–21.

[330] Clearly a problem, often noted by those who elect this reading, such as Lightfoot, 92.

locate the introduction to the apodosis at τοῦτό μοι.[331] Futhermore, do we take οὐ γνωρίζω in its typical New Testament usage and translate it 'I do not make known', since γνωρίζω is understood in its twenty-five other New Testament occurrences to mean 'make known' or 'reveal',[332] or do we read it this once as 'I do not know'.[333] Lightfoot notes that while the former view here is typical of New Testament Greek, the latter is typical of Classical.[334]

It seems that the best way to deal with this is first to reject the reading that suggests Paul knew something but refused to reveal it, the 'causative' reading ('I do not make known'[335]), and then to accept that Paul is representing *rhetorically* the fact that he has experienced a genuine dilemma even though he has already decided upon a choice and resolved his dilemma (1.23–26). Thus, however one wants to translate οὐ γνωρίζω, the fact that Paul does make it known or appear to know what choice he will make must be taken into consideration, and what we actually have stated in the text must have precedence in determining how we read οὐ γνωρίζω over word studies and extra-biblical parallels.

It is surprising that there appears to be none who has emphasised the fact that this phrase is a *rhetorical* reconstruction of Paul's experience rather than the actual experience itself, the resolution of which is stated in 1.23–26. For this reason, the argument over whether Paul meant 'I do not know',[336] or 'I do not make it known',[337] is really a

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[331] Also seen as a problem since it assumes an ellipsis of a predicate (με?) in the protasis, so Lightfoot, 92; Silva, 83.

[332] Or 'declare', see O'Brien, *Philippians*, 127–28; also the discussion in Vincent, 27–28.

[333] BAGD, 163, and the list of extra-biblical attestations for this usage; Silva, 83–84; Fee, *Philippians*, 144–45.

[334] Lightfoot, 93.

[335] See, among others, Vincent, 27–28; H. A. A. Kennedy, 'The Epistle to the Philippians' in *Expositor's Greek Testament* (vol. 3; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1903), 428; William Hendriksen, *Philippians* (NTC; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 77, n. 56.

[336] Lightfoot, 93; BAGD, 163; Fee, *Philippians*, 144–43, who seems to have misread O'Brien saying that 'some of these (interpreters) suggest 'I cannot tell' in a less colloquial sense, of his *not being able* to reveal it' and cites 'esp. Lohmeyer and O'Brien' (Fee, 145, n. 28), when in fact O'Brien is quite clear that while such a reading cannot be excluded, it is not the one he chooses, O'Brien, *Philippians*, 127–28, n.66, note also his translation, p. 116.

[337] Vincent, 27–28; Kennedy, 'The Epistle to the Philippians', 428; Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 77, n. 56.

pointless one since it assumes that Paul is actually in the midst of a struggle, when it appears that the struggle is over. The language Paul uses to express his situation in this section (Phil 1.21ff.) is a reinforcement of a certain discourse which claims power for itself above all other powers. In so doing, Paul seeks to affirm the power of the gospel message, so central to his discourse, and which his followers, in this case the Philippians, have adopted. If Paul is seen as impotent against the Roman state, so does his discourse, and thus, so does the gospel message.

One of the significances of Rapske's point is that one would assume that the Philippians would also know how the land lay regarding Paul's imprisonment, that is, that they may have known the estimation of the Roman officials. If so, it may speak to why Paul mentions nothing about his personal circumstances and points only to the well-being of the gospel.[338] Not a few scholars have already pointed out various reasons for Paul's omission of his *personal* circumstances which generally comes under a common and expected umbrella, namely that for Paul the Gospel is of the highest importance and thus entwined in, or even more important than, his own personal circumstances.[339]

If the Philippians were under the impression that Paul expected to be released, in keeping with Rapske's suggestion of the Roman officials' estimate of the situation, then perhaps there was no real need for Paul to go into too much detail unless there were some new development of his situation. In spite of this, it is still difficult to imagine why Paul, who is generally held to have had a close relationship to the Philippians, did not mention anything, unless of course he understands his epistle to be functioning on a different level other than simply personal communication; that he had some other, greater rhetorico-theological or etho-poetic purpose in mind. Indeed, this is one of the claims I wish to make in this project: While Paul's letter is ostensibly a communication-letter (*Verbindungsbrief*[340]), it nonetheless attempts to subvert any questioning on the part of the Philippians that there may have been something wrong with Paul and/or his gospel.

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[338] Paul's omission of his personal circumstances has caused some surprise among scholars (Collange, 51).

[339] Among the many, see Collange, 51; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 91; O'Brien, 'The Gospel', 219, 220, 222; Martin, *Philippians*, 70–71 (who also believes that there is a 'tantalising obscurity about these verses'); Fee, *Philippians*, 108 ('to reflect on how his imprisonment has furthered the gospel *is* to reflect on his life!'; and correctly, adds that Paul probably expected Epaphroditus to fill in any other details).

[340] See earlier comments, pp. 60f.

Paul is in prison. His freedom to act as he wills has been removed. He is a man who believes he has a divine commission, but has been forced into submission by an earthly power: the collision of two power structures. Yet, he converts his prison to a locus of the gospel's power. He inverts the situation and represents his weakness as all the more strength. He turns impotence into power. He engages in creating a new (sub)version of his circumstances (τὰ κατ' ἐμέ, 1.12). Through his epistle, he engages in an attempt to invert the normal expectations of Greco-Roman culture so that his readers are given the 'correct' lens through which they must read his circumstances; that is, they are being persuaded to read τὰ κατ' ἐμέ, *the way Paul wants them to read them*.

Being in prison would have been a conventional stroke against Paul's reputation.[341] 'Regardless of why prisoners found themselves in prison, their mere presence there often was seen as pointing to unscrupulous, immoral or illegal activity. . . . Regardless of whether one was actually guilty of any crime, imprisonment in itself was seen as a reason for shame'.[342] What Wansink has in view here is that the previously established social construction of the prison was of such a nature that entering into prison meant entering into a previously established category of shame existing within the minds of those within the society. Not only did one feel a sense of shame by virtue of the social value, but everyone else automatically and perhaps unconsciously imputed shame to that person by virtue of that set of social assumptions.

It is commonly held that Greco-Roman society, particularly among the educated classes, operated on an economy of honour, the acquisition of which was 'a constant social tug of war, a game of social push and shove'.[343] Imprisonment was one of the fastest ways to lose honour and incur shame, equally fast was the public flogging; both together, as in Paul's case at Philippi, were a devastating blow to any honour held by the subject.[344] Rapske shows that not only is honour removed from the subject of a prison sentence, or beating, or some other humiliating punishment, those closely associated with

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[341] See the excellent and comprehensive discussion on the relationship between shame and prison in Rapske, 283–312.

[342] Wansink, 135.

[343] See B. J. Malina and J. H. Neyrey, 'Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World', in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. J. H. Neyrey; Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991), 29.

[344] See the excellent discussion on this in Rapske, 283–312. Note that he discusses in some detail the circumstances of Paul's beating and incarceration at Philippi.

the subject were in danger of losing honour as well.[345] For this reason, it was rather common for people to abandon anyone suffering the shame of prison, and quite remarkable when they did not.[346] What is most significant in Rapske's work is not the fact of the prison-shame scenario but the intensity of it and its lingering effect on the subject's social status if he or she should be freed. As to the question of whether Paul would have been alive to these social concerns, one would simply ask how could he not be? Shame and honour was the real currency of the Greco-Roman world, and 'Paul would have known that imprisonment, like exile, strained and changed the relationships between people', having himself imprisoned others, 'he would have been conscious of the fragility of relationships between those in prison and those outside'.[347]

Paul's first move to compensate for his problem is, of course, to invoke a sort of martyr-principle: Paul is in prison for the sake of the gospel. Since this is true, it is an effective way for Paul to maintain his apostolic economy, insofar as his followers, those over whom he is positioned as a spiritual father or leader, continue to maintain both the social and spiritual structures which govern their relationship to Paul. However, a prolonged imprisonment could easily take its toll on such an economy, since it could be perceived that the divine power surrounding the apostle Paul was either no longer active or that perhaps there was some discrepancy between his claims of the gospel's power and the fact that he remains in prison.

The Philippians, according to Acts,[348] have already experienced a Paul in prison (Acts 16.22ff.); however, on that occasion he was freed by a σεισμός, yet remained in prison along with the other prisoners which led to the conversion of the jailor as well. The important development in this story, however, is the honour-shame issue associated with Paul's beating and then incarceration in stocks in the inner prison. Most importantly, Paul's public and thorough humiliation also publically disgraces the gospel which he had been preaching, along with those with whom he had associated.

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[345] Rapske, 291–95.

[346] See Wansink 133–45

[347] Wansink, 133; see also Rapske, 298.

[348] The reliability of Acts is a subject far too vast to deal with in this project. For discussions on the historicity of Acts, see, for example, Colin. J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (ed. Conrad H. Gempf; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990).

Paul's experiences at Philippi, according to Acts, are an example of this tug-of-war for honour. As mentioned, Paul is 'publicly' (δημοσίᾳ) shamed in Philippi. The next morning—one assumes it was relatively early since it is to be done in 'secret' (λάθρα contrasting δημοσίᾳ, Acts 16.37)—the city officials try to eject Paul from the city and have the matter finished. The result of this would have been to affirm their position as men of power in Philippi, who can shame others at will, and to secure Paul's public shame in Philippi. Paul has other ideas. He is clearly aware of the problem that this secret expulsion poses for him and the gospel's progress in Philippi, and therefore refuses to leave the prison in secret and thus maintain or even validate his shame (Acts 16.35–37).

Paul's response is to indicate that his shaming was the result of an error on the part of the city magistrates; specifically, he points to a lack of due process (ἀκατάκριτος)[349] in his being railroaded directly to a public flogging and to a night at the pleasure of the Roman government. Paul has the Philippian magistrates in a rather awkward position which they confirm by virtue of their subsequent actions. It appears that they also assumed that the trial of Paul and Silas was less than desirable, and that rather than risk a challenge and then possible failure and subsequent personal condemnation under Roman law they were willing to shame themselves to some lesser degree by agreeing to the demands of Paul the previously shamed prisoner. Paul and his entourage now get a *public* escort by the city magistrates, yet Paul is not so easily dispatched. He uses this honour-building process to its fullest and goes to Lydia's house to meet the church before he leaves. The honour-shame struggle is over, scars are marked on both sides.

It would be wrong to claim that Paul felt that his honour was fully restored at this point.[350] It is clear, from 1 Thess 2.1–2, that Paul maintained some indignation regarding the episode. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul refers to his experiences rather obliquely. In Phil 1.20 there is the possible reference to, or at least a resonance with, the shame of his experiences at Philippi: 'according to my eager expectation and hope, that I shall be shamed (αἰσχύνω) in nothing'.[351] Phil 1.29–30 is more explicit: 'for to you it has been given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him but also to suffer (πάσχω) on his

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[349] It is not the case that Paul was claiming that it was illegal for the magistrates to mete out the stated punishment on a Roman citizen (Rapske, 299–300), against H. W. Tajra, *The Trial of St. Paul: A Juridical Exegesis of the Second Half of the Acts of the Apostles* (WUNT 2/35; Tübingen: Paul Siebeck, 1989), 28; see the summary by Rapske, 301–2.

[350] So also Rapske, 298ff.

[351] See Rapske, 298.

behalf, having the same sort of struggle (ἀγών) you *saw* in me and now hear to be in me'. The point here is that Paul is sensitive enough to the dishonour and shame of public humiliation and imprisonment for it to linger around in his mind and surface in his subsequent writings.[352] Paul's extended imprisonment (at least two years in Caesarea, Acts 24.27), culminating in his voyage to Rome and subsequent imprisonment for at least another two years (Acts 28.30), is easily another occasion for Paul to feel the pressure of social shame, even if he hopes against it (Phil 1.20). As with the Philippi episode, however, Paul is not going to allow shame to take him so easily, and thus he represents his circumstances in a positive light (Phil 1.12ff.).

In further connection to the Philippi episode and the shame-honour issue, it would be correct to assume that there was enough material in this event for the church to make something good of it. Paul was now well-known in Philippi, more so than perhaps he would have been had he visited the city without incident, and there was always that puzzling spectacle of the magistrates escorting them out of the city for the church's spin-doctors to play with. The incident at Philippi would have been a rather powerful testimony to communicate around Philippi; it certainly would have been woven into the fabric of the nascent church's understanding of its identity.

It is also worth noting the frequently observed fact that one of the 'we' passages in Acts ends when Paul leaves Philippi the first time (Acts 16.11–13; 17.1; 20.1–7) and picks up again when he returns. Assuming that the 'we' passages are not literary devices, it would seem that this indicates that Luke stayed on in Philippi. Luke is the one who communicates the prison story in Acts and he is also the one who, it seems, stays on in Philippi. It was obviously an important event, and Acts shows that Luke knew just how to narrate the story to generate the best effect. If Luke is left in Philippi, then one would expect him to integrate the story into his evangelistic work with the church. Even if Luke did not remain in Philippi, such a story would become well-known, and an integral part of the church's identity. If so, the fact that Paul is once again imprisoned, for at least four years, must have presented some challenge to the impression generated by stories of what would now be classified as 'divine favour' shown to Paul while experiencing conflict in Philippi. Where is this divine favour now? Was it ever there?

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[352] See 1 Thess 2.2; 2 Cor 7.5; 11.23ff.

### *4. The Philippians in the Context of Conflict*[353]

While Philippians presents conflict occurring on a number of fronts, the conflict represented in Phil 3 seems to have evoked the most academic interest. The state of scholarship regarding the identity of Paul's opponents in Phil 3 has not changed a great deal since Gunther's investigation into the subject revealed no less that *eighteen* different positions being put forward.[354] A more recent contribution is by Bateman,[355] in which he conflates an older suggestion that the opponents were both Judaisers and Gentile Christians,[356] and suggests that they were Gentile Judaisers.

It is not my purpose here to deal with all the various suggestions, but the major trends are worth noting. Paul does not indicate that these opponents are necessarily in Philippi, instead it appears he is simply warning the Philippians of a potential or impending threat.[357] Almost all of the positions concerning identity incorporate Jews or proselytes of some description. That we are dealing with Jews of some sort is obvious (to most) from the various points made in the earlier part of Phil 3.[358] What clouds the issue is that as we get to the end of the chapter there is a less-definable group mentioned: 'enemies of the cross' and so forth. Are they the same group or are they different? At

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[353] The issue of identity is the dominant one in the scholarly discussion of conflict at Philippi. This issue is, however, beyond the scope of this project. The interest in this project is the fact of conflict and the determining elements that outline the problem sufficiently. For more detailed discussion on the subject see John J. Gunther, *St. Paul's Opponents and Their Background* (NovTSup 35; Leiden: Brill, 1973), esp. p. 2, though not recent, it lists eighteen variant perspectives on the opponents. See also A. F. J. Klijn, 'Paul's Opponents in Philippians iii', *NovT* 7 (1964): 278–84; Carl R. Holladay, 'Paul's Opponents in Philippians 3', *RestQ* 12 (1969): 77–90; Robert Jewett, 'Conflicting Moments in the Early Church as Reflected in Philippians', *NovT* 12 (1970): 362–90; K. Grayston, 'The Opponents in Philippians 3', *ExpT* 97 (1986): 170–72; J. B. Tyson, 'Paul's Opponents at Philippi', *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 3 (1976): 82–95; W. Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics* (trans. J. E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 65–122; Mikael Tellbe, 'The Sociological Factors behind Philippians 3.1–11 and the Conflict at Philippi', *JSNT* 55 (1994): 97–121; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 26–35; Silva, 9–10; Hawthorn, xliv–vii.

[354] Gunther, 2.

[355] H. W. Bateman IV, 'Were the Opponents at Philippi Necessarily Jewish?' *BSac* 155 (Jan–Mar 1998): 39-61.

[356] See Gunther, 2.

[357] See Fee, *Philippians*, 9.

[358] Paul's references to circumcision and his word play on κατατομή to slander those who value it, along with his account of his own Jewish heritage all strongly suggest that we are dealing with Jews of some sort.

least since Lightfoot's 1869 commentary,[359] and as recently as Robert Jewett,[360] many have observed that the two passages in Phil 3 seem to indicate two different kinds of opponents: 3.2-6 reflects a more Jewish opponent and 3.18-19 reflects a more Antinomian/Libertine-Gnostic opponent. Rather than attempt to encompass the two under one theory—a task which Jewett believes requires too much energy[361]—some have decided that it makes more sense to divide them into two groups.

Jewett, who is representative, has pre-empted a challenge to his argument when he prefaces it with a long discussion of the character of the Philippian church which ends up claiming that the Philippians had a desire for 'perfection' which formed the basis of the disparate appeal of the two groups: on the one hand some felt they could find perfection in circumcision, on the other, others felt they could achieve it though an 'exalted spiritual self-consciousness'.[362] This last phrase of Jewett's is suggestive of how far from the actual evidence within the text he has strayed, since it bears little resemblance to anything Paul actually says. Jewett is following good historical practice by reading in the negative (following the hints and tips from Schmithals and Köster), and builds his argument upon the assumption[363] that the phrase 'enemies of the cross' in Phil 3.18 is closely parallelled to 1 Cor 1.17, which he suggests 'refers to a gnostic denial of the soteriological significance of the cross', but which actually says, 'For Christ did not send me to baptise, rather to evangelise, not with sophistic speech, in order that the cross of Christ may not be made empty (κενόω)'. From this, Jewett builds his arguments for the existence of a second, libertinistic group in Phil 3. It seems that, with respect to Jewett's complaint, more energy is spent on the two claims necessary for his position: that 'enemies of the cross' refers to Gnostics and that the Philippians had a desire for 'perfection' which formed the basis of an attraction to two opposing theologies.

Another question which raises itself is whether those references which are clearly Jewish are aimed at Judaisers requiring some obedience to the law or simply Jews preaching their pre-Christian theology in an effort to proselytise. As to the latter, Gnilka

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[359] Lightfoot, 143–44, 155.

[360] Jewett, 'Conflicting Movements', 362–90, esp. 378–87.

[361] Jewett, 'Conflicting Movements', 362.

[362] Jewett, 'Conflicting Movements', 387.

[363] Suggested by Schmithals, 'Die Irrlehrer des Philipperbriefes', 331–32.

observes that nowhere (unless this is the exception) does Paul write against Jews who are posing a threat to the church.[364] While this argument from silence does not prove much, it demonstrates certain trends. The text itself seems to bear out that we are dealing with Judaisers, since Paul's argument within the text seems to make more sense when understood in reference to Judaisers as opposed to just Jews.[365] The brief mention of the kinds of circumcision suggests that what is at stake is not Judaism versus Christianity, but whether (some?) Jewish rites apply to Christianity. On the one hand we have an actual circumcision given the label κατατομή by which Paul redirects the sign of circumcision as 'sign of the covenant' (Gen 17.11), to be simply a sign *of circumcision*, to signify the thing itself rather than a metaphysical covenant. On the other hand we have a circumcision which is not an actual circumcision given the label περιτομή, the intended signification of which is entirely metaphysical or as Paul would say, 'spiritual' and therefore 'real'. The function of the label κατατομή only works if actual, physical circumcision is being given value by those so labelled. When Paul then makes the claim that the Philippians are the (true) circumcision because[366] they worship God *in spirit*, his point is not to introduce a Jewish/Christian opposition, but a flesh/spirit opposition within the context of Christianity.

Paul's letter to the Philippians makes it clear that, at the very least, he was under the impression that the Philippians were experiencing some conflict on account of their new faith. To refer again to the Acts account as discussed in the previous section, some confusion may have arisen among the Philippian townspeople as to just how they were supposed to regard Paul and his entourage. On the one hand they were clearly seen as deviants—Jews out proselytising, a widely practised, though technically illegal, act[367]—who upset the normal rhythms of the city and were therefore justly punished—the

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[364] Gnilka, *Philipperbrief* 211; also Joachim Gnilka, 'Die antipaulinische Mission in Philippi' *Biblische Zeitschrift* 9 (1965): 260–64.

[365] See O'Brien, *Philippians*, 33.

[366] The phrase in Phil 3.3, οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες καὶ καυκώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ οὐκ σαρκὶ . . . is in a causal relationship to ἡμεῖς γάρ ἐσμεν ἡ περιτομή, insofar as the former explains the basis for the latter.

[367] See A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1963), 78ff.

punishment reinforces the deviant status.[368] On the other hand, they had been escorted out of the city by the city magistrates who no longer had the power to tell them what to do, indeed, Paul does the opposite of the magistrates' requirements by not leaving the city directly, rather via Lydia's house. The Western text's version of Acts 16.39 suggests that the situation may have been rather volatile and that the magistrates were anxious to get Paul and his retinue out of the city lest the citizens band together against them in a riot similar to the previous day's. Given the possibility of this version of the circumstances and what we know of the situation as a whole, we expect that the Philippian church had a number of (non-Jewish[369]) enemies from the very beginning.[370]

As mentioned, the letter itself testifies to the presence of conflict at Philippi, both from within the church (Phil 1.27; 4.2–3; also 2.1–16) and from without (Phil 1.27–30; also 2.15). The internal conflict is hard to define since it relies so much on a few scant references in this one epistle, whereas the external conflict is defined in light of Acts and other comments by Paul both in this epistle and in his other epistles; moreover, these tend to follow a particular pattern and come as no real surprise. It is also the case that the external and internal find points along their borders at which they touch each other; thus, Paul exhorts the Philippians to 'remain steadfast (στήκω) in one spirit, striving in one accord for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way being afraid of those who oppose you' (1.27b–28a). That is, the two participial clauses indicate the two sides of what it means to remain steadfast.[371] The exhortation in Phil 3.2–3 to 'beware . . . beware . . . beware', because 'we are the circumcision who worship in the spirit of God', if taken as a

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[368] Anthropological theory has identified deviance as a status that comes into existence by infringing rules generated by social groups. That is, 'the deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied' by previously established sociological structures (Howard Saul Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* [New York: Free Press, 1963], 9). Thus, punishment serves to reinforce the deviant status, since it reinforces the sociological structures. See John M. G. Barclay, 'Deviance and Apostasy: Some Applications of Deviance Theory to First-Century Judaism and Christianity', in *Modelling Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context* (ed. Philip F. Esler; London: Routledge, 1995), 114–27, esp., 122–23; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 94ff.

[369] It is important to note that these are non-Jewish enemies since it is almost a given in Paul's experience that he and his followers will acquire Jewish enemies as they progress with the gospel of Jesus-as-Christ.

[370] This conclusion does not rely on the validity of the Western text's account of the story, it is merely assisted by it.

[371] See O'Brien, *Philippians*, 152.

warning,[372] also suggests that Paul was trying to ensure that the inner state of the church was such that it could endure the attacks of those Paul refers to as 'dogs', 'evil workers' and the 'mutilation'.

Paul's exhortation in Phil 3.2 serves to create an oppositional structure which reinforces the boundaries of the Philippian church and their distinction from those without the church, thereby facilitating a move to unity by virtue of defining their identity in terms of what they are not. Thus, 'dogs', 'evil workers' and the 'mutilation' serve as indicators or examples of what the Philippians are not, but also as indicators of the enemy, of whom they must beware, whose presence among the Philippians would dissolve their difference from them and thus also Paul's work. That these are Judaisers, is suggested, at least in part, by the reference to them as κατατομή and the subsequent oppositional concept περιτομή being used of the Philippians who were obviously not physically circumcised.[373]

Paul is naturally inclined to the preservation of the Church's identity. For this reason he is most concerned about any discord and dissatisfaction, since this leaves the Church in a vulnerable state and open for enemies of their faith (theological and secular) to enter the Philippian Christian community. A challenge to the community belief system as established by Paul is a challenge to his authority and a challenge to his gospel, and Paul is always prepared to react against any alteration of, or challenge to, his gospel (see Gal 1.8). The reason for this is that the nature of the community is placed into jeopardy if its central beliefs are altered; thus Paul's reactions are designed to preserve the group's essential nature. Importantly, 'the emphasis in Paul's paraenesis, however, is not upon the maintenance of boundaries, but upon internal cohesion'.[374] Paul understands the internal and the external conflict at Philippi to be closely related: in order for the Church

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[372] There is no reason to withdraw the warning dimension from Paul's βλέπετε formula as suggested in G. D. Kilpatrick, 'ΒΛΕΠΕΤΕ, Philippians 3:2', in *In Memoriam P. Kahle* [eds. M. Black, and G. Fohrer; BZAW 103; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1968], 146–48; also G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 131; Garland, 166; Hawthorn, 124–23. For the opposite position, see Silva, 172; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 354; Wolfgang Schenk, *Die Philipperbriefe des Paulus* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1984), 253; BDF §149.

[373] Naturally, the ease with which these people are here pronounced as 'Judaisers' has not been felt throughout scholarship, for a comprehensive discussion on the various positions, see O'Brien, *Philippians*, 27–35.

[374] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 100; note also the discussion in Bruce J. Malina, 'Early Christian Groups: Using Small Group Formation Theory to Explain Christian Organizations' in *Modelling Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context* (ed. Phillip F. Esler; London: Routledge, 1995), 108–9.

to survive conflict from without, it must be at peace within, yet this inner stability requires a certain hermeneutic which enables the Philippians to read the external conflict in a particular way so as to affirm the difference between those outside and those inside. I suggest that it is the affirmation and development of this hermeneutic which forms the primary interest of Philippians.

Because internal unity and cohesion around Paul's gospel is the best defence against threats from without the church (1.27b–28a)—both theological opposition (Jews and Judaisers) and secular opposition (the citizens and government of Philippi and the Roman legal system)—Paul includes a good deal of exhortation for the Philippians to conduct themselves appropriately, to be unified and of the same mind (Phil 1.9–10, 27; 2.1–16; 4.2–3, 8). Moreover, it has been well-noted that Philippians has a high concentration of συν- compounds and friendship terms.[375] While these are without question a part of the friendship theme maintained throughout the letter, it should not go unnoticed that they also function rhetorically to encourage the assumption that the Philippians are already in the same group as Paul and not in the same group as those who oppose Paul. So, for example, when Paul uses the first person plural personal pronoun (ἡμεῖς) in 3.2, it serves as a subtle way to keep the Philippians on Paul's side and away from his opponents—who have now also become the Philippians' opponents. Another example is the way Paul represents his own suffering and the suffering of the Philippians as connected (1.7, 29–30).[376] Paul is anxious to maintain ideo-theological solidarity with the Philippians, since he naturally assumes that his own belief system is the true one and that the Philippians will fare their best if they are in harmony with his own ideo-theological position.[377] Of course, this solidarity which Paul seeks is not a democratic common belief as such, but belief in common with Paul's own beliefs, which function as the point of cohesion. It is this kind of power structure which Paul seeks to generate in Philippians and which constitutes the structuring process in the epistle.

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[375] See the list pn p. 77; also Fee, *Philippians*, 18–21.

[376] This also serves to prevent any wedge being driven between them with respect to the honour-shame issue discussed earlier, see pp. 81ff.

[377] So, for example, Phil 3.17, and note also Castelli's work, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power*, the thesis of which is that 'the notion of mimesis functions in Paul's letters as a strategy of power. That is, it articulates and rationalizes as true and natural a particular set of power relations within the social formation of early Christian communities'.

The immediate external conflict, at the time of writing, comes primarily from the secular quarter, the Philippian citizens and leaders, and, *secondarily*,[378] from theological interests of Judaisers, though pressure from the former group may have increased Philippian interest in the latter. However, it is only appropriate to focus on the theology of the situation,[379] if one also understands the politics of the situation to be incorporated into the theology. That is, while Paul's comparisons may indeed be a general struggle, this generality is enabled by real specifics. One cannot dismiss the possibility that Paul was in fact referring to some specific situation(s) at Philippi, that some of the Philippians were indeed suffering at the hand of the State and were perhaps in prison, simply because it is likely the case that ἀγών also refers to the general struggle to spread the gospel.

The reference to a common struggle on Phil 1.30 (τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες) is most likely a reference to oppression by secular forces:[380] Phil 1.27 is referring to a present situation, whereas in 3.2 he is referring to a future possibility;[381] the opponents mentioned in 1.27 are headed for destruction (ἀπωλεία), which in Paul is the province of non-Christians;[382] while one could postulate that in Phil 1.30 Paul was referring to Jewish-Christian oppression in Rome, it seems more probable that he was referring to the secular opposition that he was experiencing since there is no account of his suffering at the hands of the Jewish-Christians while in Philippi, when in fact there is ample evidence that he suffered at the hands of the Empire while in Philippi.

Thus, it is unlikely that he is referring to any kind of theologically-based challenge (from Judaisers), since the common struggle is one which they themselves had previously observed in Paul (οἷον εἴδετε ἐν ἐμοὶ) and which they now hear Paul is experiencing (νῦν ἀκούετε ἐν ἐμοί), and we know of no point at which the Philippians saw Paul in conflict

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[378] 'Secondarily' because it is the *threat* of conflict and not the actuality of conflict which causes Paul concern.

[379] Gnilka, for example, argues that the point of comparison is the theological foundation of their struggle, see Gnilka, 101–2.

[380] Against Phil 1.28 as a reference to secular forces, and as a reference to itinerant Jewish-Christian preachers (or 'Judaisers'), anticipating the rebuke in 3.2ff., see Collange, 75; Silva, 92; Hawthorn, 58–60; G. P. Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers* (SNTSMS 24; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 210. On the opposing position, that Phil 1.28 refers to secular opposition, see O'Brien, *Philippians*, 152–58; also see Fee, *Philippians*, 167, n. 50; Martin, *Philippians*, 15, 23, 83; Gnilka, 99–100.

[381] So also Gnilka, 99.

[382] 1 Cor 1.18; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 153.

with the Judaisers. They certainly did see him in conflict with the State, and one assumes that this is dominant in Paul's mind as he writes of their common struggle; however, this does not then mean that Paul is only referring to imprisonment and public floggings, since one is hard pressed to exclude all the nuances of 'struggle' (ἀγών) in this context in favour of just one. We can certainly understand Paul as referring both to his present circumstances—a well-developed theme in the epistle thus far—*and* to the general struggle for the gospel in whatever circumstances, since this encompasses his present experience and that of his Philippian experience.[383] Hence Pfitzner's claim that 'the Apostle conceived of his apostolic mission as an Agon for the Gospel or for the faith', and that this Agon extends 'to include the activity of his coworkers, and also the members of an entire congregation under special duress (Phil 1:27ff.)'.[384]

As already indicated, Paul was concerned that the Philippians would also experience conflict from an alternate form of Christianity—the Jewish-Christian group or 'Judaisers'—(Phil 3.2; also 3.17–19?)[385] which Paul considered to be inferior to his own since it required the adherent to assume the confines of the Jewish law, and restricted the freedom for which Paul so vigorously preached and argued.[386] This sort of conflict seems to bother Paul the most—that is, if we take 3.17–19 to be a warning against ideo-theological challengers. The way he refers to the opponents in 1.28 is different enough from that in 3.2, 17–18 for us to be confident that he is not in 1.28 referring to Judaisers or any other ideo-theological opponents. The Philippians are not told to 'beware' the secular opponents, they are simply told not to be afraid (μὴ πτυρόμενοι), and this fits an unsubtle and physical threat far better than an ideo-theological threat. The secular threat is, as mentioned, unsubtle and simple; the danger to their faith is a crude one based on fear.

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[383] See the discussion in Pfitzner, 114–29, esp. 127–28, 191–95.

[384] Pfitzner, 127, and 128 respectively.

[385] While it is generally agreed that 3.2 is a reference to Judaisers, there is some question as to whether we can classify 3.18–19 also as a reference to Judaisers. On this, see the bibliography in n. 353, but note especially the summarising discussions in O'Brien, *Philippians*, 26–35, and Martin, *Philippians*, 22–34. For the purposes of this project the identity is not important, what is important is that Paul understands them to be an ideo-theological threat to the Philippians.

[386] See Gal 2.4.

The ideo-theological threat—a threat to the stability of the discourse Paul has established at Philippi[387]—is subtle and complex, entering by already-established discursive openings made by Paul's own work. It bases itself not upon fear but upon security and commonality, a sort of ideo-theological Trojan horse. The Judaisers can only succeed because of the discourse Paul has already given to the Philippians: they can enter Philippi in the belly of that gift from God, the gospel, the discourse of hope in Christ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΑΥΛΟΝ. The action of the Judaisers is to circumscribe the Christ event with a new context that will enable it to be re-read in terms of their own ideo-theological interests. Paul, therefore, pre-empts this move by reinforcing the discourse already in place with his thoroughly rhetorical biographical account in Phil 3. This account maintains Paul's position of superiority (superior whether Jew or Christian or both) and thus the superiority of his own ideo-theological position which he has established at Philippi.

### *5. Summary*

On the basis of the preceding discussion, we can say that the historical context of Paul, the Philippians and the letter is as follows. Paul was in Rome when he wrote Philippians. He penned a single letter that was designed, among other things, to inform them of certain information, and thank them for the gift, to create a Christ-centred *phronēsis* so that they would know how to act in certain situations, and to reassure the Philippians, which is the 'real business' of the letter and necessarily plays a role in the other aspects of the letter's purpose. The letter is particularly intimate, and this assists in the development of ethos within the letter, enabling Paul to perform the necessary rhetorical manoeuvres he needs to make. Paul's immediate context was a low-level incarceration in Rome, the nature of which suggested that the guards in charge of Paul would have expected Paul to be released. His imprisonment nonetheless plays an unfortunate social role among the Philippians and Paul must work in his epistle to counter the problems suggested by his imprisonment. This is exacerbated by the fact that the Philippians themselves are experiencing conflict on more than one level. However, Paul attempts to help them see things from his own perspective and enable them to interpret the situation as the noble struggle of the gospel.

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[387] The interesting thing is that it is not so much a threat to their faith as it is to their theology, and as such appears more of a problem for Paul than for the Philippians, since Paul would see this sort of regression as a move away from the potential of freedom secured by the work of Christ and thus an essential regression away from Christ.

# Chapter Three

# The Socio-Philosophical Context of Paul and his Writing

## *1. Introduction*

Paul is a man who is a part of his society and whose society was a part of him; naturally this was also true of the Philippians. While there may have been some divergent socially discursive features within their respective experiences, it is evident that Paul is a man who attempts to engage people on their own terms. Note, for example, the claims in 1 Cor 9.19–23 where Paul describes his practice of adapting to the needs of those to whom he is ministering.[388] Thus, I shall discuss Paul's social location in the general philosophical matrix of his society—I have in view here the general social discourse of the shared culture of Paul and the Philippians and the set of 'cognitive tools' available to Paul for use in his interaction with the Philippians. In addition, I shall also discuss the historical situation of the letter in terms of ancient letter writing practices, and the ancient assumptions associated with the function of language in general. The respective discussions on Paul's philosophical location and writing practices, are essentially attempts to describe some of the key cultural features which *precede* Paul's thought and expression with a view to considering the fact that such contexts not only precede Paul's thought and expression but constrain them.

## *2. The Socio-Philosophical Situation of Paul and the Philippians*

In the previous chapter it was noted that the major functions generally understood to be the complex of Paul's purposes behind Philippians are (1) to respond to their gift, (2) to allay fears of his own welfare, (3) to warn of false teachers ('opponents'), (4) to exhort them to be steadfast and unified in the face of conflict. The first two of these are generally contextualised in terms of an intimate relationship between Paul and the Philippians.[389] The latter two suggested purposes reflect the general hortatory tone of Paul's apostolate which pervades all of his letters.

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[388] Note also Luke's telling of Paul's sermon on Mars Hill in Acts 17.22ff. in which Paul is presented as doing this very thing: contextualising the gospel for the people to whom he is communicating.

[389] See the comments on pp. 75ff.

Encountering this connection in Philippians between intimacy and ethical exhortation is not entirely serendipitous. In fact, it appears that to some degree Paul subscribed to the Greco-Roman psychagogic practice in which the intimate and the hortatory are frequently, if not necessarily, found. It is not at all an easy task to determine the degree of Paul's confluence with Greco-Roman moral philosophical ideals and practice. There is no question *that* Paul was influenced by the culture,[390] the question has been *what* influenced him. The search for this 'what' is really the impetus behind the research on rhetorical and epistolary forms in the Pauline epistles, the various metaphors and allusions Paul employs, and anything else comprising the cultural background or social world of the Apostle. The enduring research on Paul is that which develops a contextual matrix which grants historical and cultural significance to specific features of Paul's life while keeping them in balance with other features of the culture.[391]

This matrix extends into the culture as a whole, and not to the elite alone. We cannot assume that due to the comparative lack of education and literacy[392] the poorer members of, for example, the Philippian community were completely isolated from those ideals espoused among the literate twenty to thirty percent. We have to admit, nonetheless, that making claims about the worldview of the uneducated is 'tantalizingly difficult', as Meeks has it,[393] for no other reason than the simple fact that their illiteracy prevented them from expressing their voice in the record of human history. The significance of this is that the majority of any population is not the elite, rather it is the 'small community' which 'has been the very predominant form of human living throughout the history of mankind'.[394]

While illiteracy silenced the *hoi polloi*, it would not have prevented them from having access to a largely oral-based tradition of communicating ideas. That is, while the

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[390] See Malherbe's discussion on Paulus Hellenisticus in Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 8–9.

[391] The respective works of A. D. Nock, H. J. Cadbury, and E. A. Judge, for example.

[392] In the first century, less than ten percent of the general Empire was literate, see Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (London: SPCK, 1987), 62. Within the Hellenistic cities it may have reached as much as twenty to thirty percent, see 'Literacy', *OCD*, 869.

[393] Meeks, *The Moral World*, 40.

[394] Robert Redfield, *The Little Community: Viewpoints for the Study of a Human Whole* (Comparative Studies of Cultures and Civilizations; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 3.

literary form of philosophical ideas certainly bears out the 'great traditions' through history, it was 'by *hearing* them recited, listening to public speeches, attending lectures, hearing sermons and homilies and exhortations that one learned the tradition'.[395] Thus, when we consider those to whom Paul is writing, we can affirm Malherbe's claims that Paul's readers can be expected to have been familiar with the philosophical traditions to which Paul adhered, and that there is no reason Paul should not have drawn directly from the popular philosophical tradition.[396] The following pages of this, and the next, chapter discuss what some of those philosophical traditions and conventions were, and the nature of Paul's potential confluence with them. An important point here is that philosophical language filtered down into the discursive structures of non-specialised educated, and possibly even uneducated, people of the Greco-Roman world and became *normative*, even required. That is, those ways of thinking which were born in the philosophical communities, and the ideals generated by those 'ways of thinking', became common to the larger populace through a popularising process. Thus, someone in Paul's position would have had available to him philosophical ways and 'tools' of thinking which he brought to bear upon his apostolic activity.

### *2.a. Locating Paul as a Product of his Time*

As is the case with all of us, Paul was a product of his time. This, of course, is no new claim, but the depths of its significance continue to be plumbed by scholars of the New Testament. These depths, however, have often proved difficult to fathom, leading Edwin Judge to remark that 'the trouble with Paul has always been to put him in his place'.[397] Although the study of *Paulus hellenisticus*, to use Malherbe's term, tended to wane during the middle of the twentieth century, it has enjoyed a recent revival of interest which connects one branch of more recent Pauline studies with those typical of the beginning of the twentieth century. Thus, the early twentieth century comment by Johannes Weiss continues to ring true: 'students of the New Testament should know Seneca, Epictetus, Plutarch, Lucian, Musonius, Marcus Aurelius, and Cicero intimately, and pursue the study of the New Testament with Hans von Arnim's collection of Stoic

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[395] Meeks, *The Moral World*, 40.

[396] Malherbe, *Popular Philosophers*, 50.

[397] Edwin A. Judge, 'St Paul and Classical Society', *JAC* 15 (1972), 19.

texts at their elbows'.[398] Perhaps, the only modification we would make to Weiss's comment is to increase the list of relevant Hellenistic writers to include the likes of Philodemus and Epicurus.[399]

One of the basic goals of this thesis, and Pauline studies in general, is to further consider *Paulus hellenisticus*, in order to further understand *Paulus christianus*—the most prominent figure in the foundation of Christian thought. Implied in this goal is the assumption that the (primarily Hellenistic) culture in which Paul lived, had a significant influence on the way he thought and interpreted the world around him. It easily follows that to understand more about his relationship with that culture is to give us a clearer picture of the processes behind Paul's thinking and writing. Thus, another claim is that *Paulus hellenisticus* forms an unconscious context, or 'pre-text', and foundation for *Paulus christianus*. The general interest of this project, with respect to *Paulus hellenisticus*, is the language of the moral philosophers, and Paul's adaptation and use of that language for his own apostolic purposes.

There is little risk in claiming that Paul can be classified as a moral philosopher or a psychagogue. Scholars such as Abraham Malherbe have spent much of their academic lives compiling copious documentation which evidences and articulates the affinity of Paul's activity among various churches in the mid-first century ce with the activity of the Hellenistic moral philosophers.[400] However, my purpose here is simply to survey some of the principles held by ancient philosophers which led to the popularising of philosophy and thus enabled philosophical concepts to enter into the social discourse of the average

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[398] Johannes Weiss, *Die Aufgaben der neutestamentlich Wissenshaft in der Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1908), 4, 11, 55; cited in Abraham Malherbe, *Popular Philosophers*, 3.

[399] The significance of Philodemus for the study of Paul is still in its nascent stage, with only three works: Clarence E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy* (NovTSup 81; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995); Glad, 'The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for Our Understanding of Paul', in *The New Testament in Its Hellenistic Context* (eds. Gunnlaugur A. Jónsson and Einar Sigurbjörnsson og Pétur Pétursson; Studia Theologica Islandica 10; Reykjavík: Guðfræðistofnun-Skálholtsútgáfan, 1996); Glad, 'Frank Speech, Flattery, and Friendship in Philodemus', in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald; NovTSup 82; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996).

[400] See the bibliography in David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks, eds., *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

educated individual as 'intellectual equipment'[401] or to function as 'the general intellectual currency'[402]—the sort of equipment used, or currency traded by Paul to establish and nurture his churches, which forms the background of his epistolary efforts, and which constrains his discourse. However, it is important to note that the existence of such 'intellectual equipment' does not also mean that those who used it were conscious that it was anything more than the norm. It is possible that highly educated individuals may have been, but as these devices filtered into the popular discourse, they would have eventually lost their specialised opacity and become as transparent as the discourse itself. Yet, this does not mean that the functional features of such 'equipment' were lost when it entered into social discourse. The point is that social discourse would be altered by its absorption of this conceptual equipment.

More specifically, it is the presence of a social discourse behind the writing of Paul which forms the interest here, and not the philosophical discourses themselves. Understanding Hellenistic moral philosophy in relation to Paul is a matter of understanding 'philosophy . . . as a phenomenon of education *and* society'.[403] Recognising this allows us to consider a framework according to which we can put Paul 'in his place' as a possible participant in this social phenomenon of increased awareness and use of moral philosophical concepts. This means locating Paul in the context of the philosophical mood of the educated classes[404] of Greco-Roman society in order to appreciate more of the nature of the social discourse according to which Paul thought, wrote, and taught.

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[401] Miriam Griffin uses this phrase in her description of the intellectual developments of the Ciceronian age. It is helpful because it recognises the reality that people develop principles, ideas and categories of thought in order *to do things with them* (read 'function'), in the same way that people develop equipment to achieve various tasks. See Miriam Griffin, 'The Intellectual Developments of the Ciceronian Age', in *The Cambridge Ancient History* (vol. 9; 2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 728.

[402] Judge, 'St Paul and Classical Society', 33.

[403] Judge, 'St Paul and Classical Society', 32 (emphasis added). I emphasise this here to draw attention to Judge's point that philosophy was a part of society, not simply education, and as a part of society it naturally influenced the construction of conventions within society.

[404] That Paul worked with the educated classes, see Edwin A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century* (London: Tyndale, 1960), 60; See also Judge 'St Paul and Classical Society', 28; more recently, Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 51ff., and Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 29ff., have both advocated and developed Judge's original claims. See also Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Sather Classical Lectures 55; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 36–37. All this is contrary to Deissmann, *Paul*, 51.

### *2.b. Locating Paul among the Philosophers*

There are a number of close parallels to Paul when we think of the various groups of moral philosophers in the Greco-Roman world. Abraham Malherbe has presented Paul in terms of the gentle Cynics; more recently, Clarence Glad has suggested that the Epicurean parallel is preferred when one considers Paul's psychagogic activity in his nurturing of the early Christian communities,[405] and Troels Engberg-Pedersen has at times emphasised the Stoic elements in Paul's writing.[406] Of course, it is not a matter of choosing one over another of these parallels, as the diversity between the publications of these scholars demonstrates,[407] it is rather a matter of recognizing that such structures[408] were there for the using as 'intellectual equipment'[409] by moral leaders—particularly when such leaders did not see themselves as moralists first and leaders second, and had no particular allegiance to a given philosophical school.

With respect to Paul, the implication is that there were patterns or categories of thought in existence which were created by the philosophical schools over a period of time, which were subsequently integrated into the culture to the degree that someone with Paul's education and life experience would encounter them both unconsciously as cultural norm, and consciously as moral philosophy in the 'class room'.[410] The result is that when Paul goes to think about how he should act towards those whom he is guiding (the Philippian Christian community, for example)—what he should say to them, how he should say it to them, the best ways to bring them around to his way of thinking, even his own sense of responsibility towards them—he will naturally be inclined to employ the rhetorical topics and strategies, and even conceptualise these things according to what seems normal to him—what I am here calling the 'discourse' of his culture. This does not deny that Paul was innovative, or that he modified Jewish and Hellenistic values in order

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[405] Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 4.

[406] Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'Stoicism in Philippians'.

[407] This is not to suggest that these scholars claim that the only way to understand Paul is according to one particular school, indeed, the opposite is true.

[408] By 'structures' I mean philosophical systems *and* structures of thought which are less conscious than the formal system, but are produced by that system.

[409] See above n. 401

[410] Not everything in society, of course, is encountered unconsciously. As an educated individual, it is probable that Paul was exposed to various moral philosophical treatises.

to cultivate a 'Christian morality'. The important point is that his modification, innovation, and cultivation all begin with something which is *already* there and that the subsequent Christian discourse which developed from Paul's writings is really based on the social discourse of his culture. Indeed, Averil Cameron sees that the Christians are 'reflecting and responding to the same influences that were making themselves felt on pagan discourse', and that even when we get a century or two beyond the first Christians there is still surprisingly little difference between pagan and Christian discourse and conceptual schema.[411] Or as Wayne Meeks has it,

> The daily practice of most church members was doubtless indistinguishable in most respects from that of their unconverted neighbours. Differences in moral judgment and practice between one Christian, or group of Christians, and another often seem as great as or greater than differences between the Christians and the 'pagans'. Attempts to discover overt changes in those areas of public discourse, practice, or legislation that we would identify as morally sensitive . . . turn up embarrassingly few examples of a clear difference that could be ascribed to Christian influence.[412]

An example of both this discourse at work and its content is found in Seneca. In a discussion on the efficacy of philosophical precepts for the person progressing towards the philosophical *telos*,[413] Seneca cites some of these 'brief but weighty' precepts:

> 'Nothing in excess', 'The greedy mind is satisfied by no gains', 'You must expect to be treated by others as you yourself have treated them'. We receive a sort of shock when we hear such sayings; no one ever thinks of doubting them or of asking: 'Why?' So strongly, indeed, does mere truth, accompanied by reason, attract us.[414]

The 'shock' (*ictus*) to which Seneca refers is not one of incredulity towards the precepts, it is rather a reference to the weight of their perceived *veritas*. When Seneca claims that no one ever thinks of doubting the *veritas* of these precepts, he assumes the existence of a shared set of cultural norms, what he calls 'mere truth' (*ipsa veritas*), without which his example has no currency. These precepts appear to have *veritas* because they are entirely confluent with the complex of cultural expectations and codes which made up the

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411 Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 7.

412 Wayne A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 2.

413 Typically understood as εὐδαιμονία ('happiness'), as a result of virtue.

414 Seneca, *Ep.* 94.43.

discourse of that society. They have great effect because they summarise the ideals of the culture in brief but potent linguistic structures.

### *3. Paul and Psychagogy*

The need for a cultural matrix to offer perspective presents Greco-Roman psychagogy to us as a valuable means for understanding Paul. The importance of psychagogy is that while we may say that it is a somewhat singular feature of Greco-Roman society, it nonetheless contains within it a complex of social features which have often been linked to Paul as separate elements of his cultural context, but not necessarily as a previously established, integrated structure. For example, many of the features of Greco-Roman philosophy and morality (such as models of friendship, pedagogy, leadership, exhortation, admonition, and so forth) which have frequently been noted in Paul's letters find a confluence in the social model of the Greco-Roman psychagogue. As we study the psychagogue we begin to give more context, and thus more significance, to some of Paul's practices which have less obviously originated in the culture of Greco-Roman philosophy.

While the relationship between Paul and moral philosophy is not a new suggestion, it has not been until more recently that the connection has been as well demonstrated as it has been by Abraham Malherbe[415] and Clarence Glad.[416] Glad makes the important point that 'we are indeed misguided if we exclude a pedagogical passion from Paul's nurturing paternity'.[417] As with every attempt to locate Paul within his cultural environment, it is not so much that Paul *is* a psychagogue or a Greco-Roman moral philosopher, or whatever we may want to say he is, rather that such social realities and behavioural patterns were in place as a part of the social discourse, functioning as a set of options for him to utilise as the need arose on a given occasion. Thus, as Glad points out, 'it is not important that we be able to classify Paul as a "psychagogue" but rather that we recognize his participation in a widespread "psychagogic" activity'.[418] That is, it is important that we recognise Paul's adherence to the already available social

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[415] E.g., Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987)

[416] E.g., Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*; Glad, 'The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for Our Understanding of Paul'.

[417] Glad, 'The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for Our Understanding of Paul', 92.

[418] Glad, 'The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for Our Understanding of Paul', 60.

model of the psychagogue—something exemplified in the literary relationship between Seneca and Lucilius, in which Seneca assumes an authoritative posture and gently reproaches and exhorts Lucilius to spiritual and moral maturity.[419] One may even want to avoid suggesting that Paul was conscious of such adherence; nonetheless, it must be the case that when Paul understood and enacted his role among the churches, he understood and enacted that role in terms familiar to him as a member of that culture (to whatever degree we can generalise the Greco-Roman world as a unified culture), and to his readers as members of that culture. Hence Alexander's statement that

> if we have learned anything from the last twenty years of New Testament scholarship, it is that 'thought' does not operate in a kind of disembodied noetic sphere independent of personal and social structuring. Thought is an activity of thinkers, and thinkers are tied in to certain patterns of behaviour, restricted to certain specific forms of communication, by the society they live in.[420]

The point to be made here is that, given his role as a spiritual and moral guide, the psychagogic model, or established norm, presents itself to Paul (unconsciously, at the very least) as a prudent path to follow in his endeavour to serve as an effective leader in that society. Hence Glad's claim that '"Hellenistic psychagogy" or the "guidance of souls" among Greeks and Romans reflects a common leadership model available to and appropriated by Paul,' and was 'a widespread model of spiritual and ethical guidance, used in one way or another by most moralists of the Hellenistic period'.[421] The availability of that convention is well stated by Malherbe: 'it was the Epicureans who had developed the system of psychagogy, but what Philodemus says in the first century B.C. is reflected in the writings of Seneca, Paul's Stoic contemporary, and a generation later by the Platonist Plutarch. In short, the concerns and techniques that interest us were widespread at the time Paul wrote'.[422] Thus, when we speak of the 'purpose' of Philippians,[423] the social models available to Paul play a role in both the way Paul

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[419] On Seneca as psychagogue, see I. Hadot, *Seneca und die griechisch-römishe Tradition der Seelenleitung* (Berlin; de Gruyter, 1969).

[420] Loveday Alexander, 'Paul and the Hellenistic Schools: The Evidence of Galen', in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (ed. Troel Engberg-Pedersen; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 60.

[421] Glad, 'The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for Our Understanding of Paul', 57.

[422] Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 84.

[423] See the previous chapter, pp. 56f.

construes his responsibility to his churches and the form in which that responsibility is manifested.

If we were to summarise Paul's purposes as an attempt to maintain his relationship with the church, which assumes also the attempt to maintain the *nature* of that relationship—the maintenance of group purity, stability and progress—then we also summarise the basic goals of any Hellenistic psychagogue. Recognising all this, Stanley Stowers labels Philippians as either a 'hortatory or psychagogic letter of friendship'.[424] Stowers also notes that Paul

> describes himself as a psychagogue for the Philippians when he says 'but to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. . . . I shall remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith' (1:24–25). . . . Throughout the letter, Paul presents himself as a model of one who is struggling in this process. He presses on toward the goal and strains forward to the prize.[425]

So why is it important to observe these psychagogic issues with respect to Paul? Phil 1.12–18 is typically read as a minor introductory section of the epistle and thus as primarily a description of Paul's historical circumstances. It is the contention of this thesis, however, that this section is (1) the main reason for writing,[426] and (2) is not simply historical data, but psychagogic/friendship rhetoric employed to rectify any potential perceptions of a discrepancy between Paul's word and deed. If we read this section of the epistle in the light of the tensions in moral discourse between the conventions of word and deed, and frank speech (friend and flatterer), we begin to see how Paul's language adheres to, and is even governed by, these well-established social conventions.

### *3.a. What is* Psychagogia*?*

*Psychagogia* was originally a reference to the leading of souls through the nether world and evoking the souls of the dead.[427] It then took the more familiar, metaphorical

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[424] Stowers, 'Friends and Enemies', 108.

[425] Stowers, 'Friends and Enemies', 108–109.

[426] See discussion on pp. 58ff.

[427] See *LSJ*, 2026. Note also the very interesting use of ψυχαγωγ- cognates in Lucian. When Lucian discourses on contemporaneous issues, he uses it as a reference to amusement (*True Story*, 1.2; *Wisdom of Nigrinus*, 18, 21; *Double Indictment*, 10), but when he discourses on the ancient myths he employs the ancient referent of leading the souls of the dead (*Dialogues of the Gods*, 4.1; 11.4). For a comprehensive discussion of the development of ψυχαγωγεῖν from being a reference to the leading of departed souls to the nether world, to a reference to moral exhortation, see Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 18ff; see also the article by Elizabeth Asmis, '*Psychagogia* in Plato's

referents of persuasion and influence through speech. Thus, Socrates defines rhetoric as an 'entirely psychagogic art' (ὅλον . . . τέχνη ψυχαγωγία) which is conducted 'through words' not in the public courts alone but also in private.[428] Along with this came both the positive connotation of influencing people for good and the negative connotation of beguilement. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates' point is to elucidate the difference between good and bad uses of rhetoric (Isocratean rhetoric in particular[429]) and thus also the difference between the two uses of *psychagogia*.[430]

Rhetoric, and thus *psychagogia*, had some delightfully treacherous qualities according to Plato (among others): it is the art by which one thing can be presented as just and unjust at the same time to the same people; thus it is ἀντιλογική,[431] or the 'art of opposition';[432] it is the art of deception (ἀπάτη);[433] it is the beguilement of the appetites of the soul via images and phantasms.[434] Or, in Isocrates' view, it is the ability to beguile through poetic device.[435] In the Shepherd of Hermas the participle is used to explain the effects of wealth, in that it leads the soul astray.[436]

The Epicurean Polystratus has an interesting discussion on the nature of the philosopher which also places *psychagogia* in rather bad company. He urges that the true philosopher should not proceed with syllogisms or inductions (συλλογισμοὺς ἢ ἐπαγωγάς

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*Phaedrus*', *ICS* 11.1/2 (1986): 153–72.

[428] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 261 A–B; note also *Phaedrus* 271 C–D where he rather matter-of-factly says that the function of speech is to lead the soul (ψυχαγωγία).

[429] 'It is evident that *those who desire to command the attention of their hearers must abstain from admonition and advice, and must say the kind of things which they see are most pleasing to the crowd*' (Isocrates, *To Nicocles*, 49 [Norlin, LCL], emphasis added).

[430] See, Asmis, *Psychagogia*, 157.

[431] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 261B–E.

[432] Asmis, *Psychagogia*, 155.

[433] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 261E–262A.

[434] Plato, *Timaeus*, 71A. But note that it was Plato's goal in the *Phaedrus* to advocate a positive use of *psychagogia* as positive moral guidance (see *Phaedrus*, 260E–272B; 277B–C).

[435] Isocrates, *Evagoras*, 10.

[436] Shepherd of Hermas, vis. 3.6.6.

περαίνοντας) nor become a peddler of sentences (ῥησικοποῦντας);[437] rather to investigate nature straightly[438] (φυσιολογήσαντας ὀρθῶς)[439]—'in so doing, one dispels the falsities handed down through the myths and the poets; thus one also dispels every fear and empty suspicion, along with the rest of the soul's affectations (πάθη) that such falsities produce; thereby attaining the goal of the good life'. He then points out that though there are those who on the one hand use syllogisms and axioms, on the other hand there are those who say the same things but whose motives are for the adulation *or* deception of their neighbours (πρὸς τὸν πλησίον ἀρεσκείας ἢ ἀπάτης),[440] who contrive to gain momentary approval and persuasion (ψυχαγωγίαν). Thus, we find this Epicurean leader[441] associating *psychagogia* with peddling sentences, attempts to procure favour, deception, and other abuses of rhetoric. The duplicitous nature of psychagogia is, however, merely reflective of the duplicitous nature of all speech, namely its 'pharmacological' nature.[442]

It is therefore no real surprise that we do not see Paul or his contemporaries using this word to refer to their own moral leadership. The negative connotations evoked by *psychagogia*, and the subsequent application of the term to the flatterer (κολάξ) and the sycophant (ἄρεσκος) meant that, in the late Republic and early Empire, it was little used as a positive reference.[443] This, however, does not change the social reality of the psychagogue, it merely changes the way in which people referred to it.

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[437] Polystratus, *On the Irrational Contempt of the Popular Opinions*, *PHerc* 336/1150, col. 13.26–29; in *Sul Disprezzo Irrazionale delle Opinioni Popolari* (ed. Giovani Indelli; vol. 2; Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici: La Scuola di Epicuro; Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1978).

[438] It is interesting to consider that this reference to the necessity of the philosophical investigation being conducted 'straightly' (ὀρθῶς, col.14.24) may be the necessary complement of παρρησία, in that παρρησία is, for the most part, the communication of that investigation. Note that Polystratus then uses παρρησία soon after (in col. 16.29–17.1) as a reference to the communication of investigation (but see the rest of the Polystratus' discussion for context).

[439] Polystratus, col. 14.27–16.8.

[440] Note the possibility of both adulation (ἀρεσκείας) and deception (ἀπάτης) being generated by the one speech act.

[441] Polystratus was the third leader of the school of Epicurus and thus one of the founders of Epicureanism (see David John Furley, 'Epicurus', *OCD*, 532–34).

[442] See comments on p. 110.

[443] Glad, 'Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy', 60.

The fact was that during the first century, referring to someone as a 'philosopher' was tantamount to referring to that person as having the basic qualities of the psychagogue. Lutz, summarizing Musonius, comments that the 'primary concern of philosophy is the care of the soul . . . from our surroundings we have become morally ill. It is philosophy alone which can cure us by its remedy of reason';[444] hence Seneca's understanding that the philosopher is 'the pedagogue of the human race',[445] and Maximus of Tyre's understanding that care of the soul was the product of the philosopher's rational teaching.[446]

The desire for a moral guide is something which obviously parallels the popularising of moral philosophy,[447] and 'ample evidence exists for the social practice of searching for a mature guide'.[448] Indeed, the fact that the social and moral reality of psychagogy was pervasive is demonstrated in part by the number of expressions of a need for moral guidance.[449] In fact, the degree to which people sought someone to fulfill the role of a psychagogue was common enough for Lucian to lend the practise some satirical attention. In his *Hermotimus* he takes great delight in poking fun at a fellow who seems to be forever seeking guidance and never arriving at the point to which he is supposedly being guided. Furthermore, looking for a guide was common enough for Seneca to set down guidelines for the task.[450] Seneca elsewhere cites Epicurus as suggesting that we all should have a person of high character in our lives who helps govern our character.[451] Quintilian states that while virtue is somewhat natural, it 'will require to be perfected by

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[444] Cora E. Lutz, *Musonius Rufus: 'The Roman Socrates'* (ed. Alfred R. Bellinger; Yale Classical Studies 10; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), 27–28, (all references to Musonius are from this edition).

[445] Seneca, *Ep.* 89.13.

[446] Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes*, 1.2.61–63.

[447] See Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 13.

[448] Glad, 'The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for our Understanding of Paul', 63; see also Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 53; Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, 2.5.3–7; *On the Passions and Errors of the Soul* 1.1; 3.6–10; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 2.3–6; Isocrates, *Antidosis*, 290.

[449] E.g., Seneca, *Ep.* 52.2.

[450] Seneca, *Ep.* 52.1–9.

[451] Seneca, *Ep.* 11.8–10 (=Usener Frag. 210).

instruction'.[452] For Plutarch, one good sign that someone was progressing towards virtue was that the person was willing to submit to someone who would determine his problems and admonish him.[453] For Clement of Alexandria, the role of the psychagogue was common enough to be confluent with the role of the pedagogue, which was 'both to lead and admonish the soul'.[454]

It is important to recognise that the main tool of the philosopher-psychagogue was speech, yet at the same time it was the main weakness, since speech bears no marks of veracity. Thus, a basic responsibility borne by the philosopher-psychagogue was to live in a manner which validated the truthfulness of his message. The easiest way for anyone to detect a pseudo-psychagogue was to discover that what he said and what he did were at odds with each other. This is typically seen in the common, fundamental requirement for one's deeds to be confluent with one's words. Within this word-deed complex arise the common moral philosophical *topoi* of frankness (παρρησία) and flattery (κολακεία).

Furthermore, the structural relationship with friendship conventions[455] implies that for the genuine psychagogue to practise his art, he must assume a degree of responsibility towards the person(s) being guided. Without a sense of duty towards the patient, there is no impetus for genuine admonition. Even if the guide's duty were only the integrity of the philosophy, it still implies a responsibility towards the patient.[456]

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[452] Quintilian, 12.2.1.

[453] Plutarch, 'Progress in Virtue', 82A.

[454] Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus und Paedagogus* (ed., Otto Stählin; vol. 1; Die Greichischen Christlichen Schriftsteller: Der Ersten Jarhunderte; Berlin: Akademie, 1972), 261.23–24.

[455] Malherbe adds to this the social convention of a 'father', and of a 'nurse'; see the overall discussions in Abraham J. Malherbe, '"Gentle as a Nurse": The Cynic Background of 1 Thess ii', *NovT* 12 (1970): 203–17; Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*. Glad also connects the father and friend conventions in Glad, 'The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for our Understanding of Paul', 72. Note also the sentiments offered by Maximus of Tyre who felt that the guidance philosophy offered was similar to that offered by a friend, see Maximus of Tyre 1.2 where he construes philosophical teaching in terms of the role of a true friend; also note Epictetus, *Discourses*, 3.13.18–23; 2.17.1–2; 2.22.7–10; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 6.30 where Diogenes compares himself to a helmsman or a physician.

[456] It was common among philosophers to assume that all people had a duty towards philosophy which incorporated the principle that others would benefit from it. See Musonius, 2.36–38; 16.104.30–32; 16.106.6ff; Seneca, *Ep.* 90.1; Pseudo Diogenes, 21.8–9; 35; also Pseudo Heraclitus, 9.210.20–21; Diogenes Laertius, 10.122; 10.83, 85.

An important aspect of this is the fact that the psychagogic process was a part of a larger, reciprocal process of mutual affection.[457] 'Whatever the group, and however it might be structured, they shared a concern for each other. Those who led in exhorting were to do so out of friendship and a genuine desire to help'.[458] Combining this relational structure with the previously mentioned desire to seek out a mature guide, suggests that the desire itself is 'not an exercise in solitude, but a true social practice',[459] or even, an 'intensification of social relations'.[460] 'The care of the self appears therefore as intrinsically linked to a "soul service" [psychagogy], which includes the possibility of round exchanges with the other and a system of reciprocal obligations'.[461]

This reciprocal process producing obligation is of critical import to our understanding of Paul's activity in the writing of Philippians. As a psychagogue, Paul has a sense of responsibility or obligation to the Philippians. This obligation has naturally formed itself in terms of Paul's Christian gospel and manifests itself in Paul's activity as a literate apostle. That is, Paul has a specific task to perform in the Philippian community (the same specific task he has everywhere else), which is to involve them in the gospel. He is going to seek the completion of that task in the socially constructed conventions available to him; thus psychagogy presents itself as a suitable set of conventions for our understanding of Paul's practices within that society. Furthermore, taking our leave from Foucault, we should understand this practice as an intensification of social relations between Paul and the Philippians. As their psychagogue, Paul has a special set of relations to the Philippians. As the recipients of Paul's psychagogy, the Philippians have a special set of relations to Paul. These relationships are expressed in their sense of responsibility towards each other. For the Philippians it has been their submission to Paul's authority, and their support of his mission. For Paul it has been his devotion to them as an apostle through his writing to them, sending them ambassadors, writing them

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[457] See Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 84.

[458] Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 88.

[459] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (London: Penguin, 1990), 3:51.

[460] Foucault, 3:53.

[461] Foucault, 3:54. On mutual edification, see also Glad, 'The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for our Understanding of Paul', 74.

letters, encouraging them in general, and, not at all least, his willingness to remain alive when he would prefer to die.[462]

Paul's sense of obligation, both to his followers and to his apostolic assignment, would naturally mean that he would be willing to take up any challenges threatening either of those obligations. However, any question concerning the validity of his gospel, any questioning of the foundational sub-text of that gospel (the story of Paul and the gospel) will naturally take place along socially conventional lines and Paul's reactions are also going to be in terms of the social conventions available to him. Just how this works out in Philippians is the subject of the following chapter.

### *3.b. Psychagogy and the Language of Truth and Friendship*

There is a close relationship between psychagogy and friendship. In distinct contrast to the flatterer, the psychagogue was very much a true friend. Interestingly, the manner in which the falsehood of the friend or the psychagogue was determined was primarily through the relationship between speech and action.[463]

Seneca provides for us a model for understanding this connection which we also see in Paul; Seneca is both a psychagogue and a friend to Lucilius in a similar way that Paul is both psychagogue and friend to the Philippians. Traditionally, psychagogy was the practice of one person, a psychagogue, guiding the life, or 'soul', of others.[464] Naturally, a psychagogue would have been a person who was perceived to be superior in some way so as to be worthy of imitation.[465] But placing oneself in the hands of a psychagogue left one open to various abuses from *pseudo*-psychagogues. It was important, therefore, to establish whether a person was a genuine psychagogue or a pseudo-psychagogue.

As discussed earlier, Plato makes the point that the psychagogue conducts his business, the leading of the soul, through words[466] (ψυχαγωγία τις διὰ λόγων) and this highlights precisely the source of the problem: words themselves bear no mark as to

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[462] Note again Stowers' comment about how Paul represents himself as a psychagogue in Philippians, see above p. 103.

[463] See the discussion on pp. 107ff.

[464] See the discussion on pp. 101ff.

[465] On mimesis in antiquity see Castelli, 59–87. Note also Castelli 21ff. for a discussion on how mimesis reinscribes power structures and social hierarchies.

[466] See above pp. 103ff. and esp. n. 428. In general see Plato, *Phaedrus*, 260E–272B; 277BC.

whether they are true or false; thus in this same work, *Phaedrus*, Plato constructs language, writing in particular, as a *pharmakon*, at once a remedy and a poison.[467] Of course, this issue of 'genuine' versus 'pretext', or as we find in our passage in Phil 1.18, ἀλήθεια versus πρόφασις, was frequently the subject of philosophical and moral discourse, particularly with respect to such *topoi* as friendship, flattery, and psychagogy, not to mention those *topoi* associated with sophistry and the like.

Such conventions developed common safeguards for, in our case, protecting oneself from stumbling into the semantic snares of pseudo-psychagogues. One can tell a genuine psychagogue from a false one by observing whether his life (deeds) matched his philosophical teaching (words), and a genuine psychagogue, like a genuine friend, speaks with παρρησία.[468] Thus, in moral exhortation, or psychagogic literature, one constantly finds claims to a continuity between word and deed, and therefore to frank speech (παρρησία), for which a working definition could be: a mode of communication (speech/writing) intended to refer *by virtue of itself* to the continuity between word and deed. That is, frank speech was both word and deed.

We also find these very claims in Paul. The classic example is Paul's comments in 1 Thess 2.5ff. where he says that he and his retinue did not come with words of flattery (ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας), nor with the pretext of greed (ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας), nor seeking the glory of men. Paul goes on to remind the Thessalonians that they themselves are aware of his labours among them; he thereby reinforces the idea that he was a genuine and not a pseudo-psychagogue, thus also contributing to a validation of his gospel. Note also 1 Cor 2.4 where Paul claims that his message and preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom rather in the *demonstration* of the spirit and power (ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως).

As discussed earlier, by the time Paul entered into the Greco-Roman world, the term 'psychagogue' appears to have fallen out of use, perhaps due to the abuses of pseudo-psychagogues.[469] A general skepticism had developed in Hellenistic culture concerning the intentions of someone who might claim to be a guide of the soul but in

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[467] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 274C–278B, esp. 274E–275A.

[468] Although, as we see in Philippians, even παρρησία (bold speech) was eventually mimicked further compounding the problem of how to tell a flatterer from a friend, or πρόφασις from ἀλήθεια (see Phil 1.18).

[469] See the above discussion pp. 103ff. Also note again Glad, 'The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for Our Understanding of Paul', 60–61.

fact be more interested in guiding one's money into his own purse. This is the same suspicion that we find being directed toward the sophists, and which Paul himself affirms in order to create a distinct contrast to his own rhetorical activity. Nonetheless, psychagogic activity itself was alive and well at this time, albeit operating under various other labels, and offers itself as one of the cultural analogues for our interpretation of Paul.[470]

The well-established[471] practice of psychagogy in the ancient world offers a set of ethico-cultural conventions according to which we could say that Paul was constrained to operate. As culturally accepted norms, these ideals provide an easily accessible structure for when one had occasion to wax eloquent on moral and ethical issues. More to the point, the structures or discourse associated with psychagogy had, by the time of Paul, entered into the wider populace as normative. Thus we hear Engberg-Pedersen suggest that Stoic ideals and structures became a part of the 'ordinary discourse at a certain level';[472] that is, a part of their particular structure of codes of significance. Thus, it is not necessary to say that Paul was formally a psychagogue in order for us to accept that Paul employed structures formally associated with psychagogy.[473] Once such a structure enters into the discourse of a culture it enters into a reciprocal relationship of affirming and being affirmed by that culture.[474] Consequently, it is difficult, if not impossible, to speak of the degree to which Paul was conscious of the psychagogic analogue, even though his language is often rather psychagogic.[475]

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[470] That is, as stated earlier, the social convention remained, what changed was the way in which people referred to it; see above pp. 105ff.

[471] See Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 84; Glad, 'The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for Our Understanding of Paul', 60; see also the earlier discussion on the widespread desire to seek out a psychagogue or moral guide, pp. 106ff.

[472] Engberg-Pedersen, 'Stoicism in Philippians', 261.

[473] To cite Glad again: 'it is not important that we be able to classify Paul as a "psychagogue" but rather that we recognize his participation in a widespread "psychagogic" activity' (Glad, 'The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for Our Understanding of Paul', 60).

[474] This subscribes to fundamental human orders. Note for example, Berger and Luckmann's discussion on social interaction and the foundation for knowledge in everyday life, Berger and Luckmann, 28–34.

[475] See the earlier discussion on Paul and psychagogy, pp. 101ff.

Genuine psychagogues, like genuine friends, assumed a certain responsibility toward those being led.[476] More specifically, they were interested in the ethical or moral outliving of their discourse (their 'gospel') in the lives of their followers. As a result, we find that the rhetoric of the psychagogues focuses on creating within the follower an apologetic discourse which enables the follower to deal with potential threats to the ideals of the psychagogic discourse in general. We find Paul doing this very thing in Phil 1, although it is specifically targeted towards the Christian community and participates within fundamental sociological practices of group maintenance.[477]

Paul's letter is mainly about reassuring the Philippians.[478] He is in a negative situation and he needs to ensure that the way the Philippians interpret his imprisonment is confluent with the gospel/discourse he has preached to them, lest there appear some anomaly between the gospel he has preached and its practical ability; that is, initially at least, between word and deed. Thus, employing common *topoi* associated with psychagogic and friendship rhetoric (such as 'progress', and 'frank speech'), the discourse Paul inserts into the situation works to reassure the Philippians that the situation is not a negative comment on the adequacy of the gospel he has preached, it rather becomes a positive example of its power; thus, he presents a confluence between the claims of the gospel and its power.[479] Paul's sense of responsibility to the Philippians, his pastoral need to reassure them naturally affects his rhetoric.[480] The various *topoi* Paul employs and his disposition toward the various issues he encounters are naturally governed by his psychagogic or pastoral agenda. I would suggest that Paul's reluctance to articulate his usual theologically-charged rebuke of the selfish preachers in Phil 1 is due, at least in part, to his psychagogic agenda in this reassuring section of the epistle.

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[476] See the earlier discussion on psychagogic responsibility and its relationship to friendship, pp. 107ff.

[477] See the discussion on pp. 89f., and the references in nn. 276, 374. The goal of psychagogic discourse was essentially teleological, seeking to enable the student to attain the great goals of moral philosophy, happiness, being Good, etc.

[478] See the discussion on pp. 58ff.

[479] Note again 1 Cor 2.4: 'my message and my proclamation were not in persuasive words of wisdom, rather in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power'.

[480] Which is interesting in light of the moral ideal to leave speech 'unaffected'. See Seneca, *Ep.* 75.1; Plutarch, 'How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend', 62C, and the citation from Euripides, 'The Phoenician Maidens', 469, 472; Plutarch, 'On Stoic Self-Contradictions', 1047A–B, and the citation from Chrysippus, *SVF* 2.297–8. On frank speech and thus 'unaffected' speech as the 'new virtue' see De Witt, 'Parresiastic Poems of Horace', 313.

What is of interest here in the first chapter of Philippians is that Paul's 'detour'[481] into the discussion of the good and bad preachers is a way to deal with the potential discrepancy between word and deed in his own situation. That is, Paul's discussion of the two preachers, and 1.18 in particular, shows that when it comes to the gospel, the Philippians are to break out of the cultural norm of evaluating discourse according to this word-deed binary structure.[482] Paul wants them to view the gospel message as being a sort of self-validating discourse. But as I say, the discussion of the two kinds of preachers is a way of making this point which can then bracket Paul's own imprisoned situation so that it does not affect the Philippians' evaluation of the truth of the gospel message. At the same time, Paul does not discount the value of the cultural norm, and a few verses later (1.20) makes a claim to frank speech and continuity between word and deed with respect to his own integrity. Thus, we end up with Paul claiming that on the one hand, the truth of the gospel is not judged by human circumstances, but on the other, Paul recognises that humans themselves are still judged by the traditional word-deed structure. I shall develop this strange division in Chapter Four.

### *3.c. Frank Speech, the Word-Deed Convention, and Letter Writing*

Language was the well-honed instrument of the psychagogue.[483] The psychagogue applied this instrument both to speech and to writing, both treatises and letters. This also harks back to the question of the degree to which Paul's pastoral or psychagogic concerns affect his rhetoric.

Seneca, a moral philosopher, psychagogue, and Pauline contemporary, presents us with an interesting example of psychagogic ideals being represented in the form and content of his epistles.[484] In *Ep.* 75 he begins with a rebuke:

> You [Lucilius] have been complaining that my letters to you are rather carelessly written. Now who talks carefully unless he also desires to talk affectedly? I prefer that my letters should be just what my conversation would be if you and I were sitting in one another's company or taking

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[481] Phil 1.12–18a is unsatisfactorily, but often, seen as an excursus by commentators (see above n. 132). My point would be that it is not only an integral, but a central feature of the function of Philippians.

[482] Note the comments on Martin's argument in n. 478; Paul's discourse is doing a lot more than merely conveying information.

[483] Note again Plato's comment that the psychagogue leads the soul through words, see n. 466.

[484] Note that the letters of Epicurus also provide philosophical parallels with the letters of the New Testament; see the discussion in De Witt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy*, 32.

> walks together, spontaneous and easy, for my letters have nothing strained or artificial about them. If it were possible, I should prefer to show, rather than speak, my feelings. . . . I should like to convince you entirely of this one fact, that I feel whatever I say, that I not only feel it, but am wedded to it.[485]

Lucilius is shown to be entangled in concerns about formal epistolary structure, rather than paying more attention to the *function* of Seneca's letter-writing. Lucilius may think he is being a superior epistolist by levelling such a critique at Seneca, but Seneca's reply invokes the established epistolary theorists when he says that he wants his letters to be like an actual conversation.[486] D. A. Russell suggests that 'Seneca's view is bound up, as the context shows, with his insistence that *res* [things] matter more than *verba* [words], and that the problem of philosophy is a matter of not only intellect (*ingenium*) but also of the soul (*animus*)'.[487] Or as Seneca puts it, 'let it [eloquence] be of such a kind that it displays facts and not itself. It and the other arts are wholly concerned with cleverness; but our business is the soul'.[488] And later, 'Are you concerned about words [*verba*]? Rejoice this instant if you can cope with things [*res*]'.[489] Here Seneca *seemingly* drives a moral wedge between language (or '*verba*') and that which it attempts to signify ('*res*' real things); but actually, he is distinguishing between two kinds of speech: artificial (in the technical sense, yet invoking its 'figurative' sense), and plain or 'frank' speech.

The point is that although it stood apart from what Lucilius assumed to be normal, Seneca's deviation from standard epistolary form has its roots in the fact that he values the *function* of the communication more highly than the communication itself, which perhaps we might distinguish in his terms as being the priority of the soul over mere words which could in fact entangle the soul. This also implies that he sees language or communication as a two-tiered structure. Seneca's question 'Who talks carefully unless he also desires to talk affectedly?' is very much a reflection of standard Hellenistic ideals of frank speech, that is, of παρρησία.

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[485] Seneca *Ep.* 75.1–2 (Gummere, LCL); note the comments on affected rhetoric in n. 480.

[486] See the discussion on letters as one side of a conversation, pp. 126ff. in particular and, in general, see the discussion of letters as fictionalised presence on pp. 124ff.

[487] D. A. Russell 'Letters to Lucilius', in *Seneca* (ed. C. D. N. Costa; Greek and Latin Studies: Classical Literature and its Influence; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 73.

[488] Seneca, *Ep.* 75.5 (Gummere, LCL).

[489] Seneca, *Ep.* 75.7 (Gummere, LCL).

***3.c.i. Frank Speech*** Παρρησία took on significance in Periclean Athens as the symbol of freedom, since nothing symbolised personal freedom as much as the freedom of speech[490]—a point reinforced by the fact that slaves did not have this freedom.[491] What is important for our purposes, is the fact that παρρησία was not restricted to a purely political referent. Nor did it maintain the common philosopher-versus-tyrant referent. The philosophers moved the idea of free speech, or παρρησία, from the discourse of civic freedom to the discourse of moral freedom.[492] Schlier notes that the original political aspect of the παρρησία had three components: the right to say anything; that the actuality of things is stated; the courage of openness.[493]

The latter two of Schlier's components appear to be those which developed into the use employed by the philosophers for their moral interests. It is not difficult to imagine how 'the courage to be open', could convert into the psychagogic activity and frankness of speech employed in the pedagogy and healing of the student/patient. The idea of 'the actuality of things being stated' fits easily converted into philosophy by virtue of signifying 'a close relation to truth (ἀλήθεια)'.[494] Thus, Bultmann, recognising the shift away from the classical usage of παρρησία, notes that Paul's use of παρρησία in 2 Cor 2.12 'is not openness toward God [a common early Christian referent], but rather the apostle's openness toward his hearers in his public activity'.[495]

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[490] The reason is that it represented political openness. This of course was something in which the Greeks took great pride, see M. Radin, 'Freedom of Speech in Ancient Athens', *AJP* 48 (1927): 215; also A. Momigliano, 'The Social Structure of the Ancient City', in *Anthropology and the Greeks* (ed. S. C. Humphreys; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 185.

[491] See Euripides, *The Phoenician Maidens*, 390ff.; also Radin, 'Freedom of Speech in Ancient Athens', 215–20; Rudolph Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians* (ed. Erich Dinkler; trans. Roy A. Harrisville; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 84, 85.

[492] See David E. Fredrickson, 'ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ in the Pauline Epistles', in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald; NovTSup 82; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 166. For the Cynics παρρησία was a most beautiful thing, a moral virtue, a property of the wise (Diogenes Laertius, 6.69). The Cynics bear out the relationship of παρρησία to truth very well.

[493] Schlier, 1967, *TDNT* 5:872–73.

[494] Schlier, *TDNT* 5:873.

[495] Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 85. Van Unnik has suggested that Christian παρρησία derives from a Semitic background. His discussion focusses on the conscious attempt by Christians to speak boldly, which is virtually the same as the classical philosopher-tyrant use of the term. I am more interested, however, in παρρησία along the lines of the 'new virtue'. See, W. C. Van Unnik, 'The Semitic Background of ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ in the New Testament',

As with Bultmann's observation, παρρησία was a symbol of truth, and openness of the philosopher towards his audience and among philosophical friends. Initially, this use is most prominent among the Epicureans, for whom παρρησία was a 'corollary to their cardinal principle of friendship'.[496] While prominent among the Epicureans, it was not exclusively Epicurean. Even Aristotle comments that friends should always use frankness of speech towards each other.[497] It is in this environment of friendship that the definition of παρρησία undergoes development, 'eventually becoming a classical topic'.[498] Contributing significantly to that development is Philodemus' own essay on παρρησία.[499] One of the more interesting features of Philodemus' description of παρρησία is the degree to which it is to be done with gentleness;[500] though there is, on occasion, still the need for the harsh (σκληρός) form.[501]

De Witt notes that 'during the Augustan age the adjective *candidus*, if not the noun *candor*, took on the meaning of frank, [and] unaffected. . . . The new virtue . . . signified absolute openness of speech and conduct, without, however, implying the reproof and admonition that went with παρρησία'.[502] Yet, παρρησία itself has not been left behind. De Witt understands that the concept of παρρησία has also developed a similar, 'new specialized sense'.[503] This development in the use of παρρησία is where we begin to see it become a part of the psychagogic discourse. That is, the use of παρρησία as a mode

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in *Sparsa Collecta* (NovTSup 30; Leiden Brill, 1980).

[496] Norman De Witt, 'Parrhesiastic Poems of Horace', *CPh* 30 (1935): 312.

[497] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 9.2.9; also note Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 42.

[498] De Witt, 'Parrhesiastic Poems of Horace', 313.

[499] See either Philodemus, ΠΕΡΙ ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑΣ, PHerc 1471 (ed. Alexander Olivieri; B. G. Teubner, 1914); or Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism* (introduction, translation, and notes by David Konstan, Diskin Clay, Clarence E. Glad, Johan C. Thom, and James Ware; Society of Biblical Literature Text and Translations 43; Greco-Roman 13; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998).

[500] Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism*, fr. 37–38.

[501] Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism*, fr. 7, 10.

[502] De Witt, 'Parrhesiastic Poems of Horace', 313; on the virtues of *candor* see Cicero, *De Amicitia*, 25.95.

[503] Exemplified by Varrus in Horace's *Ars Poetica*, 434–38; see De Witt, 'Parrhesiastic Poems of Horace', 313; see also the discussion of Horace's 'Ode to Licinius', De Witt, 316.

of interaction within philosophical-friendship communities re-introduces the issue of responsibility. It was not outspokenness for its own sake, it was rather designed to function as a benefit for the person to whom it was directed.[504]

This was in direct contrast to flatterers—those whose speech was designed to procure their own interests—who tended away from bold speech so as not to destabilise their sycophantic relationship with their benefactor(s). Yet, even this symbol of truth and true friendship came to be mimicked by flatterers. In fact, Plutarch is quite indignant over the fact that flatterers would dare to imitate frank speech:

> But the most unprincipled trick of all that he has is this! Perceiving that frankness of speech, by common report and belief, is the language of friendship especially (as an animal has its peculiar cry), and, on the other hand, that lack of frankness is unfriendly and ignoble, he does not allow even this to escape imitation, but, just as clever cooks employ bitter extracts and astringent flavourings to remove the cloying effect of sweet things, so flatterers apply a frankness which is not genuine or beneficial, but which, as it were, winks while it frowns, and does nothing but tickle.[505]

It should be made clear that this was no small issue in the ancient world. A good deal of philosophical and moral literature attempted to deal with the problem that speech can be both a poison and a remedy;[506] it can lead the soul as well as beguile it, or according to Seneca's *Ep.* 75 it can be factual or artificial. And here is the important point; Seneca sees his freedom from form as an expression of truth, as an example of παρρησία, as a way to demonstrate the continuity between what he says and what he does. As παρρησία, freedom from formal epistolary structures can take on this definition I offered earlier, a self-reference to integrity in the attempt to become both word and deed.[507]

***3.c.ii. Word and Deed*** The relationship between παρρησία and the word-deed convention is an important one; thus Malherbe summarises the ancient assumption that 'every philosopher's *parrēsia* should therefore be backed by character'.[508] Plutarch states it a little more colourfully: 'the speech of a man light-minded and mean in character

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[504] See the discussion on psychagogic responsibility and its relationship to friendship, pp. 107ff.

[505] Plutarch, 51C–D (Babbitt, LCL); see Plato, *Phaedrus*, 239.

[506] See references on Plato's use of φάρμακον in n. 467.

[507] See p. 110.

[508] Malherbe, *Popular Philosophers*, 160.

(ἐλαφροῦ δὲ καὶ φαύλου το ἦθος), when it undertakes to deal in frankness, results only in evoking the retort: Wouldst thou heal others, full of sores thyself!'[509] In his essay on frank speech, Philodemus assumes that the teachers (pedagogue/psychagogue) who employ frank speech properly will have the deeds (ἔργων), and not just the words, to support their pedagogic and psychagogic function.[510] Furthermore, the person seeking a psychagogue will seek one with both the right speech and the right practice (ἔργου).[511]

The word-deed complex is an important social convention to consider when we account for the way in which the discourse of Paul's psychagogic/apostolic activity was constrained. According to Musonius, the Philosopher's 'treatment should consist in showing himself not only as one who utters words which are most helpful, but as one who acts consistently with them'.[512] As for the student, living out the philosophical teachings is the only way in which philosophy will be of any profit,[513] since after all, 'philosophy is nothing other than knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) about life'.[514] Importantly, it even took on a theological flavour: 'God is an ever present witness to our words and deeds'.[515] Note also the way in which the Cynic writer Pseudo-Anarchasis points out that the appropriate employment of the faculty is to investigate whether one's words match one's deeds while discussing the faculty of reason the gods have afforded to the Greeks and non-Greeks alike. The important point here is that Anarchasis is not actually talking about the word-deed convention, he simply assumes it to be of valid concern to the reader.[516]

In general, however, people simply expected that if someone was genuine, there would be a confluence between their words and their deeds. 'This was particularly applied to a philosopher who justified his exhortation by his own moral progress or

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[509] Plutarch, 'How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend', 71F.

[510] Philodemus, fr. 16.

[511] Philodemus, fr. 40.

[512] Musonius, 36.3–5 (Lutz).

[513] Musonius, 36.8–12.

[514] Musonius, 40.13–14 (Lutz).

[515] Seneca, *Ep.* 83.1; *De Vita Beata*, 20.5.

[516] See Pseudo-Anarchasis, 2 (Malherbe, *Cynic Epistles*, 38).

attainment',[517] and 'was generally regarded as an index to his trustworthiness',[518] or as Glad puts it, as 'two recurring prerequisites for being a psychagogue, namely self-scrutiny and consistency of word and deed'.[519] Furthermore, Glad notes that the assumption was an holistic one in which speech was understood to be 'an integral part of conduct'.[520] For Cicero, knowledge completes itself in action, since the effect of knowledge upon one's life is the whole point of acquiring it through philosophy.[521] Indeed, Malherbe notes that 'the philosopher's whole manner of life, extending in the case of the Cynics to their simple garb, could be pointed to as a deliberate demonstration of the principles they taught'.[522] One need only to read through the antics of Diogenes in the *Cynic Epistles* to gain a sense of the degree to which he sought to saturate his every movement (in both senses of the word!) with his philosophical ideals.[523]

The Cynics were particularly interested in the idea of a philosopher's word being confluent with his deed. In fact, they took it so far that they practically reversed the problem; instead of privileging words, they tended to privilege deeds. Thus Pseudo Crates claims that the Cynics had found some short cut to happiness: 'the way that leads to happiness through words is long, but that which leads through daily deeds is a shortened regimen'.[524] Julian, having a positive view of the Cynics, rhetorically asks: 'Now what was the manner of Cynics' association with people? Deeds with them came before words', he then goes on to list a host of examples.[525] For the Cynics the convention usually amounted to a sense of self-confidence in putting themselves forward

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[517] Abraham J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation, A Greco Roman Sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 38.

[518] Malherbe, *Popular Philosophers*, 57–58.

[519] Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 21.

[520] Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 21.

[521] Cicero, *De Finibus*, 1.7.25; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 5.24f; Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.43.153 (see Cicero, *Academica*, 2.41.127; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 5.3.9; 24.69; Cicero, *De Finibus*, 4.5.12).

[522] Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 38.

[523] Though these epistles are pseudonymous, they represent the Cynic ideals of those who wrote them.

[524] Pseudo Crates, 21 (Malherbe); see also 13; 16; Pseudo Diogenes, 30.

[525] Julian, Oration 7.214BCD.

as models of imitation.[526] Of course, the confluence of word and deed was not a convention peculiar to the Cynics,[527] especially since the fact that Paul also adhered to this well-established, and fundamental convention is all too obvious from his writings. While there are numerous examples,[528] note the interesting comment in Rom 2.24 where after listing a set of examples (2.17–24) in which Jews failed to demonstrate confluence between word and deed, Paul then applies the Old Testament citation: 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you'. Paul seems to employ the social standards of this convention to isolate their failure as a cause for public shame.

***4.c.iii. Letter Writing*** As mentioned earlier, Seneca represents a convenient example for our understanding of Paul. To draw wide uncritical formal parallels between Seneca's and Paul's epistles would be naïve. However, we can draw parallels between the similar culturally constrained motives behind each writer's relative epistolary freedom. Both writers operate with the idea that speech has a lethal dual nature and attempt to employ an openness or frankness in their writing that will demonstrate the virtue of their communication. For example, in 2 Cor 10.9ff. Paul recites a testimony by some of the Corinthians that his letters are weighty and strong, which could easily be understood as 'frank'; hence Fredrickson's suggestion that 'in 2 Cor 10:9–10 we learn that the severity of the so-called "letter of tears" proved to Paul's critics in Corinth that he was capable of παρρησία'.[529] It was when the Corinthians detected a difference between Paul's speech in person and the tone of his epistles that the old problem of how to tell a friend from a flatterer developed;[530] that is, the issue of distinguishing between the two levels of language.[531] Moreover, Paul himself claims that his rhetorical conduct is characterised by

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[526] Lucian, *Demonax*, 3; also see Pseudo Crates, *Epp.* 20; 21; Pseudo Diogenes, *Epp.* 15; 27; 29; Pseudo Heraclitus, *Epp.* 4; 7.

[527] See Malherbe, *Popular Philosophers*, 57; Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.65; Musonius, 36.8–12; 52.8–10; Seneca, *Ep.* 108.35–38 (see *Ep.* 6.5–6); Dio Chrysostom, Discourse, 70.6; Julian *Orations*, 7.214BC; Lucian, *Peregrinus*, 19; Lucian, *Demonax*, 3.

[528] E.g., Rom 2.1; 15.18; 1 Cor 2.4; 1 Thess 2.5ff.

[529] Fredrickson, 173.

[530] See Fredrickson, 173.

[531] This reading of 2 Cor 10.9ff. may challenge the idea that the reference in 2 Cor 10.10 to Paul's speech being 'contemptible' [ἐξουθενημένος] is a comment about his inadequate rhetorical style. It would rather suggest that the problem was that what the Corinthians took to be one level of language, plain and frank speech, was actually another level, affected and artificial speech.

παρρησία (normally translated in the New Testament as 'boldness' or even 'confidence' emphasising a disposition of Paul's consciousness and unfortunately neglecting the rhetorical aspect of the word[532]), using the term itself,[533] and often simply employing the concept by virtue of negative reasoning; for example, in 2 Cor 2.17, Paul compares his activity to those who 'peddle the word of God' (καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ), characterising his own activity as sincere (εἰλικρίνεια). As mentioned earlier, 1 Thess 2.5–6 is also an important example. Paul says that he and his retinue did not come with words of flattery (ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας), nor with the pretext of greed (ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας), nor seeking the glory of men.

Paul consciously represents himself as not only characterised by παρρησία, but also as the opposite of a flatterer. I would suggest that this bears itself out not only in various references such as those I have mentioned, but that as with Seneca, Paul's structuring of his epistles is generated at least in part by this conscious activity. Not that Paul is abandoning epistolary structure, rather that he employs what is necessary in order to allow the function of communication to take place without the *apparent* artifice of form. He is, in short, being frank, which is confluent with being a true friend, or a genuine psychagogue. It might also be possible to go a step further and suggest that since, again in the vein of Seneca, Paul's epistles go beyond the topics typically associated with letter writing and the tradition of epistolary theory, that, as Russell says of Seneca's epistles, they 'are what Pliny calls *scholasticae litterae* . . . they belong . . . to the philosophical line of Plato and Epicurus'.[534]

### *4. Writing in the Greco-Roman World*

Writing has been the subject of philosophical inquiry for almost as long as there has been philosophical inquiry. While we have already discussed the relationship of letter writing to psychagogy, in order for us to further contextualise Paul and his epistles, it is important to investigate further the nature and assumptions of writing in the ancient world. The study of Paul in general, especially in theological contexts, has tended to neglect the assumptive features of ancient writing practices. While I do not intend to discuss *all* the features of ancient writing, what I do intend to discuss here is the fact that ancient writers

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[532] Fredrickson, 165.

[533] 2 Cor 3.12; 7.4; Phil 1.20; Col 2.15; Phlm 1.8; see also Eph 3.12; 6.19; 1 Tim 3.13.

[534] Russell, 'Letters to Lucilius', 74.

understood their texts, and language in general, to be highly functional, as opposed to simply informational.

An example of this sort of thinking is seen in the theorist Longinus' discussion on the sublime.[535] The real mark of good communication is 'not to persuade (εἰς πείθω) but rather transport (εἰς ἔκστασιν) them out of themselves'.[536] This effect of communication upon the audience is what Longinus refers to as the 'sublime' (ὕψος): 'a well-timed flash of sublimity scatters everything before it like a bolt of lightning and reveals the full power of the speaker at a single stroke'; more importantly he compares the sublime to 'the due disposal and marshalling of facts'.[537] That is, it is not a benign presentation of data, but a crafted arrangement of the data for a particular purpose. Longinus assumes that the goal of the communicator is to generate an *effect* upon the audience,[538] and thus his entire work is primarily how one goes about doing precisely that[539]—hence Jane Tompkins' observation that 'for Longinus language is a form of power and the purpose of studying texts from the past (such as Herodotus[540]) is to acquire the skills that enable one to wield that power'.[541] Thus we note, in Longinus' work, that he is clearly not interested in effect alone, but also the power of effect. So for example, Longinus points out that one particular writer has failed because he has overdone his attempts to create effect, and the actual resulting effect is one of 'confusion' and not of 'intensity';[542] such things are

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[535] Longinus is not necessarily talking about the sort of writing that Paul does, but the point here is to observe this sense of function that good communication is apparently supposed to have.

[536] Longinus, 1.4 (Fyfe, LCL).

[537] Longinus, 1.4 (Fyfe, LCL).

[538] One criterion cited for determining whether something is 'sublime' is whether the effect lasts or not (Longinus, 7.3 [Fyfe, LCL]). Once again, this concept of an 'effect' is understood to be the goal of the communication.

[539] See the discussion in J. W. H. Atkins, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity: A Sketch of its Development* (2 vols; New York: Peter Smith, 1952), 2:210–53.

[540] See for example Longinus' discussion on various ancient writers in Longinus, 24ff.

[541] Jane P. Tompkins, 'The Reader in History: The Changing Shape of Literary Response', in *Reader Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (ed. Jane P. Tompkins; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 203.

[542] Longinus, 3.1.

labelled as 'tumours', 'empty inflations, void of sincerity, as likely as not producing the opposite to the effect intended'.[543]

That we can treat Longinus as somewhat paradigmatic of a first century understanding of literary theory is in part answered by the fact that his work was not so much an abstract theorizing of elevated literary style but a corrective response to what he observed were contemporaneous (first century) excesses and failures.[544] It appears that a similar document produced by Caecilius of Caleacte was the impetus for the response.[545] However, reference to yet another theorist, Theodorus of Gadara[546] suggests that Longinus (with whom Atkins believes Theodorus had a theoretical affinity) was not simply responding to Caecilius alone, rather to a general debate, which extended though the first century,[547] between the rival schools of Theodorus, and Apollodorus of Pergamum.

Going back into the tradition of communication, Tompkins further notes that 'it is the consequentiality of poetry as a political force that explains Plato's decision to banish lyric and epic poets from his republic'.[548] 'The equation of language with power, characteristic of Greek thought at least from the time of Gorgias the rhetorician, explains the enormous energies devoted to the study of rhetoric in the ancient world'.[549] The point of this is again well stated by Tompkins: 'all modern criticism . . . takes meaning to be the object of critical investigation, for *unlike the ancients we equate language not with action but with signification*'.[550]

When it comes to epistolary texts like Romans and Philippians there are additional comments to be made with respect to a functional view of ancient texts. The most fundamental element of an epistle in the ancient world is a functional one in that, before anything else, the epistle is an attempt to compensate for authorial absence by creating

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[543] Longinus, 3.4 (Fyfe, LCL).

[544] Atkins, 213, 216.

[545] Longinus, 1.1; Atkins, 213–24.

[546] Longinus, 3.5.

[547] Atkins, 214.

[548] Tompkins, 204.

[549] Tompkins, 203–204.

[550] Tompkins, 203 (emphasis added).

the effect of the personal presence of the writer to the recipient. Thus Berger states that in the ancient world 'letters are a substitute for presence (*Anwesenheit*)', albeit an imperfect (*unvollkommener*) substitute (*Ersatz*).[551] Interestingly, Berger suggests that the friendship letter is not so much a type, rather the presence of particular topics within any type can make it a 'friendship' letter. In particular he cites two *topoi*: the expression of friendship, and the letter as substitute for presence.[552] Thus, one might also note that the idea of the letter as a substitute for presence should be understood as an epistolary *topos* as well as an actual function of the letter.

Koskenniemi suggests that in the ancient world 'it is regarded as the most important task of letters, namely a form simply to represent this relationship (*Zusammenlebens*) during a time of spatial separation, that is, making the ἀπουσία into the παρουσία.'[553] He further understands that the idea of 'presence' is not only an effect upon the reader, but is something that is a part of the letter's nature, since the writer writes while experiencing the presence of the recipient as a mental reality (*geistige Wirklichkeit*)'.[554] This concept of presence as a 'mental reality' is what Stowers later refers to as a 'fictionalized personal presence',[555] and which Robert Funk believes is a highly significant structural element contributing to the function of Paul's letters.[556]

Of course, this is not simply a Pauline matter, but a pervasive feature of Greco-Roman letters. Thraede, for example, has produced a survey of epistolary topics and their motifs from pre-Christian letters to fourth century letters. It appears that the letter as a substitute for personal presence was quite commonplace, giving currency to Paul's

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[551] Klaus Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament', *ANRW* 25.2:1329.

[552] Berger, 1329.

[553] Koskenniemi, 38.

[554] Koskenniemi, 38.

[555] Stanley Stowers, 'Social Typification and the Classification of Ancient Letters', in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism* (eds. Jacob Neusner, et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 79.

[556] See the discussion in Robert W. Funk, 'The Apostolic *Parousia*: Form and Significance', in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (eds. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niehbuhr; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 263–68; see also Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 24.

attempts to invoke his authority via the letter.[557] Koskenniemi and Funk both understand that fundamental to the nature of the letter is the simple notion that it creates a way for two people or parties to compensate for the fact that they are spatially separated.

> It is in the nature of the letter that it represents not only a means for communication or a method for all that which one wants to achieve with its help, but at the same time a uniting bond, a form of spatial contact between separated people. We can also determine that the letter-writers were well aware of this significant component of the letter—and of course they needed no explanations and instructions about this on the part of the scholar.[558]

In other words, it was a simple matter of course that anyone who wrote a letter assumed this to be a fundamental reality. What we want to make of these comments is to introduce a general *caveat* that we *do not allow the apparent simplicity of this assumption to belie its importance.*

Theorists like Demetrius tend not to refer directly to the concept of a fictionalised presence, but, as Koskenniemi notes, there is a definite train of thought associated with the idea.[559] For example, Demetrius understands the letter to be almost an 'image' of the sender's soul.[560] In Pseudo Demetrius' example of the friendly letter he writes: 'Even though I have been separated from you for a long time, I suffer this only in body';[561] later, in the letter of consolation, he writes: 'Since I happened not to be present to comfort you, I decided to do so by letter'.[562] Pseudo-Libanius states that, when writing a letter, 'one will speak in it as though one were in the company of the absent person'.[563] Cicero writes to his friend Marcus concerning a recent letter: 'All of you was revealed to

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[557] See Klaus Thraede, *Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Brieftopik* (ñÆîÆËÀîÀ: Monographien zur klassischen Alterumswissenschaft 48; Munich: C. H. Beck, 1970), esp. 95–106 where he analyses three uses of the 'presence-motif' in the New Testament; see also Koskenniemi, 38–42.

[558] Koskenniemi, 88. Note also Funk's comment: 'The letter is designed to extend the possibility of friendship between parties after they have become physically separated' (Funk, 263–64).

[559] Koskenniemi, 38, 40.

[560] Demetrius, *On Style*, 227.

[561] Pseudo-Demetrius, 'Epistolary Types', 1.10–11 (Malherbe, *AET*).

[562] Pseudo-Demetrius, 'Epistolary Types', 5.16–17 (Malherbe, *AET*).

[563] Pseudo-Libanius, 'Epistolary Styles' (Malherbe, *AET*), 2.

me in your letter'.[564] Gregory of Nazianzus understands that the letter is able 'to sketch an image of the writer's presence'.[565] Especially helpful is Seneca's comment to Lucilius:

> I thank you for writing to me so often; for you are revealing yourself to me in the only way you can. I never receive a letter from you without being in your company forthwith. If the pictures of our absent friends are pleasing to us, though they only refresh the memory and lighten our longing by a solace that is unreal and unsubstantial, how much more pleasant is a letter, which brings us real traces, real evidences of an absent friend![566]

It was more common, however, for the ancient theorists to understand this sense of fictionalised personal presence in terms of something taking the place of personal conversation. Hence Demetrius notes that 'Artemon, the editor of Aristotle's *Letters*, says that a letter ought to be written in the same manner as a dialogue, a letter being regarded by him as one of the two sides of a dialogue'.[567] Again, Pseudo-Libanius states that 'a letter, then, is a kind of written conversation with someone from whom one is separated';[568] and in his example of the friendly letter, he writes that 'it is a holy thing to honor genuine friends when they are present, and to speak to them when they are absent'.[569] Julius Victor advocates that 'it is agreeable to write as though you were conversing with the person actually present, using expressions like "you too?" and "just as you say" and "I see you smile"'.[570] In a letter of recommendation, Aurelius Archelaus closes the letter with the admonition 'Look upon this letter, Sir, and imagine that I am talking with you'.[571] Cicero frequently refers to letters as conversations or dialogues: 'I have begun to write to you something or other . . . that I may have a sort of talk with

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[564] Cicero, *Letters to his Friends*, 16.16.2 (Williams, LCL).

[565] Gregory of Nazianzus, 'Epistulae', 196.3 (TLG E; University of California, Irvine: 1999): σκιαγραφῆσαι τὴν παρουσίαν.

[566] Seneca, *Ep.* 40.1 (Gummere, LCL); note also Demetrius, *On Style*, 227 (Roberts, LCL); see also the later discussion on Seneca's favouring the function of an epistle as a corollary to the value of the soul, p. 114.

[567] Demetrius, *On Style* (Roberts, LCL), 223. Demetrius takes slight issue with Artemon's claim in Demetrius, *On Style*, 224ff.

[568] Pseudo-Libanius, 'Epistolary Styles' (Malherbe, *AET*), 2.

[569] Pseudo-Libanius, 'Epistolary Styles' (Malherbe, *AET*), 58.

[570] Julius Victor, 'The Art of Rhetoric, 27: On Letter Writing' (Malherbe, *AET*), 64.17–19/§448.

[571] *Select Papyri* 1:122.31–33 (Hunt and Edgar, LCL).

you'.[572] In another letter he writes: 'Though I have nothing to say to you, I write all the same, because I feel as though I were talking to you'.[573]

Stanley Stowers, in his book on Greco-Roman letter writing, consistently points out that it is upon the *function* of the epistles that we must focus our attention.

> From the modern perspective, it is natural to think about letters in terms of the information they communicate. The interpreter, however, should resist the temptation to overlook the great multiplicity of functions that letters performed and to speak only of the communication of information. *It is more helpful to think of letters in terms of the actions that people performed by means of them.*[574]

The most important point to note here is the difference Stowers has drawn between contemporary preoccupation with 'information' and the functional interests of the ancient writers. If we do have a desire to know what someone like Paul was thinking, then we are going to have to redress the imbalance caused by a tradition of focussing on 'information'.

### *5. Social Discourse as Constraint*

The significance of philosophical concepts entering the discourse of Judeo-Greco-Roman society is that they become an integral feature of the conditioning process which societal discourse or cultural code places on thought and action within that society.[575] This is akin to what Peter Berger is discussing when he points to a 'social stock of knowledge' which governs social practices; once certain features are factored into that common stock, they are institutionalised through habitualisation and become a part of the subject's impression of reality. Given the nature of Greco-Roman discourse during the first century, it is easy to imagine that someone in Paul's position could be exposed to philosophical concepts and structures of thought and use them for his own ends with no sense of being inconsistent with an institutionalised philosophical system. Indeed, this is

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[572] Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 9.10.1 (Winstedt, LCL).

[573] Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 12.53 (Winstedt, LCL).

[574] Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (LEC 5; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 15 (emphasis added). Subsequent to Stowers' exhortation to focus on function, he lists nineteen specific functions ancient letters were designed to perform upon the reader. The important point to note from Stowers' list is the transitive nature of each item, see Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 15–16.

[575] See Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), esp. 47–92.

precisely what Paul does.[576] Note for example Gnilka's suggestion that since a Christian moral structure did not exist at the time of writing,[577] Paul falls back on the use of moral philosophical terms/concepts *and traditions* already existing within his culture (*Umwelt*).[578] More importantly, Gnilka points out that after Paul takes these existing concepts and traditions (*Begriffe und Traditionen*) from the culture, he moves on to use them for his own purposes and to assist in the development of his own, *Christian* system. Thus, the popular availability of moral philosophical structures of thought gave shape to the way Paul developed a Christian moral structure of thought.[579]

The presence of philosophical concepts in the discourse of Greco-Roman society suggests that Paul would use such terms, concepts, or structures of thought both consciously *and* unconsciously.[580] As part of the social discourse, these terms or concepts form part of the way Paul constructs or articulates his world; thus they necessarily form part of how he conveys his ideology both to himself and to others, since language is the means by which we articulate experience and thus 'necessarily participates in ideology'.[581] Since language is the vehicle for ideology, and since 'it is a characteristic of language to be overlooked',[582] to remain unconscious and transparent to the subject, Paul's use of philosophical terminology to convey theological or ethical ideals—ideals being intimately tied to one's ideological structure—should not be taken to represent an entirely conscious act on his part. The implications of this are rather extensive. The primary implication is that any theological ideal being derived from Paul's writing must be qualified by an

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[576] This is commonly recognised by classicists and historians, see for example, Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 7, and Wayne A. Meeks, *Origins*, 2, as well as the discussion on pp. 100f.

[577] Perhaps we should add that it did not exist as an established authoritative system *for Paul.*

[578] Gnilka, *Philipperbrief*, 51. The particular terms to which Gnilka is referring are ἐπίγνωσις, αἴσθησις and τὰ διαφέροντα in Phil 1.9–10. Gnilka then goes on to suggest that Paul did not remain within the sphere of Hellenistic moral philosophy but moved on to generate an ethic—the basis for reasoning how to act—different from both the Hellenistic and the '(Hellenistic-)Judaistic' ethics to create the Christian basis for reasoning about actions: ἀγάπη.

[579] Gnilka, 52. According to Gnilka, this amounts to the principle or law of ἀγάπη.

[580] Note again the comments by Malherbe, *Popular Philosophers*, 50, where he assumes Paul's adherence to the resources of the philosophical traditions.

[581] Belsey, 42.

[582] Belsey, 42.

already existing (unconscious?) structure of thought which governs the way Paul is able to think about and articulate theological ideals.[583]

The production of Pauline theology is immediately troubled if it does not take into consideration the presence of these underlying structures within Paul's communication. Moreover, the presence of these structures indicates that what we confront in Paul's letters, the surface level of the text, is not theology as such, but a construct produced by other conscious *and* unconscious processes. On one level we can simply say that in Paul's letters we confront language, not theology. But we already know that language is also a construct, that it cannot be reduced to the sum of its lexical parts; that it is, to invoke Sassure,[584] a combination of a system of potential and the realisation of that potential in specific communicative events. To remain with Sassure a little longer, the dynamic relationship between *langue* and *parole*—the former, as a system of possibilities, determines the latter which enables the existence of the former—is the same sort of relationship we find in operation between the discourse of Paul's society (*langue*) and Paul's letter writing (*parole*).

This principle, or process, finds its primary significance in the discussion of how Paul's ideas are put into practice in the actual lives of his followers, that is, in the ethical ramifications of his central ideas. The reason for this is that the practical outliving of Paul's theology is always performed in terms of the norms and strictures of a given culture. This means that on a fundamental level Pauline ethics could be said to be the operation of one set of cultural norms and strictures (Paul's Judeo-Greco-Roman culture) upon another (any culture in which Paul's letters are read as authoritative).

We already recognise this as a problem to some degree when we acknowledge significant cultural differences between ourselves and Paul when we read, for example, Paul's claim in 1 Cor 11.5 that a woman dishonours her head if she prays without a head-covering, since it is the same as if her head were shaved. It is commonly held that this was something peculiar to Paul's culture and that a contemporary woman in Western society would not typically dishonour her head if she prayed without a hat, let alone that being the equivalent of a shaved head! The moment we acknowledge this, however, we

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583 Of course, language, or the articulation of experience, will never be the same as the theological ideals towards which it makes gestures. To say it another way, theological ideals—ontological categories—cannot be reduced to the logocentric world of language.

584 Saussure, 8–11.

acknowledge a fundamental structure which conditions all of Paul's discussions about ethical norms.

### *6. Summary*

In this chapter we have continued the discussion from the previous chapter concerning the context of Paul, the Philippians and the letter. The particular concern of this chapter has been those things which precede Pauline thought and expression. The significance of this particular context is that it had a determinative role in the way in which Paul's thoughts and thus expressions were formed. Understanding what Paul said, is necessarily a study in how Paul came to say what he said; that is, a study in what precedes Pauline expression. Here I have sounded agreement with those who locate the moral philosophers and their culturally adapted ideas as a precedent for Paul's thought. I also suggested that the psychagogic model in particular presents itself to Paul as a viable, prior structure according to which he could have conducted his ministry in ways that would seem 'normal' to both him and his followers. Another important feature of this context is the appreciation of the ancient assumptions associated with writing practices. I suggest here that preceding Paul's act of writing is the assumption of a priority of language's function, not to the detriment information, but certainly not subordinate to it.

The fact that Paul was a product of his environment is hardly a new idea in the history of Pauline studies;[585] nonetheless, the consequences of this fact are still being brought to bear upon the ongoing development of our understanding of Paul, his life and works. That Paul was a product of his environment also means that he was *constrained* by his environment.[586] Abraham Malherbe's comment that Paul was at once *Paulus hellenisticus* and *Paulus christianus*[587] is clearly a tidy way to think about this dialogue between theology/faith and culture operating within Paul to shape the man who wrote various letters of the New Testament. However, it suggests a false balance, since—without denying the distinctiveness of Paul's Christianity—*Paulus christianus* is preceded and enabled by *Paulus hellenisticus*. It was not an axiom of Christianity to

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[585] Thus, note again Alexander's earlier cited statement, on p. 102; Alexander, 'Paul and the Hellenistic Schools, 60.

[586] Note Alexander's comment in the above citation: 'thinkers are *tied in to* certain patterns of behaviour, *restricted* to certain specific forms of communication, by the society they live in' (my emphasis).

[587] Malherbe, *Popular Philosophers*, 8–9.

employ Hellenistic ideas and structures of activity, by contrast, to 'Hellenise' non-Greek ideas and structures of activity was essential to the identity of Hellenism as a phenomenon.[588] Paul can only understand himself and his beliefs in terms of the cognitive, psychological, and social structures available to him, which include any religious beliefs, and those structures which make up his culture, which was Hellenistic. Hellenistic structures provide the framework which locates Paul at a particular point in the fabric of human society, his structures of communication—which is that according to which he articulates and conveys his ideology—his theology, and thus also our ability to know this person.[589]

Importantly, therefore, a reference to the constraint of Paul's discourse is also a reference to the constraint of Paul's theology to more logocentric realities rather than ontological realities. Paul's pragmatic focus on the gospel and his use of proclamation as an ethical reference point brings logocentrism to the fore as a structuring force in how we should be thinking of the nature of Paul's texts. This naturally fails to satisfy the lust for a 'theological' reading, a reading which is unconsciously metaphysical in its desires, yet always remains just that: desire for the grammatical apprehension of the metaphysical in the text, 'a kind of ontological inferiority complex'.[590] Paul's concern in his epistles is primarily to perform the function of spreading his gospel. This also problematises the development of 'normative' Christian practice, or ethics based on Paul's writing, since, traditionally, Christian ethics based on Paul's writing are structured through metaphysical categories. Here, I prefer to structure them along logocentric lines, by which I mean that I prefer to structure the form of Paul's ethical exhortations in terms of the socially discursive structures which constrained Paul's own discourse and thus ideology and thus theology.

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[588] This is a generally accepted point, however see Martin Hengel, *The "Hellenization" of Judaea in the First Century* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989); also F. W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World* (rev. ed.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 14–16, 60ff.

[589] Hence, not simply 'pre-Christian' in Hengel's sense of the term, which amounts to the pre-Damascus road Paul with an emphasis on his relationship to Judaism (that is, Saulus, not Paulus). See Martin Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1991).

[590] Jameson, 4.

# Chapter Four

## (Dis)Closure, Opening, Commentary, Sur-Prise, Failure: Re-reading Phil 1.12-18

### *1. Introduction*

In this chapter I now seek to re-read the text in light of the preceding discussions and with reference to the relevant commentary on this passage. My goal is to 'defamiliarise' and shed new light on Phil 1.12–18, and not simply to offer a repository of prior learning.[591] In the following discussion, I suggest that there are forces at work other than those which appear on the surface of the text; indeed, Phil 1.12 has already been presented as an important moment in the letter which does more than what is explicitly obvious on, but derived from, the surface of the text.[592] I further develop that theme here and suggest that Phil 1.12–13 does two things. It generates a reading strategy (hermeneutic), for the Philippians, which seeks to reverse common assumptions about Paul's imprisonment; it also defines the success of Paul's programme in terms of proclamation. I suggest that these activities are rhetorically closed off by Paul through the formulaic disclosure of Phil 1.12, hence (dis)closure.

I then consider the shift in Paul's focus in 1.14–18 to describe the effects of his imprisonment in terms of those within the Christian community. In 1.15, rather than going on to develop the discussion in the way we might expect him to,[593] Paul goes into further detail, with a discussion of two kinds of preachers, culminating with the extraordinary announcement in 1.18. Paul's reasons for going into the selfish/loving preacher discussion in 1.15–17 are not simply to expand the Philippians' knowledge of his circumstances, but to continue generating a reading strategy for the Philippians to read his situation, which, among other things, seeks to redefine evangelical success in terms of proclamation.

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[591] Note N. T. Wright's comment that 'recent commentaries have . . . tended to be repositories of detailed learning rather than major theological statements' (Wright, 21).

[592] Note again that Alexander has suggested Phil 1.12 is perhaps the most important moment in the epistle, see pp. 58ff.

[593] A number of scholars have pointed to this section as a deviation or an aside of some sort (e.g., Fee, 124). German scholars typically tend towards the view that it was an excursus. Notable are Dibelius, 65; Barth, 29; Gnilka, 60.

The matter of proclamation is perhaps the most important point around which this discussion will cohere. While on the one hand this passage (Phil 1.14–18) clearly has a lot to do with proclamation, there are elements within Paul's discussion which raise critical eyebrows. In particular, I refer to the fact that in 1.18 Paul makes an abnormal claim which resonates more with the philosophy of Austin and Derrida, than with the traditional commentary on this passage. For this reason, I shall devote some of this chapter to further elaboration of those points in their work which speak to the situation. We find that as we then follow the textual contours of Phil 1.14-18 we arrive at an undecidable point within the text, where it's logic deconstructs (itself, since all deconstruction is already within the text). Traditional readings encounter this gaping crevasse of undecidability, and seek to close it over, halting its dynamic production. The re-reading of this passage permits the logic to fail, and the result is found to be more fruitful and dynamic than the glossed, closed, halted version of commentary on this text.

## *2. Opening: Phil 1.1–11*

Philippians opens in a somewhat typical Pauline manner, insofar as Paul adapts the standard epistolary formula of his culture, intermingled with some Jewish elements, to suit his own purposes.[594] While studies on formal epistolary openings (the salutation and thanksgiving sections), are essential for our understanding of the New Testament letters, the most important point for issues of New Testament analysis is Paul's *adaptation* and subordination of such norms to his ideological agenda. It is in such points of difference that we discover the contours which distinguish Paul as a particular individual and his writing as a distinct object of criticism. This interest in Paul's adaptation or his difference provides an avenue through which I may further indicate something of the critical direction I wish to take in this project.

On the one hand we have formal approaches to Paul's epistles which marry instances of Paul's texts with instances of other, extra-biblical texts and intend to indicate that by these points of commonality there opens an aperture through which 'light from the ancient East' would flow into and illuminate Pauline studies. We may readily apply Foucault's language here and refer to the structure which enables and validates this

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[594] See the discussion in Paul Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings* (BZNW 20; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1939), 19; also Peter T. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul* (Leiden: Brill, 1977); but note Jeffrey T. Reed, 'Are Paul's Thanksgivings Epistolary?' *JSNT* 61 (1996): 87–99.

process as an 'order of knowledge'[595] which seeks to reveal truth concerning Paul, or more specifically, which constructs aspects of Pauline studies in a particular way so as to discuss and critique them. But of course, and on the other hand, there are various other 'orders', processes which seek to reveal truth concerning Paul and construct him and his work as objects of criticism. In general, these have been combined into that large mechanism of truth-revelation known as historical criticism. The title 'historical criticism' refers to a way of constructing the object of criticism and not to a method or even a particular set of methods. Thus, for example, one can be 'doing' historical criticism while reading for the literary aspects of a particular text because one constructs that text in a particular way as an object of criticism; conversely, one may be investigating historical information about the New Testament and be a long way from the ordering processes of historical criticism.[596]

With respect to Paul's opening statements, it is clearly important to acknowledge and research the formulaic norms of Greco-Roman letter writing and Paul's relationship to those norms. The importance of such study, as mentioned, is that it shows us where Paul differs from his culture, or even within the domain of his own epistles. The interest of this project, however, is to question how Paul uses such differences to secure his own interests;[597] that is, to ask how alteration of epistolary form, for example, serves to facilitate Paul's position of power—the maintenance of his relationship to, or position within, a particular discourse, or set of discourses, respecting who he believes himself to be, namely a man with a divine commission to proclaim the gospel. Such an interest does not imply that the *only* function being performed by these epistolary introductions, or any passage under consideration in this project, is the facilitating of Paul's power. It is rather the case that this is simply one of the functions.

The primary difference in the opening passage (Phil 1.1–11) which is of interest to this project is the extended thanksgiving section in 1.3–11, which differs from letters

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[595] Foucault uses the phrase 'order of knowledge' to refer not to an epistemological matrix *per se*, but to a discursive and dominating structure which itself plays out a role in line with its own interests. In short, it is a way in which an objective of criticism is *constructed as such*. See Foucault, 1:54–55.

[596] See for example, Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, 'Taking It Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees', *JBL* 117/2 (1998): 249–73.

[597] This does not imply a lack of interest in the well-being of others, rather it implies the simple point that if we say that Paul has the interest of others at heart, then it is within his 'interests' to do so.

within Paul's culture[598], and the section in 1.7–8 in particular which differs from other letters within the Pauline corpus. It has been well noted that the opening section of Philippians carries a tone of personal interest on the part of Paul toward the Philippians like none of his other letters.[599] This personal interest gives rise to the rhetorical contours of Philippians in ways different from the well-discussed, overt protestations of Paul's longing and concern for the Philippians. Paul represents himself in the epistle as having a very close relationship to the Philippians in a manner unparalleled in his extant epistles, and there is no reason to contest his sincerity.[600]

Bolstered by Paul's rather positive representation with his constant references to friendship and joy, some critics have then gone on to read this as the primary mode of the epistle, with the result that we hear such bold claims as the one noted by Shaw, that Philippians is 'the happiest document in religious literature'![601] Though typically less jubilant, such laud of Philippians abounds in the commentaries[602] and this is clearly one of the responses that Paul was attempting to achieve.

Many commentators have detected, however, a different side to the epistle, one in which all is not as well as it could be. Gnilka, for example, senses that 'Despite cordial agreement (*herzlichen Einvernehmens*), all is not well in Philippi'.[603] The issue of the false teachers is not yet a reality, but what is a reality, suggests Gnilka, are certain events representing a break down of their affection (*Lieblosigkeit*) for one another.[604] Similarly, Ernst claims that Paul's letter shows that the Philippians in 'no way exemplify'

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[598] See Peter Arzt, 'The "Epistolary Introductory Thanksgiving" in the papyri and in Paul', *NovT* 36 (1994): 28-46; also see the comprehensive discussions in O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul*; Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings*. Prayers, wishes and thanksgivings for the good health of the recipient are more the rule than the exception in ancient letters similar to Paul's letters, see for example the discussion on family letters in J. L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (FFNT; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 196–97, but note also pp. 200–3. Yet, in spite of this, we note that Paul is using his thanksgivings in a way peculiar to him. Even Schubert, who seeks to draw close to the Hellenistic parallels, acknowledges that Paul is not a slave to the Hellenistic forms (Schubert, 119).

[599] See discussion on pp. 75ff.

[600] See discussion on pp. 75ff.

[601] J. M. Shaw, 'Philippians', *ExpT* 45 (1934): 204.

[602] See the discussion and references on pp. 75ff.

[603] Gnilka, 12.

[604] Gnilka, 12.

(*demonstriert keineswegs*) unity and are not exactly a 'shining example of Christian virtuousness';[605] furthermore, he suggests that Paul shows that the congregation has failings, doubts, and error.[606] Peterlin, whose position on the matter is similar to my own, suggests that hostile circumstances at Philippi and Paul's imprisonment forced the church to reconsider some issues which they had previously accepted uncritically. Two sides form, and their respective positions harden, thereby laying siege to the church's unified front and weakening it. Paul's letter is, at least in substantial part, a response to this threat.[607] Other commentators are far more bleak, and tend to see the negative aspects as the dominant mode of the epistle. Black, for example, believes the letter reveals that the Philippians were 'diseased by strife and self-interest',[608] and Blevins, who follows Lohmeyer's infamously gloomy work,[609] argues that the church has been split apart by dissension and the formation of cliques.[610]

Gnilka's point, mentioned above, that there is an agreeable tone which seems contrary to some of the problems actually taking place, is a suggestion that there is a discrepancy between the rhetoric and the reality of the epistle. Calvin noted somewhat earlier that Paul expresses his particular disposition towards the Philippians 'with the view of securing their confidence',[611] and commenting on Phil 1.8: 'It was . . . of advantage, that Paul's affection should be thoroughly made known to the Philippians. For it tends in no small degree to secure credit for the doctrine, when the people are persuaded that they

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605 Josef Ernst, 'Anfechtung und Bewahrung: Das Bild einer Christlichen Gemeinde nach dem Philipperbrief', in *Das Evangelium auf dem Wege zu Menschen* (eds. Otto Knoch, Felix Messerschmid and Alois Zenner; Frankfurt: Knecht, 1973), 74.

606 Ernst, 74. Like Gnilka, Ernst also points out that this is 'normal' and 'human'.

607 Davorin Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Light of Disunity in the Church* (NovTSup 79; Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 219–24; note Watson's claim that the main proposition of the epistle is 1.27–30 (Watson 'A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians', 79).

608 D. A. Black, 'Paul and Christian Unity: A Formal Analysis of Philippians 2.1–4', *JETS* 28 (1985): 303.

609 Lohmeyer understands martyrdom to dominate the tone of the epistle.

610 James L. Blevins, 'Introduction to Philippians', *RevExp* 77 (1980): 320f.

611 John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (vol. 21 of *Calvin's Commentaries*; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 21.

are beloved by the teacher'. Again, we observe a difference between the rhetoric of Philippians and the points being made within in it.[612]

One would be hard-pressed, however, to find support for the claim that Paul was *faking* concern in order to get his point across, but there is a degree of healthy suspicion to be cast on to Paul's language in Philippians. It is obvious that expressing genuine concern and affection does not preclude any another operation being performed by that very expression. Paul, like everyone else in the world, has specific goals he wants to meet and he achieves these goals by means stated and unstated, even if those unstated means are not conscious movements on his part. This does not invalidate Paul's claims of affection, rather it merely suggests that Paul's expressions of longing and concern do not cease to function as soon as he moves on to another subject, they indeed reside within all that follows.

I suggest that Paul makes use of the residual effects of his expression of affection in order to move toward developing a way for the Philippians to understand his imprisonment; that is, he wants to create an interpretative framework or perhaps a new context for the Philippians to view his circumstances so that they read the situation *the way he wants them to read it*. Here is clearly where this element of suspicion enters the discussion; not an incredulous suspicion, rather a critical suspicion in which one wonders if there is more to Paul's comments than what appears to be the case on the surface-level of the text. If there is, then we may just as easily call it a 'subversive movement' in Paul's text as we may call it a rhetorical one, since the goal of such a movement is to persuade the Philippian readers *without actually saying so*.[613]

### *3. (Dis)closure: Phil 1.12–13*

The rhetorical move in Phil 3, mentioned above, is indicative of an unstated function of Philippians as a whole. Paul's language works to mask and influence; that is, it masks its own rhetorical operation, it leaves unstated its most important function which is to give the Philippians a reading strategy which will cause them to contextualise in a manner

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[612] Calvin, 30.

[613] Some may suggest that this reduces all attempts to persuade to being subversive. This would be an appropriate conclusion when applied to texts (written or spoken or signified in any fashion) in which the function of persuasion is not the immediate and superficial activity of the text.

confluent with Paul's own discourse any difference to that discourse.[614] One can put this same strategy in different and more euphemistic terms: the reading strategy will enable the Philippians to maintain their ideo-theological position in the face of conflict, it will help them to keep the true faith.

This gift from Paul of a reading strategy is also something of a rhetorical Trojan horse. Paul's letter of friendship carries within the folds of its discursive form another message which operates on the Philippians while they enjoy the gift. Thus, the signal for disclosure in Phil 1.12, 'I want you to know' (γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι) is at once the signal for the opening *and* the 'closure' of Paul's letter, the signal for its (dis)closure: Paul's letter is perceived as open to the Philippians, as (dis)closed and (un)covered information, a window into his 'real' situation, but this moment of uncovering or opening is also the moment of closure whereby the Trojan strategy comes into operation and the Philippians accept both the stated and unstated. The window becomes a rhetorical lens through which Paul allows the Philippians to see his circumstances as he wants them to see them.

Jane Schaberg, as mentioned, has noticed this same operation in the Gospel of Luke,[615] and for this reason she interestingly suggests, though somewhat overstating the case (for rhetorical purposes one assumes), that Luke is 'perhaps the most dangerous book in the Bible'.[616] What she has noticed is that while Luke seems to be the most woman-friendly of the Gospels, which leads to the text's gaining a certain privilege about the status of women, and thus to an uncritical reading or acceptance, the Gospel itself uses this to 'legitimate male dominance in the Christianity of the author's time'.[617] The point is, regardless of whether one agrees with the 'danger' element which Schaberg suggests exists, that the Gospel of Luke, while appearing to be friendly to or even privilege

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[614] Note Castelli who understands 3.15–21 to be about constructing insiders and outsiders while at the same time conveniently re-inscribing certain hierarchical structures that work in Paul's favour (Castelli, 95–97).

[615] See earlier discussion, on p. 24.

[616] Schaberg, 275, 286–89. Note, however, that Schaberg speaks as though Luke the man consciously commits these crimes against women. This is quite difficult to determine, and the situation in the gospel seems more like Luke re-inscribing the values of his culture into his text and thus it is the text which gets away from him and operates on both the sub-surface and surface levels.

[617] Schaberg, 275.

women,[618] is not at all what it appears, and is in fact quite the opposite. Thus, the text of the third Gospel uses the same Trojan logic which Paul uses in Phil 1.12ff. It brings in the reader on a level of reassurance and uses this reassurance to enable another discourse to operate, hence Schaberg's descriptions of the Gospel: 'extremely dangerous text', 'most dangerous book', 'it seduces the reader into uncritical acceptance of it'.[619] The element of 'danger' sensed by Schaberg is caused by the realisation that this unstated current flows deep within the text, particularly since this unstated flow runs counter to the current of the stated textual surface.

Another point to be made here is that this Trojan strategy, in which the outside level misdirects what is on the inside, is not exactly an uncommon one. Matthew's Jesus criticised the Jewish leaders for the same thing: 'Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are like whitewashed tombs (τάφοις κεκονιαμένοις) which on the outside appear beautiful, but within are full of bones of the dead and all uncleanliness' (Matt 23.27).[620] The only difference here is that Jesus castigates the process because in Matthew the claim is that these hypocrites are doing it on purpose. One must ask whether or not they really are. They obviously do not agree with Jesus' programme, and they deliberately attempt to achieve their own ends through their language. So, what is the difference between them, and Luke and Paul? Are they not living out and trying to achieve what they believe to be right, and is this not the very thing Luke and Paul are trying to do also? The difference is, from the perspective of the New Testament, that they do not follow Jesus' programme, which is said to come from God, whereas Luke and Paul are firm adherents of Jesus' programme. But does this make the Trojan logic of their texts any more or less 'valid'?

Returning to Philippians, we note that the break from 1.1–11, the introductory material or 'exordium',[621] is signalled in 1.12 by a 'disclosure formula' (γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι), the function of which was to introduce the primary reason for writing.[622] As

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[618] See the commentators' claims listed in Schaberg, 275, which have been used to describe Luke as, 'a special "friend" of women, portraying them in an "extremely progressive" and "almost modern" fashion, giving them "a new identity and a new social status"'.

[619] Schaberg, 275.

[620] See Psalm 5.9; Rom. 3.13.

[621] See, Watson, 'A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians', 61–65.

[622] See discussion, on pp. 59ff.

discussed earlier,[623] Alexander suggests that the disclosed reason for writing (1.12–26) is all about reassuring the Philippians concerning Paul's situation. It is important that we recognise that the idea of 'reassuring' is also an unstated one. We assume that this must be what Paul was trying to do in 1.12ff.,[624] and there is no reason at all to question that this is indeed a function of the disclosure formula in 1.12, yet the conditions which enable the function of reassurance to operate also enable differently interested[625] rhetorical moves to operate in Philippians.

This is a natural feature of rhetorical communication in general. Even if we were to assume that language is concrete and has solid connections between its signifiers and signified, when it aims to produce an *effect*—where the relationship between a set of signifiers and their referent(s) is 'metaphorical'—such as in our text, it opens itself up to a radical polyvalence which is easily (if not always) exploited for ideological purposes. This linguistic operation is, of course, an object of critical theory and is not a matter of seeing Paul as deliberately or consciously out to deceive, rather of one which recognises that Paul's interests were not singular, but varied; that Paul was a *normal*, subjective writer whose many interests inscribed themselves in the texts he generated. As Belsey has it, 'ideology is *inscribed in signifying practices*—in discourses, myths, presentations and re-presentations of the way "things" "are"'.[626]

What this leads to is the realisation that when we read Paul, we read *Paul*, since his bio-graphics are inscribed in everything he writes, as is the case with all of us. Paul's texts are naturally unconsciously constructed in accordance with ideo-theological interests derived from his social discourse and the terrifyingly complex psycho-social network which that includes. This problematises readings of Paul which are designed to generate Christian ethics in particular, since all such readings must account for the constraints which precede Paul's evaluation process and govern his reactions, what he sees as normative or abnormal, what is proper behaviour and improper, and so on.

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[623] See discussion on pp. 58ff.

[624] I am aware of no commentator who does not try to represent this section as an attempt to reassure or allay the concerns of the Philippians.

[625] That is, the language of the letter is seen to operate confluently with the flow of its own argument and at the same time in a manner other than that argument.

[626] Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (London: Routledge, 1980), 42.

A further problem that arises is the fact that it is a feature of language to escape its origins.[627] The result of this, to put it negatively, is that the author loses control over what he or she produces at the moment of production; to put it positively, the result is that readers produce readings of texts that are valid in and of themselves but may not have been what the author was thinking when he or she compiled the text.[628] The only question with this is not whether or not it happens, rather whether or not one would label as 'valid' a reading other than that which is entirely confluent, even identical, with the conscious mind of the author at the time of writing. It is very important, however, to recognise that this is not a hermeneutical reality simply affecting *our* contemporary reading of Philippians, in which we experience the risk of missing the author's 'intended' meaning, it was, of course, also a hermeneutical reality affecting the Philippians and forms the condition according to which both the reassuring and the subversive[629] elements can operate. Despite all the complaints to the contrary, the author's 'intended' meaning remains a possibility. The only problems are that: (1) there is no guarantee that one has arrived at that reading; (2) we must assume that the author's 'intended' meaning is the one foremost in his conscious mind, if such a distinction can be made (by 'foremost', I only mean in the same way that a desire for salt is foremost in my mind when I ask for someone to pass the salt). The author has varying interests derived from transparent norms and values within his or her culture which consequently constrain him or her as a subject and thus to be subjective. As such, the author is blind to his or her discourse at least to some degree. Nonetheless, we can claim that the 'authorial' reading is a possible reading even if there are other possible readings generated by a given text. For this reason there is no harm at all in attempting to reach Paul's 'intended' meaning; though 'intended' must remain in quotes since it is necessary to keep in mind point 2, above, and the question of whether we can speak of a consciously unified intention present to the subject.

In Phil 1.12, Paul makes a point of explaining that his circumstances are actually working for the *advancement* (προκοπή)[630] of the gospel, which we should probably take as

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[627] See the discussion on pp. 174ff.

[628] See Johnson's comments on the logic of an author's text on p. 41.

[629] By 'subversive' I mean the unstated function in the letter which works to align (further) the Philippians with Paul's ideo-theological position.

[630] Προκοπή is something of a technical term in Greco-Roman moral philosophy; however,

a reference to proclamation; hence O'Brien's suggestion that προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγέλιου in Phil 1.12 is not a reference to its content, rather a reference to the act of proclaiming it.[631] O'Brien also notes that Paul 'goes out of his way' to show the Philippians examples of this advance by accumulating terms expressive of courage:[632] 'the majority of the brethren have all the more [περισσοτέρως] confidence [πεποιθότας] in the Lord by virtue of my bonds to boldly [τολμᾶν] speak the word without fear [ἀφόβως]' (Phil 1.14). The significance of this explanation, that is, the significance of *including* an explanation, is that it serves to alleviate the 'natural and reasonable'[633] expectation by the Philippians that things do not bode well for Paul and perhaps even for the gospel itself. The contrary expectation of the Philippians is probably the significance of the term μᾶλλον ('rather'[634]), which seems best read as an attempt by Paul to point out to the Philippians that the 'unexpected'[635] has happened; that is, that *their* natural expectations—which Paul either knows from reports or assumes on the basis of cultural norms—have been confounded.[636]

As almost every commentator points out, Paul is here quite concerned to represent the gospel as something which transcends his own circumstances and the power of the Romans. A rather helpful point can be derived from a phrase used by Fee to describe the situation. Fee points out that Paul's 'present focus is not so much on himself

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it does not appear to carry this technical sense at this point. See Foucault, 3.43ff.; Epictetus *Diss.* 2.12–22; the essays in E. R. Dodds, *The Ancient Concept of Progress and Other Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973); also, G. Stählin, προκοπή, *TDNT* 6: 704–11; in the New Testament, only in Phil 1.12, 25; and in 1 Tim 4.15.

[631] O'Brien, 'The Gospel', 223, 219–24.

[632] O'Brien, 'The Gospel', 221.

[633] O'Brien, 'The Gospel', 220; see the discussion on pp. 81ff.

[634] For 'rather', see Vincent,16; Fee, *Philippians*, 110; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 90; Collange, 53; Lightfoot, 87; but note BAGD which suggests 'to a greater degree' for μᾶλλον in Phil 1.12 (BAGD, 489).

[635] Gnilka, 56.

[636] While Paul may have felt that the gospel had made 'considerable and unexpected progress' (O'Brien, 'The Gospel', 221), one suspects that the Philippians too would not have expected any advance. Indeed, they probably expected the contrary; Fee, *Philippians*, 111; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 90; Lightfoot, 87.

. . . as it is on *how he views* what has happened'.[637] While the phrase '*how he views*' is also emphasised by Fee, I would suggest that it might be better to emphasise only the personal pronoun, so as to indicate that what is important about the explanation in 1.12, from a critical perspective, is that it is *Paul's* view; in fact, I would further suggest that we take this as not simply how *Paul* views the situation, but how he wants the *Philippians* to view the situation. Hence the well-established argument in the commentaries that Paul seeks to show that even the antagonists further his interests.

That is, 1.12 offers Paul's preferred 'spin' on his present circumstances. There are a number of possible reasons for this, but the one which forms a central interest of this project is simply that Paul desires (βούλομαι) to create the impression that the gospel prevails in spite of bad circumstances, and that, in accordance with the norms of popular discourse about psychagogic activity,[638] Paul's words match his deeds.[639] Thus, 'I want you to know' (1.12) becomes, functionally speaking, a covert way of saying, 'this is how I want you to read the situation'. The object of Paul's desire (βούλομαι) is, therefore, not the Philippians' simple, unitary cognizance of the gospel's progress (προκοπή) but the dynamic polysemy effected by the explanation. That is, the explanation in general, and the ὅτι-clause in particular, is this aforementioned rhetorical Trojan horse which functions purely and singularly on the surface, but on the inside there lies the discursive complex that Paul wants to unfold and lay over the Philippians' understanding of his situation.

As mentioned, we find in 1.12–18 an attempt by Paul to counter the expectations among the Philippians that there was something untoward about Paul's message, which would be suggested by his prolonged imprisonment, and that these expectations are derived from the norms generated by Greco-Roman social discourse. Apart from the social norms of linking prison and shame, discussed earlier,[640] there is also another very important social expectation in place and which Paul may indeed be attempting to meet in Phil 1.12–18, namely the aforementioned word-deed convention. This convention was

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[637] Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 108.

[638] Hence the earlier discussion on Greco-Roman philosophical conventions and psychagogy, see esp. pp. 101ff.

[639] Note pp. 113ff., and pp. 101ff.

[640] See above, pp. 81ff.

incumbent upon philosophers and psychagogues in particular,[641] but certainly as a standard, popular ethical convention, that one's words ought to match one's deeds.[642]

Phil 1.12, and the rest of our passage, works to demonstrate that any potential problem based on the word-deed convention is countered by the fact that the gospel continues to progress. The problem is this, if Paul has preached the gospel at Philippi and claimed that it was the message of God by whom he has been personally commissioned to tell them these very things, and then finds himself in prison for a number of years, what does this then say to the Philippians who are already starting to falter in their unity, and to new converts in particular, about the validity of Paul's claims? Not very much. The fabric of the Philippian Christian community's self-understanding is woven through with stories of God's demonstration of power through Paul,[643] and releasing him from jail. Paul's long-term imprisonment can threaten a retrospective interpretation of these previous events. Phil 1.12ff., is a bid to prevent this: if Paul's words were thought *not* to match his deeds, his 'deed' in this case is his long-term imprisonment, then he need only point out that the gospel is still being spread while he is in prison. But is this enough? Perhaps Paul did not think so, because Phil 1.14–18 continues the development of his attempt to generate the right reading of his situation. It is a subtle development, but it also explains what is going on in the passage as a whole (Phil 1.12–18a), a passage which Ralph Martin has called 'tantalisingly obscure'.[644]

To take stock of the discussion, in 1.12 we find Paul sifting through the rubble of his socially degraded circumstances, which have probably relegated him to the lowest stratum of an intensely class-conscious society and which have probably stripped him of any semblance of honour in an equally intensely honour/shame-driven society. In spite of these dire straits, and contrary to the natural expectations of the Philippians, he has nonetheless been able to unearth from the rubble the claim that the gospel has progressed. In order to validate his claim, Paul begins in 1.13 to unpack the significance of the term 'progress' (προκοπή) by giving an account of supporting evidence. He begins

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[641] See, the discussion on pp. 99ff.

[642] See the discussions on pp. 113ff., and on pp. 101ff.

[643] See comments on p. 84.

[644] Martin, *Philippians*, 70.

with a complex infinitival result clause (ὥστε . . .[645]), lasting through to 1.14, which describes or 'explains'[646] his circumstances in terms of the results of the coming about of the progress of the gospel (προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν).

It is difficult to say precisely what Paul's claim is in 1.13 as opposed to the rest of the results stated in 1.14. Is he saying that he has been able to win converts among the Praetorian Guard and 'all the rest'? It does not appear to be the case that he is. The fact that he is careful to add a salutation '*especially* (μάλιστα) from those out of Caesar's house (Καίσαρος οἰκίας)'[647] in 4.22 at the very last moment in the letter, before his formulaic closing, indicates that he was certainly interested in pointing out to the Philippians that he was still at work among the house churches in Rome. It is clear that there were already Christians in Rome before Paul arrived, and the fact that the salutations are made in the way they are ('especially' [μάλιστα]), is perhaps indicative more of the fact that the saluters were already Christians of whom the Philippians were at least aware or perhaps even knew, than of new converts unknown to the Philippians. What the salutation does evidence, as indicated above, is the fact that Paul was working among the Christians in Rome. This is a point Paul is obviously keen to make sure the Philippians know in order to further develop the impression that things are going well, with respect to his ministry, in spite of the circumstances.

So, what is to be made of the claimed result in Phil 1.13? An obvious point is that it differs from the result in 1.14, insofar as 1.13 refers to the progress of the gospel outside the Christian community, as opposed to 1.14 which refers to the progress within.[648] One thing Paul is not claiming is that he has been able to win converts; instead, he appeals to *proclamation*[649] as the basis of the advance, which is also the basis of the advance in the second result stated in 1.14. That is, Paul points to his achievement of spreading the 'message' throughout the Praetorian Guard and all the rest with the result that they are

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[645] The use of ὥστε with the infinitive could refer to either real, potential or intended results (BDF §391), the present context indicates that Paul refers to actual results (see Rom. 15.19; 1 Cor. 5.1); see Silva, *Philippians*, 69; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 91, n. 18–19.

[646] On ὥστε as explicatory, see Collange, 54, n. 1; also, Vincent, 16; Silva, *Philippians*, 69–70; Gnilka, 56.

[647] On Καίσαρος οἰκίας, see comments on p. 70.

[648] See O'Brien, *Philippians*, 91.

[649] See the discussion on the definition of 'gospel' (εὐαγγέλιον) below, pp. 148ff.

now aware that his imprisonment is 'in Christ' (ἐν Χριστῷ).[650] This raises two questions, What is meant by ἐν Χριστῷ? and What is the significance of the fact that Paul's claim of progress is based on proclamation and not upon conversion?

The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ is used seventy-six times in the New Testament, seventy-three of which are in Pauline literature, while the remaining three are located in 1 Peter. It is as common in Paul as it is ambiguous; hence the frustrated tone of BDF, 'the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ (κυρίῳ), which is copiously appended by Paul to the most varied concepts, utterly defies definite interpretation'![651] Here the problem has been to determine with what other phrase(s) in the clause in 1.13 (ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι) one should connect ἐν Χριστῷ, since it leaves the word order in a rather awkward or at least unexpected state.[652] One option, generally rejected,[653] is to connect it to the phrase 'my bonds' (τοὺς δεσμούς μου).[654] The problem with this rendering is that it strains the Greek word order by not allowing the predicate adjective 'manifest' (φανερός), which separates the two phrases, to function adequately as a modifier of the phrase 'my bonds' (τοὺς δεσμούς μου). For this reason, it appears best to take the lead from the Greek word order[655] and render the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ in such a way so as to link it to the entire preceding accusative construction (τοὺς δεσμοὺς [μου] φανεροὺς),[656] so that it renders the dative ἐν Χριστῷ as indicative of the sphere in which the manifestation of Paul's bonds has 'come about' (γενέσθαι).[657] It is not quite correct, therefore, to get

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[650] This assumes a certain rendering of the word order in the infinitival clause in 1.13 which I discuss below in conjunction with the meaning of ἐν Χριστῷ.

[651] BDF, §219 (4); for a good summary of the interpretative situation regarding this phrase in Paul, see the discussion and bibliography in M. A. Seifrid, 'In Christ', *DPL*, 433–36.

[652] Gnilka notes that one expects ἐν Χριστῷ to follow γενέσθαι (Gnilka, 56, n. 11).

[653] For example, Vincent, 16.

[654] Such as the AV: 'So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace'.

[655] See Vincent, 16.

[656] Gnilka, 56, n. 11.

[657] Similarly, Dibelius, 64.

around the problem by rendering ἐν Χριστῷ as 'for Christ',[658] although this certainly comes close to the point. Neugebauer suggests that take the phrase as an adverbial or circumstantial modification. This is helpful only if we see it as adding to the complexity of the phrase's referents, rather than excluding the metaphorical reference to space which is inherent in the term. For this reason, the rest of his claim, that the phrase is a temporal reference to Christ's saving activity and that therefore Paul's imprisonment was an example of that saving activity, is harder to accept.[659] Note, however, O'Brien's concern that 'it is doubtful whether the phrase "in Christ" can really bear the weight Neugebauer has put on it'.[660]

The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ nonetheless remains ambiguous even when we do determine its syntactical function, or perhaps even in spite of its syntactical function. While it is probably impossible to nail one referent to the phrase, we can of course approximate the sense of the range of referents Paul may have intended. Seifrid notes that the expression in Paul 'probably came from earlier Jewish Christianity'.[661] As an example, he points to Acts 4.2, 12 as indicators that 'the earliest believers in Jerusalem proclaimed Jesus as the decisive "sphere" of God's saving action'.[662]

The signifier 'in Christ', in such cases, therefore becomes the label for the context of work done as a result of the Messianic activity of God's son. That is, Paul assumes a certain metaphysical shift occurs when one is baptised which is the direct result of this Messianic activity in which the Christian, in this case Paul, *participates*. So, in Rom 6.3–5, Paul says that those who were baptised into (εἰς) Christ Jesus were baptised into (εἰς) his death, the result of which is that the Christian's activity is now recontextualised so that it is performed in this sphere of Christ: 'so that we walk in newness of life' (Rom 6.4). The result of this is that *everything* the Christian does is in the context of 'Christ', because 'God has rescued us from out of the domain of darkness (ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους)

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[658] E.g., Vincent, 16; NIV; NRSV. Some, unwilling to trouble ἐν by rendering it as 'for', have understood the phrase in an elliptical sense, rendering it as 'in Christ's cause', e.g., Werner Kramer, *Christ, Lord, Son of God* (trans. Brian Hardy; London: S.C.M., 1966), 154.

[659] F. Neugebauer, *In Christus: Eine Untersuchung zum Paulinischen Glaubensverständnis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), esp. 121; see also his more accessible, earlier article F. Neugebauer, 'Das Paulinische "in Christo"', *NTS* 4 (957–58): 124–38.

[660] O'Brien, *Philippians*, 92.

[661] Seifrid, *DPL*, 435.

[662] Seifrid, *DPL*, 435.

and transferred (μεθίστημι) [us] into the kingdom of his beloved son' (Col 1.13, also 1.22–23). The point I draw from this is that the phrase 'in Christ', when used in references to activity, is merely a way of contextualising that activity. Thus, in Phil 1.13 Paul's point is simply that his imprisonment has come to be understood by the Praetorian Guard and 'all the rest' to be a part of his activity as someone who has adopted Jesus Christ as his Lord and tries to act in accordance with the fact, namely, his *activity as a Christian.*[663]

Paul claims that the Praetorian Guard and the others have been able to (re)contextualise his imprisonment, not in terms of the normal social expectations, the natural context, but in terms of his work as a servant of Christ—not as impotence, since he is not simply thrown in prison at the whim of the state, but as power, since his imprisonment is being used for a higher purpose. This throws light on to the sort of critical move Paul is making throughout this passage. He is attempting to give the Philippians a specific way of reading his situation which enables them to look favourably on his present circumstances, and, in keeping with the normal context with which they would read anyone's imprisonment, not unfavourably.

The second question mentioned above[664] concerned the significance of Paul's claim that progress is based on proclamation. Paul has attempted to recontextualise his imprisonment by claiming that his circumstances have, against normal expectations, brought about the progress of the gospel. As discussed earlier, Phil 1.13 is an explanation of the claim in 1.12. But if so, in what way does the manifestation of his bonds ἐν Χριστῷ infer the progress of the gospel? In trying to determine just what he is claiming in his explanation of the claim in 1.13, we also confront the problem of defining the term 'gospel' (εὐαγγέλιον).

Originally, a εὐαγγέλιον was a reward for bringing good news[665] and then, as is presently obvious, it eventually conflated the circumstances and was used to refer to the

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[663] Note the translation in Beare, 56.

[664] See p. 146.

[665] This is the sense of the substantive in its earliest known use, Homer *Odyssey*, 14.152f; 166f. Note that the word was still rooted in the sense of good news εὐ + ἄγγελος, insofar as the bearer brings good news which brings relief for the recipients and for that he was subsequently rewarded (Becker, *NIDNTT* 2:107).

good news itself.[666] In the New Testament the noun is used seventy-six times, *sixty* of which are found in the Pauline epistles.[667] Partially on this basis, some have suggested that 'it was Paul who established the term *euangelion* in the vocabulary of the [New Testament]'; not that Paul invented the term, rather 'he was taking over phraseology already familiar to his readers', who were already aware of the word's content.[668] Perhaps Paul's most explicit description of the (semantic/kerygmatic) content of εὐαγγέλιον is located in 1 Cor. 15.1–4: 'I make known to you, brethren, the gospel . . . namely that Christ died on behalf of our sins according the Scriptures, and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures'. To say that this statement is fundamental to all that Paul writes rather understates the case. 'The gospel' is the point of cohesion around which crystallises the meaning of all that Paul is and does. However, Becker has pointed out that the term εὐαγγέλιον in Paul's writing does not only refer to the kerygmatic content of the term, 'but also the act, process and execution of the proclamation'.[669]

The implication of this for our problem in Phil 1.12–13 is that when Paul claimed that the gospel had progressed, and then points to its manifestation 'in Christ' among the Praetorian Guard and all the rest, he was not referring to the winning of converts, but to this verbal, dynamic aspect of εὐαγγέλιον, that is, to proclamation. According to Paul, the criterion of progress which he meets is proclamation, re-iteration; that is, the gospel has advanced because he has been able to communicate basic content concerning Christ's salvific work. The importance of this cannot be overstated. In εὐαγγέλιον, we have all that Paul considered important, we have both 'theology' and practice. Perhaps more importantly, I suggest that the communication of the gospel, its reiteration, is not only central to Paul's work, but that what he says elsewhere, particularly in passages impacting ethics and Church polity, which I combine under the title 'Christian practice', is subordinated to it. The content of the gospel is the information concerning Christ's work; the practice—that is, *Christian* practice because it is performed ἐν Χριστῷ—is all that is necessary to communicate the message of Christ's work. A primary reason that I

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[666] See BAGD, 317; U. Becker, *NIDNTT* 2:107; Gerhard Friedrich, εὐαγγέλιον, *TDNT* 2:722.

[667] Including the disputed epistles.

[668] U. Becker, *NIDNTT*, 2:110.

[669] U. Becker, *NIDNTT*, 2:111, see the earlier discussion of Becker's comments on p. 68.

believe Phil 1.12–18 to be so important is that it develops this point like no other passage. Paul is willing to allow what can only be considered in normal circumstances as unethical or inappropriate Christian practice simply because it spreads the gospel, and thus meets the very criterion he holds up for his own sense of progress. The significance of this is that it problematises other discussions in Paul where he discourses on appropriate Christian practice. I submit that when we encounter other discussions on Christian practice, what we see is not a discussion based on a metaphysical ethic, rather a fundamentally pragmatic logocentric discussion which Paul believes will bring about the best circumstances for the gospel's progress.

Paul has invested a great deal in the gospel and sees himself as the spiritual father of, and thus responsible for, the Philippians. The Philippians are in conflict, experiencing pressure from within and without; the church is not as stable as it should be. Some are worried about Paul (4.10), and some are worried about themselves (1.28). The cause of all this is their adoption of the gospel. 'Is it worth it?' must have been a frequent, silent, and perhaps quietly discussed question—Is it worth holding on to Paul's gospel?[670] or Is it worth holding on to any form of the gospel? Thus, Paul can not afford his present circumstances to detract from his work at Philippi; he therefore takes special care to ensure that though he may appear to be impotent and in prison (and all thus under all the social pressure and shame associated with that fact), the Philippians do not use his present circumstances as the occasion for any 'retrospective interpretation'[671] of his work, and thus his message, and degrade his status to match the perceived situation. For Paul this would be disaster, both for his position at the head of the Christian community in Philippi—and thus also his ability to maintain their ideo-theological position—and for the gospel he preaches.

### *4. There's No Such Thing as Safe Text*

'Text' is a reference to any codified structure or semiotic system. As semiotic structures, texts are not the works themselves, to invoke Barthes, rather that which is produced when

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[670] Since they could opt for the *religio licita* version in Jewish-Christianity.

[671] On the phenomenon of retrospective interpretation see Malina and Neyrey, 'Conflict in Luke-Acts: Labeling and Deviance Theory', 106f. Basically, the point is rather simple and obvious, when someone comes to be seen in negative light, such as being in prison for several years(!), that person's past, if a positive one, begins to be re-understood in terms of that person's present negative circumstances (one assumes the opposite would be true also). This leads the observers—such as, perhaps, the Philippians—to degrade the previous status of the individual and rebuild a new status which is confluent with the present reality.

one engages the 'work', that is, the text is the 'methodological field' of activity.[672] The problem with text, however, is that it all looks and sounds the same. Its phonetic and graphic marks bear no mark of truth value, no apparent metaphysic. Truth (ἀλήθεια) and pretext (πρόφασις) easily, perhaps necessarily, cohabit the same text—not as permanent residents, though, and certainly not as innate qualities of a text's structure; they exist in the (un)conscious intentions, the prior structuring, of the signifying subject. The problem is that they remain there. The auditing subject bears the responsibility of inscribing the perceived text with his or her own intentions and interests. Basic expectations, cultural code and common social discourse work towards enabling the communication of ideas between two subjects to function fairly smoothly.

Language, however, is never what it seems to be, because it all looks the same, not that it is not what we think it is, but rather it is always more than we think it is. It is always something else as well. Trouble arises. How is it possible that language is always more than we think it is? It is because of its iterability: its ability to be cited and re-situated into new contexts; that is, its ability to be recontextualised and not necessarily into homogenous contexts (writing for writing, speech for speech), but into heterogenous contexts (culture/speech, writing/ideology). Derrida has much to say about the context in his intercourse with Austin's *How To Do Things with Words*, and in the course of this chapter we shall have further occasion to interact with this dialogue.[673] However, we do not want simply to leave the dialogue situated on the pages of Derrida and Austin, rather, there is opportunity to re-cite the dialogue in our reading of Paul. Indeed, Paul himself has something to contribute to the discussion, for in his letter to the Philippians, Paul also saw that the problem with language was that it all sounded the same. Having recognised this, Paul decides not to write against the iterable nature of language, he rather decides to use this quality of language against itself in an attempt to halt the progress of iterability. That is, Paul produces a new context in which his imprisonment and relationship to the gospel can be re-cited and thus enable the Philippians to read his situation in a manner confluent with the way he himself wants them to read it. We could hardly say that Paul is attempting to delude his readers, it is rather the case that he necessarily seeks to persuade

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[672] See Roland Barthes, 'From Work to Text' in his *Image Music Text* (trans. Stephen Heath; New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 155–64, esp. 156–57.

[673] See also the discussions on Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, pp. 35ff., and pp. 32ff.

his readers to believe what he believes to be true; even if 'persuasion comes from what seems to be true, not from the truth'.[674]

At this point, we must ask Paul to rest his pen, or at least that of his amanuensis, the 'citer' of Paul, while we take stock of the situation. The present task is to investigate a problem of language, namely its iterability, repeatability or citability and its relationship to the production of meaning; although, such critical theory often finds itself as an uninvited guest at the gatherings of Biblical scholars. In spite of this, we find Paul in Philippians posting an open invitation: to the Romans, a Roman; to the Greeks, a Greek; to the critical theorists, a practitioner. In his letter(s)—γραφή, γράμμα(τα), ἐπιστολή—to the Philippians, Paul pulls on his critical commentator's cloak (ἐπι-στολή) and comments upon the (metaphysical) relationship between author and message, form and essence, entity and being, letter and spirit. One can hardly reject an invitation from such a man, so we must also don our critical attire and respond. Before we go on, however, let us re-read the text thus far and pre-empt where it will go.

We have noted that Paul glides through the standard introductory citation of the marks of ancient epistles, offering his thanks to God for the Philippians; ma(r)king some comments regarding what God will do for them; citing his own affection for them; and concluding the introduction with his prayer for them. Following this rather conventional opening, Paul begins the body of the letter with a formula not altogether common to the New Testament: γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι (1.12). This turn of phrase, along with other literary aspects of the letter, suggests a more intimate and informal correspondence in which Paul communicates with good friends as opposed to a group with whom he is unfamiliar.[675] It is significant that Paul had a close relationship with the people of the Philippian church, because, as my thesis suggests, it plays a crucial role in the way in which he presents information to them.

After creating a sort of 'just for you' ambience,[676] he proceeds through the channels of his personal relationship with them in order to develop a 'correct' interpretation of his circumstances. Paul is able to do this with a degree of ease, since the evidence of his close relationship with the Philippians also suggests that he had an established ethos (in spite of the probability that it had been damaged by virtue of his

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[674] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 260A, (Fowler, LCL); also see 272D–E.

[675] See the comments on p. 60.

[676] See the comments on pp. 75ff.

imprisonment) which would have enabled him to say a great deal without challenge from his audience. Thus, Paul applies himself to the aforementioned task of fixing an interpretive perspective from which the Philippians are supposed to view the bland historical fact of his imprisonment. He could hardly allow the fact of his imprisonment to suggest that his gospel was in some way subordinate to Roman power. Thus, while it is quite rare for commentators to venture a discussion of Paul's attempt to create an interpretive perspective for this historical event, Craddock assumes that Paul's circumstances naturally warrant his providing an interpretative perspective to prevent what could otherwise be a detrimental interpretation: that Paul's gospel is not a divine programme.[677] Martin also comes close when he suggests that Paul is trying to communicate that the imprisonment does not invalidate his status as an apostle, or perhaps the power of apostleship in general, as well as the fact that the gospel continues to advance in spite of various obstacles; rather Paul's 'interest focuses on giving a statement of personal vindication of his apostleship and on announcing the progress of the gospel'.[678]

There is no way to know just what the Philippians thought of Paul's circumstances, apart from the fact that they must have had some concern for him.[679] But it is not so difficult to determine what Paul thought of the Philippians at this time; he was obviously concerned about them. This concern of Paul's for the Philippians is generally acknowledged to be two-fold: his concern for the personal opposition experienced by the ecclesial community in Philippi (see 1.27–30), as well as the threat to Paul's established set of beliefs and principles or theology brought on by false teachers or leaders (see 1.27; 2.1–4; 3.1–3, 17–19; 4.9), which may have been the cause of some unrest.[680]

As the spiritual father of this group, and in keeping with the nature of his apostolate, Paul is naturally compelled to recontextualise[681] the situation so as to alleviate their distress and any danger that he might perceive they are in. His main tool is his

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[677] Fred B. Craddock, *Philippians* (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 24.

[678] Martin, *Philippians* (NCB), 71.

[679] This is evidenced by Epaphroditus' presence as their 'apostle' who meets Paul's needs on their behalf (2.25), as well as by their gifts to him (4.10, 13–18).

[680] See the discussion of these two concerns in Fee, 29–34.

[681] Echoes of *Entstellung* resound through this movement, see the discussion of *Hinterfragen* on pp. 17ff.

rhetoric through which he 'bring[s] into existence a discourse of such a character that the audience, in thought and action, is so engaged that it becomes a mediator of change'.[682] That is, his epistle serves as a potential 'mediator of change' by virtue of its ability to 'alter' the way in which the Philippians view various circumstances.[683] Paul exhorts them to 'stand firm' and 'strive together' in the things that they already know, and to beware of certain ones who might threaten what they know. It just so happens that the two issues going on at Philippi are similar to two issues with which he is also dealing in his imprisonment: personal suffering for his faith, and self-oriented preachers. It is reasonable to assume that a probable reason for Paul's foregrounding these two issues in Phil 1 is due to the fact that they reflect something of what the Philippians themselves are experiencing. Paul can demonstrate his own situation as a potential model for their own.[684] But he must present his imprisonment in such a way so that it really does function as a positive model and not an ominous death knell for both Paul and the power of the gospel or worse, for those at Philippi who have thrown their lot in with Paul and his gospel. After all, the power of the gospel does not appear to be all that powerful while Paul seems to be humbled by the Roman state. So, it is incumbent upon Paul to (re)present his situation to the Philippians in a way that is positive ('acceptable'[685]), so that it can slip past the Censor. He needs to persuade them to see that such opposition does not, as might be supposed or even suggested by some among them, subordinate the power of the gospel, which is the power of God to act in this world. That is, Paul must re-create their own sense of the world.

But here, in the attempt to create a new discourse to resolve a problem, in the attempt to persuade the audience to adopt a new perspective, a fissure between the bland historical event and its interpretation is exposed. The very possibility of persuasion ('interpretation') exposes an already existing split between, or a demarcation of, every event and its interpretation, an opening that never permits closure. That is, an interpretation can never achieve complete identity with its object. There is only always a cite of on-going (re)production, because this possibility of persuasion is also the

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[682] Bitzer, 4.

[683] In this particular case, Paul is seeking to strengthen internal cohesion. Note again the discussion on pp. 89f., and the references in n. 276, 374.

[684] Indeed, it has been suggested that models are the 'core' of the letter and the 'key' to the 'architecture' of Philippians (Stowers, 'Friends and Enemies', 117).

[685] Note the idea of 'acceptable' on pp. 17ff.

possibility of the continual citing and grafting of new iterable or repeatable structures into the context of that space.

Every event is a text open for (re)production, thus all of history is a text open for (re)production, and so, as Derrida suggests, *il n'y a pas de hors-texte;*[686] there is nothing which escapes text, nothing which escapes mediation.[687] As stated earlier,[688] the result, in short, is that interpretation changes with new information. Again, the possibility of change prevents closure from ever taking place, and this possibility is also continuous because context itself is continuous. Thus to cite Derrida again 'no meaning can be determined out of context, but no context permits saturation'.[689] That is, meaning requires a point of reference, but there can never be a final decision regarding what that point of reference might be. Thus, the context of any event is always beyond every description of it.

In Paul's discussion of his imprisonment in Phil 1, the rhetorical gestures inscribed in his letter simply offer the Philippians new information to add to their interpretive processes, their perception of a context, so that they might not perceive or interpret that his imprisonment has signalled the overpowering of the gospel, but rather that the gospel transcends even the power of the Romans, thereby providing them with a perspective from which to view their own circumstances. This information comes as the object of γινώσκειν in 1.12–14, specifically the summary in 1.12 that 'my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel', in spite of what appears to be a negative situation for him and his work, namely, his imprisonment. Immediately following this statement, Paul seeks to qualify his positive account in 1.15–18. In so doing, he exposes his assumptions about the relationship of authors to intention and meaning. This qualification consists of Paul's description of two opposing kinds of people who preach the gospel with respect to his imprisonment. He notes that on the one hand there are those who preach the gospel 'through good will' and 'out of love', knowing

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[686] Derrida, 158: '*There is nothing outside of the text* [there is no outside-text . . .]'.

[687] Hart takes Derrida's comment, *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*, to infer a virtual given in poststructural critical theory, that 'there is no knowledge of which we can speak, which is unmediated' (Kevin Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology and Philosophy* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 26.

[688] See pp. 28f.

[689] Jacques Derrida, 'Living On: *Border Lines*,', 81; see also Derrida, SEC, 327; Culler, 123.

that he had been appointed for the defence of the gospel (1.15b–16). On the other hand, says Paul, there are those who preach through envy (φθόνον) and strife (ἔριν) (1.15), out of selfish ambition (ἐριθείας) and without purity (οὐχ ἁγνῶς), imagining (οἰόμενοι) that they are causing Paul further grief in his imprisonment (1.17). On the contrary, says Paul, they cause him to rejoice (1.18). But, historically speaking, Paul does not rejoice in their attitude or intentions, of which he clearly disapproves.

After suggesting to the Philippians that the latter group of preachers is a mob of sophistic, preaching-for-profit ingrates whose association with the gospel message is dubious,[690] Paul makes an interesting move. In 1.18 he suggests that whatever the motive or intention behind the preaching of this bad group, his only concern is 'that in every way, whether in pretext (πρόφασις) or in truth (ἀλήθεια), Christ is proclaimed'.

A couple of questions pose themselves at this point: What is the nature of the hierarchical relationship Paul creates between the two different kinds of preachers? or, what is the nature of the relationship between the opposing terms πρόφασις and ἀλήθεια? and, what are the implications of Paul's suggestion that the gospel message performs a function beyond the boundaries of what he claims are the intentions of some who preach the gospel message?

### *5. The Good, the Bad, and the Undecidable*

Paul's discussion of the two kinds of preachers in 1.15ff. finds its inception in a complex of events and social roles which created within him a sense of lack, that is, a 'want' or 'desire' (βούλομαι, 1.12) that the Philippians have a certain kind of knowledge. When this absence presents itself to Paul, when he perceives his desire, he seeks satisfaction in the production of his discourse which might enable the Philippians 'to know' (γινώσκειν).[691] He desires them to have the correct perspective on the circumstances surrounding his imprisonment (1.12), a desire he hopes to actualise through *his* description of his circumstances, and the rhetoric that presents it. Paul thus sets out to describe the advance (προκοπή) that has come about through his imprisonment, since, as mentioned

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690 They do not accept Paul's authority, they preach for personal profit. See the discussion on pp. 182ff.; note also the use of πρόφασις in 1.18 as a reference to a 'pretext for greed' and compare 1 Thess 2.5; see also BAGD, 722.

691 This perception of an actual or potential exigence is by no means unique to Paul, it is analogous to any rhetorical situation. Note again Bitzer's description of the rhetorical situation in n. 186.

earlier, it is important for him to demonstrate that his imprisonment does not herald a weakness on the part of the gospel's ability to move forward in the face of adversity. As he works toward developing the perspective the Philippians are to have, Paul makes the claim that 'the majority of the brethren in the Lord have been persuaded by my bonds to dare all the more to speak the word boldly' (Phil 1.14).

Yet Paul knows that the progress which he suggests his imprisonment has enabled has already stumbled, since some of the people who gain boldness are not only antagonistic toward him (Phil 1.15, 17), but they in fact only (ab)use the gospel to secure their own gain. These people employ the gospel in a manner quite distinctly other than that which is suggested by the very gospel being proclaimed; they do it for self-oriented reasons and have an attitude quite other than the one which Paul says Christ had and which Paul calls for his Philippian readers to have (Phil 2.5ff.).[692]

The very thing which Paul says has occasioned the possibility of progress, has also created the occasion for regress. Paul finds himself on the defense, and seeks to re-present the situation so that his circumstances appear to be working for the advancement of the gospel. The issue here is not whether or not Paul's situation actually was advancing the gospel, it is rather how Paul's rhetoric attempts to create a particular kind of perspective, and thus not necessarily a pure and unmediated image of reality. He attempts this by drawing a line of division between the two groups in order to clarify what has happened. Then, instead of embarking on a thorough condemnation of the anti-Paul group in order to render their message as invalid—as he is wont to do with other members of the Christian group who have a perspective different from his own—he proceeds to demonstrate that the difference which constitutes this group does not in fact invalidate the gospel which they preach. The happy result is that the potentially weak point in Paul's earlier claim—that his incarceration has worked not *against* but *for* the advancement of the gospel—is now reinforced, since even these roguish sophists can be said to preach the gospel and thereby contribute to the advance of the gospel. Paul takes a situation in which people are preaching in a manner that he believes is contrary to the purpose of the gospel, a situation that he cannot control, and uses it as a way to gloss over and re-contextualise the impotence of his own position in prison *and* his inability to control the citation of the gospel by whomever desires to employ it for whatever reasons.

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692 This is yet another example of why Philippians is sometimes seen as cohering around the presentation of good and bad models of behaviour; see n. 684; but also see the Fowl who does not think of the Christ hymn as a 'model', Fowl, *The Story of Christ*, 85–92; also the earlier discussion on pp. 61ff.

By validating the preaching of the selfish preachers, Paul validates his own claim to the gospel, but at what cost?

Paul has often made overtures to possess and master the re-citation of the gospel message; yet, language's iterability has proven too slippery for him to maintain his grip. Paul discovers that Plato's problems with writing have extended to speech as well.[693] For example, in Galatians Paul attempts to persuade the Galatian Christians that what they have received from the Judaisers is not a gospel at all (Gal 1.6–7). Paul believes that *his* contextualisation of the Jesus' death, burial and resurrection is *the* Gospel and that other contextualisations of that message are only perversions. However, what makes the one a 'perversion' (μεταστρέφω) and the other 'truth' is the same thing: contextualisation or recitation of an iterable text.

Paul's desire and lack of fulfilment is the same as Socrates' because the problem with writing is also true of speech. This is one of the insights Derrida has contributed to the philosophy of language though his critique of Western metaphysics in general, and of Plato's oppositional structure of speech and writing in particular.[694] Speech and writing meet in some primordial structure which is their common origin. Derrida refers to this structure as 'archewriting' in order to represent that part of language which is at once both inside and outside of language by virtue of being prior to language. It both constitutes and signifies language. This is that quality which makes language work.[695] That is, because language can be signified and constituted by the same structure, language can therefore be repeated and thus it enables the communication of (the father's) ideas. In short, the essence of language is communication, and communication relies upon iterability, and iterability is a quality of language which precedes both speech (phoneme) and writing (grapheme) and which is named by Derrida as this 'archewriting'.[696]

It is the iterability of the gospel which enables it to be communicated in a manner confluent with Paul's own ideo-theological position, but it is also iterability which enables

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[693] See the comments on p. 19.

[694] The most thorough discussion of Plato's opposition of speech and language in Derrida's *oeuvre* is 'Plato's Pharmacy' in Derrida, *Dissemination*, 61–172.

[695] Derrida chooses arche*writing* over arche*speech* since it is in writing that the iterable quality of language is most evident.

[696] Derrida discusses this at length in the chapter entitled 'Linguistics and Grammatology' in *Of Grammatology*, 27–73, but see especially 44–70.

it to be used in a different manner. The citation of the gospel has escaped Paul's mastery and is now in the hands of other would-be masters, who can control it no better than he, though they may re-cite it in whatever context they wish and thus for whatever purposes they wish. Paul seems to have realised this and thus also the impotence of his position. Therefore, instead of condemning what he sees as a misuse of the gospel, scheming a kidnapping, and risk exposing his impotence, he gives it his blessing. Paul thus makes a Socratic bid for paternal power over the re-citation of the gospel, but he does it in a way that masks its violence; he uses a Freudian *Entstellung* to slip it past the Censor, disguising its unacceptability.

Paul's bid for patronage of the re-citation of the gospel is a slippery one. It also causes institutional problems for the keepers of the commentaries since it creates a gap in the construction of a 'Pauline theology'. This in turn leads commentators to frequently take note of the fact that he stops short of the strong, excommunicative language he normally employs for such people and refer to his attitude as 'large-heartedness'—the commentators do not have a problem with Paul's comments in Phil 1.15–17, where the language is typical of Pauline invective,[697] it is the 'large-heartedness' of *Phil 1.18* which pumps confusion back into the preceding verses.[698] This break from the 'norm' problematises the assumption that Paul's ethics are based on something radically external to his own desires. Even if Paul's imperative were non-immanent, his behaviour is governed by a cohering, immanent 'principle'—proclamation of the gospel *in this world*—and thus his ethics are constructed as non-metaphysical and rather based on a certain kind of desire.

The very act of labelling Paul's treatment of these people as 'large-hearted' reflects the idea prevalent in biblical studies that Paul seems to break away from an assumed normal practice. Paul's 'normal' behaviour is to label or describe antagonists in such a way so as to place them firmly *outside* the group, in order to maintain the stability of the (Pauline) group's identity, since such people threaten the theological boundary Paul has drawn which subsequently threatens to alter the dogma and praxis of the people within the group. Any group, in order to remain as a group, must maintain the difference between itself and the rest of the world. This is a complex process of affirming and re-affirming rules and practices consistent with the basic tenets of the group. As a leader

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[697] One the use of φθόνος, ἔρις, and ἐριθεία see pp. 182ff.

[698] See the discussion on 'sur-prise' on pp. 188ff.

who desires to perpetuate the group, Paul must make sure subordinate members within the group know just where the boundaries of acceptable beliefs and behaviours lie, in order that the group's members act accordingly and the group maintains its purity or difference from the rest of the world. If some within the group act and/or think like those without the group, then, the group has lost its purity or radical difference from the rest of the world.[699]

This practice of Paul is also evident in Phil 3, where Paul exhorts the Philippians to beware of people he describes as 'dogs', 'evil workers', 'false circumcision' (3.2); and in the latter part, as 'enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their stomach, and whose glory is in their shame, whose minds dwell on earthly things' (3.18–19). This is harsh language whose function is excommunicative, insofar as it places such people outside of the Pauline group.[700] Thus, through the use of such language, Paul creates for the Philippians a well-defined category for them to interpret accordingly the actions of those who differ from himself. If, from the perspective that Paul has given, there be any selfishness, if there be any shame, if any dwelling on earthly things, then consider such ones as *outside* the group.

While Paul's comments are descriptive to some degree, they *perform* the function of setting up the one group as clearly other than Paul and the church at Philippi; furthermore, these comments re-mark the boundary between the inside and outside of the Christian group in general, or at least, the boundary of the Pauline Christians. So Barclay, who points out that Paul is not averse to making 'proto-sociological' statements which, in our present terms, serve to 'give the Christian community definition and identity' by 'creating distinctions between the "genuine" (*dokimoi*) and the "spurious" (*adokimoi*)'. He then comments that throughout Corinthians Paul creates 'insiders and outsiders on his own terms. . . . He identifies deviants in order to establish boundaries and solidify the identity of the Corinthian community. . . . It is easy to recognize here [in Corinthians]. . . that "deviant" labels are being applied as part of a power struggle, here a fundamental battle for control of the Christian tradition'.[701]

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[699] For fuller discussion on groups and the Pauline community, see the chapters 'Formation of the EÊÊêĒÎÉÀ' and 'Governance' in Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 74–140.

[700] Hence Fee's comment that 'this language ordinarily refers to those outside Christ altogether' (Fee, 371).

[701] Barclay, 'Deviance and Apostasy', 124.

Thus, Paul's comments are to be read as *performative*, especially since they do not really fall into a positivistic true/false dichotomy. This performative aspect of language is located within the philosophy, or speech act theory, of J. L. Austin discussed earlier.[702] The present benefit of speech act theory is that it exposes the functional quality of language, even language thought to be purely descriptive. More importantly, it exposes that functional quality to be the *primum mobile* of all 'meaningful' statements. So for example, the rhetorical value of calling people 'dogs' transcends the question of its propositional truth; that is, the act of doing so is what is important. And this does not at all mean that it is 'wrong' or philosophically ineffective to use such metaphoric language. These comments are there to *act* upon the Philippians. They perform this action by showing the Philippians that these people to whom Paul refers are not the kind of people whose example they ought to follow. These 'dogs', therefore, stand in stark contrast to Paul himself (who, in the eyes of his Philippian readers, one imagines, is clearly not a dog) whose example, it is suggested, the Philippians are to follow (see 3.17; 4.9).[703]

We note here that Paul's conclusion in Phil 1.18 is, by contrast to the diatribe of Phil 3, suspiciously restrained. It is necessary, then, to observe some of the differences and similarities between the two groups which may perhaps explain the difference in treatment. The group discussed in 3.2ff. is most likely a Judaistic one which accepts the work of Christ but only within the confines of Jewish custom,[704] hence Paul's testimony and subsequent rejection of his boast in the flesh. However, the foil for Paul's handling of the non-Pauline preachers in Phil 1 is really the latter group in 3.18–19. The description in 3.18f, in particular, is rather broad. The phrase τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ is, again, more performative than propositional and is qualified by a series of broad claims which contribute to the basic rhetorical function of the phrase: Paul equates their τέλος with 'destruction' (ἀπώλεια), and says that they are selfish or serve their own desires (ὧν ὁ θεὸς ἡ κοιλία), that their glory is their shame, and that their minds dwell on earthly things (as opposed to heavenly things). This description of what constitutes an enemy of the cross is quite generic and could be made to fit almost anyone;[705] indeed, the girth of this belly-worshipping category easily encompasses the kind of selfish preachers discussed in

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[702] See discussions on pp. 32ff.

[703] Note Castelli, 96.

[704] See the discussion on identity on pp. 85ff.

[705] Similarly, O'Brien, 454.

Phil 1. That these descriptions are more performative than descriptive is what Hawthorne is trying to say when he states that they are 'short, verbless sentences; constructions that are broken off without proper completion; clipped phrases whose meaning defies precise explanation; strong words, *whose force lies not in lexical definitions*, but in the sound and suddenness with which they come'.[706]

Given the nuances that cross through Paul's use of the word σταυρός in Phil 3, there is much debate about the identity of those whom Paul labels τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.[707] It is possible that these people either never were or no longer are members of the Christian community; thus, the label τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ would refer to a cosmic difference between these people and those within the general Christian community. It is also possible that they are Judaizers who are not, in Paul's view, crediting the cross of Christ with all that it achieved. Typically, however, these people are identified as Christians (and possibly teachers) of some sort.[708] Whatever the case, it seems that Paul's problem with this group was with the way they conducted themselves: πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν . . . (3.18). And this is also very close if not identical to Paul's problem with the non-Pauline preachers in Phil 1. Paul does not mention whether he has a problem with the theology or message of the group in Phil 3, he simply focuses on their conduct as a contrast to his own conduct and that of others like him (3.17); thus, as Fee suggests, they serve their performative purpose by 'standing in sharp relief to Paul's own "walk". . . .'[709] Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to find an occasion in which Paul criticises someone else without his own ideas or conduct being thrown into exemplary relief. This, in fact, seems to be a given when dealing with Paul: as an apostle, he wants his followers to imitate him.[710] Criticism is therefore quickly served by Paul to those who might present themselves as an example (τύπος) other than

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[706] Hawthorne, 163 (emphasis added).

[707] Note the list of suggestions in O'Brien, *Philippians*, 453.

[708] Note, for example, Martin (NCB), 143.

[709] Fee, 375.

[710] For example, 1 Cor 4.16; 11.1; Phil 3.17. See also, Phil 1.30 and 2.18 where the idea of *immitatio* is also present. For comprehensive discussion on the debate regarding the definition of συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε in Phil 3.17, see O'Brien, *Philippians*, 444–47. For a general description of mimesis in antiquity relevant to the present discussion, see Castelli, 74–78; on mimesis in Paul, see, Castelli, 89ff.; also see Fowl's discussion on mimesis and the concept of the exemplar in Fowl, 'Christology', 148–49.

the one he has set, particularly when his own followers are concerned.[711] It also seems that this serves as the point of difference in Paul's treatment of the antagonists in Phil 3.18f and Phil 1. As mentioned earlier,[712] Paul has a keen desire to serve and protect his own group of people. Some of whom, to be sure, may dispute this—the cause of a great deal of Paul's troubles—but the important thing is that Paul himself senses a psychagogic responsibility to a particular group.[713]

The significance of Paul's sense of responsibility is that it is fundamental to the fact that he feels the need to respond to certain circumstances with whatever discourse he believes may solve any exigencies he perceives. Paul's responses, however, will always be attempts to help his audience to view things from his perspective. If there were some issue about which he thought a particular group might have the wrong interpretive perspective, then his discourse will re-present the situation in such a way so as to favour the presentation of his own position. This assumes, of course, that Paul, as the rhetor responding in epistolary form, believes that his perception of reality is superior to the audience's. His epistolary discourse will therefore attempt to bring their perception of reality into line with his. Again, this is not peculiar to Paul, it is what anyone does when he or she attempts to inject a discourse into a situation in order to resolve any perceived problems.

In Phil 1, Paul has something at stake that is not at stake in Phil 3: the reputation of the power of the gospel. Paul has to re-present the circumstances surrounding his incarceration in such a way that the power of the gospel does not appear to be diminished. Given the antagonism that the Philippian Christians were apparently experiencing,[714] and Paul's own sense of responsibility to them, it was necessary for Paul to comfort them, since the continued imprisonment of their spiritual father would have been most disconcerting. However, though he may be in prison, the power of God is still greater than any other powers, implies Paul when he describes the 'advancement' of the gospel in spite of what might appear to some to be a defeat. Thus, Paul presents to them

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[711] Commentators frequently observe this; note, for example, Martin (NCB), 143; Jewett, 376.

[712] See the discussion on pp. 152ff.

[713] Evidenced not only by the fact of his correspondence but throughout the Pauline corpus (e.g., Gal. 2.7), see the discussion on, pp. 107ff.

[714] See the discussion on pp. 85ff. Paul also seems concerned (Phil 3.17–21, νῦν δὲ καὶ κλαίων) that the Philippians are open to corruption by enemies.

a positive interpretive perspective of his circumstances, *contrary to what they might have expected.*[715] Presenting this perspective to the Philippians also serves as an example of how to act while experiencing conflict. Insofar as the Philippians are able to see that Paul's suffering for the gospel leads to the advance of the gospel, they are then able to attribute to their own sufferings such an interpretation. Indeed, Paul attempts to create this perspective when in Phil 1.30 he suggests that their conflict is the 'the same' as his.[716]

Paul even presents his opponents in a similar light; the kind of people who in Phil 3 are labelled 'enemies of the cross of Christ', in Phil 1 have their motives reprimanded but their practice praised. How is it that such people can cause Paul to rejoice when everywhere else he has only contempt for them? Phil 1.18 is a climax and a summarising of Paul's development of the perspective from which he wants the Philippians to view his circumstances. Yet it is an odd sort of a climax, and perhaps an unexpected one on behalf of the Philippians, since Paul takes the unusual step of not castigating those whom he earlier suggests are charlatans; he rather focuses on what good they do. By doing this, Paul introduces into his discourse on the non-Pauline preachers a division which glosses over itself. Moreover, his discourse in general confidently draws a line between the two kinds of preachers, but by the time we finish reading the passage 1.12–18, the line has been effectively erased and the effects of the division have gone.

What prompted Paul to say what he does about the two kinds of preachers only to end up saying that the difference is ultimately irrelevant? Perhaps it has to do with his desire to create models and demonstrate the power of the gospel in the face of adverse circumstances. This means that the passage exists for reasons other those immediately apparent by virtue of the discourse itself, and that what we are ultimately dealing with is a rhetorical construct which incorporates historical events to support its rhetorical designs.[717] Thus, the operation of another division within the passage is made apparent: the division between the rhetorical argument and the discourse which presents it. What we end up with is, on one level, a play between 'valid' and 'invalid', within the presentation of the self-centred preachers; that is, Paul denounces their activities and attitudes early on in the passage, but in 1.18 reaffirms the gospel they preach as valid. On

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[715] O'Brien, *Philippians*, 36

[716] On the exhortation in 1.27ff., see pp. 66ff.; note also comments on Phil 1.30, p. 91.

[717] However, it is not the fact of the historical events recounted which is in dispute, rather the assumption of their primary status within the discourse.

yet another level, there is play between 'valid' and 'invalid' with respect to the Paul-centred preachers and the self-centred preachers; that is, the two groups are set up as opposites in 1.15–17, but in 1.18 the oppositional structure falters as Paul unites them with regard to their evangelistic activities. On another level, there is play between the argument and the discourse; that is, the passage is both metaphoric and historic, it is an attempt at both immediacy—an attempt to recount the historical situation—and mediacy—an attempt to use the historical situation to achieve purposes beyond it.

These lines of division which work their way through this discourse find their epicentre at a fracture operating within the word πρόφασις (1.18). To investigate this fracturing, we must first note that the words πρόφασις and ἀλήθεια in 1.18 serve to summarise Paul's description of the two groups of which he has been speaking in 1.15ff.[718] They sum up what Paul thinks of the various speakers' relationship to the gospel which they have been proclaiming. The signifieds of these labels are not only open to semiotic influence by Paul's discussion thus far, but also by their syntagmatic relationship to each other in 1.18. Paul positions πρόφασις in an oppositional structure with ἀλήθεια; thus, the signifieds of these two labels feed off the relationship of the labels (signifiers) within the statement itself. One apparent effect of this is to suppress or regulate a certain polysemy, or fracture, operating at the cite of πρόφασις, since the word opposes within itself at least two differing concepts or possibilities for translation/substitution: it can refer to a *valid* motive or excuse, or it can refer to a *invalid* motive or excuse.[719] Thus, πρόφασις is a signifier of both truth and falsehood, the cite of the intersection of mutually exclusive signifieds, a rupture in the established continuum between signifier and signified, the point at which the προκοπή begins to falter, the epicentre of the text.

This fracturing, however, is far from being a negative aspect of the discourse as it may at first appear. Indeed, it is crucial to the discourse, if Paul's rhetoric is to work at all. The argument in 1.12ff. stretches from a typically Pauline castigation of the selfish preachers to a rejoicing of their actions. But the discourse which presents the argument does not flow so continuously and folds along the line between that which is valid and that which is invalid—the motives of the preachers are invalid but the product of those

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718 That the terms represent two respective groups, see Hawthorne, 36; Fee, 124; against Collange, 58.

719 BAGD, 722. O'Brien recognises this, see O'Brien, *Philippians*, 106; see also John 15.22 and compare 1 Thess 2.5.

motives is valid. Thus, there is also a discontinuity between the motives and that which the motives produce. If it were not for this fracture, or space, or *différance*, or whatever else it may be called, preventing the continuous flow of presence from speaker to text in Paul's discourse, his presentation of the advancement of the gospel would already be defeated by the presence of the speaker's motives/intentions becoming present also in the text, thereby invalidating their gospel and thus also Paul's claim to progress. The success of Paul's argument, its design to comfort the Philippians and to present the overcoming power of the gospel in the face of adversity, depends upon this fracture. However, we note that a fracture is no more than a gap, a point of non-regulation and endless play, it (is) nothing. We discover once again that for all our talk about the discourse Paul creates to relieve tensions and alter perspectives at Philippi we are dealing with just so much rhetoric.

Mark Brett has presented a discussion on the author's motives and intentions which attempts to delineate a difference between the two.[720] Brett seeks to tie authorial intention to content (the 'what') and locate them together under the title 'communicative intention'.[721] From this communicative intention, he separates out the 'motives' of an author. Commenting on and summarising Clines,[722] he suggests that 'any given author could be driven to write by the desire for prestige or by some psychological need'. He then suggests that these features of the author's psyche 'apply *only* to the level of motives,'[723] as *opposed* to the author's intentions. The reason for this is that motivation, as opposed to intention, 'in no way resolves the question of what was being said'.[724] Brett's project here is classificatory.[725] He is working towards creating classes of information so that we can speak of the results in more precise terms. According to Brett, in this project we are concerned with Paul's motivations which is something we arrive at

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[720] Mark G. Brett, 'Motives and Intentions in Genesis 1', *JTS* 42 (1991): 1–16.

[721] Brett, 5.

[722] D. J. A. Clines, 'Theme in Genesis1–11', *CBQ* 38 (1976): 483–507.

[723] Brett, 5 (emphasis added).

[724] Brett, 5.

[725] Note his comments, Brett, 6.

not merely by analysing surface level of the text, but also through 'wider historical contexts'.[726]

While Brett's proposal is quite helpful for classifying our analytical activities with the material text, one must wonder if Brett's dichotomy can endure the metaphysical strain it relies upon. I have in mind the proposed discontinuity between motive and intention. Brett seems to be implying, though he does not state it, that there is a causal relationship here. A motive *causes* me to communicate; my communication then, though caused by, does not have a form determined by that motive. Thus, in Brett's view, an author's desire to amuse, using his example, has no bearing on 'what' the author says when the author attempts to amuse, so that one cannot simply look at the material form of the communication and arrive back at an original motivation. I agree with Brett up to this point.

The trouble begins when we ask why intention is not also subjected to the same spacing that motive is: how is it that an 'intention' and a 'what' can be joined in a way that a 'motive' and a 'what' cannot? What is the essential difference between a motive and an intention? There does not appear to be any explanation of this problem. Brett suggests that they are 'separate interpretative goals',[727] but what we actually find in the text of Brett's analysis is not a separation of motive and intention, but a separation of motive and 'what'. Thus, the difference between motive and 'communicative intention' appears to be determined by which one is more explicit, or what 'the text actually says' as opposed, one imagines, to inferences about the text.[728]

The implication is that what the author intends and what the material text actually says are the same thing. Brett himself states that 'motives lie behind and are prior to communicative intentions. Motives may not come to explicit expression at all'.[729] However, Brett has already opposed motives to intentions, thus the implication of this claim is that while motives are prior and may not be explicit, intentions are not prior and are explicit. What Brett is seeking to achieve is to be able to question analyses that make claims about the 'Why?' of a text. He simply wants to say that we have to talk about two different things when we read texts: what the material text *actually* says, and then what we

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[726] Brett, 6.

[727] Brett, 5.

[728] See comments on Brandon, Brett, 6.

[729] Brett, 5.

think an author wanted to generate that material text. However, again, what the text *actually* says is an assumption already and the very point of critical analysis. While we can see which material words are being used, we cannot at the same time see the conscious intentions of the author, we infer them. How do we infer them? By the very means Brett suggests we infer motives: through analysis of 'wider historical contexts'.[730]

So, while I affirm Brett's distancing of motives from having a presence within the text, I also suggest that intentions are equally distanced, and that both are determined by the same means. However, I also suggest that while distanced, an author's intention is responsible for the form of the text. Hence Derrida's statement that 'the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance'.[731] Thus intention, while a structural part of the material text, does not function as a determining force in its reproduction. Hence a major point of this thesis: the activity of the material text of the gospel message is not enabled by the respective reproductive intentions/motives of the good and bad evangelists in Phil 1.12-18, it is rather enabled by a fracture.

As mentioned, the cite of this fracture is located at the word πρόφασις. The play between its references of valid and invalid motives[732] enables the text to create a line of difference within the selfish preachers themselves by severing what they do from their motives (or 'intentions') for doing so. In addition, this same fracturing works its way through the text, deconstructing one level of the oppositional structure set up within the passage by distancing the selfish preachers from Paul *at the same time* that it brings them closer to him. That is, on the one hand, the text maintains a distance from those whose example is not to be followed by describing their intentions as φθόνος, ἔρις, ἐριθεία;[733] on the other hand, the text denies the ability of those intentions or motives to be present to the actions of the subject which enables Paul to claim the proclamation of this group as being a part of the progress which has come about though his imprisonment. And this is perhaps the most significant contribution of the fracture operating in this passage, since without it Paul cannot make the claim that the gospel is advanced by the preaching these

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[730] Brett, 6.

[731] Derrida, SEC, 326.

[732] For the referents of πρόφασις, see BAGD, 722.

[733] Coupled with φθόνος and preceded by the διά and used in comparison with εὐδοκία, it is easy to see why ἔρις could refer to an intention or the general motivational sphere of activity.

ill-motivated preachers perform. Thus, we begin to find that the very thing which makes the argument of this text possible is the fracture between the presence and the absence of the intentions of these speakers. And, again, a fracture (is) nothing.

What happens when we apply the text's fractured treatment of the selfish preachers to its presentation of the preachers who love Paul?[734] That Paul relies on a discontinuity between the intentions or motives of the selfish preachers and their actions undermines the ontological stability[735] of the oppositional structure set up in the passage between εὐδοκία/φθόνος, ἀγάπη/ἐριθεία, and ἀλήθεια/πρόφασις, and even, as some have suggested, between οἶδα/οἶμαι.[736] This is because Paul's use of the term ἀλήθεια, when opposed to πρόφασις, suggests a continuity between the motives of the good preachers and that which they preach. Thus, a conflict arises between continuity on the one hand and discontinuity on the other. If, on the one hand, we privilege continuity, then Paul cannot say that the gospel which the bad preachers proclaim is valid which subsequently undermines the quality of his claim in 1.12 that the gospel is advanced by his imprisonment. If, on the other hand, we privilege discontinuity, then Paul has no basis (other than the straightforward desire to discredit those of whom he does not approve), for saying that one group proclaims by truth while the other by pretext. It is this confusion between discontinuity and continuity, along with the other factors mentioned in this discussion, that works to unsettle the stability of the oppositional structure operating in this passage. And, in so doing, it questions the ease and definiteness with which Paul can define the boundaries of Christian practice and thus identity. Interestingly, the purity of the presence of a unified significance, and the continuity desired by the term ἀλήθεια cannot be said to be present within our text. What in fact we have in this text is a reflection of the undecidable tension between valid and invalid found at the cite of πρόφασις.

As with all signifiers, πρόφασις simply points to a concept (an excuse, reason, or motive), and the value of that concept, (valid or invalid), must somehow be related to

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[734] See Phil 1.16 (ἐξ ἀγάπης). That the object of the love is Paul and not Christ is not a disputed issue, see, for example, Hawthorne, 37; Fee, 120.

[735] Maintenance of the Platonic continuity between the sign and its idea that dominates Western thought and theology.

[736] For the suggestion that Paul plays on the opposition between εἰδότες (1.16) and οἰόμενοι (1.17) see, for example, Collange, 57; Fee, 120; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 101 (note also his n. 14).

those conventions to which the observer conforms. So, here in Philippians, the value of πρόφασις is dependent upon Paul's observations, thus, by extension, upon his personal ideology and everything else that goes into constructing his theology. It is not hard to see what sort of value Paul wants to give πρόφασις, since he places it into an oppositional structure with ἀλήθεια in 1.18. The syntagmatic or spatial relationship of these two words is subsequently intended to establish their ontological relationship, since Paul places πρόφασις into an oppositional structure with ἀλήθεια, which has the effect of πρόφασις becoming the signifier of the absence of ἀλήθεια, and ἀλήθεια the absence of πρόφασις. Thus, Paul's argument relies on clean lines between presence and absence operating within the two words. From the very start, however, this line has already gone under erasure and appears as a mere trace, since πρόφασις already opposes within itself these same structures of true and false, valid and invalid, which already throws into question the stability of the ontological framework giving πρόφασις and ἀλήθεια their respective values as opposites. As a small example, one would simply note that πρόφασις does not signify a radical or non-modified[737] absence of ἀλήθεια, since πρόφασις also refers to a valid motive, or, to be more relevant to this discussion, it also signifies its own opposite.

More importantly, however, we find that the line of difference is already fading when we consider just what the text requires to be true—when we take the opposition in 1.18 between πρόφασις and ἀλήθεια at face value—in order for the argument to be persuasive. On the one hand, the term πρόφασις foregrounds the operation of personal motives in the proclamation of the non-Pauline group. On the other hand, we have a group of preachers whose motives are glossed. This group is simply said to proclaim in truth (ἀλήθεια).[738] While Paul does not explicitly suggest that one group has motives for preaching and another group does not, the text itself, by virtue of the term πρόφασις, argues that the motives of the non-Pauline group employ the gospel message as a cover for their underlying intentions as opposed to the Pauline group whose motives for proclaiming the gospel are not foregrounded. The one group preaches from 'ulterior' motives as opposed to the other group whose motives do not seem to affect the presence

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[737] On 'radical' and/or 'non-modified' absence/presence, see pp. 46ff.

[738] The dative case of προφάσει and ἀληθείᾳ alerts us to the accompanying circumstances of the proclamation of Christ; thus, one set of circumstances is equivalent to truth while the other is equivalent to falsity.

of ἀλήθεια. Yet earlier in this passage, Paul seems to put both groups on equal footing by appearing to describe their motives.

The issues of motives requires some attention. After pointing out that one kind of preaching used the gospel as a mask for selfish ends, O'Brien says that 'over against this there was a preaching without any unworthy personal motives whatever, and which was concerned only with the truth (ἀλήθεια)'.[739] Thus, he acknowledges that there were indeed motives behind the preaching of the Pauline group, but he plays down any potential problems this might suggest through the rhetoric surrounding the word 'motives': '*without any unworthy personal* motives *whatever*'. They have motives, it is just that they are not deemed 'unworthy'. In addition, their preaching is presented as having an undiluted (perhaps ἁγνῶς, see 1.17) relationship with the 'truth'. Just what is assumed by O'Brien's comments here? First of all, it does not matter what value is given to the motives (worthy or unworthy), or how many qualifiers we place on the word, motives or intentions still mediate between the subject (evangelist) and object (gospel) and thus prevent an unmediated continuity between the subject and the object, which means that opposing one group to another on the basis that one group has a direct and unmediated connection to ἀλήθεια while another does not is problematic from the very start. Secondly, the difference between 'unworthy' and 'worthy' suggested here by O'Brien is a difference dependent upon the dominance of Paul's own theological system over other systems built on the basic premise of the gospel. Paul simply mentions that there is such a difference, and O'Brien is here affirming that difference as an hierarchical one. However, O'Brien attempts to make this hierarchy more pronounced by stating that the Pauline group has as the sole object of its evangelistic activity 'Christ and his glory',[740] but this goes beyond what the text indicates: the differences between the motives find their exigence with respect to the evangelists' relationship to Paul.

To be sure, both groups of speakers have 'motives' or 'reasons' (προφασεῖς) for proclaiming Christ; thus, ultimately, both groups have as a part of the accompanying circumstances of their proclamation, a reason to speak, a motive for proclaiming Christ; thus both operate in a sphere of πρόφασις. Moreover, as mentioned, it seems that it is the preachers' relationship to Paul which establishes the value of the πρόφασις of his or her proclamation. Those who proclaim Christ through envy and strife (1.15), out of selfish

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[739] O'Brien, *Philippians*, 106.

[740] O'Brien, *Philippians*, 106.

ambition (1.17), and by pretext (πρόφασις) (1.18) are said to be doing so by Paul because they conflict with him: they imagine (οἶομαι) that they raise up tribulation for him in his imprisonment (1.17). Likewise, those who proclaim Christ through goodwill (1.15), out of love (1.16), and by truth (ἀλήθεια) (1.18) are labelled so because they confer with Paul: knowing (οἶδα) that he has been appointed for the defence of the gospel (1.16). Thus, the classifications of πρόφασις and ἀλήθεια are dependent upon who Paul is and not upon who Christ is or what the gospel means, which consequently undermines the theological privileging of Paul's use of ἀλήθεια in 1.18 as the opposite of πρόφασις. Thus, again, the line of difference which Paul's argument has intended to draw between the two groups has been blurred by the text upon which it was drawn. The underlying ontological structures upon which Paul's theological argument rests are not confluent with that argument. What we are left with in Philippians are simply individuals who proclaim Christ for their own purposes, not metaphysical categories determining and dominating legitimacy.

### *6. Severing the Tie that B(l)inds*

Phil 1.12ff. draws an ironic picture: Paul is bound, but his gospel message advances freely. The perspective of the text, however, is that it is Paul's tethered circumstances that have untethered the gospel: 'my "imprisonment" has turned out for the greater progress of the gospel'. The grain of the text is to present Paul as maintaining a position of influence—that is, maintaining his presence, and thus authority and power, with respect to the evangelists. The Philippians text suggests that the various products of the gospel text (at least two are mentioned) are linked back to Paul, and that Paul is still having an influence on the text *by virtue of his absence*. The evangelists are said to speak because they have gained boldness by Paul's imprisonment (1.14), some because they love Paul (1.16) and others because they imagine they will cause Paul strife in his imprisonment (1.17). The implications of this are interesting, since what is analogically true of Paul and his gospel in these circumstances, is metaphysically true of authors and their texts in general. While Paul is forced into absence from the gospel text, the text itself is free to produce things he would prefer it did not produce. Every author is forced into absence by the mark of signification, since what Derrida labels *différance* functions as a metaphysical barrier imprisoning the presence of the author's consciousness.

Metaphysics is a reference to any system that employs a fundamental separation of the sensible and the intelligible and subsequently relies on the priority of the intelligible.

Classically, the idea of an object has been understood as prior or superior to the thing itself which is a representative of the idea. The notion that the thing itself (the sensible) is a representation of the idea (the intelligible) which is also that which has come to be understood as presence, is fundamental to philosophy. Derrida's project, however, seeks to intervene in the difference between the sensible and the intelligible, questioning the assumed priority of the intelligible or what has come to be known as presence. Spivak therefore notes that, for Derrida, metaphysics is 'shorthand for any science of presence'.[741]

Thus the operation of Derrida's *différance* and the phenomenon of iterability, fundamental axioms of Derrida's philosophical project, prevent the author's presence or conscious will-to-communicate, or will-to-mean from occupying the text. The intentions of the author's consciousness remain forever just that, the intentions of his or her consciousness; they cannot escape into and occupy the iterable marks of his or her text. Hence Barthes' claim that 'linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing more than the instance saying *I*: language knows a "subject", not a "person"'.[742] Once the signifying mark materialises, a space between the mark and the one who made the mark also materialises both spatially and chronologically. This spacing is, of course, a part of the structure of the mark without which there could be no mark, a space that is irreconcilable and without which the mark could not signify.[743] It is this space, and thus 'absence', as a necessary part of the structure of every signifying mark, which enables the possibility of text to operate in the first place. And this possibility created by absence marks also the impossibility of the presence of the author's consciousness to occupy the text. This does not then suggest that absence now functions as the dominant category within the oppositional hierarchy absence/presence, but that the two infect, efface, and displace each other, calling into question the oppositional structure itself.

The forced absence of every author severs the text from its tether and thus enables it to be cited in various productive contexts; that is, forced absence enables the text to go

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741 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Translator's Preface', in Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, xxi.

742 Roland Barthes, 'Death of the Author', in *Image Music Text*, 145.

743 See comments on pp. 32ff., 43.

beyond the bounds of the tether of univocality or even regulated polysemy[744] which the author's presence would attach to the text. As Barthes would say, this absence enables the text to become 'writerly' (*scriptible*), to become productive rather than product, 'not a line of words producing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash'.[745] Barthes' semiotic theory, in part, works upon the difference between readerly (*lisible*) and writerly (*scriptible*) texts. Readerly texts are consumer orientated; whereas writerly texts are typically understood to be producer orientated. Ultimately, the distinction is not between two different kinds of texts, but different ways of constructing the text. The readerly approach is to subordinate the text to metaphysical significance or representation, the writerly approach is to disrupt the ease of generating metaphysical connections by acknowledging the resident textual folds and aporiae and seeking their logocentric performance.[746] In Philippians, Paul is caught in the difference between the gospel as writerly and as readerly.

In Philippians, it is never assumed that the text cannot continue to produce what Paul used it to produce. Even though Paul's hands are tied, he suggests that the hands of those citing the gospel are equally bound; they cannot control the text either. As far as Paul is concerned, the gospel text can continue to produce what he used it to produce regardless of the intentions of those who cite it. The only problem for Paul (though he does not mention it) is that the gospel text produces that and more. Again, this is true of authors and texts in general, and it is a particularly important point because the metaphysical disjunction between author and text is not a nihilistic phenomenon; indeed, it is quite the opposite. Orphaned texts (that is, *all* texts) are not doomed to a poverty of meaning, rather their orphaned status places them in a position for continual abundance of meaning; indeed, the very possibility of meaning is founded on the possibility of a text being able to break free from its parent, its 'origins', and become iterable. To tether the text absolutely to the consciousness or will of the author would prevent communication in the first place, since it would force texts to be subjective in the extreme, preventing them

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[744] Regulating polysemy is the attempt to denote the semantic variation by naming specific semic units, in order to regulate the polysemy of the text and thus retard, or prevent, textual (re)production.

[745] Barthes, 'Death of the Author', 146.

[746] For more on this see Barbara Johnson, 'The Critical Difference', *Diacritics* 8 (1978): 4; also Barthes' extended treatment in Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (trans. Richard Miller; New York: Hill and Wang, 1974).

from being re-iterated in the experience of the reader/hearer. Again, for the text to operate, it must do so by being apart from the author, and thus by being re-produced or re-inscribed in the wor(l)ds of other subjects.[747]

Communication or meaning is only possible by virtue of our ability to re-cite the marks of a message in terms of our own horizon of life-experience. So, unless the marks of communication can be severed from the author and his or her own subjective world, they cannot even begin to mean. Thus, every attempt to communicate or to mean, is an act of disownment whereby the author disseminates, by virtue of a text, the seeds of signification in order that they might find purchase in the soil of some other subject. Thus, it is by no means a nihilistic move to acknowledge the orphaned status of texts, it is rather the acknowledgment of a text's ability to produce beyond the expectations of the author, but not necessarily instead of them.

In Phil 1.18, Paul actually invokes this metaphysical separation of the message from the messenger; with his own chains he unlocks the bonds which bound intention to meaning. But can Paul have his meaning and keep it? On the one hand he attempts to inject his controlling presence into the proclamation of the gospel by claiming the various kinds of preachers preach by virtue of his own circumstances. On the other hand, he claims that the gospel message is free of the intentions of those preachers.

The graphematic gospel, the iterable mark(s) of an apostle, finds a new cite of production in the contexts brought into being by the acts of different preachers. Paul says that the message spoken by the aforementioned preachers performs, or has the potential to perform, a function or a meaning either exterior to the speaker's intention, or at least not defined by or tethered to those intentions. There are several important points to make about this critical move. We shall begin with an observation, introduced in Chapter One, of language performance in the vein of J. L. Austin, since Austin addresses the distinction between language used in normal circumstances, that is, 'serious' language (requiring the comprehensive presence of the speaker's intentions) and abnormal circumstances, that is, 'non-serious' language (requiring that intentions are other than that which would be present in the same text in normal circumstances).

A question to begin with is, do utterances performed under duress or in 'non-serious' contexts have the same performance value or 'meaning' (if we can call it that) as utterances performed in serious contexts? If an actor in a play says to another actor, 'I

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[747] Note Derrida, SEC, 317.

love you' is it an expression of truth? Most people would follow Austin and answer, No.[748]

If it seems to us that 'no' is the correct answer on both of the above accounts, why is it, then, that Paul seems to think that an utterance spoken in a 'non-serious' mode (that is, from φθόνος and ἔρις, with ἐριθεία and οὐχ ἁγνῶς, and later characterised by Paul as πρόφασις) has the same value, or can mean the same thing as one spoken in a 'serious' (that is, through εὐδοκία, out of ἀγάπη, and in/by ἀλήθεια)? Asking this question leads us to discover that Paul is bound to a rather unexpected cellmate: Jacques Derrida. Derrida has also re-written the distinction between the performative value of serious and non-serious language. Moreover, as we go along, we shall find that Paul has more in common with Derrida than most would care to admit. I shall deal with these issues in the following section.

### *7. (Re)iteration, (Re)citation, Sur-prise, Commentary*

> *The category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance.*
>
> *Jacques Derrida*[749]

I suggested above that Paul and Derrida had in common a willingness to accept a non-difference between utterances made in serious and non-serious contexts.[750] At this point, I would like to investigate that suggestion and begin to read Philippians in light of the previous discussion between Austin and Derrida about contexts and intentions,[751] and in light of the earlier discussion on *Hinterfragen*.[752]

Before going on, it may be helpful to reiterate the basic point Paul makes in Philippians 1:18. Paul is in prison and he believes this ignited two kinds of reactions among two kinds of preachers. One kind of preacher of the gospel gains boldness because of Paul's imprisonment and preaches the gospel message from truth and love. The other kind of preacher also gains a boldness, but one that causes him to preach for his own gain

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[748] Austin 22.

[749] Derrida, SEC, 326.

[750] See above pp. 175ff.

[751] Note also pp. 32–47.

[752] See pp. 17ff.

while Paul is in prison, a sort of 'while the cat's away the mice will play' scenario. Paul also takes pains to point out that the preaching or intention of the latter group is self-oriented, impure and false. Yet he does not suggest that these intentions infect the message or utterances of the gospel with their presence, rather, he indicates that the series of marks which constitute the gospel message act on their own. As discussed earlier, these marks 'constitute a kind of machine that is in turn productive, that . . . [an author's] future disappearance in principle will not prevent from functioning and from yielding, and yielding itself to, reading and rewriting'.[753]

It is important to recognise that the value system governing the description and distinction of these two kinds of preachers is a construct made with reference to Paul himself.[754] He labels those supportive of him as good willed (εὐδοκία) and those who preach from truth (ἀλήθεια), but those whom he believes are not supportive of him are selfish and impure (ἐριθεία καὶ οὐχ ἁγνῶς), and preach from falsehood (πρόφασις). Since Paul raises the issue, I shall later follow through the logic of his text and ask what the relationship is between the message and these messengers, and then what the relationship is between the two opposing kinds of messengers. For now, I turn to the treatment of this text by the commentaries on Philippians.

### *7.a. (Re)citation: Erasing the Contours of the Cite*

Commentary on our passage has not really taken Paul's remarks 'seriously'. The tendency is to trace their discussions along the textual contours, but glossing over the metaphysical chasms. They fall precisely in line with the traditional discourse of Western metaphysics. This leads the commentaries to focus on the dynamics of the historical relationship between Paul and the preachers to whom he refers. Thus, for the commentaries, the primary critical issue associated with Phil 1.18 is the question of the identity of the bad preachers.[755] This is naturally followed up by an intense interest in the situation from which Paul wrote, since most theories of identity depend, to varying degrees, on determining whether Paul was in Caesarea, Ephesus or Rome, and in or out

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[753] Derrida, SEC, 316. See also the earlier discussion on pp. 46f.

[754] See comments on p. 171.

[755] See, for example, J. Hugh Michael, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians* (The Moffat New Testament Commentary; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), 44–45; Beare, 26; Martin, 73–74; Collange, 9–10, 58; Hawthorne, 35–38 (esp. 37); Fee, 121–24. See also the lengthy discussion in Jewett, 'Conflicting Moments', 363ff.

of prison.[756] Generally, the commentators wonder why Paul does not articulate some polemical diatribe against the selfish preachers in accordance with what is thought to be his normal practice. In other words, they see Paul's 'soft' approach as abnormal. Jewett, who stands in contrast to the content of the general trend, suggests that Paul is not being soft on his antagonists, since he does cast dispersions upon the bad evangelists. The softness of Paul's comments may, suggests Jewett, derive from the confusion over the fact that Paul does not label them outrightly as heretics.[757]

It is no surprise to see this interest in the historical relationship between Paul and the other preachers, since it appears to be the simple perspective of the text. Paul is, after all, the one who is writing and he naturally sees the world with respect to his own experiences. Yet the 'abnormality' of Paul's comments is not derived from an historical issue, but from a critical issue: the separation of author and text, intention and message, the subordination of the metaphysical to the logocentric. Furthermore, these mechanisms are hidden within the text itself, they are not brought to bear upon the text. What we find, however, is that to write about the text while glossing these aporiae is to bring something else to bear upon the text, to introduce to the text something foreign, to 'distort' it, and finally to replace it, in order to make it acceptable.

To recite the text: Phil 1.13–14 is a complex result clause.[758] The first part of the clause (1.13) focusses on the progress of the gospel outside the Christian community, the second part (1.14) refers to the situation *within* the Christian community. As a part of the same clause, Phil 1.14 continues to express the object of Paul's desire (βούλομαι, 1.12). He wants them to know that 'the majority of the brethren have all the more confidence in the Lord[759] by virtue of my bonds to boldly speak the word without fear'. Once again, Paul's focus is upon the re-citation of the gospel in new contexts, or 'proclamation' ('to boldly speak the word[760] without fear'),[761] which he cites as evidence

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[756] See discussion on provenance, pp. 68ff

[757] Jewett, 'Conflicting Movements', 365–66.

[758] On the clause as an explanation, see references in n. 646.

[759] I have rendered ἐν κυρίῳ as a reference to the object in which the confidence is placed, and treat τοῖς δεσμοῖς as the means by which the confidence is placed. As noted in O'Brien, adding 'in the Lord' to ἀδελφῶν is somewhat superfluous (O'Brien, *Philippians*, 94–95).

[760] The assumption here is that τὸν λόγον refers to the gospel. Apart from the fact that this is a classic New Testament reference to the message received from God (see, Gal 6.6; 1 Thess 1.6–8; but note 'the word of God' in Paul, 1 Cor 14.36; 2 Cor 2.17; 4.2; in early Christian use, for

of the gospel's progress.[762] Thus, as with 1.13,[763] 1.14 is an important contribution to Paul's rhetorical agenda to create a way of reading his situation so that the Philippians will not perceive some lack in either himself or his gospel.

As mentioned, Paul is now addressing the effect his imprisonment has had upon the interior of the Christian community. One of those effects has been to engender courage within the Christian community, and it is well noted among the commentaries that Paul is stressing this effect by piling up words which reflect this courage: πεποιθότας, περισσοτέρως, τολμᾶν, ἀφόβως. But of course, the effect is not singular, it is divided along two lines of interest, suggested initially by the comparative adjective, πλείονας ('majority'[764]), the point at which the story of another set of interests—that of the 'minority'—becomes manifested within the text. One cannot help but wonder *why* Paul decided to volunteer this second story, a story of dissent and faction. The great interest of the commentaries appears to be the historical identity of the opponents;[765] however, I suggest that the 'why' here is much more important than the 'who', simply because what Paul is trying to do by mentioning this story of dissent is much more important *to Paul as he writes Philippians* than who is or is not dissenting. Fee is one of the few who attempt to deal with the 'why'.[766] He concludes that it anticipates the exhortations of 1.27–2.16 and 4.2–3. Hawthorne, somewhat defeated and more typical, states: 'Why Paul felt it necessary to disclose to the Philippians the weaknesses of some of the brothers who were with him in Caesarea is a mystery'.[767]

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example, Acts 4.29; 6.2, 7; 8.4; 11.19; 13.5, 7, 44, 46; 16.32), there is a strong tradition clarifying the referent of τὸν λόγον: ℵ, A, B, (ʿD*), P, Ψ, et al., insert the modifier τοῦ θεοῦ; however, the more likely readings of $P^{46}$, $D^{2}$, et al., omit the phrase.

[761] See the discussion on p. 145.

[762] See the discussion on progress being validated by proclamation on pp. 148ff.

[763] See the discussion on (dis)closure, pp. 137ff.

[764] See BAGD, 689.

[765] An important problem which actually assists in determining the 'why', though it is rarely treated as such.

[766] Fee, *Philippians*, 123.

[767] Hawthorne, 38; note that the various arguments (e.g., n. 593) suggesting that this section is an excursus are by virtue of that suggestion attempting to answer the 'why' of Paul's comments.

***7.a.i. Identifying the Division*** The more substantial reference to division comes in 1.15 with the indefinite pronoun τινές ('certain ones'), which here refers to those other than the previously mentioned 'majority'. These 'certain ones' preach Christ (Χριστὸν κηρύσσουσιν) through envy (φθόνον) and strife (ἔριν); they proclaim Christ (τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν) out of selfishness (ἐξ ἐριθείας), without pure motives (οὐχ ἁγνῶς), supposing (οἰόμενοι) to raise up trouble while Paul is imprisoned. There are a number of interesting terms here, none of which, one imagines, would find a place on Paul's favourite 'fruit of the Spirit' list.

In addressing the historical question of identity, the important task is to establish at the very least, what *kind* of people they are. In fact, Fee asks this very question: 'But who are these people, or at least *what kind* of people are they?'[768] The commentaries *tend* to suggest two certainties: they are brethren,[769] and they are brethren whose doctrine is no problem for Paul.[770] It is this latter claim which has the greatest interest for this project, for now we can certainly acknowledge that these preachers are indeed brethren, after all they preach and proclaim Christ (1.15, 17), and they are the 'certain people on the one hand' (τινὲς μέν) of 'the majority of the brethren' who have gained confidence.

It is worth noting that involved in the discussion is Phil 2.20–21, where Paul seems to lament the fact that no one seems to be concerned about the interests of Christ. They all seem to be preoccupied with their own interests.[771] Jewett, among others,[772]

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[768] Fee, Philippians, 121.

[769] There are many kinds of ἀδελφοί. The suggestions include: the seemingly ubiquitous 'Judaisers' (e.g., Lightfoot, 88); people who were not actually opponents of Paul, but anti-imperialist Christians seeking the (eschatological) glory of persecution and martyrdom (Hawthorn, 316–17); a set of circumstances based on the personal rivalry among the Roman Christians which extends itself to Paul (Oscar Cullman, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr: A Historical and Theological Essay* [trans. Floyd V. Filson; New York: Meridian Books, 1958], 104–9); Gnostics (e.g., Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 65–122); Christian missionaries with a Greco-Roman divine man view of apostleship (Jewett, 'Conflicting Moments', 366–71); finally, there is the suggestion that they were simply Christians in Rome who did not like Paul, who were 'downright antipathetic' (F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 390).

[770] Among others, see Bockmuehl, 77–78; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 103; Collange, 55–56; Fee, 118–23.

[771] Τὰ ἑαυτῶν ζητοῦσιν, in Phil 2.21, is easily understood as the equivalent of ἐριθεία in Phil 1.17.

[772] See the general acceptance in, e.g., Fee, *Philippians*, 268; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 321–22; Bockmuehl, 166; Meyer, *Philippians*, 127; *contra*, e.g., *Gnilka, Philipperbrief*, 159, and note that a detailed description of the relationship between the two texts is found in Wolf-Henning Ollrog, *Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter: Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis der paulinischen Mission*

argues that we have here in Phil 2.20–21 a reference to the same group of people mentioned in Phil 1.15–17.[773] If this is in fact the case, we have a delightful example of Paul's underlying disposition towards the 'selfish' preachers surfacing only briefly, but long enough for us to begin to suspect even further the operation of 1.12–18.

*7.a.ii. Identifying Activity* On historical grounds, I would suggest that the most productive way to consider the issue is deciding what these people are actually doing, or perhaps more subtly, how one phrases what they are doing. Bockmuehl and Silva represent two of the important positions on the matter: Bockmuehl states that these self-centred preachers 'smell an opportunity for self-advancement, even at the expense of causing the captive Paul distress';[774] Silva states that these people 'merely pretended . . . to be concerned for the gospel when their real desire was to aggravate Paul's sufferings'.[775] The difference between these two scholars is how they have reconstructed the intentions of the self-centred preachers.

Bockmuehl has focussed almost entirely on their personal 'selfishness' (ἐριθεία, 1.17). In fact, Bockmuehl has focussed on the ἐριθεία so much that the issue of deliberate antagonism towards Paul is phrased in such a way so as to suggest that it was not at all a deliberate activity but a mere byproduct of seeking their own interests. In contrast, Silva has focussed on their proactive antagonism, their 'envy' (φθόνον), 'strife' (ἔριν), and, primarily, their 'supposing to raise up trouble' for Paul (οἰόμενοι θλῖψιν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου). What this means is that Bockmuehl is going to end up saying that these people were not really opponents in the classical sense, rather Christian preachers whose real problem is their selfish ambition, and who do not mind rubbing salt in Paul's wounds as they seek their own interests.[776] It also means that Silva is going to cast these fellows in a much more sinister light. He asks 'would it really occur to anyone that one way of hurting the apostle was to preach precisely what Paul himself had been preaching,

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(Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1979), 193–200.

[773] Jewett, 'Conflicting Moments', 369.

[774] Bockmuehl, 76.

[775] Silva, 72.

[776] See Bockmuehl, 78, 80, 81.

especially when such an activity would brand them as "Pauline" and thus bring danger to them?'[777]

Silva supposes that 'some issues of doctrinal significance must have been at stake'; in spite of the fact that people were indeed being brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, which gives Paul occasion to rejoice.[778] So where lies the problem? Silva suggests that it lies with this very success, that these fellows use their evangelistic success 'to subvert the apostle's authority and to establish a form of Gentile Christianity that was friendlier to Judaizing influences'.[779] Silva's position is most certainly aligned with the text's derision of these bad preachers to a greater degree than is Bockmuehl's; since Paul, 'does not treat these persons mildly at all, but casts aspersions on their tactics as well as their attitudes'.[780] To clarify the distinction between Bockmuehl's text and Silva's text, let us consider the language Paul employs to perform the derision.

***7.a.iii. Identifying Language*** The terms φθόνος and ἔρις when paired together make a potent pair of adjectives indicating 'a need to tear down the rival teacher, to whom one feels inferior'.[781] The two terms are found partnered in biblical and extra-biblical vice lists.[782] In 1 Tim 6.4, the two terms are again partnered in a classic Pauline vice list. What is interesting about this list is that it is specifically developed to describe the kind of person who teaches a different doctrine (1 Tim 6.3); still more interesting is the fact that as the discussion develops we find that these people are also the sort of people who 'think that godliness is a means of gain' (1 Tim 6.5). This text bears out some interesting similarities to our Philippian passage. In Timothy we have people who are labelled with φθόνον and ἔριν, who are using 'godliness' (εὐσέβεια) as a means to profit (πορισμός), and yet are labelled as teaching a different doctrine (ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω). In Philippians 1.15–17 we have people who are labelled as φθόνον and ἔριν, who are using the proclamation of Christ (τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν) for selfish gain (ἐριθείᾳ).

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[777] Silva, 73.

[778] Silva, 73.

[779] Silva, 73.

[780] Jewett, 365.

[781] Neil J. McEleney, 'The Vice Lists of the Pastoral Epistles', *CBQ* 36 (1974): 211;

[782] See the references in Siegfried Wibbing, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament; und ihre Traditionsgeschichte unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Qumran-Texte* (BZNW 25; Berlin: Alfred Töpelman, 1959), 17, 21, n. 54, 37, 82, 77–108, 87–88.

In Titus 3.3ff. the author develops an ethical section in which he categorises the former (pre-Christian) foolishness and unprofitability as φθόνος (Titus 3.3) and ἔρις (Titus 3.9). In Rom 2.29, those people who have failed to acknowledge God and have been handed over to a depraved mind to do improper things (καθήκω)[783] are described as being filled with φθόνος and ἔρις, among other things. The famous vice list in Gal 5.19 lists ἔρις and φθόνος as 'deeds of the flesh', and since the 'flesh desires what is against the Spirit' (Gal 5.17), 'those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God' (Gal 5.21).

Even outside their partnership, the two terms are used in other contexts to describe the seedier side of life. Ἔρις, for the New Testament use of which 'Paul virtually holds the copyright',[784] in Rom 13.12–13 is catalogued as one of the 'deeds of darkness' which is not the sort of activity in which one is supposed to engage during the 'day' in preparation for salvation. In 1 Cor 3.3 (also 1.11), the presence of ἔρις reflects the fact that they are still 'fleshly' (σαρκικός). In 2 Cor 12.20, ἔρις is listed with a set of all the bad characteristics that Paul fears might exist in the Corinthian church.

Φθόνος is found less often on its own. It is located in the Gospels with respect to jealousy of the Jerusalem leadership (Matt 27.18; Mark 15.10),[785] and in 1 Pet 2.1 Christians are called to 'put off' φθόνος and other like characteristics. Perhaps more importantly φθόνος is described in classical literature in specific contrast to simple jealousy (ζῆλος), which focusses on a particular object of desire. Φθόνος appears to remove the focus from the self and represent the desire to prevent or subvert the successes or acquisitions of another person;[786] hence Aristotle's remark: 'envy is a kind of pain at the sight of good fortune in regard to the goods mentioned . . . and not for the sake of a man getting anything, but because of others possessing it'.[787]

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[783] Cranfield notes that the nominal form 'is especially associated with the Stoics, for whom it was an ethical technical term' (C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:128–29. Thus we find both Zeno and Panaetius authoring treatises entitled περὶ τοῦ καθήκοντος. The use here in Romans clearly employs this sort of moral nuance (e.g., Cranfield, 129; Moo, 118, n. 142; also see BAGD, 389).

[784] John Howard Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 161.

[785] It is also listed in James 4.5 as a way to describe God's desire for us.

[786] See R. C. Trench, 'Envy', *NIDNTT* 1:557.

[787] Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, 2.10.1 (Freese, LCL).

The final important term employed by Paul to classify his opponents is ἐριθεία (selfishness/selfish ambition[788]). The term is relatively new in the ancient world, and found only in Aristotle prior to the New Testament period—in which case it described 'the self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means'.[789] In the New Testament it is located in many of the same places we find φθόνος and ἔρις, though some interesting differences exist. In Jas 3.16, we are told that wherever there is ἐριθεία so can be found 'disorder' (ἀκαταστασία) and 'every vile thing' (πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα). In Jas 3.14 it is associated with arrogance and lying against the truth, and we find the same idea in Rom 2.6–9 where ἐριθείας is coupled with 'disobey' (ἀπειθέω) as the source of behaviour which receives a strong condemnation: 'God will render to each person according to his or her deeds . . . to those who are ἐξ ἐριθείας and disobey the truth, but pay heed to unrighteousness, wrath, and rage, (there will be) tribulation and calamity upon every soul of those who do evil'.

Considering the nature of the language Paul employs, we can hardly take confidence in the notion that the only problem with these preachers was their bad attitude. Furthermore, we cannot sustain the implication of Bockmuehl's commentary that the antagonism towards Paul was simply a by-product of their own selfish agenda. Rather, at the very least, we need to understand that the activity of these antagonists was designed to deliberately hurt Paul. Thus, in Paul's mind, such behaviour, despite what he actually says about it (since that is the point in question), is tantamount to hurting or opposing Christ. After all, the people who 'know' (Phil 1.16), as opposed to 'suppose' (Phil 1.17), who Paul really is, know that he has been 'appointed (κεῖμαι[790]) for the defence of the gospel'. The important point to be noted about Paul's appointment is the identity of the subject of the 'appointing', namely God. There is a natural positive correlation between this point and the one Paul makes in Gal 1.1 where he takes pains to point out that he is sent through Jesus Christ and God the father and not from humans—on the basis of which he can anathematise his opponents.

Both of the accounts by Bockmuehl and Silva reflect the fact that Paul understands himself to be doing God's work. To oppose Paul is to oppose that work

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[788] See BAGD, 309.

[789] BAGD, 309.

[790] Serves as the passive of τίθημι (BAGD, 426): to lie, recline, etc. It has the figurative sense of 'appointed, set, destined' (BAGD, 426) which is clearly the sense here.

which God is doing. Thus again, it is unlikely that Paul would construct any person deliberately opposed to him as merely having a bad attitude.

*7.a.iv. Examples from Corinthians* A helpful discussion on the issue of identity is the one found in 2 Corinthians where Paul is dealing with people who are clearly involved in some sort of Christian mission. According to Paul, these fellows want to be regarded as apostles, and they seek opportunity among the Corinthians to be so regarded (2 Cor 11.12). These men are 'pseudo-apostles', who 'disguise themselves as apostles of Christ' (2 Cor 11.13). How does one disguise oneself as an apostle? Primarily, though not exclusively, through language; these men talk the talk, probably better than Paul does. In fact, we note that in 2 Corinthians Paul thrice appeals to the essentials of the word-deed convention (2 Cor 3.12; 10.10; 11.6), and on two of those occasions Paul is referring to an apparent lack in his speech, perceived by the Corinthians, which he seeks to counter by representing himself as more substantial in knowledge and deeds.[791] By contrast, these pseudo-apostles are not what their words make them out to be, a fact that Paul drives home when he points out that their 'end will be according to their deeds' (2 Cor 11.15). Importantly, Paul highlights the separation of word and deed operative within the pseudo-apostles by virtue of the verb μετασχηματίζω,[792] which he uses three times in three verses: they *disguise* themselves as apostles of Christ (2 Cor 11.13), Satan *disguises* himself as an angel of light (2 Cor 11.14), they *disguise* themselves as servants of righteousness (2 Cor 1.15).

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that these fellows merely pretended to be apostles. It is rather more likely that they assumed that they were, which is not really a problem for Paul until the Corinthian church members also assume that they are apostles. Thus, Braumann, pointing to the inadequacy of the English word 'disguise', notes that they were doing more than just pretending .[793] Hence Bultmann's comment on 2 Cor 11.13 that μετασχηματιζόμενοι εἰς ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ 'certainly need not describe their subjective intent, as though these persons really did not desire to work for Christ at all; it is merely stated that they actually do not do so'.[794] The probability that these fellows at

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[791] Thus invoking the word-deed convention, see discussion on pp. 113ff.

[792] The main concern of this word rests upon external form, rather than essential substance, see G. Braumann, 'Form, Substance', *NIDNTT* 1:708.

[793] Braumann, *NIDNTT* 1:708.

[794] Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 208.

Corinth assume they are apostles, and that some Corinthians assume that they are, presents us with an interesting parallel to Phil 1, which is made all the more pertinent by their identification as the 'super-apostles' (ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, 2 Cor 11.5).[795]

Thus again, it is too simple to dismiss Paul's magnanimity in Philippians on the basis that he is merely dealing with people who have a bad attitude. Those at Corinth who assume an apostolic posture but are in fact 'pseudo', who disguise themselves as servants of righteousness in the same way that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, represent a similar category of preacher to the one found in Philippians. That is, preaching the word does not automatically infer orthodoxy, or that these preachers are not disguising themselves. The language of the Philippians account goes too far to let these fellows be understood as merely emotionally and socially deficient, but the fact that this behaviour receives severe condemnation in 2 Corinthians and only magnanimous indifference in Philippians, a 'particularly striking' contrast,[796] is precisely the problem.

2 Corinthians provides us with yet another way to view Paul's opponents in Phil 1. Jewett raises the possibility that in Philippians Paul may be reacting to a 'divine man' assumption about apostleship similar to the one suggested for 2 Corinthians.[797] The existence of a divine man theology within the culture is not really in dispute;[798] thus, the possibility that Paul encounters a divine man ideal operative within Christian groups (both Jewish and Gentile) remains a possibility. This works for Jewett because he believes that Paul is experiencing opposition precisely *because* he is in prison,[799] since imprisonment is hardly a demonstration of God's power. Thus, Paul's reference to the progress of the gospel while in prison is a counter to this accusation.

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[795] On the matter of whether the pseudo-apostles of 2 Cor 11.13 are also the super-apostles of 11.5 and 12.11, it appears to me that Paul is talking about the same people based on the fact that the entire argument from 10.12–12.13 is a discussion about the same thing: that Paul is not inferior to the newcomers. See, Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 523; also the supportive discussions in Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 349–50; Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 380, 392–93; Schütz, 167–68. For the contrary position, see Bultmann, *Corinthians*, 199. For a comprehensive evaluation, see C. K. Barrett 'Paul's Opponents in II Corinthians' *NTS* 12 (1971): 233–54.

[796] Schütz, 168.

[797] For example, see Dieter Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians* (Studies of the New Testament and Its World; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), 230–38.

[798] See Georgi, 390–422.

[799] Jewett, 'Conflicting Moments', 367.

Jewett's position here is very close to my own. The text appears to represent this sort of concern on Paul's part (a concern for an accusation of some kind of lack); however, the very points which Jewett uses to argue for why people at Ephesus[800] would be accusing Paul of weakness, I have understood to be true of the Philippians. That is, the historical situation appears to me to be one in which Paul is arguing in *Philippians* for the sake of the *Philippians*, and not for the sake of people in his present locale. Jewett argues that 'the letter repeatedly makes the point that the suffering for Christ is the epitomy [*sic*] of Christian experience'.[801] But we must ask why Paul would want to thread such an argument throughout an epistle which is not going to be read by the people in question. Thus, I would rather suggest that the apparent theme of suffering, along with Paul's points made in the early section of Philippians (especially Phil 1.12–18) is indicative of a problem Paul is attempting to resolve among the readers of the epistle, and not among people who would probably never read it. However, again, I would suggest that what Jewett has observed operating within the letter, a defence against an assumption that his imprisonment suggests that there is something wrong with him or even his gospel, is certainly a valid observation and one to which I myself hold, and one which is deeply implicated in my reading of Philippians.

*7.a.v. **An Insidious Summary*** Returning to the issue of identity, I would suggest that these people in Phil 1.15–17 are people who in a different set of circumstances would receive the full weight of Paul's invective, but for overarching rhetorical reasons this does not present itself to Paul as the most expedient course of action as he writes Philippians, if he is to produce within the Philippian church the manifestation of his own desires. If there is any patience in Philippians, it is not with the self-centred preachers, as is typically assumed. The situation is rather that Paul is 'carefully measuring' (*Entstellung*?) his response so that in the end he maintains his position within the life of the Philippian church.

On the matter of whether these 'selfish' preachers were Christian, I simply say that the text bears out the very fact with little or no ambiguity. As to the matter of whether they were pure in their doctrine or whether they simply had a bad attitude, the bulk of scholarship assumes the latter. This assumption is naturally based upon historical

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[800] Jewett begins with an argument for an Ephesian provenance (Jewett, 'Conflicting Moments', 363–64).

[801] See Jewett, 'Conflicting Moments', 367–69.

conjecture,[802] which follows a line of argument that bases itself on an idea of the Paul we have come to know everywhere else, and which *assumes* Paul simply would never have been so magnanimous with questionable doctrine. It is therefore necessary to raise the question, the *Hinterfrage*, What if their doctrine was other than Paul's? What if Paul has in fact allowed questionable doctrine to pass by unchecked? Why would he do that? What would he be hiding? What would he be distorting in an effort to by-pass the Censor?[803]

Of course, these *Hinterfragen* are equally applied to the commentaries. Why make the assumption that Paul would simply not allow impure teaching to get past him? The grain of the text is well-testified among the commentaries to be a surprising one, because the Paul we experience in the New Testament is not one to be so magnanimous about opposition of any sort, let alone appear to lend some approval, as we find in Phil 1.18. Commentary which argues for the assumption, even on its own terms, fails to relate Paul's description of the preachers to the larger Pauline corpus;[804] it also tends to forget[805] that Paul specifically states that these fellows were not preaching from pure motives and that their teaching was a pretext for something else.

***7.b. Sur-prise***[806]

Lurking within Phil 1.18a is the element of 'sur-prise'. Phil 1.18a is an assault, but not so much upon the text itself (Phil 1.12–17) as it is upon the presentation of that text by its readers. The fractures generated by Phil 1.18a run through the 'text', as the

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[802] To be precise, it really is based on a way of reconstructing that history with respect to the ideological framework of the person doing the reconstructing.

[803] I think this goes beyond Silva's suggestion, because ultimately Silva is satisfied with Paul's rejoicing and sees it as pure and unaffected. It is probably the case that Paul can isolate positive points about which he can be happy, but his saying so, the reason he decides to point out his rejoicing has more to it than the fact of his 'rejoicing'.

[804] Baur is so indignant towards the text's lack of confluence with Paul in general, that he dismisses it as altogether non-Pauline (Baur, 2:65).

[805] Commentary is the art of forgetting.

[806] '**sur-** /sə:/ *pref.* [Fr. (earlier *so(u)r-* f. as super-.] Used in wds adopted f. Fr. and rarely as a productive Eng. pref., in senses of ÎÎèÆí-' (*OED*, 3155).
'**prise** /prʌɪz, pri:z/ *n.*[1] . . . [(O)Fr., use as n. of fem. pa. pple of *prendre* take seize. . .]' (*OED*, 2358).
'**prise** /prʌɪz/ *n.*[2] . . . [f. as prec. cf. èíÑ *n.*[4]] **1** An instrument used for prising or levering something off; a lever. . . . **2** The action of prising something; leverage' (*OED*, 2358).
'**prise** /prʌɪz/ *v.*[1] *t.* . . . **1** Raise, move, or open by force of leverage' (*OED*, 2358).

'methodological field' of activity.[807] The experience of sur-prise is well-attested among the commentaries, albeit in various ways. However, the most unfortunate way in which this is treated is to forget it; a review of the index in Dunn's *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* reveals that this particularly problematic statement (Phil 1.18a), which has significant implications for Pauline theology, is in fact one of eleven verses of Philippians not cited or referenced in any way in this attempt to 'write' the theology of Paul the apostle.[808] This is a delightful presentation of commentary as the art of forgetting.

So how does this sur-prise come about? Fee provides us with an excellent introduction: 'The surprise comes in his large-heartedness about this—not that he [Paul] could not be large-hearted, *but that he could be so toward people of a kind whom he elsewhere seems to inveigh so strongly against.*[809] A little closer to the textual production of this sur-prise we find Gnilka observing that Paul creates a fracture between Phil 1.17 and 18 by 'interjecting a question' (*dazwischengeworfenen Frage*) between them; he effectively 'breaks off the discussion' (*bricht . . . die Erörterung*).[810] Thus Gnilka notes that Paul is heading in one direction but suddenly, when he arrives at Phil 1.18 he sur-prises our thoughts on where we imagined the discussion to be going. It is very important for us to note that the sur-prise here, Gnilka's sense of *bricht*,[811] only has currency with respect to our reading; that is, it is our impressions formed by the earlier stages of the text that make Phil 1.18 a sur-prise.

Bruce detects a difference between Philippians and other readings of Paul's epistles and notes that 'Paul has mellowed' and has become more like Christ.[812] Importantly, Bruce's sense of difference is based upon his *Hauptbriefe* experience.[813] Bockmuehl understands the whole passage to be 'unexpected' and refers to the Phil 1.18a

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[807] Barthes, 'From Work to Text', 155–64, esp. 156–57.

[808] Dunn *Theology*, 794–96.

[809] Fee, *Philippians*, 118 (emphasis added); also 125.

[810] Gnilka, *Philipperbrief*, 63.

[811] *Bricht* is a 3rd person singular present tense form of *brechen* (to break). I am anglicising it here as something of a noun, invoking 'it breaks' within the nominal use.

[812] Bruce, *Philippians*, 47.

[813] He begins the discussion with a reference to Paul's attitude among the Galatians, as well as comparing Paul's attitude in Philippians to 2 Corinthians (Bruce, *Philippians*, 47). Note the earlier discussion on *Hauptbriefe* and reading Paul, pp. 12ff.

section as demonstrating a 'new attitude' and a 'remarkable spirit of generosity', and that Paul's 'tone does seem to have mellowed'.[814] In other words, Bockmuehl has been surprised and notices something at odds with the way he typically assumed Paul to work, which just so happens to be based upon a reading of *Hauptbriefe* such as Galatians.[815] Barth sees a change in the apostle: 'one may venture the biographical remark that we have here to do with an insight that has grown and matured in comparison. . . .' From what standard of Pauline literature can Barth say that Paul has deviated? '. . . say, II Corinthians' of course.[816]

Collange reveals that the problem has 'often intrigued commentators', and he himself notes a difference between the 'intransigence of . . . [Paul's] other epistles' and the '"liberal" attitude' in the Philippians passage.[817] Schütz,[818] along with Martin,[819] detects a difference in Paul's demonstration of 'indifference' and labels it 'curious'. Hawthorne is awed by a display of 'splendid magnanimity',[820] and Michael by an 'amazing magnanimity'.[821] Silva warms to 'a remarkable passage in which the apostle lays his heart bare and reveals the deepest motives of his life'.[822]

Gnilka, after observing the textual *bricht*, recites the apparent trend among scholars to ask why Paul was willing 'to overlook' (*hinwegzusehen*) the agitators 'so generously' (*so großzügig*), and notes the common reference made by commentators on this verse is that Paul displays *Seelengröße*, a generous spirit.[823] Dibelius sees in the passage a 'wonderful objectivity' (*großartige Sachlichkeit*) in which all the previous

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[814] Bockmuehl, 76, 81, 77, and 81 respectively.

[815] Bockmuehl bases his comparisons on what he believes to be true of Galatians, Bockmuehl, 81.

[816] Barth, 33. Again, Barth's expectations of Paul are dependent upon a privileging of *Hauptbriefe* over Philippians.

[817] Collange, 58.

[818] Schütz, 164.

[819] Martin (NCB), 74.

[820] Hawthorn, 38.

[821] Michael, 42.

[822] Silva, *Philippians*, 74.

[823] Gnilka, *Philipperbrief*, 64.

'reservations' (*Hintergedanken*) become 'confounded' (*zuschanden*).[824] Similarly, Lohmeyer sees in Phil 1.18 a 'beautiful testimony' (*schönes Zeugnis*) to Paul's 'unselfish objectivity' (*selbstloser Sachlichkeit*).[825]

One of the more remarkable commentaries on this re-markable passage comes from Michael. In an excellent demonstration of how reading turns into writing, Michael, encountering the aporia of Phil 1.18a, delves into speculation about Paul's temperament. In commenting upon Phil 2.21, he brings Phil 1.15–17 into the discussion and claims that Paul had lost control of his temper ('temporary annoyance'), thus, 'we must not attach to the words too literal and strict a meaning. Paul does not quite mean all that his words seem to mean, anymore than when he condemns the preachers in 1:15ff'.[826] Returning to his commentary on Phil 1.18: 'Paul is hurt. Words escape him which in a calmer mood he would scarcely have uttered. He charges them with a deliberate desire to annoy him!'[827] Paul has been royally irritated, in Michael's view, and thus when he decides to suppress his true feelings 'his magnanimity is no whit less magnificent; it is even more amazing'.[828] Indeed, 'the irritation has produced a pearl!'[829]

There is one more comment from Michael to note. He sees that there is indeed a sur-prise operating in this text which is prising our readings out of position, seizing them, opening them. He notes that 'the splendid magnanimity of ver. 18 has *blinded* us to the signs of annoyance in vers. 15 and 16'.[830] This is indeed the nature of the sur-prise, yet we find that the sur-prise is suppressed in the final reading of the passage. What Michael does somewhat consciously, most do unconsciously, they re-cite the text so as to generate a hierarchy between Phil 1.15–17 and 1.18.

The *bricht* operating between the two passages fractures the metaphysic imposed upon the text through commentary and is necessarily dispensed with in the final presentation of the text. That is, while there is apparently a hierarchy operative within

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[824] Dibelius, 66.

[825] Lohmeyer, 47.

[826] Michael, 115.

[827] Michael, 45.

[828] Michael, 45.

[829] Michael, 45.

[830] Michael, 45 (emphasis added).

the text, this hierarchy is reversed by commentary to provide conscious acceptability of the text. Commentary on this activity follows:

***7.c. Commentary***

The remarks of surprise and cries of magnanimity are contingent upon how one understands Phil 1.18 to relate to Phil 1.15–17. The problem is simply this, Phil 1.15–17 appears perfectly normal and consistent with how we typically read Paul, but then we read Phil 1.18. At that point, an interpretative and institutional crisis develops, its resolution is 'commentary';[831] that is, the crisis must be removed and (re)presented and (de)formed in a way that allows it to fit comfortably, safely, acceptably into our conscious impressions of Paul. The mechanism for this is almost always a re-reading of Phil 1.15–17 which (re)presents these verses as not what they appear to be.

When this (re)presentation is performed on Phil 1.15–18, an important and ironic decision is masked: Phil 1.18 is allowed to govern Phil 1.15-17. In other words, what at first appears to be 'normal' in Phil 1.15–17 is suddenly reconstructed in the face of Phil 1.18. *Hinterfrage*: Why? Well, if Phil 1.15–17 is allowed to pass for what it typically appears to be, then Paul in Phil 1.18 is subordinating the metaphysical (theology) to something a little more earthly: words, proclamation, logocentrism.

Further: the commentary performed through Phil 1.18 upon Phil 1.15–17 implicates itself in its own critique. It seeks to replace the text with writing, or more importantly, to fill up the logical fracture in Phil 1.15–17 caused by the shock of Phil 1.18 with more writing so as to (re)create a textual grain along the lines of which a theology can be developed. It thus also fails to generate a metaphysic of the text, making a theology *reductio ad verbum*, logocentrism, logotheology. Thus, commentary participates in the very thing that is shocking about Phil 1.18 by becoming the very thing it seeks to displace.

Further still: this (e)strange(ed) movement creates a hierarchy within the text: Phil 1.18 over 1.15–17. It thus reads against the logical grain of the text, and imposes upon it a supplemental logic, without which, it is apparently assumed, the text fails to cohere. Let us briefly consider this supplement. 'Supplement' (*supplément*) is an important word for Derrida, developed and derived from his interaction with Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*. Rousseau consigns writing to a supplemental role in language, but fails to maintain the difference between writing and speech allowing Derrida to perform

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831 Again, note the previous discussion on pp. 17ff.

one of his most erudite deconstructions of Western metaphysics.[832] The importance of this here is that the logic of supplementarity comes to bear upon the idea of the commentary: 'Supplementarity, which *is nothing* neither a presence nor an absence. . . . It is precisely the play of presence and absence, the opening of this play that no metaphysical or ontological concept can comprehend'.[833] And this is not to suggest that commentary is nothing, rather that its supplemental logic and the 'play' invoked by it precedes the object of its force: the text.[834] Thus, like the supplement, commentary is a point of metaphysical undecidability; it seeks to be both a part of and an addition to the text, it wavers between presence and absence, never quite one or the other, never quite the text, never quite theology.

The hierarchy in Phil 1.15–18 created by commentary is supplemented to the text in order 'to compensate'[835] for an apparent lacuna within the text. What is this omission? Is it power? In which case, one could say that ensuring Paul remains antagonistic to difference, through 'commentary' on Phil 1.15–17, is nothing less than ensuring the institutional stability of the whole nature of Western Christian theology. Failure at this point would send shockwaves throughout the entire structure. Yet we find that all this relies upon the logic of supplementarity, which is really nothing at all. Unable to escape the text, commentary invokes *Entstellung* so that other experiences of the text are not in fact of the text at all, rather of the transcription of one logocentric system in the place of another.

### *7.d. More Commentary*

As discussed earlier in this chapter, what makes meaning and thus commentary possible is iterability. Yet the possibility of (re)citation already problematises the fundamental desire of biblical commentary for the metaphysical, or as Bruner puts it,

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[832] See '. . . That Dangerous Supplement . . .' in Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 141–64; which is merely a supplement to 'Genesis and Structure of the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*', in *Derrida, Of Grammatology*, 165–268.

[833] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 244.

[834] See Derrida's comments on the property of man in Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 244.

[835] From *Compensare* (*OED*, 458), infinitive of *compenso* 'To balance, make good, offset (a debt, deficit . . .). **2** To counter balance, make up for (a deficiency), etc.), make good in another way, offset. . . . **3** To balance mentally, weigh (against). **4** To save, secure, obtain (at the expense of or by sacrificing something else) **b.** to get rid of (by exchange)' (P. G. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* [Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1982], 374–75).

'rummaging in the thoughts and words of God'.[836] It does so because the moment of the iter, in which the mark comes into existence enabling the question of meaning in the first place, is the same moment it is permanently divided from the presence which it *represents*,[837] since that which representation represents more than anything else is absence. The struggle with this absence is that which invokes the need for interpretation and commentary; it invokes the desire for a metaphysical presence within biblical texts, that is 'theology'. As we shall see, the final resting place is an undecidable point between presence and absence, never quite the text, never quite theology.

As we have seen, commentary seeks to overcome its metaphysical lack by re-citing the text in such a way so as to enable the metaphysical to maintain its dominance. In fact, commentary is entirely and radically (re)citation, unable to prevent the relocation of the text into one contextual frame or another, thus never able to present the text as something in itself; it must always take the place of the text.

Apart from the possibility of commentary and the contemporaneous impossibility of presence, the issue of iterability is invoked once more in the analysis of the Philippian passage. However, this requires an extension of the logic required to generate the metaphysical reading of our passage into the historical activity being represented by the text. That is, as mentioned earlier, commentary on our passage attempts to reverse a hierarchical structure operating within the text. It attempts to locate Phil 1.18 over Phil 1.15–17.

I suggested earlier that the reason for this binary relocation was that if Phil 1.15–17 is allowed to dominate Phil 1.18, then Paul is subordinating the metaphysical (theology) to something a little more earthly: words, proclamation, logocentrism. Such an activity by commentary should be no surprise to us, since it is in its nature to attempt to maintain, thus '(re)create' presence within the text. Yet, the act of (re)creation is a divine act; thus, as with Watson's 'theological hermeneutics',[838] commentary is a theological activity in which the commentator must become a god in order to achieve it. This particular attempt by commentary to maintain the metaphysical within the text, is actually something of a problem for the solution arrived at by that same activity. That is, when Phil 1.18 is relocated to the dominant position over Phil 1.15–17, the purpose is to

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[836] Bruner, 401.

[837] See Derrida, SEC, 5.

[838] See above comment on p. 26.

ensure that doctrine remains fixed to a transcendent point of reference outside the logocentric world by making sure that Paul does not allow an erasure of the most important line of distinction, that between ἀλήθεια and πρόφασις.

But what are the consequences? If the selfish preachers are said to preach the truth (ἀλήθεια), what of πρόφασις? If Phil 1.18 is made to dominate Phil 1.15–17, then the result is that the metaphysics of presence are retained within the text of Philippians, but only if at the same time the metaphysics of presence is removed from the selfish preachers of the gospel. That is, the main way in which commentary seeks to compensate for bad intentions while assuming the bad preachers preach ἀλήθεια,[839] is to point out that Paul 'rejoices' in it (hence the dominance of Phil 1.18). But for the graphematic gospel to be re-cited and thus operate *apart from* the bad intentions of the selfish preachers means that the gospel is required to perform an autonomous activity.[840] In order for Paul, then, to be able to 'rejoice' at this recitation of an approved gospel, the assumption must be made that this graphematic structure bears within itself the presence of the original speaker's intentions (ἀλήθεια?), but not the intentions of those who cite it.

The result is that there is a decision to be made, albeit an entirely undecidable one: (1) accept that Paul allows for an alternative version of the gospel,[841] and thus remove the distinction between ἀλήθεια and πρόφασις and the range of possibilities that depend upon the structure; (2) allow the division of ἀλήθεια and πρόφασις to work its way back through the text and require the intentions of the preachers to be absent from the recitation of the gospel, while at the same time requiring a previous author's intentions to be present. The text remains open. . . .

### *8. Failure to Close: A (Non)Serious Reading of Phil 1.12–18*

What must we do to be saved? I suggest that it is precisely the failure of the text to close that is our salvation. The aperture opened by this text provides readers and scholars of Paul with access to the logocentric mechanisms, or indeed, the 'machinations' and agenda that comprise the substructure of what passes for Paul's 'theology'. Is this the

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[839] Which could only ever be a Pauline version.

[840] Not a few authors argue the point that the gospel has its own 'objective force', e.g., Collange, 58; Gnilka, 64. There are others who simply argue that it is God's message and thus imply that God's presence is a part of the gospel text, e.g., Fee, 125–26.

[841] For example, Silva suggests a version is being preached in which the preachers are presenting a more Jewish friendly version (Silva, 73).

same as Dunn's reference to '*The*' theology of Paul? I do not believe that it is, primarily because it relegates Pauline theology away from metaphysical categories, which are simply inventions of writing, and towards a productive, logocentric, ethical reality. It is even different, although much less so, from those who refer to Paul as 'theologiser'[842] as opposed to 'theologian', since in this case writing about theologising is still creating a metaphysic for the text. It still seeks to produce a totalisation, or saturation of presence which subsequently is thought to govern the entire reading and recitation of the product. Does the aperture allow us to escape those things? No, because 'any theology, whatever else it is, must also be a semiology'.[843]

Pauline theology is troubled when it fails to take into consideration the presence of underlying social and ideological structures because Paul's text is already constrained by them.[844] At this point a significant crisis develops in the dependence upon the text for metaphysical significance, since socially and ideologically constrained structures of thought precede the text, indeed they themselves are the means by which the author conceives of a text. Thus, as stated in Chapter Three, in Paul's letters we confront not theology but a construct produced by a complex of conscious and unconscious processes, namely language.[845] Bringing this to bear upon our reading of Paul is more than simply acknowledging the need for background information on Paul's text, it means that we subordinate our reading of Paul to the cultural constraints present to him. These constraints are 'present' because they were a part of who Paul was; they are a part of both his unconscious and conscious mind and thus they precede and are required by the iteration of his thought.

In Chapter Three,[846] I suggested that there is an important need for a cultural matrix to grant us the necessary dynamic context. This need presents Greco-Roman psychagogy to us as a viable social structure, since this one social structure contains within it a much larger complex of the relevant social structures that have been used to

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[842] Note especially Roetzel, 93–134, who has an excellent description of the questions this raises for such things as the privileging of Romans, see Roetzel, 93, and the above quote on p. 30.

[843] Hart, 7.

[844] See above pp. 4, 127ff.

[845] See above p. 129

[846] See comments on p. 101.

identify features of Paul's thought and practice.[847] A couple of key features stand out: the cultural requirement for a confluence of word and deed,[848] and the psychagogic sense of responsibility.[849] In addition to these cultural precedents to Paul's thinking, I have also already discussed in both Chapter One, and the present chapter, the problematic nature of commentary's habit of glossing the text as it seeks the metaphysical within it.[850] The problem here is located in that which prevents the metaphysical from operating within the text, namely the citationality, or iterability of text as discussed in Chapter One.[851]

If we bring all those things to bear upon the present conversation we discover an interesting, and I think highly productive reading, of Phil 1.12–18. We start back in Phil 1.12. Paul begins with a disclosure: the gospel has progressed during his imprisonment. Paul affirms this by pointing to a couple of successes: (1) the guards know that he is there for the sake of the gospel, and (2) people have been emboldened to preach the gospel. At this point, as mentioned earlier,[852] success for Paul is measured by the gospel's progress (yet another social ideal). Interestingly, this did not mean acceptance of the gospel,[853] progress was, instead, contextualised by the activity of proclamation, that is, of re-iteration.[854] Already we can see Paul starting to displace certain traditional hierarchies by virtue of relegating evangelistic success ('progress') to the deeply logocentric activity of proclamation, thereby resting it upon iterability.

The importance of the gospel is its ability to be reiterated. Thus the next thing we encounter in Philippians is that very thing: a story about reiteration, yet one which divides itself along the contours of two different contextualising forces operating upon that reiteration; contextual forces which fail to totalise or saturate the iterable gospel text with their presence and thus fail to govern its usage (a point of success for Paul, but failure for

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[847] See the whole discussion on pp. 101ff.

[848] See discussion on pp. 113ff.

[849] See discussion on pp. 107 and 109ff.

[850] See discussion on *Hinterfragen*, pp. 17ff., and discussions on Commentary on pp. 192ff..

[851] See pp. 43ff.

[852] See comments on p. 149.

[853] See the discussion on, pp. 146ff.

[854] See discussion on pp. 146ff.

commentary). In the face of these two sets of evangelistic iterations, and with respect to Paul's claim of success, we cite Derrida: 'what is a success when the possibility of infelicity[855] continues to constitute its structure?'[856] This is the very question that comes to bear upon commentary on Philippians which elects to privilege Phil 1.18 over Phil 1.15–17. When the possibility of communication in general—namely iterability—permanently divides the speaker and text, and at the same time erases any metaphysical marks from the text, what is it that makes one evangelistic re-iteration be considered successful or ἀλήθεια, if the other is said to forestall the presence of the speakers' intentions by the activity of πρόφασις? Nothing at all. And Paul seems to have recognised this, or at least he invokes it. Thus the logic of our text is one that disrupts itself, and prevents metaphysical commentary.

Is this disruption deliberate? In Chapter Three, I argued that the disclosure formula is ultimately (dis)closure; it appears to be the avenue through which one can experience Pauline presence, but the moment in which that is accepted by the reader the text is suddenly closed. I referred to this as a sort of 'Trojan logic' which was placed into operation by Paul to achieve goals not immediately apparent to his Philippian readers.[857] I suggested that the need for such a logic is represented by both the text and the standard social norms.[858] Essentially, the reason amounts to Paul's attempt to alleviate the socially constructed, 'natural and reasonable' expectations of the Philippians that there is a problem with Paul (due to his imprisonment) and thus also with his gospel. This is also suggested by the grammar of μᾶλλον in Phil 1.12 which suggests that Paul is attempting to counter the 'natural and reasonable' expectations by arguing that the unexpected has occurred.[859] What has in fact occurred is then constructed as wholly positive: evangelistic reiteration, presented as 'progress', as opposed to the expected 'regress'.

The natural expectation that his imprisonment demonstrates that there is something fundamentally wrong with Paul is something against which the full

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[855] By 'infelicity', Derrida refers to Austin's idea of the 'parasitic' use of language, that is, the abnormal use of language such as in movies and plays which requires the existence of normal use in order to work (see Austin, 14ff.).

[856] Derrida, SEC, 15.

[857] See the discussion on (dis)closure on pp. 137ff.; also see the comments on this 'Trojan logic' on pp. 138, 139, 143.

[858] See the discussion on pp. 141ff.

[859] See p. 142.

complement of his social faculty rises. Paul's apostolically charged psychagogic disposition, which extends its activity to both Paul and the Philippians, requires him to engage the Philippians at least at first, on the very grounds which cause this 'natural and reasonable' expectation. That is, Paul has to engage the Philippians on entirely socially constructed grounds. Since Paul's letters are all radically logocentric, constrained by the discursive structures of his culture, this should not be a surprise. It appears that Paul calls upon a certain cultural ideal to demonstrate his personal validity and thus also the validity of his gospel. Paul's commentary on his experience provides a way for the Philippians to reconstruct his situation in terms which are acceptable to their social sensibilities. The first and primary way in which he seeks to achieve this is through a demonstration that his gospel (words) is in no way compromised by his imprisonment (deeds).[860] In so doing, Paul conforms to the most basic of psychagogic ideals.

Paul's desire to demonstrate success in the standard social terms, which I am suggesting is by virtue of his employment (conscious or unconscious) of psychagogic ideals, means that he specifically argues for a *performance* of language which manifests both of the ideals embedded within the word-deed convention. It is on the basis of this that Paul then tells a story of two (re)iterations in Phil 1.15–17, and then deliberately problematises the two stories when, in Phil 1.18, he suggests that, whether the evangelistic reiteration is labelled as ἀλήθεια or as πρόφασις, he remains happy.

This final manoeuver (which ultimately becomes the 'first' manoeuver), is a crucial process to Paul's own activity in his apostolate and the subsequent development of 'Pauline theology': Paul deliberately writes himself out of the gospel. That is, Paul dislocates the gospel from the presence of the speakers with his disruption of the ἀλήθεια/πρόφασις opposition in Phil 1.18, effectively rendering the gospel a radically logocentric structure, open for re-citation. If the gospel is *not* subordinated to the presence of the speaker, then whatever is going on with Paul's imprisonment, whatever natural and reasonable expectations that people may have had about Paul, can no longer be said to be present in the (graphematic) gospel.

Paul has done two things and in the process masterfully salvaged the gospel from potentially devastating circumstances. First Paul went about representing himself in cultural terms as above-reproach with his claim to progress and his adherence to basic expectations placed upon psychagogues. Second, Paul removed himself, *and everyone else*,

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[860] It is important to note that I am confining myself to this particular aspect of Paul's attempt to use Philippians in this way.

from the re-citation of the gospel so that whatever might be said about the speaker, the gospel remains absent from that person's presence and thus intentions.

After the text's self-deconstruction, through the flotsam rises a single, intact ethical imperative: *proclamation*. While the gospel for Paul is merely language, entirely semiological, it is also a device, an apparatus, which he employs to bring about the manifestation of his ideological agenda. The precise nature of that agenda is another story altogether. I will, however, suggest this: proclamation as an activity can be argued to be the central point of reference for everything that we read in Paul. That is, what has come through this text is that which is central to Paul's own sense of the world, and the suggestion is that perhaps this needs to be a critique of how we have read Paul. It may be necessary to radically subject all of Paul's statements to the performative logic of proclamation and in the process uncover a different Paul: Paul the pragmatic proclaimer.

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