

NAG HAMMADI &  
MANICHAEAN STUDIES

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# Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse

*Determining the Social Function  
of Moral Exhortation in  
Valentinian Christianity*



PHILIP L. TITE

BRILL

## Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse

# Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies

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# Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse

Determining the Social Function of Moral  
Exhortation in Valentinian Christianity

*by*

Philip L. Tite



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Dedicated with love to Colleen



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## ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANET	J. B. Pritchard, <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</i> , 3rd edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969
ANF	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325</i> . Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1867–97 (American edition, 1885–1906). Reprint: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956–68
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
ARC	<i>ARC: The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
BCNH	Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
Brit	<i>Britannia</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZNW	Beiheft zur ZNW
CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ConB	Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series
CSBS <i>Bulletin</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies</i>
EBib	Études bibliques
ESCJ	Studies in Christianity and Judaism/Études sur le christianisme et le judaïsme
ETL	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testament
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
GTJ	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JHC	<i>Journal of Higher Criticism</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JRH	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MTSR	<i>Method &amp; Theory in the Study of Religion</i>
Mus.	<i>Le Muséon</i>
NedTTs	<i>Nederlands theologisch tijdschrift</i>

NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
NHMS	Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies
<i>Neot.</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTS	Novum Testamentum Supplement Series
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTSSup	New Testament Studies Supplement Series
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
<i>Numen</i>	<i>Numen: International Review for the History of Religions</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>RelSRev</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>Rhet</i>	<i>Rhetorica</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLSP	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SBM	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien Monographien
SC	Sources chrétiennes
<i>SecC</i>	<i>Second Century</i>
SHR	Studies in the History of Religion
SR	<i>Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses</i>
ST	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, 10 Volumes. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromily. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76
<i>Theol.Bl.</i>	<i>Theologische Blätter</i>
TQ	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>
TRAC	<i>Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference</i>
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der alterchristlichen Literature
VC	<i>Vigilae Christianae</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Writing in the late fourth century, Epiphanius of Salamis described a group of so-called Phibionite Gnostics that he encountered in Egypt as follows: "...having recognized one another, they hasten to dine. And they lavish meat dishes and wines, even if they are in penury. Then, after a drinking party where so to speak they have engorged their veins with gormandising, they turn to their frenzied passion" (*Pan.* 26.4.3).<sup>1</sup> Epiphanius, however, does not stop here with his description of the ethics and social interactions of these so-called "heretics." We are later informed that the ritual performances of these sectarians include various immoral practices that should, for Epiphanius' audience, revolt the moral sensibilities of a fourth-century Christian. We learn that these sectarians engaged in illicit sexual activities (orgies so excessive as to lead to male homosexual relations), the consumption of menstrual blood and semen, and even the ritual cannibalism of aborted fetuses that were conceived during these ritual activities. Epiphanius claims to have withstood the lure of these heretics, a lure that took the form of seductive women.

These polemical barbs directed by Epiphanius against those Christians he considered heretical, though recognized within scholarship as largely hyperbole if not outright fiction, typified much of how ethics within Gnosticism was viewed by not only ancient polemicists but also some modern discussions of ethics.<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, when he moved to southern Gaul in the late second century, encountered what he referred to as followers of Valentinus, specifically of Valentinus' disciple Marcus. Irenaeus, with far more credibility in his descriptive work than Epiphanius, also attacked his opponents (especially Marcus and the Marcasian sect) on ethical grounds (see *Haer.* 1.13.3). Marcus was perceived as a type of

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic*; cf. the translation by Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*. The critical edition can be found in K. Holl, editor, *Epiphanius*.

<sup>2</sup> See the discussion in Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Gnostic Ethics and Mandaean Origins*, especially 24–34; cf. Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*, 236; and Stephen Benko, "The Libertine Gnostic Sect."

charlatan, a magical cult leader who used his ritual gatherings to simply take advantage of the well-to-do women he enticed to join him. Such enticement, as we would expect, included fulfilling the sexual appetite of Marcus. References to a bridal chamber sacrament and a heavenly marriage as the climax of the Valentinian sacramental ascent to the Pleroma have further raised questions as to the ethical or unethical activities of Valentinian Christians in these early centuries.<sup>3</sup> Revelling in immoral behaviours, as Gnostic practices have been commonly seen both in antiquity and in modern treatments of Gnosticism, was a simple result of the theological, specifically anthropological, system of Gnosticism. Gnostics are, it is claimed, saved by their nature. The body serves no purpose beyond being a prison from which the pneumatic “seed” or “spark” needs to escape and ascend beyond the material realm to the Gnostic’s true home (the spiritual pleroma). What one does with one’s body is, therefore, irrelevant. Acting well or badly should have no bearing on whether one is saved or not saved.

The discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices in 1945, and the subsequent half-century of intense scholarship on these texts, has raised another possible view of Gnostic ethics. Rather than a licentious and antinomian ethical stance, grounded within a deterministic anthropological and anti-somatic worldview, these tractates seem to emphasize a more ascetic *ethos*.<sup>4</sup> Not only does the *Gos. Thom.*, arguably the best-known Nag Hammadi text within New Testament studies, present such an ascetic ideal that one would expect within a more monastic context (e.g., “Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you will find the kingdom”; logion 49), but even in texts that have no evident Synoptic relationship articulate an ethic of asceticism (e.g., *Gos. Phil.* 82,2–8; *Paraph. Shem* 10,24; *Testim. Truth* 29,26–30,17; and *Soph. Jes. Chr.* III 93,16–20). The marriage image of the bridal chamber in the *Gos. Phil.*, furthermore, is presented in contrast to the defiled marriage (81,34–82,10). Even Ire-

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<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive overview of ancient views of the bridal chamber sacrament, see Gaye Strathearn, *The Valentinian Bridal Chamber*. Strathearn gives particular attention to the libertine/ascetic model. See also Bas van Os, *Baptism in the Bridal Chamber*.

<sup>4</sup> One of the earliest modern critiques of the Fathers’ libertine view of the Gnostics is Frederik Wisse, “Die Sextus-Sprüche.” Wisse demonstrates an attentive concern for polemical processes in the descriptions put forth by the heresiologists. He is also careful not to treat all the heresiological accounts equally, recognizing that the credibility of the heresiological accounts will vary from author to author. Overall, however, the Fathers’ depictions of libertinism have more to do with polemical rhetoric than accurate description.

naeus described ascetic tendencies within Gnosticism, both those who followed Saturnil (*Haer.* 1.24.2) and those of the Ophite sect (1.30.1–13). As the body for such groups is an entrapment of the soul, to indulge the appetites of the body was seen as a hindrance to the ascent of the soul beyond the material realm.

A fresh perspective on Gnosticism was highlighted by a group of scholars that met at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature held in San Francisco in 1992 to discuss the “female and male in Gnosticism,” a discussion that inevitably engaged the ethics of Gnosticism. The panel was comprised of several leading scholars who had entered the field within the past decade. These were not the voices of the 1950s or 1960s; they were the next generation of Nag Hammadi scholars, offering a new and exciting direction for the development of this field of study: Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley, Karen L. King, and Michael Allen Williams each offered papers with a response by Michel Desjardins.<sup>5</sup> The discussion revolved around the debate whether Gnostics were libertines or ascetics. All of these scholars called into question the very categories—the classic libertine vs. ascetic dichotomy—used within discussions of ethics in Gnosticism; and in this challenge they built on the critique of Gnostic ethics offered by Frederik Wisse in 1975.<sup>6</sup> Buckley in particular challenged the dichotomous labels in using quotation marks or the qualifier “so-called” to dismiss especially “libertine.” With a concern for ritual practices and diverse stances, including a “middle of the road” position held by the Mandaeans, Buckley, like the other members of this panel (especially Karen King), typifies a shift that has been occurring within the study of Gnosticism within the past two or three decades. Rather than seeing Gnosticism as either immoral or moral based upon the heresiological accounts, an appreciation for the diversity and complexity of the religious phenomenon (indeed, phenomena) that we consider under the label “Gnostic” was advocated. Whereas

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<sup>5</sup> Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley, “Libertines or Not: Semen, Fruit, and Crackers in Gnosticism” (subsequently published in the *J ECS*; Karen L. King, “Neither Libertine Nor Ascetic: A New Look at Gnostic Ethics”; Michael Allen Williams, “Freedom by Abuse or Freedom by Non-Use = Gnostic Ethics?”; and Michel Desjardins, “A Response to ‘Female and Male in Gnosticism.’”

<sup>6</sup> Wisse, “Die Sextus-Sprüche.” Note among his closing comments: “Daß der Gnostizismus bei der Frage nach den Anfängen des Christentums eine Rolle zu spielen hat, soll nicht geleugnet werden; doch sollte nicht mehr selbstverständliche Voraussetzung bei der Diskussion sein, daß gnostisches Denken und Handeln die Tendenz hatte, amoralisch zu sein” (85).

Williams dismisses the heresiological accounts of the licentiousness of their opponents, claiming that such charges were the mere product of polemics, Buckley suggests that some Gnostics might have practiced what to the Fathers would have been seen as immoral behaviours.<sup>7</sup> Buckley suggests, however, that the Fathers would have missed the deeper, more spiritual significance of these acts (especially when ritually enacted). Desjardins—while praising the direction taken by his colleagues—cautions against a movement within modern scholarship from an anti-gnostic polemic to a pro-gnostic apologetic. He offers an analogy of modern moral violation of a group's ethical standards by religious and political leaders to suggest that there is room both for criticizing the Fathers' accounts as polemical and biased, as well as for recognizing the possible validity of the Fathers' observations. It is, furthermore, important to keep in mind that just as the Gnostic sects were not homogeneous so also are the Fathers of differing historical value in their assessments.

All four of these panel participants exemplify a noteworthy development in the academic study of Gnosticism within the past twenty-five to thirty years. Whereas Gnosticism, especially prior to the 1945 discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices, used to be approached from a philosophical, largely phenomenological perspective, there has been an appreciation emerging within the field for ethical, social, and ritual processes within the various "Gnosticisms" that existed within late antiquity. Elaine Pagels, Kurt Rudolph, and Henry A. Green all contributed to developing this appreciation during the 1970s and early 1980s. Green's *The Economic and Social Origins of Gnosticism* arguably remains the most extensive sociological analysis of Gnosticism to date.<sup>8</sup> For Green, Gnosticism is not a *sui generis* religious or philosophical development that is divorced from the social, political and economic events of the

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<sup>7</sup> See also the discussion in Andrew McGowan, "Eating People." The most comprehensive discussion of polemical attacks by the Fathers against Gnosticism remains Gérard Vallée, *A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics*; see also E. P. Meihering, "Some Observations on Irenaeus' Polemics Against the Gnostics"; Wisse, "Die Sextus-Sprüche"; Klaus Koschorke, *Die Polemik*.

<sup>8</sup> Henry A. Green, *Economic and Social Origins*; "Ritual in Valentinian Gnosticism"; "Gnosis and Gnosticism." An earlier attempt at a sociological analysis of Gnosticism, though without the depth or sophistication of Green's work, is Hans Kippenberg, "Versuch einer soziologischen Verortung des antiken Gnostizismus." A more recent application of sociological methods, specifically from Rodney Stark and Williams Sims Bainbridge (*The Future of Religion*), is Alan B. Scott, "Churches or Books?" See also the socio-economic proposal for Gnostic origins in Carl B. Smith, *No Longer Jews*.

Greco-Roman world. Pagels contributed to the close reading of the Nag Hammadi material with an eye towards processes of power contestation within social entities.<sup>9</sup> Her work on gender inclusion/exclusion within these early Christian communities and the conflict over authority or authoritative voices through not only theological divergences but also ritual or sacramental formulation has inspired many students to look seriously at the Gnostic material. Indeed, her work has been so successful with a popular audience that most people who are not scholars of Gnosticism likely know Gnosticism through Pagels's *The Gnostic Gospels*. Rudolph's introduction to Gnosticism, first published in German in the late 1970s and then in English in the early 1980s, remains the standard introduction for students. It is surely the most comprehensive introductory text on Gnosticism, and is still used despite being over twenty-five years old.<sup>10</sup> In this book, he presents the theological elements of the Gnosticisms of late antiquity, as well as the historical development and community construction of these sects. His attention to ritual and community formation is significant. As an historian, Rudolph stresses the historical, including social nature of Gnosticism.

This shift in the field towards appreciating the social aspects of Gnosticism has led to an appreciation for the importance of ethics for the Gnostics. The most significant study to appear on Valentinian ethics in particular is Michel Desjardins' *Sin in Valentinianism*.<sup>11</sup> Desjardins sets out to establish the Valentinian attitude towards sin through a detailed survey of the instances of sin (ἁμαρτία and NORE/Ḡ-NORE/PEUḠḠ-NORE) within both the Fathers and the Nag Hammadi sources. His study counters a tendency within scholarly discussions to ignore or marginalize the significance of ethics within Valentinianism, claiming that an historiographical polarity of an "Orthodox" and a "Gnostic" trajectory tends to obscure the significance of sin for Valentinian Christians. Just as sin, and ethics generally, was significant for other Christians of the second and third centuries, so also, Desjardins concludes, is sin/ethics important for Valentinian Christians. This study clearly and definitively established the interconnection of Valentinian ethics, ritualization (especially sacraments), and community formation. Overcoming sin begins with an awareness of how the heavenly Father expects the Valentinians

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<sup>9</sup> Elaine Pagels, *Gnostic Gospels*; "Conflicting Versions of Valentinian Eschatology"; "A Valentinian Interpretation of Baptism and Eucharist."

<sup>10</sup> Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis*.

<sup>11</sup> Michel Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*.

to act. Desjardins' work emerges from the recent appreciation for such social issues within Nag Hammadi studies. In a similar vein of thinking, and with a level of dependency upon Desjardins' work, Michael Williams further argued that the caricatures of Gnosticism that we have inherited from the heresiologists have obfuscated the ethical concerns of the Valentinians.<sup>12</sup> Rather than a deterministic anthropology that negates ethical concern, Williams contends that, "the ethical exhortation that is so visible in many of these writings from Nag Hammadi certainly argues against the notion that authors and readers of such texts discounted the importance of ethical behavior, even for the 'spirituals.'"<sup>13</sup> Both Desjardins and Williams, emerging from this broader shift in the field towards a social appreciation of Valentinianism, recognize that ethics were not irrelevant for these early Christians.

Although the growing appreciation for the social and especially ethical aspects of Valentinianism has surely assisted scholars in better appreciating the complexity of these texts, there has been a dereliction of attention towards appreciating the rhetorical presentation of ethics within the Nag Hammadi material.<sup>14</sup> Not only should we recognize the presence of ethical concern, we also need to inquire as to how these Christians talked about ethics. Rhetorical analyses of early Christian texts have, of course, had a profound impact on the field of New Testament studies. This impact has not been excluded from the study of the Nag Hammadi codices. Indeed, work currently emerging out of the Laval project in Quebec, particularly by Louis Painchaud and Anne Pasquier, has increasingly stressed the rhetorical dimensions of these texts.<sup>15</sup> However, despite these strides in appreciating the literary and

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*, especially 190–93.

<sup>13</sup> Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*, 191.

<sup>14</sup> An example of this tendency to recognize the presence of ethics in the Valentinian sources without further analysis, is Martha Lee Turner, *The Gospel According to Philip*, 176–77. She simply notes that, "from time to time, the *Gospel according to Philip* gives advice about how to behave. This advice is more than a little oblique..." (176). No rhetorical analysis or discussion of moral philosophy is offered.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Anne Pasquier, *Eugnoste*; Louis Painchaud, "La composition de l'Évangile selon Philippe (NH II, 3)"; cf. my review of Pasquier's rhetorical analysis of Eugnostos in *Review of Biblical Literature* (2004). While the Laval project has insightfully emphasized the value of rhetorical analysis for the study of the Nag Hammadi material, they have largely limited themselves to structural and literary aspects, as derived from ancient rhetorical conventions presented in the rhetorical handbooks, rather than engage the broader aspects of persuasive discourse such as found in the work of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, Toulmin, or Robbins's socio-rhetorical approach to biblical texts.

argumentative dimensions of the Gnostic material, an application of rhetorical conventions to the study of Gnostic ethics has been lacking. It is the purpose of this book to address this dereliction in research. Rather than rejecting the work of previous scholars, it is my intent to move the discussion to a new and deeper level of analysis, standing on the shoulders of those who have enabled us to read these texts as reflective of early Christian social processes of ethical discourse for identity formation.

Moral discourse within the Greco-Roman, including the Jewish and Christian, world included hortatory address. Not all moral discourse was hortatory, nor was all exhortation moral discourse. Early Christians, however, like others in late antiquity talked about ethics in part by exhorting each other to follow particular paths towards the good, to practice particular behaviours and to abstain from other behaviours deemed immoral. As Wayne Meeks has insightfully articulated in his overview of early Christian morality, moral codes of conduct were intricately connected with the formation and identity construction of early Christian communities. Valentinian Christians of the second and third century were not excluded from these tendencies. Indeed, for Valentinian Christians to lack either an interest in moral exhortation or to not have a social identity forming engagement with such exhortation would have rendered them an unusual anomaly within the Greco-Roman world. Philosophers of all schools of thought were intensely interested in answering the question, how does one live according to nature? A moral sensitivity, therefore, typified Stoics, Platonists, Neopythagoreans, Cynics, Epicureans as well as Jews and Christians. For Christian Gnostics to also engage in moral discourse should not, therefore, be surprising. Consequently, it is necessary to look at the way in which people in this world talked about morality.

Thus this book will focus on one form of moral discourse that is present within the Valentinian material. The paraenetic aspects of the Valentinian material will be explored in depth. Scholarly studies of paraenesis within New Testament studies has had a long history, as will be evident in chapters 3 and 4. Little attention has emerged, however, on the presence and function of paraenesis within the Nag Hammadi

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A central issue to address in a rhetorical study of such texts is the persuasive function of the rhetoric, especially within a social or communicative context.

codices. Even more surprising has been the lack of attention to the Gnostic material in studies of paraenesis in early Christianity. Consequently, by re-reading these Valentinian texts through a paraenetic and rhetorical lens, this study promises to offer new insights into both Valentinianism and early Christian moral discourse. The study of paraenesis, however, is essentially an analysis of genre. As will be noted in chapter 3, specifically drawing from the work of Klaus Berger and John Gammie, a genre analysis necessitates an exploration of both literary and social aspects of the genre. This two-fold approach in our investigation is valid in that it places stress less upon what a text is and more so upon how a text is designed to function. Such functionality places the analysis within the field of rhetorical analysis. My interest is not merely to note literary style or the development of a tradition through literary trajectories. Rather, my focus is upon the discursive aspects of these texts. Consequently, this study seeks to answer the question, what is the social function of paraenesis in Valentinian Christianity?

This research question raises certain methodological problems at the outset, which I wish to briefly address. The very nature of determining what constitutes Valentinianism immediately arises. A second problem is the delimitation of a corpus of Valentinian sources. The basic theological system and historical origins of Valentinianism are well known and do not need to be rearticulated at length for the sake of my study.<sup>16</sup> We know that a popular and talented Christian teacher in Alexandria named Valentinus moved to Rome *ca.* 140 C.E. where he gained an audience and eventually a series of followers or disciples. Valentinus was active in Rome until *ca.* 160 C.E., when he left either of his own accord or due to ecclesiastical opposition to his teaching. What Valentinus taught, and whether he was a Gnostic or a platonizing Christian philosopher is, however, widely contested within scholarship. Most recently this debate has continued within and between a series of publications by Christoph Marksches and Gilles Quispel.<sup>17</sup> My own

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<sup>16</sup> Helpful overviews of the Valentinian system(s) can be found in François M. M. Sagnard, *La gnose*; Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*; Rudolph, *Gnosis*; Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 12–17; and Christoph Marksches, *Die Gnosis*. One of the most recent, and arguably most influential, re-construction of Valentinianism since Sagnard is Einar Thomassen's *The Spiritual Seed*. While Thomassen strives to systematize Valentinian doctrine, a study that is far more sensitive to social aspects of Valentinianism is Ismo Dunderberg's *Beyond Gnosticism*.

<sup>17</sup> Christoph Marsches, *Valentinus Gnosticus?*; “Die Krise einer philosophischen Bibeltheologie in der Alten Kirche oder”; “Nochmals: Valentinus und die Gnostikoi”;

opinion leans more towards Markschies's platonizing Christian stance. However, as none of Valentinus' extant works exhibit moral exhortation,<sup>18</sup> this debate is not overly relevant for my study.

What is recognized by both Markschies and Quispel is that a movement, or series of movements within Christianity emerged from the activity of Valentinus. It is unlikely that this movement, which we have come to call (following the lead of the heresiological accounts) Valentinianism or Valentinian Gnosticism, was a conscious product by Valentinus. Nor is it likely that those who were part of this movement, either as teachers or as followers, saw themselves as members of a new sect or religion. As Frederik Wisse observes with regard to Marcus the Magician, "it is unlikely that Marcus called himself a Valentinian. No doubt he claimed to be a Christian and as such was able to attract followers from among orthodox believers."<sup>19</sup> More likely than a self-designated, organized religious sect is the emergence of a movement of theological speculation within Christian communities that developed through a series of teacher-disciple relationships. Valentinians, therefore, were Christians; yet, Christians with a particular form of theological perspective that was opposed by certain other Christians, especially those with a more ecclesiastical perspective on church authority and dogma. I would avoid Walter Bauer's model of orthodox and heretical movements to frame this conflict.<sup>20</sup> As Frederik Wisse has insightfully observed, the second century was typified by a great deal of diversity and fluidity.<sup>21</sup> The heterodoxy of early Christianity should not, however, be

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Gilles Quispel, "Valentinus and the Gnostikoi"; "The Original Doctrine of Valentinus the Gnostic." Quispel's position is a restatement of his, "The Original Doctrine of Valentinus." See also Anne McGuire, "Valentinus and the Gnostikoi Haeresis" and Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, esp. 417–29 as well his analysis of the fragments of Valentinus. Thomassen's argument that Valentinus is linked to later Valentinian speculation through a theological "common denominator" is based upon a circular interpretation of the fragments from later perspectives.

<sup>18</sup> Although the *Gos. Truth* has been attributed to Valentinus, this attribution is erroneous, as will be demonstrated in chapter 7. Early investigations of the Nag Hammadi material, in particular the Jung Codex, also led to the overenthusiastic attribution of the *Treat. Res.* to Valentinus as well. This early claim, however, was quickly dropped and is barely mentioned in current scholarship.

<sup>19</sup> Frederik Wisse, "Prolegomena," 141; cf. Koschorke, *Die Polemik*, 177–78. This identification as a Christian by a Valentinian clearly runs counter to the heresiological polemic of Epiphanius, *Pan.* 31.1.1.

<sup>20</sup> Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*; cf. Tom Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined*.

<sup>21</sup> Although he articulates and presupposes this model in his "Prolegomena," the classic presentation of this heterodoxy model is found in Frederik Wisse, "The Nag Hammadi Library and the Heresiologists."

seen as limited to sectarian or idiosyncratic side movements within the larger, more homogeneous “orthodoxy” (or proto-orthodoxy). It would be more useful, especially for appreciating the religious innovations that existed in the second century, to see the second and third centuries as a period of various competing claims to “orthodoxy,” of various social forces vying for a normative claim to Christian identity. To simply posit a demarcation of a unified (or semi-unified) ecclesiastical “orthodoxy” and a variety of schismatic sectarian movements (some of which are Gnostic) is to obscure rather than elucidate the complexity and social fluidity of the various Christianities that existed and contested with each other during these formative centuries.

Einar Thomassen has recently put forth a helpful model that adds greater depth to Wisse’s historical model by offering a social nuance.<sup>22</sup> Thomassen suggests that the second-century Christian communities in Rome may have “alternated between cooperation and conflict in their attitudes towards one another” in the earlier part of the century.<sup>23</sup> Cooperation and conflict reflected tendencies toward either centralization or decentralization of social structures. Different strategies within both tendencies were followed, including differing reform programmes advocated by the author of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, Marcion, and Valentinus. Whereas Marcion developed a unified doctrinal basis for organizational unity (and carried out this programme by eventually creating an alternative branch of Christianity separate from the existing communities), Valentinus or the Valentinians attempted to establish a spiritual elite within the existing communities for the sake of evangelism and mission.<sup>24</sup> By the end of the second century, however, the tendencies toward centralization will have won out, though through a more

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<sup>22</sup> Einar Thomassen, “Orthodoxy and Heresy.”

<sup>23</sup> Thomassen, “Orthodoxy and Heresy,” 255.

<sup>24</sup> As Thomassen, “Orthodoxy and Heresy,” 254–55, puts the matter: “The Valentinian attitude towards these not-yet-Christians [i.e., non-Valentinian Christians] is therefore not one of rejection, as if they were heretics to be condemned, but one of gnostic evangelism and mission... Those other Christians remained an educational challenge for the Valentinians.” The only clear indication that Valentinians may have established a separate church is the incident in 388 C.E. when a mob burned down a Valentinian chapel in Callinicum on the Euphrates (see the discussion in Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 272). Given the late date of this incident, and the marginal geographical location from major centres of Valentinian activity, we might be witnessing a final stage in the history of Valentinianism wherein the movement was eventually forced out of the now officially recognized church. The remnants of Valentinian Christianity may have splintered into small, organized groups.

ecclesiastical form of church structure and doctrine (“rule of faith”) such as that advocated and defended by Irenaeus. The movement that was inspired by Valentinus’ teaching and writing, at least according to Hippolytus (*Haer.* 6.35.5–7), emerged along two major branches, within which various significant teachers emerged: an Italic or Western Valentinianism (mainly centred in Rome and Lugdunum; Heracleon, Ptolemy) and an Oriental or Eastern Valentinianism (mainly centred in Alexandria and Asia Minor; Axionicus of Antioch, Colorbasos [whose existence is questionable], Theodotus). The final reference to Valentinianism is a short comment on handling a repentant Valentinian in Canon 95 of the Trullian Synod in 692 C.E. Whether this is evidence for the survival of Valentinianism into the seventh century or is simply an instance when “Valentinian” is used as a generic label for a (dualistic) heretic is not known. We do know that by the end of the fourth century, Valentinianism, like other forms of Christian Gnosticism (e.g., Sethianism), largely died out under polemical and imperial pressure.

The label “Valentinian” remains, however, problematic. As Wisse correctly observes, the designation is not a self-designation but rather the construct of the Fathers. It is perhaps first used by Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 35:6) in the mid-second century. Indeed, there is a circular problem with this designation when applied to the Nag Hammadi material. In order to establish whether a text fits a Valentinian, Sethian, Ophite, or Barbelo-Gnostic label is dependent upon the description of these sects by the heresiological accounts. Given the heterogeneous nature of the Nag Hammadi material, no two texts consistently follow the same mythological system nor does any tractate in Nag Hammadi perfectly fit the general description(s) found in the Fathers. Consequently, Wisse claims that such classifications of the tractates are not only impossible, but also distort the heterodox dynamic of these sects: “The so-called developed, Gnostic ‘systems’ of the second century C.E. may well be the invention of the ancient and modern interpreters rather than being intended by the Gnostic authors. The summary of the sectarian ‘heresy’ distilled from the Gnostic texts by the ancient heresiologist or modern scholar is far too structured and coherent.”<sup>25</sup> Nearly every scholar of Valentinianism recognizes this problem. The difficulty with “Valentinianism” is not dissimilar to that with the more general label “Gnosticism.” As Williams correctly notes, “Gnosticism” is a prejudicial term

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<sup>25</sup> Wisse, “Prolegomena,” 142.

that has led to various misunderstandings of “Gnostic” texts and social bodies.<sup>26</sup> Such caricatures emerge due to the baggage attached to the category; specifically abstract generalizations of what scholars *a priori* define as essentially “Gnostic.” These misleading caricatures collapse, according to Williams, when they are tested against the actual texts. Given the problems with “Gnosticism” as a label, compounded by the fact that it does not seem to have been a self-designation, Williams advises that we discard the category and construct a more analytically useful one.

In like manner, Valentinianism is a constructed category that is derived not from a self-designation but from outsiders—indeed, opponents—of the Valentinian circles. Furthermore, there is the methodological danger posed by the category for imposing preconceived understandings of Valentinianism onto the individual texts. Recently, Michael Kaler and Marie-Pierre Bussi eres have further problematized the category by looking at how Origen and Clement of Alexandria differ in their treatment of Heracleon as a Valentinian: Clement linked Heracleon to Valentinus along a genealogical model (i.e., defining a Valentinian due to being an associate or disciple of Valentinus) while Origen merely recognized that others linked Heracleon to Valentinus (eliminating a Valentinian identification due to a definitional criteria of shared ideas or doctrine that are viewed as quintessentially “Valentinian”).<sup>27</sup> Thus, we are faced with the methodological challenge of establishing “Valentinianism” along diverse models (e.g., doctrinal and genealogical) while avoiding the imposition of preconceived views of Valentinianism (especially mythological) on a person, school or text that has been labelled as Valentinian or linked in some way to Valentinus.

Thomassen in particular has attempted to correct this methodological problem by constructing a Valentinian theological system inductively from the Valentinian sources themselves.<sup>28</sup> He gives privileged place to

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<sup>26</sup> Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*, passim. See also my “Categorical Designations and Methodological Reductionism”; and Karen L. King, *What is Gnosticism?*. Contra, e.g., Birger A. Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, who is one of the few scholars that still view “Gnosticism” as a viable category for designating an historical movement rather than as a scholarly construct.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Kaler and Marie-Pierre Bussi eres, “Was Heracleon a Valentinian?”

<sup>28</sup> Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, passim. An abbreviated version of Thomassen’s reconstruction of Valentinianism appears in “The Valentinian School of Gnostic Thought.”

the *Tri. Tract.* and the *Excerpts from Theodotus* in order to construct a pure, Eastern form of Valentinianism from which the Western form was derivative. While his attempt to give preference to an inductive analysis of the sources is commendable, Thomassen's reconstruction (despite many useful insights into Valentinian theology, such as the importance of mutual participation as a soteriological motif) forces the material into an overly coherent system or set of systems that merely adds nuance and logical consistency to the Fathers' east/west division of Valentinianism. Given these difficulties, I will specify, therefore, that I am focussing not only on one form of Christian Gnosticism—Valentinianism—but will specifically address the distinctive construction of "Valentinianism" within specific texts as distinct expressions of Valentinianism. Unlike "Gnosticism," the designation "Valentinianism" is valid when seen as a subtradition within Christianity.<sup>29</sup> Care, however, must be taken when balancing the general framework offered us by the Fathers against the particularity of each textual expression of Valentinianism. Indeed, even more cautiously I will view the individual texts as one voice within one discursive moment within a particular social interaction that may have included Valentinians. It is not my intent to utilize this study for the sake of constructing either a general "ethics of Gnosticism" or an "ethics of Valentinianism." Valentinianism, like other expressions or formulations of Christianity in the first to fourth centuries, was diverse in nature, even beyond the so-called Western and Eastern branches of Valentinianism.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, as Joel Kalvesmaki

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<sup>29</sup> Note the distinction between the categories "Gnosticism" and "Valentinianism" made by Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*, 51: "There is nothing wrong in principle with efforts to sort out traditio- and sociohistorical relationships. It still makes sense, for example, to speak of something called 'Valentinianism,' as a subtradition within the broader early Christian tradition... The decision to abandon an overarching construct called 'gnosticism' would not require abandoning research on specific categories of texts that manifest some relationship by tradition." Williams's comments are an appropriate caution for those who have used his work to deconstruct all such categories (or to simply replace one with another). Even with a traditio- or socio-historical category such as Valentinianism, however, it is necessary not to impose general assumptions about the movement onto a specific text or historical occasion, even though the broader category may still illuminate the specific text under analysis.

<sup>30</sup> Joel Kalvesmaki, "Italian versus Eastern Valentinianism?" has effectively called into question the value of the Eastern/Western division of Valentinianism. The three major sources for such a taxonomy are so problematic that the clarity of this geographical division in, e.g., Thomassen's *Spiritual Seed* fails to convince. For instance, the privileged place given by Thomassen to the *Excerpts from Theodotus* needs to be questioned for constructing an early, Eastern system that is close to Valentinus own teaching. Kalvesmaki insightful observes: "For all we know, this Eastern Teaching [reflected

has recently, and correctly, demonstrated, “The geography of Valentinianism is too muddled to serve as the starting point for establishing the taxonomy of Valentinianism.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, each community, author, or document must be studied with a clear sensitivity to the distinctive traits and social dynamics in each expression of Valentinian thought. Indeed, we are dealing less with a concrete concept of Valentinianism than with multiple possible Valentinianisms. My approach in analyzing paraenesis within Valentinianism will attempt to be sensitive to this general-and-specific concern. For example, in addressing literary aspects of paraenesis in chapter 5, a general appreciation for Valentinianism will be offered by looking at the presence of such aspects in a broad, comparative presentation. Along with this presentation will be two specific analyses of Valentinian texts in chapters 6 and 7. This general and more focussed method will attempt to avoid the dangers of both imposing general assumptions onto the texts, while also avoiding the equally problematic danger of falling into using idiosyncratic views within specific texts to determine a general understanding of a particular religious tradition.

When we turn to establishing a corpus of texts for Valentinianism, there is a bit more assurance as to what should be considered, both as primary and secondary sources. Such a task, however, is still problematized by the fact that the hirsiological accounts have been, and continue to serve as, the main source for our understanding of the Valentinian system. Not only are these works questionable due to their polemical, outsider nature, but they also raise questions as to the value of assigning a Valentinian identification for the Nag Hammadi material. However, the task of establishing what texts within the Nag Hammadi codices are likely Valentinian is a necessary one for the historian. As Einar Thomassen succinctly put the matter, “l’identification de tels corpus a sans doute constitué un pas important pour la recherche, permettant

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in Theodotus] had little or no formal connection with Valentinus and his school. Or maybe it was a system from which Valentinus developed his own doctrines. Or maybe the Teaching drew inspiration from Valentinus. Whatever the case may be, the so-called Eastern Teaching did not necessarily come *from* Valentinus” (83). Perhaps more insightful are Kalvesmaki’s observations that Tertullian’s *Against the Valentinians* may only mention two schools or branches of Valentinianism for rhetorical impact, rather than as a delimited taxonomy that strives for accurate description (88). This is especially important to keep in mind, as Kalvesmaki notes, when we appreciate Tertullian’s stress on multiple schools (*Val.* 1.4, 33–38). Thus, while a geographical division between an Italian and Eastern branch of the movement may have existed, such a division does not, contra Thomassen, assist us in better understanding Valentinianism.

<sup>31</sup> Kalvesmaki, “Italian versus Eastern Valentinianism?” 89.

des études sur le contexte idéologique propre de chaque traité et sur la réalité historique que représente chacune des deux désignations mentionnées.”<sup>32</sup> As with contours of the theological system and historical development of Valentinianism, there has already been significant work on this issue of sources.

The most comprehensive treatment of this question is that by Desjardins.<sup>33</sup> Beyond the patristic sources—i.e., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* and *Excerpts from Theodotus*, Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*. (notably containing fragments of Heracleon), Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians*, Origen, *Commentary on John*, and Epiphanius, *Panarion* (specifically section 33, where we have Ptolemy’s *Letter to Flora*)—he offers the following working list of Nag Hammadi material: “... the following seven make a defensible working group: *The Prayer of the Apostle Paul* (I,1); *The Gospel of Truth* (I,3/XII,2); *The Treatise on the Resurrection* (I,4); *The Tripartite Tractate* (I,5); *The Gospel of Philip* (II,3); *The Interpretation of Knowledge* (XI,1); and *A Valentinian Exposition* (XI,2). Three others may be considered as candidates as well: The First and Second Apocalypses of James (V,3–4); and *The Letter of Peter to Philip* (VIII,2).”<sup>34</sup> This list is more or less consistent with what most scholars treat as a viable Valentinian corpus. Others, such as Henry Green, would add *Authoritative Teaching* to this list while excluding the *2 Apoc. Jas.* and the *Ep. Pet. Phil.*, and Michel Tardieu would exclude both First and Second Apocalypse of James while adding the *Ap. Jas.*<sup>35</sup> Elaine Pagels lists only six Valentinian texts from Nag Hammadi, excluding from the core seven the *Pr. Paul.*<sup>36</sup> In Thomassen’s more recent assessment of the Valentinian material, we

<sup>32</sup> Einar Thomassen, “Notes pour la delimitation,” 243.

<sup>33</sup> Michel Desjardins, “Sources.” A slightly different version of this article appears in Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 3–12.

<sup>34</sup> Desjardins, “Sources,” 342.

<sup>35</sup> Green, “Ritual in Valentinian Gnosticism,” 111; Michel Tardieu, “Le Congrès de Yale sur le Gnosticism,” 192; cf. Klaus Korschorke, “Patristische Materialien, 122, especially note 4: “Als valentinianisch zähle ich: OrPl (NHC I, 1); EvVer (NHC I, 3/XII, 2); TracTrip (NHC I, 5); EvPh (NHC II,3); Inter (NHC XI, 1); ExpVal (NHC XI, 2); sowie mit Einschränkung Rhag (NHC I, 4); valentinianische Elemente finden sich in 1ApcJac (NHC V, 3).” Although Green includes in his list two other texts (*Exeg. Soul* [II,6] and *Treat. Seth* [VII,2]), these works have been linked to Sethianism by scholars, and therefore, like Tardieu’s inclusion of *Ap. Jas.* tend not to be included within lists of Valentinian texts. Cf. the discussion of these debates in Desjardins, “Sources,” passim.

<sup>36</sup> Elaine Pagels, “Irenaeus, the ‘Canon of Truth,’ and the *Gospel of John*,” 341. The same list of six appears in Smith, *No Longer Jews*, 143, even though he depends upon Desjardins, “Sources,” for his listing.

find a methodologically sophisticated appreciation for the degrees of plausible inclusion of a given text. The possible candidates for inclusion are listed according to degrees of probability: “provenance valentinienne impossible ou invraisemblable, possible, probable, certaine ou très probable.”<sup>37</sup> Thomassen further considers whether texts are classified as, “1° écrits d’origine valentinienne; 2° écrits d’origine non valentinienne, réécrits par des valentiniens; 3° écrits d’origine valentinienne réécrits par des non valentiniens.”<sup>38</sup> Working with a more inductive approach than previous scholars, he offers the following listings of Valentinian materials: 1) Likely or certainly Valentinian includes *Tri. Tract.*, *Gos. Phil.*, *1 Apoc. Jas.*, *Inter. Know.*, and *Val. Exp.*; 2) Probably Valentinian includes *Treat. Res.*, *Gos. Truth*; 3) Possibly Valentinian includes *Exeg. Soul* and *Auth. Teach.*; and 4) Revised texts by Valentinians that are probably non-Valentinian in origin include *Pr. Paul* and *Eugnostos*. As *Eugnostos* and *Exeg. Soul* are more likely Sethian, or in the case of *Exeg. Soul* Simonian, than Valentinian, I would exclude them from this list.<sup>39</sup> A recent addition to the growing list of potential Valentinian texts is the Coptic *Apoc. Paul*, as argued by Michael Kaler (specifically with reference to Irenaeus, *Haer.* 2.30.7); a suggestion that has found little support among scholars.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, a working list of sources constituting a Valentinian corpus would include these seven as a core along with the *Ep. Pet. Phil.*, the *Auth. Teach.*, the *1 Apoc. Jas.*, and the *2 Apoc. Jas.* As primary sources—that is, sources that we can say with only some reservation are the prod-

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<sup>37</sup> Thomassen, “Notes pour la delimitation,” 244; he offers his list of texts on pages 258–59. It is surprising that the findings of this important study were not incorporated, or even referenced, in *Spiritual Seed*.

<sup>38</sup> Thomassen, “Notes pour la delimitation,” 244.

<sup>39</sup> Anne Pasquier has raised the possibility that *Eugnostos* is Valentinian, at least at some stage of redaction (this was brought to my attention by Pasquier at the 2005 meeting of the Nordic Nag Hammadi and Gnosticism Network in Ebeltoft, Denmark), while Madeleine Scopello (“Exegesis on the Soul”, 226) has argued that *Exeg. Soul* fits the Valentinian Sophia myth.

<sup>40</sup> The Valentinian reading of the *Apoc. Paul* appears in Michael Kaler’s commentary to the Laval critical edition (Jean-Marc Rosenstiehl and Michael Kaler, *Apocalypse de Paul* (NH V, 2), esp. 153–158) as well as Michael Kaler, Louis Painchaud and Marie-Pierre Bussières, “The Coptic *Apocalypse of Paul*.” Birger Pearson’s review in *Religious Studies Review* (2006) of the Laval edition is indicative of initial reactions to Kaler’s suggestion: “. . . but probably goes too far in specifying a Valentinian context for it” (so also Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 229). On the contrary, Scopello, who largely follows the Laval critical edition, accepts the Valentinian attribution with only minor hesitation: “It is conceivable that the author was connected to a Valentinian school of thought in which Paul was highly praised” (Scopello, “The Revelation of Paul,” 316).

uct of Valentinianism<sup>41</sup>—this list of eleven texts should be extended to include the material preserved in the heresiological accounts, specifically Ptolemy’s *Letter to Flora*, the fragments of Valentinus, the fragments of Heracleon, and the *Excerpts from Theodotus*. Another possible addition to a corpus of primary material is the epitaph dedicated to Flavia Sophe discovered along the Via Latina in Rome.<sup>42</sup> This gives us a corpus of sixteen primary sources for a study of Valentinianism.

The inclusion or exclusion of a source from such a corpus is largely circular in argument. The Fathers’ accounts of the Valentinian mythological system (especially the fall of Sophia, the thirty aeonic beings that comprise the Pleroma, an ignorant rather than malevolent demiurgical figure, and an inclusive attitude towards non-Gnostic Christians), coupled with the presence of key terms, serves as the basis for determining the degree to which a source can be identified as Valentinian. The circularity, of course, is that the primary sources (especially from Nag Hammadi) are evaluated through the lens of the secondary sources (the Fathers). Added to this identification process is the realization that no tractate in the Nag Hammadi library neatly fits the heresiological accounts of Valentinianism. The same difficulties are present with the Sethian corpus. The primary or secondary nature of both the Fathers and the Nag Hammadi tractates, however, has been questioned.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, an appreciation of both sets of sources, with a dose of scepticism towards both, is necessary. In this book, I will attempt to avoid the problem of identification by working with what most scholars consider Valentinian, while treating each tractate as an instance of Valentinian thought but not as representative of a unified or homogeneous Valentinianism nor as part of a grand synthesis of a Valentinian system(s). Rather, my approach is to appreciate each text as an individual discursive moment or expression. Such an approach should allow us to appreciate with greater care the social dynamic underlying each of the Valentinian texts.

Having established a working Valentinian corpus, it is necessary to delimit our sources to those that are relevant for a study of Valentinian

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<sup>41</sup> Note the problems that face the historian even with these so-called primary sources that Desjardins, “Sources,” *passim*, observes. Although the Nag Hammadi material, as primary source material, is invaluable, it is as problematic as the heresiological accounts, including the primary material preserved by the Fathers.

<sup>42</sup> See Peter Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 257–64.

<sup>43</sup> Desjardins, “Sources”; cf. Wisse, “Prolegomena.”

paraenesis. I will address the presence of paraenesis in greater detail in chapter 5. Suffice for now to note those Valentinian works that contain paraenetic material. Outside the Nag Hammadi codices there are only two possible instances of paraenesis that I was able to locate. Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora* might fit a type of moral exhortation referred to as protrepsis. This identification, however, is problematic, given that there is no call for the recipient to adopt a new worldview or *ethos*. Rather, we have a theological discourse between a theologian and a disciple who has inquired on particular theological points. Consequently, I would not include this text within a discussion of Valentinian paraenesis. The second possible instance is Theodotus' redactional activity in *Exc.* 52,1–2a, where *παραινέει* ("he exhorted") is used twice to introduce a Jesus saying from the Synoptic tradition.<sup>44</sup> The first instance is the clearest and most insightful of this redactional interest in paraenesis. Here Jesus asks, "Or how can one enter the strong man's house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man?" (Matt 12:29; cf. Mark 3:27; Luke 11:21–23).<sup>45</sup> This excerpt more closely follows the Matthean and Markan versions. The verb used to introduce the Jesus discourse in Matthew and Luke is *εἶπον* ("he said"; Matt 12:25a, Luke 11:17). Mark introduces the parables with the verb *ἔλεγεν* ("he spoke"; Mark 3:23). With the shift to the verb *παραινέω* the nuance of the passage takes on a possible hortatory sense. This instance, however, is so minor and the excerpts so decontextualized from their original literary setting that *Exc.* 52,1–2 is helpful only in suggesting a Valentinian interest in exhortation.

Within the Nag Hammadi material we find much more extensive presence of paraenetic material. Those texts with paraenetic material include: *Gos. Truth, Treat. Res., Gos. Phil., 1 Apoc. Jas., 2 Apoc. Jas., Auth. Teach., Ep. Pet. Phil., Interp. Know.,* and *Val. Exp.* Each tractate varies as to the extent or type of paraenesis that is present. Consequently, of the eleven Valentinian texts from Nag Hammadi, only the *Pr. Paul* and the *Tri. Tract.* lack paraenetic material. The lack of moral discourse

<sup>44</sup> Text with a French translation of the *Excerpts from Theodotus* is available in François M. M. Sagnard, *Extraits de Théodote*.

<sup>45</sup> A brief note on translations used. Unless otherwise indicated or where I offer my own translation, I generally follow the NRSV, the UBS Greek New Testament 3rd edition, and for the Nag Hammadi material I tend to refer to the Brill and Laval critical editions. At times I have also consulted the facsimile edition of the Nag Hammadi codices. Other editions and translations, notably the SC and LCL editions, used will be noted throughout and are collected in the bibliography.

in the *Pr. Paul* is not surprising, given its likely liturgical/ritual function. The *Tri. Trac.*, however, even though it lacks moral exhortation is replete with moral discourse. From this survey of sources for a study of Valentinian paraenesis, it is evident that Valentinians, like other Christians, were engaged in moral exhortation. This engagement will emerge far more prominently in the following chapters.

This book is organized into eight chapters. In chapters 2, 3 and 4 the preliminary issue of establishing a theoretical approach to the study of early Christian paraenesis is offered. Chapter 2 argues for a discursive approach in the study of early Christian texts. Texts are not simply representational repositories for reconstructing socio-historical processes, but are ontologically narrative as acts of communication. I propose, therefore, to analyze Valentinian paraenesis as social activity set within rhetorical reconfigurations of social location. In chapters 3 and 4 a discussion of scholarly approaches to paraenesis is offered as well as a functional approach to the study of paraenesis along the lines of the discursive method set forth. The work of the Lund-Oslo group offers a valuable theoretical foundation for such an analysis. Chapter 5 explores the presence of paraenesis within Valentinianism, specifically as indicated by literary devices that are typical of early Christian paraenesis: prescriptive discourse, moral exempla, virtue/vice lists, and the two ways. Like other early Christians, Valentinians drew upon the same forms of moral exhortation. This exploration of literary devices clearly articulates the importance of paraenesis for Valentinian Christians. After the more sweeping literary approach to paraenesis in Valentinianism, attention is given to two specific instances of paraenesis. The *Interp. Know.* is explored as an illustration of a sustained paraenesis in chapter 6, while chapter 7 applies a discursive reading to the paraenetic subsection in the *Gos. Truth*. In both cases, social idealization of the audience is articulated; an idealization that is designed to affect the audience's perception of their social situation. Finally, this book closes with a comparative assessment of the socio-rhetorical presence of paraenesis in these two tractates. My goal in this book is to demonstrate the social rhetoric of moral exhortation within instances of Valentinian Christianity. These texts were written by real people to real people within historical contexts and evidently with specific rhetorical goals in mind. My focus is to explore the ideological aspects of these remnants of discursive interaction. Indeed, a social analysis of texts is necessarily an act in ideology criticism.



## CHAPTER TWO

### CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL IDENTITY THROUGH DISCOURSE: A SOCIO-RHETORICAL APPROACH FOR THE STUDY OF VALENTINIAN PARAENESIS

The art of historical inquiry, or historiography, is one of relating isolated discourses with events, to draw upon the remnants of the past in order to articulate an admittedly inadequate approximation of that past. For those of us who study early Christianity, including Valentinian Christianity, such sources inevitably are the textual sources that have somehow survived in one form or another through centuries of “historic events” bearing upon these sources. The survival and condition of our sources (including the few archaeological remnants we may be lucky enough to have) seem at times to be random chances of luck; sometimes good luck, sometimes bad, but nearly always frustrating luck. This frustration is indebted to the indefatigable challenge within historiography of relating the literary dimension of our sources to the hidden historical or social processes that we use such sources to unlock. Michel de Certeau insightfully summed up the matter: “Historiography (that is, ‘history’ and ‘writing’) bears within its own name the paradox—almost an oxymoron—of a relation established between two antinomic terms, between the real and the discourse. Its task is one of connecting them, and, at the point where this link cannot be imagined, of working *as if* the two were being joined.”<sup>1</sup>

Social and historical reconstructions of early Christian communities suffers from the frustration that emerges in this very attempt to connect what at times seem to be irreconcilable “gaps” between the discourses of our texts and the communities, events, social processes and individuals that we need those discourses to reveal to us. Such frustrations—sometimes for those of us reconstructing histories of early Christianity and sometimes for those of us reading our colleagues’ reconstructions—are compounded when we take seriously the rhetorical playfulness of our texts. Can we trust what Paul tells us about the churches in Galatia?

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<sup>1</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, xxvii.

Does Mark trustfully articulate Jesus' relationship with his disciples? Or are these accounts all fictions, such as we tend to read apocryphal infancy gospels, and thus not to be read except as literary products such as one may read C. S. Forester's narrative adventures of Captain Horatio Hornblower? While most of us would not go so far as to reject the historical value of these texts, can they be read historically and socially while recognizing that they are embedded with a rhetorical agenda that shapes the rhetorical situation of the text as presented within the text? The opposite question is also essential: Can we study early Christian texts without considering the social function of that rhetoric? The study of early Christian paraenesis must engage both literary and social aspects of our sources. Moral exhortation is a social act. Indeed, all communication, including fiction writing, is social.

To fully appreciate the role of paraenesis within Valentinianism, we cannot be content with simply an articulation of literary devices and forms, even though those devices and forms are essential for a social appreciation of the rhetoric of a text. To do so is to obscure the very purpose of the act of writing. The rhetorical strategy presented in the literary production of a text is not divorced from the social setting that prompted the creation of the text. Mixing social and literary criteria is helpful in understanding a text for two reasons. Firstly, there is the value of recognizing that literary works in real societies do have a functional value that is often indicated largely by genre. A text does not simply exist as a literary creation separated from its communicative situation. Secondly, by using both literary and social criteria for identifying the genre of a text, that identification will be reinforced. Although the social and literary aspects of a text must, therefore, be considered in genre analysis, there remains the methodological problem of moving from the level of text to that of social context. Although there have been many attempts within early Christian studies at relating the socio-historical to the literary, I will argue that a focus on relating the literary to the social function of a text may be a more helpful line of investigation. Our focus, however, must be less on the typical goal of historiography—connecting the discourse *with* the real—and more on elucidating the discourse *within* the real, as a part of historic narrativity.

#### FROM LITERARY LEVEL TO HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Two approaches toward determining historical or social context from literary texts have been put forth by both J. Louis Martyn and Vernon

Robbins. Both approaches, though widely accepted within New Testament scholarship, remain methodologically problematic. Martyn's work on the Fourth Gospel is well known. He begins with the text as a literary drama that reflects the occasion of the text within the narrative presentation of the ministry of Jesus. The two-fold story of the text—that of the days of Jesus and that of the days of the evangelist and his community—along with the assumption that the text functions largely by analogy for mutually presenting both historical locations, underlies his entire method. Thus, the narrative presentation of the blind man and his parents in chapter 9 mirrors the conflict facing the Johannine community with the Jewish leaders of the synagogue. The characters are simply one-to-one references to those players in the readers' situation. In effect the exemplary role of the gospel narrative (set in the 20s C.E.) serves the community concerns of the Johannine Christians (set by Martyn in the 80s or 90s C.E.). For Martyn there are three social stages within which the narrative world is applied: 1) the early period when Jewish Christians were preaching about Jesus within a synagogue framework; 2) the middle period of conflict with other synagogue Jews and persecution of the Christians; and 3) the late period in which the Johannine community was established independent of the synagogue (and when the final edition of the Fourth Gospel was produced).<sup>2</sup> Key indicators of social situation are identified, perhaps most notably the dramatic threat of excommunication in John 9:22 (ἀποσυνάγωγος), which, for Martyn and many who have followed his lead, reflects the *Birchath-ha-Minim*, incorporated into synagogue worship in order to expose and shun heretics (*ex hypothesi* including Christians).<sup>3</sup> When one accepts a reflection or application of the narrative world of Jesus to the social conditions of the readers, coupled with an assumed "Johannine community" underlying and addressed by the text, then such literary features can serve a very fruitful and precise analysis of not only the Johannine community at a particular point of reception of the text, but also a stratification of the community's changing situations along

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<sup>2</sup> J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel; The Gospel of John in Recent History*; and "Glimpses into the History of the Johannine Community". Compare with the five-stage history espoused by Raymond E. Brown, *Gospel According to John (1–XII)*, and more recently, Ludger Schenke, "John 7–10".

<sup>3</sup> See Wayne O. McCready, "Johannine Self-Understanding"; and John Bowman, *Fourth Gospel and the Jews*. The presence of the Twelfth Benediction in the Fourth Gospel, however, has not gone unchallenged. See especially S. J. Joubert, "A Bone of Contention in Recent Scholarship".

the lines of a compositional stratification theory for the gospel.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, the text, without an explicit reference to the readers' condition or social location, is a window into not only a particular Christian group, but also the historical development of that group.

The historical approach illustrated by Martyn's reconstruction has been recently challenged by Frederik Wisse.<sup>5</sup> Wisse's concern, as is typical of his other work on Gnosticism, adds a vehement cautionary note to those scholars whose work is highly creative and confident in offering historical reconstructions. He claims that New Testament scholars have constructed a historical-critical perspective that presupposes that through inferential reading the modern scholar can construct a community behind almost every early Christian text. A Johannine community, a Matthean community, a Thomas community, and a Q community, for instance, all recur in serious academic work and show no sign of subsiding (especially with the rising interest in stratification of these texts and thus their underlying communities).<sup>6</sup> The existence of a community behind (nearly) every text has, according to Wisse, become almost a commonsense reality for historians of early Christianity. This commonsense perspective is based on two methodological assumptions: "First, the apparent literary character of most early Christian writings had to be played down in favor of a quasi-documentary status. Second, the unknown authors of these texts had to be reduced to community spokespersons, so that the special features of the text could be taken to be the distinguishing marks of a community rather

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<sup>4</sup> In an earlier study of the social and literary aspects of the Fourth Gospel, I accepted Martyn's theory *a priori*. See Tite, "A Community in Conflict." My findings on the social conflict within the Johannine community, especially reflecting levels of disagreement over the conflict by both the Jewish leadership and non-Christian members of the synagogue community, were very fruitful and precise. However, this precision demands a blind acceptance of the presuppositions of the documentary nature of the gospel and Martyn's methodology in teasing out those historical and social indicators. The question of accuracy, despite precision, remains problematic.

<sup>5</sup> Wisse, "Indirect Textual Evidence."

<sup>6</sup> Beyond the stratified work by Martyn, stratification theories have been pervasive in the study of other texts, perhaps most notably in Q studies under the influence of John Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*; see also Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*; cf. Arnal, "Rhetoric of Marginality." John Dominic Crossan's work on the *Gospel of Peter* (*The Cross That Spoke*), with his reconstructed *Cross Gospel*, also is worth mentioning. See also Robert Fortna's stages for the Johannine community derived from his reconstructed *Signs Gospel* (Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs; The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor*).

than representing the personal views and idiosyncrasies of the author.”<sup>7</sup> The first assumption relates directly back to the nature of the sources for our historical reconstructions. An assessment of sources is a basic and necessary opening step for any historian, and Wisse demands an equivalent attention to source assessment by historians of early Christianity. For Wisse, there are two basic types of written sources for historical work: literary and documentary texts. Documentary texts are occasional works that are written for a specific audience within a specific historical situation. Letters, such as Paul’s letter to *Philemon* or Ptolemy’s *Letter to Flora*, would be examples of documentary texts, as would the Vindolanda tablets from Roman Britain<sup>8</sup> or Pliny’s letters to the Emperor Trajan on the situation in Bithynia. Literary texts are designed to address a general, amorphous audience rather than a specific audience or occasion. These texts are meant to transcend time and thereby have enduring literary value. The *Golden Ass* by Apuleius and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides* would fit this literary type, as would martyrdom accounts such as the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* or the satires of Lucian. Whereas documentary sources offer direct evidence for historical reconstruction—the direct reference to persons, events, and other such clues—literary sources can only offer indirect evidence. Indirect evidence, where clues are only reflected in a text, can only be ascertained by means of inference.

Wisse claims that there are two fallacies with inferential reading of these sources: “inferring origin from perceived benefit” and “assuming pervasive utility.”<sup>9</sup> A functionalist approach to social and historical interaction is reflected in both fallacies. Special features of a text, such as ἀποσυνάγωγος in John 9:22, are taken to have been written for affecting some positive change in an intended audience, and thus the very purpose of the text is necessarily functional. Texts, especially literary texts, may have been written for various purposes, including being inspirational or reflective for only the author, and therefore need

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<sup>7</sup> Wisse, “Indirect Textual Evidence,” 225. He traces these trends in scholarship to the work of Franz Overbeck, “Über die Anfänge der patristischen Literatur,” and popularized by the work of Dibelius and Bultmann.

<sup>8</sup> For a helpful and readable presentation of these letters from the fort of Vindolanda, see Alan K. Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier*.

<sup>9</sup> Wisse, “Indirect Textual Evidence,” 228, drawing upon Stephen Jay Gould, *Bully for Brontosaurus*. The analogy between natural science and historical work is even more explicit in Frederik Wisse’s 2003 presidential address to the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies, “The Origins of the Christian Species”.

not have a community concern as the object of their rhetorical strategy. The assumption here also necessitates that all such special features contribute to the effectiveness of the rhetorical strategy. Not only is the identification of special features for addressing a reconstructed historical situation a circular procedure, calling into question analytical control of variables, it also assumes that features cannot be idiosyncratic or even simple ornamentation. Wisse calls on scholars to limit themselves to a clear two-fold taxonomy of documentary and literary sources, only allowing a text to say what is reasonable given the limitations of indirect and direct evidence.

Wisse's essay on literary and documentary sources is a useful caution in the historical assessment of sources for the study of early Christianity, and echoes recent debates within gospel research over the assumption of isolated communities underlying and specifically addressed by the canonical gospels.<sup>10</sup> Those adopting Martyn's approach for reconstructing early Christian communities must address the methodological problems that Wisse has effectively highlighted. Although I find the methodological precision in Wisse's essay refreshing and challenging, his model is not without its own limitations; limitations that render it not a useful model for my study of the social function of paraenesis. His model would negate much of what goes on in the study of both the New Testament texts and the Nag Hammadi codices. Indeed, his typology of texts, while necessarily delimiting in its taxonomy of texts, is somewhat artificial, obscuring the fluidity and variety of sources within the Greco-Roman world. Not all sources will neatly fit his typology, and many within either type will serve various functions (especially if we appreciate the appropriation, reutilization, and reinterpretation or application of texts within new or diverse social contexts). As to the former, many of the Nag Hammadi texts would seem to defy either documentary or literary identification. The *Gos. Phil.*, for instance, especially with its emphasis on sacraments and cosmological speculation, is not a clear instance of a literary text, yet is not clearly documentary.

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<sup>10</sup> The recent debate over whether the gospels were written from and addressed to specific Christian communities or for a general, non-specific Christian audience, has been spearheaded by Richard Bauckham, notably in the collection of essays in his *The Gospels for All Christians* (including essays by Richard Bauckham, Michael B. Thompson, Loveday Alexander, Richard A. Burridge, Stephen C. Barton, and Francis Watson). For a thorough critique of Bauckham's position, see Margaret M. Mitchell, "Patristic Counter-Evidence." A full discussion of the debate is offered by Edward W. Klink, "The Gospel Community Debate."

The theological speculation that seems to be written with a universal presentation of a theological system would place this gospel within a literary classification. However, the sacramental emphasis in this gospel, especially if it reflects actual sacramental practices (or the text was used sacramentally) would then be a documentary text. Neither type of source classification seems to fully reflect the value of this text for the historian. The same is true of the *Trip. Tract., Gos. Truth*, and perhaps especially the *Pr. Paul* (if indeed it is a sacramental prayer designed for an actual ritual).<sup>11</sup> Do theological, ritual and sacramental texts become a third type of source? How do they work within historical-critical work? If a text carries a liturgical function as well as offering a theological reflection on sacraments, then it would seem to belong to both types, thereby calling into question the documentary and literary separation of texts.<sup>12</sup> These “no fit” texts need to be addressed, given the breadth of such evidence beyond even the patristic sources (such as *Shepherd of Hermas*) and especially the more esoteric material we find within the Nag Hammadi codices. As to the latter problem of diverse functions, there are numerous instances of a text that fits both literary and documentary purposes. Private letters are an excellent example. The letters of Pliny, Seneca, and Isocrates were all written for specific individuals within specific situations or addressing specific issues, yet were also written for the purpose of a broader public dissemination. Although by definition a letter would be documentary, only taking on a literary function after it had served its occasional purpose, letters in the ancient world were sometimes also written with the initial purpose of addressing a more general readership beyond the occasional function. The letters of Isocrates, for example, were written not only for the occasional function of, for instance, prompting Philip to unify all of Greece, but also served as pedagogical devices. Writers recognized that their work could serve to demonstrate their literary and intellectual skill; that is, to build reputation or attain glory. Speeches, even prior to the widespread practice of declamation for public entertainment in the imperial period, were composed and performed for the specific

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<sup>11</sup> See Tite, “Paul, Prayer of the Apostle”; Lüdemann and Jansen, *Suppressed Prayers*, 35.

<sup>12</sup> The mutual presence of literary and documentary material in such texts, furthermore, would beg the question as to a method for identifying such material in a text. Not only must one determine what material is literary and what is documentary, but even with such a demarcation the overarching rhetorical strategy that both types of material serve problematize a typological carving up of the text.

case or situation (thus serving a documentary purpose), yet were also written down for a general public distribution for the sake of demonstrating rhetorical art (thus a literary purpose). As a young orator, Cicero recognized the importance of utilizing not only his rhetorical skills for winning the specific case and thereby gaining prestige, but also the significance of publicly disseminating a speech to demonstrate his literary skill. The publication of letters and speeches in the ancient world merged both documentary and literary functions.<sup>13</sup> If such a text as the *Gos. Phil.* or *Orig. World*, as Louis Painchaud has meticulously argued, fit the structure of ancient rhetorical speeches, then a potential dual purpose must seriously be taken into consideration by Wisse's model. Similarly, the collection and passing on of both Paul's letters (perhaps within his life time and with his knowledge) and Ignatius' letters (surely with Ignatius' approval) further calls into question the strict demarcation within Wisse's typology.<sup>14</sup>

There is a further difficulty with Wisse's model. Although he is correct in challenging the assumptions of a community behind each text, his own assumptions are equally questionable: "...in the absence of internal indications to the contrary, one cannot take for granted that they [literary and documentary texts] reflect anything other than the views of their authors."<sup>15</sup> To privilege *a priori* an idiosyncratic reading of text over a community reading places the interpretations and historical understandings of the text on just as insubstantial a foundation as the default community reading of which Wisse is so methodically wary. Methodological precision and accuracy, therefore, necessitates

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<sup>13</sup> Although my concern is with the Greco-Roman world, a more recent example is helpful for highlighting this specific and general goal in writing texts. The journals of John Wesley, specifically the later ones, were written not only with the personal reflective goal of a diary in mind, but were also written knowing that they would be made available to the public and, therefore, would serve an authoritative function as theological reflections for the Methodist movement.

<sup>14</sup> Again there are examples wherein a literary work refers to specific persons or situation through literary satire. Although Wisse ("Indirect Textual Evidence," 225) may be correct in claiming that, "No historian would expect to be able to infer Milton's historical situation from *Paradise Lost*," not all literary works lack inferential clues. Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, especially the *Inferno*, is replete with such literary features that point beyond the literary level of the text to specific individuals, situations, or personal concerns of Dante. The fact that we can identify documentary aspects in Dante's work due to the external evidence for the historical context of *The Divine Comedy* is suggestive of the possibility of other literary works carrying documentary functions (even if we can no longer identify the documentary context or occasional purpose).

<sup>15</sup> Wisse, "Indirect Textual Evidence," 226.

that both assumptions be validated. Although a default position of a text reflecting *only* the viewpoint of its author might seem plausible and even commonsensical, it remains a questionable assumption that infers alternative historical contexts from which the texts could have emerged, thereby risking the danger of generating historical inaccuracies or obscuring the occasional strategy of a text. Indeed, we could also question whether texts should even be seen as necessarily one or the other. Texts do have a reader or readers, even if the reader is only the author as first reader.<sup>16</sup> Thus, texts are social devices (even at the level of intrapersonal communication, where a reflexive author-reader dual role co-exists), and it is their social function (without necessarily falling into functionalism) that needs to be considered, even beyond their documentary or non-documentary function. Furthermore, even with clearly documentary sources where a community situation can be reasonably discerned or inferred (e.g., Paul's letters to the Corinthians), we are still left with the idiosyncratic voice of only one or two individuals. To not consider the individuality of an author/text, as well as the persuasive design of that voice, is to risk falling into methodologically questionable historical reconstructions such as those based on mirror reading. Although Wisse does not advocate mirror reading, it is important to appreciate that individual and community viewpoints or readings of a text are far more complex and intertwined than his model would seem to suggest.

Although Wisse's model for source evaluation remains problematic due to its strict demarcation, his methodological caution is a valuable and refreshing challenge for historians of early Christianity. Too often, and with far too much confidence, scholars have put forth or accepted historical reconstructions and settings for texts. Martyn's reading of the Fourth Gospel, or William Arnal's stratified history of the community behind the *Gos. Thom.*, is problematic due to the lack of methodological control over the inferential readings and unsubstantiated assumptions. Even when such reconstructions are extremely precise, their accuracy is questionable due to the problems and criteria that Wisse has effectively laid out in his essay. Within some studies of the historical context behind Nag Hammadi texts, such as Brashler's comments on the *Apoc. Peter* and Andrea Mollinari's dating of the *Acts Pet. 12 Apost.* to the Decian persecution, a lack of precision (i.e., merely taking the special features

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<sup>16</sup> On author as first reader, see Paul Ricoeur, "What is a Text?"

at face value, such as vague references to suffering) compounds the problematic nature of such reconstructions.<sup>17</sup> Thus, given the timely and insightful critique by Wisse, the model for reconstructing the social dynamics of a text advocated by, for example, Martyn cannot be adopted. Although an appreciation for the social or historical contours of the text are aptly addressed by Martyn's model, the methodological "gap" of moving from the level of the literary contours to the social contours remains. A method is needed that will enable scholars to bridge this gap with a degree of verifiable plausibility, a bridge that takes the rhetorical dimensions of a text into consideration as well as the special features of that text.

Another approach to historical reconstruction of a text that has been posited in recent years is the socio-rhetorical method of Vernon Robbins. Socio-rhetorical criticism, as the name indicates, takes into consideration both the literary rhetorical aspects of a text as well as the social rhetorical strategies of a text. Indeed, Robbins calls for an interdisciplinary appreciation of the nature of texts, arguing that various methods within biblical studies can be mutually insightful for understanding the rhetoric of early Christian texts. Robbins, in positing a socio-rhetorical method for New Testament studies, identifies four clear, though interactive "textures": inner texture; intertexture; social and cultural texture; and ideological texture.<sup>18</sup> Inner texture places the

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<sup>17</sup> J. A. Brashler, *The Coptic 'Apocalypse of Peter'*; Andrea Lorenzo Molinari, *The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*. The same methodological difficulty problematizes the social analysis of Kippenberg, "Versuch einer soziologischen Verortung."

<sup>18</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse; Exploring the Texture of Texts*. Also see the special symposium in *JSNT* on Robbins's work: "Vernon Robbins's Socio-Rhetorical Criticism: A Review" (this includes an introduction by Duane F. Watson; two review articles, by Margaret E. Dean and Gordon D. Newby; a response by Robbins; and a dialogue between Robbins and his two reviewers as well as Alan Culpepper). Although not related to Robbins's work, on intertextuality see also Painchaud, "Gnostic Use of Scripture." In *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, Robbins touches on another textured dimension, the "sacred texture" (120–31), which he defines as: "...finding insights into the nature of the relation between human life and the divine. In other words, these readers are interested in locating the ways the text speaks about God or gods, or talks about realms of religious life" (120). The topics dealt with under sacred texture include deity, holy person, spirit being, divine history, human redemption, human commitment, religious community, and ethics. Sacred texture, not dealt with at all in *Tapestry*, highlights Robbins's confessional sensibilities (or sensitivities), i.e., his desire to *do* theology with modern implications. The discussion in *JSNT* reinforces this view, both in his explicit wish for theology to "get into" the discussion as well as his canonical bias: he is sensitive to the problems of a "canon-with-a-canon" approach to the New Testament, calling on the texts to be given equal status, but does not extend (at least explicitly) the equal playing field to non-canonical texts. Sacred

focus upon the text itself, its literary make-up and dynamic. Robbins explores various aspects of textual rhetoric, specifically the role that repetition plays in moving ideas forward within the text, the broad framework of opening-middle-closing, narrational aspects such as characterization and the role of the narrator or narrative voice within a text, and the way the text incorporates argumentative devices, attempting to reflect aesthetic experience, for persuading the audience toward the view point advocated by the implied author.

Intertexture looks beyond the text itself and analyzes the various links that may exist between the text and other texts. Such links require some degree of boundary drawing, and Robbins proposes that we move beyond “canonical” boundaries (i.e., reading a New Testament text only within a Christian and Jewish context, or only a biblical collection of texts) and to look at a broader Greco-Roman dimension of social and cultural textual expressions. Intertextual relations between texts has become somewhat fashionable in the field of Christian origins, and Robbins highlights various ways that such relations can be noted in texts: recitation (direct quotations from one text into another; e.g., the various citations from the Jewish scriptures in the New Testament texts), recontextualization (when such quotations are not prefaced with an “is written” type of formula; e.g., 1 Peter 2:3), and reconfiguration (when a source is reworked and the meaning is modified for the new context). We could also note the relation of allusions, where texts are not cited but a general allusion is made to a motif that may refer to a particular text or fall within a broader motif tradition. The early patristic development of the descent into hell, which is then developed to its height in Dante’s *De Inferno*, may indeed indirectly go back to 1 Peter 3:18–22, as we see this specific motif developed in various early Christian texts, such as the *Acts of Pilate*, *Ap. John* (the closing “Providence Monologue” of the two copies of the longer recension), the *Interp. Know.* 12,29–13,35, *Test. Truth* 32,22–33,9 and certain versions of the Apostle’s Creed. Intertextuality goes beyond “text-to-text” relations, and includes cultural and social referents, wherein language signifies particular extra-textual relations with a broader socio-cultural world. Robbins uses Martyn’s work on the Fourth Gospel as an example of such

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texture, nonetheless, is valid to explore, but, from a non-confessional or neutral stance, I see no reason why it should not be subsumed under ideological texture, or, at best, a nuanced dimension of ideology.

historical intertexture, i.e., how the language of a text can point outside of itself to events that the implied readers could connect with.

Social and cultural texture moves beyond intertextuality and draws upon sociological models for situating and thereby interpreting the particular texts under analysis.<sup>19</sup> Here we find Robbins building upon Bryan Wilson's seven types of religious sects: conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, gnostic manipulationist, thaumaturgic, reformist, and utopian. Each of these types is a response to the broader cultural setting, are embedded in various cultural relations (dominant culture, subcultures, contracultures, countercultures, and liminal cultures), both individually and in variant combinations.<sup>20</sup> Ideological texture is loosely conceived in Robbins's study as "comprehensive patterns of cognitive and moral beliefs about humans, society and the universe that are intended to function in the social order... [especially] the intersection of ideas, ideals and social action and to detect the collective needs and interests the patterns represent."<sup>21</sup> Robbins highlights that every text, and every reading of a text, engages, to some degree, a political agenda of power relations in direct connection with social location.<sup>22</sup> Social location, and ideological texture in general, relates to the domains of discourse in both the text and the student of the text (i.e., the first- or second-century context of the text, and the modern context of its interpreters). By placing the dynamic of ideological point of view in relation to the symbolic universe constructed by the text and the interpretative discourse selected by modern interpreters, Robbins's call for an integrative analytical approach is given even greater force.

Robbins's socio-rhetorical criticism helps us move beyond a narrow adherence to only one approach to biblical studies, emphasizing instead the necessity of various methodological approaches in order to more fully appreciate the multiplicity of possible approaches to these writings. Although a rhetorical appreciation of early Christian texts dominates

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<sup>19</sup> Robbins (*Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 144) distinguishes social and cultural texture from intertexture as follows: "This arena differs from the arena of intertexture by its use of anthropological and sociological theory to explore the social and cultural nature of the voices in the text under investigation."

<sup>20</sup> Robbins draws upon Bryan Wilson's "A Typology of Sects"; *Magic and the Millennium*.

<sup>21</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 193.

<sup>22</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 200–1; for a fuller discussion of ideological texture, 200–36.

his entire interdisciplinary approach, rhetoric is not limited simply to the level of the literary features of a text. Rather, rhetoric, in Robbins's method, is seen as further constituting social and cultural dimensions of the text. By placing his own emphasis upon the rhetorical dimensions of a text, Robbins helps to highlight the function(s) of a text; specifically rhetorical function linking the author, readers, contexts, and ideologies within the textual playground of persuasive communication. What a text communicates, how it moves its participants, and how it generates alternative, symbolic worlds for new (and hopefully challenging) perspectives, underlies the functional aspect of a text. Just as readers and socio-cultural contexts constantly shift and change, so also will the communicative dynamic of a text.

Although Robbins is to be commended for encouraging scholars, who work with differing methods of analysis, to creatively collaborate, his method of locating the social rhetoric of a text remains problematic. The various textures he presents, even though they are important aspects co-existing within texts, remain largely isolated dimensions of the texts. The methodological gap still needs to be bridged. It is this gap that renders Robbins's socio-rhetorical criticism both defective and finally unimpressive. Without a bridge linking the textures there is no real analytical value in this method for early Christian scholars. Indeed, the movement from the level of text to the level of occasion behind the text is not only impossible with this method, there is furthermore no corrective agent in place for the errors that emerge when one moves from one level to the other without such a bridge. Although Robbins's method is not directly concerned with constructing a bridge, it is this very omission that calls into question the precision and accuracy that this method can offer us in the study of the various textures of early Christian texts. We see these same problems emerging with John Elliott's sociological exegesis of 1 Peter, a study that Robbins enthusiastically cites as an example of an analysis of social and cultural texture.<sup>23</sup> Elliott reads metaphorical terms in the opening prescript as if they were technical terms for indicating social status. Several Petrine scholars have challenged Elliott's interpretation of the social background of the Petrine community due to the uncritical move from

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<sup>23</sup> John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*; cited by Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 154–157. More recently see Elliott, “Disgraced Yet Graced”; and his *1 Peter*.

text (metaphorical language) to community addressed by the text.<sup>24</sup> Without a methodological bridge accounting for the gap between the text and the occasion, there is no way that such sociological exegesis can proceed with a degree of historical plausibility. Consequently, although very intriguing and tantalizing as a method for biblical studies, Robbins's socio-rhetorical criticism is not a viable analytical framework for establishing the social function of paraenesis.

Given the inadequacy of these approaches to move beyond the text to the occasion behind the text, it is therefore necessary to construct a fresh method for the sake of genre analysis. Although the literary aspects of the Valentinian texts are easily identified and related to the paraenetic genre, the main challenge remains as to how to plausibly engage the second of Berger's criteria: social situation. In order to effectively tease out the social situation of a text, we eventually move into the domain of historical reconstruction of the occasion of the text. The rhetorical situation of a text is intimately tied into the social situation. Implied, however, in any discussion of rhetorical situation is the historical situation, or occasion, for the construction of a rhetorical strategy of socialization. For the sake of clarity, I refer to the social context in reference to the historical location within which a text plays a role, while freeing social situation to refer specifically to the rhetorical situation in which the author frames the context. It is in the movement from social situation to social context that rhetorical criticism and historical criticism converge. Methods addressing social reconstructions of texts by New Testament scholars remain defective for this task. Although with some early Christian texts such a move is not necessarily difficult, even if the results are contestable, with many of the Valentinian works several difficulties render this move problematic at best. Not only is *Interp. Know.*, as one example, only extant in a Coptic translation, but also the text was completely unknown prior to the 1945 find. A similar situation problematizes the *Gos. Truth*, despite a possible external reference to this gospel in Irenaeus. Other Valentinian sources are just as difficult to contextualize historically. Compounded with the lack of external evidence to help situate the text, we lack any clear internal evidence of date, authorship or location. These texts could be dated anytime from ca. 160 to 340 C.E., and almost anywhere within the Roman world.

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<sup>24</sup> See my discussion of this problem with Elliott's work in *Compositional Transitions*, 31; cf. Martin, *Metaphor*, Paul J. Achtemeier, "Newborn Babes and Living Stones," 212-13; and Reinhard Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*.

If we avoid the temptation to engage in creative eisegesis of the text, perhaps even attempting some form of mirror reading, then how can we determine social context with methodological precision?

I suggest that instead of focusing on the unanswerable historical questions of date, authorship, or location, that we turn instead towards matters of social processes, the construction of historical memory, and rhetorical discourse as an attempt at forming or re-forming community ideology and identity. In other words, in what way does our author present and thereby address the social context of his or her community? The methods critiqued above, including Wisse's meticulous and precise model, all approach the text as if it can serve as a window into the historical situation underlying the text. As Wisse rightly challenges, not every text can serve such documentary purposes. Rather than looking at the text as a documentary window, using the text to glimpse the occasion and setting of the text, I propose instead that we turn our attention towards seeing the text as conversant within a discursive interaction. The text, therefore, is not evidence *for* a conversational voice, but rather *is* a voice; it is one instance of a conversation, a fragment of a much larger social conversation with a particular rhetorical force of shaping this very conversation. I begin such an interpretative move for appreciating the discursive voice of the text by drawing upon positioning theory, a theoretical approach that will offer an analytical framework for exploring the social dimensions of the *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Truth.*

#### SOCIAL DISCOURSE AND POSITIONING THEORY

Within recent social scientific theorization, especially in sociology and social psychology, there has been a notable shift away from static role theory towards an interactive, discursive understanding of social relations. Within sociology this movement is epitomized by Herbert Blumer's work on symbolic interactionism. Blumer, building from George Herbert Mead's analysis of interaction, contends that, "social interaction is a process that *forms* human conduct instead of being merely a means or a setting for the expression or release of human conduct."<sup>25</sup> It is, therefore, out of interaction that meanings are formed

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<sup>25</sup> Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 8–9. Blumer works with Mead's "triadic nature of meaning" for communicative gestures: "It signifies what the person to whom it is directed is to do; it signifies what the person who is making the gesture plans to do;

and altered through social discourse. In a similar vein of thought, communication theory has redefined the nature of communication as “the co-presence of *utterances*, rather than the physical presence of interlocutors” and thus a “communicative interaction” wherein a reciprocal process of reflexivity and anticipation renders communication less an exchange of meanings and more so a relationship out of which meanings are generated.<sup>26</sup>

Positioning theory, as a recent manifestation of social interactionism within the field of social psychology, has in the 1990s posited an understanding of social reality as a strictly dialogical process of interaction.<sup>27</sup> Positioning theorists take their inspiration from the work of Rom Harré.<sup>28</sup> Harré and his colleagues argue that dialogues and the roles adopted within those dialogues are neither static nor predetermined, but rather emerge out of and are modified within discourse.<sup>29</sup> Interlocutors, Harré contends, are placed within a person/act referential grid rather than the more classic time/space grid. Within a time/space grid, people adopt roles as actors with set scripts given a particular social context within which they are socialized to play out.<sup>30</sup> A person will take on

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and it signifies the joint action that is to arise by the articulation of the acts of both.” For a discussion of the different schools and development of symbolic interactionism, see Gary Alan Fine, “The Sad Demise, Mysterious Disappearance, and Glorious Triumph of Symbolic Interactionism,” who summarizes this sociological approach as teaching that “we know things by their meanings, that meanings are created through social interaction, and that meanings change through interaction” (64).

<sup>26</sup> For a helpful discussion of these shifts in communication theory, with special attention to computer-mediated communication, see Giuseppe Riva and Carlo Galimberti, “The Psychology of Cyberspace”. Cf. Carlo Galimberti, “Dalla comunicazione alla conversazione.”

<sup>27</sup> The most comprehensive treatment of positioning theory is found in the collection of essays edited by Rom Harré and Luk van Langenhove, *Positioning Theory*. See also Luk van Langenhove and Rom Harré, “Positioning in Scientific Discourse”; Rom Harré, “What’s Real in Psychology”; Rom Harré and Luk van Langenhove, “Varieties of Positioning”; and Rom Harré and Nikki Slocum, “Disputes as Complex Social Events.”

<sup>28</sup> Although Harré is the founder of positioning theory, his theoretical terminology is derived from the earlier work of W. Hollway, “Gender Difference.” Dorothy Howie and Michael Peters have demonstrated that Harré’s theories are, furthermore, largely derived from the Russian theorists Lev S. Vygotsky and Mikhail M. Bakhtin; see Howie and Peters, “Positioning Theory”; Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*; Lev S. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*; *Mind in Society*.

<sup>29</sup> B. Davies and Rom Harré, “Positioning and Personhood,” 34, defines discourse as follows: “We shall use the term ‘discursive practice’ for all the ways in which people actively produce social and psychological realities.”

<sup>30</sup> See Luk van Langenhove and Rom Harré, “Introducing Positioning Theory,” 15–16.

particular characteristics, or persona types, when she or he steps into a temporal or spatial location of particular roles, for example, a parental role or the role of a doctor interacting with a patient. The scripts within this time/space grid are already in place, socially established and internalized through socialization processes. If there is any reflection on, or modification of, the playing out of these scripts, such fluidity takes place prior to the actual performance. The time/space dramaturgical model is replaced by positioning theory's person/act grid, with, to draw upon another dramatic model, a more improvisational type of social interaction. Rather than having a script in hand, interlocutors will adjust and alter their roles and narratives as they interact: contesting, affirming, and redirecting the conversational dynamics as the dialogue proceeds. Just as with improvisational stage performance, so also with positioning theory: the roles adopted and the scripts utilized are dependent upon the dialogical interaction of the various individuals or groups involved in the conversation(s), and are thus malleable, taking shape from within conversational interaction. Each voice, or speech action, is one attempt within a plethora of attempts to direct and shape the discussion (i.e., rhetorical redescription).

There are three basic, and interdependent, processes by which this dynamic model of communication occurs: positioning (of self and others), the social force of speech actions/acts, and storylines.<sup>31</sup> As discursive process, communication (carrying both perlocutionary and illocutionary force) requires the utilization of positioning in order to locate oneself within a relationship with others.<sup>32</sup> Such positioning requires the intentional and unintentional positioning of various individuals within a conversational setting. The settings within which such positioning takes place will be the storylines along which individuals attempt to locate and render normative their perspective of the conversational issues. Langenhove and Bertolink, in applying positioning theory to technology assessment, further delineate storylines as occasionally

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<sup>31</sup> The most thorough discussion of these three processes is Langenhove and Harré, "Introducing Positioning Theory," 16–20 and *passim*.

<sup>32</sup> According to Rom Harré and Luk van Langenhove, even "personal identity" is discursively produced within a "social identity"—the "successful management of everyday life" being realized through "the multiplicity of social identities" ("Reflective Positioning: Autobiography," 60–61; so also S. Sabat and Rom Harré, "Positioning and the Recovery of Social Identity," 93). Thus, a relational link between self and others (including self as other in certain circumstances) is brought out as an aspect of positioning and indeed day-to-day existence within social bodies.

fitting into “questioning storylines” of “regressive questions” (the “why” question; why did something come about, in order either to justify or excuse the development) and “progressive questions” (the “how” question; how did something come about, in order to reproduce or continue the development as prospective and beneficial).<sup>33</sup> Although not all storylines in communication will fit this questioning typology, they will attempt to structure discourse so as to present a normative direction for communication to continue along. Communication can in many cases be seen as competing attempts at moral authority (taking on the moral rights, duties and obligations to declare positions and storylines; including the moral right to impose upon others rights, duties and obligations).<sup>34</sup> Unequal distribution of authority is established and played out (affirmed, contested, assumed, accepted) discursively, each interlocutor generating a series of speech acts that function to establish or alter the conversational storylines (and in some cases this will include the same positions, and in others such challenges will offer new positions).<sup>35</sup> When a speech action affects the direction of communication, infusing new meaning into the conversation, it will thereby contribute to the establishment of a speech act. Each of these three processes is interdependent and cannot exist apart from the other two.

Positioning of self or of others will play out through various acts, of which three orders are notable for appreciating the interconnections of various conversations and various interlocutors. As a first-order act positioning may either be intentional or unintentional.<sup>36</sup> For example, the first act may emerge naturally in dialogue: “When is dinner going to be ready? I expected dinner when I got home from work an hour

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<sup>33</sup> Luk van Langenhove and R. Bertolink, “Positioning and Assessment of Technology,” 123–24.

<sup>34</sup> For a fuller discussion of rights, duties and obligations, see Rom Harré and Luk van Langenhove, “Epilogue: Further Opportunities,” 198.

<sup>35</sup> See Davies and Harré, “Positioning and Personhood,” 35; note especially the parallel made between positioning through “a conceptual repertoire” and narratology. They go on to delineate positioning theory as “the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines” (37); cf. Harré and Langenhove, “Reflexive Positioning,” 69–70. Sabat and Harré, “Recovery of Social Identity,” 93, define “position” as “a certain set of duties, rights and obligations as a speaker.”

<sup>36</sup> Unintentional aspects of positioning will further include non-verbal contributions to a conversation; see Davies and Harré, “Positioning and Personhood,” 34. L. Berman, “Formations of a ‘National’ Identity,” 141, further notes that intentional and unintentional positioning is indicative that interlocutors are “not always in control of how they position themselves or are positioned by others.”

ago!” places the addressee (Mary) in a domesticated or subservient position and the speaker (John) in an implicit position of authority. The speaker may have intentionally established these positions for rhetorical effectiveness, or he may have assumed these positions without thought. If the addressee accepts (or does not contest within the dialogue) the positions presented, then the storyline of food preparation along with the moral authority taken on by the first speaker will be played out until a new speech act emerges. Second-order position arises when the positioning of the first act is challenged. The second speaker will contest the positions given and the authority assumed.<sup>37</sup> In some cases the very storyline itself will be altered, offering a new perspective to the dialogue and thereby invoking new positions for both speakers. For instance, in response, the second speaker may declare, “Why should I? I’m not your servant. Make your own dinner, I’m busying grading exams.” This second act is always intentional positioning. Here Mary reverses the positions of domesticated status and primary income earner, negating John’s claim to authority as nothing more than patriarchal biases of public and private gender roles. The conversation can continue further, with both John and Mary contesting, accepting, and altering the conversation throughout a series of second-order acts. Third order acts re-present the preceding acts to a third party (e.g., John furiously leaves the house and connects up with his best friend, Miguel, to whom he relates the conversation with Mary), thereby generating a new first-order act (i.e., Miguel now must accept or contest the storylines and even the positions put forth for himself, as sympathetic ally, by John).<sup>38</sup>

Understanding and misunderstanding, as well as truthfulness, are not necessary for appreciating such discursive acts. Indeed, John may have simply intended to communicate that he was exhausted and that he had made dinner the night before. Thus, in his view, it was Mary’s turn at preparing dinner. Mary, however, may have perceived John’s storyline as implying that her rightful place was in the kitchen, while his was in front of the television drinking a beer. Her value as a tenured professor and an equal partner in their relationship may have been questioned, in Mary’s view, by John’s initial demand. What Mary is contesting is not necessarily what John meant, but rather the meaning

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<sup>37</sup> See Berman, “Formation of ‘National Identity,’” 151. Berman refers to the rejection of a positioning action as “subversive.”

<sup>38</sup> Langenhove and Harré, “Introducing Positioning Theory,” 20–21.

she inferred from his speech action. John likewise might misunderstand Mary's speech action, prompting him to see her as an overbearing feminist or misanthropist who simply wishes to control and manipulate him. For John, Mary's refusal threatens his value as an equal partner in their relationship. The dynamic of such a conversation is sustained by misunderstanding. Understanding can also be present, even when contestation emerges. Mary might very well understand what John is saying, but wishes to highlight the patriarchal implications of such a demand.<sup>39</sup> Truth, however, is not a significant factor. It does not matter which storyline or position is true—indeed they might all be true, or not true, even when it is the same person adopting differing positions and storylines throughout a conversation.<sup>40</sup> Rhetorical redescription, for the sake of persuasively presenting a social perception, is what is central for analyzing the conversation.<sup>41</sup>

This dynamic approach to communication differs from static role theory, as well as less static communication theories such as those offered by Erving Goffman.<sup>42</sup> Davies and Harré, for instance, have countered the dramaturgical models put forth by Goffman, charging that his theories are not discursively interactive enough for analyzing

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<sup>39</sup> On the role of stereotypes as components of storylines, see Luk van Langenhove and Rom Harré, "Positioning as the Production and Use of Stereotypes," especially page 132. Note the power relationship between the interlocutors due to such generalizing stereotypes: "By positioning each other as methodologically defective the group claims hegemony for themselves" (134). The rhetorical effectiveness of such claims through stereotypes tends to be dependent upon the ability of the speaker to link generalized "categories of people" (the "social representation") with a "physical representation" of that category (134). On metaphorical language in positioning, as rhetorical devices for "de-emphasiz[ing] or hid[ing] other aspects in accordance with our cultural values," see Berman, "Formation of a 'National' Identity," 140 (so also mythology on page 142, using Javanese mythology as an example).

<sup>40</sup> F. M. Moghaddam, "Reflexive Positioning: Culture and Private Discourse," 77, further refers to the multiplicity of positions that a person can take on even simultaneously; such positioning is referred to as "parallel positioning" and reflects the mutual presence of intra- and interpersonal positioning within communication. Cf. Raya A. Jones, "The Presence of Self in the Person."

<sup>41</sup> For instance, Berman, "Formation of a 'National Identity,'" 146, observes that within political positioning a state can present a narrative storyline of an evil opposition that does not even exist in order to solidify the dependency of the people upon the state system. Although the opposition may not be real, the social situation of world construction and power contestation is very real and, through the rhetoric of propaganda, is rendered real for those within the discourse. See also Helen Haste, "Constructing the Citizen."

<sup>42</sup> Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis; Forms of Talk*.

the processes by which communication develops.<sup>43</sup> Goffman's theory of frames, as well as his later theory of footings, is concerned with analyzing social interactions within conversations. Frames, for instance, attempt to establish basic frameworks ("...degrees of organisation. Some are neatly presentable as a system of entities, postulates and rules; others, indeed most others, appear to have no particular articulated shape")<sup>44</sup> for locating and making sense of speech actions: a wedding within a play, for instance. Such frames are culturally established prior to the conversations and, therefore, carry resonance with those within (performing within) that cultural unit (e.g., "mother" within a "Jewish culture" will have preliminary set scripts that are taken up or assumed by interlocutors). With such culturally established frameworks, individuals can creatively play with their dramas; they are, as Davies and Harré put it, "thus agent (producer/director) as well as author and player, and the other participants co-author and co-produce the drama."<sup>45</sup> Goffman's theory of frames is still basic role theory, though with a bit of flexibility. His theory of footing, however, is more dynamic. When a person establishes his or her footing within a conversation, she/he is taking into account the possible or likely reactions of the intended audience. One may either gain or lose footing within a conversation. The positions adopted and the scripts conceived or utilized are established prior to the actual inception of dialogue. The problem with this theory is the failure to appreciate the dynamic interaction within dialogue; meanings (or alignments that are infused with meanings), rather than simply being brought into conversations, are, contra Goffman, emergent within conversation and thus are a result of, not a pretext for, dialogical interaction.<sup>46</sup> As Bakhtin put the matter:

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<sup>43</sup> Davies and Harré, "Positioning and Personhood"; cf. Harré and Langenhove, "Reflective Positioning," 64–66.

<sup>44</sup> Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 21.

<sup>45</sup> Davies and Harré, "Positioning and Personhood," 42.

<sup>46</sup> Davies and Harré critique "footing" as follows ("Positioning and Personhood," 45; see also the distinction between role and position on pages 41–42): "This could not be in sharper contrast to our conception of positioning, since it takes for granted that alignments exists prior to speaking and shape it, rather than that alignments are actual relations jointly produced in the very act of conversing." On the relational aspects of alignments, see D. Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand Me*. See also the comments in D. Carbaugh, "Positioning as Display of Cultural Identity," 175.

Any concrete discourse (utterance) finds the object at which it was directed already as it were overlain with qualifications, open to dispute, charged with value, enveloped in an obscuring mist or, on the contrary, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgements and accents... The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around that given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue.<sup>47</sup>

A more complex, dialogical process of interaction and social location underlies discourse, thereby calling for a more complex appreciation for discursive interactions than Goffman's footing theory would allow.<sup>48</sup>

The contestation/assumption/acceptance of moral authority and the establishment of moral codes are at the heart of positioning theory.<sup>49</sup> Given the dialogic nature of communication, speech acts (with their attendant storylines and positions) will emerge from preceding acts.<sup>50</sup> The storylines, positions, and acts all work in tandem to shape or counter the shaping of perceptions; i.e., memory construction or reconstruction through rhetorical redescription. An analysis of discursive engagement must therefore recognize the rhetorical role that each speech action plays within, and emerges from, broader communicative settings. Indeed, even when addressing oneself within, for instance, Wisse's suggestion regarding the possible idiosyncratic nature of certain literary works or a private diary (perhaps also in diatribe), discourse remains interactive and dialogical; a speaker will discourse with himself or herself, projecting their self as an object for directing the discourse. Such self-as-subject and self-as-object within discourse again works with the same dynamics as externalized communication and therefore is open to critical analysis by means of positioning theory. As Howie and Peters, building upon Alex Kozulin's reading of Vygotsky's theoretical work, insightfully observe,

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<sup>47</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 275; cited in Howie and Peters, "Positioning Theory," 52.

<sup>48</sup> Note also Vygotsky's delineation of the Russian paradigm for psychology: "To study something historically means to study it in the process of change; that is the dialectical method's basic demand"; Vygotsky, *Mind in Society*, 65; cited in Howie and Peters, "Positioning Theory," 56.

<sup>49</sup> See Deborah M. Kolb, "Staying in the Game or Changing It."

<sup>50</sup> See Langenhove and Harré, "Introducing Positioning Theory," 28: "The fact that both storyline and illocutionary force of the speech-acts are jointly created by the conversants and so made determinate means that rejection of the original positioning by other conversants and the adopting of other positions *redefines every aspect of the conversation*" (emphasis added).

even with externalized communication there is still an internalized process of positioning, albeit in relation to the other interlocutor.<sup>51</sup> Sui-Lan Tan and F. M. Maghaddam have further extended the interactive dynamics of positioning to intergroup and intragroup discourse. Tan and Maghaddam, recognizing the identity forming and “other”-making processes at work within such group interactions, observe that linguistic markers such as personal pronouns, group labels (both of self and of other), and the construction of group histories all serve to rhetorically establish differential power relations of elite and non-elite paradigms.<sup>52</sup> Conflict resolution between group factions (intragroup) or opposing groups (intergroup) can in some cases be achieved through the role of a mediator.<sup>53</sup> The mediator—even if only fictive in presentation or role adoption—takes on the position of an impartial and trustworthy figure for both groups. Such a mediator offers new storylines for the groups, attempting to position (or re-position) the groups into new alignments to each other so that a mutual relationship (with attendant mutual goals) will emerge and potentially replace the storylines of conflict.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Howie and Peters, “Positioning Theory,” 59: “In conversation, the individual is not only acting as an individual, but as a collaborator in the positioning that occurs.” This is true regardless of whether the individual is located in first-, second-, or third order positioning. See Alex Kozulin, *Vygotsky’s Psychology*, 268; see also, “Life as Authoring,” especially 345. An appreciation for interpsychological and intrapsychological dialogue is based on Vygotsky, *Mind in Society*, 57, where the focus is placed on child psychological development. The most extensive application of intra-personal positioning is Moghaddam, “Reflexive Positioning.” Moghaddam extends this discussion to imaginary discourse (dreams, supernatural beings, deities, etc.) and autobiography (on autobiography in particular see Harré and Langenhove, “Reflexive Positioning,” 60–73; see also Davies and Harré, “Positioning and Personhood,” 38). For the study of paraenetic texts, especially religious paraenetic texts, these dimensions of internal discourse/positioning are very relevant. I would add, however, that diatribe could be seen as a type of intra-personal positioning. In such cases as the Pauline autobiographical statements, the self-positioning through autobiography works with an internal dialogue for the sake of rhetorically rendering an external dialogue. Whether such writing is truly reflexive positioning or not is open to debate (e.g., Moghaddam, “Reflexive Positioning,” 85, claims that published autobiographies are not true instances of reflexive positioning due to the public release of the reflections).

<sup>52</sup> Sui-Lan Tan and F. M. Moghaddam, “Positioning in Intergroup Relations.”

<sup>53</sup> Tan and Moghaddam, “Positioning in Intergroup Relations,” 185.

<sup>54</sup> Tan and Moghaddam, “Positioning in Intergroup Relations,” 185–86: “The mediating party adds another dimension to the positioning arena, in that it will typically also aim to position itself positively and favourably, and in that it views the positions of the two groups in conflict from a third and new vantage point... When frozen narratives begin to unfreeze, possibilities for novel approaches to old problems may be discovered.”

An appreciation for discursive positioning is especially insightful for the analysis of historical instances of discourse. Rather than seeing a text or artefact as a window into the historical setting to which the historian attempts to gain access, positioning places stress upon the fragmentary instance of a speech action within broader communicative speech acts. A text, therefore, is not distanced from the discursive context, but rather is, itself, an instance of discursive engagement. It is a discursive voice, or fragment of a voice, within that engagement, with all the implications of those voices we hear within person-to-person conversations. As a speech action, attempting to counter or establish a speech act, texts will offer positions and attendant storylines. They will contest or accept preceding storylines/positions. The voice of a text, speaking in place of an interlocutor, will, when activated within communicative settings, claim moral authority regarding rights, duties and obligations. This appreciation of the rhetorical strategy of texts offers us insights into the problem of moving from the literary (including the narrative) level of the text to the historical setting(s) behind the text. The unanswerable questions of date, authorship and location are set aside, and instead social processes of persuasion, memory (re-) construction, and interactive production of meanings through moral alignments is stressed. A text, therefore, ceases to be a simple window into the past and, instead, is seen as an integral part of that historical setting and, most importantly, is analyzed as a discursive fragment instead of a fragment of an occasion through which the broader setting could be inferred; rather than a window that serves as a source of historical inference of the occasion of the text, we have instead a mirror within which the text is self-reflected and refracted.<sup>55</sup> What sets apart a discursive reading of a text from the typical historical approach is the end goal of the metaphors utilized: a window implies the goal

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<sup>55</sup> Such a discursive approach to historical texts does not, however, mean that the historian cannot reach some objective sense of past events. As Langenhove and Bertolink, "Assessment of Technology," 120, observe, there are both strong and weak forms of social constructionism. Whereas the former would deny any access to objective descriptions of the world (cf. B. Latour and S. Woolgar, *Laboratory Life*; and K. D. Knorr-Cetina, *The Manufacture of Knowledge*, the latter contends that one can indeed access objective descriptions of the world, but that such descriptions are located within theoretical contours (highlighting, therefore, "the multiplicity and relativity of the human interpretations of reality"). See also K. Gergen, "The Social Constructionist Movement in Modern Psychology." My approach fits into the latter approach; cf. Tite, "Naming or Defining?" *passim*, for a similar articulation of my view on knowledge construction.

of inferring the broader context that the text emerges from or points towards through direct and indirect referents (thus, even if a text is not external to the occasion, the historian's interest is in gaining access to the context through the inferential value of the text), whereas a conversation partner implies the text as social communication (thus, the text is never an external and serves no inferential value for an external, historical occasion for the text; rather, the text is seen as an attempt to shape the social processes or perceptions through its rhetorical potential for directing conversation; in some cases through setting up possible inferential readings and in others by constructing/reconstructing social memory). These two approaches are not necessarily opposed to each other. Indeed, the more we know about the historical occasion of a text the greater the plausibility of any analysis of the discursive dimensions of the text. Where there is not enough material to work with for reconstructing the occasion of a text, a social analysis is still possible by focussing upon how the text is designed to socially function as a rhetorical action. Such an analysis of social function, therefore, no longer focuses upon the social contexts within which the text can be located, but rather upon how the text is designed to affect readers as conversation partners.

Texts, however, are not the same as direct communication. This is especially true of historical remains for which an entire conversation is missing. There are two difficulties with historical texts as voices. First, there is the fragmentary nature of the conversation. What we have is, by analogy, only a small part of a telephone conversation. As with overhearing a telephone conversation, with texts we only have one side of a conversation. This does not negate the discursive and interactive nature of that conversation. Rather, it complicates any attempt to fully locate that partial conversation within a broader dialogue. Consequently, any attempt at mirror reading, such as was once popular within Pauline studies especially,<sup>56</sup> should be avoided. Not only is the text not a window, it is also not a (complete?) transcription of a discussion.

Secondly, there is the temporal distance within the communication itself. Riva and Galimberti, in their study of modern modes of communication through technology, have insightfully delineated two types of temporal relationship between interlocutors: synchronous and

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<sup>56</sup> For a helpful critique of mirror reading in Pauline studies, see especially Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography*, 96–105.

asynchronous communication.<sup>57</sup> Synchronous communication takes place in real time, near instantaneously. The reception and reaction within communication is simultaneous, such as face-to-face conversation or conversation through telephone, instant Internet chat, or video conferencing. Asynchronous communication occurs when communication is not simultaneous or near instantaneous. Letters, including e-mail or Internet discussion boards, require a time lag between the sending of a message and the opening/receiving of, and replying to a message.

Most historical texts, such as the early Christian material, would fit the asynchronous side of this typology. I say most and not all, as some texts may have been performed within social settings wherein reaction and debate could emerge. Letters, however, are clear instances of asynchronic communication. Ptolemy, for example, evidently wrote his letter to Flora and sent it to her. At some later point, she would have received it and, when she decided to, read it. Perhaps a response was then prepared and sent back; or, perhaps, Ptolemy's own letter was in response to a letter now lost. A speech, or an oral presentation of text, however, may have both synchronous and asynchronous attributes, carrying an asynchronic character given the stage of composition prior to delivery; yet, unlike with asynchronic texts, it will have a possible synchronous dimension at the moment of delivery. A speaker, such as perhaps the author of Hebrews, prepared an address to be given by him or her within real time. Its preparation is asynchronous with whatever may have prompted the composition, but its real time delivery may have been part of, or the beginnings of, one or more series of speech acts each occurring in immediate sequence. The same might be true of the *Gos. Phil.*, if indeed Louis Painchaud's compositional analysis correctly identifies it as fitting ancient rhetorical conventions of speech arrangement.<sup>58</sup>

Asynchronic texts engage relational and discursive aspects of positioning theory. They generate a first-order act, constructing storylines and establishing positions from which the reader(s) should be persuaded to respond as the author hopes. What is different from synchronic speech acts, however, is that the second-order act does not necessarily precede third-order acts. Indeed, it is possible that prior to sending his

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<sup>57</sup> Riva and Galimberti, "Psychology of Cyberspace," 148–50.

<sup>58</sup> Louis Painchaud, "La composition de l'Évangile selon Philippe." See the critique of Painchaud's analysis of *Gos. Phil.* in Bas van Os, *Baptism in the Bridal Chamber*, 9–15.

letter to Flora, Ptolemy decided to run it by a colleague; or, he could have discussed the matter with another theologian before receiving Flora's response. Flora also could engage in a third-order act before responding (accepting, modifying, or rejecting) Ptolemy's positioning. For instance, she may have questioned whether his teacher-student framework is appropriate (perhaps she sees herself as his equal theologically), and complains to another Christian about Ptolemy's views and implicit claim to moral authority in theological matters prior to writing a refutation. Of course we only have Ptolemy's letter and therefore cannot reconstruct any such series of speech acts; yet, such a series of speech acts is only possible due to such non-simultaneous time. In each type of communication, the speech actions develop from an interactive social engagement, and are discursive partners within the communication process.

In addressing the social-historical aspects of a text the question arises as to what type of positioning the author generates for his or her rhetorical play. In other words, we recognize that our text is a discursive speech act, one that portrays the various members of a (possibly fictional) community (or, when not addressed to a specific community, the readership/implied reader) by positioning them within socially interactive relations.<sup>59</sup> Such positioning attempts to generate a broader world construct by which the readers are intended to reassess the situation being addressed.<sup>60</sup> In this constructive process—a dynamic rhetorical act of positioning rather than objectively presenting static roles—our author needs to reconstruct social memory. Memory construction is, to add to Langenhove and Harré's theory, a vital function of discursive positioning. As Jean-Pierre Vernant, in reference to memory in ancient Greece, states: "Memory, insofar as it is distinguished from habit, represents a difficult invention, the progressive conquest by man of his individual past, as history constitutes for the social group the conquest of its collective past."<sup>61</sup> According to Ross and Conway,

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<sup>59</sup> Discursive positioning is discernable within the Pauline corpus, specifically in how Paul opens his letters. See Tite, "How to Begin and Why?"

<sup>60</sup> The dynamic of positioning in discursive storytelling also is true at the meta-level of academic research. This point is emphasized by Langenhove and Harré, "Introducing Positioning," 28–31; see also Luk van Langenhove and Rom Harré, "Positioning and the Writing of Science"; "Positioning in Scientific Discourse."

<sup>61</sup> Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs*, 51; cited in Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, 63. Vernant is drawing upon Ignace Meyerson, "Le temps la mémoire, l'histoire," 351. Le Goff illustrates the political value of memory/history for

memory construction (or reconstruction) tends to follow three basic processes: selective recall, reinterpretation/re-explanation of events, and filling in gaps in memory.<sup>62</sup> All three processes perpetually occur unconsciously, which, for Ross and Conway, renders memory problematic for historical reconstruction. However, these same processes underlie rhetorical strategies that attempt to construct or reconstruct memory for a persuasive intent. As Harré and Langenhove articulated well: “the question is not what people ‘forget’ about their own life, but why they make use in a given situation of this or that action as part of their personal stories.”<sup>63</sup> The authors of early Christian paraenetic texts, such as *Auth. Teach.* or *Epistle of Barnabas*, may have been complete failures in persuading or dissuading their audience, or even the majority of the audience, but in order to understand their attempt we need to understand not only the historical location and function of the text (if possible), but perhaps more importantly the author’s perception of that location or function as embedded within the text.<sup>64</sup>

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affecting national conscience within the Roman period: “The weapon was the *damnatio memoriae*, which removes the name of a defiant emperor from archival documents and from monumental inscriptions. The power to destroy memory is a counterweight to power achieved through the production of memory” (68). In order to understand the paraenetic rhetoric within early Christian texts, therefore, it may be instructive to look at how our texts construct or deconstruct their own community’s “memory” or perception, such as within the *Interp. Know.*’s specific social conflict. See also Dorothy Howie, “Preparing for Positive Positioning,” 59, and Harré and Langenhove, “Reflexive Positioning,” 68, where memory is touched on. Berman, “Formation of ‘National Identity,’” 150, recognizes the rhetorical significance of appeals to some past affiliation.

<sup>62</sup> Mike Ross and M. Conway, “Remembering One’s Own Past.” Cf. A. G. Greenwald, “The Totalitarian Ego”; and discussion in Harré and Langenhove, “Reflexive Positioning,” 68.

<sup>63</sup> Harré and Langenhove, “Reflexive Positioning,” 72. Moghaddam, “Reflexive Positioning,” 75–76, refers to these bites of selected memory as “fragments of unfolding personal stories.”

<sup>64</sup> Karen L. King, “The Politics of Syncretism,” invokes a fascinating metaphor of a cook in a kitchen. Just as a cook will draw upon what is at hand, blending various elements together to “fit” those who will eat the meal, so also ancient authors may have simply drawn upon various elements at their disposal; not with issues of origins or ownership in mind, but rather raising the question of “what works?” in a given context. King’s image of a cook is helpful for our purposes in that it illuminates the role of an author within the context of an engagement with cultural elements available. In this sense, therefore, no text need be “accurate” historically to be historically acute. King’s concern over the performative nature of ancient texts, in this case the Sethian *Ap. John*, helps move us away from the search for original texts or static cultural units, and move us toward seeing texts as “originally performed” with each performance (either in the process of reading or writing) and cultural units as dynamic and interactive (see also her, “Approaching the Variants of the *Apocryphon of John*”).

With such an appreciation of positioning in mind, my goal is to tease out clues as to the social processes that seem present within Valentinian paraenetic texts. Similar to the work of Wayne Meeks, my proposal is to focus on the moral contours or intuitions of a specific text and its specific function.<sup>65</sup> Rather than deducing ethical principles, or the historical location of those principles, I wish to focus more on the social and rhetorical processes of addressing moral challenges facing the intended audience. The specific storylines, positions, and speech actions that are teased out from discursive moments, including historical remnants of such moments, must be culturally located. Indeed, concern for the particular cultural context(s) underlies most positioning theorists.<sup>66</sup> Such cultural sensitivity, consequently, helps the historian of early Christianity avoid anachronistic applications of modern communication theories; as application of the theory must be culturally refined.<sup>67</sup> The “storylines” that might be adopted within a paraenetic text could fit those social settings or contexts that tend to typify paraenesis, at least as enumerated by Perdue.<sup>68</sup> An author, for instance, may adopt the storyline of a teacher’s final instruction, a rite of passage or new stage in the life cycle, a potentially threatening situation or social crisis that endangers the reader, or other such settings that would fit a paraenetic address.<sup>69</sup> These storylines would serve as framing mechanisms for the author’s speech act and would incorporate or be developed through the process of positioning the author, readers, and others brought into the discussion.

Given the relational nature of such communication, it is necessary to note the establishment of moral relations in a text; i.e., the imaginative or narrative portrayal of relational dependency, accountability, or power relations between interlocutors. Such moral relations are tied into the social idealization(s) that an author might posit or contest. What is

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<sup>65</sup> Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*.

<sup>66</sup> See, e.g., Moghaddam, “Reflexive Positioning,” 80, 83; Berman, “Formation of ‘National Identity,’” passim; Carbaugh, “Positioning as Display,” passim. Carbaugh in particular notes that, “this cultural discourse is partly constructed through assertions that employ key cultural symbols...and their associated premises” (161).

<sup>67</sup> Such refinement must, according to Carbaugh (“Positioning as Display,” 163), consider the dynamic tension between “the familiar cultural positions” and “the immediate interactional position” within a given discourse.

<sup>68</sup> See discussion in chapter 3.

<sup>69</sup> For a full discussion of Perdue’s social contexts/settings, see chapter 3.

the ideal social unit presented by the author?<sup>70</sup> That is, how does the author implicitly or explicitly, through a narratological presentation, advocate the proper social relations as reflected in the literary contours of the text? A brief discussion of moral relations, drawing upon Guy Swanson's sociological work, will help establish the importance of such relations for the study of paraenetic texts.

In *The Birth of the Gods* Swanson attempts to determine those social structures that enable certain "primitive" beliefs to emerge, or the way in which those beliefs develop.<sup>71</sup> Much of his work is a challenge to E. B. Tylor and is built upon the theoretical foundation of Emile Durkheim. Working with a sample of fifty simple societies, gathered from diverse regions and time periods, Swanson argued that certain conditions of ultimate sovereign organizations resulted in the emergence of particular beliefs, such as witchcraft, reincarnation, and immanence of the soul.<sup>72</sup> Despite the extreme reduction of his work, he is to be commended for attempting to relate social patterns to social beliefs. More important for our discussion is his consideration of the relationship between social morality and supernatural sanctions for moral codes.<sup>73</sup>

Supernatural sanctions, or mythical grounds, for morality necessitate the presence of a moral relation between those involved in the society. Specifically the moral agents are faced with some sort of "unstable moral relationship."<sup>74</sup> Therefore, a link between morality and supernatural

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<sup>70</sup> Moghaddam, "Reflective Positioning," 81, touches on this issue of social idealization when analyzing the rhetoric of Henry Thoreau in the nineteenth century: "... Thoreau's retreat to the woods... [is] an attempt to achieve reflexive positioning through the use of a selected ideal state. His journals reveal a strategic use of an ideal for self-to-self positioning."

<sup>71</sup> Guy E. Swanson, *Birth of the Gods*.

<sup>72</sup> Swanson, *Birth of the Gods*, 20, defines sovereign as follows: "A group has sovereignty to the extent that it has original and independent jurisdiction over some sphere of life—that its power to make decisions in this sphere is not delegated from outside but originates within it, and that its exercise of this power cannot legitimately be abrogated by another group. Although the term 'sovereignty' is commonly applied to nations or states, it can be applied to other groups as well."

<sup>73</sup> Swanson, *Birth of the Gods*, 153–74 ("The Supernatural and Morality").

<sup>74</sup> Swanson, *Birth of the Gods*, 159–60, claims that there are two hypothetical situations that result in supernatural sanctions being applied to morality: 1) "Any important but unstable moral relationship between individuals, whether as particular persons or as members of some group, will evoke supernatural sanctions to buttress their fragile association"; and 2) "supernatural controls cannot be exercised over interpersonal relations unless the number of persons having interests peculiar to themselves has become great enough to create a large number of social relations in which people interact as particular individuals, rather than as members of some group."

sanctions emerges when there is a perceived crisis to social cohesion that could threaten the group's existence. The need for moral relations to exist within these communities renders the moral sanctions an "insiders'" discourse. Indeed, Swanson claims that the first step in exploring such moral sanctions is to "first establish that a moral relation exists in the population being studied."<sup>75</sup> With a similar appreciation for the relational aspects of social roles, Gerd Theissen has recently commented that when one adopts a particular role, one always stands in some form of social relationship with another person or role: "Anyone who adopts the role of a pupil adopts a relationship to a teacher. Anyone who adopts the role of a 'child' adopts a relationship to 'parents.'" A fluid, and co-dependent, relationship emerges that is "internalized" through, for example, "the performance of ritual."<sup>76</sup> Ethics, social norms, and community interaction are, therefore, dependent upon both the existence of moral relations as well as the successful internalization of the worldview underlying those very relations. Or, in G. E. Moore's terms, a moral obligation only exists when commands are established as morally binding, that is when commands are perceived as related to the good.<sup>77</sup> Swanson's work, though clearly dated and functionalist rather than interactionist,<sup>78</sup> is especially helpful in that it draws specific attention to these moral relations within the moral sanctions of a social group.

In turning to the occasion of the Valentinian texts, it is necessary to establish whether a "moral relation" exists. For example, for a social analysis of the *Inter. Know.*, an assessment of the relations between the two factions (discussed in chapter 6) is needed in order fully to appreciate the discursive function of the paraenetic material. Does the author recognize that his or her faction stands in some moral relation

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<sup>75</sup> Swanson, *Birth of the Gods*, 160.

<sup>76</sup> Gerd Theissen, *A Theory of Primitive Christian Religion*, 11. In social learning theory, a similar position is put forth by A. Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*, vii, noting a reciprocal relationship between various reciprocal determinants: people and environment, student and teacher, etc.

<sup>77</sup> G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, 128.

<sup>78</sup> A helpful overview of the three major streams of role theory (structural-analytical model, interactionist model, and perceptual model) is offered in Nils G. Holm, "Role Theory and Religious Experience." Although Holm prefers the perceptual model, notably in the work of Hj. Sundén, my approach best fits the symbolic interactionism model, which places stress on the relational and social constructionist dynamic of social ethics as dialogue.

to the opposing faction; do they, in effect, belong to the same ultimate sovereign group?

Two qualifications must be noted. First, we need clearly to differentiate *actual* social relations and *perceived* social relations.<sup>79</sup> Rhetorical portrayal of a social situation can radically differ from an actual social context; polemical “other-making” can negate moral relations even within the same social body. Second, we must also recognize that “ultimate sovereign association” is a relative concept, especially in dealing with late antiquity. Swanson primarily draws upon tribal structures, where the simplicity of the structure renders the identification of ultimate sovereign associations more feasible. The Greco-Roman world, including Christianity as a segment of that world, was far more complicated, with various levels of sovereign social entities. Such associations exist at multiple social levels, each text reflecting one such level within more complicated structures. In the *Interp. Know.*, for instance, there is the level of the faction itself; of the local community comprising, or including, two factions; of the Christian Church generally; and the broader Greco-Roman culture they exist within.<sup>80</sup> We could also ask what role the metaphysical or mythical realm plays in the moral relations perceived by the author. Keeping in mind these qualifications, it will be beneficial to see how the author views moral relations at differing social gradations.

#### SOCIAL RHETORIC AND NARRATIVITY

How does such a discursive approach impact the historical agenda? To draw upon our metaphor, what happens to our “bridge” between text and context? The approach advocated above avoids the entire attempt at bridge-building, and instead side-steps the entire methodological “gap” between text and context. In order to clearly articulate what should constitute a social analysis of the Valentinian material, it might be helpful to set forth the narrative theory presented by Margaret Somers

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<sup>79</sup> Recognizing this distinction between actual and perceived realities, especially when addressing issues of community identity, is one of the shortcomings of Swanson’s sociological approach. He fails to note that the interrelationship of social units is as much a matter of perceived group identity as it is actual social structures.

<sup>80</sup> See chapter 6 for a comprehensive discussion of these two factions in *Interp. Know.*

and Gloria Gibson for social and political theory.<sup>81</sup> Their work is very similar to the discursive approach articulated by positioning theory, yet has the advantage in that Somers and Gibson effectively relate identity construction to not simply communication but more specifically to narratives and metanarratives.

Somers and Gibson note that social scientists who engage narrative as a theoretical framework tend to either follow what could be called *representational* narrativity or *ontological* narrativity. Representational narratives constitute “modes of representing knowledge (telling historical stories) [that are] representational *forms* imposed by historians on the chaos of lived experience.”<sup>82</sup> To engage in a representational narrative analysis is to draw upon, for instance, historical texts to infer the historical processes, essences, and causal development of human groups. This is especially true when we consider the metanarrative level of scholarly “stories” of what constitutes “history” and historical knowledge. The historical approaches to early Christian material explored in this chapter all attempt such inferential readings through representational narrative. The other form of narrativity explored by Somer and Gibson is *ontological* narrative, where,

... social life is itself *storied* and that narrative is an *ontological condition of social life*. Their [those following ontological narrativity] research is showing us that stories guide action; that people construct identities (however multiple or changing) by locating themselves or being located within a repertoire of emplotted stories; that “experience” is constituted through narratives... and that people are guided to act in certain ways, and not others, on the basis of their projections, expectations, and memories derived from a multiplicity but ultimately limited repertoire of available social, public, and cultural narratives.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, rather than building a “bridge”, where the text is viewed simply as a repository of historical knowledge that can be inferentially obtained if set within a correct epistemological framework or representation, a social analysis of early Christian texts can better be served by viewing the text as a discursive fragment wherein social *agency* and social *structure* are dialogically interrelated within an ongoing process of defining, determining, contesting and even ignoring ontological products: the

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<sup>81</sup> Margaret R. Somers and Gloria D. Gibson, “Reclaiming the Epistemological ‘Other’.”

<sup>82</sup> Somers and Gibson, “Reclaiming the Epistemological ‘Other,’” 38.

<sup>83</sup> Somers and Gibson, “Reclaiming the Epistemological ‘Other,’” 38–39.

“self” both individually and interpersonally. At the centre of such an approach is the role of relationality (focused on particularity) rather than universalistic and essentialized attributes.<sup>84</sup>

Like positioning theory, ontological narrativity places stress upon the generation of meaning or identity through interactive processes between social actors, thus rendering social epistemology a processional, contingent and relationally driven construction of social ontology.<sup>85</sup> Such ontology is not simply reflected by narratives. Rather, it is through narratives that social identities are constituted and thus rendered meaningful. Without narrative, there are no identities as it is the process of emplotment (“constellations of relationships”) that “gives significance to independent instances, not their chronological or categorical order” and thus “narrativity turns ‘events’ into *episodes*.”<sup>86</sup> Indeed, it is through plot development, along thematic or conceptual lines, that key elements are selected from an infinite series of events and drawn into evaluative frameworks. Thus, what is selected, or plotted, is what constitutes what is important for an interlocutor. Consequently, in order to appreciate the social rhetoric of a text, it is necessary to discern the ways within which an author discursively positions self and other through thematic frameworks (i.e., social idealization).

Somers and Gibson set forth four types or dimensions of narrativity:

- (1) *Ontological Narratives*—“the stories actors use to make sense of—indeed, in order to act in—their lives. Ontological narratives are used to define who we are; this in turn is a precondition for knowing what to do... People act, or do not act, in part according to how they understand their place in any number of given narratives—however fragmented, contradictory, or partial.”<sup>87</sup> Such narratives are centred upon *narrative location* through which actors are situated, defined, and thus act towards others and self.

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<sup>84</sup> Somers and Gibson, “Reclaiming the Epistemological ‘Other,’” 53, state, “These new theories of ‘identity politics’ have shifted explanations for action from ‘interests’ and ‘norms’ to *identities* and *solidarities*, from the notion of the universalistic social agent to particularistic categories of concrete persons... [who] will act on the grounds of common attributes... theories of identity politics posit that ‘I act because of who I am,’ not because of a rational interest or set of learned values.”

<sup>85</sup> Somers and Gibson, “Reclaiming the Epistemological ‘Other,’” 58–59.

<sup>86</sup> Somers and Gibson, “Reclaiming the Epistemological ‘Other,’” 59.

<sup>87</sup> Somers and Gibson, “Reclaiming the Epistemological ‘Other,’” 61.

- (2) *Public Narratives*—“are those narratives attached to cultural and institutional formations larger than a single individual, to inter-subjective networks or institutions, however local or grand, micro or macro.”<sup>88</sup>
- (3) *Conceptual Narrativity*—“are the concepts and explanations that we construct as social researchers. Because neither social action nor institution-building is produced solely through ontological and public narratives, our concepts and explanations must include the factors we call social forces.”<sup>89</sup>
- (4) *Metanarrativity*—“the ‘master-narratives’ in which we are embedded as contemporary actors in history and as social scientists . . . Our sociological theories and concepts are encoded with aspects of these master-narratives . . . they usually operate at the presuppositional level of social science epistemology or beyond our awareness.”<sup>90</sup>

The latter two dimensions of narrativity focus upon the scholarly construction of history or social processes. This is where our epistemological “baggage” comes into play, our conceptual “tools”, and our own narrative location. In her outstanding discussion of the category “Gnosticism”, Karen King has effectively presented just such an analysis of the narrative location or narrativity of the academic study of Gnosticism.<sup>91</sup> However, it is with the first two dimensions (ontological and public narratives) that my study is most concerned.

While I have a great appreciation for Robbins’s socio-rhetorical criticism, and would certainly welcome a full application of this method to non-canonical texts including the Valentinian sources, there is still the need to recognize more fully and with greater acuity the social strategies within texts. For my study of Valentinian paraenesis, the ontological and public narratives constructed within the specific texts will be explored. My interest is not to construct a reconstruction of the social or historical occasion of a given text or set of texts, but rather to elucidate the social narrative of the text. This does not mean that the text is treated as an ahistorical literary product. Such narratives serve

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<sup>88</sup> Somers and Gibson, “Reclaiming the Epistemological ‘Other,’” 62.

<sup>89</sup> Somers and Gibson, “Reclaiming the Epistemological ‘Other,’” 62.

<sup>90</sup> Somers and Gibson, “Reclaiming the Epistemological ‘Other,’” 63.

<sup>91</sup> King, *What is Gnosticism?* While Williams’s *Rethinking “Gnosticism”* is a seminal work on the issue of category formation in Gnostic studies, and one that I am in agreement with, it is with King’s work that we are presented the most thorough ideological analysis of the field.

social functions in the presentation and formation of identity *by the very act of offering fresh perceptions of the interlocutors*. As narrativity not only shapes ontological identity but also directs behaviours, it is vital that a study of paraenesis explore how the ontological re-presentation (not as historical representation) is designed to hortatively direct ethical behaviour (such as affecting social relations). While directed at actual historical locations or within a communicative setting, social rhetoric is designed to shape perceptions and through such perceptions to impact occasions. A study of Valentinian paraenesis, therefore, will be directed at elucidating the social narrativity of the sources rather than the historical occasion behind the sources.

Such a social rhetoric must take into consideration how a text constructs ontological narratives within public narratives. For instance, the social idealization of the recipients as a “school” or “church” will be shaped by a public narrative of cosmological, social and mythical elements. Such idealization does not mean that the community is a “school” but that the recipients are positioned to perceive themselves as such. Within other narrative contexts (“public narratives”), the same social typology could serve a totally different ontological function; e.g., “school” could serve a polemical function such as it tends to serve within the Church Fathers’ presentations of the Valentinians, whereas in other contexts, such as the *Interp. Know.*, it serves a positive function in the construction of a narrative identity. By using positioning theory to elucidate the ontological and public narratives within our sources, it is hoped that the social rhetoric of the paraenetic discourse within our texts will emerge more fully than it has in previous scholarship.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DEFINING PARAENESIS I: HISTORICAL PHASES WITHIN THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF PARAENESIS

Paraenesis, as moral exhortation intended to either persuade or dissuade a given audience, has been an important part of early Christian discourse since at least the early days of Paul's ministry. Indeed, the earliest extant Christian text that we possess, 1 Thessalonians, has been widely recognized as containing paraenetic material or, most forcefully argued by Abraham Malherbe,<sup>1</sup> as an instance of a paraenetic letter.<sup>2</sup> In developing paraenetic material to shape the moral contours of their various social organizations, early Christians in the first two centuries drew upon common conventions of moral discourse prevalent in the Greco-Roman world.

Writing in the mid-first century c.e., the Roman political philosopher Seneca clearly noted a type of moral exhortation, "which the Greeks call paraenetic [*quam Graeci paraeneticen vocant*], and we Romans call the preceptorial [*nos praecptivam dicimus*]" (*Epistle* 95).<sup>3</sup> In introducing his own moral discourse or epistle, Ps.-Isocrates claimed, "I have not invented a hortatory exercise [*παράκλησιν εὐρόντες*], but have written a moral treatise [*παραίνεσιν γράψαντες*]; and I am going to counsel you on the objects to which young men should aspire and how they should regulate their own lives" (*To Demonicus* 5).<sup>4</sup> If authentic,

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<sup>1</sup> Abraham J. Malherbe, "Exhortation in First Thessalonians"; *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, 49–66. Similarly, see Raymond F. Collins, "The Function of Paraenesis in 1 Thess."

<sup>2</sup> Although 1 Thessalonians is the earliest extant Christian text we have, this does not mean that paraenetic material was not present in even earlier material that scholarship has been able to discern and, in some cases and to some extent, reconstruct. The hypothetical Q<sub>1</sub> and *Gospel of Thomas* are indicative of an early Christian sapiential tradition (see the insightful study of these texts, noting the shift toward an apocalyptic social perspective in Q<sub>2</sub>, William E. Arnal, "The Rhetoric of Marginality"). Many of the sayings of Jesus, such as those embedded in the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain, may indicate that Jesus or at least the Jesus movement engaged in paraenetic discourse.

<sup>3</sup> Text and translation from the LCL.

<sup>4</sup> Text and translation from the LCL.

then Ps.-Isocrates's *To Demonicus* is our earliest reference to the paraenetic genre.<sup>5</sup> For Isocrates, such a genre is to be distinguished from the rhetorical display of fine speech and should, instead, focus on the moral development of the readers' character. For Seneca, as well as for Quintilian (*Inst.* 3.6.47; 9.2.103),<sup>6</sup> paraenesis is essentially precept giving. Modern scholarly discussions of paraenesis clearly acknowledge the ancient recognition of such a type of discourse, yet debate the exact particulars of what constitutes paraenesis. In this and the next chapter, I will present and refine "paraenesis" as a type of moral discourse. I begin with a survey of the history of the study of paraenesis within biblical studies, which, for New Testament scholars, essentially begins with Martin Dibelius.

#### PARAENESIS FROM DIBELIUS TO OSLO

The scholarly study of paraenesis within biblical studies stretches from the seminal work of Martin Dibelius near the beginning of the twentieth century up to the Lund-Oslo conferences held in northern Europe in 2000 and 2001. Much of the development in the field has been a slow, overlapping of shifts in understanding the concept of paraenesis, along with other generic designations (notably protrepsis and paraklesis), rather than in sharply delineated, and easily isolated, periods or historical phases of study. In order to offer a helpful overview of these shifts and developments, however, a heuristic delineation of four general historical phases in the study of paraenesis will be offered. These phases, however, are not distinctly separate from each other. Rather, there is a great deal of overlap, both in those figures who play important roles in different phases (e.g., Malherbe dominates in Phase Two, but is also a

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<sup>5</sup> If Isocrates, *To Demonicus* is not authentic, as most scholars believe, then it is witness to both a period closer to that of formative Christianity and as an indication of an appeal to a Greek philosophical tradition. A recent work, breaking from the majority of scholarship, that argues for authenticity is Yun Lee Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*, especially 58, n. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Quintilian, *Inst.* 3.6.47 states that "the hortative... is peculiar to the deliberative speech" and again at *Inst.* 9.2.103 exhortation, within a list of figures, is synonymous with paraenesis ("exhortationem, παραινετικόν"). Although in the former case, Quintilian uses the designation προτρεπτική στάσις (as one of Athenaeus' four *bases*), he sees this designation as equivalent παρορητική. For Quintilian there is no clear distinction between *paraenesis* and *protrepsis* (or other similar terms) for exhortation. Text and translation from LCL.

major voice in Phase Four) and in the work of one phase building on, accepting, or rejecting aspects of previous scholarship. Furthermore, there is no homogeneous position to typify each phase. Rather, there is, especially in Phase Four, a great deal of diversity in views. Finally, the presence of certain aspects of one phase in subsequent phases will be evident. Consequently, these breaks offered here are merely for the sake of discussion and should not deter from the dynamic and ongoing debates over paraenesis within the field. Still, even with such a caution, the historical demarcations offered here are valid. Each demarcation notes a significant contribution to the study of paraenesis within biblical studies, a contribution that is justifiably seminal in significance. Given the importance of particular individual scholars within a specific historical phase, more attention will be given to some than others. Such emphasis, for example with Perdue and Martin in Phase Three, will also be due to the contribution such a position makes to addressing the question of this study: what is the social function of paraenesis in Valentinianism?

#### PHASE ONE: MARTIN DIBELIUS

In many ways, we could say that New Testament analysis of paraenesis both began and, ironically, nearly ended with Martin Dibelius. Scholarly discussions of paraenesis have stagnated in large part due to the influence of his seminal commentary on James. Dibelius defines paraenesis as “a text which strings together admonitions of general ethical content.”<sup>7</sup> It is this definition of paraenesis that allows Dibelius to address the perpetual debate over compositional arrangement in James scholarship. In effect, he solves the problem of arrangement by denying any such coherent organization of material. Dibelius then unpacks this definition of paraenesis, first by denoting the hortatory nature of paraenesis, which distinguishes it from *gnomologium*: “Paraenetic sayings ordinarily address themselves to a specific (though perhaps fictional) audience, or at least appear in the form of a command or summons. It is this factor which differentiates them from the *gnomologium*, which is merely a

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<sup>7</sup> Martin Dibelius, *James*, 3; building on the work of Paul Wendland, *Anaximenes von Lampsakos*, 81; Rudolf Vetschern, *Zur griechischen Paränese*.

collection of maxims.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, paraenesis, though a “stringing together” of sayings is distinct in that it has an imperatival force behind it.

Dibelius proceeds to establish four features of paraenesis. First, there is “a pervasive *eclecticism* which is a natural consequence of the history and nature of paraenesis.” This eclectic quality reflects “the transmission of an ethical tradition.”<sup>9</sup> As a consequence of such eclecticism, the value of authorship of the paraenetic material is rendered unimportant: we are faced not with original material, but rather with a scattered drawing upon of diverse stock ethical material by an author. Indeed, for Dibelius this eclectic quality is a central feature of paraenesis, one with an emphasis on transmission rather than originality.<sup>10</sup>

The second feature closely builds on the first: “lack of continuity.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the bringing together of diverse and general ethical material for exhortation tends to result in Dibelius’s “stringing together of sayings.”<sup>12</sup> Such “stringing together” of material, with random or incoherent transitional links, is what Dibelius sees as the most common form of paraenesis. Such an evaluation is not surprising given both the proposed definition of paraenesis and the exegetical application (or problem solving endeavour) that he is attempting in this commentary. One common device that he identifies for such loose stringing together of traditions is the “catchword,” i.e., the repetition of the same word or a cognate in what are otherwise seemingly random sentences. Such catchwords were originally meant as mnemonic devices, though Dibelius argues that “this device has become literary and its use cannot serve as evidence that the statements in question were already juxtaposed in the oral tradition.”<sup>13</sup> Although this qualification clearly denotes the shift from the oral to written traditions, a shift that was of utmost importance in

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<sup>8</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 5. In support, he cites Isocrates, *To Nicocles* 41: “...but, rather, we should regard that man as the most accomplished in this field who can collect the greatest number of ideas scattered among the thoughts of all the rest and present them in the best form.”

<sup>10</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 5. The emphasis on the transmission of an ethical tradition should not, he contends, call into question an author’s virtue: “On the other hand, the author should not be reproached for his eclectic style and he should not be accused of ‘parading the fruits of his studies.’ For this eclecticism is an inherent aspect of paraenesis. Paul, too, in the paraenetical sections of his letters, is more interested in transmission than in originality” (5).

<sup>11</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 6–7.

Dibelius's work on the gospel traditions,<sup>14</sup> for those who study paraenesis the catchword, along with the eclectic nature of those "strings" will play an enduring role.

The third feature identified for paraenesis is "the repetition of identical motifs in different places within a writing."<sup>15</sup> Here Dibelius ties paraenetic material into the transmission of traditions and the effects such transmission might have on the arrangement of paraenetic material within a given, or final, literary context. He believes that such traditional paraenetic material would have been transmitted in various combinations, the rationality of which was no longer extant. Thus, combined material would have been kept combined without a planned arrangement for its present utilization. Repetition, and variance, of motifs would have naturally emerged. This third feature of paraenesis reinforces Dibelius's broader understanding of paraenesis as being random and loosely strung together general hortatory material.

The fourth and final feature of paraenesis that Dibelius identifies is directly tied into his view that paraenetic discourse is general in nature: "...the admonitions do not apply to a single audience and a single set of circumstances; it is not possible to construct a single frame into which they will all fit."<sup>16</sup> In his definition, Dibelius claims, however, that paraenesis is addressed "to a specific (though perhaps) fictional audience."<sup>17</sup> There is no contradiction between the definition and the fourth feature of paraenesis. The specificity mentioned refers to the hortatory or imperatival nature of paraenetic material: rather than a general wisdom saying or advice on life, this material directs, commands or admonishes. Such an imperatival nature implies a specific audience, but, Dibelius believes, is not necessarily particular to a concrete setting or historical location. In commenting on the paraenetic material in James, 1 Peter, 1 Clement, Didache, and Hermas, Dibelius explicitly refers to the hortatory material as merely "der allgemeinen

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<sup>14</sup> See Martin Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte*, esp. 234–64. He specifically states the paraenetic nature of the Jesus sayings for early Christians: "So können wir behaupten, daß man frühzeitig, nämlich schon zu des Paulus Zeit, Worte Jesu gesammelt hat zum Zweck der Paränese" (244).

<sup>15</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 11. So also stated in Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte*, 239: "Vor allem fehlen ihnen eine unmittelbare Beziehung auf die Briefsituation. Die Regeln und Weisungen sind nicht für bestimmte Gemeinden und konkrete Fälle formuliert, sondern für die allgemeinen Bedürfnisse der ältesten Christenheit. Sie haben nicht aktuelle, sondern usuelle Bedeutung."

<sup>17</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 11.

urchristlichen Paränese.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, paraenesis carries a trait of universal applicability due to its tacit (and fictive) specificity.

With this definition of paraenesis, especially with the explication of the four paraenetic features, Dibelius’s work has to a large degree rendered paraenesis an eclectic, non-concrete, mixture of stock hortatory material. Little sense underlies the placement, form, or utilization of paraenetic material. In his commentary on James, this very understanding of paraenesis serves to establish his claim that there is no logical structural arrangement to the letter. A paraenetic text, therefore, simply becomes an amorphous thematic rambling of loosely held together traditions.<sup>19</sup> With such an understanding of paraenesis, it is no wonder that scholarly analyses of paraenesis have been hindered. Even with this negative influence, Dibelius has still offered a contribution to the New Testament study of paraenesis. Specifically, his enduring contribution includes the suggestion of the “catchword” as a linking mechanism (offering one direction for identifying thematic groupings or arrangements of material), the imperatival quality of paraenetic material (thereby distinguishing such material from other forms of discourse, including other types of moral discourse), and the traditional material which constitutes much paraenetic material. His identification of James as paraenetic is valuable in that it suggests that paraenesis is not merely material incorporated into a literary work, though he clearly recognizes the importance of paraenetic subsections within Paul’s letters,<sup>20</sup> but may also constitute a recognizable genre. It is perhaps with this final

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<sup>18</sup> Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte*, 241.

<sup>19</sup> Despite this extreme position on paraenesis, Dibelius seems to have offered a more moderate view of paraenesis (especially in relation to community situation and textual arrangement) in his, “Der himmlische Kultus nach dem Hebräerbrief.” However, it is the extreme position on paraenesis, embodied in both his commentary on James and his *Der Formgeschichte*, that has had the greater influence on scholarship (possibly due to the translation into English of the latter two works).

<sup>20</sup> Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte*, 239, states: “Paulus beschließt seine Gemeindebriefe häufig mit einem paränetischen Teil (Röm 12. 13, Gal 5 13ff. 6, Kol 3. 4, 1 Thess 4 1ff. 5 1ff.). Dieser Abschnitt zeigt regelmäßig einen von dem übrigen Briefkörper völlig abweichenden Stil: nicht weit auscholende, religiös oder theologisch begründete Erörterungen, sondern einzelne Mahnungen, oft in Spruchform, lose aneinander gehängt oder unverbunden nebeneinander stehend.” Consequently, the material is distinct and unconnected to the larger literary context: “Auch sachlich unterscheiden sich die paränetischen Abschnitte der Paulusbrieve deutlich von dem, was Paulus sonst geschrieben. Vor allem fehlt ihnen eine unmittelbare Beziehung auf die Briefsituation.”

contribution that Dibelius's understanding of paraenesis as a *literary* genre has come to wide recognition among scholars.<sup>21</sup>

Within the framework that Dibelius established for analyzing paraenesis, David Bradley offered a highly influential understanding of *topos* for, especially, Pauline paraenetic material.<sup>22</sup> Although I will discuss Bradley's approach to *topos* more thoroughly in chapter 7, suffice for now to comment on his contribution to Dibelius's framework for understanding paraenesis. Bradley attempted to establish a literary form, which he called *topos*, for explicating the seemingly random hortatory material in Paul's letters. He defined *topos* as "the treatment in independent form of the topic of a proper thought or action, or of a virtue or vice, etc."<sup>23</sup> Two criteria were established in order to identify a *topos*. First, it must have more than one sentence on the same subject. Second, it may have a binding word (*Stichwörter*) to enhance the link between the thematically linked sentences. Bradley's topological form is certainly reminiscent of Dibelius's earlier work. Like Dibelius, he understood paraenetic material as rather random, loosely held together hortatory elements that are somewhat arbitrarily connected to their context; thus paraenetic material could be addressed to a variety of social contexts.<sup>24</sup> Bradley claimed that Paul's topological exhortation (e.g., Rom. 13:1–5; 1 Thess. 4:9–5), similar to that of the Stoic and Cynic itinerant teachers, included a set of thematic "grab bag" answers to stock ethical questions that would have naturally been raised in different teaching contexts. Thus, the paraenetic material was not specific, but rather generic in nature and in application. Again, we see the influence of Dibelius. Unlike Dibelius, however, Bradley did not address particular texts as paraenetic. Rather, his interest was in self-contained sections of larger works. In this sense, Bradley's application of Dibelius's work on James and Hebrews to the Pauline letters highlights the presence of paraenetic sections within larger, non-paraenetic, works.

<sup>21</sup> See Walter Übelacker, "Paraenesis or Paraclesis."

<sup>22</sup> David Bradley, "Topos as Form." This article derives from his doctoral dissertation, *The Origins of the Hortatory Material in the Letters of Paul*.

<sup>23</sup> Bradley, "Topos as Form," 240.

<sup>24</sup> Twice Bradley uses the same image of "strung" together material ("Topos as Form," 240, 243. These references, plus the direct mention of Dibelius on page 239, defining paraenesis as "exhortation to seek virtue and shun vice, and the giving of rules or directions for proper thought and action in daily living," indicate the influence by Dibelius on Bradley's understanding of paraenetic material).

## PHASE TWO: MALHERBE AND THE 1960S TO 1980S

During the 1960s through to the 1980s several works emerged addressing aspects of early Christian paraenesis. Most of these works focussed on particular types of paraenetic material such as virtue/vice lists and the (Christian) *Haustafeln*.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the most noteworthy scholar to address paraenesis in early Christianity was Abraham Malherbe. He defined paraenesis as, “moral exhortation in which someone is advised to pursue or abstain from something,” and saw this style of exhortation as much broader than protrepsis (which he defined as “to win someone over to a particular enterprise or way of life by demonstrating its superiority”).<sup>26</sup> Typical of New Testament studies of paraenetic material, especially during this period, Malherbe focussed primarily on the Pauline material. Specifically, in a series of publications, he argued that 1 Thessalonians could be analyzed as a paraenetic letter (largely as an argument against the apologetic reading of the letter).<sup>27</sup> Dividing the letter into two major sections, following the prescript (1:1) he noted an extended Thanksgiving section (1:2–3:13) that set the stage for the paraenetic body of the letter (chapters 4 and 5).

An important part of Malherbe’s work was recognizing the integrated nature of the letter—i.e., those parts of the letter that are not technically exhortation can serve a paraenetic function. Such a function helps highlight the contextual basis of paraenetic material: the material is not random and disconnected from the rest of the text, even though incorporating traditional material (which he refers to as moral *topoi*).<sup>28</sup> The Thanksgiving in particular functions paraenetically in two key ways. First, Paul calls for imitation in the autobiographical material, thereby setting himself up as a “model to be imitated (ὁμοίως μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε, 1:6; cf. 5:7; 2:14), the delineation of which is done antithetically (οὐ...ἀλλά, 2:1–8).”<sup>29</sup> Noteworthy is the recogni-

<sup>25</sup> Work on such material was not limited to the last half of the twentieth century. Noteworthy discussions of the *Haustafeln* include Karl Weidinger, *Die Haustafeln*; Alfred Seeberg, *Der Katechismus der Urchristenheit*; and Martin Dibelius, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literature*. On virtue/vice lists, see Anton Vögtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge*; and Siegfried Wibling, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge*.

<sup>26</sup> Abraham J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 122–25.

<sup>27</sup> Malherbe, “Exhortation,” “Hellenistic Moralists”; “Gentle as a Nurse”; *Paul and the Thessalonians*.

<sup>28</sup> Malherbe, “Exhortation,” 240 and *passim*.

<sup>29</sup> Malherbe, “Exhortation,” 240–41 (the antithesis in 2:1–8 is most clearly stressed in vv. 5–7); on the importance of the imitation motif in 1 Thessalonians, see also George Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography*; “Modeling the Holiness Ethos.”

tion of both the role of moral *exempla* (especially the example of an author) and antithesis (in this case in connection with moral *exempla*) within paraenetic texts. Second, the Thanksgiving establishes, or, more accurately, calls to remembrance the personal relational connection that Paul has with the Thessalonian Christians. Malherbe identifies two typical aspects of paraenetic texts that fit this second function of the Thanksgiving, thereby establishing its paraenetic function: the philophrontic aspect;<sup>30</sup> and the father (2:11) and nurse (2:7) image adopted, and adapted, by Paul to reinforce positive social relations (with a “children” image applied to the recipients).

Although narrowly focussed on one letter, Malherbe’s analysis of Pauline paraenesis helped to draw attention to paraenetic material in a fresh way. His work, however, was preceded by other scholarly discussions of the importance of paraenesis in early Christianity. Indeed, Wolfgang Schrage offered a noteworthy attack on Dibelius’ claim that paraenetic material was general and non-specific in addressing a given situation.<sup>31</sup> Schrage’s counter to Dibelius will typify later discussions of the social situation of paraenesis. Similarly, a richer appreciation for paraenesis was offered by Hildegard Cancik, who definitively established that the imperative (or its surrogates, such as the supporting participles) is the defining element of paraenesis.<sup>32</sup> Cancik established a two-fold typology for Stoic moral discourse: theoretical-doxographical argumentation and paraenesis. These two types of argumentative form, she claims, are largely established by the particular utilization of the imperative and the indicative. As prescriptive discourse, paraenesis is typified by the imperative or its surrogates; theoretical-doxographical argumentation, being non-prescriptive in nature, is dominated by the indicative.<sup>33</sup> For Cancik the indicative may have a paraenetic function

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<sup>30</sup> Malherbe, “Exhortation,” 241; cf. Benjamin Fiore, *Personal Example*, 12 n. 9, 23. The separation of writer and recipient, with the letter functioning in place of (and with the authority of) the writer, is not unique to paraenetic letters, though, as we will see in later chapters in this book, the authoritative *presentation* of the writer within a paraenetic text (letter or otherwise) serves an important rhetorical function. The implied author of a given text, with the text’s implied author serving as the “stand in” discursive partner on behalf of the actual writer, would have served to socially position the communication in such a way as to move the audience to adopt the author’s world view and, thereby, accept the authority of the author as voiced in the text.

<sup>31</sup> Wolfgang Schrage, *Die konkreten Einzelgebote in der paulinischen Paränese*, especially 37–46.

<sup>32</sup> Hildegard Cancik, *Senecas Epistulae Morales*.

<sup>33</sup> Cancik, *Senecas Epistulae Morales*, 16.

when utilized for the presentation of moral examples.<sup>34</sup> At the level of grammar, Benjamin Fiore further noted the use of the vocative for hortatory purposes.<sup>35</sup> Similar to Malherbe's reading of eschatological dimensions of paraenetic material, Anton Grabner-Haider, within a discussion of μαρτυρέω as paraenetic, argued that eschatology was a central basis for Pauline paraenesis.<sup>36</sup> Within numerous studies during this period, the vital importance of moral or personal example for paraenesis was stressed. Lorenz Nieder and Ferdinand Hahn's stress on Christology for Christian paraenesis is especially noteworthy in this regard.<sup>37</sup> In discussing the paraenetic aspects of the Pastoral Epistles, Fiore contends that, "contrast and personal example emerge as principal hortatory features."<sup>38</sup> What all these studies during the 1960s to 1980s demonstrate is a scholarly interest in moving beyond Dibelius' dismissive approach to paraenetic material. A more sophisticated appreciation for the early Christian paraenetic material was emerging, an appreciation that began to push past the simplistic form-critical "loosely strung" together presentation of ethical traditions.<sup>39</sup> In contrast, a recognition of the diverse literary forms of paraenetic material emerged: paraenesis can either take on the form of a subsection of a text or that of a genre

<sup>34</sup> Cancik, *Senecas Epistulae Morales*, 23. A similar point is made by Carl R. Holaday, "1 Corinthians 13," 83.

<sup>35</sup> Fiore, *Personal Example*, 17, in reference to 1 Tim 1:18; 6:11, 20; and 2 Tim 2:1. Fiore refers to the hortatory type as protreptic, rather than paraenetic, while discussing the usage of direct address. He further indicates other typical literary features of hortatory address, including the prominence of the imperative, the usage of "*dei* [to express] the injunction and gives them a 'rule book' quality" (17), lists of virtue and vice, hyperbole, citations and gnomic sayings (17–18), as well as the call to remembrance aspect of paraenesis (15–16).

<sup>36</sup> Anton Grabner-Haider, *Paraklese und Eschatologie bei Paulus*. Cf. Malherbe, "Exhortation," 254–55; Stanley D. Toussaint, "Eschatology of the Warning Passages." Grabner-Haider, however, prefers the term "paraklesis" to "paraenesis" as the former actually appears within the New Testament.

<sup>37</sup> Lorenz Nieder, *Die Motive*, 104–45; Ferdinand Hahn, "Die christologische Begründung urchristlicher Paränese"; Cancik, *Senecas Epistulae Morales*, 23; Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter*, 62; and especially Fiore, *Personal Example*.

<sup>38</sup> Fiore, *Personal Example*, 21.

<sup>39</sup> Lauri Thurén, "Risky Rhetoric in James?" has more recently, and succinctly, voiced such a criticism when he states, "My discontent with Dibelius' solution has two main grounds. First, the studies [sic] of paraenesis have yielded a more accurate view of genre. A paraenetic text can be aimed at an audience known to the author and especially an 'actual' paraenesis has a specific purpose. In any case it may well be that he at least attempts to follow general, natural rules of communication. Such conventions involve some sort of structure of thought. A collection of loose statements is hardly a good way of influencing people" (263).

for explaining the text. A more integrated appreciation of paraenetic and non-paraenetic material was beginning to be noted, as was the distinctive Christian appropriation of paraenesis (distinct from Cynic and Stoic paraenesis). Finally, a questioning of the lack of a social situation for paraenesis began to be raised in opposition to Dibelius.<sup>40</sup> Eventually, such questioning would further be extended to Bradley's *topos* (as will be discussed at greater length in chapter 7).

### PHASE THREE: PERDUE, THE *SEMEIA* GROUP, AND MARTIN (1990s)

These trends in the scholarly study of paraenesis came to a climax in the early 1990s, particularly with the collection of essays comprising a special issue of *Semeia* (entitled *Paraenesis: Act and Form*). This issue of *Semeia* revolves around two major essays, one by Leo Perdue and another by John Gammie.<sup>41</sup> In an earlier analysis of James from a paraenetic perspective, Perdue bemoaned the lack of attention given by previous scholars to the social and anthropological aspects of paraenetic texts:

In assessing the paraenetic nature of the book [James], Dibelius established the two major lines of investigation which scholarly discussions have continued to follow unto the present. One line involves literary analysis of formal, stylistic, and linguistic features, while the other concerns the discovery of both parallels with and antecedents of the paraenetic material in James....<sup>42</sup>

Dibelius, therefore, had set forth the literary aspects of the text's hortatory elements, but had unfortunately directed scholarly attention away from the broader social contours of the text. In a series of publications, including the 1990 *Semeia* issue, Perdue attempted to counter this tendency.<sup>43</sup> For Perdue, as well as Gammie, scholarly analyses of paraenesis should not focus on social aspects at the expense of the literary. Indeed,

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<sup>40</sup> An exception to this tendency towards Dibelius' view on the situational setting of paraenesis is Klaus Berger, "Hellenistic Gattungen", 1075: "In den neutestamentlichen Briefen sind zwei Formen ethischer Instruktion zu unterscheiden: 1. Belehrung über die spezifischen Probleme aus verschiedenen christlichen Gemeinden (so 1 Kor 5ff.), und 2. die Paränese, die zumeist gegen Ende der Briefe steht (z. B. Auch 1 Thess 4,1ff.)."

<sup>41</sup> Leo G. Perdue, "Social Character"; John G. Gammie, "Morphology," 41-77.

<sup>42</sup> Leo G. Perdue, "Paraenesis and the Epistle of James," 241.

<sup>43</sup> In addition to his lead article in *Semeia* and his *ZNW* analysis of James, see also Leo G. Perdue, "Liminality as a Social Setting"; and "The Death of the Sage."

each of the essays was designed to highlight one side of this two-fold dimension of paraenesis: Perdue focussed on the social *act* of paraenetic texts, while Gammie addressed the *form* of paraenesis.

In Gammie's taxonomic construction, he only focuses on the literary aspects of the genre. Although he defers the social aspect of paraenesis (the "act") to Perdue, his failure to consider the social connections to the literary features renders his proposal weak in the end. However, his essay on the paraenetic genre is still insightful and worth noting. Building from Luis Alonso-Schökel's work, Gammie argues that literary genre should be seen in a fluid hierarchal relationship of major literary genre, secondary literary genre, and sub-genre.<sup>44</sup> He takes John J. Collins's work on the apocalyptic genre as an analogous instance of the errors of not recognizing the distinction between a major genre and a secondary genre—Collins, according to Gammie, conflated Apocalyptic with Apocalypse, thereby rendering the apocalypse the only form of the apocalyptic.<sup>45</sup> For Gammie, Paraenetic Literature (which Perdue prefers to designate "Sayings Collections") is a secondary genre to Wisdom Literature. "Reflective Essays" is the other primary secondary genre of Wisdom Literature. Paraenesis (and also protrepsis) and Instructions, distinct from Paraenetic Literature, are simply sub-genres of this secondary genre. Various components are fluid in their presence and function within these sub-genres. The secondary genre of Paraenetic Literature that Gammie constructs is, perhaps, confusing and therefore is better labelled by Perdue's designation of Sayings Collections.

Although an excessively complex and convoluted taxonomy, there are aspects of Gammie's approach to paraenesis that are useful to recognize. First, his work is helpful in highlighting the complicated and fluid nature of literary genre. A key problem with genre analysis is the lack of coherence between the general designation and the particulars brought under the designation for comparative purposes. No literary work—or perhaps no more than one literary work—will perfectly fit the designations of genre, for example apocalypse or novel. Gammie effectively avoids the one-dimension side of genre by recognizing that genre works at diverse levels of relation, with a fluid utilization of literary components. Thus, genre can serve the function of both comparing and

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<sup>44</sup> Gammie, "Morphology," 45 and passim; Luis Alonso-Schökel, "Literary Genres." See also John G. Gammie, "Classification."

<sup>45</sup> Gammie, "Morphology," 45; John J. Collins, *Apocalypse*.

contrasting—and thereby elucidating—those texts being brought under the classification. Secondly, and building on this final observation, Gammie rightly notes that genre is a functional umbrella for comparison. Referring to David Tracy, Gammie correctly observes: “The purpose of genre analysis should not be taxonomic but should be, as David Tracy has recently urged, productive and heuristic.”<sup>46</sup> Constructing genre, therefore, is not an end in itself. Rather, genre analysis is meant as a second-order analytical device for scholarship. This is an important observation on Gammie’s part, one that has not been given its due in scholarly discussions of paraenesis. Thirdly, Gammie offers a helpful distinction on the terms paraenesis and protrepsis. The distinction by Stowers, Fiore, and others (in opposition to Burgess)<sup>47</sup> that paraenesis and protrepsis are not synonymous is picked up by Gammie. Gammie notes that paraenesis can be defined as referring to those readers who are already converted, and therefore does not require argumentative demonstration to be persuaded. Protrepsis, however, is primarily directed towards those who are not yet converted to the position of the author, and thus demonstration is needed. Precepts tend to typify paraenesis more so than protrepsis, yet, as Gammie further recognizes, precepts are also important components for protrepsis.<sup>48</sup> Gammie’s contribution to this debate is to recognize that in some cases a writer or speaker may have more than one intended audience. A dual audience in cases such as the *Letter of Aristeas* will affect the rhetoric of the text so that paraenetic and protreptic aspects will both be present.<sup>49</sup>

Building on Klaus Berger’s two-fold criteria for determining genre, i.e. a genre will be determined either by literary form or social context, Perdue places stress on social context. Berger claimed: “Die konstitutiven Elemente im Sinne der Gattungszugehörigkeit sind dabei auf zwei mögliche Weisen zu bestimmen: entweder textimmanent oder ‘soziologisch’, d.h. an der Kommunikationssituation und an der Rezeption orientiert.”<sup>50</sup> Although both literary aspects and the communication situation will play a role in establishing genre (i.e., the criteria are not exclusive), Berger held that one would tend to be the dominating factor.

<sup>46</sup> Gammie, “Morphology,” 42, see also 66; David Tracy, *Analogical Imagination*.

<sup>47</sup> Stowers, *Letter Writing*; Fiore, *Personal Example*; and Theodore L. Burgess, *Epidictic Literature*.

<sup>48</sup> Gammie, “Morphology,” 50–54, 57.

<sup>49</sup> Gammie, “Morphology,” 43, 54; on the *Letter of Aristeas*, see John G. Gammie, “Hellenization of Jewish Wisdom.” See also James M. Reese, “A Semiotic Critique.”

<sup>50</sup> Berger, “Hellenistische Gattungen,” 1038.

Perdue also recognized this two-fold aspect of paraenesis, briefly touching on some of the literary forms recognized by Malherbe before arguing that a dereliction in attention to the social context had overshadowed scholarly discussions of paraenesis.<sup>51</sup> In addressing Berger's second criterion, he more precisely demarked social context by dividing the social situation into social setting and social function. These two aspects of social situation are initially placed within a set of social models. Perdue claims that a model of order and a model of conflict are "the two major models for understanding the nature, organization, and functioning of human societies and communities."<sup>52</sup> It is within these two models of social interaction that Perdue sees paraenesis working to offer "guidance for the moral life . . . to provide general and practical guidance for human behavior within a previously shaped, comprehensive understanding of social reality." This moral guidance "could *confirm* the validity of a prescribed way of life or seek to *convert* the audience to a new manner of existence. . . . Or it could seek to *subvert* an existing social structure and provide the formation of a different one."<sup>53</sup> Within the model of order, paraenesis reinforces the traditional social order, offering societal myths as part of a general worldview (e.g., cosmogony and cosmology) in which the audience is exhorted to accept the cohesive and harmonious nature of the established order. Natural law, as well as divine law, clearly emerges in such a confirmative function, with society being a mere microcosm of the larger structure of the cosmos. Perdue offers the example of *Ma'at* (justice, righteousness, truth) within Egyptian moral thought to illustrate the role of natural law for paraenesis.<sup>54</sup> Advice to a (especially new) ruler also tends to follow the model of order, and within the Egyptian context is also connected to the concept of *Ma'at*.<sup>55</sup> Such reinforcement of the existing social order further has the effect of "control[ing] by ideology powerless groups."<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Perdue, "Paraenesis and the Epistle of James," *passim*.

<sup>52</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 6.

<sup>53</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 7 (emphasis mine). On the converting function, Perdue cites Burgess, *Epidictic Literature*, 229–31 n. 2.

<sup>54</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 6–7.

<sup>55</sup> Perdue offers the following example of such advice, from Ptah-hotep to his son: "If thou art a leader commanding the affairs of the multitude, seek out every beneficial deed until it may be that thy (own) affairs are without wrong. Justice is great, and its appropriateness is lasting; it has not been disturbed since the time of him who made it, (whereas) there is punishment for him who passes over its laws. It is the (right) path before him who knows nothing. Wrongdoing has never brought its undertaking into port" (Perdue, "Social Character," 7; citing ANET, 412).

<sup>56</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 8.

Whereas the model of order reinforces the harmonious perpetuation of existing or traditional society, the model of conflict directly challenges the established social order. Like the model of order, the conflict model also constructs a given worldview of both cosmogonic and cosmological relations of which society is a microcosm: "Gods or forces of order and chaos are in conflict, vying for control. Struggle, not harmony, characterizes social life in the *Gesellschaft*, viewed from below, that is by social groups denied access to power and status in the larger society, the ruling group is often considered coercive and oppressive."<sup>57</sup> Given the oppressive nature of traditional or existing society, paraenesis within this model strives at "undermining traditional teaching in order to destabilize the oppressive institutions controlled and ordered by the power elite."<sup>58</sup> Such a subversive function may be played out in two ways, and in many cases with a mutual utilization of these two ways. First, paraenesis is subversive in that it calls into question the legitimacy of the traditional order. Such a subversive function will tend to challenge the traditional symbolic worldview, thereby undermining its very social knowledge with a new, counter-social knowledge. Second, paraenesis subverts by means of promoting a new, alternative symbolic worldview that (usually) offers an idealistic picture of social egalitarianism, harmonious relations, and shared power within the social group.<sup>59</sup>

Having established the overarching models of order and conflict for understanding paraenesis, Perdue then adopted a social paradigm from Victor Turner's theory of liminality. Turner, building on Arnold van Gennep's work on rites of passage, argued that rites constitute three phases of movement between structure and anti-structure: separation, margin (*limen*, "threshold"), and aggregation.<sup>60</sup> An alternative construction of this three-fold model is offered by Bruce Lincoln, claiming that women's rites of passage tend to follow the pattern of transformation: enclosure, metamorphosis, and emergence.<sup>61</sup> This three-fold model of movement highlights the movement from point A to C by means of

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<sup>57</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 8.

<sup>58</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 9. He offers the examples of Job and the early Jesus traditions of Q of such a subversive function. Cf. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*.

<sup>59</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 8-9.

<sup>60</sup> Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between"; Arnold van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*; cf. Ronald L. Grimes, *Deeply into the Bone*.

<sup>61</sup> Bruce Lincoln, *Emerging from the Chrysalis*.

a point of liminality (B). Liminality, as the threshold of transitional ambiguity, is wrought with danger and potential for moving in various or diverse directions and perhaps no direction at all. It is a stage of crisis, and a necessary one for entering a new place or space socially or developmentally.<sup>62</sup> During the process of movement into a new stage of life, or role or place within society, the initiate's previous social connections are dismantled or deconstructed (the separation), thereby placing the initiate within a period of chaos or instability (the threshold of liminality). Within this shift from structure to anti-structure, social hierarchies are obscured into a *communitas* of egalitarian power relations. The goal for the initiate is to move into a new social reality (the reintegration), thus a movement from *communitas* into a new *societas* (i.e., from anti-structure to structure). As Perdue observes, this liminality is both "ontological as well as instructional" in nature: the initiate is transformed as well as equipped to function, in his or her newly transformed status, within society.<sup>63</sup> The transformative power of this process of movement between *communitas* and *societas* is not limited to the individual initiate, but also involves the entire social body. Along with the individual, the group itself participates in the process and indeed the dangers of *communitas*. Furthermore, by analogy, what happens in the case of an individual journey through liminal experience can be analogous for the liminal experience of entire social groups. In many cases, the imagery invoked for the liminal period is a type of death and subsequent rebirth: "death, tomb, the womb, wilderness, darkness, eclipse, etc."<sup>64</sup> In his second essay in the *Semeia* collection, Perdue explicates this image within the concrete location of the death

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<sup>62</sup> Plutarch (*Mor.* 77.5) offers a wonderful example of the danger of such transitional ambiguity. In his discussion of the progress towards virtue, he uses the analogy of beginning to learn philosophy: "... an illumination succeeding upon perplexity, errant thought, and much vacillation, which students of philosophy encounter at the outset, like persons who have left behind the land to which they know and are not yet in sight of the land to which they are sailing. For having given up the common and familiar things before gaining knowledge and possession of the better, they are carried hither and thither in the interval, and oftentimes in the wrong direction." Plutarch then offers a more concrete illustration: "... the story told about Sextius, the Roman, to the effect that he had renounced his honours and offices in the State for philosophy, but, because he was impatient and found the subject difficult at the outset, he came very near to throwing himself down from an upper story" (translation from LCL).

<sup>63</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 10.

<sup>64</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 10.

of a ruler or sage, offering instruction to the disciple or successor.<sup>65</sup> Re-emergence or reintegration, as Catherine Bell has observed, tends to follow images of birth.<sup>66</sup> Both baptism and the Eucharist evoke this two-fold aspect of rituals, symbolically presenting birth out of death experience.

Within traditional paraenesis, liminality is both a potential benefit for the social body (i.e., the coming of age of a new leader or a mature, good citizen within society etc.) as well as a potential threat (i.e., the initial dismantling of the *societas* with the possibility of the liminal experience resulting in either permanently rejecting *societas* with *communitas* or moving the initiate into a totally unexpected direction such as a counter- or contra-cultural *societas* that vies with the existing social order). It is with this threat to effective reintegration that traditional paraenesis (the model of order) is designed to counter by means of semi-regulating the transitional period of anti-structure.<sup>67</sup> Subversive paraenesis (the model of conflict), however, either utilizes the ambiguity of the threshold stage to move the reader into a new counter- or contra-cultural social unit, or “takes shape within these liminal occasions and appeals especially to groups which were denied access to power and status” and thus construct “a new order of egalitarianism or social inversion.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Perdue, “Death of the Sage,” passim; also touched on in “Social Character,” 21–23.

<sup>66</sup> Catherine Bell, *Ritual*, 94–102. Bell further recognizes that rituals and rites need not relate directly to life-cycle stages. Rather, symbolic systems, such as religious bodies or other social entities such as the U.S. Marine Corps or the Triads, actually create their own stages of transitions or metaphorical life stages. Cf. J. Albert Harrill, “Coming of Age and Putting on Christ.”

<sup>67</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 11.

<sup>68</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 11. Grimes, *Deeply into the Bone*, 122, sees a dichotomy between Victor Turner’s work on rites and that of Emile Durkheim (e.g., *Elementary Forms*). Whereas Durkheim perceived ritual as a social bonding mechanism (similar to Perdue’s model of order), Turner’s perceived ritual as “subversive, the opposite of *ceremony*, the staunch conservator of culture and guardian of the status quo” (Grimes, *Deeply into the Bone*, 122). Ritual, therefore, is seen as the generative matrix from which ceremony emerges: “... the *fons et origo* (‘fountainhead and origin’) of social structure. The generative effects of liminality, then, are not limited to artistic or ritualistic creativity; they include new and adaptive social forms as well” (122). What Grimes neglects to recognize, however, is that within van Gennep and Turner’s view of ritual there is not only a period of liminality preceded by separation (and for Turner this middle period was definitely the primary focus of his work), but also a following period of reintegration. Ritual, along with the moral instruction or exhortation that accompanies ritual, can therefore function subversively or it can function for creating social reinforcement. The danger, however, is that the transformational power of rites is somewhat

Although Klaus Berger distinguished literary form from social situation, Perdue contributed to the genre analysis of the latter by further distinguishing social situation as social context and social function. Perdue recognized that the contexts within which a paraenesis may be fashioned were complex and interdependent arenas of lived experience. Following Malherbe, he notes “the diversification of roles and tasks [were] defined by various factors, including age, gender, class, occupation, clubs, and groups.”<sup>69</sup> Thus, within these diverse arenas of experience, moral exhortation addressed the movement of individuals and groups into various levels of social interaction, with the combination of the variables affecting the stages of progression, the symbolic constructs for liminal experience, and the relationship of social relations to biological growth. In his lead article in *Semeia*, Perdue offered three social contexts or settings for paraenetic discourse. The first type of context included those biological aspects of the life cycle, or what are more commonly referred to as rites of passages: “birth, puberty, marriage, parenting, retirement, and death.”<sup>70</sup> Secondly, paraenesis is common in the context of new social roles, offering moral advice in preparation for new responsibilities that are to be taken on by the reader. A common example of such a context is a ruler or government official moving into a new position of responsibility. The death of a ruler, teacher/sage, or father was such a time when paraenetic discourse was utilized. Although such discourses were specific to the occasion of death or ascension, the texts, as Perdue notes, “presumably were reused in subsequent New Year’s festivals during the kings’ lifetimes to remind them of royal duties and their subjects of the importance of loyal service.”<sup>71</sup> The third context identified for paraenesis is the entrance into a new social group or community. The paraenesis would have served to prepare the initiate for becoming a fully socialized member, and then, later on, to remind the initiate of his or her moral responsibilities within the group. Induction into religious communities, such as the Jewish

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unpredictable and therefore may actually be subversive when it was intended to be a reinforcement of the existing social order. Where Durkheim and Turner do differ is not on subversive/bonding distinction, but rather in their emphases. For Durkheim, ritual is predominately, in its social function, functionalist, whereas for Turner ritual is essentially interactionist in social function.

<sup>69</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 19; cf. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 23–29.

<sup>70</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 20, with reference to Victor Turner, *Ritual Process*.

<sup>71</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 21.

synagogue or the Christian *ecclesia*, would represent such a context, as would philosophical schools and voluntary associations.<sup>72</sup>

The social setting of a paraenesis, however, is refined further in Perdue's other study of James. In this earlier article, he suggested that social contexts (in this article called settings) could include any of the following settings (which tend to overlap those of the *Semeia* study):

- 1) a final instruction of an aged teacher to his or her student(s) prior to the teacher's death;
- 2) a separation of the teacher from the student while the student faces a potentially threatening situation;
- 3) a rite of passage for a novice, specifically during the liminal period of a transition either from one group to another or from one level to another within the same social group; and
- 4) a calling upon the reader(s) to seriously reflect prior to his or her "initial entrance into his present group or position."<sup>73</sup>

An important addition here is the role of liminality beyond entrance into something or some place new. Transitions can occur within the same social body, moving up the ladder to new stages. To designate such a transition as "conversion" would misconstrue the nature of the movement. Furthermore, liminality itself can exist within periods of crisis faced by, or perceived by, the social group or part of the social group. Although no life cycle or promotion/entrance into a new role is envisioned within such a crisis situation, the generative and potentially dangerous implications of liminal experience are just as present. Paraenesis within such crisis situations addresses just such liminal existence. Perdue notes that although a social setting may vary in nature from one paraenetic document to another, "the underlying factor is the instructional situation involving an experienced teacher and an immature novice."<sup>74</sup> This instructional aspect, however, is modified by social function.

The social functions of a paraenesis are socialization, legitimation, and conflict resolution. These three social functions of paraenesis are tied into two more general functions: protreptic function (conversion)

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<sup>72</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 22, further notes that within this third context paraenetic material could be general enough to be reused within a school curriculum.

<sup>73</sup> Perdue, "Paraenesis and the Epistle of James," 249.

<sup>74</sup> Perdue, "Paraenesis and the Epistle of James," 250.

and paraenetic function (confirmation). In many cases the protreptic and paraenetic functions are not exclusive of each other, especially as a text may simultaneously address multiple audiences.<sup>75</sup> Socialization, to draw upon Berger and Luckmann's classic definition, is defined as "the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or sector of it."<sup>76</sup> Socialization is the process of constructing a worldview for a social unit and, furthermore, maintaining that worldview through a process of reminding the group's adherents of the basic precepts and benefits of the social unit's worldview. The necessity of a paraenetic address to an individual or group is due to a breakdown, or the potential for such a breakdown, of the social structure, and thus its symbolic "meaning" system.<sup>77</sup> The paraenesis offers the reader a reinforcement of the social norms and structures deemed necessary to ensure stability and the perpetuation of those structures.<sup>78</sup> Familial relations, both literally and figuratively, played an important role in this processes constructing a nomos for the readers. Teacher-student relations in particular were often viewed as fictive kinship relations.<sup>79</sup> The second and third social functions of paraenesis are closely built on the foundation of the function of socialization. Reinforcement of normative structures necessitates a "legitimation of the existing social world," most notably when that existent social world is threatened by competing ideological options.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, paraenesis is, to recall Berger and Luckmann again, an instance of "second level legitimation" directed towards a new generation for whom the symbolic world transmitted

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<sup>75</sup> An example of such dual audience, offered by Perdue, "Social Character," 25, is the Wisdom of Solomon, which "sought both to convert apostate Jews and to reconfirm the validity of Judaism." The social setting of exhorting royal duties to a new king could have a protreptic function, while also paraenetically reminding the king of his duties on significant anniversaries or sacred times (23).

<sup>76</sup> Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 130; cited by Perdue, "Paraenesis and the Epistle of James," 251; "Social Character," 24, who goes on to say that "paraenesis, then, is a means by which an individual is introduced to the group's or role's social knowledge, including especially norms and values pertaining to group or role behavior, internalizes knowledge, and makes it the basis for both behavior and the meaning system by which he interprets and orders his world" ("Paraenesis and the Epistle of James," 251). See also the classic treatment on normative social structures in Peter Berger's *Sacred Canopy*.

<sup>77</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 11.

<sup>78</sup> Perdue, "Paraenesis and the Epistle of James," 253.

<sup>79</sup> Perdue, "Social Character," 24. He builds on Berger and Luckmann's notion that the externalization of values necessitated a significant other during the socialization process (Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 127; Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 130).

<sup>80</sup> Perdue, "Paraenesis and the Epistle of James," 254.

is not self-evident.<sup>81</sup> Legitimation grounds the symbolic world as normative by means of natural law and tradition, thereby presenting the nomos as self-evident and thus irrefutable (cf. Libanius, *Epistolary Styles* 1.5). Boundary markers are frequent in such legitimation processes, offering contours for social identity formation.<sup>82</sup> As Perdue goes on to explain, such paraenetic legitimation is especially necessary when there is a crisis threatening the society. Indeed, the presence of crisis might be identified by means of the intensity and type of legitimation present within a paraenesis: “Finally, when crisis threatens the social reality constructed by a society or community, legitimation becomes all the more imperative, though increasingly difficult. Indeed the more strident and authoritarian the paraenesis becomes, the more likely it is that its social reality is undergoing serious challenge and threat.”<sup>83</sup> This observation should be kept in mind when looking for possible indicators of social situation underlying a paraenetic text.

Similar to legitimation, the social function of conflict attempts to build boundaries for establishing or reinforcing social identity for the readers. Whereas legitimation primarily focuses on the nomos of the readers (insiders), conflict functions to undermine other competing symbolic worldviews through which insider-outsider demarcations are established and validated. Subversive paraenesis is particularly adept at the social function of conflict. Boundary markers, be they embodied in tactile rituals or conceptually reinforced through philosophical or theological discourse, function to legitimize the insiders’ imaginative world construction while simultaneously delegitimizing competing outsider worldviews. All three social functions are able to work in concert with each other: legitimation, for example, may utilize conflict in order to socialize the readers toward accepting the symbolic nomos of the preceptor as normative.

Having established the social models, overarching paradigm, social contexts and functions of paraenesis, Perdue further noted several basic features that typify paraenesis that are worth considering. First, he recognizes that much paraenetic material is traditional or not original with the preceptor. Nearly all commentators on paraenetic material,

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<sup>81</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 25; Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 94.

<sup>82</sup> Gammie, “Paraenetic Literature,” 56–57.

<sup>83</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 26.

both modern and ancient, have recognized this aspect of paraenesis. Ps.-Isocrates, in particular, noted:

And do not be surprised that in what I have said there are many things which you know as well as I. This is not from inadvertence on my part, for I have realized all along that among so great a multitude both of humankind in general and of their rulers there are some who have uttered one or another of these precepts, some who have heard them, some who have observed other people put them into practice, and some who are carrying them out in their own lives... we should regard that man as the most accomplished in this field who can collect the greatest number of ideas scattered among the thoughts of all the rest and present them in the best form. (Isocrates, *To Nicocles* 40–41 LCL slightly adjusted)

Rather than novelties, paraenetic material should include the best of the traditional material available. Secondly, paraenesis tends to include non-traditional material, including a subversive or aphoristic utilization of traditional language.<sup>84</sup> Given the aphoristic nature of such material, the focus of such moral exhortation tends to revolve more around a single teacher or philosopher—or around a social group built around such a figure (e.g., the Jesus movement or Cynicism)—and, therefore, is more akin to the *chreia* than the proverb.<sup>85</sup> A third feature of paraenetic material is the teacher-student relationship that tends to underlie the variety of social settings. Parental relations often are imagined for such a relationship, thereby stressing the strong social bond and mentoring aspect of paraenesis.<sup>86</sup> This third feature naturally leads to the fourth, i.e., that paraenesis is essentially dialogical and thereby highly personal in tone. Again, motifs of teacher, parent, and even friendship illustrate this feature. The dialogical aspect is further drawn out by the usage of diatribe in various paraenetic discourses (Seneca, *Epistles* 94 and 95, perhaps being the classic examples).<sup>87</sup> Malherbe has also noted that

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<sup>84</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 13; on aphoristic aspects of paraenetic material he refers to the work of James G. Williams, *Those Who Ponder Proverbs*. By utilizing traditional language in a subversive way towards traditional society, this type of paraenesis tends to fit the model of conflict more than that of order.

<sup>85</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 13.

<sup>86</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 15; cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.1–8 who clearly notes the parental aspect of the teacher.

<sup>87</sup> See also Stanley K. Stowers, *Diatribe*, for a comprehensive overview of the diatribe form not only in Paul but also the broader Greco-Roman world; cf. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 129–34. For a discussion of diatribe in Seneca, see especially pp. 69–75. Other examples, offered by Malherbe, of diatribe within hortatory discourse include Epictetus, *Discourse* 1.6–17 and Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 3 (“That Women Too Should Study Philosophy”). Note especially Miriam Griffin’s qualifying comments: “Seneca’s

diatribe is not uncommon in both protrepsis and paraenesis.<sup>88</sup> A fifth feature of paraenesis, which has been widely recognized within studies of paraenesis, is the importance of positive and negative examples or *paradeigmata*. Both traditional and subversive paraenesis draw upon moral examples (such as legendary, historical, and familial individuals). Again, Isocrates offers the classic illustration of moral *exempla*, drawing upon both legendary and familial figures:

But virtue, when it grows up with us in our hearts without alloy, is the one possession which abides with us in old age.... This is easy to learn from the labours of Heracles and the exploits of Theseus, whose excellence of character [ἀρετή] has impressed upon their exploits so clear a stamp of glory that not even endless time can cast oblivion upon their achievements. Nay, if you will but recall your father's principles, you will have from your own house a noble illustration of what I am telling you. For he did not belittle virtue nor pass his life in indolence; on the contrary, he trained his body in toil, and by his spirit he withstood dangers. Nor did he love wealth inordinately; but, although he enjoyed the good things at his hand as became a mortal, yet he cared for his possessions as if he had been immortal. (Ps.-Isocrates, *To Demonicus* 7–9)

The sixth feature of paraenesis is the eventual collection of literary sayings. Such literary collections of moral sayings, which are more extensively addressed by Gammie, tend to be fluid earlier on in their formation. When a threat of dissolution faced a given community, such collections reach a more static, less fluid state eventually taking on a fixed canonical status. The existence of such collections, therefore, implies “the dynamic interaction of texts and communities.”<sup>89</sup>

Finally, Perdue offers a seventh feature of paraenesis: repetition. Paraenesis, especially with a confirmative function, tends to be, as Seneca clearly denoted, “not teaching; it merely engages the attention and rouses us, and concentrates the memory, and keeps it from losing grip.”<sup>90</sup> An actual example of this calling to remembrance feature can be found in Libanius’ *Epistle to Heortius* (*Ep.* 10):

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works cannot be assigned to an ancient literary genre called διατριβή. But it is fair to admit that Seneca’s *dialogi* owe a great deal to a long tradition of popular philosophical writing, for whose characteristic style and themes we can reasonably retain the term Diatribe” (*Seneca*, 14; cited by Stowers, *Diatribes*, 69–70).

<sup>88</sup> Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 129.

<sup>89</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 17–18; referring to James A. Sanders, *Canon and Community*, and B. Rosenkranz, “Die Struktur der Ps-Isokrateischen Domonicea.”

<sup>90</sup> Seneca, *Epistle* 94.25, erroneously cited by Perdue as *Epistle* 95.25.

I am perhaps playing the busybody in exhorting [παρακαλῶν] a father [πατέρα] who has made up his mind to neglect his son [παιδός] to have some concern for him, but when I saw Themistius in tears I preferred to be thought to do so than to ignore this... my advice [παραίνῳ] is that you spend some of your possessions on the most precious of your possessions... If he has none [books for study], he will be like a man learning archery without a bow.<sup>91</sup>

A similar point is made in Libanius' *Epistle to Themistius* (Ep. 16). Themistius evidently had offended Libanius by making public his letters without his permission, in an attempt to spread Libanius' ideas. Libanius responds: "When you advise me [ὅταν δέ μοι παραίνῃ] not to forget [ἀμνημονεῖν] my friends [τῶν φίλων] in my success, you yourself seem to have forgotten [ἐπιλελοῖσθαι] your friends [τῶν φίλων]." In both these letters, paraenesis is connected with reminding someone of their social obligations. In the first, the obligation is not only of a father to his son's education, but also Libanius' obligation to his student. The second has an ironic reversal in obligation. Whereas Themistius entreats Libanius to make his ideas public (thus the social obligation of the philosopher to the broader public good), Libanius retorts with Themistius' obligation not to disrespect Libanius by violating his privacy.<sup>92</sup> This final feature of paraenesis will become central for the Oslo definition of paraenesis in 2001, and is, furthermore, a distinctive quality of paraenesis as confirmative rather than only protreptic in function (or, possibly, confirmative in conjunction with a converting function).

The various interlocutors of *Semeia* offered a new direction for the study of paraenesis. They helped establish not only the literary aspects of paraenesis within a more sophisticated appreciation for genre analysis, they also recognized and highlighted the essential role of sociological aspects of paraenesis. Although the exact model of social setting and social function offered by Perdue will not remain unassailable, it definitely established, building on Klaus Berger's seminal work, that the paraenetic genre must be established through both an appreciation for literary and social aspects of the material. Again, similar to both Malherbe and even Dibelius, the *Semeia* contributors did not limit themselves to the New Testament or biblical texts, even though most

<sup>91</sup> Text and translation from LCL.

<sup>92</sup> The ironic reversal of the exhortation is beautifully crafted by Libanius in a chiasmic construct around the motif of the obligations of friends to each other within the motif of forgetfulness.

contributors were primarily interested in the early Christian material. Rather, they placed their analysis within a broader, cross-cultural comparison with other ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman contexts. Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome were all drawn upon to furnish paraenetic material, alongside both Jewish and Christian material (canonical and non-canonical). Such a move is not all that different from the cross-cultural applicability of rhetorical analysis envisioned by George Kennedy.<sup>93</sup> Although an anachronistic charge might be levelled against their extremely broad source base, the enduring contribution is their desire to place the early Christian (especially New Testament) material within its broader cultural context as a significant part of that cultural fabric.

An early and noteworthy attempt to apply the approach of the *Semeia* group to a single text, approaching both literary and social aspects in establishing the paraenetic genre, is Troy Martin's *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*.<sup>94</sup> Martin's interest is in determining the compositional arrangement and rhetorical situation of 1 Peter, a perennial problem within Petrine studies. He locates 1 Peter within ancient epistolary conventions, largely building on John L. White's work. By establishing the prescript, blessing period, letter opening, body, and letter closing, he effectively offers a broad epistolary framework for analyzing the body of the letter. As Berger correctly noted, the epistolary genre functions to frame other genres.<sup>95</sup> Epistolary conventions do not offer a key to the letter body, and, therefore, the body needs to be analyzed with another method. The body middle is explored through the author's utilization of metaphorical clusters, progressively moving the thought forward. Martin proceeds to argue that the letter is actually a paraenetic letter written to encourage the readers to remain faithful and not return to their former non-Christian life. The danger of apostasy underlies the rhetorical situation of the letter. The primary metaphor of identity, under which all other metaphors in the letter are subordinate, is that of the diaspora. The diaspora metaphor, as a type of social indicator for identity formation (i.e., the basis for the symbolic universe within 1 Peter which frames the rhetoric of the letter), is tied into a strong eschatological conception of the journey of the recipients

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<sup>93</sup> George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*.

<sup>94</sup> Troy W. Martin, *Metaphor*. For an assessment of Martin's work on 1 Peter, see Tite, *Compositional Transitions*, especially 1–34.

<sup>95</sup> Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen," 1338.

towards sharing the glory of Christ.<sup>96</sup> The letter, as Frederick Danker once aptly described,<sup>97</sup> is a letter of consolation and thus of paraenetic encouragement.

In order to establish the paraenetic nature of 1 Peter, Martin follows the approach set forth by Berger, Perdue and the *Semeia* group. Whereas Berger claimed that a genre would either be determined primarily by the text's literary features or its communication situation, Martin applies both criteria to 1 Peter.<sup>98</sup> In this regard he is closer to the *Semeia* group's "act" and "form" criteria than to Berger's. As the *Semeia* issue is not cited in Martin's work, most notable being the absence of Gammie, his lead for this two-fold approach must be Perdue's earlier article on James (which is primarily cited by Martin). Perdue engaged these two criteria, thereby setting the framework for the *Semeia* group, within a discussion of Malherbe's literary analysis of paraenesis in 1 Thessalonians. In Martin's work we see a very precise and meticulous exploration of both the literary and social aspects of the paraenetic genre, thereby offering perhaps the most comprehensive, yet still concise, overview and application of the paraenetic genre to date. His linking specific elements of paraenesis to 1 Peter, and then connecting these links with the author's usage of metaphorical images for persuasive/dissuasive argumentation, renders his study a valuable model for other explorations of paraenesis within early Christian literature.

The primary defining aspect of paraenesis, for Martin as for Cancik, is the imperatival component. Paraenesis is prescriptive speech, a point very clearly established by Seneca (*Epistle* 95), and for Martin it is this prescriptive or hortatory aspect that determines or defines paraenesis. All other literary aspects are secondary to the hortative function. Martin explores the presence of imperatives and their surrogates (such as the future indicative) within various ancient texts. Perhaps most noteworthy is his attention to a general's speech to his troops. In Plato's *Ion*, Socrates explicitly refers to "a general exhorting [παραινοῦντι] his soldiers."<sup>99</sup> More importantly, the paraenetic nature of a general's speech (such as

<sup>96</sup> For a similar, and more recent, appreciation for apocalyptic and eschatological hortatory discourse, see Brent Nongbri, "A Touch of Condemnation."

<sup>97</sup> Frederick W. Danker, "1 Peter 1:24–2:17."

<sup>98</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*, 84, explicitly states: "According to Berger, literary form or social context are the two methods for determining genre. Both of these methods will now be used to determine the genre of 1 Peter" (emphasis added).

<sup>99</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*, 88; citation from Plato, *Ion* 540D, "Ion," translated by Lane Cooper, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*.

Phormio's in Thucydides)<sup>100</sup> will be determined by the importance of the imperatives for moving the thought forward. Martin further goes on to indicate that the presence of the participle along with the imperative in a hortatory address does not, in itself, carry imperatival meaning. Rather, the participle functions in subordination to the imperative to place the exhortation within a given context (i.e., the context within which the imperative will or can be fulfilled).<sup>101</sup> This is a helpful corrective for exploring the syntactical nature of particular hortatory addresses, especially in reinforcing the observation that various grammatical elements will function to support an exhortation—not only participial phrases, but also conditionals, rhetorical questions, and subordinate clauses that further expound upon the actual imperative, thereby offering a richer texture to prescriptive discourse. In addition to the imperative, other literary features will typify paraenetic material. The usage of *exempla*, both as positive and negative models for imitation, especially placed within antithetical constructions, has already been noted by previous scholars. Such moral examples are, in part, one form of motivational device used in paraenetic literature. Other types of motivational clauses have been observed by Lorenz Nieder, most notably the christological example within Christian paraenesis. Others that Nieder lists include: divine will, being part of Christ's body, the presence of the Holy Spirit within the community, and rewards and punishments (especially with an eschatological nuance).<sup>102</sup> Antithesis, such as with moral examples, is another prominent aspect of paraenetic discourse. Finally, Martin draws upon Malherbe in order to establish a set of paraenetical terms.<sup>103</sup> I will comment on the usage of this terminology below.

Having established the literary aspects of paraenesis, and using such criteria to establish that 1 Peter fits the literary criterion for the genre, Martin then turns his attention to the social situation or communicative setting of paraenesis, once again demonstrating in which ways this second criterion establishes the paraenetic genre of 1 Peter.<sup>104</sup> His work is almost entirely framed by Perdue's distinction of social context and

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<sup>100</sup> This example, offered by Martin, is taken from Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.89.9–11, translated by Charles Smith, LCL.

<sup>101</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*, 91. This rejection of the imperatival participle is put forth in refutation of J. H. Moulton, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 180–223, and David Daube, "Participle and Imperative in 1 Peter," 467–71.

<sup>102</sup> Nieder, *Die Motive*, 104–45; referred to by Martin, *Metaphor*, 94–95.

<sup>103</sup> Malherbe, "Exhortation," 241; Martin, *Metaphor*, 100–2.

<sup>104</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*, 103–18.

social function. For 1 Peter, Martin sees the social setting of “encouraging them [the recipients] by reflection upon their entrance into the group, as well as their future hope, to stand firm” as determinant for the rhetorical situation of the letter.<sup>105</sup> When he addresses social function, however, Martin offers a significant qualification. Although agreeing with Perdue’s proposition that the primary social function of paraenesis is socialization, he disagrees with Perdue’s dependence on Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s sociological work and Victor Turner’s ritual theory. Martin’s contention is that modern social theory should not be determinative of ancient social contexts. Therefore, he proceeds to revise the focus of socialization for 1 Peter as follows: “Greco-Roman society was an hierarchical society. Esteem and reputation, not only by one’s peers and superiors but also by one’s inferiors, were highly sought after. Socialization involved performing one’s duties, discharging one’s responsibilities, and relating to others so one could attain δόξα.”<sup>106</sup> The importance of honour and shame within the Greco-Roman world has become an important social model within New Testament studies in recent years, and Martin is surely correct in noting that such a system would have constituted an important part of that society’s normative symbolic universe. He effectively demonstrates the role of glory or honour as a social goal with an extended quotation and discussion from Cicero, *Off.* 2.9–11. Indeed, it is the very absence of δόξα within the Petrine community that allows the Petrine author to develop his argument; centring his paraenesis within an eschatological process of attaining ἔνδοξα through ἄδοξα (cf. Teles, *On Circumstances* 52h): just as Christ went through a process of suffering (or shame) in order to attain true glory, so also should the recipients continue enduring hardships (or shame) with a promise of true glory (rather than temporary, earthly glory).<sup>107</sup> For Martin, it is this eschatological connection between glory and non-glory that is a prominent and distinctive aspect

<sup>105</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*, 107.

<sup>106</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*, 108. Martin, *Metaphor*, 110–11, cites Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 98, as saying: “The actual advice in Libanius’ model letter is gnomic and unexceptional, as the author indicates paraenesis should be. The motivation for the advice is to be well spoken of and not reproached. Libanius believes that paraenesis concerns those basic and unquestioned patterns of behavior which are sanctioned by honor and shame.”

<sup>107</sup> For a more fully developed discussion of this christological *exemplar* within an eschatological glory-through-suffering motif, see Tite, *Compositional Transitions*, 95–111.

of Christian paraenesis,<sup>108</sup> and which underlies the process of creating and maintaining group identity in the face of possible apostasy.<sup>109</sup>

Although his analysis of the prominence of honour/shame cultural valuation in the Greco-Roman world is surely correct, Martin, unfortunately, unnecessarily dismisses Perdue's discussion of liminality. Honour and shame were important identity forming concepts within the hierarchal social relations of this culture, such as the patronage system, but this value system was part of a more complex network of ritualized processes for which liminality certainly played a conceptual role. As one example, a recent study by Mary Harlow and Ray Laurence demonstrates that liminality was an essential part of moral development within Roman society. Indeed, according to Harlow and Laurence, the transition between childhood to adulthood for Roman males (ages 16 or 17 to approximately 25) included a ritualized liminal state: "... youth was seen as a phase in which the male was an adult citizen, but subject to impulses that were not those of an adult and were instead exclusively associated with the liminal phase known simply as youth."<sup>110</sup> The donning of the *toga virilis*, as Harrill has further demonstrated, carried strong moral connotations. At this point in life, a young man became socially and morally responsible for his actions and the honour of his family. As this moral responsibility was dependent upon reaching a stage of maturity, it would have been considered dangerous (i.e., a threat to moral stability or virtue) to take on this stage of life prematurely.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, Martin and others have neglected to recognize the importance of liminality less as a ritualized process and more as state of existence. Indeed, his own analysis of the rhetorical situation of 1 Peter, and of Galatians in his more recent work,<sup>112</sup> clearly, though not explicitly, evokes just such a liminal condition of anxiety and crisis. Finally, although he is completely correct in his concern of anachronistic

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<sup>108</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*, 111. So also for David W. Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict*, 225–26, and in the Roman world more generally 233–34. Kuck clearly states in a chapter entitled "Judgment and Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 3:5–4:5: A Paretic Adaption of an Apocalyptic Tradition," 228: "The knowledge of God's final judgment promotes a kind of self-understanding that leads to community-enhancing behavior...group solidarity."

<sup>109</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*, 117–18. On the importance of "reminding" within such a social function, see Martin, *Metaphor*, 116.

<sup>110</sup> Mary Harlow and Ray Laurence, *Growing Up and Growing Old in Ancient Rome*, 65.

<sup>111</sup> Harrill, "Coming of Age," passim.

<sup>112</sup> Troy W. Martin, "Apostasy to Paganism."

reading of ancient texts, the application of social theories to ancient contexts is not inevitably anachronistic. Social theories and models can assist in elucidating social relations within various contexts when these very theories and models are contextualized and kept as analytical tools subordinate to ancient cultural and social frameworks. One such theoretical framework for analyzing paraenetic material is Perdue's model of order and conflict. It is unfortunate that the close dates of Martin's dissertation (1990, published as is in 1992) and Perdue's lead article in *Semeia* (1990) negated Martin's ability to fully draw upon Perdue's ideas. Indeed, the order and conflict framework might have added further insights into Martin's own analysis of the Petrine community's social situation and the Petrine author's rhetorical strategy in constructing his paraenesis. Any future study on early Christian paraenesis should seriously take the models of order and conflict into consideration.

Martin's work on 1 Peter offers an extensive model for establishing an early Christian text as fitting the paraenetic genre. In many ways, he helps to bring scholarly discussions together in order to concisely delimit that very genre. His emphasis on the prescriptive or hortatory side of paraenesis is both an advantage and a weakness. It is a weakness in that he has left paraenesis very broadly defined as exhortation, and does not note the *moral* dimensions of such prescriptive discourse. He has clearly helped establish that the imperative is a (if not the) defining element of paraenesis. However, not all exhortation is necessarily moral exhortation (i.e., paraenesis), nor, for that matter, is all moral discourse paraenetic (i.e., exhortation).<sup>113</sup> His broad sweeping approach to paraenesis as exhortation is perhaps most evident in his treatment of a general's speech to his troops. Here he simply notes the importance of the imperative for moving the thought forward in the speech. The question of whether or not such exhortation is actually moral discourse, or engages aspects of moral philosophy, is completely ignored. Of course such discourse could indeed carry moral connotations, even if not recognized by most modern readers.

When Phormio exhorts his troops (Martin's example of a general's speech), he not only utilizes imperatives throughout the speech, he also appeals to classic virtues that were, for example, an essential part

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<sup>113</sup> As Gammie, "Morphology," 56, put the matter: "The mere presence in a work of admonitions and exhortations is not sufficient to warrant its classification as paraenesis."

of a good soldier's ἦθος, namely discipline and courage. Courage in particular was recognized as one of the four parts of virtue. Cicero clearly delineates these four parts as *prudentiam, iustitiam, fortitudinem, temperantiam* ("wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance") (*Inv. Rhet.* 2.52.159). He defines courage as "the quality by which one undertakes dangerous tasks and endures hardships. Its parts are highmindedness, confidence, patience, perseverance" (*Inv. Rhet.* 2.54.163).<sup>114</sup> His taxonomy of virtue is likely drawn from Aristotle, who offers extensive discussions of courage (ἀνδρεία), linking it (not always positively) with military service (especially *Eth. Nic.* 3.6–9): "The courageous man, therefore, in the proper sense of the term, will be he who fearlessly confronts a noble death, or some sudden peril that threatens death; and the perils of war answer this description most fully," as do sailors "in a storm at sea," and thus, with such examples, "courage is shown in dangers where a man can defend himself by value or die nobly, but neither is possible in disasters like shipwreck" (3.7.10–12).<sup>115</sup> For Aristotle, as for Cicero, courage is virtuous when linked to honour and shame. Military service, Aristotle comments, can at times lack this quality due to motive: "The courage of troops forced into battle by their officers may be classed as of the same type, though they are inferior inasmuch as their motive is not a sense of shame but fear, and the desire to avoid not disgrace but pain. Their masters compel them to be brave..." (3.8.4). Thus, when Phormio encourages his troops, he constructs a speech that is paraenetic not simply because it is dominated by exhortation, but also due to the evoking of the classic virtue of courage.<sup>116</sup> The same is true of the two speeches constructed by Tacitus at the climax of the Boudiccan revolt (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.35–36).<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Text and translation from LCL.

<sup>115</sup> Text and translation from LCL.

<sup>116</sup> Phormio further draws on other paraenetic features, when he states, "Once more I remind you that you have beaten most of them already; and when men have suffered defeat, their spirit is never the same..." (Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.89.11). The calling to remembrance is, as already indicated, a feature of paraenesis.

<sup>117</sup> In private correspondence, Martin indicated that his utilization of the generals' speeches was meant to illustrate the broader hortatory nature of paraenesis, and, therefore, paraenesis for his own purposes included all hortatory speech, not simply moral exhortation. However, he also indicated agreement with me that a general's paraenesis would also include such moral aspects as appeals to the virtues of courage and discipline. See also Ramsay MacMullen's discussion of Caesar's speeches to his troops, "The Legion as a Society."

Consequently, Martin's work on 1 Peter is useful in delineating the paraenetic genre, and illustrates the value of the *Semeia* group's two-fold approach to paraenesis. A paraenetic text can, therefore, only be established when analyzed with both literary and social aspects kept in the foreground. The elucidation of paraenetic material within texts that are not entirely paraenetic, however, has not been effectively established. However, as will be elucidated in a discussion of *topos* in chapter 7, the usefulness of metaphorical clustering, which Martin develops from David Bradley's work on *topos*, will offer a clue to delineating such subsections.

#### PHASE FOUR: THE LUND-OSLO GROUP (2000–2004)

The most significant scholarly attempt at defining paraenesis within early Christianity since the early 1990s was another group of scholars that met over two conferences in Lund, Sweden August 25–27, 2000 (the "Lund Conference") and in Oslo, Norway August 24–26, 2001 (the "Oslo Conference") (henceforth I will refer to the Lund-Oslo conference or group to denote both meetings of this group). As one of several conferences designed to explore rhetorical aspects of early Christianity, this particular gathering of international scholars—primarily drawn from northern Europe (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Sweden; along with Canada and the United States)<sup>118</sup>—attempted to address the ambiguous status of paraenesis within the field, particularly noting the lack of discussion of paraenesis within broader scholarly discussions of antiquity. The group's primary goal was to offer a more precise understanding of paraenesis, placing it within the more general context of ancient conventions of moral exhortation. From this gathering emerged a collection of essays under the editorship of Troels Engberg-Pedersen and James Starr.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>118</sup> This predominately European, indeed Nordic, make up of the Lund-Oslo group differs from the *Semeia* contributors, who are all American scholars. What the Lund-Oslo group represents is perhaps the emergence of a distinctly (northern) European direction on the analysis of paraenesis and early Christian moral exhortation.

<sup>119</sup> The list of contributors include: Wiard Popkes, "Paraenesis in the New Testament"; Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "The Concept of Paraenesis"; James M. Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?"; Diana Swancutt, "Paraenesis in Light of Protrepsis"; Johannes Thomas, "The Paraenesis of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs"; Stephen Westerholm, "Four Maccabees"; Hans Dieter Betz, "Paraenesis and the Concept of God"; Reidar Aasgaard, "Brotherly Advice"; Anders Klostergaard Petersen, "Paraenesis in Pauline

The definition of paraenesis put forth by the Oslo conference was a “concise, benevolent injunction that reminds of moral practices to be pursued or avoided, expresses or implies a shared worldview, and does not anticipate disagreement.”<sup>120</sup> Starr stresses five aspects of this definition: “(1) Paraenesis is *benevolent*... [an] element of mutual friendship... included an open concern for the moral condition of one’s friends... (2) Paraenesis typical concerns *moral practices* to be pursued or avoided... (3) Paraenesis *reminds* someone... [it] ‘concentrates the memory’... (4) Paraenesis assumes a *shared worldview* or set of convictions that inform and motivate the advice given... (5) Finally, paraenesis *does not anticipate disagreement*... The advice offered concerns simply the best way to achieve the common goals, and both parties have already agreed on these.”<sup>121</sup> This definition is a more narrow refinement of the definition developed at the Lund conference:

Paraenesis is,

1. a heuristic, modern term used to describe
2. a text or communication in which
3. a person or authority, A, addresses
4. a party, B, who shares A’s basic convictions about the nature of reality and God,
5. in order to influence B’s behavior in the practical (“ethical”) issues of everyday life, and possibly
6. in order to strengthen B’s commitment to the shared ideological convictions in 4,
7. where A may incorporate traditional ethical material, and
8. where A may employ some or all of these literary devices:
  - a) brevity of style (e.g. precepts, lists)
  - b) the *Haustafel*
  - c) antithetical statements (not “a” but “b”)
  - d) the offering of examples to be imitated.<sup>122</sup>

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Scholarship”; Abraham Malherbe, “Paraenesis in the Epistle to Titus”; Walter Übelacker, “Paraenesis or Parklesis”; Lauri Thurén, “Motivation as the Core of Paraenesis”; Karl Olav Sandnes, “Revised Conventions in Early Christian Paraenesis”; Jonas Holmstrand, “Is There Paraenesis in 1 John?”; Clarence E. Glad, “The Rhetoric of Moral Exhortation in Clement’s *Pedagogue*”; David Hellholm and Vemund Blomkvist, “Parainesis as an Ancient Genre-Designation”; Samuel Rubenson, “Wisdom, Paraenesis and the Roots of Monasticism.”

<sup>120</sup> James M. Starr and Troels-Engberg-Pederson, “Introduction,” 4.

<sup>121</sup> Starr, “Was Paraenesis for Beginners?” 79–80.

<sup>122</sup> Starr and Engberg-Pederson, “Introduction,” 3.

Although the Lund definition is largely encompassed in the Oslo definition, the latter is far less restrictive in some ways, while more restrictive in others. The Lund definition covers much of what is generally discussed as “paraenesis” within recent scholarship, yet with much greater precision. On the contrary, the Oslo definition gives more freedom to reconceptualize paraenesis given its broad strokes, yet conceptually is far narrower and theoretically delimiting. As Starr and Engberg-Pedersen note, not all participants agree on these definitions, some leaning more towards one or the other for example, and some preferring broader or narrower understandings of paraenesis than encompassed in either of these definitions. For example, on one end of the spectrum Engberg-Pedersen proposes an extremely narrow understanding of paraenesis and its cognate terms, while, at the other end of the spectrum, Wiard Popkes holds a very broad understanding of paraenesis. In his earlier work Popkes offers the following, very broad, definition: “Im allgemeinen Sinn stecht Paränese für (Er-) Mahnen, Anweisen, Rat-Geben, Ermutigen, Zu-Bedenden-Geben, Aufruf, Zuspruch, An-bzw. Abraten u.a.; im weitesten Sinn für ‘moralische Ermahnung’.”<sup>123</sup> Indeed, Popkes’s closing claim that paraenesis is “im weitesten Sinn für ‘moralische Ermahnung’” is completely opposite to Engberg-Pedersen’s prolegomenon for paraenetic analysis (this narrower position will be discussed below). Somewhere between these two poles would fall Abraham Malherbe (who is largely representative of a mainstream approach to paraenesis within New Testament studies) while Hans Dieter Betz implicitly lies closer to Popkes. However, even though the editors recognize that “there is no consensus, not even on the definition of paraenesis,” the volume has the more useful goal of “problematiz[ing] . . . earlier scholarship on paraenesis.” This goal clearly indicates the hopes of the contributors: “We would rather contribute to opening up the field than closing it.”<sup>124</sup> Even with the diversity of positions taken in the collection, the Lund-Oslo group can still be seen as indicative of some general and noteworthy trends in the field.

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<sup>123</sup> Popkes, *Paränese und Neues Testament*, 9; note also the brief overview of scholarly views on paraenesis on pp. 29–48. Popkes’ broad understanding of paraenesis is consistent with his “Paraenesis in the New Testament,” 42–43. A similar definition of paraenesis is adopted by Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict*, 235, and by Werner Wolbert, *Ethische Argumentation*, 18–19.

<sup>124</sup> Starr and Engberg-Pedersen, “Introduction,” 9.

The three basic features of paraenesis, as defined by the Oslo group, along with the overarching understanding of the category as “a concise, benevolent injunction,” are significant. First, paraenetic discourse does not hold a harsh, argumentative tone that needs to justify its overarching claims. Rather, the preceptor and reader(s) have a shared symbolic universe within which the moral exhortation takes place dialogically. Second, the prominence of “reminding” as a function of paraenesis is again reaffirmed and indeed stressed. Exhortation does not include initial teaching, or teaching new material, but rather is to call the readers back to memory of what is already known by the community. Third, the shared symbolic universe plays a role in the non-dialectic aspect of paraenesis. Although certainly dialogical in nature, paraenesis does not engage in debate over what is exhorted but accepts it as normative and expects such acceptance by the readers. Not all hortatory literature explored in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* neatly fits this definition of paraenesis. Übelacker is very clear in his claim that Hebrews does not fit all aspects of this definition, and thereby offers a more precise distinction between *paraenesis* and *paraklesis*. Still, the definition is useful for determining the nuance on paraenesis adopted by the Lund-Oslo group.

Unlike the centrality given to rites of passage and liminal experience by Perdue, the Oslo definition calls into question such prominence. They claim that the ritual context of initiation into a group or a new level within a group has nothing to do with paraenetic discourse—paraenesis recalls what is known, and thus its target audience is comprised of insiders who are already socialized and incorporated into the existing social unit. Indeed, Übelacker’s treatment of the social make-up of the recipients of Hebrews raises this question of liminality: “With regard to paraenesis, the interesting question is whether the addressees are a) people whom the author wants to persuade to change their lifestyle and convert to a new cultural identity, or b) newly converted people (e.g. beginners) and therefore in a liminal state, or c) people who are more advanced and only momentarily wavering in their process of development.”<sup>125</sup> His answer echoes the contours of the Oslo definition: “In sum, the recipients are not in a liminal state. Their conversion has happened some time ago, which implies that they need not be persuaded to change their life-style or their value-system. On the contrary, the author

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<sup>125</sup> Übelacker, “Paraenesis or Paraclesis,” 324.

can presume a knowledge that he or she can remind the recipients of, such as the common confession and a value system that the author and recipients have agreed upon. . . . Another matter is of course that these texts can nonetheless be described as *paraenetic in intent* because of the context and the ultimate goal of the instruction, namely, to strengthen the listeners' belief and the value system they, in principle, share with the author."<sup>126</sup> Starr in particular has further challenged this consensus view, situating his discussion within a much broader group of texts than Übelacker. With an understanding of paraenesis as "not a friendly presentation of ethics but friendly advice,"<sup>127</sup> Starr surveys paraenetic examples such as Plutarch, Seneca, the *Wisdom of Solomon*, 2 *Baruch*, 1 Thessalonians, and Romans, as well as instructions for new initiates or beginners in Epicurus, Xenophon, Aristotle, Musonius Rufus, Epictetus, Seneca, the Pauline material, Acts, Hebrews, *Didache*, and Justin Martyr.<sup>128</sup> Building on a philosophical tradition, largely developed within Stoicism, that argued against moral advice ("solid food") until the novice had been established with the "milk" of foundational teachings (e.g., regarding the nature of the cosmos, the gods, and what constitutes right and wrong; Cicero *Fin.* 3.73; Epictetus *Diss.* 1.9.6–14; Philo *Prelim. Studies* 19), Starr claims that the early Christians would not have included moral advice within initiation instruction, but would have preserved such advanced teachings for those already established in their faith.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, for Paul the appropriate teaching for initiates "was *primarily* focused on expositing the confession that God had raised Christ from the dead and that 'Christ is Lord' (Rom 10:9)."<sup>130</sup> Thus, while paraenesis may refer back to a period of initiation, especially as a reminder of the basics, paraenetic discourse is addressed to those who held a shared worldview.

Given the Oslo definition, paraenesis, therefore, does not address the social setting of initial entrance into a particular social group.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Übelacker, "Paraenesis or Paraclesis," 326.

<sup>127</sup> Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?" 84.

<sup>128</sup> Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?"

<sup>129</sup> See discussion and further examples in Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?" 98–111.

<sup>130</sup> Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?" 105.

<sup>131</sup> Among the early Christian texts analyzed by Starr, the one exception to this view is *Didache* 1–6, where the two way schema "appears to have functioned *both* as pre-baptismal instruction *and* as the on-going, regularly repeated rule for the congregation" ("Was Paraenesis for Beginners?" 109). Such a dual function, according to Starr, may have been due to liturgical use of the material.

Liminality—so important for Perdue’s social analysis of paraenesis—is removed from a social understanding of paraenesis by the very definition employed. Unfortunately, as with Martin’s treatment of Perdue on this very point, the Lund-Oslo group has mistakenly limited Perdue’s utilization of Turner’s liminality to rites of passage (or symbolic equivalents of such a ritual, to again refer to Catherine Bell’s work on ritual passage). Experiential states of liminality within crisis situations were as important for Perdue’s social context as are ritually marked progressions through stages of the life cycle or movement within a social group. Of course, unlike the Lund-Oslo group, Perdue does not limit paraenesis to a confirmative function.<sup>132</sup> Rather, he understood there to be both a confirmative and a conversionist function of paraenetic material (i.e., the paraenetic function and the protreptic function).

Precision of language and delimitation of definitional boundaries, however, are quintessential for recent scholarly attention to paraenesis, especially for members of the Lund-Oslo group. Übelacker, as an example, attempts to clarify the distinction between paraenesis and paraclesis within his analysis of Hebrews. Both are moral exhortation, but, within his typological framework, are slightly distinct. He begins with the limitations of the Oslo definition as a framework for establishing this distinction. Whereas paraenesis should merely recall a shared worldview in order to re-affirm the recipients’ established beliefs, and therefore should contain no expectation of disagreement, Hebrews instead draws upon various devices for arguing the prescriptive position of the author even though the recipients do share the author’s worldview and are already established within the community. Through means of rhetorical questions (which are indirect requests for assent), metapropositional bases, and evaluations, the author of Hebrews offers logical argumentative reasons for the assent of the recipients. For Übelacker, this usage of motivational devices, rational arguments, and emotional support (i.e., an appeal to *pathos*) distinguishes paraclesis

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<sup>132</sup> This broader sense of liminality seems to have been missed by the Lund-Oslo group. Starr, for instance, is not as far from Perdue on the role of liminality in paraenesis than he suggests. In dealing with Plutarch, for example, Starr clearly recognizes that a liminal state of crisis was significant: “The paraenesis in these letter-essays is addressed to people who are, it must be admitted, in the midst of a major life transition... But the social changes entailed in these transitions [such as the death of a family member, entering adult life, a new marriage, or retirement] are the type that are universally experienced and expected; they do not in these instances involve a foundational change in the individual’s view of life or the world” (“Was Paraenesis for Beginners?” 88).

from paraenesis. A further distinction between paraenesis, as delimited by the Oslo definition, and paraclesis, as articulated by Übelacker, is the usage of co-hortatives in Hebrews. For example, Heb 10:22 reads “προσερχόμεθα μετὰ ἀληθινῆς καρδίας.” Here we find the middle deponent verb προσέρχομαι, in the first person plural form, functioning as a hortative subjunctive: “*let us come* with a true heart.” Such a form renders the appeal a co-hortative. In this case, the verb carries a dynamic quality, rather than a static element, in that it “indicates a movement in a certain direction.”<sup>133</sup> For Übelacker these co-hortative formations render the exhortation not a discourse of an authoritative figure speaking to the recipients, but rather a “reciprocal exhortation” between the author and recipients within a context of “mutuality [rather] than authority” (i.e., as in paraenesis, so in paraclesis, a preceptor may assume an authoritative role but not an authoritative voice).<sup>134</sup> Such mutuality functions to reinforce the positive relations between the author and audience. Paraenesis, it will be recalled, was understood by the Lund-Oslo group as “usually presuppos[ing] that the person giving paraenesis has some kind of authority to give advice or injunctions without anticipating disagreement.”<sup>135</sup> By means of this close, inductive analysis of Hebrews, Übelacker is able to offer a clear definitional separation of these two hortative terms. Paraclesis, even though carrying a paraenetic intent in Hebrews, differs from paraenesis in that: 1) paraclesis (unlike paraenesis) allows for disagreement, and indeed addresses such disagreement anticipatively; 2) paraclesis is not limited to what the recipients already know (the vital importance of reminding in paraenesis), but presents new information and deeper clarification of such information; 3) paraclesis calls for deliberation not just understanding; 4) paraclesis utilizes motivation devices, especially

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<sup>133</sup> Übelacker, “Paraenesis or Paraklesis,” 331. An example of a static dynamic would be “hold fast” or “stay true.” This distinction is drawn from Harold Attridge, “Paraenesis in a Homily,” 221.

<sup>134</sup> Übelacker, “Paraenesis or Paraklesis,” 349. Earlier in the essay, he states more succinctly: “The reciprocal exhortation eliminates any differentiation in status between the members of the congregation, and it may therefore be that παραινέω is an inappropriate word because it would stress the author’s higher status as more experienced and entrusted with special authority” (334). Other members of the Lund-Oslo group also recognized the importance of familial relations for paraenetic discourse, see especially Aasgaard, “Brotherly.”

<sup>135</sup> Übelacker, “Paraenesis or Paraklesis,” 332. This is based upon an acceptance of Libanius’ understanding of paraenesis as unquestionable (*Epistolary Styles* 5).

moral examples and appeals to *pathos*; 5) paraclesis envisions mutuality between author and audience; 6) like paraenesis, paraclesis is directed towards established insiders “in progress” rather than initiates or novices; and 7) paraclesis can therefore be seen as both a designation for a genre and the function of a text (unlike paraenesis).<sup>136</sup> What is important to note here, beyond the actual construction of paraclesis in contrast to paraenesis, is Übelacker’s close attention to terminology and inductive construction of genre.<sup>137</sup>

In like manner, Troels Engberg-Pedersen has also given prominent attention to inductive analysis of paraenesis terminology in not only his contribution to the Lund-Oslo collection but also in an earlier study of Philonic paraenesis.<sup>138</sup> Engberg-Pedersen begins by arguing that paraenesis should be translated “injunction” or “advice” rather than “exhort” or “exhortation.”<sup>139</sup> By closely engaging Philo’s works, with particular attention to and correction of the Loeb translation, he places the term paraenesis within a constellation of hortative terms. A line of intensity of hortative terms is established through inductive method. At one end of the line πρόσταξις denotes commands or giving orders that are to be obeyed. “Commands” [πρόσταξις] and “prohibitions” [ἀπαγορεύσεις] are “the customary ways of tyrants and despots addressing people like slaves instead of free men” (other key terms that fit on this end of the pole include: προστάττειν, κελεύειν, and βιάσασθαι).<sup>140</sup> At the other end of the pole, we find αὐτομαθεῖ (“by himself”) and ἐπιστήμη (“complete or final knowledge”). This end of the pole pushes toward a realization of virtue or character within a person, thereby allowing an

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<sup>136</sup> This final aspect of paraclesis strikes me as ambiguous and slightly odd. A genre by definition is functional and descriptive of a type of literature. Paraenesis, like any other genre, must conform to both descriptive and functional aspects in order to be a genre. Whether we see paraclesis as a distinct genre from paraenesis, or as a sub-genre of paraenesis, it too would have to fit such qualification.

<sup>137</sup> See also the discussion of paraenesis and paraclesis, and the limitations of these terms for denoting moral exhortation in the New Testament (especially as a sub-genre), in Jan Botha and Fika J. van Rensburg, “*Paraenesis of paraklese*.” Special attention is given to Gammie’s theory of paraenesis as a secondary genre (45–48).

<sup>138</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, “Concept of Paraenesis”; “Paraenesis Terminology in Philo.”

<sup>139</sup> Evidently independent of Engberg-Pedersen, Roger Wayne Maddox has also translated παραινέω as “advise” or “urge,” yet, unlike Engberg-Pedersen, Maddox maintains a more general understanding of paraenesis along the lines of Popkes. See Maddox, *Paraenesis and Exegesis*, 6.

<sup>140</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, “Paraenesis Terminology in Philo,” 382.

intuitive insight into what is good.<sup>141</sup> Between these two poles he places both *παράινεις/παραινέιν* (“injunction, advice”/“enjoin, advise”) and *προτροπή/προτρέπειν* (“incitement”/“urge, incite”). The latter is placed closer to *εἰστήμη*, while the former is nearer to *πρόσταξις*. Although *παράινεις* stands close to *πρόσταξις*, it is distinct in that paraenesis does not command but offers advice on conduct or behaviour, and thus is not actually an exhortation in the sense of a law, rule, or command. It is closer to “teaching” or “instructing” in its basic meaning. *Προτροπή*, however, focuses less on behavioural acts, and more so on moral attitudes or moral virtue (*ἠθικὴ ἀρετή*). It addresses the will or desire of the soul, encouraging, urging or inciting the person towards the realization of virtue/character at the far end of the line. In the process of such “urging”, *προτροπή* may draw upon *παράινεις* (i.e., on precepts). Two other key paraenetic terms are *νουθετεῖν* (“admonitions”) and *σωφρονισμός* (“correctives”). These two terms tend to fall on the *πρόσταξις—παράινεις* end of the line, much like auxiliary terms for these two types of hortative discourse. As a general, and sometimes ambiguous, umbrella term, Engberg-Pedersen finally places *παρακαλεῖν/παρακλήσις* (which he feels should typically be rendered “to exhort/exhortation”, though other terms may be used depending on context). By offering such a continuum for the paraenesis terminology, especially with a very clear focus on Philonic paraenesis, Engberg-Pedersen offers two useful contributions to scholarly discussions of paraenesis. First, his narrow and inductive approach (with each step carefully building on the preceding in the very construction of his typology) effectively demonstrates that the terminology utilized should be determined within set parameters—i.e., each author or even each text should be analyzed for the particular contextual meaning of the terms that have become technical terminology for scholars. Second, his continuum in particular gives us a model of degrees of nuance within the paraenetic terminology. There is no one, static determining definition of paraenesis for the range of terminology, but rather a series of peculiar nuances for the terminology utilized. The exact emphasis, however, should be deduced from specific contextual contexts—an

<sup>141</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, “Paraenesis Terminology in Philo,” 382–83. As an example of the perfection of character/virtue, he offers an example from Philo, *Somn.* 1.160–162: “a figure of knowledge gained by nature [*αὐτομαθῆς φύσει περιγινωμένη... ἐπιστήμη*], knowledge which listens to and learns from no teacher but itself [*αὐτήκοος καὶ αὐτοδίδακτος*]” (382).

individual text, a corpus of texts (e.g., Philonic, Isocratean, etc), or a social and epistemological context such as philosophical schools (e.g., Stoic paraenesis).

It is this last context, that of a social or epistemological typology, that is developed at greater lengths in his contribution to the Lund-Oslo volume. In this typology, he begins with what he terms *traditional paraenesis* (distinct from what Perdue understood by “traditional paraenesis”), specifically identified in the Isocratean corpus (i.e., Isocrates, *To Nicocles*, *Nicocles Antidosis*, and Ps.-Isocrates *To Demonicus*), which drew upon the Greek poetic tradition. Traditional paraenesis exhorts or enjoins specific behavioural acts thereby “reflect[ing] a *traditional system of popular ethics* that had developed over the centuries.”<sup>142</sup> A second type of paraenesis identified by Engberg-Pedersen is *philosophical paraenesis*; perhaps most clearly present in Seneca, especially *Epistles* 94 and 95. Engberg-Pedersen traces this type, however, as far back as Ariston of Chios (4th century B.C.E.). This second type of paraenesis revolves around the moral debates within Stoic circles: namely, the relationship if any between knowing the good, or doctrines (*δόγματα* or *decreta*), and good behaviour (*καθήκοντα* or *officia* especially in connection with precept-giving [*praecepta*]). A tripartite anthropology undergirded this ancient debate: “the ultimately insightful person (the sage) . . . *the incipient wise . . . progressing fools*.”<sup>143</sup> As Engberg-Pedersen summarizes the debate, “the controversy among the old Stoics that is connected with the name of Ariston of Chios was whether room should in fact be made for *παράινεσις* and *καθήκοντα* or whether the grasp of the ultimate good was in itself sufficient. Stoics generally thought the first. Ariston thought the second.”<sup>144</sup> In beautiful diatribal form, Seneca argued that both comprehension of the good and precepts were necessary—precepts functioning to remind and call attention to what is known, not for new knowledge *per se*. Within this Stoic philosophical paraenesis, such as with Chrysippus, the focus is not only upon proper behavioural acts (as in traditional paraenesis), but even more so the end goal of grasping ultimate insight into the very nature of the good.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>142</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, “Concept of Paraenesis,” 53.

<sup>143</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, “Concept of Paraenesis,” 55.

<sup>144</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, “Concept of Paraenesis,” 55.

<sup>145</sup> This distinction between Isocratean and Stoic paraenesis is most explicitly indicated by Engberg-Pedersen, “Concept of Paraenesis,” on page 57.

The third type of paraenesis within Engberg-Pedersen's typology is Hellenistic psychagogy: "... we have come to see that there was a large amount of reflection in different types of text and discipline of the Hellenistic period concerning proper ways of addressing people whom one wanted to adopt some understanding or practice. It is immediately clear that ancient rhetoric is one such discipline. Equally clear, one may see Hellenistic moral philosophy as one of the parents of such reflection...."<sup>146</sup> The Cynic epistles would fall under this third type, as would Cicero, *Tusc.* Book 4. Such material, he claims, should not be considered *paraenesis*. For instance, moral examples, he argues, are not actually paraenesis but rather substitutes for paraenesis.<sup>147</sup> Rather than paraenesis (παράνεσις, or Latin equivalents *admonitio/monitio*, and *praepceptio*), he advocates instead the more general term, already discussed above, παράκλησις "exhortation" (Latin equivalent, e.g. in Seneca, *adhortatio*). In all three types so far there is, Engberg-Pedersen further argues, no distinct *paraenetic genre*. Rather, we find, especially with Hellenistic psychagogy or paraclesis, a *paraenetic style*.<sup>148</sup> Up to this point, therefore, there has not emerged a genre of *the* paraenesis.

When Engberg-Pedersen turns to Paul's paraenesis or paraclesis we move into the formation of early Christian paraenetic discourse (though Paul does not illustrate all early Christian exhortation). In a sense, the fourth type in the typology is Pauline paraenesis. This type, however, should be carefully qualified. Like other writers of paraenesis (of the earlier types), Paul does not write something that qualifies as *the* paraenesis (especially 1 Thess 4; Gal 5; Phil 4; and Rom 12). Rather, he writes with a paraenetic style, in much the same way that he writes at times with a diatribe style. It is with fourth century commentators that we find Paul's exhortations being identified as paraenesis—indeed the idea of a Pauline paraenetic genre comes from these commentators up to modern scholarship.<sup>149</sup> We may speak, therefore, of two phases of Pauline paraenesis (to add to Engberg-Pedersen's typology): a) Pauline

<sup>146</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, "Concept of Paraenesis," 59–60.

<sup>147</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, "Concept of Paraenesis," 60. This is based upon a discussion of both Isocrates, *Nicoles* 57.61 and Seneca, *Epistle* 94.40–42.

<sup>148</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, "Concept of Paraenesis," 61. He uses the example of the diatribe to illustrate this "style" qualification for paraenesis. Just as we may speak of a diatribe style of a text without the text being a diatribe in genre, so also, he argues by analogy, we can speak of "bits of texts" that are stylistically paraenetic but without being paraenetic in genre.

<sup>149</sup> See Hellholm and Blomkvist, "Paraenesis as an Ancient Genre-Designation."

paraenesis as style (focusing on Paul's time), and b) Pauline paraenesis as *the* paraenesis/genre (focusing on later readers of Paul). The question still remains as to what in Paul prompted the (still ongoing) understanding and application of the term paraenesis to (parts of) Paul's letters. It is this very question that Engberg-Pedersen focuses upon at some length. Working with Wolfgang Nauck's οὖν *paraeneticum* to make sense of Paul's "theologizing," noting both parallels and differences from the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* (specifically, *T.Reu.* 4:1, 5; *Zeb.* 5:1,3; *Dan* 5:1; *Gad* 6:1; *Jos.* 10:1–2, 11:1 where we have a patriarch moving from life experience to imperatival importance for the hearers)<sup>150</sup> and especially parallels with the Stoic philosophical tradition of *exempla bona* and *praecepta bona* (Seneca, *Epistle* 94.40–42), he locates Paul's hortative material within Hellenistic, philosophical paraenesis, especially with consideration given to παραγγελία and λοιπὸν οὖν in 1 Thess 4.<sup>151</sup> Paul writes to his recipients within an epistolary framework (thus within an *epistolary* παράκλησις, as Engberg-Pedersen describes it).<sup>152</sup> It is this very epistolary framework, and the stress of Paul's paraenesis, that resulted in a discourse so interwoven and prominent for the hortative sections, that later commentators began to see *the* Pauline paraenesis present as a distinct literary (sub-) genre. Paul's hortative material, however, is referred to as παράκλησις by Paul himself, even though in content it is a melding of traditional and philosophical paraenesis (with stress on the latter). Engberg-Pedersen suggests that Paul's choice of terms may have been due to Paul's positioning of himself within his

<sup>150</sup> See also Marinus de Jonge, "Die Paränese in den Schriften des Neuen Testaments," 277–89; especially his closing comments: "Nur mit großer Vorsicht kann man Parallelen aus den Test XII zur Erhellung der Paränese in den Schriften des Neuen Testaments gebrauchen. Die Text XII liefern einen wichtigen Beleg für die Kontinuität zwischen hellenistisch-jüdischer und christlicher Paränese. Sie sind aber in gründlich bearbeiteter Form auf uns gekommen, und man kann niemals ausschließen, daß eine bestimmte ethische Passage den christlichen Ansichten der Verfasser der Schrift in ihrer Endgestalt angepaßt worden ist." Cf. de Jonge, "The Transmission of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs by Christians," especially 6–8. On the relationship between praising God and paraenetic warning in the Hebrew Bible, see especially Clause Westermann, "Mahnung, Warnung und Geschichte." On the prominence of paraenesis in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, see the insightful discussion in Thomas, "Paraenesis of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs."

<sup>151</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, "Concept of Paraenesis," especially 65–67; Wolfgang Nauck, "Das οὖν *paraeneticum*." Nauck clearly notes the relationship between Paul's theology and ethics, indeed that ethics is an ethics of response ("Christliche Ethik ist Ethik der Dankbarkeit," 135).

<sup>152</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, "Concept of Paraenesis," 66.

letters and his overall rhetorical strategy. Rather than locating his own thought within any particular philosophical circle, which he would have seen as foolishness, Paul may have wished to distance himself from terminology that would have more clearly aligned him within such circles. Furthermore, the philophroneitic nature of the (epistolary) exhortation may have prompted Paul to adopt a rhetorical strategy of mutuality rather than hierarchal authority. Παράκλησις, rather than παραίνεσις, would have, within Engberg-Pedersen's earlier reconstruction of the terminology within his continuum and the historical typology now offered, carried a much broader sense of hortative implication, thereby enabling Paul to exhort within the contours of Hellenistic psychagogy (with a Stoic type goal in mind for the ethical connotations of his theology—i.e., relations with God have a reciprocal effect upon human relations, especially within the body of Christ) and also to maintain close, friendly relations with his audience.<sup>153</sup>

Although precision in terminology and definition are central issues for the Lund-Oslo group, another direction that has emerged both within this group's work and within other recent scholarship is the role of the rhetorical contours of identity formation within paraenetic discourse. Diana Swancutt is arguably the most notable member of the Lund-Oslo group to fit into this category. In both her doctoral dissertation and her essay in the Lund-Oslo volume, she argues for an application of (modern) identity formation theory to our understanding of protreptic discourse in antiquity.<sup>154</sup> Rather than seeing protrepsis as rhetorical deliberation with a goal to convert, standing within a dichotomous relationship to paraenesis on the issue of audience, Swancutt, through a review of ancient material, reconceived the category as a type of discourse focused upon the construction of identity through a playful engagement of ethnic stereotypes. The creation of "the other" or even "others" for the construction of a cultural identity for insiders is a central strategy of such discourse. Thus, for Swancutt paraenesis and protrepsis are determined by issues of social power and identity contestation and do not, contra Paul Hartlich, represent conversion and post-conversion literature.<sup>155</sup> She frames her discussion within an ancient debate between speculative and practical philosophical approaches to education

<sup>153</sup> See Engberg-Pedersen, "Concept of Paraenesis," 69; cf. Übelacker, "Paraenesis or Paraclesis," passim on the philophroneitic character of New Testament exhortation.

<sup>154</sup> Diana Marie Swancutt, *Pax Christi*; "Paraenesis in Light of Protrepsis."

<sup>155</sup> Swancutt, "Paraenesis in Light of Protrepsis"; Hartlich, *De exhortationum*.

or παιδεία. Protrepsis (λόγος προτρεπτικός), therefore, was “a form of rhetoric philosophers and others used to exhort people to embrace or deepen their commitment to a way of life,” and, furthermore, “philosophical protrepsis usually effected this result by teaching that a given way of life best enabled followers to live as ‘philosopher-kings’—as sages who embodied elite virtues and ruled well over their lives and others.”<sup>156</sup> Paul, writing to the Roman Christians, constructs just such a protreptic discourse in his epistle. His goal is not to convert or even instruct, but rather to create a new sense of identity for the Roman Christians—“to strengthen their identity as liminal Jews”—by means of defining the Christian community as a type of Judaism that stands beyond the disdainful ethnic stereotype that Gentiles would have held, as well as against the ethnic stereotypical view of Gentiles (*Romanitas*) that Jews would have held.<sup>157</sup> By working within an ethnic polarity, Paul “extols the Greco-Roman philosophical ideal of kingship and its attributes (e.g., justice, power, sagacity, impartiality, faithfulness, clemency, and *philanthropia*), while emphasizing that they were the essential characteristics of the God of Israel.”<sup>158</sup> Within Paul’s rhetorical play, the ongoing modern debate regarding the Jewish or Gentile make-up of the church at Rome is displaced as largely irrelevant. The goal is not to construct a clear historical backdrop for the letter, but rather, following Stanley Stowers’s lead, to focus on how the text itself indicates a playful, perhaps even theatrical rhetoric of affecting and moving the social perceptions of the audience. The audience is seen as holding a liminal stance between two differing cultural loci: a Jewish heritage within the Roman capital. It is the inevitable intercultural tensions that emerge, and which typified much of Diaspora Judaism (and, by extension, Christianity in the first century), that becomes the basis for Paul’s hortative and diatribal discourse to the Roman Christians. Such tensions are definitively placed within a context of social interactions by

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<sup>156</sup> Swancutt, *Pax Christi*, 4.

<sup>157</sup> It is, furthermore, important to recall (and Swancutt clearly does) that ethnicity in antiquity was not a static, biological construction as it is in modern Western cultures. Rather, as Denise Kimber Buell, “Rethinking the Relevance of Race,” has insightfully and correctly demonstrated, ethnicity was a fluid, interchangeable and constructed aspect of identity; see also Denise Kimber Buell and Caroline Johnson Hodge, “The Politics of Interpretation.” Indeed, the construction of the “other’s” identity, especially within binary opposites, was a common means of defining one’s own self-identity or the (self-)identity of one’s group. The classic Greek/Barbarian (or Scythian) or Jew/Gentile pairing effectively demonstrates such rhetoric of identity construction.

<sup>158</sup> Swancutt, *Pax Christi*, 5.

Paul, especially as cultural identity is largely socially constructed through a series of responses—indeed, I would contend a series of dialogical responses—within such interactive and intercultural tensions.<sup>159</sup>

Swancutt's work on moral exhortation as identity construction and behavioural acts within social interactions, is an insightful and refreshing prolegomenon for further studies of paraenesis in early Christianity. Her work, however, is not alone in such a direction in analyzing early Christian paraenesis. In 1992 David Kuck, in a similar line of reasoning on Pauline paraenesis in 1 Corinthians, claimed that "... in Jewish texts [prior to 100 C.E.] that refer to a belief in future judgment it [paraenesis] functions for the most part to define one group against another in the face of conflict, crisis, or threat which affects the whole group."<sup>160</sup> More recently, Charles A. Wanamaker has argued that the apocalyptic motifs in 1 Thessalonians carry a similar paraenetic function for preserving community identity.<sup>161</sup> The major shortcoming of Swancutt's definition of protrepsis is that it is not clear where the distinction between paraenetic function and protreptic function comes into play. Indeed, it would seem that for Swancutt these two functions of conversion and confirmation are both embedded within the *λόγος προτρεπτικός*. The two functions lack clarity, likely due to their unimportance for her understanding of the rhetorical and thus social function of moral exhortation. This de-emphasis on the paraenetic/protreptic debate, coupled with the stress placed on rhetorical social perception, is a distinguishing feature of her work and stands in contrast to previous scholarly work including that of Perdue, Burgess, and Hartlich.<sup>162</sup> With her work we move beyond the confines of the historical backdrop or context of the text and, instead, move toward an appreciation of the role of the text as a rhetorical device to affect the recipients within their own symbolic universe or normative worldview and their place within that world.

<sup>159</sup> Swancutt, *Pax Christi*, 7–9; cf. especially her comments on page 8: "For the study of identity the pertinent question is not 'Which definition of Judaism was essentially true?' but 'How did the tensions between divergent cultural definitions of the 'other' form group identities'." Cf. Tite, *Conceiving Peace and Violence*, for another and further explication of relationship between ethics and social constructionist approaches to worldviews conceived through narrative discourse.

<sup>160</sup> Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict*, 229; cf. 234–35.

<sup>161</sup> Wanamaker, "Apocalyptic Discourse."

<sup>162</sup> Perdue, "Social Character"; Burgess, *Epideictic*; and Hartlich, *De exhortationum*. Hartlich in particular held to a distinction between paraenesis and protrepsis, a position challenged by Burgess and revised and held by Perdue. See also M. D. Jordan, "Ancient Philosophic Protreptic."

Indeed, her work encourages us to consider with greater acuity what is at stake for an author when constructing a hortatory address rather than simply focussing on mechanical aspects of genre.<sup>163</sup>

In like manner, but with a very different theoretical approach, Lauri Thurén, another member of the Lund-Oslo group, has advocated a rhetorical appreciation for the motivational dimensions of New Testament texts. Like Swancutt, Thurén places emphasis upon the communicative situation and socially interactive nature of a text's rhetoric. In bemoaning a purely content based analysis of a text's linguistic and theological particularities, he states:

Therefore progress in understanding James can be made, when the thematic contents and even linguistic constructions are left aside for a while. Instead of looking at the text as a static set of ideas, we can begin by focusing on the communicative and interactive conventions therein, and seek the function and purpose of such phenomena. Thereafter the contents can be assessed in a new light.<sup>164</sup>

Working within modern speech act theory, specifically the work of J. L. Austin, J. R. Searle, and F. H. Eemeren and R. Grootendorst, Thurén proposes to explore the argumentative structure of the New Testament texts (particularly in his work on 1 Peter) as an audience-oriented, interactive form of communication.<sup>165</sup> Communication is intended to not only inform an audience but also to "produce some effect upon the audience... as a bi-directional relationship" in which the audience's reaction will affect "the speaker's further message, which again affects the audience."<sup>166</sup> This effect can be an illocutionary effect, yet, as there are few instances of simply informative communication, there is the perlocutionary affect (both inherent and consecutive) in which the

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<sup>163</sup> Similarly, Popkes, "Paraenesis in the New Testament," 43, comments: "The formal and literary aspects should not be the decisive criteria, but rather, the function one." So also Engberg-Pedersen, "Concept of Paraenesis," 53: "It was not a type of text, even less a literary genre. It was a practice."

<sup>164</sup> Thurén, "Risky Rhetoric," 266.

<sup>165</sup> Thurén's rhetorical approach, with special emphasis upon motivational aspects of rhetoric, goes back to his doctoral dissertation on 1 Peter, though it is most clearly developed in his 1995 book on 1 Peter along with a series of articles and essays. See Lauri Thurén, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter*; "On Studying Ethical Argumentation"; "Hey Jude!"; and, of course, "Motivation as the Core of Paraenesis."

<sup>166</sup> Thurén, *Argument*, 52; Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*; Searle, *Speech Acts*; and Eemeren and Grootendorst, *Speech Acts; Argumentation, Communication and Fallacies*.



The paraenetic contours of 1 Peter are explored by means of this method, charting out the relationship of the motivational elements in the letter. Although his attention to the communicative dynamic as well as ideological and pathetic dimensions of paraenesis are commendable, Thurén's approach has met with resistance largely due to both the mechanical and wooden nature of his "charting" of the motivational elements, as well as the fear of anachronism. At several points in his work, he has explicitly praised the superiority of modern rhetorical theory over that of ancient cultural contexts. Indeed, his rationale for this preference is largely due to a perception of a universal form of communication—all communication tends to function the same way, he claims.<sup>172</sup> His essentializing of social communicative processes and structures certainly evokes wariness among those biblical scholars for whom anachronism is anathema. Modern theoretical models, I would contend, are certainly useful, indeed essential, but only when qualified by the contextual basis within which they are utilized.

The Lund-Oslo group is to be commended for advancing discussions of paraenesis, in particular for the level of precision that has been advocated, both regarding the precise meaning of the terminology and the attention given to conceptual or ideological aspects of paraenetic texts. From the above sketch of this group's work, at least four general directions for the study of paraenesis in biblical studies emerge. First, there is a strong emphasis upon terminology, specifically to establish a field of terms that typify and therefore classify (or define) paraenesis. Several members of the Lund-Oslo group are concerned over the broad, sweeping understanding of paraenesis as simply "moral exhortation" (Popkes perhaps being the major exception, though even here a concern with terminology emerges).<sup>173</sup> By focusing on particular terms and their distinct meaning in contrast to, or in comparison with, other technical terms, such studies have allowed these scholars to offer fresh understandings of moral exhortation. Although the exact nature of each scholar's understanding or typology will vary, what is common is the

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<sup>172</sup> Thurén, "Risky Rhetoric," 263, "...it may well be that he at least attempts to follow general, natural rules of communication"; *Argument*, 34, "...it is often evident that modern insights can offer more adequate tools for research"; and *Argument*, 37, "Even if ancient ways of thinking differed to some extent from modern discourse, and although many ancient concepts are irreplaceable due to their familiarity, one should ask whether a great deal of the discourse is not common to all human communication, and whether some modern aspects could not be more adequate in describing it."

<sup>173</sup> Popkes, "Paraenesis in the New Testament," 27.

delimitation of each term's meaning by means of an appreciation for the nuance of each term in relation to the other terms. The terms, however, are not divorced from each other, but rather allow different types of moral exhortation (or various levels of nuance of moral exhortation) to emerge. The exact terms are not necessary in order to identify/classify a text as paraenetic, yet the construction of a terminology field helps to draw out the distinctiveness of a moral exhortation in comparison or contrast with other instances of moral exhortation. Engberg-Pedersen's continuum from command to intuitive virtue (or virtuous disposition) perhaps best exemplifies this tendency.

Second, there is a concern with the ideological, argumentative, and identity forming aspects of paraenesis. In effect, paraenesis is not simply discourse regarding morals, ethics or the good, rather it is a communicative, dialogic strategy—it is rhetoric designed to persuade. As such, paraenesis, by necessity, is socially interactive. It operates within communicative settings, appealing to an intended audience. As Johannes Thomas observes with regard to Jewish paraenetic material: “By reminding people of a tradition, they also involve the bearers of the tradition in the tradition. Furthermore, they remind people of the complete value canon that belongs to the group. Finally, without requiring further explanation, they at the same time bring into play the whole ideological basis for the life of the group.”<sup>174</sup> Other scholars have also noted this aspect of paraenesis in recent scholarship, such as Charles Wanamaker. Tim Sensing, in a series of articles in *Restoration Quarterly* has also stressed the importance of preceptor-audience relations, particularly with attention to the relationship between Paul's theological (or “indicative”) formulations and his paraenetic (or “imperative”) application.<sup>175</sup> Sensing's work is primarily concerned with paraenesis within a modern theory of homiletics (he does not argue that paraenesis is homiletical, but that it affords a paradigm for sermons). However, it is worth noting for the historian of early Christianity, given the attention to ancient (particularly Pauline) paraenesis as well as modern scholarly discussions.

Sensing exemplifies a third direction that the field has been increasingly moving in; that is, an appreciation for the relation between the

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<sup>174</sup> Thomas, “The Paraenesis of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,” 167; cf. Reidar Aasgaard, “Brotherly Advice,” 264.

<sup>175</sup> Tim Sensing, “Towards a Definition of Paraenesis”; “A Strategy for Preaching Paraenesis”; “From Exegesis to Sermon in Romans 12:9–21.”

paraenetic material in a text and the other, non-paraenetic, parts of a text. The Lund-Oslo group implicitly adopts such a concern for the relationship between paraenetic and non-paraenetic sections of a text. Indeed, not only does Malherbe advocate such a view—which he has held since his earlier, pioneering work on paraenesis in 1 Thessalonians—but also for Engberg-Pedersen the distinctive nature of Pauline paraenesis emerges from such an interweaving and interconnection within Paul’s letters. Thurén has also rightly noted that 1 Peter’s paraenesis does not neatly fall into paraenetic and non-paraenetic sections, but rather weaves doctrinal and hortative material throughout the letter. For the Lund-Oslo group, the relationship of paraenetic and non-paraenetic material is closely tied to a negative view towards reading the material as constituting a paraenetic genre. Typically, such a rejection of genre is due to seeing genre as simply a “mechanical recipe book” of formal literary features.<sup>176</sup>

A fourth direction found within the Lund-Oslo group is a critical stance towards Perdue’s theory of liminality. The definitions emerging from both the Lund and Oslo conferences require the readers to be already established insiders who share the author’s symbolic universe. There is no room for a “conversion” type of paraenesis within the definitions established by the Lund-Oslo group. Some of these directions will be critiqued below when I propose that paraenesis needs to be understood as an analytically functional category for studying early Christian moral exhortation. However, suffice to say that the Lund-Oslo group, like the *Semeia* group ten years before, offers a significant and fresh contribution to the study of paraenesis.

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<sup>176</sup> Swancutt, “Paraenesis in Light of Protrepsis,” 113, notes 2 and 3; so also Thomas, “The Paraenesis of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,” 160 and 190; and Stephen Westerholm, “Four Maccabees,” 200. A contrary position is taken by Malherbe, “Paraenesis in the Epistle to Titus,” who is also concerned over the interaction of paraenetic and non-paraenetic sections of a text. Karl Olav Sandnes, “Revised Conventions,” also argues for identifying a text, in this case 1 Peter, as fitting a paraenetic genre (this departure from the majority of the Lund-Oslo group is due to a heightened appreciation for the *Semeia* group’s work as well as a dependency on Troy Martin’s reading of 1 Peter). Cf. Betz, “Paraenesis and the Concept of God” as well as Hellholm and Blomkvist, “*Parainesis* as an Ancient Genre-Designation.”



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DEFINING PARAENESIS II: TOWARDS A FUNCTIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF PARAENESIS

Over the past century there have been significant developments in the construction of what has become known as paraenesis. Although most scholars have moved beyond the “stringing together” with catchwords approach, appreciating more complicated and socially interwoven dimensions in hortatory address, there remains a lack of consensus as to what is meant by the term paraenesis. While some prefer a general understanding, others prefer a narrow definition. Emphasis can be placed upon issues of terminology, social function, motivational structures, or cross-cultural comparison. This diversity in the field—a diversity running through most of the historical phases discussed in the preceding chapter—is, perhaps, a healthy indication that scholarly discussions are increasingly dynamic and lively. Moral exhortation is no longer reduced to simple traditional precepts loosely thrown together with no relation to each other, and thus seen as only secondary features, with no significance for discerning the author’s rhetorical strategy. Still, we are left with the problem of establishing a working understanding of paraenesis for exploring the moral exhortation in the Valentinian sources.

#### SECOND-ORDER NATURE OF CATEGORIES

Although I do not accept Gammie’s particular typology in its entirety, the principles he establishes for genre analysis and his identification of the functional dimension of genre is insightful. He set forth this functional dimension as follows: “...genre analysis should not simply be taxonomic but productive, heuristic—and that in a least two ways: (i) by enabling the interpreter to observe distinctive variations of the type...and (ii) by pointing to other works which may profitably be studied together in the same curriculum or course of study.”<sup>1</sup> Gammie’s

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<sup>1</sup> Gammie, “Morphology,” 46.

theoretical perspective on genre analysis highlights three aspects of genre. First, genre is a constructed, analytical device and not a purely descriptive presentation of data. Second, the genre constructed must be flexible enough to allow variation. Such variation is not only necessary at the level of description (i.e., to describe a text through the lens of a given genre), yet even more so at the explanatory level, where the analysis moves beyond simple descriptive presentation of the text. Third, to analyze a given text within the confines of a particular genre, is to analyze that text comparatively. Indeed, the very function of genre is to enable comparison of diverse data.<sup>2</sup> The effectiveness to include both variance and comparison for paraenesis is accomplished through Gammie's hierarchy of genera (major genre, secondary genre, sub-genre) and the fluidity of components at the sub-genre level (e.g., admonition, diatribe, fables, lists, lamentations, etc) that can cross from genre to genre in diverse combinations. The difficulty, of course, with Gammie's actual typology—not the principles of genre analysis, with which I agree—is twofold: (1) there is an artificial rigidity in the placement and delimitation of the various elements, producing a cumbersome mechanical device rather than an efficient analytical tool; and (2) there is, ironically, an absence of analytical delimitation—what criteria allow us to establish a comparative genre rather than an amorphous mixture of genera?

All classifications are artificial constructions that are only valid and useful as heuristic devices. Consequently, all classification is inherently functional in nature. Such functionality is by necessity methodologically reductive. Such a view of classification is not new, though it is a point that needs to be stressed in biblical studies. Rather than asking, "is a text a paraenesis?" it is more accurate to ask, "does applying the label 'paraenesis' to a text give us added insight into the text?"—The distinction between these two questions is profound: with the latter is a clear distinction between the label and the item being labelled, whereas the former conflates the two, erroneously reducing the text to the label.

In an earlier study on the necessity for analyzing the functional, second-order nature of the very category "Gnosticism," I touched on the very nature of this first-order and second-order distinction for

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<sup>2</sup> See Jeffrey R. Carter, "Description is not Explanation."

taxonomic construction and utilization.<sup>3</sup> In that study, I argued that the epistemological gap between particulars and generals results in a problematic inconsistency for any such designation. While generals are abstracted from and comparatively established by particular data, the validity of the classification will come into question when applied back onto the particulars. Such inconsistency between category A with the particulars of A ( $A^1$ ,  $A^2$ ,  $A^3$ ) only arises when we conflate or confuse classification with that being classified. Indeed, to ontologically or metaphysically reduce a particular datum to a category (with all the invoked traits of that category) is to generate this problem—what Bertrand Russell called “naming” (i.e., the “standing in for” something [X] by the label [A]), thus essentializing the identity of X to the label A).<sup>4</sup> By drawing upon what is termed methodological reduction, classifications are distanced from the level of data (particulars) by focussing instead on the relative relations between data at the level of explanation.

The process of *naming* is fallacious due to its substantive correlation of category with object (unlike *describing*, which merely describes specific aspects of the object rather than the object itself). In collapsing description with theorization, in effect our analytical “maps” *de facto* become our “territories” even when still called “maps”.<sup>5</sup> Descriptions, on the other hand, assist the critical analysis by presupposing this analytical gap between data and theory. They place the emphasis not upon the object or objects, nor do such designations “stand for” some such entity

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<sup>3</sup> Tite, “Categorical Designations,” *passim*; see also Tite, “Gnosticism, Taxonomies, and the *Sui Generis* Debate”; “Naming or Defining?”

<sup>4</sup> Bertrand Russell, in his discussion on the definition of definitions, directly addresses the issue of classification symbols. He neatly lays out a two-fold typology of labels, referring to one as *naming* and the other as *description*. Each typology differently addresses the relational connection between an object and its properties. Naming, he contends, “is a simple symbol, directly designating an individual which is its meaning, and having this meaning in its own right, independently of the meanings of all other words” (*Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, 174). Descriptions, however, are defined by Russell as consisting “of several words, whose meanings are already fixed, and from which results whatever is to be taken as the ‘meaning’ of the description” (*Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, 174; cf. page 173). Relations of properties will, of course, vary under diverse indeterminate contexts, including the context of analytical inquiry. What is useful in Russell’s typology of designations is that they point out that descriptions, indeed language, are intimately linked to epistemological connotations (thus, their symbolic function); they evoke or invoke such connotations within the indeterminate usage of language. For a more thorough discussion of the theoretical distinction between *naming* and *describing*, see Tite, “Naming or Defining?”

<sup>5</sup> See Tite, “Categorical Designations”; Alfred, Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*; Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory*.

in an ontological sense, but rather focus upon the sets of properties and the relational configuration of those properties within historical, cultural and political particularities. By placing the analytical focus upon the indeterminate particularity of specific and shifting relations, descriptions (within a defining function of analysis) take first-order data collections and direct our attention to possible explanations of that data. This distinction between *naming* and *describing* is not all that dissimilar from what Robert Baird labelled “‘the essential-intuitional method’ and the ‘functional-definitional method’.”<sup>6</sup> For Baird, the former method rests upon a search for *sui generis* essences, while the latter method uses categories for a stated heuristic purpose. Functional-definitional methods are only valid within the context of an analysis of some matter, rather than “pointing to” or “standing in for” some metaphysical reality. Thus, in the construction of “knowable knowledge” categories serve a utilitarian function in theorization.<sup>7</sup>

Such explanatory utility, it should be noted, is only possible within an analysis of relations. Such a focus on relations, rather than objects within the relations, further moves us away from the pitfalls of ontological reductionism. Ontological reduction, as I have indicated elsewhere,<sup>8</sup> runs the danger of explaining away the data; the data (truth claims) are explained away by means of an absolute reduction to some other domain of conception (be it economic, cultural, political, or psychological; and these domains, it could be argued, are still in need of theorization). This problem is especially true when a classification is used for a particular social entity or belief system, such as in the case “religion” or “myth.” The same problem, however, arises when literary genre is invoked. Categories, as both Michel Foucault and Jonathan Z.

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<sup>6</sup> Robert D. Baird, *Category Formation*, 1–16; cf. “Interpretative Categories.”

<sup>7</sup> “Knowable knowledge” construction is what I referred to as verifiable and falsifiable knowledge, building on Bertrand Russell’s claim that, “We have been considering, in the above account, the question of *verifiability* of physics. Now verifiability is by no means the same thing as truth; it is, in fact, something far more subjective and psychological. For a proposition to be verifiable, it is not enough that it should be true, but it must also be such as we can *discover* to be true. Thus verifiability depends upon our capacity for acquiring knowledge, and not only upon the objective truth” (*Our Knowledge of the External World*, 116). Cf. E. Thomas Lawson and Robert N. McCauley, *Rethinking Religion*, 27.

<sup>8</sup> Tite, “Gnosticism, Taxonomies”; cf. Russell T. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion*; Donald L. Wiebe, “Beyond the Sceptic and the Devotee”; and Reinhard Plummer, “Recent Publications on the Methodology of the Science of Religion.”

Smith have convincingly demonstrated, carry conceptual baggage.<sup>9</sup> Such baggage can result in evaluative rather than descriptive/explanatory utility. In regards to genre, the same problem arises. Dibelius's literary classification of James as "paraenetic" enables him to dismiss or, at the very least, avoid the issue of arrangement. Paraenesis, he argues, is a simple stringing together of material. From this position it could be argued, perhaps beyond Dibelius's own research agenda, that paraenesis is not important for understanding a given text; indeed, that the very presence of "paraenesis" is no indication of the importance of ethics or ethical discourse within the Valentinian material (e.g., in studies of the *Gos. Truth*).<sup>10</sup> The category "Gnosticism," especially when placed in contrast with "Christianity," has obscured rather than elucidated the academic recognition and appreciation of ethics in Valentinianism. By recognizing the second-order level of classifications, including those of genre, the focus should be placed on the explanatory value of description, rather than the normative valuation of names for legitimization processes. It is this focus that distinguishes methodological reduction from either ontological or metaphysical reduction.

Methodological reductionism contends that there is at least a three-stage process within critical-analytical work.<sup>11</sup> The first stage is that of first-order description, where insider truth claims are collected and made accessible as "data." Data is a product of critical inquiry; critical inquiry is the selective process of extracting the "things" to

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<sup>9</sup> On the epistemological frameworks or biases underlining taxonomies, see Jonathan Z. Smith, "A Matter of Class." Michel Foucault also highlights this same problem with his humorous illustration, drawn from Borges, on an old Chinese encyclopedia: "animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies" (*The Order of Things*, xv). This extremely odd taxonomy does not simply illustrate the artificial and sometimes arbitrary nature of classifications, but also, indeed more so, that these very classifications delimit and classify with issues of power and (de-) legitimization of normative structures as subtext. Foucault goes on to state that this taxonomic system "localizes their [the fantastical] powers of contagion; it distinguishes carefully between the very real animals... and those that reside solely in the realm of imagination. The possibility of dangerous mixtures has been exorcized" (xv).

<sup>10</sup> See chapter 7. Perhaps most explicit in the case of dismissing ("explaining away") ethics from the *Gos. Truth* is Grobel's work.

<sup>11</sup> What follows is largely based upon Tite, "Categorical Designations"; "Is There Room for Theory in Religious Studies?"; William E. Arnal, "Definition"; McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion*; *Critics not Caretakers*; Jonathan Z. Smith, "Classification"; "Religion, Religions, Religious"; "Matter of Class"; *Maps is Not Territory*.

be analysed and thus data are not to be equated with reality itself (at least not in some absolute sense of objective reality). Such reworking of the data reproduces insider truth claims, and renders them accessible to a broader analytical process. The selectivity of data collection is important to recognize; the process *does not* reproduce *objective reality in its totality*, but is selectively drawn out from the larger external world. In classical historical-critical method, this first-order selectivity falls into the process of establishing evidence (i.e., the remnants, or parts of X, that allow the historian to gain some [indirect?] access to X) and source evaluation (i.e., to weigh the evidence, to determine its value for scholarly inquiry into an historical reconstruction of X). Such selectivity enables the unmanageable nature of X to be placed within set parameters; parameters that are necessary for establishing specific degrees of certainty for constructing “knowable knowledge.”<sup>12</sup> A key aspect of this first-order process of description is accuracy of reproduction—with the qualification that such reproduction, given its self-imposed analytic limitations, is a heuristic approximation of X; i.e., X rendered into data should be valid only when the data approximates X. Thus, as I have already stated, taxonomic processes, within the framework of methodological reduction, must avoid misrepresenting the data (or, more accurately, the constructed data should not be a misrepresentation of X).<sup>13</sup>

The second stage in methodological reduction is second-order explanation or theorization. Explanation constitutes the process of locating the first-order data within those domains where knowledge can be rendered “knowable knowledge”; thus, explanation typically grounds such data within a social, political, historical, or cultural context.<sup>14</sup> Theory, therefore, functions at this level as a way of ordering, explicating, and comparing the raw data of first-order processes. Such theorization focuses less on the actual objects of data, be they physical, psychological, ideological, or ethical, and instead places the focus upon those relational properties of the data. Theorization, therefore, constructs analytical foci for which the diverse data are brought into constellations of problem-solving endeavours. Theory sets up the framework for such construction of foci, and explanation is the goal of the entire problem-

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<sup>12</sup> This point is highlighted by Wendy Ashmore and Robert J. Sharer, *Rediscovering Our Past*, 79–113, on archaeological data processing in fieldwork.

<sup>13</sup> Tite, “Gnosticism, Taxonomies,” 66.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Timothy Fitzgerald, “Russell T. McCutcheon’s *Manufacturing Religion*,” 103.

solving enterprise. These *modes of relation* are relative relations, as is certainly the case given their dependency upon the analytical questions raised by the researcher. Classifications, as analytical devices, are merely the products of temporary, analytical frameworks whose existence is strictly one of functional utility.<sup>15</sup> A third stage in the critical-analytical approach is that of “critique”;<sup>16</sup> i.e., the self-reflective reassessment of our theoretical frameworks, methodological tools, and scholarly products. It is through the process of scholarly debate, reworking of analytical tools, challenging established models, and constructing a discipline’s sociology of knowledge that “knowable knowledge” construction continues to emerge in new and challenging directions.

In my earlier work on methodological reduction I contended that two taxonomic pitfalls must be avoided when constructing categories as second-order tools: (1) the danger of absolute reduction, and (2) misrepresenting the data.<sup>17</sup> Both taxonomic concerns underlie not only a classification of a social or historical entity, but also literary taxonomies. To conflate the text or texts with the genre is to commit the former error. The latter error, however, can be avoided by accurately presenting the texts (= data) at the level of first-order data construction. Although a genre analysis, as Gammie correctly notes, is heuristic in nature (and thus a second-order category that serves the function of assisting in answering scholarly questions asked of the data under analysis), it is also reflective of the very data that it classifies. In order to avoid misrepresenting the data it is necessary that a constructed genre avoid anachronistic comparison. Therefore, the genre must be located within the cultural and historical context, or social field, for which it is to function. An *ad hoc* application and construction of genre will not assist us in better understanding the data we are studying without such a reflective aspect being involved. The data itself, regardless of the analytical questions bringing the data together, must not be obscured in this process. The central issue in any genre analysis is to maintain the analytical utility of the genre for understanding the texts and explaining their cultural and historical context.

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<sup>15</sup> Carter, “Description is Not Explanation”; Baird, “Interpretative Categories”; *Categorical Formation*; Ashmore and Sharer, *Rediscovering Our Past*, 109; J. Z. Smith, “Religion,” 281–282; Tite, “Categorical Designations.”

<sup>16</sup> See especially Tite, “Is There Room?” and McCutcheon, *Critics Not Caretakers*.

<sup>17</sup> Tite, “Gnosticism, Taxonomies,” 66; this point is then developed at greater length, in application to the insider-outsider problem in religious studies, in my “Naming or Defining?”

## A WORKING UNDERSTANDING OF PARAENESIS

Given the functional nature of genre, any study that engages paraenesis as a category—be that category a text, a subsection of a text, or an aside within the text—must serve the purposes of the study at hand. Delimitations of a genre, or a selectivity of aspects of a genre—teased out from our discussion of scholarly treatments of paraenesis above—is valid when (1) that genre is not already well established and clearly delineated, and (2) that delimitation highlights aspects of the genre that has a direct bearing on the critical analysis for which the delimitation is made. Clarity, however, must also be part of any such utilization of language. Only miscommunication can emerge when a term is used in a way that does not hold resonance with a reader. My interest in delimiting paraenesis for a study of moral exhortation within Valentinianism, therefore, is to address both these issues of utility and clarity.

Despite the lack of consensus on establishing paraenesis as a literary category for early Christian studies, there are some helpful points of consistency within scholarship; indeed, there is enough coherence within scholarly discussions to enable us to work with a general framework for establishing a working understanding of paraenesis (rather than simply dismiss the category completely, as should be the case if there were no general sense of what constitutes paraenesis). Perhaps most broadly stated, paraenesis is moral discourse intended to persuade or dissuade a course of action or direction in life. Definitions put forth by Malherbe, Popkes, Wolbert, Perdue, and Martin all would comfortably fit within such a broad field of meaning. Further, the understanding of this genre that can be teased out of Isocrates, Seneca, and Libanius (arguably the most prominent ancient sources for constructing an ancient genre of paraenesis) would also neatly fit this broad definition. Within my study, this definition will be followed. However, this definition, as Troels Engberg-Pedersen has noted in reaction to similar definitions posited by previous scholars, is so general that it lacks the precision needed for critical work. Consequently, it will be helpful to further clarify this broad definition with more precise delimitations or qualifications. A helpful beginning, and one that actually attempts to pull together a broad range of voices in scholarship, are the Lund-Oslo definitions.

The definition developed at the Oslo conference—“a concise, benevolent injunction that reminds of moral practices to be pursued or avoided, expresses or implies a shared world view, and does not anticipate dis-

agreement”<sup>18</sup>—attempts to construct a definition that is both precise enough to delimit moral exhortation, thereby enabling the genre to carry analytical value rather than being a category into which any text could conceivably be placed, while also broad enough to allow diverse understandings of the genre to be explored (especially with comparative analysis in view). This definition highlights four particular aspects of paraenesis worth noting:

- 1) paraenesis is not only hortatory discourse, but also moral discourse;
- 2) paraenesis tends to call to remembrance what is already known or should be known by the recipient(s) or audience;
- 3) there should be no room for demonstration or developed argumentation to support this prescriptive discourse; and
- 4) there should be a positive or collegial relationship between the author/speaker and the recipients/audience (at least at the level of fictive representation of such a benevolent relationship).<sup>19</sup>

Underlying these aspects of paraenetic discourse is the stress upon a shared worldview. Thus, a central aspect of paraenesis, according to the Lund-Oslo definitions, is the creation or assumption of a shared set of values and social perceptions. Such a shared worldview gives an author not only moral authority to direct his or her exhortations to the recipients, but also offers various opportunities for the author to persuasively set forth an argument by means of tapping into a shared identity. For instance, an author may use the paraenesis to warn the recipients of the danger of falling away from the moral path that is integral to the shared worldview. Further, an author may draw upon the shared worldview to call the recipients to recall their origins or entry into the community, along with the role of the author in such entry, in order to both reinforce the author’s authority and re-frame

<sup>18</sup> Starr and Engberg-Pedersen, “Introduction,” 4; see discussion in chapter 3.

<sup>19</sup> An alternative breakdown of the Lund-Oslo definitions is found in Popkes, “Paraenesis in the New Testament,” 34–35: (1) “The functional aspect (‘injunction’) has preference over the literary one (‘text’). There is no mention of a ‘genre’”; (2) “The people involved, as either giving or receiving paraenesis, step back behind the message... The authority lies with the message itself”; (3) “No mention is made of the situation in which the paraenesis is given”; (4) “The donor as well as the receiver of paraenesis operate on common ground”; (5) “No specific reference is made any longer to ‘often utilizing tradition material’ (as in the 2000 definition)”; and (6) “Most important of all, paraenesis is linked with ethics, that is, practiced moral behaviour. In this way paraenesis is distinguished from all sorts of advice other than ethical ones.”

a point of dispute so as to position conflicting views within a shared worldview (which subsequently stresses the position of the author). A shared worldview may also be drawn upon to discursively place the community in relation to the broader culture (occasionally placed onto a more cosmological narrative rather than as a direct social critique).

This definition, however, is still inadequate for several reasons. First, it does not effectively address the problematic relationship of paraenesis and protrepsis. Indeed, this very definition by necessity eliminates any address given to those who are not members of the author's community or philosophical school. The unconverted, or the initiate, as well as those who may not fully agree with the author though are still a member of the same group, is not addressed in such exhortation. Such a delimitation is problematic given both Überlacker's demonstration that Hebrews does not neatly fit the Lund-Oslo definitions, though it does in part (thus forcing him to construct another, separate genre), and, more significantly, Gammie's observation that a dual audience could underlie such paraenetic discourses. Perdue's observation that an exhortation given upon a ruler's rise to power could be used paradigmatically as a reminder on ritually significant dates (which, although epideictic, carries a deliberative function to continue along the path of virtue). Thus, in order to fully appreciate the rhetoric of a paraenetic address, the possibility of a dual audience or an audience of the unconverted must be considered in such a definition. Although a narrow understanding of paraenesis could be justified on the grounds that it elucidates particular aspects of moral exhortation for analysis, the narrow dimensions of the Lund-Oslo definitions fails to account for dual audience, various social uses of a text, and the fluidity within the genre between paraenetic and protreptic functions. Even if Christian moral exhortation tended to de-emphasize a protreptic function, such definitional limitation is problematic due to *a priori* assumptions possibly obscuring analyses of data (especially the problem of forcing texts into preconceive understanding of Christian moral exhortation; an inductive analysis of each instance of moral exhortation should establish whether the text is protreptic or paraenetic), ignoring those texts that might be protreptic (e.g., Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora*'s possible protreptic function, or the exoteric reading of the *Gos. Truth*),<sup>20</sup> not

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<sup>20</sup> Although I do not agree with either reading of the *Gos. Truth* and Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora* (preferring to see the former as oriented to insiders and the latter didactic,

acknowledging the presence of various multiple functions of a text (e.g., Clement of Alexandria's *Exhortation to the Greeks* seems to weave both paraenetic and protreptic functions together, targeting both Christians and, apologetically, non-Christians), and not enabling comparative analysis with the broader Greco-Roman world on moral exhortation.

Secondly, this definition does not address the issue of traditional and original material; i.e., whether the paraenetic material is simply stock, random moral precepts incorporated into a text with no significance for understanding that text, or, contra Dibelius, is related to the broader literary context and thereby serves some rhetorical function within the text. A third, and, for the analytical question raised in this book, most important, problem is that the Oslo definition fails to fully address the social aspects of paraenesis. Although insightfully emphasizing the dialogical aspects of paraenesis (especially with the stress on confirming the insiders' worldview), the Lund-Oslo group's effort to distance itself from Perdue (especially on liminality and ritual processes) unfortunately results in a de-emphasis on sociological models for appreciating the communicative setting of these texts. Such a limitation is unfortunate, as such models, including Perdue's model, could further elucidate the rhetorical dimensions of paraenetic texts even within the Lund-Oslo definitions. A functional definition of paraenesis for this study must address these problems.

Evidently the Oslo definition's overly broad nature was a problem for the Lund-Oslo group, as evidenced by the new definition that emerged from the Lund conference a year later: "Paraenesis is a heuristic, modern term used to describe a text or communication in which a person or authority, A, addresses a party, B, who shares A's basic convictions about the nature of reality and God, in order to influence B's behavior in the practical ('ethical') issues of everyday life, and possibly in order to strengthen B's commitment to the shared ideological convictions... where A may incorporate traditional ethical material, and where A may employ some or all of these literary devices: a) brevity of style (e.g. precepts, lists), b) the *Haustafel*, c) antithetical statements (not 'a' but 'b'), d) the offering of examples to be imitated."<sup>21</sup>

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rather than hortatory, discourse for an insider on moral and theological issues), the definitional framework should be broad enough to allow debate over possible protreptic discourse in such texts.

<sup>21</sup> Starr and Engberg-Pederson, "Introduction," 4; see discussion in chapter 3.

The Lund definition, though lacking the general flexibility of the Oslo definition, is more helpful in addressing the problems of the Oslo definition. This definition highlights the rhetorical nature of paraenesis—such discourse fits a communicative situation within which an author attempts to affect or direct a particular audience. There is, therefore, a move towards recognizing a more concrete social location for paraenesis. The Lund definition also recognizes that an author may incorporate typical literary material—both traditional and original in the production of a rhetorically efficacious discourse—for the constructing or framing of his or her rhetoric. The mutual worldview shared between the author and audience is again noted, but unlike with the Oslo definition here we find that there is room for degrees of agreement and disagreement (and thus for reinforcing or adjusting/correcting the worldview of the audience). Finally, the Lund definition correctly recognizes that the genre itself is a heuristic construct.

This definition, however, is not without difficulties, at least for the purposes of this study. Again the relationship of paraenesis to protrepsis is not effectively addressed. The social location of the genre, though better explored than in the Oslo definition in some regards, continues to be undeveloped. Given the Lund-Oslo group's general distancing from Perdue's theory of liminality, this failure to engage social location is not completely unexpected. Still, the social aspects of paraenesis must be addressed in order to elucidate the social function of paraenesis within Valentinianism. To not engage social aspects of a genre, or to simply address social aspects in passing, is to relegate genre analysis to a simple literary descriptive dimension. The rhetorical function of genre analysis, therefore, necessitates engaging, as Berger argued, the *Kommunikationssituation* along with the literary aspects of the genre.

### *Basic Definitional Contours*

In order to qualify my working definition of paraenesis, we could therefore claim that paraenesis is moral discourse intended to persuade or dissuade a course of action or direction in life. This form of discourse tends to be indicated by typical literary features of paraenesis as well as social aspects that typify paraenetic discourse. Such literary features, as will be discussed with greater depth in chapter 5, include imperatival discourse (i.e., the use of imperatives or other hortative devices to give the text a hortative tone—both as exhortation and admonition);

antithesis; motivational clauses to support ethical claims; authoritative citations such as scriptural texts; moral *exempla* to support or demonstrate exhortative claims; and other prescriptive indicators such as precepts and reference to divine will. Particular literary arrangements of material also tend to indicate paraenesis: virtue/vice lists; household/station codes; *peristasis* or hardship catalogues; and the two-way schema (usually contrasting the way of life and the way of death). Although paraenesis need not include all such literary devices or arrangements, the hortative and moral dimensions of such features is determinative of the presence of paraenesis. The combination of various such literary features will be indicative of the possible presence of paraenesis.

As to terminology, the Lund-Oslo group and other scholars since the early 1990s have developed a near fixation with the presence of specific terminology for identifying paraenesis. To reduce genre identification to the level of key terms within a text—e.g., *παραίνεσις/παραινεῖν, παράκλησις/παρακαλεῖν, προτροπή/προτρέπειν, νουθετεῖν, ἀπαγορεύσεις, πρόσταξις*—is to ignore the second-order nature of genre. Although the presence of a term, such as *πράκλις* or *παραίνεσις*, will surely assist in identifying a genre, and even more so a self-identification by an author within the text (e.g. Ps.-Isocrates writes, *Διόπερ ἡμεῖς οὐ παράκλησιν εὐρόντες ἀλλὰ παραίνεσιν, To Demonicus 5*; or when the author of Hebrews writes, *Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἀνέχεσθε τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως, Heb 13:22*), the presence or absence should not determine whether a text can effectively be analyzed from a specific generic interpretative lens. The importance of such terminology goes back to at least Malherbe's work in the 1970s and continues to emerge within more recent scholarship. A useful direction for analyzing hortatory terminology is found within Engberg-Pederson's work. What Engberg-Pederson has perhaps most effectively illustrated with his study of Philonic paraenesis, is that terminology, especially terminology that scholars may perceive as technical terms, should be analyzed inductively within the semantic context of a given text or collection of texts. Terms are used differently by different authors, and perhaps even by the same author in different texts.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, even with self-designation by an

<sup>22</sup> The diverse renderings of what scholars today might consider a technical term for genre analysis, a diversity dependent on the indeterminate usage of language, is illustrated by Otto Schmitz and Gustav Stählin, "*παρακαλέω, παράκλησις*"—even with the four-fold distinction of the verbs basic usage (to call to, to beseech, to exhort, and

author, we need to be clear as to the contextual meaning of the terms within that work (i.e., even when a term is technical for the author, or an indication of type or purpose of writing, the terminology should be inductively clarified as best as possible by the modern reader).

A genre is more than simply the presence of a particular word from a technical word group. Genre is an analytical generalizing category that draws textual works together due to a relational or comparative connection. Therefore, the presence of a particular term does not mean a text fits a particular genre any more than the absence of a term indicates the absence of genre. Finally, there is the added problem of using terminology for studying Valentinian paraenesis in that most of the extant sources that are Valentinian are Coptic translations of Greek texts no longer extant. Not only can the same Greek term be translated by different Coptic terms, but also the same Coptic term can be used to translate different Greek terms. For instance, the Coptic term  $\omega\omicron\chi\eta\epsilon$  can be used to translate  $\text{παραινέιν}$  or  $\text{βουλεῖν}$ ;  $\text{σολσα}$  can be used to translate  $\text{παρακαλεῖν}$ ,  $\text{παραίνεσις}$ , and  $\text{πραμυθεῖσθαι}$ ;  $\text{ϩωηϫ}$  can be used to translate both  $\text{παραινέιν}$  and  $\text{παρακαλεῖν}$ ; and  $\text{ϩοηϩεν}$  can be used to translate  $\text{παραγγελία}$ ,  $\text{πρόσταγμα}$ , and  $\text{παραίνεσις}$ .<sup>23</sup> Thus, to focus on technical terminology, such as with Engberg-Pederson's work on Philonic paraenesis or Übelacker's study of Hebrews, is not possible with the Nag Hammadi tractates. The nuance that might emerge for genre identification is problematized by the lack of precision due to translation. Consequently, when dealing with a translation from Greek to Coptic, to focus on technical terms is perhaps an ineffectual approach.

### *Social Aspects*

Given the analytical question of this study, a further qualification regarding social aspects of paraenesis is needed. In chapter 2 the theoretical problems of moving from the level of literary text to the social context or occasion behind a text were discussed at length. There I advocated studying a text discursively rather than simply as a documentary window.

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to console), the term is not static within a Greco-Roman, a Jewish, or a Christian context. Engberg-Pedersen correctly directs attention to the internal usage of terminology, thereby inductively grounding the nuance of a particular word group.

<sup>23</sup> Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, 332, 616, 693.

In order to establish a functional understanding of paraenesis, such a discursive approach necessitates the need to consider the social dynamics of a text, even when the social setting or occasion is elusive. Thus, in order to fully appreciate—indeed to effectively establish—the function of a genre, both literary and social aspects of the genre must be understood. The communication situation of the text, as correctly noted by Berger, Perdue and Martin, is a key element in moving towards a grasp of the rhetorical strategy for which the literary features of the genre are employed. Therefore, paraenesis must be understood not only from the perspective of its literary features, but also with a clear appreciation for its social features. For the sake of this study, I will largely follow the lead of Perdue and Martin in assessing the social features of Valentinian paraenesis. Perdue's work in particular, it should be recalled, is helpful in more precisely establishing those social settings and social functions that tend to typify paraenetic texts, especially in his emphasis upon socialization with an eye towards issues of liminality and social crisis. Martin's application of Perdue's work to issues of apostasy, as one possible rhetorical concern, is further worth keeping in mind. Liminality, both for those who are outsiders or initiates and for those insiders who are in a crisis—and thus within a situation within which a breakdown to the normative structure is potentially present—is an important component of paraenesis. Criticism levelled against Perdue on this point, as I have indicated above, fails to fully appreciate the broader connotations of liminality as a social category or communication situation. Although my interest in the social aspects of paraenesis moves beyond both Perdue and Martin, arguing that paraenetic texts should be seen as discursive voices within social interactions, one enduring theoretical framework that should be considered is Perdue's model of order and conflict. While investigating the social function of paraenesis within Valentinianism, it will be helpful to keep in mind whether the texts under consideration reflect a subversive model of paraenesis or a model of reinforcing the established social *nomos*.

Given the debate over the relationship between paraenesis and protrepsis, especially since the Lund-Oslo contribution, a suggested distinction will be made for the sake of this study. I will again follow Perdue's lead in establishing a distinction in social functions by means of these terms. This distinction will be established for genre analysis in like manner to Gammie's approach in constructing a sub-genre for heuristic purposes. Paraenesis I understand as fitting the broad contours of the definition established above, with the appropriate literary and

social features functioning as qualifications. The distinction of paraenesis and protrepsis, however, should be seen as subsets or emphases for the social application of paraenetic discourse to differing audiences. Thus, a paraenetic function (within a paraenesis or paraenetic discourse) applies the moral exhortation to those readers who are already insiders, sharing the author's basic worldview, and are thus called to remembrance of those ethical values that are shared within the community. A protreptic function, however, addresses those readers who are not insiders, or only initiates, or those insiders who are moving into a new role or level of membership. Such readers are called on to accept, or more fully accept, the worldview advocated or envisioned by the author. Liminal experience can emerge with both functions of paraenesis: with protreptic function there could be ambiguity or anxiety due to the transition, or proposed transition, into a new state; whereas with established insiders, liminal experience could either be an ongoing state (especially with subversive paraenesis) or a crisis facing the readers that the author feels needs to be addressed (especially when the danger of apostasy is present). Both functions can co-exist within the text, and, therefore, a dual audience or function need not be ignored or obscured within the genre analysis any more than the presence of liminal crisis in either type of audience. Furthermore, the paraenesis may take on differing functions within differing contexts—an initiatory text could become a call to remember at a later date or during a meaningful time (especially when ritualized). A text could either be written with such a broader, general audience in mind even though initially prepared for a specific audience or situation, or could be used by later readers for alternative social functions than what it was originally designed for. With the former, the exclusive categories of paraenetic and protreptic functions is called into question, while the latter raises the possibility that genre may not have been a static category—indeed by appreciating the social setting of a discourse, a shift in genre identification (depending on the different setting or function of a discourse for readers) might emerge in genre analysis. Thus, I would see paraenesis in the broader sense as moral exhortation that, more specifically, can have either or both paraenetic and protreptic functions.

#### *Types of Paraenesis*

A further distinction between the various degrees of paraenetic presence within a text may also be helpful. As the history of scholarship has

established, paraenesis can emerge within various modes of discourse. Some texts, such as 1 Thessalonians, James, and 1 Peter, can be identified as fitting a paraenetic genre. The entire text is a sustained paraenesis. Other texts, such as Phil 4:1–20, the Matthean Sermon on the Mount, and perhaps the letters to the seven churches in Rev 1:17–3:22, merely contain paraenetic material or subsections. Such a distinction is necessary for an adequate understanding of paraenesis. I would add, however, a third type of paraenetic presence: the paraenetic aside.<sup>24</sup>

### *Type 1: Paraenetic Genre*

There are several ancient texts that have been identified as fitting the paraenetic genre. Most of the letters of Ps.-Crates fit this classification. Several of Isocrates and Seneca's letters are understood as paraenetic. According to Malherbe, 1 Thessalonians is best understood as paraenetic, and so also 1 Peter according to Troy Martin. We could also claim that Polycarp's *Epistle to the Philippians* is paraenetic and the opening of *Didache*, if seen as a separate text within an extant composite text, is also a sustained paraenesis. It is also possible that among the anti-heretical writings of Theophilus, mentioned by Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 4.24), were works of instruction, teaching, rebukes and exhortations. Rebukes and exhortations are distinct from other writings in that the target audience were "the brethren" and not the heretics (ἀυτοὺς ἀνεῖργον τοτὲ μὲν ταῖς πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς νουθεσίαις καὶ παραινέσεσιν, emphasis added).<sup>25</sup> In order to establish a paraenetic classification for the genre of a given text, there are several criteria that could be employed for determining such a classification (indeed, to distinguish the genre from the subsection and aside). One criterion is the presence of an overarching literary arrangement that fits typical paraenetic conventions. For instance, the opening of *Didache* is structured around a two-way schema that not only dominates the conceptual contours of the text but also the literary arrangement. A text constructed in the framework of virtue and vice lists or a household/station code, as another example, would be indicative, on the literary level, of a paraenesis. This criterion, however, is problematic due to the lack of a particular literary arrangement for paraenesis in antiquity. The literary

<sup>24</sup> A similar three-fold typology is presented by Johannes Hempel, *Die Althebräische Literatur*, who sees paraenetic texts containing a paraenesis, having a paraenetic aim, and those that are paraenetic narrative literature (cited in Gammie, "Morphology," 65).

<sup>25</sup> Text from LCL.

arrangements of paraenetic material do not necessarily follow set or exclusive literary arrangements. Another criterion would be the dominance of the imperative or hortatory tone. As will be further explored in chapter 5, the hortative or prescriptive nature of paraenesis is the defining element, when placed within a moral context of discourse. Thus, the presence of imperatives to move the moral discussion forward in a text is a clear indication of paraenesis. This second criterion, furthermore, is valid in that it moves the scholar beyond the confines of genre as simply arrangement and, instead, towards the broader and more valuable dimension of genre identified by Klaus Berger and applied to paraenesis by Leo Perdue: literary features and social situation (or communicative setting). This two-fold nature of genre, especially with recognition of the analytical function of genre for scholarship, moves us towards the third criterion for identifying paraenesis as genre. Specifically, a text can be identified as fitting the genre of paraenesis when that text's literary and social aspects are dominated by a paraenetic or protreptic function. When the entire text is dominated by paraenesis, or the elements within the text serve to meet or contribute to the rhetorical strategy of the text, and when that strategy is paraenetic, then the text fits the paraenetic genre.

Within the Valentinian material there is only one clear instance of a text that fits the paraenetic genre. As will be indicated, and as I have argued elsewhere, the *Interp. Know.* is an instance of a paraenesis.<sup>26</sup> There are, however, two other possible candidates for Valentinian paraenesis. In Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora*, as Malherbe suggested, we might have a protrepsis.<sup>27</sup> Malherbe's suggestion, which is not substantiated but merely mentioned in passing, is not plausible, however, given the fact that this letter does not have a converting function. Rather, Ptolemy writes to clarify theological issues with a student or disciple who is already an insider. This text, like the *Treatise on Resurrection*, is less paraenetic than non-hortatory moral discourse framed within a teacher-student instructional setting. It is the non-hortatory nature

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<sup>26</sup> For a preliminary analysis of the paraenetic genre of the *Interp. Know.* see Tite, "An Exploration of Valentinian Paraenesis."

<sup>27</sup> Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 122: "In Christian literature, it [protrepsis] makes its appearance in the second century in different literary forms: letters (e.g., *Epistle of Diognetus*, *Letter of Ptolemy to Flora*), epideictic discourses (e.g., Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*), Socratic dialogues (e.g., Minucius Felix), and in defenses of Christianity." Malherbe's definition of protrepsis is, "to win someone over to a particular enterprise or way of life by demonstrating its superiority."

of Ptolemy's letter, even if a confirmative function could be identified instead of a converting function (both of which are not present; rather, we have a purely didactic function), which leads me to disagree with Malherbe's suggestion. The other possibility of Valentinian paraenesis is the *Auth. Teach.* Richard Valantasis has recently argued that this text fits the classification of asceticism rather than Gnosticism.<sup>28</sup> Although he effectively indicates the relationship that this tractate has with Greco-Roman asceticism, he has unfortunately erroneously rendered his categories as static rather than dynamic descriptive tools. The ascetic aspects of the tractate indeed bring to the fore the ethical prominence of the *Auth. Teach.*, an ethical prominence that might indicate that the tractate not only contains hortatory material but is actually a sustained paraenesis. In all three cases, but perhaps only clearly evident in the *Interp. Know.*, the viability of the genre label is demonstrated by the sustained paraenetic or protreptic function of the text. All elements in the text are either secondary or contribute to the paraenesis.

### *Type 2: Paraenetic Subsection*

The presence of paraenesis in ancient texts does not always necessitate that the text in question fits the paraenetic genre. Quite often we find sections of texts that contain substantial paraenetic material though the text itself is not a paraenesis. In analyzing paraenetic subsections, a central question to keep in mind is how the material in the paraenetic subsection relates to the non-paraenetic sections of the text. Whereas with the paraenetic genre the hortatory elements will dominate and control all other literary elements within the text, with the subsection the emphasis is reversed. The subsection is still a significant literary unit within a text, but serves not as a general, sustained moral exhortation, but rather contributes to the broader, non-paraenetic strategy of the text. The broader context might be theological, apologetic, or polemical in nature (or any number of possible rhetorical goals). In analyzing paraenetic subsections, it is necessary to 1) establish the literary contours and delimitations of the subsection; and 2) determine the relationship

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<sup>28</sup> Richard Valantasis, "Demons, Adversaries." Although Valantasis is not the first to recognize the ascetic aspects of this tractate, he has perhaps more thoroughly studied these aspects within the broader context of Greco-Roman asceticism. His work is also noteworthy given his engagement with Williams's challenge to the category "Gnosticism" in *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*, legitimizing his asceticism identification on Williams's rejection of "Gnosticism" as a useful category for historical analysis.

of that subsection to its broader literary context. That is, we need to have a method in place in order to determine the beginning and end of a rhetorical unit that is paraenetic when the unit does not determine the genre of the entire text.

Each attempt at isolating a given rhetorical unit of paraenetic material must be determined given each individual case, or types of cases. In some cases the very presence of a typical paraenetic literary arrangement, such as the household/station code or virtue/vice lists, will help isolate and identify the paraenetic subsection. In other cases, such as in the *Gos. Truth* and the *Gos. Phil.*, the subsection will be less evident by such arrangements. In those cases, another approach is necessary. Such approaches will likely be more inductive, emerging from the very fabric of the text itself. In chapter 7, just prior to my analysis of the *Gos. Truth*, I will offer one such method by drawing upon a topological approach.

### *Type 3: Paraenetic Aside*

In contrast to the paraenetic subsection, the paraenetic aside can be understood as those instances when paraenetic material appears within a text, but only briefly and tangentially. For instance, such an aside most likely arises in the *Ep. Pet. Phil.* 139,28–30 where Peter, after a discussion of the Savior's sufferings, makes a side comment directed to the other disciples: "My brothers, let us therefore not obey these lawless ones and walk in..." (the text breaks off at this point on the page).<sup>29</sup> The text as a whole is not paraenetic, and this side comment is not significant enough, nor large enough, to warrant being considered a subsection. The aside, like the subsection, applies or gives an ethical twist to the broader discussion of the text. In the case of the subsection, the paraenesis offers a fuller discussion that contributes to the broader literary context. With the aside, the paraenesis is minor, and contributes little if anything to the broader context. All the aside truly indicates is

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<sup>29</sup> I am not the first to recognize the paraenetic nature of this fragmentary statement. Recently, and independent of my own reading, Hans-Gebhard Bethge has labelled this passage (running from 139,28–140,1) as "Paränetische Konsequenzen"—this paraenetic material develops from, and directly applies to the readers, the ethical implications of the preceding discussion of Christology and soteriology (which, in my opinion, are both grounded in a suffering motif in this tractate) (*Der Brief des Petrus an Philippus*, 141; Bethge's text and translation of this passage is offered on pages 28–29).

the presence of ethical concern. As the aside is not an overly important element in determining social function for Valentinian paraenesis, I will focus my attention instead on the genre and the subsection when I address the major examples in chapters 6 and 7.

#### VALUE OF GENRE ANALYSIS

Largely indebted to, initially, Dibelius and, more recently, Malherbe, the study of paraenesis has been a study of genre. What type or types of literature can be called paraenetic? How does such literature compare to other ancient writings? With the work of the Lund-Oslo group, this stress on genre has largely been called into question. Scholars are becoming less interested in the study of literary forms than in the discursive strategies of texts within context(s). While there are a few noteworthy exceptions, such a move away from genre analysis has typified the Lund-Oslo group. Such distance tends to emerge due to a very rigid or mechanical view of genre, a rigidity that is perceived as obscuring the function of a text. The Lund-Oslo group's caution regarding genre analysis is one illustration of a broader shift in the field away from the stress upon identifying genera during the 1970s and especially 1980s. Indeed, in an earlier version of my own work, I was challenged on this very point: what is gained by looking at genre? Why not simply look at paraenesis as rhetorical devices within texts? A brief comment, therefore, on the value of "genre" is necessary prior to entering into a study of Valentinian paraenesis.

While I fully appreciate the concern over reducing texts to static, mechanical sets of literary patterns with little regard for the dynamic, functional role of texts within early Christianity, I still think that engaging questions of genre are important, indeed vital, for a study of literature. Genre need not be seen as static or mechanical, though analysis of formal elements can still be helpful in articulating the inner-texture and intertextual aspects of a text (to evoke Vernon Robbins's socio-rhetorical criticism once again). There are two criteria that need to be kept in mind, however, in order to avoid the problems of genre analysis. First, we need to keep clearly in mind that genre, like any form of classification, is heuristic and temporary. I am less concerned with identifying, for instance, the *Auth. Teach.* as paraenesis or ascetic than I am in whether such identification offers me insights into the rhetorical strategies and discursive function of the text. Second, we must not stop

at identification of formal features but must move on to appreciating the discursive function of the text as framed by those features. With these two criteria in place, genre becomes an analytical tool for discerning the dynamics woven throughout the texture of a text.

Even with a dynamic appreciation of genre in mind, the question still arises: what do we gain by genre analysis? There are at least five benefits in exploring genre. The value of studying genre is not limited to ancient literature, but is true for all literary analyses.

- (1) *Inferring the Rhetorical Situation of a Text*: Genre is a key means in determining the literary function or functions of a text. This includes the re-presentation of the setting within which the recipients are to read, understand, and re-perceive the situation of the text. In other words, applying a genre label to texts offers the scholar possible insights into how an author has framed the rhetorical situation of a text for the readers to be persuaded or dissuaded. Thus, form and function are not dichotomous aspects, but can more fully inform each other.
- (2) *Comparative Value*: Genre, like all classification devices, is not limited to the analysis of a single text. Rather, genre allows various, and perhaps even disparate, texts to be brought together for comparative analysis. Placing such diverse particulars (in the case of genre analysis, texts) within a comparative context holds the potential for gaining new insights, even if these particulars are not directly or indirectly connected to each other. Such comparative value has been a cornerstone of the study of religious phenomena over the past century. Comparison, however, is further useful in that taxonomic constructions allow texts to be played off of each other even within subsets of genre, allowing literary groupings to draw out both similarities and unique qualities of the texts being analyzed.
- (3) *Historical Developments in Literature*: Genre allows us to focus on shifts in literature, ideally linking literary conventions to social and cultural contexts within which a text emerges or is appropriated. By looking at genre historically, rather than simply phenomenologically, there is greater potential for noting shifts in literary expression over time. By simply isolating rhetorical devices is to fail to give texts a framing mechanism by which changes and continuities can be explored in conjunction with analyses of social and cultural changes.

Such an historical value is true not only of written works, but also of fashion, artistic expression, tools, and language more broadly. We are able to both recognize and trace changing within semantic contexts.

- (4) *Explicating Social Attitudes*: Generic categories may embody or reflect and thereby allow the elucidation of social and cultural values, attitudes, and perspectives to emerge. Whereas authorial intention is a highly problematic, and indeed doubtful, venue of critical inquiry, generic analysis allows a text to be explored through its culturally specified intertextuality and ideology. That is, by engaging in genre analysis, the cultural and social referentiality of a text may be explicated more fully. Thus, form and function work together to elucidate context; context not as in a static *Sitz im Leben* such as found in the older form criticism, but rather in drawing out the inferential quality of an ancient text as it is situated within its particular social context (or the “shared worldview” assumed by the text).
- (5) *Holistic Perspective of a Text*: Whereas analyses of rhetorical and literary motifs may be useful, they have a tendency to isolate those very motifs or devices from the entirety of the text being studied. While recognizing an argument from analogy or a literary pattern such as a chiasmic structure of a sentence is of value, the question still remains as to how that device functions within the broader texture and, more importantly, discursive strategy of the text. Generic analysis, in contrast, places emphasis upon the way these motifs function within a text. Such holistic concern is especially important when we are looking at the presence of paraenetic material within non-paraenetic texts; i.e., to explore how the paraenetic material (such as a subsection or aside) contributes to the rhetorical strategy of the text. Genre offers a conceptual framework for such work.

Although my study of Valentinian paraenesis will not directly engage all these benefits, it will be informed by recognizing the value in using genre as an analytical tool. These benefits, however, reinforce the importance of genre analysis for the study of early Christian texts while simultaneously avoiding the pitfalls of a mechanistic cataloguing of formal features.

## DEFINITIONAL AND ANALYTICAL ASPECTS OF PARAENESIS

Given the work of the Lund-Oslo group, with qualifications as set forth above (especially drawing back into the working framework of paraenesis as set forth by Perdue on the importance of a social or communicative setting), I will explore Valentinian instances of paraenesis with such an understanding of paraenesis. To briefly summarize this discussion, my working understanding of paraenesis can be set forth as follows:

**General Definition:** Moral discourse intended to persuade or dissuade a course of action or direction in life.

**Criteria in Identifying and Analyzing Paraenesis:**

*Typical Literary Features*—the hortative and moral aspect essential.

*Social Features*

- (1) Subversive Social Model  
Paraenetic Function  
Protrectic Function
- (2) Model of Reinforcing the Social Order  
Paraenetic Function  
Protrectic Function

**Types of Paraenetic Material**

Type 1: The Paraenetic Genre (sustained paraenesis throughout the text)

Analytical Focus: An author's construction of a moral exhortation, with the hortative concern as the underlying purpose of the text (i.e., the paraenesis is central to the rhetorical strategy of the text).

Type 2: The Paraenetic Subsection (substantial paraenetic material within a text)

Analytical Focus: The contribution of paraenetic material to supporting or adding nuance to the text's broader purpose (i.e., the paraenesis does not dominate the rhetorical strategy of the text but rather contributes to that rhetoric).

Type 3: The Paraenetic Aside (tangential paraenetic material within a text)

Analytical Focus: Indication of ethical concern, but with no significant rhetorical contribution to the text.

Within the following chapters, I will explore the Valentinian material, in particular the two texts selected as case studies (in chapters 6 and 7), with this working understanding in mind. In addition to this somewhat mechanical understanding of paraenesis, I will also explore the Valentinian material with an eye towards other aspects of the Lund-Oslo group's work. The Lund-Oslo group has set forth an important framework for the study of early Christian texts, and thus it would be valuable to continue to test this work with the Valentinian material (i.e., how closely does Valentinian paraenesis fit the Lund-Oslo definitions?). Consequently, in chapter 8 I will compare our findings on the *Interp.*

*Know. and the Gos. Truth* with the following points (drawn from James Starr's summary into five elements):

- (1) "Paraenesis is *benevolent*; it occurs between two friendly parties and expresses the adviser's amicable desire for greater well being of the one being advised"
- (2) "Paraenesis typically concerns *moral practices* to be pursued or avoided"
- (3) "Paraenesis *reminds* someone of moral practices that have already been taught and learned. Paraenesis 'concentrates on memory' on previously acquired knowledge"
- (4) "Paraenesis assumes a *shared worldview* or set of convictions that inform and motivate the advice given"
- (5) "Finally, paraenesis *does not anticipate disagreement*."<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, and more significantly, the Lund-Oslo group has placed stress upon the non-mechanical aspects of paraenetic discourse. Emerging from the above elements of paraenesis, recognition of the construction of ideology in the construction of social identity is one of the most important contributions emerging from this group of scholars. While I am not following her distinction between paraenetic and protreptic, preferring instead a heuristic social distinction of function, Swancutt has especially drawn out the value of ideological analysis and identity construction for the study of early Christian texts. Consequently, such strategies of such ideological contestation or construction need to be explored within a paraenetic analysis of an ancient text. The assumption and playful utilization of a shared worldview, for instance, will be a central aspect of my study of Valentinian paraenesis. As articulated in chapter 2, paraenetic discourse needs to be studied as instances of discursive acts within communicative settings. Such discursive acts are played out through a series of rhetorical positioning of the various actors involved in the discourse, as well as a rhetorical re-description of the narrative framework for the dialogue. It is through such positioning that the shared worldview is not only assumed but also imposed as shared and self-evident upon the paraenesis of a given text. It is through such rhetorical analysis of the Valentinian paraenetic material that a dynamic, rather than static appreciation for paraenesis will emerge.

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<sup>30</sup> Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?" 81.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### LITERARY ASPECTS OF PARAENESIS: INDICATORS OF MORAL EXHORTATION FROM THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD WITHIN VALENTINIANISM

Despite the diversity of opinion on the definition of paraenesis, there has been a general understanding in scholarship as to the various stock literary aspects of paraenesis. In this section, I will present some of those literary aspects that typify ancient paraenesis. Specifically I will address imperatives, moral *exempla*, virtue/vice lists, and the two-way schema. In order to contextualize these elements, I will begin by presenting them within the broader Greco-Roman context, then within a more narrow early Christian context, and finally within the precise context of the Valentinian sources within which we find paraenetic material. This procedure will help to locate not only paraenesis as a generic category within a culturally confined historical setting, but will also allow us to establish the presence of paraenesis within Valentinianism in a brief survey.

As to the former, I believe it is important to locate the moral hortatory discourse we are calling paraenesis within a more specific context than has been done by some in the past. For instance, to construct this genre by appeal to the ancient Egyptian material, or other pre-Hellenistic Near Eastern cultures, runs the danger of being as anachronistic as if we were to appeal, for instance, to the moral hortatory components of Norse myth.<sup>1</sup> Most would cry “anachronism” if the early Christian genres were studied with appeal to the conventions of the Norse Eddas. So also, I contend, is it just as anachronistic to appeal to Egyptian material of over a thousand years prior to the rise of Hellenistic and

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<sup>1</sup> Especially in the *Poetic Edda* (also known as the *Elder Edda*) we find wisdom sayings that are ethical and hortatory in design. The largely didactic poem *Hávamál* (“Sayings of Hár”), which contains a series of stanzas relating the wise sayings of Odin on issues of hospitality, conduct, human interactions, and moderation in eating and drinking, is perhaps the most paraenetic of all the Eddic poems (the use of imperatives, vocative with hortatory tone, *exempla*, precepts and gnomic sayings are all present within a somewhat diatribe form of discourse). See Lee M. Hollander’s translation and notes, *The Poetic Edda*, especially his introductory comments on page 14.

Roman culture.<sup>2</sup> This caution, however, does not negate the possibility of correctly seeing paraenesis within Egyptian, Babylonian, or Nordic cultures—something akin to paraenesis is most likely present in every one of these cultures and, arguably, in nearly any other culture or time period we may wish to analyze. However, in order to locate Valentinian paraenesis within the conventions of moral discourse of its historical setting, delimitation to the Greco-Roman world is necessary.

With respect to the Valentinian material, the spiralling down from the Greco-Roman examples through early Christianity to the Valentinian sources is helpful in highlighting Valentinianism as a form of Christianity within late antiquity, and, furthermore, Christianity as part of the Greco-Roman world (indeed, in this sense Christianity should be seen as a Roman religion). As discussed in the introduction, although Valentinianism is clearly recognized as Christian, there has been a tendency in past scholarship to distinguish Valentinians on certain issues, such as ethics, from other Christians. Much of this distinction is not only evaluative, evoking the “heresy-orthodoxy” dichotomy, but also clouds the possibility of historically reconstructing Valentinianism within its broader Christian context.

There is one literary form of paraenesis that will not be dealt with below. The household or station codes that have so fascinated New Testament scholars are not a prominent feature in Valentinian Christianity, at least not as far as our available evidence suggests. Indeed, in the Nag Hammadi codices, there is only one possible instance of a household code: “But, on the other hand, the gentle son inherits from his father with pleasure, while his father rejoices over him because he receives honor on account of him from everyone, as he looks for the way to double the things that he has received” (*Auth. Teach.* 24,26–33). However, this passage is not an actual household code, but rather a metaphor for the paraenetic discussion on the soul falling into ignorance. The image is analogous to the relationship between a father and a son, couched within an honour/shame framework, and, therefore,

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<sup>2</sup> Both Perdue, “Social Character,” “Death of the Sage,” “Liminality as Social Setting,” and Gammie, “Morphology,” draw upon Near Eastern and Egyptian as well as Greco-Roman sources in their genre construction (e.g., the Egyptian *Instructions of Ptah-hotep* ca. 2480–2340 B.C.E. and *Instruction for Meri-ke-Re* ca. 2100 B.C.E.; the Sumerian *Instructions of Shuruppak* of ca. 2500 B.C.E.). Other members of the *Semeia* volume and the Lund-Öslo group tend to focus more on the biblical or extra-biblical material that is more closely related in date.

could only be tangentially related to a household code. There is, however, one source of evidence indicating that Valentinians may have utilized household codes in their discourse. In Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.8.4. we read: “They [the Valentinians] declare also that Paul has referred to the conjunctions within the Pleroma, showing them forth by means of one; for, when writing of the conjugal union in this life, he expressed himself thus: ‘This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church’.” This comment by Irenaeus on Valentinian exegesis of Eph 5:32 is the closest we get to a Valentinian interest in the household codes. For Irenaeus, as for PHEME PERKINS,<sup>3</sup> this reference is mythological rather than ethical in interest—the Valentinians have imposed a cosmological hierarchal understanding of the Pleroma onto various biblical texts, thereby re-presenting New Testament passages as hidden analogies for the deeper truths of Valentinian doctrines.

Even if Irenaeus is correct in relating a Valentinian exegesis of Eph 5:32, as well as the exegetical principles used by Valentinians, his reference to the Ephesian household code does not negate a possible interest in ethical relations framed in such a literary fashion. Indeed, to claim that the Valentinians were not interested in actual household relations based on a cosmic application would necessarily indicate the same for the Ps.-Pauline author of Ephesians—the connection drawn between the household code and the Pleromatic realm by Valentinian exegetes simply follows, and more clearly applies, Ps.-Paul’s own view of domestic relations mirroring the higher reality of human-divine relations (the exegesis, to follow Irenaeus, only deals with Eph 5:32 where Ps.-Paul applies the lesson of the household to human-divine relations; we are not told if Valentinians would have followed Ps.-Paul by addressing the practical or literal application in Eph 5:33—“Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband”—Irenaeus’ silence need not indicate that Valentinians were not interested in such a practical application as well as a deeper, cosmological application). There is, however, nothing in this passage that specifically indicates a non-analogous or non-allegorical view of the household code; yet, there is also nothing that would negate such a practical perspective. Thus, given the questionable evidence available, the household codes are not a useful literary feature for identifying

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<sup>3</sup> PHEME PERKINS, *Gnosticism and the New*, 79.

paraenesis within the Valentinian material.<sup>4</sup> Other literary features that typify paraenesis, however, are present and therefore more helpful for exploring Valentinian paraenesis.

#### IMPERATIVES AND PRESCRIPTIVE DISCOURSE

The imperative is the defining element for identifying paraenetic material. This observation has been definitely established by Hildegard Cancik, who indicated that the imperative, along with its various surrogates, including the infinitive and hortative subjunctive, functions with the indicative to exemplify the hortative directives with positive and negative examples.<sup>5</sup> Troy Martin has further refined the use of the imperative by noting the subordinate function of participles for delimiting the imperative (as a basic characteristic of the participle is its subordination to the verb to which it relates).<sup>6</sup> In some cases it is appropriate to translate imperatives as present participles, when those imperatives are subordinate to a major verb.<sup>7</sup> The hortative subjunctive is a particularly distinct form of exhortation from the direct use of the imperative. Whereas the imperative carries the sense of a direct command or order, the hortative subjunctive is far less forceful. Indeed,

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<sup>4</sup> Although negative evidence, the absence of the household codes might still prove useful for identifying the intended audience of the Valentinian paraenetic material, or perhaps the social perception that the author may have attempted to present through moral exhortation. Perhaps Valentinians placed emphasis on a more egalitarian social structure and a less hierarchical church structure. Such an absence might rather be due to a more general tendency to shift away from using household codes for Christian paraenesis in the mid to late second century. Regardless, an argument from silence remains questionable on methodological grounds (i.e., variable control in the study of individual texts), and thus will not be pursued here.

<sup>5</sup> Cancik, *Senecas Epistulae Morales*, passim; especially 16, 23. Cf. C. W. E. Miller, "The Limitation of the Imperative in the Attic Orators"; and, on the relationship of precept to indicative, Gammie, "Morphology," 58.

<sup>6</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*, 85–107; especially 90–93 regarding the subordinate nature of the participle. The subordinate nature of the participle to the leading verb is true whether the participle's function is attributive, circumstantial, or supplementary. See Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, § 2039–2148.

<sup>7</sup> Such a case is found at 1 Pet 2:17. The main verb here is the aorist imperative τιμήσατε. The series of imperatives that follow stand in subordination to this verb, thereby elucidating or delimiting its field of application or meaning (for a full discussion, see Martin, *Metaphor*, 204). Indeed, in Theophylact's rendering of this verse, the imperatives are interpreted as present participles: Πάντος τιμήσατε, τὴν ἀδελφότητα μὲν ἀγαπῶντες (Theophylact, *Expositio in Epistolam Primam S. Petri*, 1189–1252; cited from Martin, *Metaphor*, 204).

it has been observed that this less emphatic imperatival form is more of an indirect request. A sense of mutuality, or a co-hortative tone, emerges with this form. As prescriptive (or precept-giving) discourse, paraenesis will always carry a hortative aspect, even when using non-imperatival verbal forms that are specifically or essentially prescriptive verbs (especially παρακαλεῖν, προτρέπειν and παραινεῖν).<sup>8</sup>

Consequently, the presence of imperatives (both positive and negative imperatives) within a text is a significant clue to identifying the discourse as paraenetic. In such cases, the imperatives will tend to direct or structure the discourse, marking significant shifts in a discourse or, more generally, moving the thought of the discourse forward. However, even when there is no imperatival verbal construction, there will still be an imperatival sense within supporting material (such as the rhetorical question, which offers an indirect request to the readers to accept the underlying assumption of the question; *exempla*, which illustratively prescribe and proscribe behaviour; and various motivational devices, such as rationales or reasons for the prescribed claims). In other words, although the imperative will be a central element within a paraenesis, it is the prescriptive and proscriptive aspect of paraenesis that dominates all aspects of a paraenetic text.

An example of a hortative (in this case, corrective) aspect of a paraenetic address, using a present passive verb with one of our prescriptive verbs in participial form, is Libanius' *Epistle to Heortius* (*Ep.* 10.1), which opens: "Περιεργάζομαι μὲν ἴσως πατέρα παρακαλῶν...". Libanius is admonishing Heortius and reminding him of his responsibilities to his son. Without an imperative the opening of the letter carries a sharpness and directness—indeed, a sense of indignation on Libanius' part. The participle, παρακαλῶν, is not the main verb of the sentence, but stands in subordination to περιεργάζομαι. The participle further explicates what it means for Libanius to be a busybody; i.e., he is exhorting or "enjoining" (to use Engberg-Pedersen's translation of the verb)<sup>9</sup> the father to purchase the books his son needs in order to study under Libanius. The point is that Libanius has been unnecessarily

<sup>8</sup> C. J. Bjerkelund, *Parakalo*, 156–57, argued such a fraternal nuance of παρακαλεῖν, thereby rendering the verb one of establishing the intimate basis for the request. So also Berger, "Hellenistic Gattungen," 1329. Cf. Überlacker, "Paraenesis or Paraclesis," *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> We could translate this participle more freely as "nagging" given the context, i.e., its subordination to "being a busybody": thus, "I am perhaps playing the busybody in nagging a father..."

placed into the position of being a busybody due to Heortius' negligence. He should not need to remind the father of his obligations to his son, and the very reference to *πατέρα* carries an ironic tone of condemnation. The imperatival tone of paraenesis (without using the imperative mood) is nicely illustrated by this letter, especially with the usage of the participle to support the main verb (in this case one of the key paraenesis terms, from the verb *παρακαλέω*).

There are numerous examples of the presence of the imperative within paraenetic discourse. For example, Ps.-Crates writes: "Accustom yourselves to eat barley cake and to drink water, and do not taste fish and wine. For the latter, like the drugs of Circe, make old men bestial and young men effeminate" (*Ep.* 14).<sup>10</sup> Here we find two second person middle imperatives, one positive (*ἐθίζεσθε*) and the other negative (*μὴ γεύεσθε*) in form (though they both call for abstaining from worldly foods, a typical Cynic motif), which dominate this very short exhortation. There is, along with, but clearly developed from, these imperatives, a motivation clause (*γάρ*) along with a supportive example from Homeric verse (*τῆς Κίρκης φάρμακα*; cf. Homer, *Od.* 10). All elements in this paraenetic letter support the proscriptive, hortative message of abstaining from worldly foods.

In *Epistle* 15, Ps.-Crates' utilization of the imperative is even more prominent. Here we have two dominating imperatives that control the flow of the discussion: *φεύγετε μὴ μόνον* ("shun not only...") and *διώκετε μὴ μόνον* ("pursue not only..."). Ps.-Crates has carefully structured this letter with two imperatives, which place a contrast between not only those vices to avoid but also the causes of such vice, followed by a motivational clause or reason to support the imperatival statement and then with a concluding call after both hortative sections to virtue by means of an argument from analogy. This paraenesis is clearly structured by the imperatives and all other elements (motivational clause, contrasts, analogy, call to virtue and proscription of vice) support the imperatives. For a similar example, recall the discussion of the imperative in Phormio's speech to his troops (in chapter 3), especially in relation to the supporting participles.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Text and translation (by Ronald F. Hock) from Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles*.

<sup>11</sup> Similarly, see P.Oxy. 33, where a brief moral exhortation emerges within a second-century trial before the emperor (most likely Marcus Aurelius). Appianus, the official being led off for execution, turns to his friend, Heliodorus, and asks, "why do you not speak?" Heliodorus offers a brief exhortation to Appianus in response, exhorting him

Another classic example of the importance of the imperative in paraenetic discourse is Ps.-Isocrates' *To Demonicus* from 13 to the end of the letter. For illustrative purposes, a quotation from certain parts of the letter will suffice:

First of all, then, show devotion to the gods, not merely by doing sacrifice, but also by keeping your vows; for the former is but evidence of a material prosperity, whereas the latter is proof of a noble character. Do honour to the divine power at all times, but especially on occasions of public worship; for thus you will have the reputation both of sacrificing to the gods and of abiding by the laws. Conduct yourself toward your parents as you would have your children conduct themselves toward you. Train your body, not by the exercises which conduce to strength, but by those which conduce to health. In this you will succeed if you cease your exertions while you have energy to exert yourself. Be not fond of violent mirth, nor harbour presumption of speech; for the one is folly, the other madness... (13–15).

Set not your heart on the excessive acquisition of goods, but on a moderate enjoyment of what you have. Despise those who strain after riches, but are not able to use what they have; they are in like case with a man who, being but a wretched horseman, gets him a fine mount. Try to make money a thing to use as well as to possess; it is a thing of use to those who understand how to enjoy it, and a mere possession to those who are able only to acquire it... (27–28).

The rest of the letter proceeds in the same hortative fashion: a series of imperatives off of which build moral reasons, including *exempla* and analogies, and thus an argument for pursuing the moral path.

In turning our attention to early Christian paraenesis, again the imperative, as well as the hortative tone more generally, emerges prominently. In the opening paraenetic sections of *Didache*, for example, we read: "My child, flee from every evil man and from all like him. Be not proud, for pride leads to murder, nor jealous, nor contentious, nor passionate, for from all these murders are engendered. My child, be not lustful, for lust leads to fornication, nor a speaker of base words, nor a lifter up of the eyes, for from these is adultery engendered" (3.1–3).<sup>12</sup> The opening imperative, φεῦγε, sets the imperatival agenda of this passage. The reader(s), addressed in good paraenetic style as

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to face death with virtue. This short paraenetic statement contains two imperatives, one positive (τρέχε... τελεύτα) and one negative (μὴ ἀγωνία). Supporting the imperatives is a fictive father-son relationship as well as a reminder of virtue/glory.

<sup>12</sup> Text and translation by Kirsopp Lake from LCL.

τέκνον μου (thus establishing a parental fictive kinship relationship), is to flee from all evil (ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ). What constitutes evil is then drawn out through a list of vices to avoid (using the negative particle μή and μηδέ...μηδέ throughout), along with the underlying reasons for avoiding them (not all that dissimilar to Ps.-Crates' discussion in *Epistle* 15). The imperatives continue even into the next section on ritual (e.g., the Eucharist and baptism, 7.1 “βαπτίσατε” and 9.1 and 10.1 “εὐχαριστήσατε”). Association with evil (or outsiders) becomes the moral foundation for Christian worship, and thereby communal harmony: e.g., μηδέ προσεύχεσθε ὡς οἱ ὑποκριταί (8.2; citing Matt 6:5).<sup>13</sup>

Polycarp's *Epistle to the Philippians* could also be classified as a par-  
aenetic letter, and again the imperatives come into play:

...let us arm ourselves with the armour of righteousness, and let us first of all teach ourselves to walk in the commandment of the Lord; next teach our wives to remain in the faith given to them, and to love and purity, tenderly loving their husbands in all truth, and loving others equally in all chastity, and to educate their children in the fear of God. Let us teach widows to be discreet in the faith of the Lord, praying ceaselessly for all men, being far from all slander, evil speaking, false witness, love of money, and all evil, knowing that they are an altar of God, and all offerings are tested, and that nothing escapes him of reasonings or thoughts, or the secret things of the heart. (4.1b-3)<sup>14</sup>

Here Polycarp constructs a version of the household code, applied to the community of faith, illustrating the usage of the hortative subjunctive (ὀπλισώμεθα) and imperatival usage of the infinitive (παιδεύειν). He also uses prescriptive terms, e.g., in chapter 9:

Now I beseech/exhort [παρακαλῶ] all of you to obey the word of righteousness, and to endure with all the endurance which you also saw before your eyes, not only in the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others among yourselves, and in Paul himself, and in the other

<sup>13</sup> A similar usage of the aorist imperative to exhort Christians of the proper, and socially edifying, behaviour towards the Eucharist is found in Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, where we read: Σπουδάσατε οὖν μιᾷ εὐχαριστία χρῆσθαι (4.1) (text and translation by Lake from LCL). This particular instance of exhortation is more of a caution or warning, calling on the readers to be diligent, earnest or careful in the practice of the sacrament. An extended parenthesis offers the rationale or argument for the exhortation.

<sup>14</sup> Text and translation by Lake from LCL.

apostles; being persuaded [περπεισμένους] that all of these ran not in vain, but in faith and righteousness... (9.1–2b).

The hortative παρακαλέω is the verb on which both the hortative infinitives (e.g., πειθαρχεῖν and ἀσκεῖν) and the moral examples hang and thereby explicate the exhortation.

A similar usage of the imperative, in this case the imperative mood, is evident in the opening of chapter 10. Unfortunately the text is only extant in Latin, but the hortative elements are still clear: “Stand fast therefore in these things [*In his ergo state*] and follow the example of the Lord [*domini exemplar sequimini*], firm and unchangeable in faith, loving the brotherhood, affectionate to one another, joined together in the truth, forestalling one another in the gentleness of the Lord, despising no man” (10.1). Here we have two imperatives that define the contours of the exhortation, one (to apply Attridge’s distinction) a static command (*state*) and the other a dynamic command (*sequimini*).<sup>15</sup> Together they determine the moral direction that the Philippian Christians are to follow in order to establish proper social harmony within the church. The other hortative elements are subordinate to this two-fold imperatival statement (*firmi...et immutabiles; amatores; diligentes* [perhaps best translated “diligent to one another” rather than “affectionate to one another”]; *sociati, praestolantes, and despicientes*). The chapter closes with another imperative (*docete*), which, following *ergo*, effectively pulls the chapter together with a hortative emphasis: “*Sobrietatem ergo docete omnes...*” (“Therefore teach sobriety to all...” (10.3b). Thus, the imperative is what controls and directs the exhortation.

When we turn to the Valentinian Christian material, the imperative and prescriptive/proscriptive tone is again present, thereby indicating the presence of paraenetic material. The prominence of the imperatives structuring the paraenetic discourse in both the *Interp. Know.* and the *Gos. Truth* will be discussed in some depth in chapters 6 and 7. Other texts from the Valentinian corpus further evidence the presence of imperatives within their paraenetic material. In the *Gos. Phil.* there is a paraenetic section running from 79,33b–81,14 and other paraenetic and moral discursive material throughout the text. There is a clear imperative at 83,18–21: “As for ourselves, let each of us dig down after the root of evil which is within one, and let one pluck it out of one’s heart from the root.” Here the third person optative (the jussive)

<sup>15</sup> Attridge, “Paraenesis in a Homily,” 221.

(ΜΑΡΕΥΒΛΑΒΛΕ) follows a discussion on the wickedness of the world, illustrated by both an analogy to human anatomy and a tree's roots. This discussion places the emphasis upon the inner location of the cause of evil (ἸΚΑ ΤΗΟΥΝΕ ΠΤΡΑΚΙΑ), somewhat similar to the Stoic and Cynic emphasis on a virtue ethic. The exhortation applies this ontological ethical discussion to the readers and the author (the insiders), thereby calling upon insiders to become aware of the root of evil and thereby pluck it out. The author follows this co-hortative with a discussion of the moral condition of the ignorant person in contrast to the aware person: "It will be plucked out if we recognize it. But if we are ignorant of it, it takes root in us and produces its fruit in our heart. It masters us. We are its slaves. It takes us captive, to make us do what we do [not] want; and what we do want we do [not] do. It is powerful because we do not recognize it" (83,21b–29, with the discussion extending to 84,14a). This discussion, including the contrasts both between recognition and ignorance as well as "root of evil" and "fruits of the truth within" (84,12) (there is a further contrast between slavery and freedom), as well as the preceding ontological discussion on the world, supports the co-hortative application of the author's theology (or more specifically soteriology). A clear behavioural aspect to the co-hortative is present. This aspect is explicitly drawn out with the reference to "make us do what we do [not] want" as well as not being able to do what is desired (83,27–28).

In the *1 Apoc. Jas.* there are several instances of the imperative being used. This tractate is designed with a strong consolatory tone, structured in a dialogue format between the risen Lord and James, and thus the paraenetic elements are primarily for the sake of encouragement. Within this dialogue, the Lord exhorts James, "do not be sad [ἸΠΠ Ἰ ΠΩΠΖΗΤ]... do not be timid or afraid [ἸΠΠΠ [ἸΔΑΒ] ΖΗΤ ΟΥΤΕ ἸΠΠΠ ΖΟΤΕ]" (32,17–22). This follows on both James being timid and weeping and the Lord explicitly indicating the suffering James will face (ἸΑΚΩΒΟΣ ΔΕ ΝΕΥἸΔΑΒΖΗΤ ΠΕ ΕΥΡΙΜΕ ΛΥΩ ΔΥΠΚΑΖ ΠΖΗΤ ΕΜΑΤΕ; 32,13–15). Just prior to this exhortation, James had condemned the wicked behaviour of those who had caused the Lord's suffering. The Lord responds with an exhortation to not be concerned with these people as they are simply types of the archons ("do not be concerned [ἸΠΠΤΡΕΟΡΗΕΛΙ] for me or for this people"). Within the same line of discussion over suffering and dealing with the wicked other, we find a further hortative response by the Lord at 40,9–41. Unfortunately this passage, including James' preceding question, is extremely fragmentary. However, we do read the Lord exhorting:

For cast away from [you the] cup, which is bitterness. For some from [...] set themselves against you. For [you have begun] to understand [their roots] from the beginning to end. Cast away from yourself all lawlessness. And beware lest they envy you. When you speak these words of this [perception], encourage these [four]: Salome and Mariam [and Martha and Arsinoe...].

This short paraenetic passage is designed around a series of imperatives (“cast away [ΝΟΥΧΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΠΗ[ΟΚ]]... cast away [ΝΟΥΧΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΠΗΜΟΚ]... beware [ΜΑ† ΨΤΗΚ]... encourage [ΤΩΤ ΠΖΗΤ]”). The contrast between James and opponents of the insiders is more explicitly linked here to ethical behaviour, both proscriptive (“lawlessness”) and prescriptive (“encourage these...”). The latter in particular highlights the fraternal, or communally responsible, nature of the paraenesis. The reasoning given in the ΓΑΡ clauses (and ΜΗΠΩC at 40,21) directly build off of the imperatives, thereby lending a hortative stress to the entire passage.

A series of imperatives also begin the paraenetic section in the *2 Apoc. Jas.* (52,14–21): “When you hear, therefore, open your ears and understand and walk accordingly” (52,15–17). Open [ΔΥΟΥΩΝ], understand [ΕΜΕ] and walk [ΜΟΟΥΕ] are ethical in connotation. The readers are to respond to the Lord’s teaching by both positive reception and positive living. A two-way schema is implied. The next paraenetic section (59,1–60,24) also begins with an exhortation, located within a two-way schema: “Renounce this difficult way, which is so variable, and walk in accordance with him who desires that you become free men with me, after you have passed above his dominion” (59,1–8). The two imperatives ([Κ]Ω ΠCΩΤΠ and ΜΟΟΥΕ) set the remainder of the section by placing the two ways within a hortative context. These imperatives are further supported by an eschatological promise, invoking a theological belief in the ascent of the soul.

The *Ep. Pet. Phil.*, in its paraenetic aside at 139,29–30, further illustrates the usage of the imperative. Following a discussion on suffering, Peter exhorts the other disciples with a co-hortative, “let us therefore not obey these lawless ones and walk in...” (the text breaks off at this point on the page). The co-hortative (the negative optative ΜΗΡΤΡΕΝCΩΤΜ) is most likely the primary verb in this sentence,<sup>16</sup> and it establishes

<sup>16</sup> In Coptic, the injunctive (i.e., the optative) is the usual way to form the co-hortative, like the hortative subjunctive in Greek. ΜΗΡΤΡΕΝCΩΤΜ is the only occurrence of the optative in *Ep. Pet. Phil.* (as also noted in Meyer, *Letter of Peter to Philip*, 77). This single instance of the optative, here formed in the negative with ΜΗΡ- prefixed

the imperatival direction of what Peter then says (the conjunctive  $\text{NTNM}\omega\omega\epsilon$  is dependent on this co-hortative).<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, there are three instances of a co-hortative in *Val. Exp.* ( $\text{M}\Delta\text{P}\bar{\text{N}}[\epsilon\text{I}]$ ) a text that is not a paraenesis but does include some paraenetic material. Sandwiched between two references to the Father's will (such references carrying ethical or moral connotations, as has been definitively established by Albrecht Dihle),<sup>18</sup> is the exhortation, "While these things are due to the Root of the All, let us for our part enter his revelation and his goodness and his descent and the All" (23,31–35). Orthodoxy ("right doctrine") undergirds this exhortation, which reflects the common motif in moral philosophy of striving towards knowing the good (i.e., the divine will) and thereby being able to do the good. The same doctrinal concern undergirds the co-hortative at 28,36–37, "So let us [ $\text{M}\Delta\text{P}\bar{\text{N}}$ ] know his unfathomable richness he wanted..." (text breaks off). The third co-hortative ( $\text{M}\Delta\text{P}\bar{\text{N}}$  36,38), though only at the beginning

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to the causative infinitive, reinforces the paraenetic aspect of this aside in contrast to the rest of the tractate.

<sup>17</sup> The conjunctive form of the second future, as Lambdin notes (*Sahidic Coptic*, 107), is "used to continue the force of a preceding verbal prefix" and "is especially frequent after a First Future or an Imperative." This is the very case here at 139,30. Given the break in the text, I am hesitant to explicate further the paraenetic construction or implications of this hortatory statement on Peter's part. Given the dependence of this conjunctive on the preceding co-hortative verb, it might be more effective to translate the  $\lambda\gamma\omega$  as "nor" rather than "and"; thus, offering the interpretative translation, "My brothers, let us therefore neither heed these lawless ones nor walk in..." (although we would expect the negative form of the conjunctive, this translation helps highlight the sense of the sentence where the conjunctive supports the negative optative). This translation clarifies that the two verbs are both admonitions against the influence of the lawless ones, rather than a two-way schema of not obeying the lawless ones (admonition) but rather walking in the way advocated by the author (exhortation). The dependency of the second future with its conjunctive force, instead, offers a two-fold admonition against the way of the lawless ones. Perhaps with an even freer translation (in order to stress the continuous relation between the verbs), we could render the second future as follows: "My brothers, let us therefore not heed these lawless ones, walking in..." Thus, instead of two separate admonitions, we have a major admonition with a following, or continuing, explication of the optative with the conjunction application. Such a conjunctive addition adds stress and weight of importance to the paraenetic exhortation.

<sup>18</sup> Dihle, *Theory of Will*, offers a compelling analysis of the moral contours of divine will within the Greco-Roman world. He notes that Jewish and Christian presentations of divine will, though still ethical, differs from the Greek and Roman traditions in that Jews and Christians placed emphasis upon obedience to divine commands rather than, as with Greco-Roman writers, coming to know the divine will and thereby attain to the rational ability to become moral. Although his general analysis of divine will is indeed accurate (and worthy of far more attention than Dihle's work tends to receive), the sharp demarcation between obedience and rationality is in need of qualification, at least with the Valentinian material.

of a fragmentary break, concludes a discussion of the Father's will (ΠΟΥΘΕ ΠΠΩΤ) (36,20–38).

When we turn to the *Treat. Res.* there are several imperatives within the paraenetic material near the close of the tractate. For example, we have at 49,9–16 an opening negative (proscriptive) imperative (“do not think in part, O Rheginos, nor live in conformity with the flesh for the sake of unanimity...”) followed by a contrasting positive (prescriptive) imperative, “...but flee from the divisions and the fetters...”. The rationale for this two-fold exhortation is then offered, introduced with the conditional, “For if...” (49,16b and again at 49,25).

The imperative, along with a general hortative tone, is the primary determinant for identifying paraenesis. As moral *exhortation*, paraenesis does not simply discuss moral philosophy, but, by necessity, exhorts that philosophy within a dialogic context. This is not only true of paraenesis within the broader Greco-Roman tradition, but also within early Christian paraenesis. The usage of the imperative for marking and structuring hortative discourse is also prominent in the Valentinian corpus, thus placing such Valentinian exhortation within the contours of ancient conventions of constructing paraenesis.

#### MORAL EXEMPLA

The utilization of examples is common within rhetorical discourses, and paraenesis is no exception. Such examples embody in vivid images those virtues and vices that the audience is to avoid or imitate. Examples tend to be drawn from a variety of sources: historical, legendary, mythic, fictional, and personal. The moral path that the author advocates is illustrated by *exempla*, offering models or paradigms of moral conduct or moral character. Indeed, to emulate someone who is noble and virtuous was seen in the Greco-Roman world as a virtuous act, standing in opposition to envy. Aristotle succinctly states the value of emulation:

Emulation therefore is virtuous and characteristic of virtuous men, whereas envy is base and characteristic of base men; for the one, owing to emulation, fits himself to obtain such goods, while the object of the other, owing to envy, is to prevent his neighbour possessing them. (*Rh.* 2.10.11)<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Text and translation from LCL.

He goes on to link emulation to not only goods, but also virtues. Again note the contrasting values of the virtuous (emulous) and the non-virtuous (contempt):

It is also evident who are the objects of emulation; for they are those who possess these or similar goods, such as have already been spoken of, for instance, courage, wisdom, authority; for those in authority, such as generals, orators, and all who have similar powers, can do good to many. And those whom many desire to be like, or to be their acquaintances or friends; those whom many or ourselves admire; those who are praised or eulogized either by poets or by prose writers. The opposite characters we despise: for contempt is the opposite of emulation, and the idea of emulation of the idea of contempt. And those who are in a condition which makes them emulate, or be emulated by, others, must be inclined to despise those persons (and for that reason) who suffer from defects contrary to the good things which excite emulation. That is why we often despise those who are fortunate, whenever their good fortune is not accompanied by highly valued goods. The means of producing and destroying the various emotions in men, from which the methods of persuasion that concern them are derived, have now been stated. (*Rh.* 2.11.5–7)

For Aristotle, there are those who appear as models for emulation and those who appear as models for contempt. The persuasive force of such models in rhetorical discourse is closely tied into the emotive side of rhetoric, i.e., exemplars of both virtue and vice tend to appeal to *pathos*. Those who are to be emulated, or are emulated, embody positive virtues: courage, wisdom, and authority. As contempt is the opposite value, it is evident that those who are not to be emulated but rather despised embody the opposite of the virtuous: cowardliness or selfishness, ignorance, and lack of discipline (see *Rh.* 2.12.5–6 for a more complete list of these negative characteristics). For Aristotle, like the ancient historians, examples are to present a role model of the development of virtuous character (ἥθος).<sup>20</sup>

Within paraenetic discourse, the same emphasis upon moral examples emerges. Although Engberg-Pedersen has argued that the example, though used with precepts, is not specifically a feature of paraenesis, his suggestion is erroneous, or, perhaps, overly delimiting. It is true that examples are not the same as maxims or gnomic sayings, but preceptorial speech is not simply a narrow list of precepts. His re-examination

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<sup>20</sup> For a helpful overview of the relationship between poetics and rhetoric, with attention to moral character, see the excellent discussion by Thompson, “Reading Beyond the Text, Part I”; “Reading Beyond the Text, Part II.”

of Isocrates and Seneca, though intriguing, misses the point, especially with Seneca. Engberg-Pedersen claims that: “These authors speak of using examples and models as an alternative to giving injunctions. They do not see the use of examples as itself a part of something broad called paraenesis... the giving of injunctions captures the *focal* meaning of the practice of paraenesis, but that giving of examples could be included under an *extended* meaning of the same practice.”<sup>21</sup> His concern is, of course, to establish a narrower understanding of the term “paraenesis” for the sake of establishing a more general umbrella term, “paraclesis”—thus, the extended inclusion of examples. However, moral *exempla* are an important part of paraenesis (beyond the narrower confines Engberg-Pedersen establishes).

For Isocrates, *Nicocles* the exhortation is extended to include examples, not as an addition to the imperatives or precepts, but rather as a validation of those very hortatives. Isocrates states:

Do not be jealous of those who are highest in my favour, but emulate them, and by making yourselves serviceable try to rise to the level of those who are above you. Believe that you should love and honour those whom your king loves and honours, in order that you may win from me these same distinctions. Even as are the words which you speak about me in my presence, so let your thoughts of me be in my absence. Manifest your good will towards me in deeds rather than in words. Do not do to others that which angers you when they do it to you. (*Nicocles* 60–61)

In this exhortation, not only are there imperatives running throughout (indeed, dominating the flow of the exhortation) as well as the offering of a closing maxim, one that will eventually arise within Christian circles, but there is also a call to deeds and emulation. Deeds, and the emulation of deeds, validate the morality espoused in the text: manifestations of precepts are evidence of the truthfulness of those precepts. Thus, emulation is very much a part of a moral exhortation. In Ps.-Isocrates *To Demonicus* this same relationship between precepts and moral example is clearly illustrated: “...if you but recall also your father’s principles (τοῦ πατρὸς προαιρέσεις), you will have from your own house a noble illustration (παράδειγμα) of what I am telling you (λεγομένων)” (9). Here the precepts or moral policies advocated by the father, and the advice given by Isocrates, are of like nature, with the

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<sup>21</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, “Concept,” 60 (emphasis original).

father serving as a moral or good (καλόν) example of the mode of life advocated by such teachings or principles.

In Seneca, it is true that we read: “It is, that good precepts, often welcomed within you, will benefit you just as much as good examples” (*Epistle* 94.42). Seneca is not, however, distancing *bona exempla* from *praecepta bona* as if they were two distinct things, or one merely standing in place of the other as an alternative discursive device. It is important to recognize the broader context of this statement in this epistle. Seneca has thrown a wide net for various types of moral exhortation, thereby establishing not a diverse taxonomy of various types of discourse but rather a broad field of terms and types for understanding the diversity within moral exhortation. Indeed, by answering his fictional interlocutor, Seneca places in contrast the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the law (or Posidonius’ understanding of the law as simply obeying without reasoning) and that of advice or exhortation (or precepts as pleading rather than coercing). With such a contrast, he places on one side the following: “Grant, if you will, that the laws do not avail; it does not necessarily follow that advice also should not avail. On this ground, you ought to say that consolation (*consolationes*) does not avail, and warning (*dissuasiones*), and exhortation (*adhortationes*), and scolding (*obiurgationes*), and praising (*laudationes*); since they are all varieties of advice (*Omnia ista monitionum genera sunt*)” (*Epistle* 94.39). The extension of precepts to advice is not meant as a distinction, but rather as a further instance of, or type of, advice-giving device within such a broad, sweeping field of terms. Like Seneca’s other terms, *exempla* will certainly have distinctiveness in function, but should not be distinguished as separate from or an alternative to *praecepta* or paraenesis.

As parts of paraenetic discourse, examples tend to be placed within antithetical constructions, thereby highlighting both the admonishing and injunctive sides of hortative discourse. An excellent example of such antithetical usage of positive and negative moral *exempla* is offered in Ps.-Crates, *Epistle* 19. Ps.-Crates first presents a negative *exemplar* of the Cynic lifestyle, drawn from the legends of Homeric verse:

Do not call Odysseus, who was the most effeminate [sic] of all his companions and who put pleasure above all else, the father of Cynicism because once he put on the garb of the Cynic. For the cloak does not make a Cynic, but the Cynic the cloak. Such was not the case with Odysseus, since he always succumbed to sleep, succumbed to food, praised the sweet life, never did anything without God and fortune, begged from everyone—even from the humble, and accepted whatever anyone gave.

In contrast with Odysseus, Ps.-Crates then presents the positive *exemplar* of Diogenes:

Rather, call Diogenes the father of Cynicism. He put on the cloak not just once but throughout his life, he was superior to both toil and pleasure, he demanded his support but not from the humble, he abandoned all necessities, he had confidence in himself, he prayed that he might never attain to honors out of pity but as a revered man, he trusted in reason and not in guile or bow, he was brave not only at the point of death but was also courageous in his practice of virtue.

Ps.-Crates finally ends his letter to Patrocles with a hortative application of the two examples:

And it will be proper for you to emulate, not Odysseus, but Diogenes who delivered many from evil to virtue, both when he was alive and after he died through the teachings he left behind for us.

The antithetical contrast in this paraenetic letter draws out those virtues that are proper for the true Cynic to emulate.<sup>22</sup> Even Odysseus, as a negative *exemplar*, offers direction for the reader to understand the ethical lifestyle that Ps.-Crates advocates. The reader is evidently familiar with both the narrative legends of Odysseus (in this case most likely the *Odyssey* rather than the *Iliad*, the Homeric hymns, or later material on Odysseus) and the teachings and life of Diogenes. This is not an indication that the recipient is being introduced to new material, but rather is being reminded of the virtues of the Cynic lifestyle. By placing Diogenes' paradigmatic role into an antithetical structure, Ps.-Crates is able to offer Patrocles a stronger moral example—the contrast of these two figures within an either/or structure renders the positive *exemplar* far more stark and thus emphatic.

Although references to actual persons, especially a father or teacher, was most typical of paraenetic *exempla*, an author could also draw examples from other sources, such as animals or nature more generally. Malherbe offers just such an example with Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 48.14–16. In this paraenetic discourse, Dio Chrysostom uses both insects and celestial bodies to illustrate, and thereby urge imitation of, social harmony or civil concord:

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<sup>22</sup> On emulating legendary figures within the Cynic tradition, see Donald R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism*, 198–201, and for more on Heracles (especially Sostratus being called “Heracles”), see pages 182–83.

If my purpose on this occasion were to speak on behalf of concord, I should have had a good deal to say about not only human experiences but celestial also, to the effect that these divine and grand creations, as it happens, require concord and friendship; otherwise there is danger of ruin and destruction for this beautiful work of the creator, the universe. But perhaps I am talking too long, when I should instead go and call the proconsul to our meeting. Accordingly I shall say only this much more—is it not disgraceful that bees are of one mind and no one has ever seen a swarm that is factious and fights against itself, but, on the contrary, they both work and live together, providing food for one another and using it well?<sup>23</sup>

Dio Chrysostom goes on to offer a refutation of a possible counter to his illustration—the role of the drone bee. In this illustration he sets up a model for human social behaviour that is *κατὰ φύσιν*. The strength of such an appeal is evident when we recall that *ζῶν κατὰ φύσιν* was an essential part of moral philosophy, regardless of which school of philosophical thought is under consideration.<sup>24</sup> The analogy of celestial bodies and the insect realm for human behaviour is explicitly made when Dio Chrysostom closes with the statement: “It is not disgraceful, then, as I was saying, that human beings should be more unintelligent than wild creatures which are so tiny and unintelligent?” The way he frames the hortative conclusion plays with the concept of honour and shame. In effect, Dio Chrysostom has “shamed” his audience by usage of the antithesis of bees and humans for illustrating the antithesis of civil concord and social conflict.

A father figure is a prominent moral example utilized within paraenetic texts. A paternal figure evokes in some cases a degree of intimacy, while in others a sense of social obligation on the part of the *pater familias*, through his *patria potestas*, as well as those under the paternal head of the household.<sup>25</sup> The importance of a father’s obligations underlies the entire paraenesis of Libanius’ *Epistle to Heortius*

<sup>23</sup> Translated by Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 147–48.

<sup>24</sup> See the discussion in Wayne Meeks, *Moral World*, 40–64; cf. Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 1.9; 1.17.5. *Κατὰ φύσιν*, however, necessitated for the Stoic a recognition of the divine (and most importantly the human-divine kinship, *συγγένεια*; thus, Stoicism tended to equate *ζῶν κατὰ φύσιν* with *ζῶν κατὰ λόγον* (e.g., Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.3.7–9; cf. Philo, *De migratione Abraham* 127–32, linking *κατὰ λόγον*, *κατὰ φύσιν* and *κατὰ νόμον θεοῦ* on the way to attaining *τέλος*).

<sup>25</sup> See Francis Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*; Martin, *Metaphor*, 170; Beryl Rawson, “Adult-Child Relationships in Roman Society,” 7–30; Thomas Wiedemann, *Adults and Children in the Roman Empire*; and Trevor J. Burke, “Pauline Paternity.”

(*Ep.* 10). Perhaps the most commonly recognized illustration of the father example in paraenetic material is Ps.-Isocrates, *To Demonicus* 9 (cf. 1–3). Another example is found in Pliny the Younger, *Letter* 8.13 (to Genialis). We read, “I much approve your having read my orations with your father [*cum patre legisti*]. It is important to your progress, to learn from a man of his eloquence. . . . You see whose steps you ought to follow; and happy are you in having a living model [*exempla*] before you, which is at once the nearest and the noblest you can pursue! Happy, in a word, that he whom nature designed you should most resemble [*simillimum*], is, of all others, the person whom you should most imitate [*imitandum*]! Farewell.”<sup>26</sup> Pliny plays with the biological and the moral relationship of a son to a father in order to encourage Genialis to follow his father’s example, especially in the arena of studying philosophy.<sup>27</sup> Such moral imitation is presented with an indirect moral link to the idea of living according to nature. Marcus Aurelius’s *Meditations*, although not a paraenetic text (due to the self-reflective, non-hortative nature of the work), further illustrates the importance of a father figure as a model for moral development. In praising the role of his adoptive father, Antoninus Pius, following similar praise of his teachers, in his own moral development, Marcus Aurelius paints a picture of the virtuous father figure who, through such virtuousness, exemplifies for his son the moral path to follow:

From my father, mildness, and an unshakable adherence to decisions deliberately come to; and no empty vanity in respect to so-called honours; and a love of work and thoroughness; and a readiness to hear any suggestions of the common good. . . . And his public spirit, and his requiring his friends at all to sup with him or necessarily attend him abroad, and their always finding him the same when urgent affairs had kept them away; and the spirit of. . . (*Meditations* 1.16)<sup>28</sup>

In this praise to Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius effectively demonstrates the successful outcome of a proper paternal role model: Antoninus Pius embodies various (Stoic) virtues, and Marcus Aurelius has developed those same virtues by means of moral imitation.

<sup>26</sup> Translation from Malberbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 137; Latin text from LCL.

<sup>27</sup> The hortative tone is indirectly presented in this letter, thus still allowing us to classify it as a paraenetic letter. Indeed, this letter’s non-commanding but still hortative tone effectively illustrates Engberg-Pedersen’s understanding of paraenesis as injunction rather than command.

<sup>28</sup> Text and translation from LCL.

When we turn to early Christian paraenesis, moral *exempla* also feature prominently. In Clement of Alexandria's *Exhortation to Endurance, or, to the Newly Baptized*, he closes his moral and doctrinal exhortation with an analogous example for the readers to follow:

Knowing this [God's commandments and the ethics preceding this example], make your soul strong in the face of diseases; be of good courage, like a man in the arena [ἄνθρωπος ἐν σταδίοις], bravest to submit to his toils with strength unmoved. Be not utterly crushed in soul by grief, whether disease lies heavily upon you, or any other hardship befalls, but nobly confront toils with your understanding, even in the midst of your struggles rendering thanks to God.<sup>29</sup>

This example of the man in the arena is a useful one for Clement to draw upon for exhorting the readers to hold fast to their faith in God in various hardships. This *exemplar* could either be drawn from the athletic metaphor so common in moral treatises of antiquity, especially when linked with asceticism, or it could be drawn from Christian suffering and martyrdom (a motif that is especially popular within the earlier Christian material of the second century, specifically in the Apostolic Fathers, but would not have been out of place in the third century). Regardless of what social image this metaphor may have initially evoked (of the athlete or the martyr), this example further embodies the classical virtue of courage. Finally, this image is placed within a broader apocalyptic framework for supporting the exhortation.

Christological *exempla* is prominent in early Christian paraenesis. Indeed, as noted above Ferdinand Hahn has correctly observed that early Christian paraenesis is always connected to the Gospel and Christology.<sup>30</sup> Although Hahn's examples are drawn from the New Testament (most notably 1 Thessalonians, James and Hebrews), his observation is applicable to other early Christian paraenetic material. In Polycarp's *Epistle to the Philippians* Christ is explicitly invoked, with a co-hortative, as a model for the Philippian Christians to imitate: "Let us then be imitators of his endurance [μιμηταὶ οὖν γενώμεθα τῆς ὑπομονῆς], and if we suffer for his name's sake let us glorify him. For this is the example which he gave us in himself, and this is what we have believed" (8.1). Another explicit reference to Christ as a moral example is offered in the extant Latin ending of the letter: "Stand fast therefore in these things

<sup>29</sup> Text and translation from LCL.

<sup>30</sup> Hahn, "Die christologische Begründung," 99; cf. 94–96.

and follow the example of the Lord . . .” (10.1). Here the two imperatives are followed by ethical virtues to be embodied by the recipients in their mutual relations. The imperatives are paired as a static command and a dynamic command. Whereas *state* (“hold fast”) fits the former, the moral *exemplar* of the Lord (*domini exemplar sequimini*) articulates the latter, dynamic call for the recipients to actively follow the moral path set forth by the Lord. This path is then articulated by the list of virtues that the recipients are called to embody.

The importance of Christ as model for imitation arguable is stressed at the very opening of this letter, when Polycarp writes, “I rejoice greatly with you in our Lord Jesus Christ that you have followed the pattern of true love, and have helped on their way, as opportunity was given you, those who were bound in chains” (1.1). If τὰ μιμήματα is referring back to τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Χριστῷ, then we have another instance of a christological *exemplar*. The opening verse, furthermore, recalls for the Philippian Christians their status as true followers of the example of “true love” and their assistance to those who have been imprisoned for their faith. The hortative aspects of this opening verse are indirect at best; the recipients are not called to start on the path of this christological pattern of love, nor to offer help to those in chains. Rather, Polycarp reminds them of their virtuous, Christ-like lives or behaviour and, thereby, encourages them to continue following this pattern of virtue. By placing such a positive affirmation on the Philippian church, Polycarp sets the tone for the paraenetic material that will follow in later chapters. The explicit exhortation to follow the christological example would have been far more forceful due to the indirect reference to the pattern of virtue at 1.1.

Similar appeals to Christ as a moral example are found throughout Ignatius’ letters. In his *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, for example, he gives a closing imperatival call to unity and submission to the authority of the bishop with a christological analogy of the Father-Son relationship: “...flee [φεύγετε] from divisions, be imitators [μιμηταὶ γίνεσθε] of Jesus Christ, as was [ὡς καί] he also of his Father” (7.2).<sup>31</sup> The same

<sup>31</sup> Another christological *exemplar* might also appear at 8.2, where Ignatius writes, “But I beseech [παρακαλῶ] you to do nothing in factiousness, but after [ἀλλὰ κατὰ] the teaching of Christ.” Whether ἀλλὰ κατὰ implies a pattern to follow or an appeal to accordance with (in a more legal sense) is difficult to determine. However, this exhortation restates again the imperative to imitate the example of Christ in 7.2 and therefore adds to and places emphases upon the readers’ reading of the Christ example.

usage of the Christ model is present in the *Epistle to the Magnesians* 13.2: “Be subject [ὑποτάγητε] to the bishop and to one another, even as [ὡς] Jesus Christ was subject to the Father, and the Apostles were subject to Christ and to the Father, in order that [ἵνα] there may be a union both of flesh and of spirit.” This usage of the moral *exempla* effectively structures a hortative address with first an imperatival directive (submission to the bishop and each other; unity being a central theme in Ignatius’ letters and therefore dominating his paraenesis), then secondly with a set of moral examples to illustrate and thereby support the directive. The examples centre on a christological base, constructing a hierarchal set of relations of submission for the church to imitate: apostles—Christ—Father. Thus, community harmony is established through submission to each other and to their bishop. Thirdly, following the imperatival directive and the moral examples, Ignatius closes with a ἵνα-clause for the motivation of the exhortation.<sup>32</sup> Again, the theme of unity or harmony, so prominent in the Ignatian letters, is stressed. Ignatius clearly recognized this passage, if not the entire letter, as moral exhortation: “...I have exhorted [παρεκέλευσα] you briefly” (14.1). What emerges, therefore, in this exhortation is the logical construction of a paraenesis, drawing upon precepts and examples, along with a motivational or reason clause. In like manner, the pseudonymous *Epistle of Barnabas* also makes an explicit reference to Christ as an *exemplar*, with this model placed within a more complex hortative structure of exhortations, the two-way schema, and appeal to authoritative scripture (5.3–6, preceding by a strong christological and soteriological discussion of the Lord, thus linking doctrine with exhortation).

Other forms of moral *exempla* are also found within early Christian paraenetic material. Celestial models are utilized in Ignatius’ *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* 6.1, though without as direct a reference to celestial bodies as we found in Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 48.14–16. Here Ignatius follows his imperative (“let no one be deceived”) with an analogy from the heavenly realm, particularly “things in heaven,” “angels,” and “rulers visible and invisible” with a closing eschatological warning of the judg-

<sup>32</sup> Whether ἕνωσις carries an eschatological sense here or not is difficult to determine. The motivation could, therefore, either indicate the unifying outcome of submission to divine patterned hierarchy emerging in the end time or within the present existence of the church (or, given Ignatius practical call for submission and harmony/concord, both a realized union and an eschatological union). The reference to union “of flesh and of spirit” in this clause may also have carried an implicit christological allusion given the anti-docetic Christology espoused by Ignatius.

ment against those of false belief.<sup>33</sup> In *1 Clement* 20 celestial bodies are also used as *exempla*, in this case more like Dio Chrysostom's celestial *exempla* (cf. *1 Clem.* 33.2–3, especially in light of the hortative verses 7–8; see also 34.5). This chapter is not, however, explicitly paraenetic. Rather we are given a more epideictic account of the glory of God's creative work.<sup>34</sup> The theme of concord arises, however, as it does with Dio Chrysostom (e.g., *1 Clem.* 20.1–2, 4, 10–11). Here in *1 Clement* the praise of God's creation carries a paraenetic function, or more accurately sets the stage for the paraenesis, of chapter 21: "Take heed, beloved, lest his many good works towards us become a judgment on us, if we do not good and virtuous deeds before him in concord, and be citizens worthy of him" (21.1). The creative works of God are, therefore, to be models for the Roman Christians to follow. Just as God's creation works in harmony with the divine will, so also should God's people (his "citizens") live in harmony and thus virtue. This application of the celestial realm as *exempla* for Christian virtue, following a supportive scriptural passage from Prov 20:27, sets the stage for the series of cohortative injunctions that structure the remainder of this chapter. In some cases, we find a direct reference to God as a model for imitation. In a paraenetic section of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, we find three such references explicitly given (10.4–6).<sup>35</sup> As with other instances of moral examples, these are woven within a series of paraenetic literary devices: a rhetorical question (10.3; cf. 2.2b–9), a reference to divine will (10.4), antithesis (10.5–6), a direct application of the moral example for the

<sup>33</sup> The exhortation then moves into a warning against those of false beliefs, drawing out a negative model that stresses love and caring for the widow, the orphan, the distressed, the afflicted, the prisoner, and the hungry/thirsty. This closing negative exemplar adds a strong moral tone to the entire exhortation of this chapter.

<sup>34</sup> Note especially the liturgical close of the chapter (20.12): "to whom [or, in the Latin, through whom to God and the Father] be the glory and the majesty for ever and ever, amen."

<sup>35</sup> A helpful, and recent, study on God as model for imitation, with special attention to the model of the Logos and ethical acts towards other humans, is Michael Heintz, "Μιμητής θεοῦ in the *Epistle of Diognetus*." Heintz, following C. S. Wansink, "*Epistula ad Diognetum*: A School Exercise in the Use of Protreptic" and David Aune, "Romans as a *Logos Protreptikos*," 285, claims that this letter is protreptic. He identifies chapter 10, however, as paraenetic (linking ethics to worship) and at times discusses the text from both a paraenetic and a protreptic perspective without evident awareness of the distinction (e.g., the lack of description on Christian cultic practices during the opening polemics against Jewish and Gentile conceptions/worship of the gods/God; p. 112). Still, Heintz has effectively demonstrated how this text brings together ethics, cosmology, and worship.

recipients (10.7a), and an eschatological climax (10.7b–8). All these are placed within a conflict model, which is explicitly indicated just prior to the eschatological climax (10.7b; cf. 6.5–6).

Examples drawn from earlier Christian generations, as well as biblical material further pervades much early Christian paraenesis. Indeed, instead of legendary heroes drawn from mythology, as we tend to find in Greco-Roman paraenetic material, the early Christians' mythic *exemplars* were their heroes and villains from their scriptures and other related material, including the New Testament texts.<sup>36</sup> *1 Clement* is an excellent example as this treatise is replete with biblical material, much of which is used in conjunction with hortative sections. For example, at 17.1 the author explicitly calls on the Corinthian Christians to “be imitators [μιμηταὶ γενώμεθα] of those who went about in the skins of goats and sheep, heralding the coming of Christ; we mean Elijah and Elisha, and moreover Ezekiel, the prophets, and in addition to them the famous men of old.” Abraham and Moses also play a significant role as examples in *1 Clement*, both here in chapter 17 and elsewhere (e.g., 31; 51), and the examples of Enoch and Noah in chapter 9 are introduced with a co-hortative and then followed by an appeal to concord (ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ). As articulated in chapter 46, the various biblical examples are intended to serve as social models as an alternative to, and thus a solution for the problems of, schism in the Corinthian church (46.1, 9). In some cases, the biblical models are employed as negative *exemplars*, such as in the case of Pharaoh and the Egyptian opposition to Moses during the exodus (51.3–5; cf. *Ep. Barn.* 2.9 and with a less specific negative *exemplar* at 4.14).<sup>37</sup> In his *Epistle to the Magnesians*,

<sup>36</sup> Martyrs also served as moral examples within early Christian moral exhortation, as well as the peristasis catalogues of the Pauline material. For an example of martyrdom as moral *exempla*, see H. A. Gärtner, “Passio Sanctorum Scillitanorum.” Cf. Joyce E. Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion*, 166–79, on the memory and social formative power of martyrs both during periods of persecution as well as with the rise of the veneration of the saints. On peristasis catalogues, see J. T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*; Robert Hodgson, “Paul the Apostle and First Century Tribulation List”; Martin Ebner, *Leidenlisten und Apostelbrief*; Niels Willert, “The Catalogues of Hardships in the Pauline Correspondence”; Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 141–43; Scott B. Andrews, “Too Weak Not to Lead”; and Jennifer A. Glancy, “Boasting of Beatings.” Although suffering is a key motif within Valentinian paraenesis, I have not been able to clearly identify any instance of peristasis catalogues in the Valentinian sources. Consequently I will not dwell on this particular literary device found in some paraenetic discourses.

<sup>37</sup> Two possible exceptions to using biblical rather than Greco-Roman mythical or legendary figures as moral *exempla* in *1 Clement* is the rising of the Phoenix (25) and a more general reference to “kings and rulers” among the “heathen” who “followed

Ignatius directly uses the apostles as a pattern for submission to the bishops and presbyters (7.1 οὕτως). It is possible that the reference to “our fathers” in *1 Clem.* 62.2 might refer to an earlier generation of Christian leaders as examples, or, more likely, this reference refers to biblical examples.

More recent, and personal, examples are also found within early Christian material along with metaphors drawn from daily life. In writing to Polycarp, Ignatius explicitly refers to himself as an example: “Give heed to the bishop, that God may also give heed to you. I am devoted to those who are subject to the bishop, presbyters, and deacons” (*Epistle to Polycarp* 6.1).<sup>38</sup> In his *Epistle to the Ephesians* (4.1–2) Ignatius similarly draws upon the moral *exempla* of the presbyters and the bishop, coupled with the metaphor of music for harmonious relations with God.<sup>39</sup> In some cases, the *exempla* in this material are less explicit in nature. Rather, we are given metaphorical images that are usually drawn from non-human things. For example, in the *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, Ignatius uses tombstones and sepulchres as metaphors for those promoting a Jewish understanding of Christianity (6.1), which is preceded by an imperative (“do not listen” μὴ ἀκούετε) and

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the counsel of oracles, and given themselves up to death, that they might rescue their subjects through their own blood” or have gone into self-exile to end sedition in their cities (55.1). Both of these are placed within a lesser-greater type of argument, with, in the former case, human behaviour expected to exceed that of a bird. In the latter case, Clement immediately follows up with examples from both Christian martyrs and Jewish female heroes (Judith and Esther). What is implicit in these examples in chapter 55 is that the Christians in Corinth should show even greater willingness to leave the community if they are the cause of schism.

<sup>38</sup> The *Epistle to Polycarp* is an interesting case, as there seems to be a shift from direct address to Polycarp to a plural community setting. Indeed, we are likely looking at either a collation of letters (a direct one to Polycarp and one to the community), an interpolation, or an addendum when the letter was sent on with Ignatius’ letters. William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 274, though noting this odd shift, which he claims has no ancient precedent, claims that this is merely meant to communicate beyond Polycarp to the Christians at Smyrna (“and now drops the mask”). The continued awkwardness of the singular to plural shifts, he claims, “shows just how impossible it was for Ignatius to think of the Christians in Smyrna without thinking of their bishop and the latter’s activity on behalf of his colleague from Antioch.” Schoedel’s double audience hypothesis, though attractive in some ways, remains problematic. The shifts are abrupt in transition, not lending them to easy public reading. Furthermore, if Schoedel’s latter claim that Ignatius could not write to the Smyrnaeans without thinking of Polycarp is true, then questions arise as to why this is not also true of Ignatius’ earlier *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*. An interpolation, collation, or addendum to the personal letter (especially as this letter was sent on with a collection of Ignatius’ letters) is more plausible.

<sup>39</sup> See Mikael Isacson, *To Each Their Own Letter*, 43–44.

followed by an imperative (“flee” φεύγετε). In the closing chapter of the anonymous *Epistle to Diognetus* we find the employment of agricultural metaphors (trees and gardens) as *exempla* (12.1),<sup>40</sup> a metaphorical usage that effectively leads into a scriptural allusion to the opening of Genesis and a discussion of disobedience (12.2–4).

When we turn to the Valentinian material, moral *exempla* again are present. As with other early Christian material, the prominence of the christological pattern is evident. The paraenetic material in the *Ep. Pet. Phil.*, for example, is preceded by a soteriological discussion of Jesus’ suffering (139,9–28a). Peter’s speech transitions (note especially the οὐν) into a hortative application with a negative co-hortative “let us therefore not...” (139,30–31; μηπρηνεωτη οὐν). Similarly, Jesus Christ is presented as the first of several examples in the paraenetic section of the *Gos. Phil.* At 79,33–80,4 we read: “Blessed is the one who on no occasion caused a soul [...]. That person is Jesus Christ [ΠΑΙΠΕ ΙΩ ΠΙΧΩ]. He came to the whole place and did not burden anyone. Therefore [ΕΤΒΕ], blessed is the one who is like this, because he is a perfect man [ΧΕ ΟΥΤΕΛΕΙΟΣ ΡΡΩΜΕ ΠΕ].” The christological *exemplar* is directly used as a model for the Christian who would attain to the status of “a perfect man”—and this model for perfection is closely linked towards behavioural effects upon the soul of others. The nature of discipleship as ethical relations with others will dominate the remainder of page 80 and undergirds the household metaphors of page 81. A unique feature of Valentinian paraenesis is the presence of a Sophia figure as an *exemplar*, especially when coupled with a Christ *exemplar*. This usage of the christological model with the Sophia myth will emerge most prominently in the *Interp. Know.*, and will be discussed at some

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<sup>40</sup> Chapters 11 and 12 of the *Epistle to Diognetus* have been seen as a separate text, perhaps an Easter or Epiphany homily, added onto the actual text. On this point, see the discussion in Kirsopp Lake’s introduction to this text in the LCL (349); see also Leslie Barnard, “The *Epistle to Diognetus*: Two Units from One Author?” If these chapters do constitute a separate text, then we have one more instance of an early Christian paraenesis, especially as the actual letter contains some paraenetic material. However, the inconsistency between the letter and chapters 11 and 12 are not as pronounced as some scholars believe. If we take the letter as a protreptic text, written with a conversionist objective, then the closing hortative chapters would have been a reasonable way to close the letter with a strong encouragement for the recipient(s) to accept the Christian faith as espoused by the author. Indeed, the doctrinal and metaphorical material in these chapters would have placed stress on the very faith that the recipient is exhorted to adopt (the imperatives at 12.7 and again at 12.8, e.g., clearly indicates that the chapters weave doctrinal summation with exhortation).

length below. Another noteworthy instance of Christ-Sophia as model is presented in *Val. Exp.* 36,20–38. Like the *Ep. Pet. Phil.* the hortative statement is only indicated by a fragmentary sentence, with the moral example again preceding the paraenetic statement. Here in *Val. Exp.* the Sophia myth, in which she attempts to produce outside of her proper syzygy, presents a negative model of violating the will of the Father, leading not to the bearing of fruit but rather to isolation and suffering. This negative cosmological model stands in contrast with the preceding discussion of Jesus. Jesus offers the corrective and stands within the will of the Father. In a similar soteriological function, Christ is presented as an example later in the tractate (*On Bap. B* 42,31–37). Though I am not convinced that this short section is paraenetic, it may have reinforced the earlier paraenetic material by restating the Christ example.

Negative *exempla* are occasionally used, such as in *Auth. Teach.* where we read: “Indeed they are of the devil! For even the pagans give charity, and they know that God who is in the heavens exists, the Father of the universe, exalted over their idols, which they worship. But they have not heard the word, that they should inquire about his ways... On account of his senselessness, then, he is worse than a pagan” (33,25b–34,12; cf. 33,9–10 “They are more wicked than the pagans”). Here is an argument of lesser to greater, placing in contrast the immoral status of the ignorant (33,4–10) with that of pagan religious devotion. While the latter are in error (the author seems to assume such a shared valuation of Greco-Roman cultic practices), they at least strive for an understanding of the Father of the universe. The former, however, are not even striving for an understanding of God, and therefore are completely lost within their bestiality, wickedness, and even kill “by their cruelty” those who do seek after truth (33,21–25). The pagans serve as a negative example that is even surpassed by those who oppose the readers. Earlier in this same text, the author follows a list of vices with a possible reference to a prostitute in a brothel as a negative *exemplar* for stressing the entrapment of the way of death (24,6–14; the transition from the vice list to the *exemplar* is fragmentary).

In the *1 Apoc. Jas.* are two instances of a model or analogy, both negative. The first follows James’ concern over the suffering inflicted on Jesus. Jesus responds with a consolatory imperative “James, do not be concerned for me or for this people” (31,15–17), and refers to those who oppose Jesus (and James, and thus Christians) by the negative analogy of the archon (“this people existed as a type of the archons [ΟΥΤΥΠΟΣ ΠΤΕ ΗΙ ΑΡΧΩΝ], and it deserves to be destroyed” 31,23–25;

cf. 33,2–34,1 on toll collectors). This first instance is not necessarily a moral example *per se*. Rather, the analogy is more of a polemical device utilized within a consolatory dialogue between Jesus and James. This analogy, however, does set up the hortative material that follows on the theme of suffering: “James, thus you will undergo these sufferings. But do not be sad. For the flesh is weak. It will receive what has been ordained for it. But as for you, do not be timid or afraid” (32,17–22). The second instance of a negative model is far more metaphorical in nature: “For cast away from you the cup, which is bitterness” (40,14–15). This cup of bitterness, an image utilized within a paraenetic section of imperatives, might be an analogy for “all lawlessness” (ἄδνομία ἡμῶν) at line 20. The repetition of the imperative *ΠΟΥΞΕ ΕΒΟΛ ἸΜΟΚ* suggest such a parallel, though the fragmentary condition of the top of page 40 renders such a parallel suggestive at best. Following each instance of this imperative is a clause or sentence offering a reason or explanation of the danger that the imperative addresses. The first instance of “cast away” is tied to suffering, much like the analogy of the archons on page 32. The second “cast away,” however, elucidates the danger of those who are lawless or cause suffering by placing the issue of suffering within the context of immoral attitudes: “And beware lest they envy you” (40,21–22). Envy (κωῶ) is the negative side of emulation within moral philosophy, perhaps most forcefully put forth by Aristotle.<sup>41</sup> Lawlessness and envy, therefore, are tied into the negative valuation of the paraenesis in this text, a valuation that effectively addresses the cause of suffering. A cosmological *exemplar* defines the human realm of suffering for James (and thus for the Christians addressed by this tractate). Although lawless is not specified with actual persons, the exemplary nature of the passage’s images is drawn from the patterns to avoid or imitate.

Other metaphorical examples are found within Valentinian paraenesis, many of which are negative in nature. Metaphors, especially those drawn from nature, constituted one type of moral *exempla* (e.g., Dio

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<sup>41</sup> Aristotle, *Rh.* 2.10.11: “Let us assume that emulation is a feeling of pain at the evident presence of highly valued goods, which are possible for us to obtain, in the possession of those who naturally resemble us—pain not due to the fact that another possesses them, but to the fact that we ourselves do not. Emulation therefore is virtuous and characteristic of virtuous men, whereas envy is base and characteristic of base men; for the one, owing to emulation, fits himself to obtain such goods, while the object of the other, owing to envy, is to prevent his neighbour possessing them.” Cf. preceding discussion on the nature of envy in *Rh.* 2.9.

Chrysostom, *Or.* 48.14–16). In the paraenetic section of the *Gos. Truth* the readers are admonished with such examples drawn from nature: “Do not return to what you have vomited to eat it. Do not be moth-eaten. Do not be worm-eaten, for you have already cast it off” (33,15–19a). Dogs, moths, and worms all serve as negative *exempla* for the readers. In like manner, the *Auth. Teach.* also uses imagery drawn from life to set up a contrast of positive and negative ethical conditions. Specifically, the author uses the agricultural image of chaff and wheat to exhort the readers to not be “contaminated” by the immorality of outsiders (25,5–27). Agricultural metaphors are also used within and preceding the ethical imperative of the *Gos. Phil.* 83,18–21 (cf. the parable of the householder at 80,23–81,14, and, just prior to the paraenetic section of 79,33–84,13 the farming image of 79,18b–33a). Indeed, the call to “dig down after the root of evil which is within one, and let one pluck it out of one’s heart from the root” is preceded by an extended discussion of trees, roots and hidden wickedness (83,3–18a). The author has also included an example from human anatomy: “Most things in the world, as long as their inner parts are hidden, stand upright and live. If they are revealed they die, as is illustrated by the visible man: as long as the intestines of the man are hidden, the man is alive; when his intestines are exposed and come out of him, the man will die. So also with the tree...” (82,30–83,3). Both the human body and tree roots are illustrative of the need to expose and thereby destroy the evil within a person. These moral *exempla* or illustrations are preceded by a common Christian type of *exempla*, namely a biblical reference to Abraham and circumcision of the flesh (82,26b–29). All three types of *exempla* build up to the exhortation on page 83. The parabolic material of both the *Gos. Phil.* and the *Auth. Teach.* are used paraenetically, as is also the opening parabolic material in the *Interp. Know.* The dragnet metaphor is effectively used in the *Auth. Teach.* to illustrate the dangers of the vices of this worldly existence. The *Interp. Know.* has a similar reference to “nets of flesh” (6,29), which might indicate some literary connection between the two parables, and perhaps even the two texts. *Interp. Know.* presents a version of Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan, albeit in a very fragmentary state (6,15–25), just prior to this fishing image.

Moral exhortation within the Greco-Roman world tended to utilize moral *exempla* in order to present vividly (and perhaps persuasively) models of ethical behaviour or moral direction. These models most often would be antithetical in presentation, constructing both positive and negative *exempla*. Indeed, the vices espoused in the negative examples

would have tacitly reflected those values advocated by the author for imitation. The values of the positive examples, similarly, would have implied those vices to be avoided. Thus, in every model presented is the implication of the antithesis and its valuation. Early Christians in like manner used moral *exempla* in their moral exhortation. Similar to others in the Greco-Roman world, Christians would draw upon various types of model for emulation or scorn. Personal examples, models drawn from nature, legends and myth were all used as well as divine or celestial models. Unlike the broader Greco-Roman world, however, Christians tended to use Christ (along with God and angelic beings) as a central model for imitation. Legendary or authoritative figures from biblical tales (e.g., Noah, Abraham, and Moses) were common and tended to replace the mythical figures of Homeric verse such as Odysseus and Herakles used by others. The Valentinians, like their fellow Christians, also drew upon similar types of moral *exempla*. Christ was an important figure, though with the Valentinians Sophia was also important and occasionally coupled with a Christ figure. In some cases this Christ-Sophia joint example would antithetically illustrate the cosmological and ethical issues addressed and/or exhorted. Valentinian paraenesis also tended to use metaphors and analogies to illustrate points raised, rather than simply as models for emulation. The presence of moral *exempla* within the Valentinian material indicates that Valentinian paraenesis followed the typical model of paraenesis of other Christians within the Greco-Roman world.

#### VIRTUE/VICE LISTS

Given the moral nature of paraenesis, it is not surprising that one compositional presentation of moral exhortation is the listing of virtues and vices. These lists tend to present stock material within antithetical sets, contrasting typical virtues with typical vices that would have been widely recognized within the Greco-Roman world. For early Christians, as Berger suggests, such ethical lists may have functioned as a form of post-conversion paraenesis (what I have referred to as a paraenetic function, rather than a protreptic function).<sup>42</sup> Two central, and interdependent, problems have arisen in scholarly studies of virtue/

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<sup>42</sup> Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen," 1092, with particular reference to 1 Cor 5:9-13; Rom 13:12-14; and Col 3:5-7.

vice lists. The first point of debate, as Neil J. McEleney correctly notes, is the issue of from whence these lists emerge.<sup>43</sup> Anton Vögtle proposed a milieu of popular preaching within Hellenistic philosophy, while Siegfried Wibbing proposed a Jewish origin of the doctrine of two spirits. Ehrhard Kamlah, building on Wibbing's work, argued for an Iranian dualistic explanation.<sup>44</sup> More recently, J. Daryl Charles has studied the lists in 2 Peter within a discussion of Stoicism.<sup>45</sup>

A second, and related, problem is that of compositional form. Vögtle has offered the most comprehensive analysis of this, arguing that virtue/vice lists tend to be organized either *asyndetically* or *polysyndetically*. Other compositional factors are also considered by Vögtle, such as associative connections between vice lists, and the movement within a list from either less serious to more serious or more serious to less serious. The grouping of vices, such as in Gal 5:19, into thematic sets (types of sins) is another possible form of arrangement. The Decalogue also may have affected arrangement (e.g., 1 Tim 1:9).<sup>46</sup> Another possible compositional device, identified by J. Rendel Harris, is the presence of *inclusio*.<sup>47</sup> Wibbing, though agreeing in large part with Vögtle, has offered a refinement of these compositional proposals. Wibbing claims that the polysyndetic list dominates the New Testament material. To be sure, as Charles has indicated, both polysyndetic (e.g., 1 Cor 6:9–10) and *asyndetic* forms (e.g., Gal 5:22–23) are found in the New Testament; thus, neither is particularly indicative of a Christian form of ethical list.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Wibbing (with McEleney and Martin building on his work) argues that, although Vögtle's compositional characteristics are correct, they are not able to determine a general typology for a reconstructed *Urkatalog* upon which the early Christian writers would

<sup>43</sup> Neil J. McEleney, "The Vice Lists of the Pastoral Epistles," 203, 216–19.

<sup>44</sup> Vögtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge*; Wibbing, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge*; Ehrhard Kamlah, *Die Form der katalogischen Paränese*; discussed in McEleney, "Vice Lists," *passim*. Cf. J. Rendel Harris, "The Influence of Philo."

<sup>45</sup> J. Daryl Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*. See also John M. Rist, "Categories and Their Uses"; and Margaret E. Reesor, "The Stoic Categories." Both Rist and Reesor analyze the Stoic categories with ontological concerns in the forefront, yet it is primarily Reesor who connects this discussion with the cardinal virtues. Rist's discussion of disposition and relative disposition more thoroughly places such virtues within the context of a discussion of qualities, substances, and existents.

<sup>46</sup> Vögtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge*, 22, 15–16. Much of this summary is indebted to Martin, *Metaphor*, 121–22, whose agreement with Wibbing and McEleney on these issues is noteworthy.

<sup>47</sup> Harris, "The Influence of Philo," 565–66.

<sup>48</sup> Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 122.

have drawn upon. Indeed, McEleney offers the analogy of the lists of caricatures that could be expressed between a militant rightist and a hippie to illustrate that the lists need not always carry a formal, set structure.<sup>49</sup> Although, as Martin claims, each list must be analyzed individually for its particular arrangement, the individuality of such lists does not preclude some form of compositional structure.<sup>50</sup> Even if an *Urkatalog* is not proposed, the contents and organization of a list can give insights into the author's biases ("author's ethical prejudice" in McEleney's terms).<sup>51</sup>

In his 1931 presidential address to the Society of Biblical Literature, Burton Scott Easton had already argued that the ethical lists in the New Testament (and, I would add, extra-canonical material)<sup>52</sup> emerge from a Greek or Hellenistic Jewish background.<sup>53</sup> Easton correctly directs scholarly attention towards a Greco-Roman milieu for identifying the origin and functional form of early Christian ethical lists. Indeed,

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<sup>49</sup> Wibbing, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge*, 81–86; McEleney, "Vice Lists," 217–18; Martin, *Metaphor*, 123. McEleney, "Vice Lists of the Pastoral Epistles," 216–17, illustrates the general, random nature of such lists: "It is as if today a militant rightist describing a hippie were to say to him that he was unwashed, unkempt, unlovable, slovenly, irreverent, disrespectful, immoral, etc., applying to the hippie all the 'vices' he himself abhorred. In turn, the hippie (to give him equal time) could say of the hardhat that he was a red-necked, Red-baiter, prejudiced jingoist, etc., again with the intention of applying his favorite vices to the opposition."

<sup>50</sup> See Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 156. F. D. Gealy, working with Dibelius' "stringing together" of traditional material approach, refers to the vice list in 2 Timothy as "a floating list of vice currently available and easily adaptable to the writer's purposes, a whiplash of stringing words of the sort that any orator of the time well understood where to get and how to use," even though a shift away from general tradition to direct attack on the "heretics" occurs at 3:5 ("The First and Second Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus," 498–99; cf. Martin Dibelius, *Die Pastoralbriefe*).

<sup>51</sup> McEleney, "Vice Lists of the Pastoral Epistles," 217.

<sup>52</sup> Vögtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge*, 54, speculates that the lists within the "sub-apostolic" period were used with a catechetical function emerging from the paraenetic tradition of the first generation of Christians. His assumption, based on Rev 2:19, 2 Pet 1:5, *Ep. Barn.* 2.2, and *1 Clem* 62.2, is evidence of both a canonical bias that gives priority to the major New Testament works (Revelation and 2 Peter tend to be relegated to the post-apostolic period, especially the latter) as well as the theory of a developing catholic church in the early second century (countered effectively and correctly by Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, passim). The failure of New Testament scholars to seriously consider the non-canonical material on par with the canonical for reconstructing early Christian paraenesis is evident in the scholarly analysis of the ethical lists. The prominence of non-canonical ethical lists is nicely illustrated by John T. Fitzgerald's extensive listing in his "Virtue/Vice Lists," 857–59. Fitzgerald similarly bemoans the neglect of this material when he says, "In general, these lists have received surprisingly little scholarly attention" (858).

<sup>53</sup> Burton Scott Easton, "Ethical Lists."

Vögtle's suggestion that the Decalogue may play a role in the composition of such lists is surely in need of qualification. Although the Hebrew Bible offers a model of commands and behaviours to be followed for such lists, actual ethical lists are not present.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, most instances of these biblical lists simply repeat or reflect the Decalogue's commands. Jer 7:9 and Hos 4:2, for example, reflect a behavioural ethic, rather than the virtue ethic of the Hellenistic period. There are only three possible exceptions to this tendency in the Hebrew Bible, all of which are not truly ethical lists or fully developed lists: the righteousness of Job (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3); divine attributes (e.g., Exod 34:6–7; Num 14:18); and Prov 8:13, which is the closest to a virtue ethic in the Hebrew Bible (and may have been influenced by the broader sapiential traditions of the Mediterranean or Near Eastern world). Obedience, rather than rational awareness, is central for ethical behaviour in the Hebrew context. Thus, although the Decalogue likely influenced Jewish and Christian ethical thinking, the biblical tradition does not offer a viable source from which such ethical lists would have been derived. Rather, Jewish virtue and vice lists only emerge, such as within the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* and *Wisdom of Solomon* 14:25–26, when there is a clear Hellenistic influence. Still, Hellenistic Jewish lists were distinct from the broader Greek virtue/vice lists, in that the former tended to avoid, or at best only adapt to varying degrees, both the specificity of the ethical terminology used as well as the conceptual nuance of the Greek models. On the latter aspect, there was a distinction between a Greek focus on rationality (λόγος) with self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) and a Jewish (and later Christian) concern over dependence on God through faith or obedience.<sup>55</sup> Idolatry rather than ignorance served Jewish moral discourse as a source for vice. Where Christian authors draw upon idolatry, obedience, faith, and love as the causes and/or constituent characteristics of virtue or vice, they are drawing more from a Hellenistic Jewish conceptual model than from a general Greek model. As Easton notes, the New Testament writers tend to draw from both models, modified to reflect their Christian doctrinal (especially

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<sup>54</sup> Easton, "Ethical Lists," 9, states, "... the concept of 'virtues' as such is hardly native to the Old Testament: the Pentateuchal legislation does not often take the positive form, while Hebrew writers generally prefer to depict the goodness of a man by concrete instances rather than by cataloguing his benevolent qualities."

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Dihle, *Theory of Will*, passim.

christological) presuppositions (πίστις and ἀγάπη in particular distinguish Christian from Greek, especially Stoic, ethical lists).

The study by Charles offers a further, and much needed, refinement to Easton's earlier study by identifying more precisely, and in far greater detail, Stoicism as the philosophical context out of which ethical lists evolved, specifically from the four cardinal virtues listed by Plato and Aristotle: justice, temperance, prudence, and courage. For the Stoics especially, specifically under the influence of Zeno and Chrysippus, virtue and knowledge became practically synonymous. Knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) as virtue reflected an antithesis mirroring virtue (knowing what to do) with vice (knowing what to avoid): "justice is knowledge of what is due, what is right and fitting; temperance is knowledge of what to choose or not to choose; prudence is knowledge of what to do or not to do in a given situation; courage is knowledge of what should be feared or should not be feared."<sup>56</sup> Such antitheses in knowledge, within the development of subsets of the various ἀρεταί (e.g., by Chrysippus and Andronikos), resulted in a perspective of vice as the opposite of a given virtue: "To the Stoic mind, where there exists an antithesis of one virtue, the same must apply to others. For example, the health of one's soul suggests the possibility of psychological sickness. Similarly, the experience of wisdom points to folly; contentment, anxiety; brotherly kindness, enmity; and so on."<sup>57</sup> From such antitheses of virtues and vices, emerged with Zeno the four cardinal vices of sorrow, fear, greed, and lust. A loose and fluid popularizing development of such lists became common—vices and virtues will be added and dropped from lists almost *ad hoc*, with the elements simply being stock ethical characterizations.

Therefore, while identifying and analyzing early Christian, including Valentinian, ethical lists, it is necessary to study them within a Greco-Roman context of moral philosophy, but not within a rigid Stoic or Platonic worldview. Indeed, by observing the leaning of particular ethical lists on issues such as rationality and obedience, such as with Philo, we might be able to gain some insight into the degree of cultural accommodation envisioned by or inscribed within a particular Jewish or Christian text. The lists of these early Christians are not formulaic

<sup>56</sup> Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 115, with reference to Dyroff, *Ethik der alten Stoa*, 82–84.

<sup>57</sup> Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 116.

in the sense of either an *Urkatalog* or literary dependence, but they do reflect the theological and moral presuppositions of the early Christian context within which they emerged and were designed to rhetorical function within.

Within the New Testament material, numerous ethical lists can be found. Although some scholars have debated whether certain lists should be classified as virtue and vice lists (e.g., Matt. 5:3–12; Luke 18:11), a comprehensive listing of ethical lists is offered by G. Mussies.<sup>58</sup> A helpful example of the mutual presence of a virtue and a vice lists is found in Colossians 3. Following a two-fold exhortation (ζητεῖτε and φροεῖτε) building on a conditional clause (εἰ οὖν...) and grounded within a christological rationale (3:1–4), the author offers a lists of vices (asyndetic in form) introduced by the imperatival statement, νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (3:5a): “fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry)... But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth” (3:5b, 8). The virtues are also largely asyndetic in form: “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” (3:12). The virtues are continued in a more complicated structure, where a “list” quality is somewhat dropped (3:13–17: forgiveness, love that binds, peace of Christ, thankfulness). The contrast with the virtue list given (3:12–17) is effectively brought out by the author’s emphasis on social cohesion or unity being a product of virtue, and the opposite (along with an eschatological warning) being linked with vice (e.g., 3:11, 14b which is linked to the “name of Lord Jesus” 3:17a). The internal nature of virtue is also present in this listing—“Let the word of the Lord dwell in you richly” (3:16).

In Polycarp’s *Letter to the Philippians* we find another ethical list (2:2),<sup>59</sup> one that is interwoven with authoritative quotes from the New

<sup>58</sup> G. Mussies, *Dio Chrysostom*; cited by Fitzgerald, “Virtue/Vice Lists,” 858. With reference to Mussies, Fitzgerald lists the following virtue and then vice lists in the New Testament: *Virtue Lists*: 1 Cor 13:4–7; 2 Cor 6:6–7a; Gal 5:22–23; Eph 4:2–3, 32; 5:2, 9; Phil 4:8; Col. 3:12; 1 Tim 3:2–4, 8–12; 4:12; 6:11, 18; 2 Tim 2:22–25; 3:10; Titus 1:8; 2:2–10; Heb 7:26; 1 Pet 3:8; 2 Pet 1:5–7; *Vice Lists*: Matt 15:19; Mark 7:21–22; Luke 18:11; Rom 1:29–31; 13:13; 1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Cor 12:20–21; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 4:31; 5:3–5; Col 3:5–8; 1 Tim 1:9–10; 6:4–5; 2 Tim 3:2–4; Titus 1:7; 3:3; 1 Pet 2:1; 4:3, 15; Rev 9:21; 21:8; 22:15.

<sup>59</sup> Fitzgerald, “Virtue/Vice Lists,” 858, offers a comprehensive listing of non-canonical ethical lists, include several from the Nag Hammadi codices (e.g., *Orig. World* 106,27–107,17).

Testament material (Rom 8:11; 1 Pet 3:9; followed in verse 3 with quotes from Matt 5, 7 and Luke 6). The passage reads:

Now he who raised him from the dead will also raise us up if we do his will, and walk in his commandments and love the things which he loved, refraining from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness, rendering not evil for evil, or railing for railing, or blow for blow, or curse for curse, but remembering what the Lord taught when he said, “Judge not that ye be not judged...” (2:2–3a)

Here we have a polysyndetical structure, using the particle ἥ to link the various vices that are to be avoided. This vice list is linked to obedience, not only of the Decalogue but furthermore of the teachings of Jesus as passed on by the apostles (ἐν ταῖς ἐντολαῖς αὐτοῦ). The vices to be avoided, however, are not simply behavioural in nature, but perhaps also dispositional; i.e., the Philippian Christians are to neither respond with anger in response to wrongs, nor desire non-virtuous things or desire in a non-virtuous way. Indeed, the virtuous character here is implicit in the references to divine will (αὐτοῦ θέλημα) and love (ἀλαπῶμεν ἃ ἠγάπησεν). A paraenetic function is indicated by the opening reference to remembrance in verse 3 (μνημονεύοντες δὲ ὧν εἶπεν ὁ κύριος διδάσκων). The entire ethical exhortation here is preceded, and thereby grounded, in a christological basis.

Within the Valentinian material, ethical lists are also used with a paraenetic function. Just prior to a paraenetic subsection in the *Gos. Phil.*, we find a four-fold list of Christian virtues: ΟΥΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΜΗΝΟΥΖΕΛΠΙΣ ΜΗΝΟΥΑΓΑΠΗ ΜΗ ΟΥΓΝΩΣΙΣ (79,24–25). This list of “cardinal” virtues (faith, hope, love, knowledge) might allude to Paul’s “πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη” in 1 Cor 13:13. The addition of γνῶσις to this Pauline list by the *Gos. Phil.* might reflect both the Valentinian emphasis on revelatory knowledge for salvation as well as the Greco-Roman emphasis on rationality as a key to virtue (the expansion to four virtues may also have been intended to more forcefully connect the Valentinian virtues with the classic cardinal virtues of moral philosophy). A possible virtue list might also be present in *Val. Exp.* 23,32–35: “...let us for our part enter his revelation [ἀπεκφογωνῆς] and his goodness [ΤΕΦΙΠΙΤΧΡΗΤΟΣ] and his descent [ΤΕΦΙΠΕΙ ΔΠΙΤΠ] and the All [ΠΤΗΡΑ], that is, the Son, the Father of the All, and the Mind of the Spirit.” Although 23,19–31 may indeed, as Elaine Pagels has read this passage, present the unravelling of the primary Tetrad from the solitary Monad (perhaps, as Einar Thomassen has suggested, with Valentinian arithmology reflecting Pythagorean

theories of derivation of number from the Monad)<sup>60</sup> (thus serving a cosmogonic descriptive function), 23,32–35 exhorts the readers to enter into that cosmic reality by entering into the virtues of that cosmology: revelation, goodness, descent, and the All.<sup>61</sup> It is not, however, clear whether this list should be considered a true ethical list.

The virtue lists in *Gos. Phil.* and *Val. Exp.* could parallel the four classic virtues in antiquity. The following table draws this parallel:

<i>Classic Virtues</i>	<i>Ethical Concept</i>	<i>Valentinian Virtues</i>	
		<i>Gos. Phil. 79,24–25</i>	<i>Val. Exp. 23,32–35</i>
Justice	“Know what to do”	Faith	Revelation
Temperance	“Know what to choose/not choose”	Hope	Goodness
Prudence	“Know what to do in a given situation”	Love	Descent
Courage	“Know what to fear/not fear”	Gnosis	All

For Valentinian Christians, or at least the authors of *Gos. Phil.* and *Val. Exp.*, there is a progressive movement to the higher virtues. In *Gos. Phil.* this progression is set forth by an agricultural analogy. This analogy indicates that the Christian’s moral journey is one of spiritual growth or maturation. If the list in *Val. Exp.* is taken as an ethical list, then we have progression from revelation to unity with the All. Although the classic virtues and the two Valentinian lists do not necessarily parallel each other exactly (e.g., justice or “knowing what to do” may

<sup>60</sup> Thomassen, “The Valentinianism of the *Valentinian Exposition*”; Elaine E. Pagels, “Introduction: NHC XI,2,” 89–105 (translation and transcription by John D. Turner, pp. 106–51; notes by Pagels and Turner, pp. 153–72).

<sup>61</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that this exhortation seems to direct attention from a cosmic description of the emanation of the Pleroma from the Monad and Sophia’s crisis (in this text reflecting a wilful act on Sophia’s part), and directs the theme of cosmic harmony (i.e., all done in a syzygy, with only the primal being as a solitary Monad) to the readers. Pagels refers to this passage as an “invitation to ‘enter his revelation...’” (“Introduction: NHC XI,2,” 92), but does not pursue the hortative aspects of this “invitation” further. If the text is, as Pagels claims, designed for initiates or newly initiated members of the Valentinian community, then we might have an instance of cosmological discourse (perhaps establishing  $\phi\acute{o}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ) and moral discourse (the co-hortative) coming together to exhort (potential) initiates to embrace harmony with the nature order of the pleromatic realm by entering into the virtues of paired unity.

not be equivalent to faith and revelation; indeed, the Valentinian list could be matched up in reverse order to the classic virtues), it is possible that the Valentinian virtue lists may have evoked for readers the implications of the classic virtues. Thus, if the order above is correct, then we could have readers of *Gos. Phil.* valuing hope (“...the water through which we are nourished”) as temperance, thus carrying the implication of “knowing what to do or not do.” This parallel suggests that Valentinian virtues are tied to not only soteriological progression, but more specifically they are tied to ethical behaviours emerging from ethical dispositions.

The most prominent instance of an ethical list within the Valentinian sources is the *Auth. Teach.* pages 23–25. The context is actually an interwoven series of ethical lists, *exempla*, and mythic discourse. As part of the opening of the tractate, this ethical section effectively places in the foreground the asceticism advocated by the author for the readers. The first ethical list follows the damaged top of page 23. Despite the damage, the ethical list is still intact:

... truly, those who have [come] from his seed, call the sons of the woman ‘our brothers.’ In this very way, when the spiritual soul was cast into the body, it became a brother to lust and hatred and envy, and a material soul. So therefore the body came from lust, and lust came from material substance. For this reason the soul became a brother to them. (23,8–22)

The next list comes almost immediately following the first, reflecting on what the “outsiders without power” inherit from their mother: “for the possessions of the outsiders are proud passions, the pleasures of life, hateful envies, vainglorious things, nonsensical things, accusations...” (23,29–33).

Both these lists—which are then placed within discussions of not remembering, debauchery, and the metaphor of prostitution—reinforce the author’s point that the condition of the fallen or entrapped soul is linked to a life of vice. The first list of four vices (lust/desire, hatred, envy, material soul) is designed polysyndectically (ΠΤΕΠΘΥΜΙΑ ΠΙ ΠΜΟCΤΕ ΠΙ ΠΚΩ2 ΔΥΩ ΠΥΧΗ Π2ΥΛΙΚΗ) (23,15–17). The second list of vices, which includes the first three in the first list (the hylic condition of the soul is assumed given the “outsider” status discussed and the preceding link between “lust/desire” and the “material”), is formed asyndectically. The four “cardinal” vices of this tractate, especially with the expansion of the list on lines 29–33, might have recalled for an audience the four

“cardinal” vices of the Stoics, particularly Zeno’s sorrow, fear, greed, lust.<sup>62</sup> This parallel of vices is set forth as follows:

<i>Zeno’s Vices</i>	<i>Valentinian Vices</i> Auth.Teach. 23,8–22
Sorrow	Material Soul
Fear	Hatred
Greed	Envy
Lust	Lust/Desire

The one noteworthy alteration to the list, that likely would have caught an audience’s attention, is “ἠϋγχι ἠϋγλικη”—recall McEleney’s “author’s ethical prejudice” that may highlight the particular biases of an author.<sup>63</sup> In order to indicate the parallels in these two vice lists, I have reversed *Auth. Teach.*’s ἠϋγχι ἠϋγλικη and ἠτρεπιθουμια, in order to line up Zeno’s lust with *Auth. Teach.*’s lust/desire. By lining up these vice lists in such a fashion, one can see that for this author the moral state of sorrow is to become a material soul. Indeed, the soteriological crisis for this author is the problem of the spiritual soul being trapped within the body. All negative ethical dispositions (i.e., vices) are derived from this crisis state.

The *Auth. Teach.*’s ethical concerns, with an ascetic advocacy as the way of life, are specifically focussed on the dualistic crisis of the soul. The soul is caught in materiality, having fallen into ignorance of the Pleroma.<sup>64</sup> Material entrapment of the soul is a cosmological or even anthropological condition that is commonly linked with Gnostic dualism. A non-ethical reading of this Valentinian text, however, would be erroneous. For this author, the very crisis condition is linked to an ethical condition emerging out of ignorance. In this sense, therefore, the *Authoritative Teaching* is well at home within a Greco-Roman moral philosophical milieu.<sup>65</sup> The emphasis on ignorance and knowing (e.g.,

<sup>62</sup> See the examples given in Vögtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge*, 32–36, and the discussion in Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 115–17.

<sup>63</sup> McEleney, “Vice Lists,” 217.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Jacques-É. Ménard, *L’Authentikos Logos*, 1–2.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. R. van den Broek, “The Authentikos Logos”; and most recently on Greco-Roman asceticism, Valantasis, “Demons, Adversaries,” passim. Ménard (*L’Authentikos*

22,23–33 where Sophia’s crisis is addressed with metaphors of food and medicine in order to renounce matter) raises questions as to how Christian this work truly is. Indeed, George W. MacRae has indicated that there is nothing distinctively Christian about this tractate beyond such expressions as “evangelists” and “hearing the preaching”.<sup>66</sup> The tractate, consequently, is a likely indication of a Valentinian perspective of high accommodation with the broader Greco-Roman world and a rejection of the credal religion of fellow Christians. A third list emerges on pages 30 to 31 that more clearly links vice with a similar disdain for worldly goods and a life of ease as is common within Cynicism:

Now these are the foods with which the devil lies in wait for us. First he injects a pain in your heart until you have heartache on account of a small thing of this life, and he seizes you with his poisons. And afterwards he injects the desire of a tunic [ΤΕΠΙΘΥΝΙΑ Π ΟΥΨΤΗΝ] so that you will pride yourself in it, and love of money, pride, vanity, envy that rivals another envy, beauty of body, fraudulence. The greatest of all these are ignorance and ease [ΤΗΠΙΤΑΤΟΟΥΝ ΑΥΩ ΤΗΠΙΤΑΤΪΙΣΕ]. (30,26–31,7)

The list of vices is asyndetically structured, and is the climax of the entire warning of the devil’s tricks to keep the readers in material bondage. Like the Cynics, this Valentinian author admonishes against worldly goods such as foods that cause heartaches (i.e., delicacies). The vice list seems to be an explication upon the “desire of a tunic” trick (fine clothing that denotes social status and generally worn within social engagements), and continues to criticize worldly pleasures (money, physical beauty, economic gain through fraud, and rivalries). Ignorance and ease are the climax of all these vices—a life of ease (or the “soft” life) rather than struggle will keep the readers in their bondage to worldly pleasures and concerns. Not only does this critique fit a Cynic perspective on civilization, it also accords well with the asceticism advocated by this author. Regardless of where the text leans in relation to Cynicism, it is a clear instance of a Valentinian utilization of virtue/vice catalogues for moral exhortation; a utilization that would surely have had resonance with both Christians (especially Valentinian

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*Logos*, 3) comments: “Bien des metaphores employées par l’écrits appartiennent au monde syncrétiste de l’époque hellénistique.”

<sup>66</sup> This observation is succinctly stated in George W. MacRae’s “Introduction” to the *Auth. Teach.*, 304–5; cf. the additional comment in the introduction by Douglas M. Parrott (305).

Christians for whom descent/ascent of the soul is so important) and non-Christians familiar with popular moral philosophy.

#### TWO WAY SCHEMA

Another common framing mechanism for paraenetic discourse is the two-way schema, perhaps most widely known due to its presence in *Didache*. Indeed, most attention has been given to the literary relations between *Didache*, *Epistle of Barnabas*, and *Doctrina Apostolorum* (among other possible texts standing in relation to these texts, such as the *Canons of the Holy Apostles* [also referred to as the *Apostolic Church Order*], *Life of Schnudi*, and *Apostolic Constitutions*) in order to determine both the literary nature of a now lost “Two Ways” document as well as the origins of the two way tradition. In the late nineteenth century, Charles Taylor argued that *Doctrina Apostolorum* and *Didache* came from a common Jewish source, a position accepted by Adolf von Harnack who had previously agreed with Adam Krawutzcky that *Barnabas* was the originating source for the two-way tradition.<sup>67</sup> Although the idea of a Jewish background for a two-ways source dominated, by the early twentieth century J. A. Robinson and James Muilenberg moved scholarly opinion in favour of *Barnabas* preceding *Didache* as the origin for the two-ways source.<sup>68</sup> Within twenty years, however, the hypothesis of a common Jewish source for the two-ways rose to prominence under Jean-Paul Audet’s landmark study of the two-ways tradition in the *Manual of Discipline* (IQS).<sup>69</sup> The presence of a two-way schema in IQS evidenced an early, Jewish, instance of a two-ways tradition. This pattern would have been the basis for the Christian two-ways tradition or source that eventually emerges in redactional form in the early Christian material of the late first, early second century. In his analysis of the Jewish context for the two-ways tradition, M. Jack Suggs<sup>70</sup> has argued (contra Klaus Baltzer’s comparison of covenantal

<sup>67</sup> Charles Taylor, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*; Adolf von Harnack, *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel; Die Apostellehre*; Adam Krawutzcky, “Über die sog. Zwölfapostellehre;”, cf. Francis Xavier Funk, “Die Doctrina apostolorum,” who argued for an opposite direction of influence between *Barnabas* and *Didache*.

<sup>68</sup> J. A. Robinson, *Barnabas, Hermas and the Didache*; “The Problem of Didache”; “The Epistle of Barnabas and the Didache”; James Muilenberg, *Literary Relations*.

<sup>69</sup> Jean-Paul Audet, *La Didachè*.

<sup>70</sup> M. Jack Suggs, “Two Ways Tradition.”

theology and the two-way schema)<sup>71</sup> that the biblical material is not the source for the two ways, despite the presence of two-way metaphors in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Deut 30:15–20; Jer 21:8; Ps 1:1,6; and Prov 2:12–15). Although Suggs believes that “the content of the Two Ways is thoroughly Jewish,” something “more than the metaphor [of ‘two paths’] itself is needed to establish connections.”<sup>72</sup> He suggests a basic literary form:

- 1) Sharply dualistic introduction;
- 2) Lists of “virtues” and “vices”; and
- 3) Concluding eschatological admonition.<sup>73</sup>

Rather than seeing this formula emerging within Judaism from a biblical tradition, Suggs follows Kamlah’s lead in identifying an Iranian influence upon Jewish thinking, locating the two-way schema within a mythological conflict between Ormazd (Prince of Light) and Ahri-man (Prince of Darkness). This Two Angels tradition is also evident in IQS, where we find a shift from the mythological (Two Angels) to the ethical (Two Ways).<sup>74</sup> A similar, or perhaps more pronounced, process of demythologizing (i.e., de-emphasizing the external myth) and ethicizing (i.e., emphasizing the internal and individual moral struggle) is found in the *Testament of Asher*.<sup>75</sup> For Suggs, the social function of the two ways (with the mythological emphasis) is to establish and maintain group identity by constructing a demarcation of insiders and outsiders. Like the *Testament of Asher*, which moved away from the mythological social function of IQS, early Christian instances of the two-way schema are most likely (though not exclusively) connected to initiation into the group.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Klaus Baltzer, *Das Bundesformular*, 103–141; cited in Suggs, “Two Ways Tradition,” 65.

<sup>72</sup> Suggs, “Two Ways Tradition,” 63–64. Suggs further applies this same criticism against New Testament examples, such as Matt. 7:13–14, in opposition to Kenneth E. Kirk, *The Vision of God*.

<sup>73</sup> Suggs, “Two Ways Tradition,” 64.

<sup>74</sup> Suggs, “Two Ways Tradition,” 66; referring to Kamlah, *Die Form*, 163.

<sup>75</sup> Suggs, “Two Ways Tradition,” 68.

<sup>76</sup> Suggs, “Two Ways Tradition,” 67: “It sharpens the sense of ‘we-ness’ among the sons of Light, who are expected to identify themselves unambiguously as the ‘guys in the white hats.’ Those instructed are meant to learn the differences between ‘we’ and ‘they’ ...”; on the shift to an initiatory setting, see 72–73.

Recently, John S. Kloppenborg has argued that the relations between the *Epistle of Barnabas* 18–20 and *Didache* 1–5, are such that a literary relationship, rather than a simple oral tradition, is most plausible.<sup>77</sup> Thus, a Two Ways Document, no longer extant, is discerned by Kloppenborg; this document, he goes on to argue, has a three-fold transmission into the extant sources. The first form ( $\alpha$ ) is a loosely organized presentation of two ways material and is what is evident in the *Epistle of Barnabas*. The second ( $\beta$ , with a derivation as form  $\delta$  underlying *Doctrina Apostolorum*) is more topical in organization and is what was used in *Didache*, from which is derived the two ways tradition in *Apostolic Constitutions*. The third form ( $\gamma$ ) is paralleled to  $\beta$  except for the Way of Death motif (this is the form found in the *Canons*).<sup>78</sup> For Kloppenborg form  $\alpha$  is far more mythological in language, fitting a type that is illustrated by IQS and the *Testament of Asher* (though without direct literary connections). The *Epistle of Barnabas* places the two ways or teachings within a cosmic contrast of φωταγωγοὶ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ and ἄγγελοι τοῦ σατανᾶ (18.1) along with an eschatological motivation. Forms  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ , however, radically demythologize the two ways, thereby more thoroughly ethicizing and de-eschatologizing the tradition.<sup>79</sup> Although correct in noting the mythological aspect of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, this distinction is not fully accurate in portraying the two-way schema of this text. First, in chapter 18 itself (where most scholars see the beginning of the two ways), there are ethical indicators worth noting: a reference to “the present time of iniquity” (18.2), is not only eschatological (ὁ δὲ ἄρχων καιροῦ...) but also ethical (... τῆς ἀνομίας; “lawless”); a reference to human will and human zeal as defining the Way of Light (θέλων; σπουδῆ) linked with knowledge necessary for walking this way (γνώσις) (18.2; 19.1). As with the Jewish material related to form  $\alpha$ , we find here a connection between cosmological mythology and individual or human moral responsibility. Secondly, although most scholars focus on the two ways that begin at 18.1, it is important to recall that the two-way schema is also present earlier on in the *Epistle of Barnabas*. Couched between two christological *exempla* is a reference to the “way of righteousness” and the “way of darkness” (ὁδοῦ δικαιοσύνης, ὁδοῦ σκότους; 5.4). Again, “knowledge” emerges as a

<sup>77</sup> Kloppenborg, “Transformation,” 88–109.

<sup>78</sup> Kloppenborg, “Transformation,” 92.

<sup>79</sup> Kloppenborg, “Transformation,” 93–97.

key distinction between these two ways, thereby recalling Greco-Roman moral philosophy (especially Stoic rationality) modified with a Christian nuance. Earlier, at 4.10 another reference to the way of wickedness is mentioned (τῆς πονηρᾶς ὁδοῦ), preceded by an imperatival statement (φύγωμεν ἀπό...) and framed within a behavioural ethic (note especially the description of the way of wickedness: ...πάσης ματαιότητος, μισήσωμεν τελείως τὰ ἔργα... “Let us flee all *futility*, completely despising the *works* of the way of wickedness”)<sup>80</sup> grounded within a covenantal perspective (4.6b-8a, 14). Again, moral and cosmological (including eschatological) elements are mutually present.

Although scholarly concern has primarily been focussed on literary relations and especially the possible Two Ways Document that might have circulated within early Christian circles,<sup>81</sup> the two-way schema need not only be a literary work or works that can be reconstructed by source and redactional analysis. Rather, we have a framing mechanism for a conceptual two-way schema within early Christian texts. Two ways emerge within, for example, Psalm 1, without reference to a literary formula: “Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night” (1:1–2; the two ways continue through this Psalm with contrasting agricultural metaphors linked to life and death). Here we do not have a mythologized Two Angels tradition, nor the formal literary pattern advocated by Suggs. Yet we have a clear instance of two paths that a person can choose to follow, one positive (the blessed, those who are obedient to the commands of the Lord, those who live) and the other negative (the wicked, who are obedient to the advice of the

<sup>80</sup> My translation with added emphasis.

<sup>81</sup> A recent argument has been made to link the Two Ways Document with a Petrine tradition, specifically a fifth century reference in Rufinus of Aquileia to *Iudicium Petri* as another name for the *Two Ways*; see Robert E. Aldridge, “Peter and the ‘Two Ways’”. Aldridge is clear that Peter is not to be considered the author of the Two Ways Document. However, his Petrine connection is still questionable, as there was no particular Petrine Circle or a basis for a Petrine corpus of material (see the definitive critique on this point by David Henry Schmidt, *The Peter Writings*. Still, Aldridge’s comparison of two-way schema in the second century material with later traditions (including the mid-fourth century pseudo-Clementines, Optatus appended *Gesta apud Zenophilum* in the fourth century, Nestorian tracts of the seventh century, and St. Boniface’s eighth-century homily, *De abrenuntiatione in baptisate*) is helpful in highlighting the continued, and diverse, interest in two-way schema even beyond a first- or second-century Two Ways Document.

wicked, with death as an end). Even within the early Christian material, we find a less formal presentation of the two-way schema. In *1 Clem* 36.1, for example, there is a direct reference to “the way” (ἡ ὁδός) that is found only in Jesus Christ. The demonstrative pronoun directs the reader’s attention to the preceding discussion, and likely recalls for the reader the earlier reference to “the way” at 35.5 (τῇ ὁδῷ τῆς ἀληθείας) where we find a vice list following the “the Way of Truth” (there is not, however, an eschatological warning or conclusion—thus, 35.5 does not perfectly fit the literary pattern proposed by Suggs).

Another instance of the two-way schema that is more conceptual and less source based arises in Ignatius’ *Epistle to the Magnesians* 5:

Seeing then that there is an end (τέλος) to all, that the choice is between two things (τὰ δύο ὁμοῦ), death and life (ὁ τε θάνατος καὶ ζωή), and that each is to go to his own place; for, just as there are two coinages, the one of God, the other of the world (ὁ μὲν θεοῦ, ὁ δὲ κόσμου), and each has its own stamp impressed on it, so the unbelievers (οἱ ἄπιστοι) bear the stamp of this world, and the believers (οἱ πιστοί) bear the stamp of God the Father in love through Jesus Christ, and unless we willingly choose to die through him in his passion, his life (τὸ ζῆν αὐτοῦ) is not in us.

This two-way schema precedes a hortatory section that explicitly exhorts the Magnesian Christians (παραινῶ, with οὖν linking the sentence to the two-way schema). An eschatological warning is present here, along with two paths that can be followed, one of life and the other implied with death, with a christological foundation for the exhortation. An analogy reflecting citizenship is also invoked, perhaps drawn from Matt. 22:19–21. There is a further distinction between those with faith and those without faith (οἱ πιστοί; οἱ ἄπιστοι). Faith and unfaith will emerge as an alternative antinomy to frame the two ways as, for example, in Pseudo-Clementines, *Homily* 7.6–8 where death and life are connected to the ways of unbelief and belief. The two-way schema in this letter, however, does not follow the literary pattern that might indicate a literary link to the Two Ways Document, and, therefore, is better understood as an example of the two-way schema as a conceptual model for moral exhortation. A similar instance arises in Ignatius’ *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, where a two-way schema precedes a reference to hardships (perhaps an abbreviated form of a peristasis catalogue). The contrast is between those who advocate death (ὄντες συνήγοροι τοῦ θανάτου) rather than truth (τῆς ἀληθείας). The application of two ways is to false teachers. Again an implication of the two ways is present, though not explicitly enough to warrant a source connection.

By appreciating the presence of the two-way schema within both a literary relationship (including a possible Two Ways Document) and a conceptual framework of a two ways antithesis, we can further broaden the discussion of the two-way schema to include the broader Greco-Roman world. Most scholarly discussions place stress on the Jewish origins for the two ways. Although I agree that Judaism, perhaps influenced by Iranian dualism, had a profound impact on early Christian utilization of the two-way schema, the influence on early Christianity is not limited to Judaism. Indeed, people in the Greco-Roman world, with or without a background in the tenets or traditions of Judaism, would have likely been able to link the Christian two-way schema with broader cultural forms of moral discourse. I have already mentioned in the discussion of virtue/vice lists that Stoic virtues implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, evoked an antithesis of corresponding vices. A more direct example, however, of the two ways is illustrated in Ps.-Crates, *Epistle* 15:

Shun [or “flee”; φεύγετε]<sup>82</sup> not only the worst of evils [τὰ τέλη τῶν κακῶν],  
injustice, and self-indulgence, but also their causes, pleasure.

For you will concentrate on these alone, both present and future,  
and on nothing else.

And pursue [καὶ διώκετε] not only the best of goods [τὰ τέλη τῶν ἀγαθῶν],  
self-control and perseverance, but also their causes, toils, and do not  
shun them

on account of their harshness.

For would you not exchange inferior things for something great?

As you would receive gold in exchange for copper, so you  
would receive virtue in exchange for toils.

This letter, as indicated above, is structured by the two imperatives. These imperatives place in contrast two ways of life: the way of the Cynic lifestyle (the best of goods); and the way of non-Cynic lifestyle (the worst of evils). Following each way is a short virtue or vice list (and the cause of each: pleasure contrasted with toils), along with a discussion of the lifestyle that serves as an added motivation to the

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<sup>82</sup> I prefer “flee” rather than “shun” here, as the former better articulates the contrast that Ps.-Crates is presenting for his disciples. The metaphors of motion are thereby more effectively illustrated.

paraenesis.<sup>83</sup> Even though this letter does not conform to a specific literary arrangement of the Two Ways Document, it is saturated with the conceptual framework of the two ways.

When we turn to the Valentinian material, moral exhortation also draws upon a two-way schema. The most pronounced instance of the two ways is found in the *Interp. Know.*, where a contrast between the way of faith (= life) and the way of unfaith (= death) arises in the exordium:

If he disbelieves them, then [he] would be unable [to be persuaded]. But it is a great thing for a man who has faith, since he is [not] in unbelief, which is the [world]. [Now] the world [is the place of] unfaith [and the place of death]. And death [exists as...likeness and] they will [not believe]. A holy thing is the faith [to see the likeness]. The opposite is [unfaith in the likeness]. The things that he will grant [them will support] them. It was impossible [for them to attain] to the imperishability [...] will [become...] loosen [...those who] were sent [...] For [he who] is distressed [will not believe]. He [is unable] to bring [a great church] since it is gathered out of [a small gathering]. (1,31–2,28)

Although I will discuss this tractate in chapters 6 and 8, for illustrative purposes it is worth noting that the exordium, where this statement emerges, sets forth the major themes of the tractate. A two-way distinction between faith and unfaith, linked to life and death, frames the rhetoric of this paraenesis. This is the most explicit instance of the two-way schema in the Valentinian materials. Its use of faith/unfaith as the opposing ways of life and death recalls Ignatius' *Magnesians* 5, with its contrast between "οἱ πιστοί...οἱ ἄπιστοι." Another instance of faith/unfaith being used to frame a two-way schema (from the mid-fourth century) is the pseudo-Clementines, *Homily* 7.6–8:

Next, when Peter entered Sidon, the people set before him many sick persons carried out in cots. But he said to them, "Do not think that I—a mortal man also capable of being afflicted by many ailments—can send any of your sick ones back home cured. I am not hesitant, however, to show you the means by which you may save yourselves..."

"These good and evil deeds I knowingly declare to you as *two ways*. Those strolling down the one will perish, while those trekking the other (being led by God) will be rescued. For *the way of those who will perish*

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<sup>83</sup> A slight irony arises in the motivation/discussion of the way of toils, given the anti-mining motif in Cynicism.



Spirits form of the two-way schema. The second reference to a two-way schema is in a hortatory passage at 59,1–11:

[Renounce] this difficult way, which is so variable, [and] walk in accordance with him who desires [that] you become free men [with] me, after you have passed above every [dominion]. For he will not [judge] you for those things that you did, but will have mercy on you. For it is not you that did them, but it is [your] Lord that did them. [He was not] a wrathful one, but was a kind Father.

This hortatory passage follows a reference to divine will (58,23–24, though missing text at the bottom of page 58 renders this connection only a suggestion). The divine will—which is an ethical motif—is explicated in the two-way distinction in this passage: there are two ways, one is the difficult way and is to be avoided or renounced; the other way is to walk in accordance with divine will. A theme of obedience emerges here, which is typical of early Christian treatments of the moral motif of divine will. This two-way schema, however, is not linked to virtues and vices, but is rather linked to a mythological framework of the ascent of the soul. Again, cosmology and ethics are linked within the two-way framework.

An exception to the separation of the two-way schema and ethical lists is *Auth. Teach.* 24,10–13: “For death and life are set before everyone. Whichever of these two they wish then, they will choose for themselves.” This very explicit statement on the way of death and life as two options for people to choose, is placed within a large paraenetic section in which a long vice list and metaphors of debauchery and prostitution for those vices precedes the two ways (with drunkenness again following the two ways). The structure of this section, as well as the exact wording, makes a literary link to the Two Ways Document highly unlikely. A cosmological and mythical connection, however, may fit this instance of two ways when placed within the broader context of the tractate, specifically the cosmological threat for the ascent of the soul (especially the dragnet parable at 29,3–30,4).

Three other possible Valentinian instances of a two-way schema can be found in the Nag Hammadi codices. In the *1 Apoc. Jas.* there is a reference to “the sons of light” (25,17–18;  $\overline{\text{nn}}\overline{\text{t}}\overline{\text{w}}\overline{\text{h}}\overline{\text{r}}\overline{\text{e}}\overline{\text{ n}}\overline{\text{t}}\overline{\text{e}}\overline{\text{ p}}\overline{\text{o}}\overline{\text{y}}\overline{\text{o}}\overline{\text{e}}\overline{\text{m}}\overline{\text{h}}$ ), which might betray awareness of the Two Angels motif of “sons of light” and “sons of darkness” in IQS. The reference, however, is not developed enough to warrant classifying this as an instance of the two ways. A second possible instance is the *Val. Exp.*’s demarcation of the heavenly and the carnal place (37,25–31; cf. 38,30–35). Again, the instance may

only reveal an awareness of a two-ways tradition rather than an actual presentation of a two-way schema. The third instance is the *Ep. Pet. Phil.*'s paraenetic aside, where an implicit two ways might be seen. The continuous function of the conjunctive second future ΝΤΗΜΟΟΩΕ, as I have already argued above, suggests that a clear two-way schema is not being presented. The lacuna may have offered just such a distinction, but what remains is only suggestive. The author exhorts a particular way for the readers to avoid: "My brothers, let us therefore not obey these lawless ones and walk in..." (139,28–40).

The two-way schema is used in those Valentinian sources that have paraenetic material.<sup>85</sup> The most prominent utilization of the two-way schema is the *Interp. Know*. Some texts, while not actually using the two ways as a discursive motif, may reveal awareness of the two-ways tradition, and, thus, perhaps evidence a wider appreciation or usage of this device for moral discourse within Valentinian Christianity. Unlike some other Christian instances of the two ways, only the *Auth. Teach.* discusses the two ways along with ethical lists. Nearly every instance of the two ways, however, is linked to a cosmological context, bringing together, as did the *Epistle of Barnabas*, external mythological frameworks (in this case relating to the ascent of the soul from the realm of matter) with ethical concerns. This myth-ethical motif suggests that Valentinians tended to follow the two ways of Kloppenborg's type  $\alpha$ , and, therefore, might indicate an earlier stream of the two ways tradition within early Christianity. None of the Valentinian sources indicate a literary link with the Two Ways Document that many scholars have attempted to locate. Rather, the Valentinian material suggests that the two ways circulated not simply through a series of literary relations and source dependencies, but as a conceptual framework for bringing together moral hortatory discourse. The presence of the two-way schema in the Valentinian material further suggests the presence and importance of paraenesis for these Christians.

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<sup>85</sup> Although it might also have a reference to two ways (71,18–23 with clear behavioural application), the *Tri. Tract.* is excluded from my discussion, as it does not fit any of the forms of paraenesis I have established in chapter 4: genre, subsection, or aside. Although not paraenetic, this tractate is replete with moral discourse (most notable is the continual references to divine will). Indeed, the *Tri. Tract.* is an excellent example (better than even Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora*) of a Valentinian work that is very concerned over moral discourse without being hortatory in nature.

## CHAPTER SIX

### TWO SCHOOLS AND THE CALL TO RECONCILIATION: LITERARY AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF MORAL EXHORTATION IN THE *INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE*<sup>1</sup>

The *Interpretation of Knowledge*, which has survived only in a fragmentary Coptic manuscript, has received little scholarly attention. The first critical analysis, and still the most influential, is that of Klaus Koschorke.<sup>2</sup> Koschorke studied the text in light of Gnostic ecclesiology contrasted with “orthodox” church order, specifically between two conflicting factions. Koschorke’s work has dominated discussions of *Interp. Know.*,<sup>3</sup> with little work being done on *Interp. Know.* beyond that of the 1970s.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it is one of those Nag Hammadi texts generally overlooked by scholars, including scholars who specialize in the

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter builds on my earlier article on the *Interp. Know.* (Tite, “An Exploration of Valentinian Paraenesis”).

<sup>2</sup> Klaus Koschorke, “Eine neugefundene gnostische Gemeindeordnung”; “Gnostic Instructions on the Organization of the Congregation.” These essays build on his larger work, *Die Polemik*.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Roger Bullard’s rearticulation of Koschorke’s thesis in the *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*; Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, “Gnosticism—A Study of Liminal Symbolism,” 120, who places this reading within a discussion of the metaphorical presentation of *communitas* in Gnosticism (Gilhus is overly confident in interpreting *Interp. Know.*, not recognizing the methodological difficulties with this tractate in stating that “the tractate reflects a *pneumatic*-charismatic organization of the community in contrast to the hierarchical order of the Catholic Church”). Note also the comment by C. M. Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi and Gospel Traditions*, 145: “This is an important text in that it enables us to see something of a Gnostic’s ideas about the church. It is clearly written for a situation not dissimilar to that at Corinth when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, i.e. a situation in which the variety of different spiritual gifts have become a source of contention.”

<sup>4</sup> The most recent major work on *Interp. Know.* is Uwe-Karsten Plisch, *Auslegung der Erkenntnis*, originally presented as a doctoral thesis at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin on 27 February 1994. Plisch offers an alternative critical edition for the text than the standard Brill critical edition. See also Plisch’s “Die Rezeption bekannter und unbekannter Herrenworte in NHC XI”; “Die Auslegung der Erkenntnis (NHC XI,1).” Since Plisch’s work, a few new works have appeared, specifically Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 147–58, Emmel, “Find the Pathway,” Painchaud, “L’utilisation des paraboles,” Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 86–89, and Tite, “An Exploration of Valentinian Paraenesis.” This new interest in *Interp. Know.* will hopefully spark further work on this sadly neglected tractate.

study of Nag Hammadi and Gnosticism. During the 1980s a few studies appeared on this tractate that should be mentioned. Elaine Pagels, in her introduction to *Interp. Know.* for the *Nag Hammadi Library in English* and the Brill critical edition, has further suggested that the text is “a homily intended for delivery in a service of worship.”<sup>5</sup> John Turner, Madeleine Scopello, and, more recently, Birger Pearson have accepted this homily reading.<sup>6</sup> It is hoped that with the publication of Plisch’s German critical edition and the forthcoming French critical edition by Louis Painchaud, Einar Thomassen and Wolf-Peter Funk at Laval, that more attention will be drawn towards *Interp. Know.*<sup>7</sup>

A further addition to the scholarly literature on *Interp. Know.* is Michel Desjardins’ brief exegesis of 9,27–38; 12,25–29; and 14,28–38.<sup>8</sup> Desjardins is concerned with discovering the Valentinian concept of sin, as articulated in both the Fathers and the Nag Hammadi sources. By drawing a comparative connection between *Interp. Know.* and the Sermon on the Mount, along with the Pauline traditions, he identifies the ethical aspects of this tractate. Sin is defined as “not acting in accordance with the Father’s will,” and is closely connected to the division of humanity (a division due to the “descent and ascent of Christ”), within which all people “are still under the domination of the powers and authorities (= the All), who continue to control people by means

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<sup>5</sup> Elaine Pagels, “The Interpretation of Knowledge,” 472. See also her, “The Interpretation of Knowledge (NHC XI, 1, 1, 1–21,35): Introduction,” 22, where she offers an expansion on the homiletical nature of *Interp. Know.* Kurt Rudolph, however, merely refers to *Interp. Know.* as “a didactic writing concerned with basic questions of gnostic understanding of the church (a kind of church order)” (*Gnosis*, 48).

<sup>6</sup> John Turner, “Interpretation of Knowledge,” 93–95; see also his “The Interpretation of Knowledge (NHC XI, 1, 1, 1–21,35)”; Madeleine Scopello, “Interpretation of Knowledge”; Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 181. Thomassen accepts the homily reading as only a possibility (*Spiritual Seed*, 86), claiming that genre is not important for studying this text.

<sup>7</sup> Preliminary work derived from the BCNH edition has already begun to appear: Louis Painchaud, “L’utilisation des paraboles”; Einar Thomassen, “An Unknown Sayings Gospel,” paper presented at the SBL annual meeting, Atlanta, GA 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 72, 100–5. Desjardins also prepared a more thorough study of this tractate for inclusion in *A Reader’s Guide to Nag Hammadi*, a project that unfortunately was never published. Desjardins’ introduction to *Interp. Know.*, which he made available for my study, and for which I wish to express appreciation, offers further insights into his reading of this tractate. In regard to genre, he follows the homily reading, though he seems to have some reservations about this hypothesis: “[it] may reflect the liturgical practices of most early Christian communities and provide the specific setting for this work: an extended homily in a church setting.” Desjardins also offers a possible date for the tractate, placing it *ca.* 175.

of their fleshly bodies and who encourage them to sin.”<sup>9</sup> This tractate adds to his overall conclusion that Valentinianism fits into the broader context of second-century Christianity, specifically in regards to sin.<sup>10</sup>

Desjardins’ study is the closest we get to an ethical reading of *Interp. Know.*, yet even his work, due to its delimited focus and given the exclusion of genre analysis, simply recognizes the presence and importance of ethical and moral discussion within Valentinianism. What is needed is to ground the discussion within the context of ancient forms of moral discourse. He gives little attention to the issue of genre, and therefore does not recognize nor explore the usefulness of paraenesis as a possible analytical framework. The homily theory advocated by Pagels, and endorsed by Turner, Pearson and Scopello, unfortunately fails as an analytical framework for explaining the theological, social, and especially the ethical dimensions of this text. Paraenesis, as I argue here and elsewhere, offers a less ambiguous and more analytically functional identification of genre for this tractate.<sup>11</sup> The early Christian homily is a problematic literary category, lacking specificity of both social and literary dimensions of the genre of a text,<sup>12</sup> and therefore fails to serve any analytical function. Indeed, to identify a text as a homily

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<sup>9</sup> Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 105. Although the term “All” is used in Valentinian texts positively in reference to the Pleroma (e.g. *Treat. Res.* 46,35–47,1 and *Val. Exp.* 39,34), Desjardins (*Sin in Valentinianism*, 103) correctly notes that *Interp. Know.* uses this term to negatively designate the “powers and authorities.” A similar negative usage of the “All” can be found in the *Gos. Mary* 15,21–16,1: “...the All is being dissolved, both the earthly (things) and the heavenly” (cf. 7,1–10) (*Gos. Mary* is not Valentinian, but does fit into what is generally viewed as “Gnostic”).

<sup>10</sup> Similarly, I have recently argued for a close connection between Origen’s Trinitarian system and the theologies present in Valentinian works, contending that Christian theology emerged within a dynamic social engagement of various Christianities. Rather than seeing Origen combating “heresy” or clarifying his cosmology and soteriology in order to refute a “threat” from Gnosticism, I argue that he was both influenced by and in conflict with Gnosticism. In a sense, therefore, early Christianity should be seen as an extensive process of competing, converging, and conflicting “Christianities”—Christianities that defined themselves variously within their broader Greco-Roman culture. See Tite, “The Holy Spirit’s Role in Origen’s Trinitarian System.”

<sup>11</sup> A preliminary, and much abbreviated, analysis of the paraenetic genre of the *Interp. Know.* appears in Tite, “An Exploration of Valentinian Paraenesis.” Within a similar line of reasoning, Ismo Dunderberg (agreeing with my identification of the deliberative aspects of this tractate) has analyzed the body metaphors in *Interp. Know.* as fitting deliberative rhetoric (working with Margaret M. Mitchell’s insightful study of deliberation in 1 Corinthians, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*); see Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 147–58.

<sup>12</sup> On the problems of homily as a genre, see Karl Paul Donfried, *Setting of Second Clement*, 25–34 but especially 26.

has tended to be a means of avoiding the problem of genre: it simply becomes an ill-defined, catch-all category.<sup>13</sup> It is hoped that paraenesis will be a more useful identification for *Interp. Know.*, opening the text for further rhetorical and social analyses. The genre of a text should tell us less what the text is and rather how the text was designed to rhetorically influence the readers. As prescriptive moral discourse, paraenesis carries a rhetorical agenda of persuasion or dissuasion and, thereby, is dialogical in nature with the status of the readers kept in the forefront of its rhetoric. By identifying *Interp. Know.* as paraenetic moral discourse, the function of the text is emphasized—the readers are already insiders in need of confirmation, encouragement, and remembrance in the process of identity formation within a community crisis. The tractate does not utilize ethical instruction for either conversion or philosophical debate. Exhortation, therefore, carries rhetorical purpose within the argumentative texture of the tractate.

Working within a teacher-student framework, a framework not unusual for the social setting of paraenesis, our author takes on the authority of the Saviour in order to admonish and encourage the readers to move toward reconciliation with the opposing (ecclesiastical) faction, yet without sacrificing the social idealization of what the community should be like (i.e. from the author's perspective). Our author seems to be concerned about potential apostasy from his or her own position to that of the opposing faction. *Interp. Know.* evidently addresses a Christian community that has divided over theological issues, scriptural

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<sup>13</sup> The homily may, however, still be useful if it is identified less as a literary category and more as a performative context of delivery: i.e. letters, speeches, and philosophical discourses may have been “delivered” within a community of worship and therefore functioned as “homiletical” performances. Paraenesis and homily need not be seen as exclusive categories (cf. Attridge, “Paraenesis in a Homily”); however, until a better-defined understanding of homily emerges it will fail to be an analytically useful genre. Recently, Stephen Emmel has challenged Pagels’ homily reading, claiming that the usage of second person plural pronouns are limited only to quotations and, therefore, the text was most likely written for a single person within a community (Emmel, “Exploring the Pathway”). Based on this argument, Emmel identifies the genre of the text as a type of philosophical epistle similar to *Treat. Res.* and Ptolemy’s *Letter to Flora*. Although a philosophical epistle is not an uncommon venue for a paraenetic discourse (e.g., Ps.-Isocrates, *To Demonius*), I find Emmel’s identification implausible. There are no specific epistolary markers in *Interp. Know.*, beyond the pronouns, that would help identify the text as a letter (see also Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 153). Emmel’s concern, however, is less with identifying a genre than distancing the text from the homily reading. Note also Plisch’s treatment of the homily theory in “Die Auslegung der Erkenntnis,” 737.

interpretations, and (most importantly) perceptions of the ideal social formation of a Christian community. The author's readers, composed of Valentinian Christians,<sup>14</sup> are called to identify with their broader Christian heritage and thereby situate the conflict within the contours of a two-way schema of faith/unfaith. In structuring this hortatory text, the author has arranged the discussion in order to prepare the readers for the imperatival emphasis of the later sections.<sup>15</sup> The arrangement of *Interp. Know.*'s discussion, following an exordium (1,1–2,28), has a series of rhetorical *exempla* (particularly parabolic examples) building up to the two teacher discussion of 9,27–38, which is preceded by a preliminary presentation of the two teachers (9,1–26). As the interpretative *crux*, 9,27–38 sets forth the ethical thrust of the paraenesis in a chiasmic structure of antithesis. From 10,9–15,18 further cosmological explications are offered, which move us into the discussion of jealousy

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<sup>14</sup> A consensus regarding the Valentinian nature of *Interp. Know.* has emerged within scholarship, though challenges have been raised by Plisch, *Auslegung der Erkenntnis*, 4. I would argue that the tractate is a product of Valentinianism due to the presence of certain motifs. For example, the presence of the Virgin or Mother as soteriological figure likely reflects the Sophia myth. The unifying aspect of this figure, especially with the male counterpart of the Saviour with reference to the Cross, is especially Valentinian rather than Sethian (see Elaine Pagels, "Pursuing the Spiritual Eve"). The inclusive attitude toward other Christians (non-insiders) is typical of Valentinianism, and is clearly present in this tractate (especially 21,21–35). The strong Christian elements in this tractate further point to a Christian context for the text (i.e., unlike the Sethian sources, there is no indication that the Christian elements are a later Christianization of the tractate). The prominence of a Christological element is especially indicative of a Christian milieu. Although the classic Valentinian cosmological hierarchy is lacking, a possible reference to an ignorant, rather than malicious, demiurgical figure might be alluded to at 10,13–21 (though the reference might also refer to the reader(s) in a previous state of ignorance, especially given the following comments on being "led astray while in the flesh of condemnation" [10,26–27], "taken to this pit" [10,30–31; cf. 13,25–29], and "the rib whence you came" [10, 35]; all these motifs likely reflect the previous life of the insiders, calling them to remembrance (as is typical for a paraenesis), and drawing out the theme of the ascent of the soul out of the pit of ignorance and flesh—the reference to "the great ignorance and the darkness of the ignorant eye" [10,15] from which the readers are "released" by "the faith laid down by the master" [10,13–14], more likely reflects a archon figure typical of the Valentinian ignorant demiurge. The Valentinian motifs plausibly place this tractate with a Valentinian tradition. See also the Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 86–89.

<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Painchaud, "L'utilisation des paraboles," 415, correctly recognizes that the parabolic material opening the tractate prepares the reader for the paraenetic material running from pages 15 to 20. As Malherbe argued in the case of 1 Thessalonians ("Exhortation," passim), so also with the *Interp. Know.* the earlier material has a paraenetic function in setting the stage for the more hortatory material. The preliminary material functions to establish the authority of the author and the receptivity of the readers.

and spiritual gifts (15,19–18,22). From pages 18 to the end of the tractate we have an extended exhortation on unity or harmony, building off the preceding discussion.<sup>16</sup>

As a performative speech act, rather than a simple documentary window into an historical occasion, the tractate would have represented one voice within a broader social discourse, perhaps presented (“performed”) as a speech or privately distributed to insiders. Within this discussion, we should recognize the methodological problems of both the fragmentary nature of this tractate, rendering all interpretations tentative at best,<sup>17</sup> as well as the problem of “Gnosticism” as a category (see chapter 1). With these cautions in place, the literary indications of the paraenetic genre for this tractate will be explored.

#### LITERARY ASPECTS IN THE *INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE*

Various literary aspects that typify paraenesis are present in the *Interpretation of Knowledge*. The author weaves moral *exempla*, imperatival

<sup>16</sup> This proposed arrangement differs slightly from that of Koschorke, “Eine neugefundene gnostische Gemeindeordnung,” 33, which has three basic sections: 1–8; 9–15,15; 15,16–21,34. My proposal also differs from the two-fold division put forth by Gerd Lüdemann and Martina Janssen (*Suppressed Prayer*, 77): 9–15, “Christ as head saves his body, the church” and 15–21, behavior of members towards one another. My reading highlights the presence of an introductory exordium and also places stress on the 9,27–38 section as an interpretative *crux*.

<sup>17</sup> In an unpublished paper, Desjardins comments on the fragmentary nature of the tractate, observing that in the *Nag Hammadi Library in English* especially, the editorial indications of both missing text and reconstructed text are problematic in that they negate the problematic nature of the tractate: “...the eye soon learns to ignore those square brackets and tiny line numbers” and “the gaps disappear and the reconstructions blend into the text” (Michel Desjardins, “Interpreting ‘The Interpretation of Knowledge’ (XI,1),” 3; similarly see Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 100; Koschorke, “Gnostic Instructions,” 759, n. 4; and Painchaud, “L’utilisation des paraboles,” 412. For the sake of my study, I typically follow Turner’s critical edition (while also consulting the Plisch and Funk editions; for the sake of consistency, and given that Turner’s remains the standard edition for scholarship, I will follow Turner), recognizing the tentative nature of my own work given the fragmentary nature of the tractate. While Dunderberg’s criticism of my dependence on Turner’s heavily reconstructed text is certainly valid (*Beyond Gnosticism*, 254 n. 4), this problem is inherent in every study of *Interp. Know.* given the damaged state of the tractate (even Dunderberg and Emmel are dependent upon reconstructions of missing text for their interpretations). While a minimalist approach to these reconstructions may prove the best approach (as taken by Emmel, “Exploring the Pathway”), there are serious methodological problems with ignoring possible reconstructions. Methodologically, it strikes me as better to work with an established, even if contested, critical edition rather than to re-establish the text so as to support my own reading.

statements, rhetorical questions, and antithesis within a two-way schema. By observing these literary features, the integrated paraenetic nature of this tractate will be elucidated.

One literary aspect typical of paraenetic texts is the prominent role of imperatives or imperatival surrogates including supporting participles and rhetorical questions. Imperatival constructions run throughout the latter part of the tractate, most of which are negative imperatives: “do not belittle” (16,20); “do not consider” (16,24); “do not be hindered” (16,32–33); “do not say” (16,34); “do not accuse” (18,28), which is followed by a motivational clause (“because [ⲁϵ]...” 18,29); “do not be jealous” (18,30–31); “but be thankful” (18,33), which are followed by a motivational clause (“on the contrary [ⲁⲗⲗⲁ], you...” 18,34–38); and “so let us become” (19,36). The opening of 9,27–38, which is the ethical *crux* of the tractate, begins with the negative imperative “do not call” (ⲙⲏⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ), rendering a strong hortatory tone to the entire passage, especially as this imperative follows the moral *exempla* that set the stage for the hortatory sections to follow and precedes the strong presence of imperatives following page 14. The placement of the imperatives helps to denote the paraenetic function of the early parts of the tractate. Motivational clauses (e.g., 18,29 and 18,34–38) are important rhetorical devices in paraenesis, functioning to substantiate ethical propositions. As part of deliberative discourse,<sup>18</sup> motivational clauses place stress on the advantages of a particular course of life for the sake of either persuasion or dissuasion. Authoritative quotations are one form of motivational clause, though in Christian paraenesis Christology also plays a prominent, if not essential, role.<sup>19</sup> The author’s use of rhetorical questions, further heighten the hortatory tone: “if [ϵⲓⲧⲉ] they are fit... how much more [ⲡⲟϭⲱ]...?” (18,24–25); “why do you despise...?” (18,38–19,1); “what, now, do you think of as spirit?” (20,23–24); “or why do they...?” (20,25–26); “are they not satisfied...?” (20,26–28); and “but what is the profit for them?” (20,36). These questions, like the imperatives, become more pronounced towards the closing of the tractate (especially on page 20). Such an accumulative

<sup>18</sup> Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 153–154, correctly notes the deliberative qualities in this tractate. It is this very deliberative quality that reinforces the paraenetic reading of the tractate.

<sup>19</sup> See Martin, *Metaphor*, 93–98, who cites Seneca, *Epistle* 94. See also Nieder, *Die Motive*; Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*; Gammie, “Morphology,” 59, 60–61; and John G. Cook, “The Proleptic Power of Early Christian Language.” See Hahn, “Die christologische,” 99.

development denotes a paraenetic emphasis being built for rhetorical climax. This rhetorical climax may be the importance of sin for the community (21,21–34), though manuscript damage (21,1–20) renders such an interpretation tentative at best. The imperatives and rhetorical questions indicate that the author’s literary style fits the conventions of paraenetic literature.

Another indicator of paraenetic discourse is the juxtaposition of opposing concepts, ways of life, or styles. Antithetical constructions, usually of binary opposites, may follow the two-way schema such as is found in the opening part of *Didache* (“way of life” and “way of death”).<sup>20</sup> In the opening of *Interp. Know.* we find such a construction, where “faith” and “unfaith” are presented in connection with the way of life and the way of death (1,14–2,20). These two ways are correlated with the readers’ either being persuaded or not being persuaded<sup>21</sup> to have true faith (1,24–31 contrasted with disbelief at 1,31b–33; note that in creating a conditional clause, the transitional indicator [εἰωπίε] at 1,31b denotes the contrast between the two ways). A further contrast is drawn between the two social groups comprising the Christian community: “a great church” and “a small gathering” (2,26–28).<sup>22</sup> Just prior to 9,27–38,

<sup>20</sup> *Didache*’s two-way schema is explicitly stated in its opening section, whereas *Interp. Know.* does not explicitly present itself as following the two-way schema. The fragmentary nature of 1,1–14 renders this an unfortunate situation for modern interpreters; as such a statement may have been part of the exordium. The surviving text, however, gives us ample enough information to recognize a two-way schema in *Interp. Know.*; one which presents a way of life and a way of death (note especially 1,36–38).

<sup>21</sup> Note one of the key terms being “persuasion” (πείθειν), which may indicate that the text is paraenetic. Compare the presence of this term in the opening of *Interp. Know.* with the *Treat. Res.* 46,2–10. In the latter Valentinian text the idea of persuasion is placed in contrast to faith, and may reflect ancient debates over the moral value of rhetorical practices (i.e. that rhetoric aims to persuade and not seek truth or attain virtue). Note Bentley Layton’s comment, *Gnostic Treatise on Resurrection*, 67: “By ‘argument’ (\* τὸ πείθεσαι) is meant rigorous demonstration and prepositional knowledge.” Cf. Malcolm L. Peel, *The Epistle of Rheginos*, 76: “‘Persuasion’ here... refers to some form of logical demonstration, and ‘faith’ is contrasted with it as trust and belief in the reality of something incapable of such demonstration.” The negative view of persuasion in *Treat. Res.* differs from the positive view in *Interp. Know.*, even though both are emphasizing the importance of faith for attaining life over and against death.

<sup>22</sup> This contrast is based upon a textual reconstruction. It is, therefore, only a tentative example of antithesis in the tractate. This fragmentary condition of the tractate, however, is problematic beyond this one example, and therefore it is necessary to draw upon various examples to establish an interpretation. The wide spread need for textual reconstructions, furthermore, must render all readings of this tractate tentative and suggestive rather than definitive or obvious. Indeed, even more problematic for reading this text is perhaps not simply what is reconstructed (which raises possible or plausible readings of what likely was there), but those large gaps that defy any textual reconstruc-

a further contrast is drawn between two types of teachers that the readers can choose to follow (implicit, of course, is the presence of two teachings or didactic ways of life or death): “the teacher of immortality” and “the arrogant teacher” (9,19–20). The former teacher is connected with life (imperishability), while the latter to death (arrogance or ignorance). This contrast sets the stage for 9,27–38’s ethical-cosmological exhortation, where further antitheses are presented. Other contrasting presentations of the two ways are given throughout this tractate: the worldly form as either advantageous or disadvantageous (10,19–20); the Father “does not keep the Sabbath *but* actuates the Son” (ἡγάρ...ἀλλὰ) (11,32–33 emphasis mine); “garments of condemnation” versus “living rational elements...as garments” (11,25–39); irony of those who thought they were saved from death but were not (14,34–38) in contrast with those who are saved (“the small brothers”), even though currently in humiliation and suffering (14,28–33 and the preceding soteriological discussion of the descent and ascent of the Son at 12,15–14,27); fellowship with Christ versus Christ removing himself from outsiders (15,17–18); being jealous versus not being jealous (15,19–20 and following discussion throughout page 15); “*do not* belittle yourself *but* rejoice and give thanks spiritually” (ἡμῶν...ἀλλὰ) (16,20–21 emphasis mine; note that gifts only “exist among your brethren” 16,30–31; a similar pattern of negative imperative ἡμῶν- and the contrastive transitional marker ἀλλὰ appears at 16,24–25 and in reverse order at 16,31–33); “earthly harmony” versus “true harmony” (18,23–25), those who are for “death” versus those who “are for life” (19,25–26); and two types of sin (that of the adept and the ordinary person, 21,25–30). This brief survey of the binary opposites indicates a strong presence of antithesis within the tractate’s paraenetic fabric. These opposing elements are contrasted within a two-way schema of life and death, of two paths that the readers must choose from and which emerge from the broader social conflict underlying the occasion of this tractate.

A self-enclosed rhetorical unit that incorporates several literary aspects of paraenesis is 9,27–38. Arguably, this unit is the *crux* for the ethical admonition of *Interp. Know*. Building upon the author’s dichotomy of two teachers and schools (9,9–25), this unit presents a

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tion. Whereas with the former we have probable readings, the latter defies any possible reading and therefore we are left with large gaps that could affect interpretation.

summation of the true teacher's teaching within an antithetical reworking of Matthean material.<sup>23</sup> This unit is chiasmically structured:

- A Now this is the teaching:
  - Ba Do not call to a father upon the earth.
  - Bb Your Father, who is in heaven, is one.
  - C You are the light of the world.
    - Da They are my brothers and my fellow companions who do the will of [the] Father.
    - Db For what use is it if you gain the world and you forfeit your soul?

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<sup>23</sup> The question could be raised as to whether the author of *Interp. Know.* directly knew Matthew or simply drew upon the Synoptic tradition more generally. In an insightful discussion of the use of scripture within Gnosticism, Louis Painchaud ("Use of Scripture") recognizes that scripture is used in at least three ways within Gnostic material: explicit quotations, implicit quotations, and allusions. Whereas explicit quotations reinforce the authoritative stance assumed by an author, implicit quotations and allusions "rely upon, and themselves create, a certain communion or complicity between the author (or the text) and the reader" by being "a device for the simultaneous activation of two texts, using a special signal referring to the independent external text" (135). Although a study of intertextual relations in *Interp. Know.* would be beyond the scope of the present study, suffice to say that the author, like many other Christians of the second or third century, held as scripture several of the New Testament texts and drew upon these texts for the augmentative efficacy of his or her own rhetorical strategy. The author clearly knew and directly drew upon Matthew and 1 Corinthians, and makes probable allusions to Luke and Colossians (and perhaps John). The suggestion by Thomassen, "Unknown Sayings Gospel," that *Interp. Know.* may evidence a now lost sayings gospel source is intriguing but in need of more persuasive demonstration. More likely is the presence of an interpretative mode of dependence on the New Testament materials along the lines established by Painchaud. There are also notably parallels with other texts, e.g. *Auth. Teach.*, which might indicate knowledge of those texts or at least familiarity with the ideas and/or traditions underlying those texts. The fact that our author authoritatively draws upon Matthean and Pauline material, and weaves allusions from Luke, Colossians, and John into the discussion, is a likely indication that the author's readers would have recognized these texts as authoritative. Such recognition would not be out of place for Valentinian Christians within a broader Christian community, and clearly would have allowed such intertextual relations to serve an efficacious rhetorical function. The allusions, however, would have served a different function (see Painchaud, "Use of Scripture," 135). The allusions would have created complicity between reader and author, drawing the reader into the process of recognizing intertextual links, and thereby rendering the discourse an in-group dialogue. Such complicity would establish a mutual social identity between the author and reader, thereby adding persuasive force to the discourse (see also the similar case made for domestic aesthetic representations in Dominic Perring, "'Gnosticism' in Fourth-Century Britain," building on Lefebvre, *Production of Space*). The encompassing nature of intertextuality can be succinctly, and vividly, summarized by the definition put forth by Ulrich Luz: "Intertextuality is nothing less than the textual shape of how culture, history, and society are engraved in text. This concept transcends a text-immanent structuralism and shows how texts are mirrors or echoes of the world"; Ulrich Luz, "Intertexts in the Gospel of Matthew," 120.

- C<sup>1</sup> For when we were in the dark  
 Ba<sup>1</sup> we used to call many “father,” since we were ignorant  
 Bb<sup>1</sup> of the true Father.  
 A<sup>1</sup> And this is the great conception of [all] the sins....

The chiasmic pattern is arranged with a series of antitheses, each section antithetically paralleled with its counterpart thereby highlighting the positive and negative connotations of the two teachings. Indeed, the antithesis here has the first half of the unit placing stress on the positive connotations and the second stress on the negative. A further shift from second to first person adds a pathetic aspect to the author's identification with the readers. In A/A<sup>1</sup> teaching is contrasted with sin, denoting both the paraenetic nuance (teaching; the author presuming the role of mentor or teacher,  $\Pi\text{C}\Delta\text{2}$ ) as well as the ethical dimension placed in the negative (sin). We find Matt 23:9a and 23:9b quoted in B, with the antithesis paralleled in B<sup>1</sup>: “Father, who is in heaven” (Bb)// “true Father” (Bb<sup>1</sup>) and, the negative, “a father upon the earth” (Ba)// “many [called] ‘father’” (Ba<sup>1</sup>). A cosmological dualism of heavenly and earthly fathers places the ethical discussion into the context of cosmology or metaphysics and forces the readers to reflect on the locus of their allegiance. A platonic cosmological ascent from multiplicity towards the solitary unity of the supreme divinity may also be implied in the singular “father” and the plural “many called father.”<sup>24</sup> In quoting Matt 5:14a (“you are the light of the world”) in C, especially with the interpretative counterpart in C<sup>1</sup> (“for when we were in the dark”), the author explicitly presents a cosmic dualism, thereby framing the ethical exhortation within a cosmological framework. The unit's stress falls on D, where we are given two Matthean quotes placed in juxtaposition (Da from Matt 12:50, cf. Matt 7:21; and Db from Matt 16:26). Here in D a clear insider/outsider demarcation is presented: familial imagery typifies the insider condition,<sup>25</sup> while the outsider condition

<sup>24</sup> For an outstanding explication of the Platonic system, specifically in comparison with Sethianism, see John D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*.

<sup>25</sup> The importance of familial imagery within moral discourse has been widely noted; see especially Hans Dieter Betz, “De Fraterno Amore,” 232–33, and Aasgaard, “Brotherly Advice.” As Martin, *Metaphor*, 104, has observed: “This friendly setting is intensified in Christian paraenesis by the adoption of family ethics.” This observation applies not only to 1 Peter, which is Martin's focus, but also other early Christian texts, such as for example the Pauline tradition (including Paul, Luke-Acts, and the Deutro-Pauline letters as well as the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*). Albert Wifstrand recognized that Christian paraenesis is primarily a form of paternal exhortation (see his, “Stylistic Problems,” 172).

is disadvantageous (“forfeit your soul”) and futile. The two conditions are not immutable: insiders can run the risk of falling into the outsider status, and indeed insiders once were in the outsiders’ position.<sup>26</sup> The ethical *crux* falls on the qualification for insider status: doing “the will of the Father.” As Wayne Meeks has noted (specifically with reference to 2 *Clem.* 9:11 and 10:1), early Christian references to “the will of God” carry strong ethical connotations.<sup>27</sup> The author’s reference to divine willing in Da indicates a dynamic, fluid rather than static or deterministic anthropology:<sup>28</sup> insiders can become outsiders, and, therefore, there is the danger of apostasy (cf. 14,28–38, “old bond of debt,” a likely reference back to the “garments of condemnation” at 11,25–30 thereby highlighting the past condition of the readers). The chiasmic antithesis of 9,27–38 nicely explicates the hortatory tone of the opening negative imperative ΠΙΝΟΥΤΕ, placing the ethical admonition (“doing the will of the Father”) into a cosmological dualism of allegiances between the two teachers/teachings.

The prominence of moral *exempla* in this tractate works within the dualistic framework of the two-way schema of life (faith) and death (unfaith). The parabolic material, for instance, offers just such a paradigmatic framework for the paraenesis and, thereby, contributes to the socialization function of the paraenesis. The rhetorical situation facing the community is one of a division within a Christian community. This rhetorical situation recalls Perdue’s second type of social setting: the reader(s) facing a potentially threatening situation. By addressing this situation within an instructional context, the author offers a confirmation of belief intended to affirm the readers in their faith during such a divisive conflict.<sup>29</sup> The author explains this division as being the

<sup>26</sup> The ΓΑΡ at 9,33, especially with the conditional ΕΚΩΛΗ, clearly links the outsider emphasis in Db to the conditional statement of Da. Therefore, the juxtaposition of these quotes in D indicates that the insider and outsider conditions are not static or immutable.

<sup>27</sup> Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*, 152–53. Divine will appears throughout Valentinian paraenetic material, such as *Gos. Truth* 33,30–34 (and fully discussed at 36,39b–38,6) and throughout the *Tri. Tract.*

<sup>28</sup> Contra PHEME PERKINS, “Pauline Anthropology,” 514–15, who draws upon Dihle, *Theory of Will*. Williams *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 190–93, has effectively argued against any such deterministic anthropology, especially when such a caricature implies the rejection of ethics in, e.g., Valentinianism. Cf. Winrich Alfried Löhr, “Gnostic Determinism Reconsidered.”

<sup>29</sup> This text best fits a paraenetic, rather than protreptic function. Given the instructional motifs in *Interp. Know.* (two schools, two teachers), the confirmative function of paraenesis is best identified with the rhetorical strategy adopted by the author.

result of evil cosmic forces known as “the rulers and authorities” (6,32). Such evil forces place the social conflict onto a metaphysical, or cosmic stage. As the author puts it, “they split the Church so as to inherit...” (6,37–38). Although page 7 is badly damaged, the phrase “fighting with [one another...]” (7,20) further highlights that the community is split into two conflicting factions. The opposing faction is referred to as “the church of mortals” (5,33), and are said to have crucified Jesus in order “to keep him in the church” (5,35).

In the fragmentary section that follows, a parable is presented to illustrate this negative *exemplar* of the opposing faction. This parabolic *exemplar* is contrasted with the preceding *exemplar* of the Saviour (3,26–4,39), which is also followed by a parable at 5,14–27. The theme of death is used to transition into the negative *exemplar* at 5,28–37, thereby bringing forth the literary pattern of the two ways. A fascinating relationship is presented in this series of *exempla*/parables between life and death: the Saviour’s death is tied to “not his own death, for he did not deserve to die” (5,31–32); the Virgin who “brought us forth” and is called “the Womb” is, furthermore, “fixed to the cross” (3,30–4,28); at the end of the parable of the sowing seeds we are told, albeit in a fragmented sentence, “And this [is the eternal reality] before the souls come forth from [those who] are being killed” (5,25–27). These various examples highlight that life and death are intimately, almost ironically, linked: in death is a venue for life or immortality. Relations to the author’s own community, especially the Valentinian faction, are notable, although presented as an undertone in the exemplary and parabolic material. The Virgin/Womb brings forth not only the Saviour in his earthly likeness, but also the “insiders”: “... that one [fem.] [who brought] forth” (3,10–31) and also “causes us to transcend [patience...]” (3,33). The closing of the sowing seeds parable hints at the suffering or conflict facing the author’s faction; i.e., out of “death” come those souls that attain eternal reality.

We are later informed that the opposing faction’s teaching “teaches us about dead writings” (9,23–24), a reference that might very well refer to the Jewish scriptures. Here the opposing faction is referred to as “another school” (9,22) in contrast with the author’s faction (“a living school” 9,22).<sup>30</sup> The difference of opinion on both christological

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<sup>30</sup> Again the use of “life” to ethically demarcate the social conflict is presented by directing the readers to see the advantages of the promoted way of virtue. The link

suffering and the nature of sacred texts, or possibly the hermeneutical processes used in interpreting those sacred texts,<sup>31</sup> seems to indicate that the opposing faction was composed of non-Gnostic Christians (i.e. in standard Valentinian anthropology, the psychics), while the author's faction (the pneumatics) were oppressed in some way by their fellow Christians over these theological issues.<sup>32</sup> The issue of charismatic gifts

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between life/death and "dead writings" emerges even more forcefully if we see a parallel with the "dead things" and the "darkening of the heart" in the *Apoc. Adam* 65,14–25. Although there is no indication of direct literary dependence between them, these two texts, one Sethian and the other Valentinian, both illustrate a similar view of life/death with death images or teachings.

<sup>31</sup> The debate does not seem to be over the acceptance of sacred writings, as the author draws heavily upon Matthew in 9,27–38. This very section, it should be noted, is a brief summary or synopsis of the true teacher's teachings. Therefore, the author's dependence on the Matthean material seems to be with an approval of the authority of the source material as scripture. In particular, the source material is presented as a scriptural statement of Jesus' teachings (if Jesus is to be equated with the "teacher"). It would seem, therefore, that the debate centred not on whether sacred texts were mutually used by both factions, but rather on either the acceptance of Jewish scriptures as authoritative or the issue of the interpretation, or mode of interpretation, of the community's sacred texts. If the latter, then the debate probably revolved around christological and cosmological matters. The challenge for the modern reader is to determine what "dead writings" refers to: specific texts or specific understandings of accepted texts (with the wrong understanding or method of interpretation rendering those texts "dead" in their value for the community). The tractate, unfortunately, is too vague to give us certainty on this question. This vagueness, however, does imply that for the readers "dead writings" was a clear enough designation. Such familiarity with the author's vague wording could, for example, indicate that the debate was well entrenched and long standing. Reading between the lines, however, it is difficult to walk away from *Interp. Know.* without the impression that leadership also played a key role in the community's internal struggles.

<sup>32</sup> The presence of the Valentinian tripartite division of humankind, specifically psychics and pneumatics, may be alluded to at 21,21–35 ("For if the sins are many, how much the more now the jealousy of the Church of the Savior. For each one was capable of both types of transgression, namely that of an adept and that of an ordinary person... And as for us, we are adepts at the Word. If we sin against it, we sin more than Gentiles..."). The presence of two types of sin, one for "adepts" (the pneumatics) and one for the "ordinary person" (the psychics), seem to indicate such an anthropological understanding. The statement "we sin more than the Gentiles" (21,30) may present the hylic type of human (or, alternatively, "Gentiles" may be another term for "ordinary person" thereby rendering the tractate's anthropology bipartite rather than tripartite). The presence of the Valentinian tripartite (or bipartite) anthropology is, however, not explicit in the tractate and, therefore, can only be suggested through a process of teasing out the demarcations established by the text. For the adepts, or those who strive (i.e. the Valentinians), sin is presented as something to overcome on the way to glorification (21,31–33 "the crown of victory, even as our Head was glorified by the Father"). This may be an allusion to the process of ascent, where the pneumatic would have to overcome the various archons or gatekeepers in order to successfully ascend to the highest heaven. There may even be the idea that salvation is connected

may also have been a point of contention, as it was in the first-century church at Corinth (1 Cor 1:4–17; 12–14). The conflict may also have divided those within the Valentinian faction. The author calls for reconciliation, as did Paul in 2 Cor 5:16–21, not only between the two factions but also between those within the Valentinian faction (18,21–28). The author contrasts these two levels of reconciliation, rhetorically emphasizing the necessity for the readers to be reconciled with each other. This may imply that the readers were willing to make peace with the opposing faction (the larger, more threatening segment of the community) by rejecting those who remained true to Valentinian beliefs (the smaller, marginalized faction). Thus, the issue of establishing harmony without apostasy becomes the basis for the author's rhetoric of persuasion/dissuasion.<sup>33</sup> Such a concern, as will be discussed below, serves as the social function of *Interp. Know.*, and this social function underlies the paraenesis that addresses this particular community conflict. The literary aspects of two-way schema, antithesis, and moral *exempla* all function to establish this rhetorical strategy.

A further moral *exemplar* that arises in this tractate is drawn from gender. Throughout the tractate the image of the Womb/Virgin/Mother would have likely evoked for the readers the Sophia myth, typical of both Valentinian and Sethian traditions.<sup>34</sup> A curious statement arises

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to a suffering process, a not uncommon theme in Valentinian texts (notably *Ep. Pet. Phil.* where such a theme sets the stage for the paraenetic aside). Such a connection fits the *exempla* and parables we have discussed. A suffering process, furthermore, would render the soteriological speculation of the tractate appealing to the rhetorical situation of the author's faction, where suffering, isolation and the danger of apostasy faced the readers.

<sup>33</sup> The author's inclusive attitude toward the non-Gnostic Christians has led Pagels to locate this community within Western Valentinianism. See her, *Gnostic Gospels*, 116–17. More recently, Thomassen (*Spiritual Seed*, 86–89) has argued that *Interp. Know.* should be assigned to the Eastern Valentinian school given the presence of a soteriology of participation and exchange (see, for example, 12,13–38). Unfortunately, even if we accept a Western or Eastern Valentinian location for the tractate, such a location does not give us much precision in locating the text either geographically or temporally. Furthermore, there is little gained for teasing out the social situation with such general claims. Although it is helpful to locate a text within a broader stream of theological thinking (the Eastern and Western strands of Valentinian thought, for example), it is still necessary to move beyond such general questions to the deeper ones of social dynamics and rhetoric underlying these works.

<sup>34</sup> A classic discussion of the various types of Sophia myth in Valentinianism is Deirdre J. Good, "Sophia in Valentinianism." See also Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 589–96; C. G. Stead, "The Valentinian Myth of Sophia"; and most importantly Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 248–68, who discerns two forms of the Sophia myth (with the two Sophias being historically latter than the myth of a single Sophia).

near the close of the tractate, however, which might have offered a slightly ironic twist to this female figure that would have placed the *exemplar* even more clearly within the context of moral philosophy: “They are senselessly mad! They rend their surroundings! They dig the earth! [CΕΩΧΕ ΠΙΚΑΛ]” (20, 37–38).

A common motif in moral philosophy was to live according to nature (ζῶν κατὰ φύσιν). Although philosophical schools varied in how to achieve such harmony with nature, Stoic and especially Cynic critique of civilization typified one view. Vice was linked with mining the earth for iron and gold, which for Ovid’s “Bronze Age” was tied into war and strife (*Met.* 1.125–145). In the second century, Maximus of Tyre (*Discourse* 36) contrasted the freedom of life exemplified by Diogenes with the imprisoning nature of civilization that leads to vice rather than virtue. The mining of the earth is one step in the fall from the “Golden Age” of humanity: “They began, also, to molest the earth by digging and burrowing in it for metals” (36.2b).<sup>35</sup> Ps.-Anacharsis (*Ep.* 9) likewise denigrates mining within a discussion of violating the shared possession of the earth, which led to the rise of vice with civilization: “They sought the treasures of the earth in various ways, and deemed their search a wonderful thing! They regard as most blessed the first man who devised this silly little undertaking.”<sup>36</sup> The immoral nature of mining, as a fall from the “Golden Age” (an age that was a key concept in Cynic philosophy),<sup>37</sup> draws upon Ovid’s four ages of humankind. For Ovid, digging into the ground was a violation of harmonious relations with the earth (and a violation of the earth itself), resulting in iron and gold being used for war and thus the death of the earth’s children and the departure of Astraea (virginal goddess of justice, the constellation Virgo) from the earth (*Met.* 1.137–150). The earth is conceived of as a mother, with children and an inner depth (*itum est in viscera terrae*; *viscera* is not used here directly in reference to the earth’s “womb” though such an image may be invoked).<sup>38</sup>

For the readers of the *Interp. Know.*, this statement, “they dig the earth,” would likely have evoked an allusion to this broader moral

<sup>35</sup> Translation from Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 74.

<sup>36</sup> Translation from Malherbe, *Cynic Epistles*.

<sup>37</sup> See Martin, “The Chronos Myth.”

<sup>38</sup> Earth as mother is also attested in Lucian’s *Prometheus* where Prometheus laments his unjust punishment: ὦ Κρόνε καὶ Ἰαπετὲ καὶ σὺ ὦ μήτηρ... (Lucian of Samosata, *Prometheus*, LCL).

figure of mining the earth, especially given the theme of persecution/strife that precedes this statement (20,23–36). If a connection were made between the Mother and the earth, then a carefully veiled shift from a more Platonic view of Mother to a more Stoic or Cynic view would have been perceived. While the Mother/Virgin/Womb figure clearly plays a role in exemplifying the author's call to reconciliation, this slight shift would have placed the entire *exemplar* into a worldly critique with a clear ethical motif in moral philosophy on the problem of living in harmony with nature.

The literary aspects of *Interp. Know.* demonstrate the presence of paraenetic devices within this tractate. The author utilizes various stock literary techniques to exhort the audience. These literary techniques fit the paraenetic genre: e.g., antithesis, motivational clauses, the two-way schema, and moral *exempla*. Consequently, *Interp. Know.* can be defined as an example of second- or third-century Christian paraenetic literature based on the criterion of literary indicators.

#### SOCIAL POSITIONING IN THE *INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE*<sup>39</sup>

In setting forth the positions for his or her social idealization, the author of the *Interp. Know.* hints at a moral relation between his or her faction and that of the broader Christian movement. This link is reflected in the very first possible reference to a social context. After referring back to the faulty faith of earlier Christians (*Inter. Know.* 1,16–21 “[The likeness] that came to be through [them followed] him, but through [reproaches]

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<sup>39</sup> Although already addressed earlier in this study, it is necessary to reemphasize that this tractate is highly fragmentary. Every reading of this text is, unfortunately, problematized by the condition of the tractate. The fragmentary nature of the text is problematic for at least two reasons. First, we are left with textual reconstructions that are suggestive of what likely was in the text. Second, there is the more troublesome difficulty posed by missing material that does not allow reconstructions to be attempted. When several lines or even pages of a text are missing, we lack clues that could have offered possible interpretative insights into the text's meaning. Consequently, all readings of the *Interp. Know.* are highly tentative. The reconstructed material offers plausible readings, but not certain readings. What follows in this section is only a possible reading of the text based upon extant and reconstructed text. Although no one passage can be used to definitively establish the social idealization of this text, through a cumulative presentation of various passages a plausible reading may emerge. It is my hope that even if my specific reading of this text is not fully accepted that my discursive approach to its social function will have enduring value for appreciating the communicative aspects of early Christian texts.

and humiliations. [Before they received the apprehension] of a vision [they fled without having] heard [that the Christ] had been crucified,” perhaps an allusion to Luke 24:13–35),<sup>40</sup> the author creates a contrast with “our generation” (1,22). Earlier Christians, or perhaps even followers of the initial Jesus movement (note 1,19–20), split over a matter of failed belief during a time of persecutions or difficulties (1,18)—some fell away due to not having strong enough faith. Those who fell away, however, failed to receive any visions or word about the crucified Jesus. Here *Interp. Know.* deviates from the Lukan account, as well as other similar accounts such as the *Ep. Pet. Phil.* (132,10–133,9), by not having those who fled away return with either a resurrection appearance or an apostolic reminder. The author, however, presents the earliest days of the Christian movement as a type of moral example for his or her own community of Christians. Whereas earlier followers of Christ suffered in their belief due to the events surrounding the crucifixion, the present community struggles with the problem of faith in Christ’s resurrection (1,22–24 “[But our]<sup>41</sup> generation is fleeing since it does not yet [even believe that the Christ is alive]”). This ironic presentation of death and life nicely sets up the two-way schema of faith and unfaith for the tractate. It also offers a glimpse of the author’s view of the broader Christian tradition. Our author portrays the community as standing in relation to the earliest days of the Jesus movement ([λλλλ ερετιγγ]ενεξ...) (i.e. the community is a *Christian* community, standing perhaps a generation or more away from apostolic times), and the present social conflict as analogous to that facing the earliest Christians: both were faced with the danger of apostasy over not only christological debates<sup>42</sup> but also some form of social pressure or threat to those of weaker faith.

<sup>40</sup> The preceding lines on page 1 of *Interp. Know.* may also have been part of this Lukan allusion. The reference to “signs and wonders and fabrications” (albeit largely a textual reconstruction) may have been pre-crucifixion miracles (Jesus as the wonder worker) that failed to inspire enough faith in the disciples to remain true to Jesus when the test of his death occurred. Post-resurrection visions, however, stand in contrast as far more valuable for faith.

<sup>41</sup> The alternative reconstruction by Plisch, *Die Auslegung der Erkenntnis*, 8, τειεγεγεξ (translated “...dieses Geschlechts”) does not negate the temporal contrast that the author is setting up for the social identification of the readers.

<sup>42</sup> The christological debate in *Interp. Know.*, which would warrant a study of its own, may reflect the debate also found in the *Treat. Res.* Note especially 46,14–17: “For we know the Son of Man, and we have believed that he rose from the dead.” This statement is contrasted with “the philosopher who is in this world” believing,

If the author establishes, or identifies a moral relation with the broader Christian tradition, then it is necessary to inquire as to how the competing factions are portrayed within this analogy. First, the author alludes to a state of suffering among the early followers of Jesus similar to the suffering of their historical *exemplar*. For the author's faction, this suffering state is portrayed as a type of persecution (5,25–27); employing an interpretative reading of the parable of the sower (Matt 13:1–9//Mark 4:1–9//Luke 8:4–8), and thereby linking suffering to being spread over the earthly realm. Other reflections of some form of persecution, or social threat, can be gleaned on page 20: “Or [why] do they persecute men of [this] sort to death?” (20,24–26). A split in community reaction to the threat of persecution may also form the thrust of 19,1–21. Most noteworthy is the reference to those who “exist in the [visible] church” or “[church] of mortals” (ΤΕΚΚΛΗCΙΑ ΠΡΩΜΕ 19,19–21).<sup>43</sup> An external persecution of some sort (local or imperial; sporadic or organized; or even the degree of “persecution” inflicted, be it shunning or killing) is not a significant theme in this text, and runs counter to the internal conflict emphasized. Persecution, therefore, may be invoked in order to highlight suffering as an honourable example to follow, or as analogous to the suffering caused upon the insiders by the opposing faction.

The cross as an *exemplar* for suffering is essential for reading 5,25–27. Prior to the parable of the sower is a curious reference to the “virgin [who is fixed] to the [cross]” (ΠΑΡΘΕΝ[ΟC ΕΤΤ]ΩC ΑΠΙCΤ[ΑΥΡΟC] 4,27). The Virgin, also referred to as the Womb and the Mother in the tractate, likely reflects the Valentinian role of Sophia (or Silence, as the Father's consort) in both creation and redemption. In an insightful study of gender imagery in the *Gos. Phil.*, Elaine Pagels has effectively argued that the separation of *pneuma* and *psyché* resulted in suffering and death (also illustrated in *Exc.* 56.2).<sup>44</sup> The need for reconciliation, or

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erroneously, that he can raise himself (a possible allusion to Simon Magus legends?). Faith is linked to life and death in *Treat. Res.*, as is a realized eschatological view of the resurrection. The *Interp. Know.* likely gains much inspiration from the Pauline view of resurrection in, e.g., 1 Cor 15.

<sup>43</sup> Both Turner and Plisch accept ΤΕΚΚΛΗCΙΑ at line 18 based upon the extant ΤΕΚΚ. Plisch, however, is more conservative in his reconstruction of ΤΕΚΚΛΗCΙΑ at line 19 than Turner, preferring to leave the end of the line blank. Turner's reconstruction, however, is plausible given the antithesis the author is establishing as well as the available space for a noun standing in relation to ΠΡΩΜΕ. The second instance of ΤΕΚΚΛΗCΙΑ, however, is less certain than the first reconstructed ΤΕΚΚΛΗCΙΑ.

<sup>44</sup> Pagels, “Pursuing the Spiritual Eve,” 200 and passim; see also Pagels, *Gnostic Gospels*, 50–56; Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 589–96.

a return to the primordial harmony, resonates with the *Interp. Know.*'s call for reconciliation as the way of life over the way of death. Similarly, Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley has explored the role of the Holy Spirit as a "double name" in the *Gos. Phil.* Buckley recognizes that this gospel's usage of double names reflect a two tiered reality (a kenomatic and a pleromatic condition), which requires the harmonious bringing together of opposites (through the ritual of the bridal chamber, in a type of realized eschatology).<sup>45</sup> The reference to the virgin is noteworthy. Whereas Adam has two virginal mothers, illustrating the dualistic crisis, Christ has a single virgin as mother, thereby paradigmatically illustrating the redemptive process of the bridal chamber (*Gos. Phil.* 71). As Pagels notes, marriage as a soteriological image is meant to offer a redemptive reunion, or reintegration, of complementary opposites. Indeed the crisis of Sophia is due to functioning without her complementary opposite.<sup>46</sup> In *Interp. Know.* the Virgin is linked to Christ through their mutual soteriological connection to the Cross. Such a pairing might effectively illustrate this Valentinian view of Sophia. The strong emphasis on reconciliation in the text adds weight to this possibility. This reference at 4,27 is tied to a soteriological function for this Virgin, and may have been meant as a textual allusion to John 3:14. Reinforcing soteriological function is the literary presentation: 5,25–27 is bracketed by both 4,27 and 5,30–35 where a direct reference to the crucifixion of the Saviour is given (cf. 13,35–38). This crucifixion is claimed to have occurred due to the desire of "the church of mortals" to keep him in their church. Death again is ironically linked to life in both 4,27 and 5,30–35. Our author seems to be portraying the opposing faction as "the church of mortals." Just as the opposing faction tried to force the Saviour to stay within their social, or theological boundaries, so also the suffering of the Valentinian faction while in this world is due to the same cause. Such a reading of 4,27–5,35 indicates that the community conflict is internal, rather than external. The insiders are portrayed as those in the victim's role (typologically related to the Saviour and, therefore, by means of the Virgin, having access to salvation). The

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<sup>45</sup> Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley, "The Holy Spirit is a Double Name."

<sup>46</sup> Pagels, "Pursuing the Spiritual Eve," 201–5. Pagels places the reintegrating role of opposites in the *Gos. Phil.* in contrast with the non-complementary presentation of these images in the Sethian tractate, *Hyp. Arch.* (205). She links the Valentinian attitude, as does Buckley, with a sacramental aspect.

opposing faction, however, falls into the role of the oppressor and is typologically linked to those who killed the Saviour.

Although fragmentary at some of the most crucial points, pages 6, 7 and 8 best present the divided condition of the community. This presentation begins with the image of being captured in nets of flesh (6,29 “having bound us in nets of flesh”), which nicely parallels the dragnet parable in the *Auth. Teach.* (29,3–30,25). Like *Auth. Teach.*, this fishing image in *Interp. Know.* both warns the readers of opposition and challenges them to overcome those who would capture and destroy them. Both texts are also similar in that they present those who oppose the readers as metaphysical or mythical beings (i.e. the archons hindering the ascent of the soul). In *Interp. Know.* these powers are the cause for the “split in the church” (6,37–38; cf. the author’s negative portrait of the world at 1,35–38: “...unbelief which is the [world]. [Now] the world [is the place of] unfaith [and the place of death]...”). Here we find our author using negative mythical *exempla* to portray the negative side of the conflict, just as he or she has used positive *exempla* (e.g. the Virgin and the Saviour) to persuade the readers to stay true to the Valentinian faction. This “split in the church” is also followed by a fragmentary reference to “fighting with [one another...] like others...” (ΕΥΜΙCΕ [Π]ΠΙ[ΕΥΕΡΗΥ] ΠΘΕ ΠΩ[Π]ΚΑΥΕ [...] 7,20). The Virgin, who is also named the Mother at the end of page 7, is again invoked (7,21; 7,31) thereby linking this discussion back to the discussion of suffering on page 5. Again, given the fragmentary damage to page 8, it is possible, though only suggestive, that the Mother’s “enemy” is somehow linked to a particular (divisive) “teaching.” If this reading is correct, then these fragments could be seen as reinforcing the two teachers of page 9 as the closing development of this long discussion about division and suffering in the church.

The demarcation of the two teachings and two schools (page 9) is the climax of the discussion up to this point. The author has now portrayed the Christian community as divided into two conflicting groups (“schools”), each with different leadership or theological leanings. The opposing, and dominant, faction is equated with the “church of mortals” linked to death (both historically, that of the Saviour, and cosmologically, that of the archons). The Valentinians are exhorted to be on their guard while in this earthly realm, to struggle past those who would ensnare them, and to do so by looking to the Saviour and the Virgin, both linked to the cross, for life. Both the Saviour and the Virgin (= Mother) struggle against oppositional forces, and so also should the

community (see also 14,28–31). It is significant that the author has not portrayed the opposing faction as absolute outsiders, be those Romans, Jewish authorities, or even heretics. Images of absolute lines of demarcation are absent, thereby indicating that the relations between the two factions were connected to an intra-Christian conflict. The author does indeed seem to see a moral relation between the Valentinian faction and the opposing faction. Just as with the moral relationship with the broader Christian tradition, this moral relation is one of belief and unbelief—the opposing faction are those who are fallen away and threaten to cause others (the readers) to fall away as well.

The moral relation is not an immutable dualism of insiders and outsiders. Already the danger of the insiders falling into the clutches of outsiders is implied. Such danger likely reflects the threat of members of the author's faction joining the opposing faction, or, at the very least, not struggling on behalf of the author's faction. There are also clear indications of the possibility for the opposing faction to be won over, or at least reconciled, with the Valentinian Christians. The author's concern over reconciliation is explicit at 18,27–28 (“They ought to be reconciled with one another”) (see also 17,30–35 “... being unwilling to reconcile them to [the] bounty of the Head. You ought to give thanks for our members and ask that you too might be granted [the] grace that has been given to them”), and follows a call for unity (18,26 “the [single] unity”). Note also the contrast between two types of harmony that precede this reference to unity: that of an earthly nature and that which is true harmony (ἁρμονία and ἑσυχνωσύνη).<sup>47</sup> Harmony in the Greco-Roman world was a key aspect of peace—i.e. to live in harmonious relations with both the gods and with each other (the two being mutually dependent). Within moral philosophy, ζῶν κατὰ φύσιν invoked the concept of harmony. Here in the *Interp. Know.* the two types of harmony might reflect a musical theme that arises, for example, in Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians* 4.1–2, where Christians are exhorted to remain harmonious through concord; just as a choir's unity is derived from following the director, so also is Christ sung by the Ephesians harmoniously following their bishop.<sup>48</sup> A similar motif

<sup>47</sup> The difference in words may highlight the contrast or indicate that the former is based on decree while the latter on actual unity. Another possibility, as discussed below, is a musical analogy for social cohesion.

<sup>48</sup> For a full discussion of the musical motif in Ignatius, see Isacson, *To Each Their Own Letter*, 43–44. The passage in Ignatius reads: “Therefore it is fitting that you should

might be present in the *Interp. Know.*, where earthly ἁρμονία (reconciliation; i.e., musical concord) is dependent upon true συμφωνία of the single unity. A similar motif of musical harmony is found in Irenaeus (*Haer.* 1.2.6), where the entire Pleroma sings hymns to the Father in unity or harmony. The admonition in *Interp. Know.* against “accusing” the Head might reflect the choir director, though, unlike with Ignatius, here the director is not a bishop but the Saviour (the Head). This reference to unity through the Saviour effectively places this passage onto the cosmological plane, which might parallel the cosmological choir in Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.2.6. Placing this exhortation for harmonious relations onto the cosmological plane is indicated, most notably with the profound either/or statement: “If you purify [it, it abides in] me. If you enclose [it, it belongs to the] Devil” (20,16–18). Salvation of the soul is dependent upon purification and harmony and not simply conquest of, in this case cosmic, opponents.

The discussion on pages 18 and 19 concludes a long section of the tractate, running from pages 15 to 18, that draws upon Paul’s discussion of spiritual gifts and the need for community unity in 1 Cor 12–14 (further drawing upon the pseudo-Pauline tradition, specifically Col 1:18; 2:19; Eph 4:15–16). In Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, he addresses a divisive situation, one where a factious division of parties had emerged (1 Cor 1:10–17). Paul’s admonition is one of being like Christ, raising the question “has Christ been divided?” (1 Cor 1:13). The division in first-century Corinth seems to have revolved around a jealous separation of a spiritual elite, or more accurately at two levels of spirituality, perhaps three (if the references to *pneumatikos*, *psychikos*, and *sarkinos* in 1 Cor 2–3 are three distinct levels of spiritual understanding or maturity), claiming certain spiritual gifts as superior to others. The divisive situation in Corinth was likely far more than a simple two-fold division, as there were evidently multiple factions reflected in the opening of the letter (1:10–17). Despite the complexity

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live in harmony with the will of the bishop, as indeed you do. For your justly famous presbytery, worthy of God, is attuned to the bishop as the strings to a harp. Therefore by your concord and harmonious love Jesus is sung [διὰ τοῦτο ἐν τῇ ὁμονοίᾳ ὑμῶν καὶ συμφώνῳ ἀγάπῃ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ᾄδεται]. Now do each of you join in this choir, that being harmoniously in concord [ἵνα σύμφωνοι ὄντες ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ] you may receive the key of God in unison, and sing with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father, that he may both hear you and may recognize, your good works, that you are members of his Son. It is therefore profitable for you to be in blameless unity, in order that you may always commune with God” (*Ephesians* 4.1–2).

of the Corinthian situation, an elitist and thereby divisive situation is reflected in the letter. Paul counters such claims of elitism due to the gifts' mutual source (12:4–6), their function of serving the common good of the community (12:7), and the superiority of a binding and edifying love to all else in the community (1 Cor 13 especially verse 13).

The author of *Interp. Know.* draws upon this Pauline discussion, applying its lesson to the factious situation facing his or her own community. Unlike Paul, the author of *Interp. Know.* places stress on a two-fold social division, specifically by drawing exclusively upon the Pauline discussion of spiritual gifts with no reference to 1 Cor 1:10–17. Like Paul's situation, our author places special emphasis upon jealousy as a primary cause of division. References to "jealous" (φθονεῖ) predominate in this section of the tractate. The author immediately links jealousy to ignorance and destruction (15,29–32; cf. 21,21–25). Given this link between jealousy and ignorance, our author claims that those who are knowing ones are not jealous (15,29–30). At the bottom of page 15, the discussion moves directly into spiritual gifts. The author argues, as Paul did more than a century earlier, that each "brother" has his (or her) own spiritual gift (15,33–38; 16,19–21), and that each gift is connected to the same Head (16,28–31). Rather than being jealous (18,27), and thus divisive, the readers are to be mutually edifying to each other (18,17–22), recognizing that an indivisible body (the church) by necessity must be unified (17,14–25). Death and ignorance are again raised, linking this dynamic (the way of faith) to social ethical decisions made by the readers. (See 21,21–26 on the sin of members of the community being divided into two types: that of adepts and that of ordinary people.)<sup>49</sup> They are admonished not to hate their fellow members (17,25–29). Rather than following the way of death—the way of ignorance, jealousy, and division<sup>50</sup>—the author

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<sup>49</sup> Although Turner translates φάειξ as "adept," it was pointed out to me by Ismo Dunderberg that it could also be translated as "athlete" or "contender" such as in *Thom. Cont.* See also Emmel, "Exploring the Pathways," 273, who also follows an athletic reading, and my more extensive discussion in chapter 8 on the athletic metaphor. This alternative reading of φάειξ would allow the reference to two types of sin to be less hierarchal in nature. That is, rather than the adepts standing above the ordinary person in a static or deterministic anthropology, we have instead a more ascetic nuance of striving or not striving—rendering the categories both fluid (insiders can become outsiders and perhaps outsiders insiders) as well as dependent upon the efforts, rather than the nature of the contenders.

<sup>50</sup> Our author creates a contrast between being reconciled and being jealous at 18,25–32, with the following claim that the readers should be thankful that they do not

repeatedly calls for reconciliation, claiming that this reconciliation (18,26–27) must be grounded in the Head (17,30–31; cf. 17,16 and 18,34–38; similarly the theme of unity to the Head and reconciliation is reflected in Col 1:18–22).

Our author then places this social-ethical situation within a brief cosmological context (cf. Col 1:20), one that again defines the two-way schema as one of allegiances: “If you purify [it, it abides in] me. If you enclose [it, it belongs to the] Devil. [Even] if you [kill] his forces that [are active, it will] be with you. For if [the soul] is dead, still it [was acted upon] by the rulers and [authorities]” (20,16–23). This cosmological comment is insightful for two reasons. First, it highlights the importance of allegiances as central to the two-way schema. Second, it argues that the oppressive archons—a reference that likely implies the process of the ascent of the soul—are only external dangers that are only powerful when the Christian’s inward state of being is not alive. By explicating the admonition for social reconciliation through metaphysical reality, the absolute necessity of addressing moral relations between the factions is stressed. As Peter Berger put it, “cosmization implies the identification of this humanly meaningful world with the world as such, the former now being grounded in the latter, reflecting it or being derived from it in its fundamental structures.”<sup>51</sup> The utilization of cosmic soteriological imagery attempts to accomplish just such a function, attempting to persuade the readers to adopt the author’s social perspective and thus engage the opposing faction as standing in a moral relationship in need of reconciliation without apostasy. Therefore, the paraenetic admonition of *Interp. Know.* draws upon both a moral relationship to the broader Christian tradition as well as a metaphysical (cosmological and soteriological) reality to exemplify the moral relationship between the two factions.

Although the author argues for a clear moral relationship between the two factions, and desires some form of unity or reconciliation to occur, the ethical exhortation does not call on the readers to adopt an alternative worldview. It is possible that *Interp. Know.* was written to address differing perspectives on what type of social structure should

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exist outside the body (18,33–35). Both unity and division are linked in this contrast with the Head: those who are united within the Head (or, more accurately, recognize that they have the same Head), while those who are divisive are in opposition to the Head (see also 17,30–31).

<sup>51</sup> Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 27.

exist within this particular Christian community. Beyond theological, especially christological, points of contention, it is also possible that these issues were only superficial issues for a more serious difference, i.e. whether a *true* Christian community (one on the way of life) is an organic, familial community or a broader, more structured social association.

Over a century ago, Ferdinand Tönnies proposed a sociological theory that explicated two basic and opposing forms of social organization: *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, representing different forms of social relations underlying social interaction.<sup>52</sup> Although his bipartite theory is very broad and general, its influence has been felt ever since, especially within Marxist analyses. For Tönnies *Gemeinschaft* (“community”) is an organic and unified social unit. Kinship relations are central for this type, with the father figure playing a key role for leadership.<sup>53</sup> Leadership, explicated either in the role of father or a similarly constructed variant (e.g. a priest or a lord), is grounded in a sense of reverence and usually affection.<sup>54</sup> The economic relations of the *Gemeinschaft* type are largely socially integrated, everything working within a communal basis for the perpetuation of the social body. Village structures, as well as feudal societies, serve as helpful illustrations of such social structures.

In contrast to the organic, kin-based type, *Gesellschaft* social units are open rather than closed social systems. They assume individuality and individual benefit as the *crux* of economic exchange. Tönnies summarizes this social type well when he says, “*Gesellschaft* may therefore be imagined as consisting of separate *individuals* who *en masse* work on behalf of Society in general, while appearing to work for themselves, and who are working for themselves while appearing to work for Society.”<sup>55</sup> Here we find multiple social units that interact in a complex, benefit-driven social hierarchy. Perceptions of social unity, or of a “common good,” are fictive imaginings that enable mutual social exploitation. In such a social structure, the individual is both elevated and, ironically, drastically devaluated.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*.

<sup>53</sup> Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, 24–25.

<sup>54</sup> Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, 34.

<sup>55</sup> Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, 56–57.

<sup>56</sup> Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, 57: “By a constantly repeated process of functional division and rational choice the individual is finally reduced to starkly equal, simple, elementary units of labour, like atoms. The total output of Society is composed of such atoms, to which each individual contributes.”

Tönnies' theory, although primarily an economic theory with clear parallels to Marxist critiques of industrial capitalist societies, may be helpful for explicating the social conflict that prompted the writing of *Interp. Know*. Such an application, however, must be qualified. I am not arguing for an *economic* social conflict, nor am I attempting to argue for a clear certainty of differing modes of social idealization (for instance, there does not seem to be any indications of social exploitation being addressed in the *Interp. Know*). Tönnies' theory is only being used as a heuristic, analytical device for exploring *possible* social relations reflected in *Interp. Know*. It is my suggestion that the conflict underlying this text may have been one of different social idealizations of what the true community should be. By utilizing these two types of social relations as a guide, we might be able to tease out from our text what those differing idealizations may have been. It would seem that our author may have preferred a form of organic, communal social structure, while the opposing faction may have been stressing the need for a more complex, competitive (i.e. less integrative), and hierarchical social structure. The evidence in the text is hardly conclusive either of the rhetorical portrayal of the community or of actual historical social organization. What follows, therefore, is suggestive and tentative.

*Interp. Know* presents the two factions of the community within its exordium. At 2,25–28a we read: “For [he who] is distressed [will not believe]. He [is unable] to bring a [great church] since it is gathered out of [a small gathering].”<sup>57</sup> The type of person reflected in this passage is one that is in a state of distress and thus unbelief. The idealization of the community is “a small gathering”—i.e. the greatness of a church emerges from a small social body. A clear sense of elitism emerges. Such an elite, as well as intimate, social perspective is reinforced by the discussion that immediately follows (2,28b–38). God's apprehension is through his members who are emanations of his trace, which we can assume refers to members of the community (especially in light of the discussion of spiritual gifts on pages 15–19). This apprehension is contrasted with “the structure” (CΥCΤΑCΙC), which apprehends by means of “likeness” (2,30–33). Direct apprehension, in contrast to such indirect apprehension similar to Plato's simile of the cave (*Republic*

<sup>57</sup> The reconstruction on page 2 ([ΠΕΤ]ΩΔΩΔΑCΤ ΓΑΡ [Η]ΔΗC[ΤΕΥΕ ΕΗ][ΠΠΩ]CΑΗ ΠΗΔC ΔΕΙΝΕ ΠΩ[ΥΗΔC Π] [ΕΚΚΑ]ΗCΙΑ ΕCΣΑΥΩ ΔΒΑΛ ΩΠ [ΟΥCΑΥ] [ΩC ΠΚ]ΟΥΕΙ) strikes me as plausible given the surrounding textual clues. Still, my reading of “a great church” and “a small gathering” remains highly conjectural.

514–521) and the relationship of knowledge and ideal forms, evokes a more intimate relationship between church members and God. God’s apprehension is related directly to a form of determinism (2,33–35; “[He knew them] before they were begotten, [and they will know] him”), which again may stress an elitist ecclesiology. That is, the insiders are directly related to God, being his emanated members. Thus, they belong to, or originate from the pleromatic realm. This determinism rhetorically functions to elevate the identity of the readers, and should not be seen as deterministic in the sense of the Gnostic being saved by nature. This passage may present a *Gemeinschaft* social structure: we find a small, intimate, and elite body. Such a close-knit idealization of what the church should be, if such a reading is plausible, obviously is our author’s preferred social perception.

An odd link, however, to “a great church” (2,27–28) needs to be considered. No dualistic demarcation is presented between “great church” and “small gathering.” Rather, the issue is one of belief/distress negatively affecting the emergence of a great church *from* a small gathering. In closing the exordium of the tractate, the author has maintained the demarcation of faith/unfaith as the two-way schema for the entire paraenesis. The closing, however, moves the discussion towards the social context facing the community. The vague allusion to the context *per se* likely indicates that the audience was well aware of the author’s reasons for making such a reference. When we recall the rhetorical value of positioning, what we see is a location of those who would move the church forward towards greatness and those who, in their unbelief/distress, hinder the progression of the church. Still an irony emerges in this passage—the great church is gathered from a small gathering; i.e. out of smallness comes greatness (either as glory or as social expansion, thus a possible missionary reading). This is reminiscent of the gospel sayings about little faith accomplishing great things (e.g., the parable of the mustard seed Matt 13:31–32//Mark 4:30–32//Luke 13:18–19; the parable of yeast Matt 13:33//Luke 13:20–21; and the saying about little faith moving mountains Matt 17:20–21). A possible implication of this passage, however, may be that the opposing faction lacks appreciation for the value, indeed the necessity, of a small, elite gathering. If such an implication is viable, then it is possible to see our author positioning the opposing faction as those in a state of distress and thus unbelief.

Further indications of a type of *Gemeinschaft* social structure can be gleaned. In addition to this opening exordium’s discussion of great church and small gathering, there is familial language invoked (“father

in heaven” and “many called father”; 9,27–38). Such language pushes forward a sense of an intimate, dependent, closed society. The reference to Christ as the “Head” evokes not only the Pauline image of the church as a body, but also, as in Paul’s writings and the pseudo-Pauline writings, the organic self-enclosed fictive kinship that is reminiscent of Tönnies’ community type.

Indications of positioning the opposing faction, though only suggestive, are present in the text. The jealousy and disunity of the community play into an image of a social body that is competitive, based on individual importance by means of devaluing—or, in Tönnies’ language, to commodify—other individuals. Our author rejects such a view of community as association, preferring to idealize the Christian community as an organic whole that is typified by mutuality. Such mutuality is seen clearly on page 18, following a fragmentary section that may have addressed divisiveness in the church, where a unified and edifying two-fold ministry of proclamation and martyrdom are valorized. When these various indications of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* are linked to the discussion of two schools and two teachers (9,20–26), then a possible social idealization of a *Gemeinschaft* type of community emerges. Our author advocates an organic, closely-knit social structure (the *ethos* exemplified for imitation in this text) in opposition to a form of *Gesellschaft* church ecclesiology.

Although a full discussion of the type of “school” (σχολή) our author may have idealized for his or her faction, and indeed the Christian community more generally, is beyond the scope of this study, it is clear that *Interp. Know.* does indeed portray the Valentinian faction of this Christian community as a type of philosophical school.<sup>58</sup> The antithetical pairing of two schools and two teachers makes such a self-designation evident (or at least as evident as the condition of the tractate allows). In his groundbreaking essay on Valentinianism and philosophical schools of antiquity, Christoph Marksches has offered a threefold typology of such schools in Rome: domestic philosophers; popular or parlour philosophers; and professional philosophers.<sup>59</sup> Marksches argues that

<sup>58</sup> It is my hope to prepare a more focused study of *Interp. Know.* on this very question. For the purposes of this study, however, a brief discussion of a Valentinian “school” should suffice for explicating the author’s social idealization.

<sup>59</sup> Christoph Marksches, “Valentinian Gnosticism.” Analyzing Valentinianism within the context of ancient schools is not new, however, see also Gerd Lüdemann, “The History of Earliest Christianity.” See also the essay by Ismo Dunderberg, “Valentinian Teachers in Rome.”

Valentinus and Ptolemy may have functioned in the style of professional philosophers, utilizing lectures, commentaries and discussions such as were used in the philosophical schools, whereas those who emerged from their circles likely moved toward more of a parlour-type philosophical school (i.e. developing elaborate systems of mythologoumena in place of the more typical philosophical topics).<sup>60</sup> Markschiefs further claims that the indications of a school designation for Valentinianism needs to be teased out of the heresiological sources as there are no such (self-)designations offered in the Nag Hammadi material.<sup>61</sup>

Here in *Interp. Know.*, however, a clear self-designation as a school is given—and one that stands in contrast to another type of Christian school (compare with *Val. Exp.* 37,30, which seems to be polemically directed towards non-Valentinians/other Christians). There are in fact two instances of  $\text{C}\chi\text{O}\lambda\eta$  on page 9 (the first on line 22 is fully extant, while the second on line 23 is fragmentary), and these, like the two teachers, are antithetically presented. Both Turner and Plisch reconstruct the second instance of  $\text{C}\chi\text{O}\lambda\eta$  with such an antithesis present,<sup>62</sup> even though they differ in other reconstructed elements in the passage (e.g., Turner's  $\bar{\rho}$  for  $\Delta\iota\bar{\rho}$ , whereas Plisch prefers the verb  $\dagger$  for  $\Delta\iota\dagger$  on line 21). It has been suggested to me that  $\text{C}\chi\text{O}\lambda\eta$  as “school” may not be the most natural way to translate this term.<sup>63</sup> The translation of  $\text{C}\chi\text{O}\lambda\eta$ , however, as “school” (i.e., a place wherein a teacher and students/disciples engage in discussion or debate) is certainly correct (as all commentators on this tractate have understood  $\text{C}\chi\text{O}\lambda\eta$ ) given the instructional setting of, and antithesis between, the two teachers/teachings. To translate  $\text{C}\chi\text{O}\lambda\eta$  as “leisure”,<sup>64</sup> apart from such an instructional setting, would

<sup>60</sup> Markschiefs, “Valentinian Gnosticism,” 436–38.

<sup>61</sup> Markschiefs, “Valentinian Gnosticism,” 418: “In the Nag Hammadi writings there is one (and only one) possible attestation for the self-understanding of the Valentinianism as a ‘school,’ namely the writing commonly entitled *Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX,3), which is critical of the Valentinians (thus again from an opponent’s perspective).”

<sup>62</sup> See the discussion in Plisch, *Die Auslegung der Erkenntnis*, 104–5.

<sup>63</sup> This suggestion was made by Ellen Aitken in 2005 when we discussed this passage in Montreal. I wish to express my appreciation to her for drawing my attention to this point.

<sup>64</sup> “Leisure” is one meaning offered by Liddell and Scott, though the semantic meaning of the term remains closely linked to an instructional context, i.e., learning as the product or context of leisure or rest; cf. the references to this Greek term in Crum, *Coptic*, 357, 493, 563; the Latin *schola*, more so than *otium*, carries the same semantic meaning of learning as an act or product of leisure.

make no sense within the immediate context and, therefore, it should be translated as “school”.<sup>65</sup>

One instance of *σχολή* is used polemically, linked to the other teacher, whereas the first instance of *σχολή* self-designates the insiders (as the living school) in contrast to the other school. Although fragmentary at points, this self-designation should have been addressed in Markschie's study of Valentinianism and philosophical schools. Such a self-designation not only offers a corrective to Markschie's general comment regarding Valentinianism, but it also provides further substantiation for his claim that Valentinianism did indeed function within the framework of a philosophical school system. It is doubtful, however, whether this self-designation assists in answering Markschie's closing challenge: “And whether the Valentinian writings from Nag Hammadi are a popular philosophical variant of Valentinianism or rather documentation of its development away from its philosophical origins needs to be investigated in its own right.”<sup>66</sup> The evidence in *Interp. Know.* is too vague to determine conclusively if our author was advocating a communal vision that was moving away from the formal philosophical school approach of Valentinus or moving instead back to an earlier form of social construction. What is likely, however, is that our author argues that the community should be a school, but not a school that leads toward the way of death (the “[dead] writings” [9,24] and the divisiveness in the community). Indeed, to construct the wrong type of school would be, or has been, to ensure the entrapment of Christians by the archons. As one possible explanation of this duality of schools, it is possible that we are witnessing a division over a spiritual, philosophical school that incorporated a broader social affiliation with the broader culture (i.e., the school is to be a philosophical school like other philosophical schools, albeit a Christian school) and the opposing faction's inclination towards a catechetical type of school.<sup>67</sup> Such a

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<sup>65</sup> See also Markschie, “Valentinian Gnosticism,” 405, on *σχολή* as a term used for “school” and “student-teacher” relations within, especially, philosophical school contexts.

<sup>66</sup> Markschie, “Valentinian Gnosticism,” 438.

<sup>67</sup> This demarcation between these two types of schools within early Christianity up into the Nicene period has recently been explored by Mary Ann Beavis, “Pluck the rose but shun the thorn.” If the author, on the other hand, advocated a less philosophical, though still as a type of *Gemeinschaft* social structure, and more catechetical type of school model, then the presentation of gospel material in the first part of *Interp. Know.* and then Pauline material in the latter part may reflect either early Christian worship

reading may make sense of the “[dead] writings” of 9,24. Regardless of the exact social implications of the school imagery, the very presence of such imagery accentuates the socially integrated idealizations of the community set forth by the author. Indeed, the teaching-school image nicely links this tractate not only to Tönnies’ social typology, specifically *Gemeinschaft* (recall, for instance, the importance of the father figure and the teacher within kinship models), but also the teacher-student image of paraenetic discourse more generally.

Having established a moral relation with both the broader Christian tradition and the opposing faction, our author exhorts his or her readers to seek reconciliation (i.e., to bring about unity within the community), but to do so in such a way as to ensure that the community becomes an intimate, socially integrated type of  $\sigma\chi\omicron\lambda\eta$ . The target audience of this tractate suggests that the moral exhortation of the *Interp. Know.* has a paraenetic social function. A secondary protreptic function might also underlie this tractate, if the call to reconciliation were to be read as extended to non-Valentinian members of the community. Our author may have seen such a model as the only effective solution to the social conflict facing the community; a solution, furthermore, that brings the community back to its Christian roots (note the historical *exemplar* for “[our] generation” at 1,19–24).

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patterns or the development of a canonical structure. I wish to express appreciation to Elaine Pagels for drawing my attention to the possible structural reflection on gospels-epistles in *Interp. Know.* during our discussion in Toronto.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### EXISTING IN ERROR: LITERARY AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF MORAL EXHORTATION IN THE *GOSPEL OF TRUTH*

The *Gos. Truth* was one of the first tractates from Nag Hammadi to be translated and rendered accessible for scholars.<sup>1</sup> Early enthusiasm led to the highly improbable attribution of this tractate to the very hand of Valentinus himself. The case was first put forth first by W. C. van Unnik, picked up by Malinine, Puech and Quispel in their *editio princeps*, and more recently advocated by Layton and his colleagues and students.<sup>2</sup> The case is made on the basis of a comment in Irenaeus

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<sup>1</sup> The *editio princeps* was produced by Michel Malinine, Henri-Charles Puech, and Gilles Quispel, *Evangelium Veritatis*. Significant early studies, including commentaries: Hans-Martin Schenke, *Die Herkunft*; Sasagu Arai, *Die Christologie*; Kendrick Grobel, *The Gospel of Truth*; Cullen I. K. Story, *The Nature of Truth*; and Jacques Ménard, *L'Évangile de Vérité*.

<sup>2</sup> W. C. van Unnik, "The 'Gospel of Truth' and the New Testament"; Malinine, Puech and Quispel, *Evangelium Veritatis*; Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 251; Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*, 184–85; Jacqueline A. Williams, *Biblical Interpretation*, 1–13; and Jo Ann Cavallo, "Agricultural Imagery." Another scholar who, in debate with Markschie, has ardently argued for Valentinus's authorship is Jan Helderma, most recently in "A Christian Gnostic Text." Further arguments for Valentinus' authorship are put forth by Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 147, 424; Magnusson, *Rethinking the Gospel of Truth*, 16–18; and Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 147, 153, 173 (Pearson opens by suggesting Valentinus' authorship and then incrementally assumes this authorship as clearly established). The connection, e.g., between Valentinus Fragment 7 and *Gos. Truth* 43,1, claiming that Valentinus is a visionary and therefore fits the description of a true Gnostic in *Gos. Truth* and thus is the gospel's author, is highly unconvincing as visionary accounts were not uncommon in various strands of early Christianity, including among Valentinians (see Henry A. Green, "Power and Knowledge"). By this same line of argument, for instance, we could claim that the author of the *Shepherd of Hermas* was the author of the *Gos. Truth*. Indeed, even if it could be proved that the author of *Gos. Truth* had Frag. 7 in mind (which is unsubstantiated), it would still not prove Valentinus's authorship. Rather, it would simply point to a founding teacher as a moral example. A notable exception from this tendency to date *Gos. Truth* early, and thereby to link it to Valentinus, is Raoul Mortley, "The Name of the Father is the Son". Mortley argues that *Gos. Truth* is best dated to the early fourth century, and therefore reflects the conflict with Arianism. Michel Tardieu (in an addendum to Mortley's essay) and M. J. Edwards (in his "The *Epistle of Rheginus*") have accepted Mortley's hypothesis. The very fact that Mortley can make such a claim, and find support for his claim, is indicative of the problems of attributing this text to an early stage in Valentinianism let alone to Valentinus himself.

that “those who are from Valentinus... have more gospels than there really are. Indeed, they have arrived at such a pitch of audacity, as to entitle their comparatively recent writing ‘the gospel of truth,’ though it agrees in nothing with the gospels of the apostles...” (*Haer.* 3.11.9; ANF translation).<sup>3</sup> This vague reference to a “gospel of truth” is linked to the incipit of NHC I,3 “the gospel of truth” [ΠΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΠΤΗΜΕ].<sup>4</sup> The reference from Irenaeus and the tractate’s incipit are then connected to an even more vague comment in Pseudo-Tertullian that Valentinus had his own gospel (*Adv. Omnes. Haer.* 4.6). A further venue for arguing this case has been to claim a stylistic similarity between the *Gos. Truth* and the nine fragments of Valentinus (preserved in the Church Fathers’ references to Valentinus).<sup>5</sup> Jacqueline Williams has further added to the argument a claim for a Latin social context for the gospel, even though originally written in Greek, thereby rendering Rome a plausible location (rejecting Lyons because, she claims, Irenaeus surely would have more directly engaged this gospel if it had originated near to where Irenaeus was located). Adding such a location to the underdeveloped mythological motifs in the tractate, she claimed that Valentinus likely wrote the text early in his career within the Roman congregation.<sup>6</sup>

The attribution to Valentinus for this tractate is problematic at best, even though the Valentinian character of the tractate is not really in question.<sup>7</sup> The reference to a “gospel of truth” in Irenaeus is uncon-

<sup>3</sup> The full Latin text reads (from the SC edition by Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutreleau): “Hi uero qui sunt a Valentino iterum existentes extra omnem timorem, suas conscriptions proferentes, plura habere gloriantur quam sunt ipsa Euangelia, siquidem in tantum processerunt audaciae uti quod ab his non olim conscriptum est ‘ueritatis Euangelium’ titulent, in nihilo conueniens Euangelis, ut nec Euangelium quidem sit apud eos sine blasphemia.”

<sup>4</sup> The tractate does not actually bear a title, and thus, noting ancient convention, advocates of Valentinus’ authorship take the title from the incipit as if it were a clear title. See the challenge levelled against using the incipit as a title for this tractate by Schenke, *Die Herkunft*, 13–14, specifically claiming that the incipit only introduces the subject of the tractate and is not a formal title; see also Hans-Martin Schenke, “Evangelium Veritatis,” 28.

<sup>5</sup> See Benoit Standaert, “L’Évangile de Vérité’.”

<sup>6</sup> Williams, *Biblical Interpretation*, 4–5.

<sup>7</sup> See R. McL. Wilson, “Valentinianism and the Gospel of Truth.” The theological system in this text resonates with Valentinianism, though it is muted or softened (e.g., although deficiency and revelation through Jesus on behalf of the Father, along with an ignorant demiurgical figure and an inclusive attitude to non-gnostic Christians [the psychics] seem present, there is no elaborate aeonic cosmology climaxing with the fall of Sophia). The question, therefore, has been whether the presentation reflects a text oriented to a non-Christian audience, an earlier less formalized development of the Valentinian mythic system, or even debates over or with Arianism in the fourth century.

vincing for two reasons: (1) the reference is very vague, placed within a broader rant over various “heretics” not following the writings of the apostles (the Valentinians are claimed to be excessively reckless in this regard by actually fabricating “new” gospels—the polemical rhetoric here should be kept clearly in mind); (2) even if the Valentinians *did* have a “gospel of truth,” Irenaeus is very clear that it is both recent and the product of followers of Valentinus (*qui sunt a Valentino*; there is, therefore, no reason to suppose, based on this reference alone, that the text in question was Valentinus’ workmanship).<sup>8</sup> The latter point is most pertinent, for even if we could assume (and this a large assumption) that the text referred to in *Haer.* 3.11.9 is the same, or a version of, that found within the Nag Hammadi codices, this does not mean that Valentinus wrote it—indeed, it would make more sense to say that *Gos. Truth* fits either a Ptolemaic or Marcosian stream of Valentinian thought as these are the types of Valentinianism that Irenaeus evidently was most familiar with and against which he directed his polemical barbs. The added reference to Valentinus’ own “gospel” in Ps-Tertullian is even less useful, even though it clearly refers to Valentinus. (Whether the person of Valentinus is in mind or the name is simply being used as an eponym for Valentinianism more generally is not clear from the text.) The reference does not say that Valentinus “wrote his own gospel” but “has his own gospel”—the distinction is important, especially if we compare this statement to Paul in Gal 1:6–9 (cf. 1 Cor 1:17; 9:12, 16; 15:1–2). Like Paul, Valentinus may indeed have had his own particular gospel, i.e., his own particular message of Christian truth (his own “good news” as it were), and, like Paul, this “gospel” need not have been a literary gospel such as those Irenaeus has in mind in *Haer.* 3.11.9.<sup>9</sup>

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As the tractate cannot be dated with certainty, it is perhaps best to simply see it as a product of Valentinianism or holding some affiliation with Valentinian theologizing.

<sup>8</sup> A similar observation is made by Andrea Lorenzo Molinari in his “Truth, Gospel of,” 1339; Schenke, “Evangelium Veritatis,” 28–30.

<sup>9</sup> A further complication arises when we consider Irenaeus’ own use of the term εὐαγγέλιον. As Annette Yoshiko Reed (“Εὐαγγέλιον: Orality, Textuality”) has incisively demonstrated, Irenaeus uses εὐαγγέλιον in diverse ways (especially 28–29). In some cases, especially in attacking the Marcionites, he will sometimes refer to a written text (in this case Marcion’s edited version of Luke; 1.27.2) and other times to the one Gospel with four “gospel” faces (the four New Testament gospels). This distinction between the “bookish” gospel and the “four-formed Gospel” is, as Reed indicates, even more ambiguous when Irenaeus addresses Valentinians. As Reed recognizes, the Valentinian εὐαγγέλιον is rejected by Irenaeus not simply due to the Valentinian rejection of particular gospels, but more so “their method of reading and interpreting such texts” (29).

There is, furthermore, no reason to suppose, even if Valentinus wrote a gospel, that such a literary work would be the one that Irenaeus had at least a passing knowledge of in the 180s. Indeed, if it was the same work, and the attribution was known, then it would seem very odd that Irenaeus would not have immediately remarked on Valentinus' own speculative production. As for the stylistic comparison with the fragments, I would have to follow Christoph Marksches's lead in methodologically separating the fragments from the *Gos. Truth* in order to avoid a circular process of reasoning.<sup>10</sup> When the fragments are taken on their own, there is hardly enough to validate a stylistic analysis, or even a systematic reconstruction of the mythology or cosmology of Valentinus. Only by assuming *a priori* a systemic parallel between the fragments and the *Gos. Truth*, along with the further assumption of an early date for the gospel, can we actually establish enough of a parallel between the two sets of sources.

Finally, J. Williams's added claim falters due to this second assumption: the gospel *must* be early because it does not have the developed cosmogony of the Valentinian system. This assumption is questionable for two reasons. First, it works with a linear evolutionary development from simple towards more complex cosmogonic speculation. There is nothing to indicate that a work such as *Gos. Truth* could not have been written later or earlier. Second, it works with a presupposition of what should constitute normative Valentinianism. This presupposition is largely based upon the system sketched out in Irenaeus and supplemented by Tertullian, Origen, Hippolytus and Clement of Alexandria. None of the Nag Hammadi codices that have been classified as Valentinian perfectly fit the Fathers' systematic presentations. This observation, of course, raises the question of what Valentinianism is. For Williams's argument, the presentation in Irenaeus is, methodologically, the best framework to work with heuristically, because it is in Irenaeus that a connection between a Valentinian "gospel of truth" and the Nag Hammadi *Gospel of Truth* depends. Irenaeus does not offer any indications that the "gospel of truth" is any less developed or less speculative than other "heretical" speculations. Indeed, given the rhetorical development in the passage, the audacity of the "gospel of truth" would place it at a climax of speculative recklessness.

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<sup>10</sup> Marksches, *Valentinus Gnosticus?* Cf. Andrew McGowan, "Valentinus Poeta."

If the *Gos. Truth* cannot be seen as either the product of Valentinus, or undoubtedly seen as representative of the earlier stages of Valentini-  
anism, then what can be said about it? Scholarship has tended to view  
the text as a “meditation on the gospel”—indeed, Grobel’s commentary  
actually has this as its subtitle. A meditation, that is, on the cosmologi-  
cal problem of “Error” (ΠΛΑΜΗ) and the need to bring to awareness  
those who are lost in error but belong to, or are encompassed within,  
the Father.<sup>11</sup> This tractate’s “gospel” is, in short, a mix of cosmological  
crisis, grounded in cosmogonic speculation on ontological relationships,  
with soteriological processes.<sup>12</sup> Soteriology is accomplished largely by  
the Father working through the Son (and, incorporated into the Son’s  
work, the Spirit).<sup>13</sup> The discussion, however, is not entirely left on  
the cosmological plane. A rather abrupt, and for earlier scholarship  
somewhat puzzling, shift occurs on page 32 with a series of imperatival  
injunctions in the second person plural. At the end of this series of  
imperatives there is another shift back to a cosmological discussion,  
specifically of the Father’s “fragrance” or “aroma” (CΤΑΕΙ).<sup>14</sup> This  
series of injunctions comprises a paraenetic subsection of the *Gos.*  
*Truth* (32,31–33,32), a section that draws the readers into the process  
of salvation by placing them into a missionary function grounded in  
an ethical or moral ontology.

#### LITERARY FRAMEWORK FOR THE PARAENETIC SUBSECTION

Whereas the paraenetic genre is established by the overarching presence  
of literary and social features of paraenesis that dominate the entire  
text, the paraenetic subsection simply offers a collection of paraenetic

<sup>11</sup> Helderman’s connection of ΠΛΑΜΗ with Isis, especially within an argument for Valentinus’s authorship of *Gos. Truth*, is extremely speculative. Although a comparative parallel might be drawn, there is no reason to force Error into the wandering motif of the Isis myth(s). See Jan Helderman’s “Isis as Plane in the Gospel of Truth?”; see also, *Die Anapausis*; “A Christian Gnostic Text,” 60–61.

<sup>12</sup> David Dawson, “The *Gospel of Truth* as Rhetorical Theology,” 241, notes the soteriological importance of the *Gos. Truth*’s “frustration of identification,” which is solved by means of a “dialectic interplay” of searching and completion.

<sup>13</sup> For a broader discussion of the soteriological role of the Spirit in cooperation with the Father and Son, as well as the ritualization of the Spirit’s function, within the Valentinian material (including the *Gos. Truth*), see Tite, “The Holy Spirit’s Role,” *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> Grobel, *Gospel of Truth*, 148–49, translates “aroma” and links this to 2 Cor 2:14–16 and draws a comparison to the *Manichaean Psalm-Book* and Mandeian works.

material that contributes to the larger literary context. As discussed in chapter 4, the subsection, as a rhetorical unit, must be delimited from its broader literary context and, subsequently, analyzed with an eye towards the contribution of the paraenetic material to the broader rhetorical strategy of the text. It is, therefore, necessary to establish the contours of the literary aspects of the subsection. That is, we need to have a method in place in order to determine the beginning and end of a rhetorical unit that is paraenetic when the unit does not determine the genre of the entire text.

Each attempt at isolating a given rhetorical unit of paraenetic material must be determined based on each individual case, or types of cases. In some cases the very presence of a typical paraenetic literary arrangement, such as the household/station code or virtue/vice lists, will help isolate and identify the paraenetic subsection. In other cases, such as in the *Gos. Truth*, the subsection will be less evident by such arrangements. In those cases, another approach is necessary. One such possible approach is the literary form identified by David Bradley (unhelpfully) as *topos*. Here I will outline Bradley's proposed literary form, along with the challenges raised by especially Terence Mullins and John Brunt. Methodic controls in establishing the presence of a literary form, despite Mullins and Brunt's critiques, still need to be defined. Moreover, I shall refer to the literary form as a "cluster" in order to distinguish it from "*topos*" in the stricter rhetorical senses, especially the *communes loci* and above all the argument from contraries. My goal in this section is not to establish a new literary form. Indeed, to establish such a literary form would necessitate a broad survey of ancient literature to inductively tease out those features that typify the form and then to reapply that established form back onto the literature in order to verify the general, abstracted form by means of the particulars being compared. My goal is far less ambitious and, hopefully, far less fraught with the methodological difficulties of such category construction.<sup>15</sup> Rather, I hope to simply build on the work of Bradley, Mullins and Brunt and thereby refine a literary form that has

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<sup>15</sup> Note, for instance, the criticisms raised against Williams's *Rethinking "Gnosticism"* in my "Categorical Designations." Although I agree with Williams's critique of the categorical "Gnosticism" and applaud his application of social scientific theory to the material (specifically applying religious innovation for explanatory purposes), a serious problem with his work is his failure to address the "gap" between generals and particulars.

already been established. The refinements I propose are intended to address the continued problematic nature of the *topos* form; problems that arise simply due to the failure to construct viable methodological controls in isolating such units. This discussion of the *topos* form is relevant for establishing the subunits of the *Gos. Truth*, in particular the paraenetic subsection to be analyzed.

### *The Bradley-Mullins-Brunt Debate*

In his 1953 article Bradley attempted to establish a literary form for making sense of the paraenetic sections of Paul's letters. For Bradley, a *topos* is to be defined as "the treatment in independent form of the topic of a proper thought or action, or of a virtue or a vice, etc."<sup>16</sup> Examples of such topical or thematic discussions are drawn from various classical works in order to illustrate and thereby substantiate this argumentative form. For example, Ps.-Isocrates' *To Demonicus*, which Bradley correctly identifies as paraenetic, contains various sections that are thematically grouped: "a *topos* of confidence" (1:22, 23), "a *topos* of the proper use of wine" (1:32), and "a *topos* of proper speech" (1:41).<sup>17</sup> Some *topoi*, such as those illustrated from Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, follow a pattern of "περὶ X-genitive" (e.g., περὶ θανάτου; περὶ πόνου; περὶ δόξης).<sup>18</sup> Other Greco-Roman examples include Epictetus (*Encheiridion*), and within Hellenistic Jewish circles, *Sirach* 31:25–30 and *Testament of Judah* 16 (on wine). The ethical nature ("right behaviour") is very clearly present in these various examples of *topoi*. The topological form pulls together material on a particular thematic topic for ethical admonition.

For Bradley, there are two basic criteria for establishing or defining a *topos*:

When we turn to the form of the *topos* as illustrated by these examples we find that its distinctive characteristic is that it is composed of more than one sentence dealing with the same subject. Thus a *topos* may consist of

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<sup>16</sup> Bradley, "Topos as Form," 240. This thematic understanding of *topos* is likely indebted to the influential work of Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature*, especially 70: "...intellectual themes, suitable for development and modification at the orator's pleasure..." and, thus, in late antiquity simply "clichés" rather than ornamentation. Cf. Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 494; and Hermann Wankel, "Alle Menschen müssen sterben."

<sup>17</sup> These are identified and so named in Bradley, "Topos as Form," 241.

<sup>18</sup> Bradley, "Topos as Form," 241–42.

an aggregation of proverbs or other short teachings on the same topic. . . . In such a case the grouping of the proverbs (if they form a true *topos* and are not just a collection of sentences) finds unity in the common subject matter. This unity is often further strengthened by the use of a recurring word which may serve as a binding element.<sup>19</sup>

A topological form, therefore, necessarily must have (1) more than one sentence on the same subject matter, and (2) may have a binding word to enhance the link between the sentences strung together (a *Stichwort*). The binding word or words may either be a prepositional introduction, such as the usage of *περί* noted above (and, according to Bradley, illustrated by 1 Thess 4:9–5:11), or a thematic word that is repeated (e.g., the fourfold repetition of *ἐξουσία* in Rom 13:1–5 and the opening and closing with *ὑποτάσσω*). A passage may also be composed of a series of *topoi*, such as suggested by Bradley on 1 Thess 4:9–5:11:

... we find once more a group of *topoi* appearing seriatim. . . . The first *topos*, vv. 9–12, has to do with love of the brethren (*περὶ τῆς φιλαδελφίας*), the second gives a teaching on the problems of the fate of the Christian dead (*περὶ τῶν κοιμωμέων*), and the third, 5 1–11, is *topos* on times and seasons (*περὶ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν*). This is concluded with an eschatological exhortation in much the same manner as does the *topos* in Rom 13 discussed above.<sup>20</sup>

The social function of Bradley's *topos* form is established based upon an analogy with Stoic and Cynic itinerant teachers. He claims that Paul, like such Hellenistic teachers, would have been faced with almost identical teaching problems or questions that necessitated immediate, and in many cases redundant, answers. Thus, itinerant teachers, whom Bradley perceives as the model for Paul's ministry, would have had a series of topical answers to pull out in such scenarios. Obviously, such an approach to ethical questions or problems would result in a very generalized didactic form, one that is not specific to any particular setting or occasion. Thus, Bradley, not unlike Martin Dibelius on paraenesis more generally,<sup>21</sup> would see paraenetic *topos* passages as independent units separate from, and not overly related to, the larger context of the document within which they are set (e.g., the Pauline paraenesis in 1 Thessalonians is neither specific to the situation in Thessalonica nor

<sup>19</sup> Bradley, "Topos as Form," 243.

<sup>20</sup> Bradley, "Topos as Form," 245.

<sup>21</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 5–11; *Die Formgeschichte*, 238.

necessary for understanding the letter itself—*topos* is simply a stock teaching form adopted by Paul and incorporated into his occasional letters).

Although Bradley's proposed *topos* form has been widely used in biblical studies,<sup>22</sup> it has not avoided critical challenges. In the 1980s two articles in particular were published challenging Bradley's topological form. Terence Mullins kicked off this critique by returning scholars to Bradley's now dated article and proposing particular modifications to the topological form. Mullins begins by establishing the two criteria from Bradley's definition of *topos*. The first, Mullins notes, is essential for Bradley's definition ("composed of more than one sentence dealing with the same subject") while the second is optional ("often uses a recurring word which may serve as a binding element"). As Mullins correctly observes, such a set of criteria for establishing a literary form is far too vague and general to be effective,<sup>23</sup> though the form does seem to be valid based upon the examples that could be, and in Bradley were, marshalled to illustrate *topos*. (It should be noted, however, that Mullins does not accept every example set forth by Bradley, e.g., those from Marcus Aurelius.) The remainder of Mullins's article sets forth a more precise set of criteria for identifying the *topos* form.

Mullins proposes a more rigid process for identifying the *topos* form. Specifically, he notes the presence of three essential characteristics, which, though flexible in their placement in a *topos*, must be present in order to classify a passage as a *topos*. The three characteristics are: (1) Injunction, (2) Reason, and (3) Discussion. The injunction sets forth the imperatival urging to particular behaviour. The reason offers some rationale for the injunction, while the discussion explores "logical or practical consequences of the behavior."<sup>24</sup> This topological form is thematically linked, though not as independent sentences loosely woven together. Rather an enthymematic argumentative structure emerges. The following example, offered by Mullins, is illustrative of this form:<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Robert W. Funk, *Language*, 255–56; William G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 39; and more recently, Hermann von Lips, "Die Haustafel als 'Topos'". Cf. Abraham J. Malherbe, "Christianization of a *Topos*," 124, where he refers to *topos* as "a fairly systematic treatment of a topic of moral instruction which uses clichés, maxims, short definitions, etc., rather than the latter themselves."

<sup>23</sup> Mullins, "Topos as Form," 542.

<sup>24</sup> Mullins, "Topos as Form," 542.

<sup>25</sup> Mullins, "Topos as Form," 542.

- (1) Injunction: Guard more faithfully the secret...
- (2) Reason: for good men ought to show...
- (3) Discussion: Consider that you owe it to yourself...

This example, drawn from Ps.-Isocrates, *To Demonicus* 1.22–23 (“On Confidence”), clearly indicates that each characteristic necessarily builds upon and substantiates the exhortation. As a result, the Mullin *topos*, unlike the Bradley *topos*, is a more precise and functional unit of argumentation. Added to these three necessary characteristics, Mullins also suggests two optional characteristics of a *topos*: Analogous Situation and Refutation. The latter addresses contrary behaviours to those being argued for, while the former is a typical rhetorical form of argumentation used here to add persuasive force to the exhortation.

As to the social function of *topos*, Mullins also challenges Bradley’s understanding of a set of stereotypical “grab bag” answers. Although particular topics or questions would emerge in diverse settings for itinerant teachers such as Paul, there would still be a degree of adaptation to the particular setting in question.<sup>26</sup> Mullins offers a persuasive example from the Cynic epistles on begging and wearing a ragged cloak.<sup>27</sup> In Ps.-Crates’ letter to his students (*Ep.* 2) he makes the following topological argument:<sup>28</sup>

- (1) Injunction: Do not beg the necessities of life from everyone...
- (2) Reason: (for it is not right...)
- (3) Discussion: Then it will be possible for you to demand...

In Ps.-Crates’ letter to Metrocles (*Ep.* 22) the same topic is addressed, but the reason and discussion change:

- (1) Injunction: Do not beg from everyone...and do not take the same amount from everyone...
- (2) Reason: For one cannot again receive...
- (3) Discussion: since they squander their money...

The general advice offered in these two letters sets forth the same position on begging, and therefore could be seen as a *topos* on Begging. The rationale and discussion offered, however, vary, as does the exact wording of the imperatival first element. Rather than a stereotypical

<sup>26</sup> Similarly see the critiques raised by H. Boers, “Form Critical Study of Paul’s Letters” and Funk, *Language*, 255–56.

<sup>27</sup> Mullins, “Topos as Form,” 545.

<sup>28</sup> Mullins cites Malherbe’s translation in *The Cynic Epistles*.

answer that could be applied to various situations, the two examples of a begging *topos* are specific to the setting within which they are framed. Mullins claims that the same non-stereotypy is present in the Pauline material.<sup>29</sup>

Although Mullins's critique of Bradley's proposed *topos* form attempted to push the discussion forward in a constructive direction by adding a more precise and rhetorically sensitive delimitation to the form, John Brunt set forth a far more destructive critique of the Bradley *topos*. For Brunt, Mullins's criticisms were only the beginning of the dismantling of the *topos* form. Although it is difficult to tell if Brunt desired his article to be the death nail in the coffin of the *topos* form or to simply push forward, and further, Mullins's call for a more useful understanding of *topos*, it is clear that he failed to add a constructive element to his article, leaving us with more questions than answers on the utility of *topos*.

Brunt begins his critique, as did Mullins, with Bradley's definition of *topos*. He agrees with Mullins's criticisms, and then proceeds to add two more to the list. Brunt first claims that the utilization of the very term *topos* is problematic. Problematic, that is, due to the fact that classical rhetorical theory utilized the term in reference to a series of argumentative styles, also referred to as *communes loci* ("commonplaces") in the handbooks. Although the commonplaces are indeed repeated and somewhat stereotyped in nature, they are neither thematic topics nor pat answers that are loosely connected, as in the Bradley *topos*. Rather than subjects under discussion, the rhetorical *topoi* were types of rhetorical arguments that could be applied to specific situations, especially within a courtroom setting. In Cicero's discussion of the commonplaces, he distinguishes two branches of argumentation: "...one concern[ed] with the invention of arguments and the other the judgement of their validity" (*Topics* 2.6). The latter is the skill developed by the Stoics (dialectic analysis), while the former, which Cicero treats in this work, is necessary to understand prior to the latter and encompasses the nature of topological analysis: how does a rhetor establish or construct an argument effectively? Cicero defines *topos* (or *locus*) as "the region of an argument, an argument as a course of reasoning which firmly establishes a matter about which there is some doubt" (*Topics* 2.8).

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<sup>29</sup> See Mullins ("Topos as Form," 546) illustration of this point, comparing Rom 14:13–15, 16–23; 1 Cor 8:9–13; 10:25–30; and Col 2:16–23.

Cicero goes on to distinguish two types of *topoi*: intrinsic and extrinsic topics. Intrinsic arguments are those that are derived from and relate back to the case being debated, i.e., the subject of some doubt. Extrinsic arguments are those that are external to the subject and are brought into the argumentation. Such arguments are dependent upon authority or testimony: "... the Greeks call such means of argumentation ἄτεχνοι, that is, not invented by the art of the orator; such would be the case if you answered your opponent as follows: Since Publius Scaevola has said that..." (*Topics* 4.24; on testimony 19.73). Cicero gives more room to those argumentative types that are intrinsic in nature. Examples of such intrinsic, or τέχνοι arguments, would be: arguments from definition, arguments derived from genus, arguments based on similarity or analogy, arguments based on differences, arguments from contraries and corollaries, from antecedents, from consequents, contradictions, efficient causes, effects, comparison, and greater to less, etc. These commonplaces (*communes loci*) are largely derived from Aristotle's *topoi*; who also explored the *enthymeme* as derived from *topoi*, and which is closely linked to *stasis* theory.

Ironically, we also find within the so-called "new rhetoric" of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca a closer adherence to the classical understanding of *topoi* or *loci*.<sup>30</sup> For Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, the *loci* are to be explored within the context of argumentative values and hierarchies; i.e., there is in every commonplace an implicit valuation, as substantiation or defence of quantitative and qualitative hierarchies, of the differing positions being placed within a debate.<sup>31</sup> The end goal of such topological argumentation is to create a delimited image of reality (an *episteme*, to invoke Foucault)<sup>32</sup> that is shaped in such a way as to guide the reader to accept the position advocated by the speaker/writer. This rhetorical effect is largely dependent upon the opposing valuations that underlie specific topological arguments.

Brunt is surely correct in criticizing Bradley for using *topos* as a term for a general clustering of thematically linked sentences, when the term is nowhere utilized by the ancient rhetorical handbooks in such a fashion (e.g., Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; Cicero's *Topics*; *Rhetoric of Alexander*; *Ad Herennium*). Bradley has ignored the technical meaning of the term

<sup>30</sup> Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 83–99.

<sup>31</sup> See especially Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 80–83.

<sup>32</sup> Foucault, *Order of Things*, xxii.

and, as Brunt bewails, such obfuscation has led to confusion in the field.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Brunt is not alone in calling for such a precise distinction, for even at the end of the first century Quintilian indicates that a similar debate/confusion existed in antiquity: “By *topoi* I do not mean, as is now understood, ‘against luxury and adultery and so forth,’ but places of arguments, in which arguments lie, and from which they may be taken” (*Inst.* 5.10.20).<sup>34</sup> With a similar concern, Brunt sees Bradley’s proposal as conflating a technical rhetorical meaning of *topos* with a general, thematic understanding. Unfortunately, he does not go on to suggest an alternative for clarifying the terminology utilized. Brunt does not seem to be dismissing Bradley’s identification of a form,<sup>35</sup> yet the question of constructive clarification has been left wide open for scholars to address.

Brunt’s second criticism raised against the Bradley *topos* addresses the issue of situational setting.<sup>36</sup> Recognizing that Bradley articulated situational *topoi* in his dissertation,<sup>37</sup> Brunt calls into question, furthermore, the narrowly defined nature of Mullins’s proposed modifications. Rather than arguing for one type of *topos*, Bradley, according to Brunt and overlooked by Mullins, actually set forth different types of *topos* forms: specifically paraenetic (general advice) and didactic (situational teaching). Mullins’s published article, in his defence, only addressed the paraenetic *topos*. Brunt also claims that even in Bradley’s work, the distinction is muddled, and, furthermore, the criticisms levelled by Mullins are still valid on the situational nature of paraenetic *topos*. Although wary of the narrowly defined nature of Mullins’s proposal (i.e., that it only addresses one type of *topos* and neglects Bradley’s broader understanding of the form), Brunt goes on to claim that the broad nature of Bradley’s topological discussion (“Some of his *topoi* are general statements beginning with *peri*; others are commands with an explanation for the command; still others are collections of proverbs. And these can be multiplied”)<sup>38</sup> renders the primary criterion for identifying the presence of a *topos* form merely an intuitive decision

<sup>33</sup> For example, W. Wuellner, “Paul’s Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans”; cf. John C. Brunt, “More on the *Topos*,” 498.

<sup>34</sup> Within recent scholarship, a similar distinction is made by Laurent Pernot, “Lieu et lieu commun dans la rhétorique antique.”

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Brunt, “More on *Topos*,” 496, 498.

<sup>36</sup> Brunt, “More on *Topos*,” 499–500.

<sup>37</sup> Bradley, *Origins*, 158–59.

<sup>38</sup> Brunt, “More on *Topos*,” 499.

on the part of the reader (“...Bradley was not dealing with a specific, well-defined form, and thus he ended up identifying *topoi* not by precise formal criteria but by very intuitive ones”).<sup>39</sup> This second criticism of the Bradley *topos*, along with the reverse criticism of the Mullins *topos*, is indeed valid. Methodological controls are surely lacking in Bradley’s work, controls that are necessary for establishing a literary form, and utilizing that form analytically. Mullins’s delimited variant of the *topos* form is helpful, but, as Brunt accurately observes, is too limiting to do justice to the literature and, therefore, begs for further analytical tools to be developed for explicating the broader dimensions of what Bradley explored as *topos*. Unfortunately, as with his first criticism, Brunt fails to offer us a solution to the very problem he raises (there is no Brunt *topos* to add to the discussion). Indeed, he does not even offer a direction for such solution building to begin moving.

#### *A Proposal: Topoi as Clustering*

Given the validity of the criticisms raised against Bradley’s topological form, and as the interlocutors of this debate unanimously have argued that the form Bradley identified is indeed present in ancient writings, I would like to offer a modest proposal for clarifying the Bradley *topos*. In a sense I am proposing to serve as Brunt’s assistant—adding the constructive side of his de-constructive discussion, thereby offering a fresh direction for the *topos* debate to proceed.

Precision of analytical categories can sometimes be accomplished by means of using new terms to distinguish differing analytical agendas. I wish to propose just such a degree of precision for understanding *topos*. First, I propose that we leave the technical meaning of *topos* to the domain of the classical rhetorical meaning: the commonplaces of argumentative strategies. I would add that we keep in mind Cicero’s two-fold demarcation of these *topoi*: the intrinsic (*technoi*) and extrinsic (*atechnoi*) topics. I would keep this first understanding of *topoi* separate and distinct from the thematic understanding of the Bradley-Mullins-Brunt debate. Therefore, secondly, I would propose that we use a different term to designate what Bradley has labelled *topos*. The term I would choose is “clustering”—a term that nicely describes what Bradley and

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<sup>39</sup> Brunt, “More on Topos,” 499–500.

Mullins were both proposing: the development of a discussion around a thematic core. I leave the term clustering somewhat vague simply to denote a flexibility of what may constitute a thematic cluster, thereby encompassing both Bradley's and Mullins's distinctive understandings of *topos*. Proceeding from such a general understanding of clustering, and keeping Brunt's criticism of Mullins's overly narrow delimitation in mind, two specific types of clusters can be distinguished: explicative clustering and injunctive clustering.<sup>40</sup>

I have adopted the term "cluster" from Troy Martin's work on 1 Peter.<sup>41</sup> Martin's work is a helpful example of explicative clustering. After discussing the Bradley-Mullins-Brunt debate, he concludes that, "given these serious criticisms of Bradley's paraenetic *topos* as a literary form, it is not very useful for determining the compositional structure of 1 Peter." Yet, despite this final dismissal of Bradley's topological form, Martin immediately goes on to claim: "Nevertheless, his description of the *topos* does provide a compositional principle that may prove useful in a compositional analysis of 1 Peter." This compositional principle is simply that "topos establishes that paraenetic literary forms may be composed around a common theme or motif."<sup>42</sup> It is in using Bradley for establishing such a compositional principle, rather than a compositional form, that Martin is able to move forward and determine the compositional structure of the letter-body of 1 Peter. Whereas the letter-opening and closing follow the typical epistolary form of early Christian letters, the paraenetic body of the letter lacks a clear compositional framework and, therefore, this needs to be established inductively from the progression of the discussion within the letter. Martin established three metaphor clusters, each derived from an overarching Diaspora metaphor: The Οἶκος-Cluster (the elect household of God; 1:14–2:10); The Παρεπίδημος/πάραικος-Cluster (aliens in this world; 2:11–3:12); and The Παθήματα-Cluster (sufferers in the dispersion; 3:13–5:11). Each cluster explicates a thematic motif that is loosely held together, each element functioning to bring out the broader thematic emphasis of the cluster and, thereby, of the broader, overarching Diaspora metaphor

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<sup>40</sup> My proposed typology for these different *topoi* is not dissimilar to that recently proposed by Johan C. Thom, "The Mind is Its Own."

<sup>41</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*. For an assessment of Martin's work, including reactions to his compositional reading, see the modifications in Tite, *Compositional Transitions* as well as chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>42</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*, 133.

that ties the ontological idealization of the Petrine community together. These metaphors function, compositionally, to “express the ontological status of the recipients.... Only those metaphors that describe or relate directly to the readers and provide the basis for an exhortation determine the compositional structure.”<sup>43</sup> Each cluster, furthermore, contains a series of transitional devices to assist in marking the structure of the text.

From Martin’s discussion of metaphor clusters in 1 Peter, we can establish the following understanding of explicative clustering: a series of images or thematic motifs that are grouped together in order to explicate some ontological idealization of, or on behalf of, the recipients or readers; the clustered motifs may subdivide into diverse clusters or units of discussions, all of which are tied together (either loosely or stringently) by the overarching cluster(s); the presence of transitional markers further denotes the unit’s framework and consequently serves as a further control on the structural demarcation of a given cluster or set of clusters. The goal of an explicative cluster is not primarily, or explicitly, hortatory in a rigid framework of an injunctive discussion. In some cases we are dealing with the establishment of an imperatival admonition or exhortation, while in others a simple working out of a thematic motif. Even in the latter, however, there will typically be a broader hortatory function, even if typical injunctive markers are absent (notably imperatival statements).<sup>44</sup> The images alone may serve as an idealization of a paraenetic *ethos* for the readers to embody. Such ideal images of the readers can be presented in allegorical parables, moral maxims, or typological *exemplars* of good character. Both those clusters that are implicitly hortatory and those that are more explicitly hortatory (two subsets of explicative clustering) simply develop, in broad and somewhat loose, though clearly marked frameworks, their thematic motif. These more general articulations of a topic,<sup>45</sup> without a rigid injunctive framework, are what I am classifying as explicative clustering.

There are, however, clusters that are far more rigid in their structural components, and these I would classify as injunctive clusters. Injunctive

<sup>43</sup> Martin, *Metaphor*, 143; drawing upon Paul S. Minear, *Images of the Church*, 67.

<sup>44</sup> See chapter 5 regarding the hortative nature of paraenesis. The hortative tone, though typically utilizing the imperative or a surrogate for the imperative, can also be present without the imperative.

<sup>45</sup> For a useful collection of several such examples, see Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 30–47.

clustering is the label that I apply to the Mullins *topos*, i.e., a narrowly defined type of paraenetic admonition or exhortation that is necessarily prescriptive in function. I would, therefore, understand injunctive clustering as: the unravelling of an initial imperatival statement within a series of statements that offer reason(s) and discussion(s) for the readers to apply the general advice of the injunction to their particular setting; a marking of those necessary elements (injunctive, reason, discussion) with imperatives, either negative or positive, and occasionally motivational clauses to add warrant to the imperatival claim; sometimes a series of injunctive statements linked together by a common topic and reasons either supporting specific injunctive statements within the cluster or to the larger sets of injunctive statements. What needs to be noted here is, firstly, that there is a clearly defined structure to the cluster, one that is derived not from metaphors and similes (though they may be present) but rather from the argumentative function of the elements within the cluster. Secondly, there is a very clear prescriptive or hortatory tone to the cluster—the exhortation is explicit, and the injunctive claims are central to the unit. As Mullins suggested, there could also be two optional elements of refutation and analogy within such injunctive structures. The explicative and injunctive clusters, it should further be noted, need not be exclusive of each other. Indeed, injunctive clusters may be woven into a broader explicative cluster, and explicative clusters may tend toward, though not fully manifest themselves within, a type of injunctive clustering. We may also wish to note that, even with the clarification of *topos* within my proposed typology, clustering and *communes loci* need not be exclusive of each other, even though they are surely distinct. Within the argumentative discussion of a cluster, either explicative or injunctive, an author may draw upon various *communes loci* in order to make his or her argument.

#### LITERARY ASPECTS OF *GOSPEL OF TRUTH* 32,31–33,32

Although scholars have recognized that the *Gos. Truth* has a fairly well-defined imperatival, ethical subsection between 32,31–33,32, and several have actually labelled this section paraenetic, or have at least noted that it is comprised of paraenetic injunctions,<sup>46</sup> there has been a

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<sup>46</sup> See, e.g., Schenke, *Die Herkunft*; Arai, *Die Christologie*; Story, *Nature of Truth*; Ménard, *L'Évangile de Vérité*; Standaert, "L'Évangile de Vérité," 245, 253; Williams, *Biblical Interpretation*.

tendency to dismiss or marginalize the ethical aspects of the *Gos. Truth.*, even in discussions of this very subsection.<sup>47</sup> Grobel is perhaps the best representative of this approach to ethical aspects of this subsection: “This whole page is dominated by the imperative (second person plural), continuing the sermonic tone of the previous page. Moreover on the face of it 33:1–8 is full of *ethical* imperatives, astonishing in a Gnostic work, for the Gnostics are generally held to have been devoid of ethical concern.”<sup>48</sup> Grobel’s astonishment is, of course, dependent upon a preliminary assumption that Valentinians would not be interested in ethics. How does one address this astonishing presence of ethical exhortation? Grobel solves this inconsistency by noting a metaphorical dimension for these imperatives. The imperatives are read as simply metaphorical of a call to missionary zeal. However, his solution is problematized by his following claim: “Even so, missionary zeal is rooted in ethical concern for others, the ultimate concern which motivates and activates all mediate concerns for others.”<sup>49</sup> In contradiction to his presumption that the author or readers of this text should not have been interested in ethics, Grobel allows for the presence of ethical concern in this subsection. His presumptions, imposed upon the text, recall the problem that Desjardins raised regarding the placing of Valentinian material onto a Gnostic trajectory rather than a Christian trajectory. Such a dichotomous set of trajectories, as Michael Williams exhaustively demonstrates, reinforces stereotypical assumptions as to what is Gnosticism. While the latter trajectory was concerned with ethics or morality, the former by definition should not have allowed the presence of ethics. Grobel is clear on this point when he claims that, “Gnostics are generally held to have been devoid of ethical concern.”<sup>50</sup> A metaphorical reading of what could otherwise be read as actual ethical exhortation, allows him to comfortably place the imperatives onto a Gnostic trajectory.

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<sup>47</sup> Andrew K. Helmbold, *Nag Hammadi Gnostic Texts and the Bible*, 42, very explicitly denies any ethical aspects in the *Gospel of Truth*: “The *Gospel of Truth* lacks distinctive Christian doctrines in the realms of eschatology, ethics, and hamartiology. Instead of speaking of ‘sin,’ *E.V.* mentions only ignorance and error. Salvation by Gnosis is a psychological experience, real or imaginary . . . This is just the reverse of Christianity.” Helmbold’s agenda in distancing—indeed, ignoring—this gospel’s ethical aspects is to clearly place Valentinianism upon a Gnostic rather than Christian trajectory.

<sup>48</sup> Grobel, *Gospel of Truth*, 139–41 (emphasis original).

<sup>49</sup> Grobel, *Gospel of Truth*, 141.

<sup>50</sup> Grobel, *Gospel of Truth*, 141.

Grobel is not alone in struggling with a seemingly troublesome presence of ethical exhortation in *Gos. Truth*. Ménard attempts to displace the obvious moral sense of the passage, by connecting “sin” (NOBΞ) with ignorance rather than behaviour.<sup>51</sup> Such a move on Ménard’s part is problematic for three reasons. First, it assumes an antithetical relationship between ignorance of the Father (which, he is correct to note, is indeed the source of “error” and thus “deficiency”) and an ethic of doing what the Father commands. As Desjardins has correctly noted, the passage can be read in light of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount, which highlights a more ethical-behavioural nuance to the text.<sup>52</sup> Second, Ménard fails to note that the ethical imperatives are *not* directed to those still in error, but rather are directed to those *already called out of error into a missionary function*. Thirdly, he works with a narrow understanding of ethics as behavioural acts. Although I agree that the imperatives do call the readers to activity, this activity is intimately tied into an ontological relationship with the “name” of the Father, i.e., to recognize that they belong to the unity of the Father and thus are to be participants in the missionary work of the Father and the Son. The moral side of the imperatives surely moves beyond simple ethical activities to encompass an ontological moral self-identity or mode of existence.<sup>53</sup>

Jacqueline Williams, in summarizing her intertextual analysis of the *Gos. Truth* with Genesis and the New Testament writings, has made a similar case to that made by Grobel and Ménard on ethical aspects of this gospel. She claims: “In a number of passages, the [biblical] texts that are interpreted originally had ethical implications. In such cases, Valentinus consistently shifts his interpretation to an intellectual plane.”<sup>54</sup> For Williams, ethical behaviour as a solution to evil (“Error”

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<sup>51</sup> Ménard, *L’Évangile de Vérité*, 154: “Le péché est l’erreur elle-même. Il n’y a que celle-ci qui soit considérée comme le mal, et le terme de ‘péché’ est vide de son sens moral.”

<sup>52</sup> Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 80. A clear intertextual link between this passage and the Gospel of Matthew is present, and reflects the prominence of Matthew in *Gos. Truth*. For a further discussion on the centrality of Matthew in *Gos. Truth*, see C. M. Tuckett, “Synoptic Tradition in the Gospel of Truth.”

<sup>53</sup> For a discussion on the soteriological sense of “the name,” especially in regards to the social construction of a religious identity, see Anita Maria Leopold, “Syncretism and Transformation in the *Gospel of Truth*,” especially 50–51. See also Einar Thomassen, “Revelation as Book and Book as Revelation”; and PHEME PERKINS, “Spirit and Letter,” 322.

<sup>54</sup> Williams, *Biblical Interpretation*, 197.

ΠΑΛΑΝΗ) is replaced with an awareness of one's root origin in the Father.<sup>55</sup> Although several of Williams's examples are correct, her generalizing does not take 32,31–33,32 into account. What she misses is that the author has concentrated the ethical imperatives of the text in this paraenetic subsection, with only one other clear imperative present as an aside comment on ΠΑΛΑΝΗ at 17,27, shortly following the exordium (16,31–17,4). Consequently, the amalgamation of paraenetic elements in this gospel accentuates the ethical force of this subsection.

A noteworthy departure from this tendency to downplay ethics in the *Gos. Truth* is Michel Desjardins's *Sin in Valentinianism*.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, for Desjardins a key theoretical problem in scholarly discussion of ethics in Valentinianism is the two-fold trajectory of "Christian" and "Gnostic"—a model that falls apart under close analysis.<sup>57</sup> By recognizing the intertextual relationship between 32,31–33,32 and the Sermon on the Mount, and defining the Father's will inductively from this passage, Desjardins was able to establish that an ethical nuance is clearly part of this paraenetic subsection. Following Cullen Story, he also noted a structural division within this subsection, which my study fully agrees with: a tightly compact series of seven imperatives (32,35–33,11) and another series of seven primarily negative imperatives (33,11–30). He also notes a set of "caps" (two imperatival sentences) that structure the subsection as well as the usage of ΓΑΡ for concluding phrases.<sup>58</sup>

The structural arrangement of this paraenetic subsection, however, is even more carefully designed than Desjardins recognized. Beyond thematic or theological implications, the arrangement of this subsection has a very precise rhetorical function. The series of injunctive statements are structured in such a way as to bring to mind Mullins's *topos*, or, as I have more precisely defined above, an injunctive cluster. Specifically, the usage of the transitional ΓΑΡ carries an important rhetorical function beyond that of merely marking the end of a section. The imperatives themselves (imperatives, the conjunctive prefix ΝΤΕΤΙΝ to indicate a series of imperatives, and negative imperatives) function as the Injunctive element in the cluster, while the ΓΑΡ statements (along

<sup>55</sup> So also Cavallo, "Agricultural Imagery," especially page 33 where she ties this into a Gnostic determinism.

<sup>56</sup> Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 76–83.

<sup>57</sup> See also Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*; cf. Marksches, *Valentinus Gnosticus?*; Dunderberg, "Valentinian Teachers in Rome"; and Thomassen, "Orthodoxy and Heresy."

<sup>58</sup> Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 78; Story, *Nature of Truth*, 23–25.



### C—Second Injunctive Unit (Negative Exhortation)

- (1) **Injunction (introductory for the unit, only non-negative imperative in the unit):** *Be concerned* (ⲁⲓ ⲉⲣⲏⲧⲏ) with yourselves;
- (2) **Injunction (first negative imperative of unit, negative of previous imperative):** *Do not be concerned* (ⲏⲓⲛⲉⲧⲏ ⲉⲣⲏⲧⲏ) with other things which you rejected from yourselves.
- (3) **Injunction:** *Do not return* (ⲏⲓⲛⲉⲧⲏ ⲉⲣⲏⲧⲏ) to what you have vomited.
- (4) **Injunction:** *Do not be* (ⲏⲓⲛⲉⲧⲏ) moth-eaten
- (5) **Injunction:** *Do not be* (ⲏⲓⲛⲉⲧⲏ) worm-eaten,
- (6) **Reason (for C.5):** for (ⲁⲉ) you have already cast it off.
- (7) **Injunction:** *Do not become* (ⲏⲓⲛⲉⲧⲏ ⲉⲣⲏⲧⲏ) a (dwelling) place for the devil,
- (8) **Reason (for C.7):** for (ⲁⲉ) you have already destroyed him.
- (9) **Injunction (the negative of first unit B.2):** *Do not strengthen* (ⲏⲓⲛⲉⲧⲏ ⲉⲣⲏⲧⲏ) (those who are) obstacles to you who are collapsing,
- (10) **[Implicit Reason (for C.9)]:** as though (you were) a support (for them).
- (11) **Reason (#1 for unit):** For (ⲁⲉ) the lawless one is someone to treat ill rather than the just one.
- (12) **Reason (#2 for unit, linking it with first unit):** For (ⲁⲉ) the former does his work as a lawless person; the latter as a righteous person does his work among others.

### D—Paraenetic Subsection Closing Injunction-Reason (Summation)

- (1) **Injunction:** *So you, do the will of the Father* (ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲉⲛⲉ ⲏⲓⲧⲱⲧⲏ ⲏⲓⲛⲉⲧⲏ ⲉⲣⲏⲧⲏ),
- (2) **Reason:** for (ⲁⲉ) you are from him.

This paraenetic subsection fits the criteria for an injunctive cluster as established above. The passage is replete with imperatival injunctions, as nearly all commentators have recognized. These injunctions are divided into two distinct and compact sets that comprise the units of the subsection.<sup>60</sup> The exact number of seven imperatives in each unit reinforces the literary grouping. Injunctions also frame the entire discussion (A.1 and D.1). The first injunction (A.1) helps mark the paraenesis both compositionally and thematically. Compositionally, the shift to an imperatival statement brings the preceding discussion into a more practical application for the readers. They are to partake in the very cosmic work of the Father and the Son that was embodied in the parable of the lost sheep (31,35–32,30, which reworks Matt.

<sup>60</sup> As recognized by Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 78.

18:12–13; 12:11; and Rev. 21:25).<sup>61</sup> The compositional shift is further reinforced by the presence of the postpositive  $\epsilon\epsilon$  (“then”), which ties the imperative  $\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$  to the preceding discussion as dependent upon the preceding (i.e., as a result of accepting the preceding the readers are to “speak”).

Furthermore the passage is effectively developed off of the preceding section by a chiasmic structure: “...in order that you may speak from the day from above, which has no light, and from the **light** which does not sink because it is **perfect**. Say, then, from the heart that you are the **perfect** day and in you dwells the **light** that does not fail” (32,26–34;  $\pi\omicron\upsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\mu\ \dots\ \upsilon\chi\eta\eta\kappa\ \dots\ \epsilon\tau\chi\eta\eta\kappa\ \dots\ \pi\omicron\upsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\mu$ ). This A-B-B<sup>1</sup>-A<sup>1</sup> structure articulates a recurrent theme in the *Gos. Truth*—the insiders (= readers) belong to the Father as his manifestation (the Father being their true source or root), and therefore partake in the ontological nature of the Father due to this relationship. Not only is the Father the perfect light, but so also are the readers. The chiasm helps mark off a new section that shifts from the Father/Son as salvific actor(s) to the readers, being of like nature, as salvific actors in the redemptive process. The link word “day” ( $\mu\iota\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\gamma$  at 32,27 and 32,32) further marks this transitional connection. Thematically, the verb “to speak” along with the message to be spoken (“you are the perfect day...”), sets forth the missionary aspect of the paraenesis. This passage does not simply exhort the readers to recognize their true nature or the Father as their root, but they are exhorted to “speak” about that nature to others. Indeed, as Elliot Wolfson has correctly noted, the *Gos. Truth* conceptualizes salvation through speech and word (i.e., the “graphic and phonic”): having the secret of one’s true nature or name revealed results in redemption. Thus, just as the Son manifests the unknowable name of the Father to the readers/hearers, so also are the insiders to enter into a phonic ministry that is similar to that of the Son.<sup>62</sup> The remainder of the paraenetic subsection will explicate the nature of this missionary work.

The explicative nature of the remainder of the paraenesis, and thus the introductory nature of the first injunction (A.1), is reinforced by

<sup>61</sup> See Williams, *Biblical Interpretation*, 119–28, for a full discussion.

<sup>62</sup> Wolfson, “Inscribed in the Book of the Living,” 268, states, “Noteworthy is the convergence of the graphic and the phonic: To be inscribed in the book is to have one’s name enunciated by the Father.” Wolfson offers Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.14.1 in support of speech and words as soteriological concepts, where, like in the *Gos. Truth*, the “letters, therefore, function as symbols of the spiritual reality that is beyond language, the media of revelation by means of which the unapparent becomes apparent” (269).

the repetition of the imperative  $\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$  in opening the first injunctive unit (B.1). This first injunctive unit frames the missionary work of the readers within the context of potential insiders. They are to “speak the truth” to those “who search” and “have committed sin in their error” (A.1). This two-fold presentation of the potential insiders indicates that they are, like the readers once were, ignorant of their true root but have a desire for knowledge. They are those who are not yet redeemed or awakened to their true nature. They are those who “commit sin in their error”; i.e., as Desjardins has argued, they are not doing the will of the Father,<sup>63</sup> which is a behavioural result of being lost in Error. Given the injunction of D.1, exhorting the readers to “do the will of the Father,” the description of the potential insiders is that they are to eventually join the insiders (= readers) in missionary work. What constitutes the will of the Father will be explicated at greater length below, but within the immediate context of the first injunctive unit the six imperatives that follow build on this open injunction to “speak” (i.e., to do missionary work). The ethical nature of the following exhortations defines that missionary work in ethical terms: the readers are to “do” as well as “be” certain things that will affect the awakening of others.

Even if the injunctions are metaphorical in some way, they are still drawn from doing good acts for the benefit of others. Thus, the metaphors are inscribed with an ethical tone. Furthermore, there is nothing in the passage to negate actually “doing good acts” even if we take such injunctions as B.5 and B.6 (perhaps the most metaphorical of the six injunctions) as metaphors for redemption. Too often an appeal to figurative language invokes a dichotomous literal or analogous framework for reading such language. For example, either the injunctions in the *Gos. Truth* refer to actual ethical behaviours or they function as analogies for spiritual realities. Such a view of figurative language obscures both the complexity of metaphor in ancient rhetoric and the persuasive force of using figurative language. As to the former, figurative language or tropes, such as *synecdoche* (part of the whole) or *hyperbole* (exaggerated metaphor) depend upon a literal quality for their persuasive force. As to the latter, even when a metaphor is definitely non-literal the analogy must be drawn from real life and, thereby, presume the valuation tacitly presented in that referent. As Burton Mack points out while discussing analogy, “By definition the analogy was to be taken from the world of

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<sup>63</sup> Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 79, links sin to not doing the Father’s will.

common experience. Analogies were reminders of the way the world worked in general, especially in the spheres of the natural and human orders of activity...the analogy pointed to a common phenomenon regarded as an instance of a universal principle.”<sup>64</sup> Consequently, a figurative usage of ethical behaviours, in order to be rhetorically effective, would reflect the valuation or “universal principle(s)” of the literal activities.

Thus, even Grobel’s metaphorical reading of these ethical imperatives would necessitate recognizing the ethical implications of the images. Indeed, as Karen King has recently described this subsection, “the text reveals a pragmatic morality of compassion and justice.”<sup>65</sup> The imperatives, however, do not need to be ethical to be seen as referring to both a physical activity and a spiritual reality. As will be discussed in greater detail below, medical practice (especially within religious sects), as one example, tended to approach healing as both a spiritual and physical reality.<sup>66</sup> I do not deny the more spiritual call of these imperatives, but I see no reason (beyond imposing an assumption of Gnostic apathy toward ethics) to deny a call to actual ethical behaviour. Would it be far fetched to read these passages, especially given the Matthean source that is drawn upon (which is both ethical and metaphorical of salvation), as promoting ethical acts (good works) as a venue for the deeper impact of spiritual redemption? The series of injunctions offers not only a list of good behaviours that can affect spiritual awakening (strengthen those who stumble; help those who are ill; feed the hungry; and offer rest or protection to the weary),<sup>67</sup> which surely would evoke

<sup>64</sup> Burton L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 46.

<sup>65</sup> King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 192. She does not explore the passage in greater depth, though she does suggest that the ethical stance of the passage does not fit the “strictly ascetic or strictly libertine ethic” to which Gnosticism tends to be reduced. She also suggests that this “pragmatic morality” is part of a universalistic concept of salvation. On this latter point, I would disagree given the negative imperatives in the second injunctive unit. However, King does effectively indicate both the practical ethical side of this passage and that ethics and spiritual salvation need not be seen as separate, or even opposing, things.

<sup>66</sup> Galen, however, opposed such an approach, preferring a purely physical approach to medicine. Galen’s polemic (which encompassed Christianity), however, is indicative of the very acceptance of such a view (i.e., healers of bodies and healers of souls) within the Roman world.

<sup>67</sup> Although ΠΤΑΗ here likely translates ἀνάπαυσις/ἀνάπαυσιν, the probable parallel with Matt 11:28 and the antithesis of weariness evokes a protective activity for those who offer rest. The Matthean Jesus (Matt 11:25–30) thanks the Father for allowing the little ones access to the truth rather than the so-called wise, and based on such access

ethical aspects of Greco-Roman culture and especially Christianity's sub-culture (e.g., hospitality codes, care for the ill and hungry), they furthermore cumulatively define a way of life for insiders and even potential insiders.

Additionally, these imperatives are not equally metaphorical. The exhortations of B.2–4 (ΤΑΧΡΟ, ΣΩΤ, and ΣΑΝΩ) are more clearly invoking behavioural acts than the three exhortations of B.5–7 (ΝΤΕΤΗΤ ΠΤΑΝ, ΝΤΕΤΠΤΟΥΝΕC, ΝΤΕΠΝΕΖCΕ), which are more direct analogies for salvation. Indeed, it is possible that these imperatives were designed to parallel or interpret each other within an a-b-c-a'-b'-c' pattern, with the second set of three exhortations (a'-b'-c') offering the higher or more spiritual understanding for the more ethical or behavioural sense of the first set (a-b-c). Thus, to strength those who stumble (perhaps the image of helping a fellow traveller) is to give rest to the weary; to reach out to the ill (to care for the ill or unhealthy) is to raise up those who need to ascend; to feed the hungry is to awaken those who sleep. Doing good deeds is not the goal of the exhortation. Rather, the author exhorts the insiders to do good deeds that, as demonstrative missionary work (embodied in the dominating imperative  $\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$ ), should lead to the salvation of potential insiders, who, in turn, should follow the same exhortation. Consequently, the metaphorical or analogous aspects of these imperatives do not negate, as Grobel would read this passage, an ethical reading. Rather, the metaphorical and the ethical aspects of

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exhorts his hearers to embrace his yoke (one of rest rather than of labour and burden) and thereby gain access to the Father. Here in the *Gos. Truth*, the author exhorts the insiders to take on Jesus' role in offering rest to the weary, to bring them to the Father by offering them release from oppressive exploitation (weariness). To read hospitality codes into this exhortation is, admittedly, stretching the image, but is not impossible. Again, the Matthean parallel offers some support. Matt 11:25–30 immediately follows on Jesus' cursing the cities that rejected him. Receiving or rejecting Jesus or his followers, especially with the itinerancy and opposition motif of Matt 10, therefore is a key theme for this call to rest. Thus, if a similar itinerancy motif emerges in the *Gos. Truth* (see below for a fuller discussion of itinerancy in this tractate), then ΠΤΑΝ may indeed be alluding to hospitality as a figurative image for receiving the message of the true gospel. Even without a hospitality motif, this imperative carries ethical allusions: 1) the exhortation could reflect a medical motif of giving health, ease or comfort; or, more likely, 2) the exhortation could reflect fulfilling social duties to care for rather than exploit those who are subordinate within a hierarchal relationship (such as in manager-employee or master-servant relations). Regardless of the exact ethical allusion, the exhortation to give rest to the weary certainly carries a moral responsibility of leading or bringing the burdened or weary insiders (i.e., potential insiders) to the good (i.e., the Father).

these imperatives support and interpret each other, thereby drawing out more fully for the insiders their role within the soteriological drama of the Father and the Son.

It is also important to note that although ethical behaviours necessitate morality, moral discourse need not imply ethical behaviour. The paraenetic subsection, even without behavioural aspects (i.e., doing good acts), does call insiders to follow a moral path or direction (i.e., duties, rights and obligations) towards or in concert with the good. The moral path for Valentinian Christians is to “do the Father’s will”—and doing the Father’s will is, for the immediate context of the paraenesis, doing good acts for those who might become insiders (i.e., those who are still in Error). Given the broader context within which the paraenesis is framed, notably the cosmological and soteriological aspects of the nature and function of the Father, Son and Spirit, there is an ontological aspect to this moral path: insiders are to act in like manner to the Father, because they are from the Father. This moral component tacitly calls on a virtue ethic for the readers, not all that dissimilar to the virtue ethic posited by the Gospel of Matthew (especially in the Sermon on the Mount).

The series of injunctives in the first unit are supported by two Reasons (B.8 and B.9). These Reasons help to substantiate classifying the paraenesis as an injunctive cluster. The Reasons, however, are not set up to validate separate injunctive statements, as in Mullins’s examples given above. Rather, they serve as reasons for the entire unit, thereby helping to pull the unit together and reinforce the compact, closely intertwined nature of the imperatival directives. The reasons again reinforce the ontological nature of the readers. Not only are they spokespersons for the truth, they are “the understanding”—clearly an ontological statement. They are to “speak” by means of being the understanding. Such an ontological view of the readers, tied into the behavioural injunctives in this unit, nicely reinforces a virtue ethic for the readers. The efficacious function of such a virtue-behaviour function (B.9) is made the climax of the first injunctive unit.

After the positive exhortation of the first injunctive unit, the paraenesis shifts to a negative exhortation. Whereas the first unit exhorted the readers to a moral path that would awaken or enlighten those who belong to the Father but are still in Error (ignorance), the second unit puts forth a moral path for the readers in relation to those outsiders who are not capable of becoming insiders. These outsiders would fit

the category of hylics in typical Valentinian anthropology.<sup>68</sup> The seven injunctives in this unit caution the readers about the dangers of associating with outsiders. All but the first imperative are negative in form, and together they reinforce an exclusive, insider-focused ethic for the readers. The only imperative in this unit not in the negative  $\bar{\mu}\bar{\mu}\bar{\mu}$ -form is the opening injunction: “Be concerned with yourselves” (C.1). This imperative sets forth the overarching exhortation of this second injunctive unit: the readers are to focus exclusively on insiders and potential insiders.<sup>69</sup> What it means to “be concerned with yourselves” is brought out by the series of negatives that follow. Indeed, the repetition, with negation in the latter instance, of the verb in C.1 and C.2 ( $\chi\iota$   $\rho\pi\iota\tau\bar{\mu}$  and  $\bar{\mu}\bar{\mu}\bar{\mu}\chi\iota$   $\rho\pi\iota\tau\bar{\mu}$ ) nicely highlights this hortatory form for the reader, not all that differently than the repetition of  $\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$  at A.1 and B.1.

Whereas the first injunctive unit depicted ethical behaviour that the readers are to do as part of an ontological virtue ethic, the second injunctive unit explicates those ethical behaviours or moral path that the readers are to avoid. In a sense, this second unit is the flipside of the first. The injunctives in this second unit call on the readers to avoid outsiders (e.g., “Do not strengthen those who are obstacles to you who are collapsing”), due to the danger of being dragged back down into Error (e.g., “Do not return to what you have vomited”). Although the *Gos. Truth* has a clear insider-outsider demarcation, the insider status is not deterministic in nature: insiders have been lost in Error, and can, if not careful, fall back into Error. The last injunctive in this unit ( $\bar{\mu}\bar{\mu}\bar{\mu}\tau\alpha\chi\rho\omicron$ ) is noteworthy.  $\bar{\mu}\bar{\mu}\bar{\mu}\tau\alpha\chi\rho\omicron$  (“do not strengthen”) recalls the positive use of this verb in the first injunctive unit ( $\tau\alpha\chi\rho\omicron$ ; B.2). While the readers are to make firm or strengthen potential insiders, they are to avoid such an effort when dealing with outsiders, as such an effort

<sup>68</sup> The anthropology of *Gos. Truth*, however, is not tripartite, but bipartite as the psychics are not a clear class distinct from the pneumatics. The bipartite tendency in the Nag Hammadi material in contrast to the Fathers, was persuasively argued by Michel Desjardins, “Baptism in Valentinianism”; an abbreviated version of this paper is to appear, “Baptism Among the Valentinians”; cf. Judith Lee Kovacks, *Clement of Alexandria and the Valentinian Gnostics*.

<sup>69</sup> Attridge and MacRae, *Notes*, 96, mistakenly read 33,11 as a shift in the exhortations from “works of mercy” (which are taken metaphorically) towards an inward focus for the readers. Rather than a specifically “inward” focus, the *Gos. Truth* exhorts the readers towards an “insider” focus. This is clearly brought out in 33,15–17, as is also indicated in their “notes” on these lines, especially in correctly reading  $\bar{\mu}\bar{\mu}\bar{\mu}$   $\sigma\omega\tau\epsilon$  as “do not return” (*Notes*, 97; contra Grobel, *Gospel of Truth*, 141, who reads  $\sigma\omega\tau\epsilon$  as “redeem”).

could threaten the missionary's own stability.<sup>70</sup> Such an antithesis is reinforced when we consider the possible baptismal language underlying  $\tau\alpha\chi\rho\omicron$  (i.e., to make firm within the context of conversion through the sacramental process).<sup>71</sup> An ironic usage of the verb in the second injunctive unit is present. Those who are outsiders are, like Error itself, in a state of "collapsing" or chaos. To "make firm" is to solve the problem of motion, restlessness, and impermanence. Indeed, within Sethian texts, as Michael Allen Williams has well documented, "immovable race" is a descriptive self-designation for Sethian insiders.<sup>72</sup> Rest or repose is a common image in Valentinian texts for describing redemption from chaos (including here at B.5; see also 22,9–13; 23,23–29; 24,15–20; 36,35–39; 42,21–22, 32, 39; 43,1; also *Pr. Paul* A, 1–10; *Treat. Res.* 44,1; *Tri. Tract.* 53,19; *Gos. Phil.* 72,22–23; 2 *Apoc. Jas.* 56,2–4; *Ep. Pet. Phil.* 140,4).<sup>73</sup> The immovable or firm nature of insiders, and the inverse for outsiders, is an ontological and soteriological condition. To be an insider is to belong to the realm of repose and stability (with clear Platonic resonance), and this ontological condition is tied into a soteriological

<sup>70</sup> This reading necessitates taking  $\chi\rho\omicron\tau\iota$  as "obstacles" standing in opposition to the insiders, reading  $\eta\epsilon\epsilon\iota$   $\epsilon\tau\lambda\alpha\epsilon\iota\epsilon$  as qualifying  $\chi\rho\omicron\tau\iota$ , rather than as "Do not strengthen your impediments for those who fall, because it is a support"; contra Magnusson, *Rethinking the Gospel of Truth*, 116 (see also 150–54, 168), whose translation depends on relating  $\chi\rho\omicron\tau\iota$ , taken as  $\sigma\chi\alpha\nu\delta\alpha\lambda\omicron\nu$  or  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\sigma\chi\omega\mu\alpha$ , to the recipients through an intertextual link to 1 Cor 8:9. It is only in accepting this intertextual link to Paul that Magnusson's emendation of  $\eta\epsilon\epsilon\iota$   $\epsilon\tau\lambda\alpha\epsilon\iota\epsilon$  to  $\eta\epsilon\epsilon\iota$   $\epsilon\tau\lambda\alpha\epsilon\iota\epsilon$  ("for those") and his taking  $\gamma\omega\varsigma$  as causal ("because" rather than "as if") is possible. I find the allusion to Paul unlikely here and thus I prefer to follow Attridge's reading of the syntactical difficulties in this passage. Literally, I would translate 33,22–23 as "Do not strengthen your obstacles, (that is) those who are falling, as though being a support (to them)." This translation, which construes the syntax almost identically to Attridge's translation (which is far smoother than mine), takes  $\gamma\omega\varsigma$  as opening a relative clause ( $\gamma\omega\varsigma$   $\omicron\upsilon\gamma\omicron\sigma\omicron\zeta\epsilon$   $\pi\epsilon$ ) that qualifies the negative imperative  $\eta\eta\pi\tau\gamma\lambda\alpha\chi\rho\omicron$  ("as though"), does not require emendations to  $\eta\epsilon\epsilon\iota$ , takes into consideration the imperatival emphasis added to the admonition by the prefix  $\eta\eta\epsilon\tau\tau\eta$ , and does not require an intertextual allusion to substantiate it. Such a qualification of the negative imperative by  $\gamma\omega\varsigma$  may have added even greater force to the use of  $\gamma\omega\varsigma$  when referring to the lawless and righteous ones ( $\gamma\omega\varsigma$   $\omicron\upsilon\gamma\lambda\tau\zeta\epsilon\pi$   $\pi\epsilon$ ...  $\gamma\omega\varsigma$   $\omicron\upsilon\gamma\lambda\iota\kappa\lambda\iota\omicron\varsigma$   $\pi\epsilon$ ).

<sup>71</sup> See Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 281, who insightfully makes this observation with reference to *Tri. Trac.* 128,24–30 (cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.21.3). While there is no need to read  $\tau\alpha\chi\rho\omicron$  as indicating the paraenesis in *Gos. Truth* as baptismal, such an allusion to conversion language would certainly reinforce the distinct ontological and soteriological condition of both insiders and potential insiders from outsiders.

<sup>72</sup> Michael Allen Williams, "Stability as a Soteriological Theme"; *Immovable Race*.

<sup>73</sup> The most comprehensive analysis of the theme of "rest" in the *Gospel of Truth* is Judith Hoch Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor*; cf. Helderman, *Die Anapausis* and Wolfson, "Inscribed in the Book of the Living," 261.

condition of either being lost in chaos (instability) or being united with the Father in rest (stability).<sup>74</sup> Outsiders, given their ontological condition as absolute outsiders, cannot be “strengthened” soteriologically as they ontologically do not belong to the root of the Father. The very understanding of salvation as reintegration with one’s true origin (i.e., the Father), excludes the possibility of a universal soteriology and thus establishes a clear demarcation of those who can receive redemption from excluded outsiders.<sup>75</sup> For the readers to extend their missionary work to those who do not belong to the Father is not only futile, but is to risk being drawn back down into the soteriological crisis of instability.<sup>76</sup> The moral path set out here in the second injunctive unit is simply to not engage with those people and things that would draw the Valentinian missionary back into Error. Such a reading of the second injunctive unit is reinforced by the closing of the gospel. In shifting to the first person singular, the author closes the gospel with a powerful demarcation of insiders and outsiders (42,41–43,5). There are several parallels in these closing comments to the paraenetic subsection: the use of *τοπιος* in reference to outsiders, with a delimitation in speaking (*ωεξε*) regarding the place of rest; the limitation of the Father and true brothers as the object of concern (*πετναωπιε νζητη*); and speaking about the perfect light from the Father (*εγωεξε απουαειν ετρκ αβαλ αγω ετμηρ 2η πισπερμα πτε πωτ*).<sup>77</sup> These parallels indicate that the paraenetic subsection directs the readers’ focus to insiders. This negative exhortation is meant to ensure the success of the preceding positive exhortation, and indeed as a caution while following this positive exhortation.

The reasons given in the second injunctive unit are not as compactly tied into the unit as with the first injunctive unit. The first two reasons given (C.6 and C.8), which offer support for the immediate injunctive

<sup>74</sup> See the discussion in Perkins, *Gnosticism and the New Testament*, 154–55.

<sup>75</sup> A similar view is taken by Wolfson, “Inscribed in the Book of the Living,” 242, who correctly connects this anthropological distinction with an esoteric secrecy theme.

<sup>76</sup> Such a returning motif is evident by, e.g.: “return to what you have vomited,” “become a dwelling place for the devil,” “rejected from yourselves,” “already cast off,” and to become “moth-like . . . worm-like” which might invoke the concept of death or decay. Schenke, *Die Herkunft*, 49, understands “obstacles” as referring to “earthly bodies,” while Grobel, *Gospel of Truth*, 145, takes the same as “earthly treasures”—in both cases their interpretation highlights a danger of returning/being drawn back to the readers’ earlier existence. On the non-deterministic nature of this “returning” motif, see Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*, 201, 209–10.

<sup>77</sup> See my discussion in chapter 8.

statement preceding them, are functionally redundant. They reinforce the author's point that the readers have moved beyond their previous status of instability, and therefore should not return to what they have cast off or destroyed. The first ("cast off") is a typical motif for Gnostic redemption (e.g., in the *Hymn of the Pearl*): clothing is a metaphor for fleshly existence. There may also be an allusion to baptismal practices here, with strong ethical connotations (especially if this imperative alludes to Rom 13:11–14; such an intertextual allusion would be reinforced by 32,28–34's light/day image in comparison to Rom 13:11–12). If such an allusion to baptism was intended, then we could have an admonition not to negate or undo the baptismal rite that the Valentinian readers had undergone.<sup>78</sup> The second reason carries a victory motif: the readers, in being united with the Father, have become victorious over Error. Therefore, to return to Error is to undo their salvific accomplishment and, ironically perhaps, establish a dwelling for the devil.<sup>79</sup> The moral path exhorted here is not to renounce earthly things (i.e., a call to conversion), but to stay firm in the renouncement of the world (i.e., a warning against apostasy). As in ascetic texts, both of a Gnostic variety and otherwise, such a moral path is clearly an ethical or moral admonition.<sup>80</sup> The last three reasons in this injunctive unit continue to

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<sup>78</sup> Either as first baptism or, more likely, second baptism of redemption; see John D. Turner, "Ritual in Gnosticism," who draws upon Desjardins, "Baptism in Valentinianism." More recent studies on Valentinian ritual include Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 333–414, and van Os, *Baptism in the Bridal Chamber*. See also Pagels, "Ritual in the Gospel of Philip."

<sup>79</sup> The reference to  $\chi\iota\alpha\rho\omega\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  "devil" is only found here in the *Gos. Truth*. It is an odd title for the author to throw in, calling into question the role of this title—does it refer to Satan, or Error, ignorance? Unfortunately it is too vague a reference to determine with any certainty any specific meaning. Likely, the title is simply a carry over from the author's intertextual appropriation of Eph 4:27 (see Williams, *Biblical Interpretation*, 134–36). Perhaps it carries a *Christus victor* motif of overcoming and liberating such as Tartaros is used in *Interp. Know.* 13,25–29.

<sup>80</sup> On the moral lifestyle in ascetical theory, especially with direct application to several early Christian texts, see Valantasis, "Demons, Adversaries"; "Is the Gospel of Thomas Ascetical?"; and "Constructions of Power in Asceticism." Despite his claim that *Auth. Teach.* is ascetic rather than Gnostic, a problematic move due to his exclusive or static application of classifications (a text could be viewed as ascetic and as Gnostic/Valentinian; the question is less what the text is and more so what analytical perspective the scholar applies to her or his textual data; see, on this point, Tite, "Categorical Designations," 269–92 and chapter 4 above), Valantasis offers a careful and insightful overview of ascetic practices as both positive and negative exhortation. The ethical connotations of asceticism are nicely brought in, e.g., "Gospel of Thomas," 61, in citing Margaret Miles, *Fullness of Life*, 44–45. The utilization of an athletic metaphor, linking lifestyle or practice/discipline to moral progression was a common motif in

add further emphasis to the validity of the author's position. The third reason in particular (C.10) is less of an explicit rationale for the injunction of C.9, and more of an aside comment that reinforces the point of this imperative on not strengthening. In this sense, C.10 is more of an implied reason than an explicit reason. It helps to bring out the irony and futility of trying to strengthen those who belong to instability, and indeed the very danger for insiders that such an attempt entails. The final two reasons (C.11 and C.12), each introduced by a closing  $\Gamma\Delta\rho$  function much like the two closing reasons of the first injunctive unit.<sup>81</sup> They offer a rationale for the entire unit, thereby neatly pulling the discussion of the unit to a close. There is a duality of insiders and outsiders in C.11 and C.12: There are the "lawless ones" and the "righteous ones."<sup>82</sup> The first of these final reasons states in non-hortatory form (but rather in the

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philosophical ethical discussions among Platonists, Stoics and, of course, Cynics (see Meeks, *Moral World*, 40–64).

<sup>81</sup> In reading C.11 as a reason, I do not read  $\Delta\chi\iota\tau\bar{\iota}\bar{\iota}$  as an imperative (contra Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 260: "Treat such a one more forcefully than the just"). The  $\Gamma\Delta\rho$  suggests that this sentence comments upon the preceding imperatives rather than adding a further exhortation. Furthermore, the balance of two sets of seven imperatives would be impaired by an eighth imperative in the second injunctive unit.

<sup>82</sup> The grammar of this part of the paraenesis is frustratingly difficult. Magnusson, *Rethinking the Gospel of Truth*, 151–159, discusses these difficulties at length and his discussion is a valuable contribution on the problems in this part of the text. His alternative reading, however, is based upon a series of emendations and grammatical decisions that are used to support his intertextual link to 1 Cor 8:9. For Magnusson, this Pauline allusion does not indicate a dichotomy of insiders and outsiders, but rather a concern about those who stumble: "Do not add strength to your impediments (for) those who fall" (33,22–23; Magnusson, *Rethinking the Gospel of Truth*, 158). This interpretation, which stands at variance with both Attridge and MacRae's critical edition and my own reading, is possible though not likely. It is based upon emendations that are only substantiated by the Pauline interpretative framework and an assumption that the Attridge/MacRae edition does not make sense in context (the latter is true only if one accepts Magnusson's reading and then changes the text to fit that reading). Methodologically, it is problematic to use emendations to force the text to fit a preconceived reading as Magnusson does. Furthermore, to offer the translation "For the lawless person will do no more wrong than the lawful person" (Magnusson, *Rethinking the Gospel of Truth*, 155) completely misses the broader moral antithesis that the author has constructed with the positive and negative imperatives (especially with this antithesis brought out so vividly with initial  $\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$ , which carries a strong soteriological sense, and the caution regarding corruption of the insiders in the negative exhortations). Consequently, I see no reason to accept Magnusson's reconstructed text as preferable without further substantiation. However, both Magnusson and I agree on the value of recognizing the paraenetic nature of this section and the importance of moral concern for the author. Indeed, although we work with different readings of the Coptic text, we come to a very similar conclusion: i.e., the paraenesis in this gospel functions to exhort the audience/readers to not fall into apostasy as insiders can fall back into Error if they are not careful in how they live within the material realm.

form of a rationale) the admonition of the entire second injunctive unit. Those who are lawless (outsiders) are supposed to be treated differently than the just ones (insiders). Explicitly the lawless one is to be treated poorly or as unimportant, thereby implying the positive treatment of the just one. This rationale for the unit's injunction, which again calls into play an ontological categorizing of people, is further substantiated by the second final reason (C.12) (the  $\gamma\alpha\rho$  once again indicates such development of thought). The works (ethical behaviours perhaps?) of the lawless are, not surprisingly, lawless works<sup>83</sup>—whereas the righteous person works “among others” (which, perhaps, indicates another ethical and ontological aspect of the paraenesis: unity as a theme in the *Gos. Truth* is pervasive, and here it is being applied to human behaviour and perhaps even processes of social cohesion). Lawless here, given its antithesis with righteous, likely implies working to divide and destroy (or at least having such an influence, consciously or unconsciously), whereas righteousness seems to imply working for and within unity. Again the rationale returns us to the soteriological theme of stability and instability, drawing the second injunctive unit back into the context of the positive exhortation of the first injunctive unit.

The final injunction in the paraenesis (D.1) and its corresponding reason (D.2) effectively pull the discussion of the entire paraenetic subsection together within a final, overarching ethical imperative: “So you, do the will of the Father, for you are from him.” The resultant element ( $\chi\epsilon$ ) introducing this imperative ( $\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon$ ) clearly functions to link this final imperatival statement with the preceding parts of the paraenesis. The return to positive exhortation further reinforces the summation function of this final part of the paraenetic subsection. The injunction itself calls the readers to *do* the Father's will, which, given the verb chosen, is clearly a behavioural exhortation. The ethical connotations of this injunction are not atypical for “doing God's will” in ancient texts,<sup>84</sup> and, given the strong paraenetic aspects of this passage already noted, surely fits an ethical aspect for this paraenesis

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<sup>83</sup> The relationship between lawful works and ethics was common among philosophical ethical discussions. The goal of moving towards a harmonious existence with nature was common among Platonist, Stoics, and Epicureans even if they understood nature somewhat differently. See Meeks, *Moral World*, 47–48, 59; Hierocles, *On Duties* 4.22.21–24: “Nature justly teaches that we should choose what is fitting and in harmony with the condition it has given us... reason might cause us to live in a manner that in every way befits nature” (cited in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 100).

<sup>84</sup> See Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*, 152–53; cf. Dihle, *Theory of Will*.

(with “Father” replacing “God,” which is typical of the *Gos. Truth*). I will discuss what “doing the Father’s will” in this passage means when I deal with an explicative cluster below. For now, it is important to recognize the climactic function of this final ethical command. The reason offered for this injunctive (D.2) again reinforces the ontological nature of the readers: they are to do the Father’s will simply because they are rooted in, or originate from, the Father. Therefore, just as the opening exhortation to “speak” calls on the readers to enter into the cosmological drama that the Father and Son are actively involved in, so also does this final imperatival command. Again, ethical behaviour, or moral pathway, is so entwined with relational ontology that to speak of the ontology or anthropology of the *Gos. Truth* is to *de facto* speak of the ethical side of this gospel.

The element of Discussion, however, is not as apparent as with Mullins’s examples (unless the implied Reason of C.10 is seen as a Discussion). Once again, our writer has prepared a careful, more rhetorically powerful injunctive cluster than we might recognize at first reading. Rather than incorporating a Discussion component into the paraenesis proper, the author has attempted to integrate the injunctive cluster into the broader cosmological discourse of this gospel. The Discussion element is what follows after 33,32. Here we find a Discussion of the nature of the Father, specifically his fragrance, and this Discussion returns us to the cosmological discussion that had preceded the paraenesis. Just as the author created a literary link between the parable and opening injunction (32,26–34) by means of a chiasm, so also here in the discussion of the Father’s fragrance, we are given a literary clue linking the paraenetic exhortation with the Discussion. The  $\Gamma\Delta\rho$  at 33,33 marks such a connection, linking the Discussion back to the paraenesis. The length of the Discussion (33,33–34,36) clearly denotes that this transition is a Discussion rather than an added Reason (this very length, developed as an unravelling of the manifestation of the Father’s fragrance through a series of transitional links [notably  $\Gamma\Delta\rho$ ], breaks with the shorter pattern of the subsection and thereby extends the supportive reasoning into a broader discussion that, although seemingly a tangent, moves the discourse from moral exhortation back to theological description). Beyond the transitional conjunction, we are also given the following key words: “...the **Father** is sweet and his **will** is good.” These key words (“Father” and “will”) are chiasmic (“...do the **will** of the **Father**”) ( $\bar{\mu}\pi\omicron\upsilon\omega\omega \bar{\mu}\pi\omega\tau \dots \pi\omega\tau \dots \pi\iota\omicron\gamma\omega\omega\epsilon$ ) and, therefore, as in opening the paraenesis, the author utilizes a chiasm to transitionally

connect two sections. This sentence, therefore, builds off of the closing of the paraenesis, offering a full discussion of the soteriological nature of the Father's will. The Father's will is tied into the manifestation of his fragrance, and the fragrance is actually "the children of the Father" (33,39–34,1) whom "he loves and manifests" (34,4).<sup>85</sup>

Consequently, it is evident that this paraenetic subsection of the *Gos. Truth* is structured as an injunctive cluster. Injunctions, Reasons, and Discussion are all present. Transitional devices are utilized to help mark and develop the paraenesis. Finally the framing of the subsection builds up to a climactic ethical admonition that becomes the basis for the readers to re-enter the author's cosmological and soteriological discussion of the Father and the Son (now tacitly as active participants rather than passive observers). This injunctive cluster is developed in a careful, complicated weaving of Injunction with Reason, offering a mutual positive and negative exhortation that presents the moral path by which the readers are to partake in the salvific drama of the Father in bringing about unity. The author's paraenesis is hardly secondary to the tractate.<sup>86</sup> Rather, the author has drawn his or her more abstract discussion of cosmogony and soteriological crisis into the practical domain of the readers, and, in the closing of the paraenesis, links this practical exhortation back to the discussion of the abstract nature of redemption.

We also find in this paraenetic subsection not only clustering, but also the topological *communes loci*. Specifically, the author has used what Cicero called the commonplace of contraries, in particular that of opposites (*Topics* 11.47–49). Cicero defines this commonplace as: "...of things that belong to the same class, but differ absolutely, as wisdom and folly. Words are said to belong to the same class if when they are uttered they are met face to face, as it were, by certain opposites. For example, slowness is contrary to speed, but weakness is not" (*Topics* 11.47). Cicero goes on to include other types of opposites, such as greater and less, double and single, and many and few; and then extends the discussion to include "intensely contrary expressions which are called negatives" (11.49). A clear illustration of a contrary would be: "If we shun folly (as of course we do), let us pursue wisdom; and

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<sup>85</sup> Cf. *Tri. Tract.* 52,18; 53,1–15; 55,34–35. On the moral superiority of the divine father's will over that of an earthly father, see Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 16.

<sup>86</sup> Contra R. A. J. Gagnon, "Ideological Structure of the Gospel of Truth and Paul's Letter to the Romans."

kindness if we shun malice” (11.47). The commonplace of opposites is from the list of *technoi*, rather than *atechnoi*, arguments.

In the *Gos. Truth* we find such a juxtaposition of opposites in an ironic play on the theme of stability/instability: “do not strengthen those...who are collapsing” (C.9); “do not become a dwelling place for the devil...you have already destroyed him” (C.7–8). The opposites are not as clear as in Cicero’s discussion, but they underlie the logic of the contrast. We could say, therefore, that: “If we are concerned with stability, then let us not be concerned with instability.” Our author has placed the parallel between the positive exhortation and the negative exhortation, specifically with the theme of stability/instability, within an argumentative type that ancient readers likely would have been familiar with: an argument from opposites. The underlying presence of a contrary is derived inductively from the text, relating the mode of argument back to the matter under discussion. The intrinsic quality of the *communis locus* here in *Gos. Truth* is quite obvious (there is no calling on authorities or witnesses external to the matter). The presence of a commonplace in the paraenesis, however, does not negate nor conflate the distinction between the different types of *topoi* that I have put forth above. Rather, it helps illustrate that diverse argumentative strategies could be utilized by an ancient author, even though those strategies, for the sake of analysis, are distinct from each other.

Not only has the author of the *Gos. Truth* designed an injunctive cluster with the aid of the commonplace of contraries, but the author has also developed the discussion of the text by constructing an explicative cluster at 36,39b–38,6. The explicative cluster is a key for noting the rhetorical and thematic link between the paraenetic subsection and the rest of the text. This explicative cluster picks up the topic of “the will of the Father” that climaxed the paraenesis and opened the discussion (33,31–33). In his study of *νοθε* in this passage, Desjardins explained what “doing the will of the Father” means, by relating the injunctive to those specific elements present within the passage to which the injunctive refers. He concludes that the Father’s will entails a two-fold obligation for the readers: “Doing the Father’s will, then, involves keeping the spiritual level which the audience has attained and teaching others how to reach it.”<sup>87</sup> The readers are called on to both “[help] others by spreading the message of salvation” and, while doing such missionary

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<sup>87</sup> Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 80.

work, “not [to] slide back into [their] former materialistic ways.”<sup>88</sup> Desjardins establishes his understanding of the Father’s will by exclusively addressing the exhortation section (32,31–33,32). His understanding is correct, but, from the perspective of the entire tractate, he has neglected to note that the author has developed a full discussion on this theme, one that would have reinforced and perhaps refined the readers’ initial engagement with the paraenesis. The explicative cluster on the will of the Father, furthermore, helps to affirm the understanding of  $\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\ \delta\epsilon\ \bar{\nu}\tau\omega\tau\bar{\nu}\ \bar{\nu}\pi\iota\omicron\gamma\omega\omega\ \bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\omega\tau$  that Desjardins draws from the paraenesis.

Cullen Story, recognizing the central theme of the passage by calling this section “Father’s Will,” has offered a helpful five-fold breakdown of the passage that effectively indicates the way in which the series of statements present and develop the topic.<sup>89</sup> Running throughout the passage are key terms such as the “Father” ( $\bar{\nu}\omega\tau$ ) and the “will” ( $\pi\omicron\gamma\omega\omega\epsilon$ ). A minor modification, however, is needed. Whereas Story begins the subsection at 37,19 (“And the will is what the Father rests in...”), I would prefer to place the beginning at 36,37b (“This is the perfection...”), setting forth a preliminary or introductory part (36,37b–37,17). The preliminary part begins with a summary statement, following on the preceding discussion of the work of Christ and perhaps sacraments (the “ointment”) to heal the “illness” or “deficiency,” climaxing with “the perfect Father” planting them (the insiders) in “his paradise... his place of rest” (35,24–36,39a). It is this “paradise = rest” that is being summarized by the opening of the explicative cluster, an opening part that functions as a transitional unit for understanding this soteriological role as “the will of the Father.” Indeed the very phrasing of the sentence highlights for the reader that the essence of the truth of the gospel is what constitutes this very will: “This is the perfection in the thought of the Father, and these are the words of his meditation” (cf. 16,31–17,4, which I see as the exordium of the tractate). This preliminary part of the explicative cluster could easily have been used to close the entire gospel. The author, however, pushes on with the discussion, smoothly explicating the nature of this “meditation”: “Each of his words is the work of his one will in the revelation of the Word” (37,4b–6a). The will of the Father, therefore, is nothing less than the revelation of the

<sup>88</sup> Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 79. Cf. Wray, *Rest as Theological Metaphor*, 121, who also recognizes the missionary (insider focussed) emphasis of this passage.

<sup>89</sup> See especially Story, *Nature of Truth*, 32–33; similarly Standaert, “L’Évangile de Vérité,” 245.

Word; the Word, the passage goes on to tell us, is the revelatory agent and not simply the content of revelation (37,6b–18). The Word, which likely refers to the Son (“the first to come forth” 37,16), is both introduced with the Father’s will (37,5–6) and is concluded with this same will (37,15–18). The preliminary section sets forth the author’s general understanding of the “will of the Father” for this explicative cluster: the Father’s will is a revelation of his message through the Word, with the goal of salvation for those lost in deficiency or Error. The five parts of the cluster that Story outlines develop this theme in greater detail.

Story labels the first part of this cluster “the satisfaction of the Father’s will” (37,19–38,6). Story recognizes that this sentence links back to the preceding one.<sup>90</sup> We find in this sentence that the Father’s rest and pleasure is in his will. The second part of the cluster (“the sovereignty of his will”; 37,21–24) emphasizes the self-sufficiency and causal supremacy of the Father’s will. The third part explores “the transcendence of his will” (37,24–34), further highlighting the greatness of the Father and his will by stressing the unknowable nature of the will. Story notes that people can only have a glimpse of the Father’s will due to the “trace” that is left behind, much like footprints in the sand.<sup>91</sup> They cannot embrace God’s will on their own (there is a possible allusion to Rom 11:33). There is a soteriological problem here, specifically that there are those who long for the Father, but are not able, of their own accord, to gain more than a shadow of him due to the “unsearchable” nature of the Father.<sup>92</sup> The fourth part, “the eternity of his will” (37,34–37), indicates that: “The Father’s will spans the extent of time. He knows the beginning and the end of all.”<sup>93</sup> What is central in this sentence is the all-knowing nature of the Father. This omniscience is part of an eschatological judgment motif (“For at the end he will question them directly”). The fifth and final part of the explicative cluster pulls the entire discussion

<sup>90</sup> Story, *Nature of Truth*, 32.

<sup>91</sup> Story, *Nature of Truth*, 32.

<sup>92</sup> Such inaccessible access to the Father’s will would have surely been seen as problematic by a Greco-Roman audience for the establishment of moral conduct. As Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 38–41, argues, moral conduct in Greek philosophy was intimately tied to the state of the human mind. Thus, there was a common view that no person could do wrong intentionally, that is rationally, and therefore moral conduct and misconduct were grounded in knowing the cosmic or divine plan or falling into error due to ignorance. Locating moral conduct in the rational processes of the mind was a view held by the Platonists, Epicureans, and Stoics, despite the radically differing ontological worldviews of each tradition (see Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 41).

<sup>93</sup> Story, *Nature of Truth*, 32.

together with a sharp redemptive culmination. This final part, which Story labels “the aim of his will” (37,37–38,8), reads:

Now, the end [“goal” ΤΕΛΟΣ] is receiving knowledge about the one who is hidden, and this is the Father, from whom the beginning came forth, to whom all will return who have come forth from him. And they have appeared for the glory and the joy of his name.

Story comments that the importance of this fifth part is that it “[positively] affirms the sovereignty of the Father’s will.”<sup>94</sup> This is true, especially as the sovereignty of the Father is an important theme in this cluster. However, this part also pulls together other themes used to explicate the will. The eternal nature and eschatological motifs are here, as well as the opening “pleasure” of the Father. The goal, which is the will of the Father, is for the redemption (the “return”) of those who are in need of salvation, which recalls the preliminary part’s “revelation of the Word.” Redemption, however, is, as it was in the paraenesis, limited to those who “come forth from him,” i.e., those who have their ontological root with the Father but are lost in Error or deficiency. The will of the Father, therefore, is, according to the explicative cluster, very much like what we have already encountered with the paraenesis: “... a return to him by means of redemption, a redemption accomplished as men receive gnosis of him. It is this gnosis of him that enables men here in this world to reveal the glory and joy of his name.”<sup>95</sup> Unlike the paraenesis, this explicative cluster does not directly call on the readers to be participants in this redemptive work of the Father’s will. Rather, the stress in the explicative cluster is upon the unknowable nature of the Father and the revealing function of the Word (= the Son, see 38,7). The only participatory role for the readers is indicated by the closing, “... they [those who ‘come forth from him’] have appeared for the glory and the joy of his name.” The Father’s name, we learn in the next sentence, is the Son. The readers, therefore, might be described as co-workers with the Word in manifesting salvific knowledge. When we recognize that the readers have already heard or read (depending on the *Sitz im Leben* of this gospel) the earlier sections of this tractate, thereby already encountering “the will of the Father” within an injunctive context, then it is plausible to assume that this explicative cluster would have recalled that earlier discussion and refined it even further:

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<sup>94</sup> Story, *Nature of Truth*, 33.

<sup>95</sup> Story, *Nature of Truth*, 33.

the Father's will is that those who long for him, having come forth from him (but now lost in Error), but can never embrace him on their own, are to be brought the message of salvation (through not only the work of the Word but also those already redeemed) so that those potential insiders may return to him in eschatological rest.<sup>96</sup>

This passage fits the criteria established above for identifying an explicative cluster. There is a clear thematic focus (the Father's will) around which are clustered a series of sentences that, in a somewhat progressive, though surely loosely constructed, manner, explicate an ontological discussion of redemption and the Father. The recurrence of the key terms "Father" and "will" thematically interconnects the various components of this passage. What is characterized or stressed is less the readers, and more so the awesome nature of the Father in conjunction with the making known of that unknowable nature through the Word. The readers, the insiders, are also presented in relation to the Father; that is they are explicitly defined as coming from the Father, returning to the Father, and standing in a special relationship to the Father; implicitly, they are presented as playing a co-working role in the redemptive task of the Word. Indeed, the Father is the main character, with the "will" being defined closely in connection with the Father (perhaps at times even being equated with the Father or simply as an attribute of the Father).

The other motifs, divided into a preliminary part and five further parts, are somewhat loosely woven together in order to elucidate the will of the Father. These subdivisions of the cluster indicate that the passage is a coherent, though not rigidly structured, unit. Finally, there are several transitional markers that support the thematic link. The opening sentence, as I indicated above, shifts the discussion (though also maintaining a discursive flow) from the preceding section on, as Story has named it, "the Father's Word and Works" to a more focused discussion of the nature of the Father's will in relation to those works of salvation. The author's usage of the demonstrative pronoun  $\pi\epsilon\epsilon\iota$  to open the explicative cluster further functions as a transitional marker.

We also find the beginning of a new section at 38,7 with "Now [ $\lambda\epsilon$ ] the name..." This new beginning is reinforced by the author's switch

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<sup>96</sup> The readers/hearers may also have linked "the *words* of his meditation" (37,3  $\pi\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$ ; note the recurrence of the noun  $\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$ , either as "words" or "Word" in this section) with the imperative  $\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$  of 32,31 and 32,35 ("speak").

from “Word” in the explicative cluster on the Father’s will to “Son” in the following discussion of the name of the Father. The linking word “name” also marks the transition (ΠΕΩΡΕΝ “his name” at 38,6 and ΠΡΕΝ “the name” at 38,7). Like the explicative type of clustering, this passage on the Father’s will lacks an injunctive argumentative structure. Rather than an obvious exhortation that dominates and directs the passage, such as with an injunctive cluster, we are given instead a discussion that unpacks a thematic aspect of cosmological and soteriological significance. Within the explication there is, furthermore, no explicit hortatory component. There is, rather, an implicit, perhaps even lightly hidden, hortatory aspect at the very close of the cluster. This implicit hortatory aspect is reinforced by the earlier treatment of the theme in the paraenesis, a connection that the readers likely would have picked up on. For these reasons 36,39b–38,6 should be seen as an explicative cluster.

The relationship between the injunctive cluster and the explicative cluster in this gospel is noteworthy. Clearly marked subsections are present in both instances, thereby allowing us to identify and isolate these units. The paraenesis itself is not a minor tangent to this gospel, but, as indicated by the explicative cluster (as well as the discussion section following the paraenetic subsection), is an important thematic aspect of the text. The more general cosmological and soteriological discussion is given a strong ethical application by the paraenetic subsection. The paraenetic subsection is, furthermore, implicitly recalled and developed not only in the discussion of the Father’s fragrance, but also, perhaps more so, in the injunctive cluster on the Father’s will. The tacit hortatory tone of this injunctive cluster both presupposes the paraenetic exhortation on the Father’s will and is anticipated by the earlier paraenesis.

#### SOCIAL POSITIONING IN THE *GOSPEL OF TRUTH*

The moral relations that are idealized within the *Gos. Truth* are closely related to a cosmological drama of soteriological endeavour. The paraenetic section of the tractate is closely linked to this broader idealization. Therefore, in order to determine the social function of paraenesis within this particular paraenetic subsection, it is necessary to see how the author’s broader idealization relates to the paraenetic material within the subsection.

The Valentinian Christians are placed within a cosmic duality of totality and deficiency. The crisis between the Father and Error is put forth at the very outset of the tractate. We read, "...ignorance of the Father brought about anguish and terror; and the anguish grew solid like a fog, so that no one was able to see" (17,10–13). ΠΛΑΝΗ ("Error"), which is here cast into a demiurgical role, stands as an opposing value to that embodied by the Father. Whereas the Father stands for unity and knowledge, Error is ignorance. It is from ignorance that the cosmic condition of suffering and fear is founded. The solidifying of the fog of ignorance effectively links blindness with material creation. This connection places the "gospel" of this text onto a cosmic dualistic stage. The Father is idealized as the source of the totality (ΠΤΗΡ̄), indeed the totality is completed only within the Father (see, for example, 17,5–9; 18,30–31; 19,34–20,3; 21,8–11). The image presented is of "the living book" as being in the mind of the Father, with the book constituting the names of those "named" that belong within the totality (19,34–20,4). The father as the *pater familias* is implied in the positioning of the Father in relation to the totality as a master of a house (20,15–20). He is further presented in typical negative theology, thereby drawing out ironically the incomprehensible nature of the Father: "...the totality was inside of him, the incomprehensible, inconceivable one who is superior to every thought" (17,5–9).<sup>97</sup> He is the teacher (19,19–20; 21,2), guide and restful one (19,17–20) who desires that those in ignorance are brought back into knowledge of him (19,10–15), and thus into the perfection of the totality (19,5–10).

Error, however, is presented as an antithesis of the Father, though not in an absolute dualistic cosmology. As would be expected from second to fourth century Christian Gnosticism, specifically Valentinianism, a

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<sup>97</sup> Negative appellations of the highest divine entity are not only common with Valentinian and Sethian texts, but is likely derived from Middle Platonic philosophy, such as found in the *Didaskalikos* of Alcinous/Albinus of Smyrna: "The first god is eternal, ineffable, self-complete...Nor can anything be attributed to him, neither bad (for to say this is improper), nor good (which would mean his participation in something, especially goodness), nor indifferent (which is out of accord with [any] conception of him)...nor is he a whole possessing certain parts, nor is he the same or different from something...nor does he move nor is he moved" (*Didaskalikos* X.3–4; translation by Dillon, see John M. Dillon, *Middle Platonists; Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism*, cited by Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 382–82). The author of the *Gos. Truth*, while following such a high view of the divine first deity, differs from Alcinous as well as the *Tri. Tract.* in that the Father is an active, motivated entity involved in the soteriological process of reestablishing the totality.

monarchical dualism with a possible emanationist cosmogony permeates this gospel (see 18,1–7). Ignorance is the lack of knowledge of the Father, and from such ignorance (the “fog”; ΟΥΓΝΑΟΤΠ), emerges “works and oblivions and terrors, in order that by means of these it might entice those of the middle and capture them” (17,32–36). As the negative side of this dualism is simply the lack of the positive, our author presents the Father as an active contestant in sweeping into view that which has been obscured. Just as light will fill the void of darkness, so also will the fog of ignorance cease to exist when knowledge of the truth is made known. Indeed, on page 28 the author draws an analogy of this process with that of coming out of a sleeping state, perhaps from a nightmare. When a person awakens from such sleep, the light of day drives away the shadows and phantoms, along with the terrors, of the night thereby revealing the non-reality of those terrors to the now awakened sleeper (28,22–31). The material realm that emerges from Error is presented as perishable and “the empty spaces of terror” (20,35–36). Error is initially presented in a personified fashion on the opening pages of this gospel but is also referenced as a spatial location or a condition of instability, ignorance, deficiency, alienation/exile, and suffering. The corruptible state of Error is what needs to be removed or abandoned by those lost in ignorance. The author uses the metaphor of stripping off “perishable rags” to illustrate this process (20,30–31). An antagonistic attitude on the part of this demiurgical figure might be implied in the reference to the ΔΙΑΒΟΛΟΟ at 33,20 and more explicitly at 18,21–24: “For this reason error grew angry at him, persecuted him, was distressed at him (and) was brought to naught.”

It is within this cosmological state of crisis, of contestation of truth and false truth, or knowledge/unity and ignorance/suffering, which the author continues to position the Father, Son and Spirit as salvific entities for those ensnared within material reality. The Son, functioning on behalf of the Father, enters this material realm, offering knowledge of “the way of truth” (18,12–21). He is presented as a teacher within schools (19,19–20). This proclamation of the word within a school is a likely readjustment, or re-positioning, of this cosmic figure within the Jesus tradition. Whereas the Synoptic Jesus moved through and taught within synagogues as a Jewish prophet, this Valentinian presentation, or summation, of those narratives locates the revelatory work of the Son within the narrative context of a philosophical school system. The *Gos. Truth* sets up a contrast within this revised narrative, thereby offering an earthly counterpart to the cosmic conflict. The author has the Son

confounding those who are considered wise by earthly standards. This is a clear intertextual link back to Jesus' confrontations with Jewish leaders over Sabbath observance (e.g., Lk. 6:6–11; 13:10–17).<sup>98</sup> The outcome of this confrontation is that these so-called wise individuals hate the Son, likely due to the confrontation revealing that they are not truly wise. Again we have the soteriological motif of shadows of ignorance being eliminated by the knowledge of truth—the real replaces the unreal. In this case the reality is one of indicating the foolishness of the Son's antagonists. Rather than standing on the dualistic side of the truth, as they supposed, they instead stand on the opposite pole of Error. The contrast, however, immediately follows with another intertextual link to the Synoptic gospels: "After all these, there came the little children also, those to whom the knowledge of the Father belongs" (19,27b–30; Matt 19:13–15//Mark 10:13–16//Luke 18:15–17, especially with a similar confrontation preceding the Jesus saying "to such belongs the kingdom of heaven/God" [Matt 19:14//Mark 10:14//Luke 18:16] with the Pharisees over divorce law [Matt 19:1–12//Mark 10:1–12];<sup>99</sup> cf. Matt 18:1–5//Mark 9:33–37//Luke 9:46–48). The children are characterized as insiders that are now strengthened, made known, and united with the mind of the Father. This contrast is then ended with an eschatological finale that evokes images of the slain and victorious lamb of Revelation (20,3–14; Rev 5:6–7 and especially 21:9–22:7). The suffering of the Son here on page 20 effectively draws together an inclusion with 18,21b–31, where the cosmic conflict of Error's anger and persecution of the Son results in the crucifixion. The images of the book of life in Revelation and the death of the Son on the cross are linked to the analogy of opening a will or posting an edict.

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<sup>98</sup> The Lukan account of the healing of the man with the withered hand is especially worth considering in relation to *Gos. Truth's* Sabbath controversy. Luke 6:6–11, unlike the Markan account (3:1–6), distinctly indicates that Jesus taught (καὶ διδάσκειν) in the synagogue. Both Luke and Matt 12:9–14 further have a reference to helping on the Sabbath a sheep (Matthew) or son (Luke) who has fallen into a pit following the healing. This follow-up question by Jesus, especially the Matthean version, likely is reflected in the *Gos. Truth* where the shepherd helps the lost sheep out of the pit (32,19–20).

<sup>99</sup> Luke 18:15–17 differs from Mark and Matthew in that there is no confrontation story. Rather, Luke has a series of parables on the nature of the kingdom (17:20–18:14). The parable of the Pharisee and tax collector (18:9–14), however, serves the same function as the Markan and Matthean confrontation story. Indeed, the Lukan account's emphasis on pride and humility nicely mirrors the *Gos. Truth's* criticism against the so-called wise.

Indeed, the Son is seen within an incarnational christology of having “put on” the book (20,24; see 20,16–30). As Elliot Wolfson has insightfully recognized, this grammatological Christology (in contrast to the logocentric Christological in John’s prologue) effectively presents Jesus as “the materialization of the imageless Father in the form of an image of the Son, the avowal of the nameless in the enunciation of the name.”<sup>100</sup> The revelatory function of the Son is one of suffering, conflict, and victory through the drawing back to the Father those who belong to the totality (note the crucifixion motif on page 20). Within a grammatological Christology, such salvation is one of manifestation to insiders their true origin or where they belong (i.e., their “name” or ontological nature or rest with the Father as part of the totality).<sup>101</sup> Indeed, it is through the process of embodying the book, going through the Passion (posting the edict or opening the will) and contesting with the outsiders of and within the material realm, that the Son is able to turn those lost in Error towards the Father and thereby enable them to ascend to the Father. In like form the Spirit also is a revelatory agent of the Father, indeed the very tongue of the Father (26,33–36, “because the truth is the mouth of the Father; his tongue is the Holy Spirit”). The Spirit, like the Son, functions to manifest or proclaim the knowledge of the Father (see 20,39).<sup>102</sup> The end goal is the unification of the lost insiders with the Father through a purifying, enlightening, and victorious reintegration of the totality (22,20–25).<sup>103</sup>

The cosmological and soteriological positions that the author outlines fall into four basic categories: the source of knowledge and unity (Father, Son, Spirit, totality), the source of ignorance and discord (Error, materiality, outsiders who are ignorant of their outsider status), insiders who are trapped within ignorance and in need of awakening, and insiders who have been awakened and are able to ascend to the Father. These categories, or positions, are shaped by a dualistic conflict

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<sup>100</sup> Wolfson, “Inscribed in the Book of the Living,” 266. As Wolfson further observes, “To put on the book is a technical elocution that denotes the incarnation of the Father in the Son” (267). For Wolfson, the role of the embodied book fits into a Jewish, as well as Christian, theological context.

<sup>101</sup> See Wolfson, “Inscribed in the Book of the Living.”

<sup>102</sup> See Tite, “Holy Spirit’s Role.”

<sup>103</sup> This movement from multiplicity to oneness (or even beyond oneness) typified Platonic thought, e.g., in the anonymous commentary *In Parmenidem* II.4–27; Plato, *Republic* VII 540A; Theon of Smyrna, *Expositio* 14.18–16.2; Clement of Alexandria, *Str.* V.11.70.8–71.5; and Plotinus, *Ennead* V, 3 [49], 12–13, especially at 12. See the discussion in Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 474–95.

between ignorance and knowledge. Insiders are distinct from outsiders and outsiders cannot become insiders. However, insiders can be lost within the material world, or once again fall into Error. Thus, an immutable anthropology exists within this tractate's narrative field, yet also a mutable soteriological condition exists for insiders. Insiders, by their very nature, belong to the Father. Note the repetition of the circumstantial clause,  $\epsilon\rho\epsilon\iota\pi\chi\omega\kappa \bar{\nu}\tau\epsilon \pi\tau\eta\pi\bar{\iota}\bar{\iota} \bar{\nu}\bar{\nu} \pi\omega\tau$  (21,8–9);  $\epsilon\rho\epsilon\iota\pi\chi\omega\kappa \bar{\nu}\tau\epsilon \pi\tau\eta\rho\bar{\iota} \omega\sigma\omega\pi \bar{\nu}\bar{\nu} \pi\omega\tau$  (21,18–19) (cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.2.6). The circumstantial clause functions as subject complement in both cases, indicating that the ontological relation of the totality to the Father necessitates ascension/cohabitation of the totality with the Father. The Father is their source, their ontological basis for existence, and their only hope of again forming the totality of or within the Father (see, for example, 21,8b–25). The crisis that exists, as a cosmic drama, places the insiders within the contours of ignorance (“stripped naked by oblivion,” 20,37–38) or, for those insiders awakened by the Father, are in danger of falling back into ignorance. As for the moral relations presented within this gospel, the author establishes a link with the pleromatic realm of the Father. However, this relationship is more than a simple one of affiliation as we observed in the *Interp. Know.*; rather, the readers are presented as being that part of the Father that has been separated and are thereby lost (or deficient). Although the insiders have a longing for the Father ( $\pi\tau\eta\rho\bar{\iota} \alpha\gamma\kappa\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon \bar{\nu}\sigma\alpha \pi\epsilon\bar{\nu}\tau\alpha\gamma\epsilon\iota \alpha\beta\alpha\lambda \bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\eta\tau\bar{\iota}\bar{\iota}$ , 17,5–6), they are not able to attain to their goal on their own; a revealing instructor is necessary for the insiders to ascend back to the Father (e.g., 20,6–14; 21,3–8). The utilization of the parable of the lost sheep at 31,35b–32,30, just prior to the paraenetic subsection, reinforces both this sense of separation as well as the desire for reintegration.

A moral relation also exists between both established insiders (the readers) and those who are potential insiders in need of receiving proclamation of knowledge. Again, the relation is one of ontological equation—they are of the same source or root and thus belong together in unity. In contrast with this insider/potential insider relation, the author paints an antagonistic relationship between insiders (both types) and outsiders. Just as the Father is of a different ontological state than Error, so also are the readers (and potential insiders) ontologically different from other human beings who fall into the status of outsiders—outsiders are not rooted in the Father and therefore have no place within the totality. Outsiders are characterized as lacking a “name” (21,26) and, therefore, are not ontologically related to the Father/totality. Rather,

they are “creatures of oblivion” (21,35–36), a description that places their ontological condition onto the side of Error. Just as Error stands in an antagonistic relationship to the Father/totality, so also are outsiders positioned as foolish and therefore hateful of the true wisdom proclaimed by the Son (19,19–27). It is from this broader cosmological understanding of the status of the Valentinians that the author constructs his or her paraenetic subsection on pages 32 to 33.

The paraenetic subsection of this gospel, as was indicated above, is closely linked to the surrounding material. Rather than a hortatory aside, this subsection is a direct communicative attempt to draw the readers into the soteriological processes that have been expounded. In a sense, the theological discourse moves from positing a passive role for the readers (as readers of salvation) towards a more active and ethical role.

A transitional shift occurs at 32,31 that explicitly directs the readers towards such an active role. The postpositive particle *ἄρα*, with its basic meaning of “then, therefore,” indicates that the imperatives in this subsection build upon the preceding discussion of the Son’s role in salvation, specifically the parable of the shepherd leaving the ninety-nine sheep to save the lost sheep that had fallen into a pit. This consequential shift is reinforced by the chiasmatic relationship of 32,29–34 (ΠΟΥΛΕΙΝ... ὈΨΗΚ... ΕΤΧΗΚ... ΠΟΥΛΕΙΝ). This transition is noteworthy as it indicates that the hortatory address is not divorced from the salvific work of the Son. Rather, the readers are called upon to join in that very work by “speaking” or declaring the truth. Being described as “the perfect day” (32,33), the readers are not positioned as those who are outsiders nor lost insiders. Rather, they are insiders who are already saved by the knowledge of the Father. In the preceding parable, they could be seen as the remaining sheep rather than the lost sheep in the pit: they belong to the realm above, not the material realm below. Such an opening for the paraenetic subsection effectively presents the Valentinians as co-workers with the Son.

The transition also suggests that the target of Valentinian proclamation is not the outsiders but rather the lost sheep that are trapped. Thus, this subsection reinforces the fourfold positioning of the players within this dualistic drama. Part of the missionary work of the readers is further tied into a social presentation of their exemplary relationship with the realm of light. The Valentinians are exhorted to “proclaim... that [they] are the perfect day and in [them] dwells the light that does not fail” (32,31–34). The readers are presented as ontologically embodying

the very reality that the lost sheep are in need of, and to which they belong. Although Grobel suggests that this substantive description of the readers as being the perfect day is merely a figurative description (this is based on the parallel sentence that “in you dwells the light,” which Grobel sees as more realistic and less overenthusiastic),<sup>104</sup> he neglects to recognize the ontological point that the author is trying to make, especially with such a parallel statement (“perfect day” and “in you dwells the light”). The parallel draws out two aspects of the readers’ place within the cosmological drama of this gospel. First, they belong to, and are ontologically derived from, the totality of the Father. Second, they exist within the material realm, not as lost sheep or as asocial ascetics, but rather as active participants within the attempt to reach and save their fellow sheep who are still lost.<sup>105</sup> The message that they are to proclaim is one of revelation of the light; a revelation that is very much a matter of self-presentation as *exempla* of the totality. As discussed in chapters 3 and 5, the importance of moral *exempla* in paraenesis is extended to that of self-presentation. The object of such exemplary presentation in this gospel is the lost sheep. The lost sheep, however, are distinguished from the so-called wise (outsiders); they are those who actively search for knowledge, but are trapped by ignorance, sin and error. They are described as those who stumble, are ill, hungry, weary, fallen, and asleep. These images, coupled with the parabolic sheep in a pit (32,19–20) offer the readers a desperate picture of the lost insiders. Such lost insiders are incapable of coming to the saving knowledge of the Father and, therefore, are in need of the readers’ missionary work.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Grobel, *Gospel of Truth*, 139. Although he correctly notes that light and day are somewhat synonymous here, thereby linking these two sentences as parallels, he erroneously assumes a figurative image. Part of his failure to recognize the ontological and relational rhetoric of these lines is his evident confusion over why the author even has this shift (seeing such a shift as “an unexpected turn”). Attridge and MacRae, “Gospel of Truth: Introduction,” 95, more correctly note that, “the shift is not accidental, but expresses the intimate association of the revealer, the content of the revelation and its recipients.”

<sup>105</sup> See King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 211: “The insistence that one’s own salvation depends on the salvation of others expresses the inaccuracy of claims that so-called Gnostic views of salvation necessarily resulted in individualism... This point is underscored by the concern for the well-being of others, evinced in other texts such as *Gos. Truth*, cited above.”

<sup>106</sup> Although Thomassen does not present such a paraenetic reading of *Gos. Truth*, he comes to a similar conclusion on the soteriological role of the Valentinian Christians when discussing Heracleon’s soteriology and christology: “The reaping too took place

The insiders are, however, distinguished in two ways. First, lost insiders are not the author's audience. As interlocutors, only the enlightened insiders are addressed. The suggestion of Attridge and MacRae that this gospel is an exoteric work "designed to introduce Valentinian soteriological insights to members of the great Church,"<sup>107</sup> collapses when we recognize that the author, especially in the paraenetic subsection where the readers are directly exhorted, only addresses enlightened insiders. The lost are simply a third party within the address. This is important in elucidating the underlying focus of this gospel's hortatory discourse. The gospel is not itself a tool for missionary work; it is not a tract that is designed to win converts. Thus, the paraenesis does not carry a protreptic social function. Rather the paraenetic function is to call those who are already insiders to ethical activity. Unlike the *Interp. Know.*, there are no indications of a possible secondary audience that may indicate a protreptic social function of the discourse.

Second, the description of the lost insiders would have offered an implicit opposite description of the readers. The readers, no longer possessing the status of lost sheep, are therefore awake, risen, rested, not hungry, healthy, and firm. On page 22 the author presents a five-fold process by which the insiders move from the state of being lost to reconnection with the Father: "If he is *called*, he *hears*, he *answers*, and he *turns* to him who is calling him, and *ascends* to him" (22,4–7, emphasis added). This process is reminiscent of the five ascending sacraments within Valentinianism (baptism, chrism, eucharist, redemption, and bridal chamber; this list is from the *Gos. Phil.* 69,27–30, though the same process might underlie the invocations of the *Pr. Paul* A,15–25: give gifts, give authority, give healing, redeem eternal light soul, reveal the first-born of the pleroma "to my mind"; it is possible that here in the *Gos. Truth* another variant list is being offered; note also the descent/ascent motif in *Interp. Know.* 13,20–35). It is also similar to the

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not only once, during the Saviour's sojourn on earth, but goes on as an activity carried out by the angels represented by the disciples—doubtlessly mediated by the ministry of the spiritual church" (*Spiritual Seed*, 116).

<sup>107</sup> Attridge and MacRae, "The Gospel of Truth," 39. In their more extensive introduction for the Brill critical edition, they state: "Such deliberate ambiguity may well have been designed to avoid giving offense to the 'weaker brethern' who could not, at least initially, accept the full speculative position of the school, especially on cosmogonic matters, while it invites an entry into the fundamental soteriological perspective of the school" ("Introduction: Gospel of Truth," 80).

process of coming to knowledge of the divine as suggested by Theon of Smyrna:

Of initiation there are five parts. First *purification*: for participation in the mysteries is not for all those who are publicly authorized to perform them; and for those not performing them it is necessary first to obtain a certain purification. Second, after purification is the *bestowal of initiation*. Third is that which is called *vision*. And fourth, that which is the goal of vision, an adornment and imposition of *wreaths*, so as to be able to bestow on others the initiations that one has received, to receive torches or hierophanies or some other sacred thing. And fifth is the well-being resulting from them in terms of *friendliness and cohabitation with the gods* (*Expositio* 14.18–16.2; emphasis added).<sup>108</sup>

Although the exact steps of the initiatory processes are different in Theon and the *Gos. Truth* (both Plato and Empedocles, according to Theon, also varied in their presentations and metaphors used to illustrate these steps and therefore variance is not surprising within such a Platonic process of intellection), the end goal of being in a “cohabitating” presence with the divine is the same. Thus, the *Gospel of Truth’s* ascending presentation of the insiders from ignorance to knowledge is not without parallel among the Middle Platonists. Just as the readers are characterized as no longer lost (having once been lost in Error), so also can the lost insiders ascend to the opposite state of their current condition.

The readers, furthermore, are not lost in Error nor are they sinful. This contrast between the readers and the lost insiders distinguishes the two conditions and offers the lost insiders a representation of what they should be. The utilization of the readers as *exempla*, consequently, allows there to be hope for those lost in Error. These two distinctions place the readers within a privileged position. They are distinguished as being superior to the realm of Error, not only having been saved from that material realm but even more so by the author’s contention that they do not even belong to that realm. The missionary command in this first injunctive unit further presents them as essential within the soteriological process of this cosmic contestation. This contrast, however, also evokes a pathetic tone for the readers. The readers are not simply in a contrastive condition to the lost insiders, but they are

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<sup>108</sup> *Theonis Smyrnaei philosophi platonici Expositio rerum mathematicarum ad legendum Platonem utilium*, edited by Eduardus Hiller, translation by Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 485–86, n. 57.

also very much like them: once they too were lost sheep, with all the implications of being lost within the material realm. They are therefore exemplars of where the lost are and where they can progress. The Reason to the Injunctions effectively indicates such exemplary missionary work: “For you are the understanding that is drawn forth” (33,8–9). Both the transitional ΓΑΡ and the verb ΤΑΚῆ (especially if it translates, as suggested by R. McL. Wilson, ἀνασπάω) link the ethical behaviour of the readers with the drawing up of the lost sheep from the pit (32,18–22).<sup>109</sup> Indeed, this allusion back to the lost sheep reinforces not only the importance of the readers’ moral example, but also the moral example set forth by the Son for the readers to follow within their missionary work.

Whereas both types of insiders are positioned within an ontological relationship with the Father, and indeed are the totality that is within the Father and perfected by the Father, the outsiders are also placed within the dualistic typology that frames this gospel’s cosmological perspective. From 33,11–32 the author presents the negative hortative side of the paraenesis: a warning of what to avoid, of the danger involved in the missionary work that the readers are called upon to conduct within this material world. An exclusive focus upon insider concern sets the tone for the second injunctive unit of the paraenesis. The readers are only to be concerned with themselves, i.e., with insiders. Given the missionary thrust of the first injunctive unit, this exhortation at 33,11 clearly includes both types of insiders (ΧΙ ΖΗΗΤῆ; note also ΜΗΡΧΙ ΖΗΗΤῆ). This exclusive insider focus, as noted above, is grounded within a contrary presentation of stability and instability, which, in turn, is ethically validated by an identity construction of the just and the lawless.

The reference to ΧΙΑΒΟΛΟΣ seems to place the outsider condition explicitly within the cosmological side of Error. Not only are outsiders on the negative side of the ethical and cosmological presentation of this gospel, they are also presented as contenders against the insiders. That is, not only are outsiders beyond the concern of the insiders, they are also active participants within the danger facing the insiders. This is seen both in references to the past condition of the readers that they are

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<sup>109</sup> See R. McL. Wilson, “A Note on the Gospel of Truth.” A similar usage of the verb is found in Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.7.5, where the weak souls of the spiritual humans are brought forth and attain perfection.

warned not to return (“do not return to what you have vomited... you have already cast it off... you have already destroyed him.”) and direct references to the threat posed by outsiders (“do not strengthen those who are obstacles to you”). Added to this antagonism and danger is the mythological or cosmological link to the devil finding a place within the insider, perhaps reflecting the notion of entrapment or illegal occupation (ΠΙΤΟΠΙΟΣ ΠΙΠΛΙΑΒΟΛΟΣ; 33,20).<sup>110</sup> Grobel and Ménard have suggested, correctly I think, that 33,20 likely is an intertextual reference back to Eph 4:27 (and perhaps also Matt 12:43–45 and Luke 11:24–26),<sup>111</sup> where Ps.-Paul makes a similar exhortation/warning: μηδέ δίδοτε τόπον τῷ διαβόλῳ. In both cases, *topos* is given an ethical nuance linked to social relations. In Ephesians, Ps.-Paul’s exhortation is tied into maintaining community cohesion between fellow Christians, yet with an uncompromising adherence to Christian ethics. In the *Gos. Truth*, the same exhortation admonishes a social cohesion among the Valentinian Christians, along with an ethical adherence (i.e., not giving the devil a foothold within the community to destroy the community). The Valentinian author, however, has presented the exhortation with some differences, which either reflects a redactional interpretation of the Ephesian passage (if there is direct literary relations between the two passages) or a distinct tradition for this Christian exhortation (if there is an indirect literary relation). First, the *Gospel of Truth* has placed this exhortation within the context of a warning against outsiders. Ps.-Paul, however, has placed this within an internal Christian conflict (note Eph 4:25b: ὅτι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη).

Although both texts develop their exhortation from an ethical threat of being pulled into worldly immorality (see Eph 4:17–24), the insider and outsider focus of the danger is noteworthy. This difference places the *Gos. Truth*’s warning within a discursive speech action of positioning insiders vis-à-vis outsiders. Secondly, the verb chosen in each text is significant. In Ephesians the negative imperative μηδέ δίδοτε carries an externalizing nuance in contrast to the ontological or internalizing danger of the negative imperative μηπιρωπιε in the *Gos. Truth*. The shift from “to give” to “to become” adds to the ontological dualistic presentation of the readers’ place within the world and perhaps reinforces the cosmological difference between insiders and outsiders. As Jacqueline

<sup>110</sup> Compare with 2π ΠΟΥΤΟΠΙΟΣ at 42,40 (see my discussion in chapter 8).

<sup>111</sup> Ménard, *L’Évangile de Vérité*, 157; Grobel, *The Gospel of Truth*, 145.

Williams suggests, “Δίδωμι is often used in Greek with τόπος to mean ‘give opportunity’... With the verb ‘become,’ τόπος in GTr probably means ‘place’.”<sup>112</sup> Although she goes on to suggest that the Coptic here may simply be idiomatic for “opportunity,” her first suggestion (and the one that is followed in the Attridge-MacRae English translation) is most likely given the context of the admonition.<sup>113</sup>

The positioning of the various players within the paraenetic subsection is consistent with the positioning that the author constructs throughout the *Gos. Truth*. She or he has placed the entire gospel message within a broad cosmological duality of the Father (with the totality) and Error (ignorance, materiality, false wisdom). Humankind is divided into a bipartite typology that parallels the cosmological dualism of Father and Error (with a further demarcation of insiders as either saved or lost). The paraenesis itself engages this series of relations, framing the missionary work of the readers as established and delimited by this valuation of insiders and outsiders. Rhetorically, this very valuation adds persuasive force for the readers to be motivated to engage in the ethical behaviours that constitute “speaking” the truth (32,31; 32,35). If the readers accept the author’s speech action, that is his/her act of positioning, then the discourse would reinforce both the call to ethical activity as part of evangelistic work (i.e., the readers will see themselves as part of the divine effort to bring truth to those lost in ignorance; recognize that this calling is prestigious and of eschatological importance; see the danger as significant and worthy of their efforts; and establish, by *pathos*, a sympathetic relationship between the readers and those who are still lost in Error) and the limitations of that work (i.e., the dualism establishes an outsider presence that is a threat; only lost insiders are to receive the concern of the readers; and the work should parallel that of the Son who sought out the lost insiders).

This speech act of positioning various relations in the *Gos. Truth* is, however, linked together within a particular storyline for the discourse.

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<sup>112</sup> Williams, *Biblical Interpretation*, 135.

<sup>113</sup> As Attridge and MacRae, “Gospel of Truth: Introduction,” 96–97, correctly observe the imperatives at 33,11 and 33,16–17 stress the inward condition of the readers (contrasting the past and present condition). This is especially true of the admonition at 33,16–17. Given the author’s concern with the inward condition of insiders, and the ethical references to illness in the first injunctive unit, τόπος likely refers to the indwelling presence or domination of the devil. This presence might have evoked images of pollution (such as desecration of a holy site) or disease (thus the connotation of contamination by outsiders).

Just as the *Interp. Know.* articulated a social idealization for the Christian community, so also does this author present a social idealization of the Christian community. This idealization, we should recall, does not necessarily describe the actual social and historical dynamics of the Valentinian Christians that are addressed in or by this gospel. Rather than a window through which we are able to reconstruct (or construct) the historical occasion of the text, we have instead a conversation partner within a broader social discourse. We are, consequently, listening in on another conversation; not with the goal of reconstructing the setting of the conversation, but rather as an attempt to gain a glimpse at one rhetorical attempt to construct the setting within discourse. The storyline of cosmological crisis and contestation incorporates a social idealization of exilic presence within a foreign and hostile realm. Such an exilic motif is not unusual within Jewish and Christian texts,<sup>114</sup> yet here in the *Gos. Truth* the motif is perhaps placed within a social idealization of itinerant prophets.

Itinerancy as a sociological role within early Christian communities is not new within New Testament scholarship. Indeed, Gerd Theissen's theory of wandering charismatics from within the Jesus movement up to the second century has found various advocates and critics. In his *Soziologie der Jesusbewegung: Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Urchristentums* (ET: *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*), Theissen attempted to explain the emergence and development of the Jesus movement from a sociological perspective.<sup>115</sup> Specifically, he focused upon the interrelationship of social roles, social factors, and social functions. Theissen's social model, at least in broad outline, largely mirrors Adolf von Harnack's *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel* and *The Mission and Expansion of Early Christianity*,<sup>116</sup> and is indebted to the work of Max

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<sup>114</sup> The diaspora motif in 1 Peter, for example, is extensively discussed in Martin, *Metaphor*; Tite, *Compositional Transitions*; and Heinrich Rendtorff, *Getrostes Wandern*, especially 18. We also see such a motif emerging in the social description of the Christian community in the *Epistle of Diognetus* (especially 5.1–6.1); cf. Adolf von Harnack, *Mission and Expansion*, 266–78. On Jewish restorative theology in connection with such a diaspora motif, see Larry Edwin Murphy, *The Concept of the Twelve in Luke-Acts*. On the social challenges in identity construction and establishment of social institutions within diaspora Judaism, see the discussion in Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 298–311, as well as Theodore Reinarch, "Diaspora."

<sup>115</sup> Gerd Theissen, *Sociology*.

<sup>116</sup> Harnack, *Mission and Expansion; Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel*.

Weber, D. Georg Kretschmar, and Kurt Niederwimmer.<sup>117</sup> At the heart of Theissen's discussion is the role of the charismatic wanderer.<sup>118</sup> Primarily working with the evidence in the Synoptic gospels (e.g., Mark 1:16–20; 6:4–56; 10:28; Matt 8:20–22; 10:1–11; 23:35; Luke 9:1–11; 10:1–12; 12:49–53; 14:26), to a lesser degree Acts (4:36–37; 6:5; 8:1, 4, 14; 11:27; 13:1), and certainly *Didache* (especially chapters 11 and 13) as well as Lucian's *Peregrinus* 16, Theissen theorizes that Jesus not only embodied an itinerant ministry, but also called upon a core group of his earliest followers to imitate this lifestyle with the support of larger circles of more settled sympathizers.<sup>119</sup> The so-called “commissioning of the twelve” is particularly central for this theory.

Theissen believes that within the early Jesus movement and early Christianity,<sup>120</sup> there was a central, rather than marginal, presence of religious leaders who abandoned settled life, including career, family, and housing, in order to spread the teachings of Jesus. The designation “charismatic” is used in order to indicate that these wandering vagabond preachers were following a perceived divine call. The lifestyle they adopted is not an institutionalized role, limited by regulations or external authorities.<sup>121</sup> This vagabond lifestyle had four basic elements worth noting. First, itinerancy required homelessness. The calling of the disciples in the Synoptic and Johannine gospels required an abandonment of one's home. Jesus himself claims that “the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Matt 8:20) and, thus, embodied this very element. In *Didache* 11.5, apostles (i.e., itinerant preachers) were deemed false if they remained within a community longer than two

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<sup>117</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society*; D. Georg Kretschmar, “Ein Beitrag zur Frage”; “Die christliche Leben”; Kurt Neiderwimmer, “Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Wanderradikalismus.”

<sup>118</sup> According to Jonathan A. Draper, Theissen largely, though not explicitly, draws upon Weber's social understanding of *charisma* at this point (Draper, “Weber, Theissen”). Draper contends, however, that Theissen failed to fully appreciate the complexity of Weberian *charisma* (551–61; see especially the discussion of *religious virtuoso* on pages 555–57).

<sup>119</sup> An independent Johannine indication (John 4:44) has been suggested by J. Ramsey Michaels, “The Itinerant Jesus and his Home Town”. Stephen J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, has also argued for an application of itinerancy to the *Gospel of Thomas* (in particular logia 14, 42, 73, and 86).

<sup>120</sup> It is difficult to tell at times whether or not Theissen recognizes a distinction between the movement during the life of Jesus and that which emerged after Jesus' death. Although I would use the designations “Jesus movement” and “early or formative Christianity” to denote such a shift, Theissen seems to use them almost interchangeably.

<sup>121</sup> Theissen, *Sociology*, 8.

days (τρεις δὲ ἔαν μείνη ψευδοπροφήτης ἐστίν). Second, the itinerant life required a lack of family. The one who responds to the call is to abandon his wife, children, and broader household.<sup>122</sup> Mark 10:28–31 and Luke 14:26 defines discipleship as a status in opposition to family, and thereby reject the family structure. The tensions between Jesus and his own family in all four New Testament gospels again present him as the *exemplar* of itinerancy. Third, a charismatic wanderer must lack possessions. Negative evaluations of the rich are not uncommon within early Christian texts (e.g., Luke 6:24; see also the *Acts Pet. 12 Apost.*). This criticism of wealth, and of worldly position, underlies the call to a minimalist type of itinerancy, such as put forth in the sending out of the disciples: “Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff” (Matt 10:9–10). Rather than being dependent upon one’s goods, the itinerant is to depend upon what God gives him (Matt 6:34). Such an economic lifestyle clearly calls to mind the Cynic lifestyle, thereby offering a possible parallel for scholars to explore.<sup>123</sup> Within the Jesus movement, it is the responsibility of the sedentary community to support these wandering preachers (cf. Acts 4:32–5:11). The fourth element of the itinerant life is a lack of protection. Not only must the charismatics not carry a staff on their journey (thus depriving them of protection from wild animals or bandits) (Luke 9:3),<sup>124</sup> but also they are not to retaliate when attacked (Matt 5:38–43), nor must they be prepared if brought before a judge (Matt 10:16–20). Rather than depending on their own means for protection, these charismatics are to depend upon God to safeguard

<sup>122</sup> The gender bias in this statement is intentional. Theissen only indicates a *male* participation in itinerancy. This limitation to male followers has been challenged by feminist scholars, most notably by Luise Schottroff, “Itinerant Prophetesses,” and Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 145–46.

<sup>123</sup> Advocates of Theissen’s social model include those with an appreciation for the possible links to Cynicism. Although only a passing analogy for Theissen, a Cynic parallel to the Jesus movement has been further developed by such scholars. Most notable is John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus*; “Itinerants and Householders in the Earliest Jesus Movement”; Leif E. Vaage, *Galilean Upstarts*; Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence*; “Q and a Cynic-Like Jesus”; John W. Marshall, “The Gospel of Thomas and the Cynic Jesus”; and F. Gerald Downing, *Jesus and the Threat of Freedom; Christ and the Cynics*; “Quite Like Q”. In opposition to the Cynic connection see especially Hans Dieter Betz, “Jesus and the Cynics.”

<sup>124</sup> Mark, however, does command the disciples to take a staff only for the journey (Mark 6:8). Luke’s redactional activity heightens the abandonment that is present in the Markan commission by eliminating this exemption and adding it into the list of items not to be taken. Matthew (10:9–10) simply drops the reference to a staff.

them (Matt 10:20). In addition to these four elements of itinerancy is the antagonistic relationship between the wandering preacher and the broader world. This antagonism, sometimes taking on a persecution/suffering motif, is not only present in the sending out of the twelve, but also is integral to the Cynic *ethos*.<sup>125</sup>

A second social level of established and sedentary communities supported these charismatic wanderers. These communities were located within village and rural settings in the earlier stages of the development of the Jesus movement. Due to the economic, political, and cultural tensions within first-century Palestine, the Jesus movement emerged as one of several renewal movements. Unlike those Jewish movements that advocated rebellion, the Jesus movement was an eirenic movement. The authority of the charismatics, like the authority of Jesus as the ideal itinerant, was founded upon the divine call to this vagabond existence. According to Theissen's theory, by the second century the Christian communities had developed local governing authorities and regulations (both dogmatic and ecclesiastical) that challenged the authority and presence of these wandering charismatics. Itinerancy, therefore, eventually gave way to ecclesiastical social structures within, especially, the broader Greco-Roman world.

Theissen's theory of a wandering charismatic ministry within the first century of Christianity has faced several challenges from other scholars. Beyond the exclusion of women taking up such an itinerant lifestyle, this social history has been challenged most forcefully by Richard A. Horsley, Wolfgang Stegemann, Jonathan A. Draper, and more recently by William E. Arnal.<sup>126</sup> All these critiques of the itinerancy model posited by Harnack and especially Theissen have rendered the

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<sup>125</sup> The Cynic view of the world, or specifically the city or government, is not necessarily completely anti-social. Rather, as John L. Moles has argued, Cynicism held a critical, but interactive relationship with the city while seeing the Cynic as a citizen of the cosmos (in relation to humans, animals, and the gods). Perceiving "living according to nature" in such a universal sense contributes to the Cynic missionary efforts, including his or her critique of society. See John L. Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism."

<sup>126</sup> See Richard A. Horsley, *Sociology*; "Jesus, Itinerant Cynic or Israelite Prophet?"; Wolfgang Stegemann, "Wanderradikalismus im Urchristentum?"; Jonathan A. Draper, "Weber, Theissen"; "Wandering Charismatics"; William E. Arnal, *Jesus and the Village Scribes*. On the feminist challenge to Theissen's theory, see especially Schottroff, "Itinerant Prophetesses." Stegemann and Arnal in particular challenge Theissen's failure to take into consideration redactional layers of the gospel materials. Stegemann focuses upon the Cynic interpretation of the Synoptic gospels, while Arnal, building on Kloppenborg's work, focuses upon the various layers of Q.

*Wanderradikalismus* hypothesis highly suspect,<sup>127</sup> despite the continued utilization of itinerancy within early Christian studies. From a sociological and methodological perspective, Horsley's challenge is the most devastating.

Horsley correctly notes that Theissen's sociological approach derives from structural-functionalism. Theissen explicitly indicates a functionalist approach at the outset of his discussion: "...a variety of ways towards fulfilling the basic aims of a society, namely in achieving the integration of its members and overcoming conflicts through change. Integration can involve compulsion and restrictions, but it can also mean the extension and the enrichment of human possibilities."<sup>128</sup> Although Theissen is careful not to equate causes with social implications, his sociological model is problematic in large part due to the problems with the functionalist sociological method more generally. Horsley has effectively reiterated these criticisms in application to Theissen's theory. The emphasis upon social integration as the driving force of social systems, in Horsley's estimation, results in three critical failures of functionalism.

First, there is an ahistorical bias that ignores the interactive dynamics of social systems over time. Rather than being closed and static social systems, societies tend to have various contingent factors affecting them through continuous interaction. Such non-self-enclosed entities cannot be reduced to simple causal relations.<sup>129</sup> Second, the integrative emphasis tends to undervalue the importance of conflict. Most functional sociologists tend to ignore or overlook the comparative value of conflict for social analyses despite the natural place of conflict within this theoretical approach. Lewis Coser, however, is one exception to this tendency.<sup>130</sup> Horsley, rather than seeing conflict as only useful within a social drive towards social integration of a closed and static system, instead advocates a more dynamic and interactive appreciation for conflict as a force for the challenging structures that contribute to

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<sup>127</sup> A further criticism against Harnack's distinction of the roles of apostles, prophets, and teachers in *Didache* is raised by André de Halleux, "Les ministères dans la *Didachè*."

<sup>128</sup> Theissen, *Sociology*, 2. See Horsley, *Sociology*, 30–41; Arnal, *Jesus and the Village Scribes*, 23–29.

<sup>129</sup> The ahistorical accusation is also directed towards the so-called neo-functionalism of the 1980s, especially embodied in Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Neofunctionalism*. See Horsley, *Sociology*, 41, n. 3; Charles Camic, "The Return of the Functionalists."

<sup>130</sup> Lewis Coser, *Function of Social Conflict*.

social changes. Thirdly, Horsley claims that the functionalist approach carries a conservative bias in that a narrow focus on social relations as tied to social systems tends to exclude relations between and among individuals. These three challenges are not new. In contrast to structural-functionalist approaches in sociology, interactionist approaches, including Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism, have attempted to stress a more historical, non-static process of social development through discursive contestation. The approach I have adopted from positioning theory clearly fits this more interactionist approach, particularly with the stress on discursive voices of asynchronic and synchronic communication.

Although the *Wanderradikalismus* hypothesis is not without its difficulties, both those typical of structural-functionalism as well as the historical assumption of Christian development with the concept of *Frühkatholizismus* (especially embedded within Harnack's history), the role of itinerancy is still helpful for our discussion of the social idealization within the *Gos. Truth*. The presence of wandering preachers within the first century and a half of the Christian movement are evident from various sources. Beyond the gospel narratives, especially the sending out of the disciples, there are more historically plausible indications of wandering preachers. The gospels are problematic for such historical reconstruction due to their purely narrative nature, a problem that is incontestable when we consider the methodological problems indicated by Wisse regarding such historical methods. References to wandering, however, are present in Acts (Paul is an excellent example, as is Philip), Gal 2 (Peter, whose wandering presence results in confrontation between him and Paul), and most clearly *Didache* 11–15. Narrative fiction, such as in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*, and the *Acts of Thomas* suggest that (apostolic) wandering was not an alien concept for early Christians in the second century.

None of these sources, however, establish the complexity of roles inherent in the *Wanderradikalismus* hypothesis. Indeed, not even *Didache*, arguably the most practical reference to itinerancy, offers more than an indication that some wandering preachers would (or could) take advantage of the local community. Such indications do not suggest that there was a contestation between rival authorities, one incrementally replacing the other as normative. *Didache's* social issue is one of violation of codes of hospitality and the charlatan philosopher motif. Furthermore, none of these sources indicates that itinerancy,

especially with an urban-rural demarcation, goes back to the ministry of Jesus and the early Jesus movement.

Rather, we have literary indications of the presence of itinerant workers who would travel, perhaps prophesying, teaching or preaching or performing exorcisms or healings, and in some cases establishing or reinforcing Christian communities throughout the Greco-Roman world. In some instances, as *Didache* suggests, such wandering travellers might simply relocate to a new location. Mobility in the Roman world was not uncommon, and second-century Christianity is replete with notable examples (e.g., Marcion, Valentinus, and Irenaeus all come to mind).<sup>131</sup> Although detailed social structures and their attendant valuations and contestations are not clearly discernable, the sources do indicate that an historical idealization of Jesus and the apostles included an imposition of itinerancy for the sake of constructing memory/history and thus social identity among certain Christians. The specificity of Theissen and Harnack's reconstruction of early Christianity is not implied in such an appreciation of itinerancy, nor does such an appreciation run counter to the *Wanderradikalismus* hypothesis. The presence of other wandering practitioners, teachers or philosophers within the Greco-Roman world, including the Cynics, indicates not only the possibility of such wandering within Christian circles, but also the likelihood that Christians could conceptually relate to the narrative presence of itinerancy as a social model. My interest is not to argue that itinerancy in this vague sense or in the more developed *Wanderradikalismus* hypothesis was the social reality for the author or readers of the *Gos. Truth*. I have no idea what the actual social context of this tractate might have been; there are not enough social indicators either external or internal to plausibly offer any such historical reconstruction. Rather, I am suggesting that the social idealization, as a storyline for the rhetorical efficaciousness of this tractate may have drawn upon an itinerant and exilic motif. The preceding discussion of itinerancy raises the possibility that readers in the second to fourth century might have picked up on the clues within the *Gos. Truth* that could lead towards an itinerant reading; i.e.,

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<sup>131</sup> In his general overview of travel in the ancient world, Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*, especially 115–48, points out that people in the Roman world were very mobile. Travel occurred for various reasons, including business, pilgrimage, pleasure, and to visit centres of healing (in particular the sanctuaries of Asclepius, such as the ones at Epidaurus, Cos, and Pergamum).

itinerancy as a culturally specific storyline is a plausible reading of the cumulative indications of itinerancy within this text.

Indications of itinerancy in the *Gos. Truth* are slight, but they are present nonetheless. The first possible indication of a wandering motif is embedded within the parable of the shepherd and the lost sheep at 32,2 (cf. 32,35–36). The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine sheep to “search for the one which had gone astray.” As we have seen, the shepherd (= the Son) exemplifies the salvific mission that the readers are then called to participate within. Thus, just as the shepherd is to go about searching and finding the lost sheep, so also the readers should embark on a wandering mission. This exemplary aspect to the parable is reinforced by its position just prior to the paraenetic subsection. The wandering mission of the shepherd (and thus the readers) is not one of a charismatic *ethos* with the support of a sedentary community. The author does not give that much information. Rather, the focus of this parable is upon the lost condition of the sheep, and the shepherd’s duty in bringing back the lost. This retrieval motif is not a permanent condition or lifestyle. No shepherd spends all their time searching for lost sheep as if wandering were quintessential to their lifestyle. This is an emergency, a threat to the unity of the whole flock and the safety of the lost sheep, and thus the shepherd embarks upon a wandering mission to draw “what was deficient and takes it from the left-hand side and brings (it) to the right, so too the number becomes one hundred” (32,12–16). This wandering mission is typified by suffering and a willingness to die for the sake of the sheep.<sup>132</sup> Just as the Son/Shepherd willingly lays his life down for the sheep, so also should the readers who are then called upon to participate in the Son’s mission of saving the lost sheep.<sup>133</sup> Suffering and persecution fit the itinerancy motif that Theissen constructs, though suffering is not limited to itinerancy (either in Theissen’s specific model or in a more general model of ancient

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<sup>132</sup> The suffering motif is evident with the christological reference to “he gave life to the sheep” (32,20–21). Although this reference may simply indicate that the sheep have their source of life in the shepherd (cf. John 1:4), the preceding statement to the shepherd labouring on the Sabbath for the fallen sheep is reminiscent of Jesus’ Sabbath controversies with the Jewish religious leaders in the gospels. Indeed, this Sabbath statement recalls the controversy that the Son has with the so-called wise of 19,19–27.

<sup>133</sup> Note the shift at lines 22–23 and 38–39 (as Attridge observes, “Notes,” 94, lines 38–39 should follow line 23, as the copyist indicates) to the second person address with the conditional. This shift effectively identifies the readers with both the lost sheep now found and as co-workers with the Son’s mission that they are exhorted to participate within in the paraenetic subsection.

itinerancy). Suffering/persecution also reflects a diaspora motif of exile, such as is prominent within 1 Peter's paraenetic address. Indeed, the entire lost sheep motif, along with the temporary status of the wandering shepherd, fit better with a diaspora itinerant social perception rather than the *Wanderradikalismus* hypothesis.

A second indication of itinerancy arises on page 35. Here we have a similar wandering *exemplar* as on page 32, yet with the image of a physician rather than a shepherd. The physician "runs to the place where sickness is" (35,30–31). Greco-Roman healers came in various forms, some of which would have been itinerant. Vivian Nutton describes Greek healers: "the plurality of Greek medicine, in which exorcists, religious healers, root-cutters, folk-healers, and *iatroi* ('healers') existed in competition."<sup>134</sup> Such competition between different approaches to illness and healing resulted in polemics against different types of healers. For instance, Galen is highly critical of the religious approach to healing, such as the incubation methods of the cult of Asclepius or the connection between illness and the divine in Judaism and Christianity.<sup>135</sup> Not all intellectuals in the Roman world were opposed to the connection of religion and healing.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, the notion of the philosopher

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<sup>134</sup> Vivian Nutton, "Medicine in the Greek World", 11–12. The competition within the Roman period remained, and was especially intense between different schools of professional physicians such as between the schools of Methodism, Pneumatism, and Empiricism. Galen was particularly polemical against the Methodists. Early Roman antagonism to Greek physicians such as Asclepiades and the so-called Asclepiadeans is perhaps most pronounced in Cato. By the imperial period, Romans (especially in urban centres) accepted professional physicians within society. See Vivian Nutton, "Roman Medicine."

<sup>135</sup> Nutton, "Medicine in the Greek World," 16, summarizes Galen's view well: "In Roman period Galen's anger at the activities of quacks was matched by his amazement at Jews and Christians, whose belief in miracles he thought entailed a capricious deity who could overthrow at will the whole 'scientific' basis of the universe, including medicine."

<sup>136</sup> At the level of the common people, magic and medicine were not necessarily seen as different practices. Although some magical spells and amulets simply invoked deities, other texts, such as *Michigan 136*, a book of folk remedies, has pharmacological and magical elements for illness interwoven. For instance, on pages 9 and 10 of *Michigan 136* the remedy for "the malignant disease" is pharmacological ("...a measure of Philanis, three measures of Ebriaam, three measures of celery seed, three measures of dill seed. You put honey on them and grind them together, and put them into a cup of beer and a cup of [...] wine, and grind together well, and divide it into three portions and take a portion with you each day for three days, and drink seven cups in the [...]), physical ("...and stretch yourself out on your belly, and people take your feet and stretch them out [...]), and an invocation of divine powers ("Osphe, Osphe, Osphe, Yosphe, Yosphe... in whatever I want—I, N. child of N.—now,

as the “healer of the soul” went back to the tripartite anthropological system put forth by Plato. The Platonic view of humankind enables illness and healing to be seen as not only physiological, but also spiritual conditions. Wandering or itinerancy, as a temporary action, not only typified patients, but also could describe some, though not all, healers. Jesus is an example of a religious healer, perhaps an exorcist healer, who travelled to where his “patients” were located. Such itinerant healers, especially in more rural or semi-rural areas, go back to at least the fifth century B.C.E.:

Only Athens was large enough to have many resident healers whose livelihood depended solely on the fees paid to them by patients. Other healers had to either travel in search of patients around the small towns in Greece, like the author of the Hippocratic *Epidemics*, books 1 and 3...or to combine medicine with other activities.<sup>137</sup>

Within the Roman imperial period itinerant, in addition to sedentary, physicians were in like manner very common, especially within less urbanized areas such as Gaul where so-called “circuit-makers” were active. Even in central Italy, an itinerant doctor in the market place could be found, such as L. Sabinus Primigenius of Gubbio.<sup>138</sup> As Nutton, using epigraphic evidence, demonstrates that even when physicians in the Roman west were somewhat sedentary, they would typically be re-located individuals, specifically from the Hellenistic east (indeed, he estimates nearly 90% of doctors in the first century, 75% in the second and 66% in the third century).<sup>139</sup> Thus, even without being itinerant healers in the manner discussed above, there would still have been a sense of social dislocation (even with the extension of Roman citizenship). Such dislocation could conceivably fit into a literary characterization of various types of healers wandering within a world not their own. The description of the physician in the *Gos. Truth*, therefore, might have reflected a common form of religious itinerant healers.

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now, at once, at once!”). Translation from Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, 87–88.

<sup>137</sup> Nutton, “Medicine in the Greek World,” 19.

<sup>138</sup> Nutton, “Roman Medicine,” 48; cf. Nutton, “Healers in the Medical Market Place,” 39. As Nutton puts the matter: “Between the civic doctor and self-help came a great variety of healers—circuit doctors going round the countryside from a home base in a market town, wise women, magicians, druggists, faith healers and quacks” (“Healers in the Medical Market Place,” 53; see also Nutton, “The Drug Trade in Antiquity” and Kudlien, “Schaustellerei und Heilmittelvertrieb in der Antike”).

<sup>139</sup> Nutton, “Healers in the Medical Market Place,” 40.

As with the shepherd image, the physician's motivation for going forth is due to a crisis—"deficiency" again a central motif as it was on page 32—that requires the saving intervention of the Son. The mythological context is one of the needy being in a state of Error: sickness, corruptibility, sin, and deficiency. Healing as an analogy for salvation or redemption is not uncommon in early Christian texts, including Valentinian texts, and therefore is not surprising here (e.g., *Pr. Paul.* A,19–23; *Auth. Teach.* 22,26–28, *Ep. Pet. Phil.* 139,4–9 and 140,4–11).<sup>140</sup> Indeed, Christ as a healer is also not unusual. In this passage we have just such a connection.<sup>141</sup> With a series of references on page 36 to ointment and anointing, the author links healing motifs with sacramental language. The end goal of the physician's mission is stated at the end of this discussion (which ends just prior to the explicative cluster of 36,39b–38,6): "his paradise is his place of rest" (36,39a). Rest as an eschatological or redemptive motif in Valentinianism, effectively indicates the soteriological role of the physician. Added to the image of the physician is the reference to "Christ was spoken in their midst" (36,14). The verb ἀγυεξε nicely draws out the exemplarily role of the physician for the readers: just as Christ (i.e., the knowledge needed to replace the deficiency of ignorance) is proclaimed here "in order that those who were disturbed might receive a bringing back" (36,15–16), so also the readers are exhorted to "speak [υεξε] of the truth with those who search for it" (32,35–36). A parallel Valentinian instance of linking the "word" with healing is found in the *Authoritative Teaching*, where the bridegroom "applied the word [ἀρτ̄ π̄ιλογος] to her eyes as a medicine to make her see" (22,26–28).<sup>142</sup> Here we find a similar link

<sup>140</sup> Molinari, *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*, 214–29, offers a helpful overview of early Christian material that addresses healing and illness. His contention that this motif in *Act. Pet. 12 Apost.* points to a date of 249 to 251 for the final redaction, however, is based upon a highly questionable reading of this material (i.e., that only with the plague of 250 in North Africa did a combination of healing bodies and healing souls become a possible motif). In spite of the problems with dating *Act. Pet. 12 Apost.*, let alone using illness and anti-wealth motifs for such dating, Molinari is surely correct in stressing the significance of healing in this early Christian narrative.

<sup>141</sup> The illness motif is typical for Valentinianism, as Ménard notes (*L'Évangile de Vérité*, 168). He further indicates that "la 'volonté' de la ligne 32 est un terme technique de la gnose; elle est une source de nourriture, de repos et de force" (168; with reference to Heracleon and Origen).

<sup>142</sup> A slightly earlier reference to the λογος occurs at 22,22 (ῥῆ π̄ιλογος ἡ ἀρτομαχης; "in the invisible word"). Although the *Nag Hammadi Library in English* translates this as "in the invisible world" it should read "word" as it does in the Brill critical edition. This instance of λογος, especially with ἀρτομαχης, connects the medicine of lines 26

to medicine as redemptive (in this case applied to the Sophia myth). Although the medicine is not speech ( $\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$ ) but the  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\tau\rho\omicron\phi\eta$  (“food”; 22,25–26),<sup>143</sup> the reference to the word linked to medicine is not dissimilar to “Christ” as spoken medicine (or connected to medicine and sacraments) here in the *Gos. Truth*. Comparing the two instances of  $\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$  in the *Gos. Truth* illustrates the paraenetic utilization of indicative description (the First Perfect  $\lambda\gamma\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$ ) and imperatival exhortation ( $\omega\epsilon\chi\epsilon$ ). This verb also elucidates the itinerant nature of “proclaiming” on pages 35 and 36. This possible indication of itinerancy on pages 35 and 36 does not carry a suffering or antagonism motif as on page 32. However, what is similar is the temporary, crisis driven situation along with the emphasis upon deficiency and unity.

Within the paraenetic subsection a third possible indication of itinerancy might be found, though it is highly speculative and can be only suggestive based on the cumulative indications of itinerancy in this gospel. The admonition to not become a “dwelling place” for the devil could suggest a negative view of a sedentary lifestyle. If  $\tau\omicron\pi\omicron\varsigma$  at 33,20, along with the attendant past victory over the devil on line 21, reflects a stationary place rather than the idiomatic “giving opportunity,” then the paraenesis might be warning the readers about abandoning a wandering existence while in the material realm and returning to a sedentary state of Error. Stationary existence, therefore, might idealize the past condition of the readers as lost insiders. A warning about becoming a  $\tau\omicron\pi\omicron\varsigma$  would fit the subsection’s concern over insiders falling back into Error, and thereby indicate the social idealization of the Christian community as itinerant.

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to 29 with the pleromatic realm. As indicated in Philo, *Spec.leg.* I.302,  $\kappa\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma$   $\acute{\alpha}\omicron\rho\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$  (“invisible world”) was not uncommon as a motif for the heavenly realm, and may have been the idea behind  $\pi\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$   $\pi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$  here in *Auth. Teach.* (though altering the sense from “world” to “word” to give a christological nuance to the spatial image).

<sup>143</sup> By including  $\tau\rho\omicron\phi\eta$  as part of the bridegroom’s healing activity for Sophia, the author of the *Auth. Teach.* invokes a common aspect of medical practice in the Greco-Roman world. As both a preventative measure and as a remedy for illness, dietetic medicine was readily prescribed by ancient physicians, especially those within the Hippocratic tradition (who stressed bodily balance and imbalance as the aetiology of health and illness). See Nutton, “Medicine in the Greek World,” 23–28; Robert I. Curtis, *Garum and Salsamenta*, 27–35; and W. D. Smith, “The Development of Classical Dietetic Theory”. Soranus’ *Gynecology*, for example, presents diet as one form of treatment from the Methodist school of medicine: “We subdivide the section on things abnormal into the part on the diseases which are treated by diet... and into the part on diseases treated by surgery and pharmacology” (1.2) (translation from Temkin, *Soranus’ Gynecology*).

The ethical behaviours that the readers are called upon to engage as “speaking” could add weight to this reading of  $\tau\omicron\pi\iota\omicron\varsigma$ . Of the three Synoptic accounts of the sending out of the twelve disciples, Matthew includes an ethical behavioural component. The Matthean Jesus exhorts the disciples to “cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons” (Matt 10:8; cf. Jesus’ activity in Matt 4:23). Although this behavioural aspect of their itinerant mission links the commission with miraculous aspects (as would be expected of wandering religious healers), it also implies a sense of doing good deeds for the needy. Such good deeds are part of the command to “proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near’” (Matt 10:7). Similarly, the *Gos. Truth* exhorts the readers to “say, then, from the heart that you are the perfect day and in you dwells the light that does not fail” and “speak of the truth” (32,31–35). In the *Gos. Truth* this proclaiming ministry is at least in part accomplished through good deeds for those in need: “Make firm the foot of those who have stumbled and stretch out your hands to those who are ill. Feed those who are hungry and give repose to those who are weary, and raise up those who wish to rise, and awaken those who sleep” (33,1–8). Although only a tenuous intertextual relationship to a similar exhortation in Matt 10, it is possible that the theme of not being sedentary (or sedentary existence being related to the devil) with a similar exhortation to proclaim and do good deeds, the readers might have read an itinerant theme here in the paraenetic subsection of the *Gos. Truth*. The possibility of an itinerant theme here in the paraenetic subsection is far from certain, and thus only suggestive. However, with the preceding shepherd and physician images of itinerancy, such a reading of the paraenetic subsection is not implausible and, when placed within a broad understanding of “wandering” within a Diaspora context, perhaps even likely.

The *Gos. Truth* articulates a cosmological dualism of the Father and Error, relating various groups or types of individuals in relation to this dualistic framework. Insiders are positioned as standing in one of two types of relationship with the Father. Either they are part of the totality but are lost within the realm of deficiency and sin, or they are those who were formerly in ignorance but now are co-workers with the Father and the Son within the salvific mission to those still lost. A sympathetic relation exists between the awakened insiders and the lost insiders. The readers are placed into the category of awakened insiders and are to be sympathetic for those not yet brought back into the Father. Outsiders, however, are not the concern of the readers. Not only are

outsiders perceived as antagonistic to the mission of the Father and the Son, they are also ontologically separate from the insiders. They are the so-called wise who think that they know truth, when they actually only know the false truth of ignorance.

The paraenetic subsection is constructed with this very set of moral relations underlying the exhortations and admonitions. Indeed, the paraenesis places the readers into an active, participatory role within this dualistic positioning. An active ministry is to typify the existence of the readers within the material world. There is no exclusiveness, elitism, or social withdrawal into, for example, monastic isolation. Rather the readers are to proclaim the truth of their true nature to those who belong, or should belong, to the Father. Ethical behaviour of doing good deeds for those in need is part of this missionary work, and is mirrored by the work of the Son as teacher, shepherd and physician.<sup>144</sup>

The hortatory address includes a social idealization within which these various relations are framed. The author of this gospel seems to present an ideal of the Christian community as itinerant preachers wandering within the foreign realm of materiality seeking those insiders who are in need. This social ideal of itinerancy fits into a general sense of exile, alienation, and temporary presence within the material realm. Although itinerancy seems to be the ideal through which the readers are to view their missionary work, this motif is not presented with the complexity of Harnack and Theissen's *Wanderradikalismus* hypothesis. Not only is there a lack of sedentary sympathizers in this gospel, there is also no historical development from wandering charismatic leadership to local ecclesiastical authority as Theissen argued was the case underlying *Didache*. Rather, this gospel lacks an historical component of development, except for the grander eschatological history of the cosmic crisis of deficiency. It also does not distinguish between sedentary and itinerant Christian social systems. Christians are only seen as those still snared

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<sup>144</sup> A missionary process of wandering through the world demonstrating the *ethos* (i.e., ethical behaviour) advocated by the missionary is not unknown in the Greco-Roman world. Cynicism is an excellent example of such demonstrative proclamation. Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," 114, says, "Cynicism presents itself as a missionary philosophy. By his [sic] characteristically exhibitionist behavior, the Cynic offers other human beings a model to imitate or a demonstration of the falsity of their own values." See also John L. Moles, "*Honestius Quam Ambitiosius?* An Exploration of the Cynic's Attitude." One form of behavioural demonstration, functioning as a subversive act or social critique, was vulgarity or shamelessness, in which the Cynic would collapse the public/private social lines. See the discussion of Cynic shamelessness in Derek Kruger, "The Bawdy and Society."

by Error or those freed from Error. Sedentary existence, if it is even implied at 33,20, simply refers to being in Error or falling back into Error. Finally, itinerancy in the *Gos. Truth* is not presented as an ongoing lifestyle (*ethos*) but rather is a temporary situation of addressing a crisis. The images of the shepherd and the physician effectively indicate the temporary nature of the ministry of the readers. Valentinianism, in this text, is not a renewal movement but rather is a movement addressing a crisis situation within an exilic existence.

As with the *Interp. Know.*, where the Valentinian insiders are idealized as an organically integrated school, the social idealization of itinerancy in the *Gos. Truth* is not necessarily indicative of actual social realities or social structures. Rather, the authors of these works idealize what she or he believes (at least as implied in the rhetorical fabric of the text) should be the way the readers perceive themselves as Christians. The positioning and attendant storylines of these speech acts function not for social integration or historical description, but rather for the sake of persuasively moving the readers to accept the position of the author and thereby to be motivated to follow the hortatory directions of the text.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

## CONCLUSION

When I set out to write this book, it was with a very simple goal in mind: to draw scholarly attention to the importance of moral exhortation within Valentinianism. It seemed that too often those who studied Gnosticism were not interested in recognizing, let alone exploring, ethical discourse within the Nag Hammadi material. This was certainly the situation twenty or thirty years ago. The view that Gnostics were not interested in ethics, due to a deterministic soteriology, has been increasingly challenged. While notable shifts in the field have been pioneered by Michel Desjardins, Ismo Dunderberg, Elaine Pagels and Michael Williams,<sup>1</sup> a lack of interest in ethical or social aspects of Gnosticism has continued to emerge.<sup>2</sup> Simultaneously, other early Christian scholars, especially New Testament scholars, have failed to appreciate the prominence of paraenetic discourse within Valentinianism (or other “Gnosticisms” of late antiquity). This lack of attention to the Valentinian material within studies of early Christian paraenesis can be observed most notably with the Lund-Oslo group’s work, despite their efforts to extend the discussion to non-canonical material.

As my work continued, however, the social and rhetorical dynamics of the Valentinian sources became far more evident. These Christians were socially engaged, both with each other and with outsiders. In

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<sup>1</sup> Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*; Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*; Pagels, *Gnostic Gospels*; and Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*. See my discussion of these shifts in chapter 1.

<sup>2</sup> This tendency is evident, for example, in Thomassen’s *Spiritual Seed*, though also reflected in his “The Valentinian School of Thought,” where ethics and social dynamics are ignored in preference for reconstructing abstract mythological systems of thought. It is odd that his powerful insights on social models in his “Orthodoxy and Heresy” does not impact his broader analysis of Valentinianism. A similar lack of attention to processes of social formation is evident in Turner’s seminal work on Sethianism (see Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*; “The Sethian School of Gnostic Thought”), where social processes are displaced by his meticulous analysis of the philosophical and cosmological aspects of Sethianism. While both Turner and Thomassen’s work offer valuable insights into the Valentinian and Sethian traditions, there is a tendency to treat these traditions as systems of thought rather than as social traditions wherein real people held beliefs, socially interacted and showed concern for how one was to live ethically.

reading through *Auth. Teach.*, the *Gos. Phil.*, or the *Interp. Know.* one can clearly see that paraenetic discourse was not divorced from social dynamics; indeed, Valentinian instances of moral exhortation were interlinked with processes of social identity formation and rhetorical redescription. Thus, this book has situated Valentinianism more clearly within a second- and third-century Christian context, rather than on the periphery of early Christianity. Rather than viewing Gnostic sects as “aberrations” or “parasitical intrusions” into normative Christian groups, it is important to look at Valentinianism as a once living set of movements, where real people held to and debated over particular beliefs; beliefs that would have had real impacts on how they lived their lives, viewed others around them, and their efforts in attaining their religious goals.

#### VALENTINIAN PARAENESIS AND EARLY CHRISTIAN PARAENESIS

As discussed in chapters 3 and 4, the Lund-Oslo group set forth a challenging new direction for the study of early Christian paraenesis. Although I modified the definitional parameters set forth by the Lund-Oslo group, specifically with an incorporation of Perdue’s work, their definitional framework is the most insightful development in the study of early Christian paraenesis. In order to situate Valentinian moral exhortation within the broader Christian tradition, it will be helpful to compare the Valentinian material with the five basic elements emerging from the Lund-Oslo definitions. My focus will be upon the two major examples of Valentinian paraenesis explored in this book: *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Truth.*

The first element identified by Starr is that paraenesis is to be benevolent. Paraenesis works with the assumption that the communicative setting is one of amicable relations, rather than between opponents. The focus of such benevolence is to encourage the well being of the recipient/addressee. Amicable relations are presented in both our examples. These are texts written by an insider to other insiders.

In the *Interp. Know.* this sense of shared identity is brought out by the familial language utilized. The rhetorical unit, for example, of 9,27–38 effectively illustrates this language. The familial designations  $\text{CINHY}$  and  $\text{E\text{I}WT}$  (as well as other designations such as “fellow companions”;  $\text{N\text{A}W\text{E}\text{P}\text{K}O\text{I}\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}\text{N}\text{O}\text{C}}$ ) establish a fictive kinship relationship with friendly relations and mutual identity. As Aasgaard correctly observed in regard to New

Testament paraenesis, a “metaphorical usage of the sibling term was current and accepted within a broad range of early Christian groups, and appears to have formed a vital part of their self-understanding and their perception of their relations internally and vis-à-vis outsiders.”<sup>3</sup> Given the importance of the themes of antithesis (cosmological, historical, and social) and unity, the utilization of familial language in *Interp. Know.* would have likely functioned to discursively position the addressee and author within a benevolent relationship. The pronominal possession that emerges throughout this rhetorical unit, in particular in the familial designations, establishes a mutual relation between the author and addressee. For instance, at 9,31–32 we see such presentation with  $\text{ΝΑCΗΗΥ ΔΥΩ ΝΑΨΩΡ̄ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΟC}$ , where the double use of the pronoun with the conjunctive  $\text{ΔΥΩ}$  adds stress to the mutuality that the author attempts to establish. Mutual identification also emerges at 9,36–37:  $\dots \text{ΕΝΨΟΟΠ̄ Ν̄ΓΑΡ̄ Ψ̄Ν̄ ΙΚΕΚΕΙ ΝΕΝΜΟΥΤΕ Δ2Δ2 ΧΕ ΕΙΩΤ ΕΝΟΕΙ Ν̄ΑΤCΑΥΗΕ ΔΠ[Ε]ΙΩΤ̄ Ν̄ΜΗΕ}$ . The first person plural imperfect  $\text{ΝΕΝΜΟΥΤΕ}$  in particular stresses the mutual condition that the author shares with the addressee, that is there is a shared soteriological past between them. Again, given the antithesis of this unit as explored in chapter 6, the mutual identifications stress the benevolent relations and shared situation of the author and addressee (i.e., what is at stake is a shared concern for both of them). Finally, there is a shared antithesis or outsider dynamic within the unit, discursively positioned within a teacher-student narrative. The entire chiasm draws out this antithesis between the two teachers and teachings:  $\dots \text{Ν̄CΔ2 Ν̄Τ̄Ν̄[ΤΑ]Τ̄ΗΟΥ\dots Ν̄Π̄Τ̄[ΟΛΜ]ΗΡΟC [Ν̄C]Δ2}$  (9,19–20). Not only are the two teachers connected to life/immortality and death/arrogance, but their relationship is one of conflict. The teacher of immortality “destroys” the arrogant teacher through the teaching. They are not only different, but also are in a life and death struggle with the true teacher being victorious. This antithesis of two schools or teachings discursively positions the author and addressee within a soteriological process that is grounded within a cosmological and ecclesiological view of the church (cf. 1,14–38). The author and the addressee are both insiders, though once outsiders, and stand within a tradition that goes back to the Jesus movement or

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<sup>3</sup> Aasgaard, “Brotherly Advice,” 262.

first Christians. By constructing such a contrastive other, the author effectively creates solidarity within group identity.<sup>4</sup>

Within the *Gos. Truth* the paraenesis also assumes benevolent relations. These relations are established by the ontological description of the insiders in opposition to the outsiders. The chiasmic link between the parable and the paraenetic subsection immediately positions the insiders as ontologically linked to the Father (32,26–34; ΠΟΥΛΕΙΝ... ΟΥΧΗΚ... ΕΤΧΗΚ... ΠΟΥΛΕΙΝ). The parable closes with a shift from the soteriological work of the Father, who “gave life to the sheep” (32,20), to the participatory role of the now redeemed sheep within the mission of active participation (“...it is not fitting for salvation to be idle, in order that you may speak from the day from above”; 32,24–27). This shift within the parable is directed toward the author’s audience through both the chiasm and the first imperative of the paraenetic subsection (the postpositive particle *δε* reinforces the chiasm by establishing an inferential or consequential relationship between the two sentences). Consequently, the insiders are called upon to participate within the missionary work of the Father/Son, due to being ontologically linked to the Father/Son. The description of the insiders’ internal nature effectively draws out an ontological connection: *ὤξε δε ἀλλὰ ὅν φητ χε ἡτῶτῆνε πε πῶωυ ἐτχῆτ ἀλλὰ ἄω οὐοῦηὲ ὅν τῆνε ἡῖσι ποῦλεῖν ἐτεμαῶωχῆν*. Not only are insiders to speak, but they are to do so “from/out of the heart” (*ἀλλὰ ὅν φητ*) because (*χε*) the insiders are (*ἡτῶτῆνε πε*) the perfect day and have an indwelling light. Thus, their very speech is an externalization of their internal state. The basis upon which the audience is able to receive or act upon the paraenesis is this ontological identification. This ontology is presented within a cosmic conflict between the Father and Error, or, on the level of human

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<sup>4</sup> The importance of conflict for building group identity, especially with the emergence of norms for group behaviour, is explored by Flynn and Chatman, “Social Categorization.” They observe: “Social identity theory suggests that expectations of other work group members may be driven by an in-group/out-group bias, which is a tendency to enhance one’s evaluations of fellow in-group members and degrade one’s evaluations of out-group members in order to maintain high levels of self-esteem... Thus, in-group members are more likely to enhance their impressions of, and cooperate with, one another while forming negative impressions of, and distinguishing themselves from, out-group members” (142). Although Flynn and Chatman are concerned over modern work environments, the social processes explored are insightful for articulating potential identity forming strategies in *Interp. Know.*; i.e., by creating the antithesis of in-group/out-group (especially within a soteriological and historical narrative), the author reinforces the mutual identity with his or her audience.

interactions, the righteous and the lawless. The concern over apostasy further reinforces the mutuality between author and audience; i.e., they were in a state of lawlessness or crisis, but are now in a state of stability or salvation. Although the author does not openly refer to him- or herself in the paraenesis, preferring the second person plural to the first person, the author does directly refer to him- or herself at the very close of the *Gos. Truth*: “For the rest, then, may they know, in their places, that it is not fitting for me, having come to be in the resting-place, to speak of anything else. But it is in it that I shall come to be, and (it is fitting) to be concerned at all times with the Father of the all and the true brothers, those upon whom the love of the Father is poured out and in whose midst there is no lack of him” (42,39–43,8). A clear ontological mutual identification of the author with the audience is made. Beyond establishing the benevolent relations of author and audience, the closing of the gospel links back to the paraenesis through focussing concern towards fellow insiders and the reference to “speaking of the light which is perfect” (43,12–13).<sup>5</sup> Unlike the paraenesis, the insiders are described with fictive kinship language. Such language establishes an ontological relationship between the insiders and the Father, stressing friendly relations between insiders, and delimiting the paraenesis to insiders (implying the exclusion of outsiders).

Starr’s second element is that paraenesis is concerned with moral practices. While “doctrines or convictions” may play a role in the paraenesis, the stress is upon the behaviours or paths that the exhorted person(s) should follow or avoid.<sup>6</sup> In both Valentinian examples, moral behaviour is vital for the paraenetic material. The *Gos. Truth* constructs the paraenetic subsection around a series of positive and negative imperatives. One finds within this subsection both “static” and “dynamic” qualities.<sup>7</sup> The positive imperatives are all dynamic in quality; the behaviours urged are those that are actively directed towards others. Missionary work (ϠΕΧΕ) is demonstratively linked to ethics: ΤΑΧΡΟ...CΩΤ...CΑΝΩ...ΝΤΕΤΗ† ΝΤΑΝ...ΝΤΕΤΝΤΟΥΝΕC...ΝΤΕΝ ΕΖCΕ. Ethical behaviours are urged in order to address the negative

<sup>5</sup> Grobel, *Gospel of Truth*, 199–201, likewise notes both the odd shift to the first person singular and the reference back to the paraenetic subsection. Grobel observes that the Gospel of John, similarly, uses the first person singular only in the closing of the book.

<sup>6</sup> Starr, “Was Paraenesis for Beginners?” 79.

<sup>7</sup> Attridge, “Paraenesis in a Homily,” 221–22.

condition of potential insiders. The negative imperatives, however, carry a static dynamic. In discussing the static dynamics in Hebrews, Attridge indicates that “the addressees are urged to ‘hold fast’ . . . to pay special attention to the message of scripture and not slip away (2:1); to hold on, especially to their confession (10:23), but also to other hallmarks of their initial Christian experience.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, static dynamics tend to direct the addressees’ attention toward not falling away, especially when faced with potential threats or dangers (e.g., persecution or suffering). The metaphors of motion and non-motion dominate (i.e., to not move away from insider status or to move further into fulfilling or performing one’s insider status). In *Gos. Truth* both dynamics are presented. The author is concerned that insiders are active in the soteriological work of the Father/Son while simultaneously facing the danger of falling back into outsider status. The images drawn upon are those of death and decay (i.e., returning to vomit as like a dog, being moth-eaten or worm-eaten).

In *Interp. Know.* we find a concern over moral behaviour, yet with a different formulation of insider-outsider relations. Whereas the *Gos. Truth* anthropologically and antithetically demarks insiders from outsiders, *Interp. Know.* urges reconciliation between two types of Christians that are socially divided. The paraenesis stresses the need for reconciliation without apostasy. It is with such a goal in mind, rather than cosmologically and ontologically distinguishing Christians as antagonists, that the author urges the Valentinian faction to “do the will of the Father” (ΝΕΤΡΕ ΠΠΟΥΩΩΕ Π[Π]ΕΙΩΤ; 9,32–33). While doing the divine will is a dynamic quality for the moral exhortation, the antithesis is the static quality of the negative imperative ΠΠΜΟΥΤΕ (9,28). The addressees are to avoid those behaviours that lead toward plurality or division rather than harmony (the antithesis of the two fathers elucidates this motif). This concern is the very basis for the author’s discussion of ΦΘΟΝΕΙ from page 15 onwards. Rather than enabling the ascent of the soul, jealousy is an “obstacle” (ΟΥΧΡΑΠ) that is connected with ignorance and results in division (15,19–33). Rather than creating divisions due to jealousy, the addressees are to “share” (ΜΕΤΕΧΕ at 15,36 and 16,23) their gifts and thus facilitate true “harmony” (CΥΜΦΩΜΙΑ) through earthly harmony (ΘΑΡΜΟΜΙΑ) (18,23–25). Such unity should result in both mutual edification of the community and a mutual group identi-

<sup>8</sup> Attridge, “Paraenesis in a Homily,” 221.

fication with others in the community. Note especially the behavioural contrast between  $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\chi\epsilon$  and viewing others as  $\alpha[\lambda]\lambda\omicron\tau\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon$  (16,23); rather than viewing others as foreign/outside, the recipients are to view other members as “your brethren” ( $\eta\epsilon\kappa\kappa\eta\eta\gamma$ ; 16,31).<sup>9</sup> Within the two-way schema of *Interp. Know.*, therefore, divisiveness leads to death, while harmony leads to life. Thus, while *Gos. Truth* illustrates a concern on how moral behaviour will affect missionary work and apostasy, *Interp. Know.* is dominated by a concern with community unity or reconciliation. In both texts, the moral concern includes a cosmological framework: for *Gos. Truth* the entire process of sharing in the soteriological work of the Father/Son is placed within a dualistic division of the Totality and Error; for *Interp. Know.* the cosmological implication of moral behaviour (or “doing the will of the Father”) is achieving the ascent of the soul or overcoming the destructive forces of the arrogant teacher.

A third element in paraenesis is the focus on reminding the addressees of what they already know. As Starr puts it, paraenesis tends to “concentrate on memory.”<sup>10</sup> Rather than new information or teaching, paraenesis recalls what is known for reinforcing the continuance of moral behaviour. Within the early Christian material this element of paraenesis is most evident within the Pauline corpus. In 1 Thess 4:1–2, Paul urges the Thessalonian Christians to continue along the path he had set them upon. Paul’s exhortation taps into his past relationship with the Thessalonians ( $\kappa\alpha\theta\omicron\varsigma\ \mu\epsilon\mu\eta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\chi\epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\chi\epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\chi\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ ; 4:1) and praises them for following in their Christian lifestyle ( $\kappa\alpha\theta\omicron\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\chi\epsilon\tau\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ ; 4:1). His paraenesis is to encourage them to continue to abound in their spiritual development ( $\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\ \mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\chi\epsilon\tau\epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \mu\alpha\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon$ ; 4:1). We have already discussed Seneca’s argument for precept-giving. In *Epistle* 94, Seneca argues that precept-giving, as a call to remembrance, should sharpen one’s ability to do good deeds. We see this very type of exhortation emerging not only in Paul but also in Ps.-Isocrates, *To Demonicus* 9–15 and Libanius’ *Epistle to Heortius*.

<sup>9</sup> While the second personal singular of the pronominal possession of  $\kappa\eta\eta\gamma$  may indicate a single recipient and his or her relations with other members of the community, it is also possible that our author places stress on the individual responsibility of each member to recognize the mutuality of each person’s gift. Regardless of the number of recipients, the author is certainly using the familial language here to stress unity and mutual identification rather than division or “foreignness.”

<sup>10</sup> Starr, “Was Paraenesis for Beginners?” 79.

When we turn our attention to the *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Truth*, however, we are faced with an unclear picture. As I have argued in the preceding chapters, *Gos. Truth* is not, contra Attridge, an exoteric work intended to convert non-Gnostic Christians to a Valentinian theology. The exhortation toward mutual participation within the soteriological drama, strongly suggests that the text is directed to those who already share a similar outlook or theology as the author. Like *Interp. Know.*, the addressees in *Gos. Truth* are already insiders. Neither text, furthermore, is designed as an initiation instruction (even if baptismal material or allusions are drawn upon). Indeed, Dunderberg has suggested that Valentinianism maintained a “scholastic esotericism” wherein certain teachings (or depth of teaching) were limited to more advanced students/members of Valentinian circles.<sup>11</sup> Dunderberg reads the *Interp. Know.* within such a pedagogical “secrecy” approach: “The way the author of the *Interpretation of Knowledge* conceives of an ideal situation in the Christian community... that only those who have the spiritual gift are entitled to speak, whereas the have-nots should remain silent.”<sup>12</sup> The *Gos. Truth* is even more clearly “scholastically esoteric” in that the anthropology does not accept non-Valentinians as insiders, but only maintains a stance of potential insiders as the object of the insiders’ missionary efforts. Yet, even if these two instances of Valentinian paraenesis are not directed to outsiders or potential insiders,<sup>13</sup> do they “concentrate on memory” for their moral exhortation?

In *Interp. Know.* there are a few brief references suggesting that the theological discussion in the tractate is not new information, but rather information that the readers should be familiar with and thus they should be open to accepting the author’s exhortation to reconciliation without apostasy. Within the opening exordium, we find a contrast between two generations, one set in the days of the Jesus movement and the other in the author’s time. The current generation of Christians ([ $\Delta\lambda\lambda\alpha$   $\epsilon\rho\epsilon\tau\bar{\iota}\gamma$ ]  $\epsilon\eta\epsilon\zeta$ ; 1,22) is in a state of unbelief regarding Christ (or

<sup>11</sup> Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 193.

<sup>12</sup> Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 195.

<sup>13</sup> As I have argued in chapter 6, there may have been a second or indirect audience for the author of *Interp. Know.* (i.e., the non-Valentinian or ecclesiastical faction of the community). The explicit audience of the text, however, are insiders who are privy to the deeper theological teachings (this is also true even if the audience is a single recipient, as Emmel has suggested).

the Good One).<sup>14</sup> The author and recipients are not in a state of unbelief, but rather do have faith (ερετινιου[τις]; 1,24 which stands in antithesis with 1,23's lack of faith). The author's concern seems to be with protecting or perfecting that faith ([ναωω]ηε εφογ[α]αβ εστουβηγ; 1,25), not to convert the recipients to a new faith. Consequently, the author makes a distinction between contemporary Christians with faith (i.e., the recipients) and those without faith (the ecclesiastical faction). As the primary audience is the former rather than the latter, it would seem that the paraenesis may fit the Lund-Oslo group's understanding of paraenesis as calling to remember what is already known. The fragmentary condition of page 1 as well as the ambiguity of the phrasing, however, renders such a reading of the paraenesis speculative at best. The second possible instance of a call to remembrance occurs at 9,35, where the author refers to the past condition of the Valentinian Christians. Their former status of ignorance (which is identified on line 38 as "sin") sets up a counter to the very idea of "gaining the world" (9,33–35). Thus, the author calls the recipients to recognize their former status of ignorance in order to stress the need to maintain their current status of faith.

A final possible indication of the recipients not needing new instruction arises at the close of the tractate, where the Valentinian insiders are described as "adepts" or "athletes" (α[γ]ω αηαη ενωφοη πωα[ε]ιχ [μ] παλογο; 21,27–29). If we read ωαειχ as an athletic metaphor, perhaps drawn from the Pauline tradition (e.g., 1 Cor 9:24–26 and Phil 3:12–14), then a dynamic paraenetic function emerges. The athletic image carries a strong sense of movement, wherein the athlete strives forward towards a goal. In ancient literature, there was a strong moral quality to the athletic metaphor. Roman Garrison offers an excellent analysis of Paul's use of this metaphor, connecting it to how other writers use it within the broader Greco-Roman world.<sup>15</sup> Striving for self-control (ἐγκράτεια or σωφροσύνη), for instance, was a key moral

<sup>14</sup> The text has χριστος rather than χριστος (though the reading is still not certain). It is possible that this is not Christ, but the Good One. See Emmel, "Exploring the Pathway," 269 n. 45. Although Emmel is certainly correct in being wary of translating χριστος as "Christ" (e.g., he indicates that "Jesus" only appears once, at 5,38), one must recognize the play on words that was typical in early Christian texts between χριστός and χρηστός (e.g., 1 Pet 2:1–3). Given the Christian nature of this text as well as the titles used in this text (e.g., Jesus, saviour, and teacher), even if we were to keep χριστος as "good/kind", it would remain another Christological title.

<sup>15</sup> Roman Garrison, "Paul's Use of the Athlete Metaphor."

quality that enabled the success of the athlete and was strongly linked to ethical behaviours. An excellent example of such a link is offered by Dio Chrysostom, where a champion boxer is praised not only for “courage, physical strength, and self-control,” but even more so by not being defeated by hardship and vice: “But what was indeed the most surprising thing about a man is, to have remained undefeated not only by opponents but also by toil and heat and gluttony and sensuality” (*Melancomas* II, 12).<sup>16</sup> This list of dangers includes two items from hardship (πόνου καὶ καύματος) and two from pleasure (γαστρὸς καὶ ἀφροδισίων). Both pleasure and pain can deter the athlete from attaining his or her goal. For Paul, and other moral teachers, the metaphor is used in moral exhortation to urge addressees to remain firm in the journey that they are already on; i.e., to not be deterred from their course. If such a reading can be applied to *Interp. Know.*, then *ῥαεῖς*, as an athletic image, would carry a similar moral sense. Like Paul, the author of *Interp. Know.* uses the metaphor to urge the insiders to continue along the course they are already pursuing. The promise of “receiving the crown of victory” (21,32–33) reinforces this parallel. With the promise, however, there is also the danger; victory can turn to defeat if the Christian does not continue to strive forward. The conditional prefix *ἐπι*, which is presented as a co-hortative (thus reinforcing the mutuality of the author and reader), distinctly warns the readers of the possibility of defeat (i.e., falling back into sin). The conditional is used twice in the closing of the tractate, once stressing the possibility of sinning and the other of overcoming sin and attaining victory (21,29 and 21,31).<sup>17</sup> This double usage suggests that the tractate ends on a two-fold exhortation, one positive and the other negative, thus paralleling the two-way schema opening the tractate. With an athletic metaphor, therefore, the author does not offer new instruction or call the readers to adopt a new lifestyle. Rather, he or she exhorts them to continue along their course, to maintain their endurance along the way of faith or life. This final indication of paraenetic reminding, especially with the preceding possible indications, suggest that *Interp. Know.* fits

<sup>16</sup> Text and translation from LCL. See discussion in Garrison, “Paul’s Use of the Athlete Metaphor,” 213.

<sup>17</sup> Emmel, “Exploring the Pathway,” 270, insightful summarizes the stakes for the author: “For ‘athletes of the Logos,’ then, the stakes of the contest are extraordinary; not only does failure to win mean a great loss (21:29–30), but also the victor’s crown is a greater prize than the ordinary athlete’s crown, since it is comparable to the Father’s glorification of the Savior (21:30–34).”

the Lund-Oslo definition of paraenesis as concentrating on memory rather than new instruction.

When we turn our attention to *Gos. Truth* the indications for a “call to memory” are far more slight. The first possible indication is in the opening sentence, where the second perfect (ἦταλξι) is used to describe the joy received from the Father as ΠΕΥΛΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ἦΤΗΗΣ (16,31). As the text is most probably written for insiders, rather than potential insiders or outsiders, it is likely that the opening of the gospel discursively positions the audience as those who have already received the joy of the Father through the power of the Word (ἡ ἰδὸν ἦΠΠΩΞΕ; 16,34). The agency of ὤΞΕ establishes the Christological basis of the missionary work that the audience is the recipient of and participates within (31,35–32,37), thereby linking the paraenesis to the opening ὤΞΕ (16,34). Although the text is clear in establishing the audience as insiders, it is far less clear in offering a reminder of past instruction; even insiders, for instance, can receive more or deeper instruction. In the paraenetic subsection there are no indications of calling to memory. Rather, the author assumes that the audience is comprised of those who are already recipients of salvation and thus are those obligated to participate in that soteriological drama for the sake of potential insiders.

The only other possible indication of an element of reminding in *Gos. Truth* is the author’s self-position at the close of the tractate: “... it is not fitting for me, having come to be in the resting-place, to speak of anything else. But it is in it that I shall come to be, and (it is fitting) to be concerned at all times with the Father and all the true brothers...” (42,41–43,5). The author discursively positions him- or herself as an insider within an anthropological distinction between insiders and outsiders. The author’s concern and act of speaking (ὤΞΕ) are directed towards those who are ontologically insiders rather than outsiders. As Magnusson correctly notes, “This [other] group is called ‘the rest’ ΠΚΕΨΩΞΠ. The rest will remain in their places. The preacher does not want to focus upon them. Instead, he or she says that it only is fitting for the one who has been at the place of repose to speak about that place, the Father of the All and the Father’s children.”<sup>18</sup> Given the parallel usage of ΤΟΠΟΣ at 42,40 (ἡ ἰδὸν ΝΟΥΤΟΠΟΣ) to the warning in the paraenetic subsection (ἦΠΠΨΩΠΕ ΕΡΕΤΗΘΕΙ ἦΤΟΠΟΣ ἦΠΙΧΙΑΒΟΛΟΣ ΞΕ

<sup>18</sup> Magnusson, *Rethinking the Gospel of Truth*, 174.

ΔΤΕΤΠΟΥΩ ΕΡΕΤΠΟΥΩCQ̄ ΠΜΔC; 33,19–21), these closing comments on page 42 strongly reinforce the author's insider/outsider anthropology. Indeed, the parallels between the paraenetic subsection and the gospel's closing comments, with the former focussing on the audience's ethical demonstrative missionary work and the latter focussing on the author, draw a concrete connection between the author's relationship to outsiders on pages 42 to 43 and the audience's relationship to outsiders. Thus, just as the author is ontologically "in the resting place" so also is the audience. The author's shift to the first person singular may be a call to imitation, not unlike Paul's call to imitation in Phil 3:17. This mutual identification may suggest that the audience, rather than needing to receive new teachings, has already received instruction. For the paraenetic subsection this assumption is certainly the case, as the concern is to participate in missionary work without falling back into Error. This gospel is clearly not designed for outsiders, either as an initiation ritual or as a proselytizing tract. However, despite the insider focus, a "call to remember" motif is not clearly present in either the paraenetic subsection or the gospel as a whole.

The highly ambiguous presence of a reminding element in our two Valentinian examples raises a challenge to the Lund-Oslo group's delimitation of paraenesis. While there are possible indications of such an element, there is no need to force the texts to fit such delimitations. Furthermore, the broader social functions of paraenesis offered by Perdue, and explicated at length in Martin's analysis of 1 Peter, may still offer insights into early Christian moral exhortation: initiation, new instruction, deeper teachings, and concern over liminality as crisis moments (such as the danger of apostasy or warnings regarding social or cosmological dangers) can all be read as possible social concerns prompting moral exhortation. This challenge to the Lund-Oslo group could be more fully drawn out by extending beyond our two examples to other Valentinian texts. The *Gos. Phil.*, for instance, is replete with paraenetic material (most notable being 79,33–84,13).<sup>19</sup> If Bas van Os is correct in identifying *Gos. Phil.* "as a whole reflect[ing] the structure and themes of the Valentinian baptismal instruction from which it originated,"<sup>20</sup> then the paraenetic subsection would have functioned

<sup>19</sup> See chapter 5 for a full discussion of the paraenetic material in *Gos. Phil.*

<sup>20</sup> Bas van Os, *Baptism in the Bridal Chamber*, 5. Van Os' work is largely a reaction against Martha Turner's hypothesis that the *Gos. Phil.* is a randomly compiled collection of excerpts (see Turner, *Gospel According to Philip*). See also Wesley Isenberg, *Coptic*

within such an initiation context, either for those entering the rite or having passed through the rite. Consequently, the Valentinian material offers a helpful challenge to the Lund-Oslo group's view of paraenesis as necessarily relating to previously acquired knowledge.

Starr's fourth paraenetic element is a shared worldview: "the two parties know that they agree here, and that is why paraenesis is typically given amicably."<sup>21</sup> Such amicable relations sets a non-threatening tone for the text; i.e., the author and reader's friendly relations are founded upon such a shared set of convictions and thus the reader is only called upon to recall that shared worldview.<sup>22</sup> The implication, as Starr insightfully notes, is that "such advice would be at home in social settings in which the speaker advises individuals about realizing a given style of life."<sup>23</sup> There is a persuasive quality to such a shared worldview. Not only does the construction of in-group identity, especially when contrasted with out-group identity, generate social solidarity,<sup>24</sup> but even more so the very construction of such social emplotments (i.e., "constellations of relationships")<sup>25</sup> functions to establish shared perspectives while obscuring, if not explicitly countering, alternative worldviews.<sup>26</sup> Thus, paraenesis does not simply *hold to* a shared worldview, but even more importantly *presents its worldview as an assumed* shared worldview in order to generate mutual identity for the sake of mobilizing what Herbert Blumer called "joint action"; i.e., "the fitting together of the lines of behavior of the separate participants... [such as] a trading transaction, a family dinner, a marriage ceremony, a shopping expedition, a game, a convivial party, a debate, a court trial, or a war."<sup>27</sup> As Blumer

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*Gospel of Philip*, 53, who claims that this gospel "provides paraenetic material about the ideal life of the initiate." Baptismal instructions and exhortations may have occurred either before or after that actual rite (van Os, *Baptism in the Bridal Chamber*, 26, see also 29, 31, and especially 88 and 172). I disagree with van Os' claim that "according to the rhetorical handbooks an exhortation is not a part of an arrangement, but a complete work in its own right" (75).

<sup>21</sup> Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?" 80.

<sup>22</sup> See also Thomas, "Paraenesis of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*," 167.

<sup>23</sup> Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?" 80.

<sup>24</sup> See Flynn and Chatman, "What's the Norm Here?" for a helpful discussion of such processes.

<sup>25</sup> Somers and Gibson, "Reclaiming the Epistemological Other," 59.

<sup>26</sup> Berman, "Formation of a 'National Identity,'" 140, puts the matter: "Metaphors invoke a coherent network of entailments that highlight some features of our perspectives on reality while they may also de-emphasize or hide other aspects in accordance with our cultural values."

<sup>27</sup> Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 70.

points out, such lines of behaviour are not based upon “commonality” of actions, but rather “the fitting together of these acts”;<sup>28</sup> a fitting together that offers orientation to the participant along with an interpretative key to the behaviour of others and a guide to interacting with those behaviours. Consequently, the assumption of a shared worldview in paraenetic discourse can be explored by means of elucidating the ontological and public narratives of that discourse.

In the preceding chapters, I have explored the discursive positioning taken within *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Truth*, focussing on how each text re-presents a cosmological and social worldview through which the addressees are persuaded to accept the author’s exhortation. By simply presenting, rather than arguing for, such “constellations of relationships” (socially, ontologically, mythically, and historically), an author’s rhetorical strategy functions to discursively position the addressee to action *as part of the shared reality* that the author idealizes for the in-group (especially when constructing an out-group). Thus, both examples of Valentinian paraenesis exemplify a shared worldview, or at the very least rhetorically present a shared worldview as an underlying assumption of the text.

In the case of the *Interp. Know.*, the author idealizes the community as a philosophical school that is to be organic or integrative in its social formation. She or he calls on the readers to move towards reconciliation with the opposing faction without apostasy. The author further establishes a moral relation between the readers (and their situation) and the early Jesus movement or first generation of Christians. The *Gos. Truth* idealizes the Christian community within a broad cosmological conflict or crisis between the Father and Error (or unity/knowledge and deficiency/ignorance). The paraenetic subsection adopts the worldview articulated throughout the gospel and contributes to it by exhorting the readers to active participation with the Father for the salvation of lost insiders. An ideal presentation of the readers as itinerant preachers wandering through a hostile realm as a temporary measure for the benefit of saving the lost insiders possibly underlies the text, though the indications for such a reading are so slight that such an overarching social idealization remains dubious. Regardless of an itinerant reading, an exilic motif linked to a temporary mission of crisis certainly is articulated within this gospel, linked to the anthropological and

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<sup>28</sup> Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 70.

ontological narrative condition of insiders. An ontological relation between insiders and the Father, in contrast to the ontological relations between outsiders and Error or materiality, establishes the cosmological duality and thus the moral relations of this gospel. Each of these examples of Valentinian paraenesis fit Leo Perdue's model of conflict, or subversive paraenesis. However, whereas the *Gos. Truth* more clearly fits this subversive model, articulating a temporary liminal condition of crisis, the *Interp. Know.* uses a model of social conflict to reinforce the author's presentation of the true Christian community (a presentation that is established and thereby validated by drawing a link to a broader Christian tradition). Indeed, we could see this tractate drawing upon a model of order through subversive paraenesis. Therefore, in both Valentinian examples, there is an assumed social function "of helping the writer's like-minded friends to understand more fully the moral implications of their worldview, and to live those implications out more completely."<sup>29</sup> Given the role of subversive paraenesis in both texts, we are seeing the rhetorical utilization of paraenesis not only to reinforce the shared worldview, but also to address the liminal dangers that the author seems to perceive (or at least discursively presents) as threatening the Christian community. The shared worldview assists in framing this concern with external dangers.<sup>30</sup>

The final element of paraenesis is that it "does not anticipate disagreement... The advice offered concerns simply the best way to achieve the common goals."<sup>31</sup> This element largely presupposes and builds upon the preceding elements. This is demonstrated in these two texts by the establishment of benevolent relations between author and audience, thereby offering a narrative field within which hostility is externalized from the in-group. Fictive kinship relations, mutual ontological identification, and expressions of concern all function to shape the reception of

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<sup>29</sup> Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?" 98.

<sup>30</sup> Westerholm, "Four Maccabees," 213, effectively elucidates this social function of paraenesis: "The 'paraenetic' situation becomes more complicated, however, where the fundamental convictions shared by the adviser and the advised are *not* held by the majority of those among whom they live. Here the stability of the convictions themselves, and not simply the practice of their ethical implications, is subject to constant temptation." Of course such a minority status (held by the adviser and the advised), and the social implications of that status, need not reflect actual social conditions. Rather, constructing minority in-group identity over against a threatening out-group status may serve as a quintessential element in the worldview, thus serving a rhetorical function of reinforcing in-group solidarity.

<sup>31</sup> Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?" 80.

the author's message as amicable. Social solidarity is further reinforced by the narrative construction of an out-group; in *Interp. Know.* this is done through a cosmological dualism of two schools, whereas *Gos. Truth* presents the out-group as outsiders that are ontologically distinguished from both insiders and potential insiders (i.e., the in-group). A "call to remembrance", if present, would certainly reinforce such in-group identification. All these aspects of the narrative field result in a shared worldview between author and audience. With such positive relations underlying each text, it is likely that these authors did not anticipate disagreement. Or, perhaps more accurately, they employ a rhetorical strategy of assumed agreement in order to orient the audience to accept a common basis for mutual identification.

There is a clear fit between the Valentinian material and the definitional elements set forth by the Lund-Oslo group. Such compatibility strongly reinforces Desjardins' conclusion that "Valentinianism is a form of second century Christianity, and from a historical perspective it is no less or more 'authentic' than other contemporary expressions of Christianity."<sup>32</sup> A consideration of not only the Valentinian concern with ethics, but also specific instances of moral exhortation within Valentinianism effectively challenges historians of early Christianity to recognize the significance of Valentinian Christianity as more than simply a distortion of, or deviation from (proto-) "orthodox" Christianity. This view is reinforced by recognizing the similar presence of literary features of paraenesis such as prescriptive discourse, moral exempla, virtue/vice lists, and the two-way schema.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps even more insightful than just the presence of paraenesis within the Valentinian sources, is the utilization of moral exhortation by Valentinian Christians. In noting the applicability of the Lund-Oslo group's work to Valentinianism, I have tried to stress the rhetorical strategies underlying paraenetic discourse within both the *Interp. Know.* and the *Gos. Truth*. Like other Christians, Valentinians used moral exhortation to shape their social interactions.

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<sup>32</sup> Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 132.

<sup>33</sup> See my full discussion of these typical literary features in chapter 5.

## SOCIAL FUNCTION AS RHETORICAL ACTS

In opening his comprehensive survey of early Christian morality, Wayne Meeks touched on the very role of moral discourse as a social device: “My thesis is that we cannot begin to understand that process of moral formation until we see that it is inextricable from the process by which distinctive communities were taking shape. *Making morals means making community.*”<sup>34</sup> For Meeks, morals are part of a socialization process wherein communities take shape and are re-shaped. In studying Valentinian Christianity, it is essential to recognize this social function of moral exhortation. Moral concern is never an individual process, but a social process. Such a claim, however, does not necessitate inferring specific Christian communities whenever paraenetic discourse is identified. As discussed in chapter 2, there are serious methodological problems with inferring a Johannine, Matthean, Lukan or Thomasine community behind each gospel. While I accept and appreciate the criticisms raised by Wisse and Bauckham on this issue,<sup>35</sup> I would not go as far as they do in addressing these difficulties. Even without collaborative evidence to support the reconstruction of a specific Christian community behind, for example, *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Truth* (or any of the Valentinian sources), there is still a communicative setting within which the discourse takes place. In order to fully appreciate that communicative setting, we can shift our focus away from identifying actual communities and instead examine the texts’ social rhetoric within interactive discourse.

Such a shift in our focus will require a very clear distinction between *actual* social relations and *perceived* social relations. Social bodies are not simply reactive to external events or needs that are imposed upon them, but rather are more greatly shaped by their perceptions of their world. For example, a religious or ethnic community can be in an oppressive or discriminative context yet not perceive that context as oppressive. Similarly, the same group may perceive itself as socially marginalized and actively opposed, even when there is no such threat actually present. The very perception of one’s identity, as tied to a perceived set of social relations, is just as “real” to those holding that perception as an actual

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<sup>34</sup> Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*, 5 (emphasis added).

<sup>35</sup> Wisse, “Indirect Textual Evidence”; Bauckham, *Gospel for All Christians*. See discussion in chapter 2.

state of conflict. Indeed, for the sake of shaping social identity, the perceived social reality is perhaps more real than actual social realities. In exploring early Christian paraenesis, including Valentinian paraenesis, such a distinction is necessary. Moral discourse attempts to have an effect upon ethical behaviour by guiding actions through narrativity. Appreciating the rhetorical strategies of paraenetic discourse shifts the historian's focus from using these texts as representational forms of knowledge and, instead, to teasing out the engagement of the texts as part of a discursive interaction that attempts to guide action by re-shaping social identity.<sup>36</sup> In this sense, paraenetic discourse constitutes an attempt to urge moral agency through an author's own interactive engagement with an audience.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, the social function of paraenesis within Valentinianism is to persuade an audience through social re-presentation. Each of our major examples of Valentinian paraenesis attempts just such re-presentation through a process of social idealization. The authors of these texts discursively position their readers, and themselves, within what we may assume are ongoing dialogues. Again, Meeks's comments are appropriate: "The ancients knew that stories helped to inculcate morals—or to corrupt them...to speak of virtues entails that we tell stories."<sup>38</sup> Such stories can take the form of cosmic speculation (how do readers fit within the cosmos?), historical narratives (what is the legacy or heritage of the readers?), or fables and myths (the identification of the virtues and vices through the narrative characterizations set forth in the tales). In many cases, these story forms will work in concert. In *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Truth* these forms of narrativity are evident. Not only are cosmological or mythical perspectives set forth in these two texts, but we also find, especially with *Interp. Know.*, an historical connection drawn between the readers and the early days of the Christian move-

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<sup>36</sup> See Somers and Gibson, "Reclaiming the Epistemological Other," 38–39, and my discussion in chapter 2 on representational and ontological narrativity. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 156, agrees that actual and perceived relations need to be distinguished in reading *Interp. Know.* Insightfully, he notes that deliberative rhetoric or concord speeches were not designed to effectively describe real-life situations.

<sup>37</sup> Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*, 8, insightfully highlights the interactive aspect of moral agency: "individuals do not become moral agents except in the relationships, the transactions, the habits and reinforcements, the special uses of language and gesture that together constitute life in community."

<sup>38</sup> Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*, 189. Meeks builds on the work of Alasdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas in stressing the importance of narrative for both moral teaching and moral reasoning.

ment.<sup>39</sup> Descriptive positioning of the readers within a framework of two opposing schools and teachings (*Interp. Know.*) or within an exilic motif of wandering through a hostile and unreal realm (*Gos. Truth*) fill this cosmological aspect out in such a way as to encourage the readers to remain firm in their faith within the broader cosmic context.

Within their acts of rhetorical positioning of author, reader, and others, both the *Gos. Truth* and the *Interp. Know.* demonstrate specific social concerns. First there is a concern over the existence of Christians within the broader socio-religious climate. Narratively, this concern is articulated in *Interp. Know.* through the presentation of two antithetical schools, two types of sin, and the idealization of the Christian community as a *Gemeinschaft* social structure over against a *Gesellschaft* type of social unit. While there is certain danger facing insiders from the arrogant teacher, there is a need for social reconciliation or harmony within the broader Christian community. In *Gos. Truth* this concern is narrativized through a cosmic conflict with the realm of Error. In both cases, the concern is a real one that faces many religious groups: how does one live in relation to others, including others within the in-group? With *Gos. Truth* this in-group is characterized as both insiders and potential insiders, whereas *Interp. Know.* presents the in-group as members of an elite Valentinian faction as well as other Christians. Second, in addressing this concern, each text carries an attendant concern over the negative impact that social engagement with the broader culture may bring about. For instance, apostasy is a key concern in the rhetoric of *Gos. Truth's* paraenetic subsection (i.e., the danger of being pulled back into Error or sinfulness). The very structure of the imperatives into, first, a set of positive exhortations (relations to potential insiders) and, secondly, a set of negative exhortations (relations to outsiders) highlights the social concern of this author for insiders' interactions with their broader world. The cosmological dualism in the gospel frames this concern, adding even greater force to the warnings. The author of *Interp. Know.*, however, is concerned about a rejection of Valentinian teaching along with a disruption to the broader Christian community within which the Valentinian Christians exist. In attempting to foster reconciliation, the author is worried that the readers may go too far;

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<sup>39</sup> The intertextual links to Jesus' ministry in the Synoptic gospels on page 19 indicates that the author was establishing a mutual identification of the readers or audience with the early days of the Jesus movement and/or the broader Christian movement through an intertextual reference to the Synoptic gospels.

i.e., the readers may achieve reconciliation by abandoning the deeper Christian teachings of the teacher of immortality. Such a concern certainly would make sense if the social situation were one of an elite minority group with access to more mature or esoteric teachings than other Christians.<sup>40</sup> Only those within the elite circle should have access to the more mature teaching, yet to embrace unity by rejecting the more mature teaching would have been anathema for the author.

In order to address these social concerns, through the narrative rhetoric of the text, each author draws upon different social strategies. These strategies include a paraenetic or protreptic social function and the use of traditional or subversive paraenesis. In Perdue's social analysis of paraenesis, he recognizes that paraenesis functions for socialization, legitimation, and conflict resolution, which are tied into a protreptic and paraenetic social function.<sup>41</sup> Paraenetic social function, as discussed in chapter 4, is distinguished from protreptic function in that the latter focuses upon persuading someone to adopt a new worldview (and thus targets outsiders) while the paraenetic function reinforces an existing worldview (and thus is directed toward insiders).<sup>42</sup> There is a difference in the rhetoric of *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Truth* regarding the paraenetic or protreptic social functions. While the ideal audience of both texts is certainly insiders, thus indicating a paraenetic social function, the *Interp. Know.* carries a secondary protreptic function. The call for reconciliation or harmony (especially on pages 17 and 18), along with the historical connection made with the beginnings of the Christian movement (1,19–24), in *Interp. Know.* suggests that the author may have anticipated the non-Valentinian faction "listening in on" the author's communication with the ideal audience. If such a secondary audience was anticipated, then the author may have attempted to indirectly persuade the rest of the Christian community (i.e., the non-Valentinian Christians) to move towards or accept the reconciliatory advances made by the author. Perhaps the author hoped that the rest of the community would eventually direct their spiritual development

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<sup>40</sup> See Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 156–58 and especially 195. See also my discussion in chapter 6. Access to such esoteric teaching, however, may have been seen by the author as having an indirect impact or benefit for the broader Christian community.

<sup>41</sup> Perdue, "Social Character" and "Paraenesis in the Epistle of James"; see discussion in chapter 3.

<sup>42</sup> Such a distinction is clearly heuristic. See the challenge to this typical understanding of protrepsis and paraenesis in Swancutt, "Paraenesis in Light of Protrepsis."

toward the higher teachings, to become “contenders” (ψαειξ) rather than remain “ordinary” Christians (ιξωτησ) (21,26–29). Such a reading would imply that εθνοσ (“Gentiles”) at 21,30 would have carried an indirect warning to these non-Valentinian “eavesdroppers”; i.e., they will be excluded from the Christian community if they continue to oppose the Valentinian faction (i.e., πψα[ε]ιξ [π] παλοσ). The *Gos. Truth*, however, does not indicate a secondary audience. Rather, the author exclusively demarks insiders from outsiders. Not only does κρεψωχπ and τοπιос on pages 42 and 43 close the gospel with such a social division, but the entire ontological identification of the insiders and potential insiders with the Father/Son articulates a sharp dualistic anthropology. The positive and negative sides of the paraenetic subsection work with this anthropological duality to guide the audience in their missionary work. This gospel, therefore, only contains a paraenetic social function.

Added to the difference in using the paraenetic and protreptic functions, our two texts also differ when we look at the strategies of using traditional or subversive paraenesis. According to Perdue, traditional paraenesis fits a social model of order. This model of order is both “traditional and conservative, for it seeks to transmit accepted forms of institutions and values.”<sup>43</sup> Paraenetic discourse that articulates a model of order attempts to socialize individuals entering a social unit (protreptic function), or those needing confirmation within a social unit (paraenetic function), so as to reinforce the legitimacy of the established social unit. Traditional paraenesis, therefore, will engage a dominant cultural rhetoric.<sup>44</sup> In contrast, subversive paraenesis, according to Perdue, follows a model of conflict. Standing in opposition to an established social entity, the model of conflict “undermines the legitimacy of the prevailing order of the society and competing communities by calling into question the social knowledge undergirding their symbolic universe” and largely accomplishes this goal by “establishing social boundaries” so as to shape or re-shape social identity.<sup>45</sup> In place of the existing social order, subversive paraenesis attempts to establish

<sup>43</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 27.

<sup>44</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 86: “Dominant culture rhetoric presents a system of attitudes, values, dispositions, and norms that the speaker either presupposes or asserts are supported by social structures vested with power to impose its goals on people in a significantly broad territorial region.”

<sup>45</sup> Perdue, “Social Character,” 26.

an alternative social order. This alternative social order will usually be insular or withdrawn from the broader culture. Depending on how rigid the boundaries are between the in-group and the out-group, subversive paraenesis can advocate any of the seven social types set forth by Bryan Wilson and adopted by Vernon Robbins's socio-rhetorical criticism: conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, gnostic-manipulationist, thaumaturgical, reformist, or utopian.<sup>46</sup> While the first three types of social outlook reflect a greater degree of social withdrawal (perhaps taking up a subcultural, countercultural, or contracultural outlook),<sup>47</sup> thaumaturgical, reformist, and utopian outlooks, though withdrawn from the broader culture, are more accommodating to the broader social world while simultaneously attempting to subvert it (i.e., to heal or reform that world). A utopian outlook, while not as radical as a reformist outlook, attempts to change the existing world rather than simply replace or escape it.

Both *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Truth* employ a model of conflict. Valentinian paraenesis, in these two instances at least, is essentially subversive paraenesis. In articulating a dualistic ontology, with a negative view of the existing world as simply a shadow or dream from which one is to be awakened, *Gos. Truth* subverts the existing social order. The material realm is exclusively a realm of sinfulness, error, and entrapment. It is the realm of instability and separation of the members of the totality from the Father. The dualistic anthropology heightens this subversive quality. The social outlook taken by this author is close to what Robbins calls a contraculture. Contracultures tend to be short lived, reactionary movements that oppose the dominant culture: "In a contraculture, then, the members have 'more negative than positive ideas in common'."<sup>48</sup> While *Gos. Truth* is not completely negative, nor is it idealizing a short lived social movement, the stark dualism in this gospel certainly suggest something akin to a contracultural response is occurring within the gospel's subversive paraenesis. By using a subversive paraenetic model in this way, the author is certainly establishing a strong social boundary between insiders and outsiders, though without a strictly

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<sup>46</sup> See Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 72–74; *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 147–50.

<sup>47</sup> See the discussion in Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 86–88, and *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 168–70.

<sup>48</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 170, citing Keith Roberts, "Toward a Generic Concept of Counter-Culture," 124.

introversionist typology. While obviously indifferent to social reform or revolution (after all, according to *Gos. Truth* the material world is an “empty fiction, as if they [those lost within that world] were sunk in sleep and found themselves in disturbing dreams”; 29,8–11), the author does not “encourage people neither to convert the population nor to expect the world’s overturn, but simply to retire from the world to enjoy the security granted by personal holiness.”<sup>49</sup> Instead, the author recognizes that insiders remain within the material world and, while within that exilic state of wandering, have a task of demonstratively reaching others who are capable of being “awakened” by the message of the Father/Son. Consequently, this gospel does advocate a withdrawing from the world, yet ironically while remaining within the world, and does call for converting people, yet only those who are already insiders (but not yet awakened to their state of living in an illusionary world of “shadows and phantoms”; 28,27).

While also presenting a subversive paraenesis, *Interp. Know.* articulates a liminal condition of crisis between two factions of a Christian community that needs reconciliation. Thus, the author’s use of subversive paraenesis serves a broader function of reinforcing an existing social order. By recalling the formative period in Christian history, building on the Pauline body metaphor, and seeking concord within the Christian community, the author articulates a model of order. This model of order, however, is muted by the antithetical representation of the arrogant teacher (locating this teacher and school within the way of death, in contrast to the way of life that is exemplified by the teacher of immortality). Thus, the author of *Interp. Know.* utilizes a model of conflict (i.e., subverting the social legitimacy of not only the cosmos but also a *Gesellschaft* church ecclesiology) in order to establish a unified Christian community (i.e., a model of order, albeit with a preferred *Gemeinschaft* social structure). The key for appreciating this author’s qualified use of subversive paraenesis is the reformist concern that emerges. She or he is attempting to, as Robbins puts it, nurture “a role of social conscience and acceptance of a place in the world without becoming part of the world or being made impure by it . . . [encouraging] active association with the world without becoming part of it.”<sup>50</sup> For this author the world is not simply the cosmos or the broader Greco-Roman

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<sup>49</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 148.

<sup>50</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 149.

culture, but more importantly the Christian church. It is within the world of the church that the author presents a countercultural response within the rhetoric of the text, albeit with a reformist approach to that world.<sup>51</sup> Hope is a key quality in countercultures, according to Robbins: “The theory of reform is to provide an alternative, and to ‘hope that the dominant society will “see the light” and adopt a more “humanistic” way of life’.” Such a hope, however, does not typically fit a reformist agenda, rather countercultures “are quite content to live their lives and let the dominant society go on with their ‘madness’. Yet an underlying theme is *hope* of voluntary reform by the dominant society in accord with this new model of ‘the good life’.”<sup>52</sup> Our author is very much interested in having the Valentinian faction exist within the broader church society, without being pulled back into that dominant culture, and with the hope that other Christians may adopt or advance to the deeper Christian teachings held by the elite. If there is a secondary protreptic function underlying *Interp. Know.*, then a slight reformist move could be perceived within this text. However, if we accept Dunderberg’s reading of *Interp. Know.*, specifically his insightful suggestion of a “scholastic esotericism” with a two-tiered distinction between ordinary Christians and the Valentinian school,<sup>53</sup> then the co-existence of the Valentinian faction within the broader Christian community may have been idealized as a type of subculture holding a countercultural outlook. Robbins describes subcultures as “imitat[ing] the attitudes, values, dispositions and norms of a dominant culture and claim[ing] to enact them better than members of the dominant status.”<sup>54</sup> With the link of faith and unfaith between the previous generation and the current generation of Christians, such a mutual identification with the ecclesiastical faction (i.e., both factions are part of the Christian tradition), while claiming a superior affiliation by the elite in-group, suggests a subcultural reaction within the author’s rhetoric. The fluidity of in-group and out-group, furthermore, adds a subculture element to the author’s countercultural use of subversive paraenesis.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 168–71.

<sup>52</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 169, quoting Keith Roberts, “Toward a Generic Concept of Counter-Culture,” 121.

<sup>53</sup> Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, especially 156–58 and 191–95.

<sup>54</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 168.

<sup>55</sup> This subculture element fits conceptual subcultures rather than ethnic subculture. On the distinction between these two types of subculture, see Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 168–69.

It is through the use of such social strategies or models that both these texts address the social concerns of existing among and interacting with outsiders. The paraenetic discourse in each text is directed to such concerns, offering similar yet different “constellations of relations” or narrative locations.<sup>56</sup> Although I use Robbins’s social and cultural typologies to elucidate the conceptual depiction of such narrative locations, such depictions should not be taken as indicating that underlying each text is a counterculture, contraculture, or subculture. To make such an interpretative move would be a return to representational narrative analysis. Rather, these social models, typologies, and concerns all function within our paraenetic discourses to orient the readers to perceive their social relations through the lens of the author’s rhetorical redescription. The social function of paraenesis, therefore, is to set forth an idealized view of the social relations implied by the text so as to urge the readers to follow a moral path that is consistent with the author’s assumed shared worldview. This function sets paraenesis within the contours of deliberative rhetoric, offering advice and urging a particular path of action. Like all rhetorical acts, paraenesis does not simply represent social relations but attempts to affect those relations. Thus, the preceptor should be seen as part of a larger discursive engagement or communicative setting. Our paraenetic texts, therefore, become “voices” within a living engagement of interlocutors.

#### VALENTINIANISM AS A SET OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS?

With such a view of the social function of paraenesis, especially in reading our two major examples of Valentinianism, what can be said about Valentinianism as a social movement? The reconstruction of Valentinianism either historically or socially continues to be very difficult. As Stephen Emmel observes: “Reconstructing anything like a history of Valentinianism is a notoriously difficult task. The Nag Hammadi codices have added extremely valuable new primary source material to the equation, but they thereby also make the solution that much more complex.”<sup>57</sup>

There have been various approaches taken in such reconstructive work. For Emmel, the key issue is to determine Valentinus’ relationship

<sup>56</sup> Somers and Gibson, “Reclaiming the Epistemological Other,” 59.

<sup>57</sup> Emmel, “Gnostic Tradition,” 131.

to the Valentinian sources, especially when connecting Valentinianism to ancient philosophical traditions. Such an approach allows us to locate the sources along an historical trajectory. Historians may also follow the social models set forth by Clement of Alexandria or Origen; i.e., a genealogical model (typically set forth as a chain of teacher-student relations and sect development) or as a doctrinal or systematic cohesion between particular teachers and texts both with each other and Valentinus.<sup>58</sup> One may simply ignore, or perhaps de-emphasize, social and historical processes in favour of theological typologies. Such typologies are typically placed within the very broad Western and Eastern Valentinian streams. In Thomassen's work, the historical quality is primarily one of isolating an earlier theological system, ideally going back to Valentinus, and tracing doctrinal developments that move away from the original teachings of Valentinus.<sup>59</sup> Another approach is to trace broad social tendencies between Valentinianism and other early Christians in the formation of Christian communities. For instance, in relation to Valentinianism in Rome, Thomassen elsewhere sets forth various competing social models of decentralization and centralization of authority from the early to late second century.<sup>60</sup> Pagels' work on ecclesiastical and anti-ecclesiastical social conflict offers another example of the approach of tracing social relations between Valentinian and non-Valentinian Christians.<sup>61</sup>

Each of these approaches tends to treat Valentinianism as a broad historical phenomenon or set of phenomena (the latter is especially true when evoking the Eastern and Western Valentinian typology), into which the particular sources can be fitted. The sources are rendered building blocks for the reconstruction of a form of Christianity (as historically, theologically, or ritually conceived) that emerges or deviates from the progenitor of the movement, Valentinus. Although there is value to such approaches, especially in elucidating a sweeping

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<sup>58</sup> See discussion in Kaler and Bussières, "Was Heracleon a Valentinian?"

<sup>59</sup> Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, passim; though he addresses historical developments within both Western and Eastern Valentinianism in chapter 32, the primary focus is upon theological trajectories rather than applying social models for understanding the development of Valentinianism. For Thomassen, it is the Eastern branch of Valentinianism, to which he attributes all the Nag Hammadi sources, that has greater affinity to Valentinus' teaching and thus represents an earlier form of Valentinianism than the Western branch.

<sup>60</sup> Thomassen, "Orthodoxy and Heresy."

<sup>61</sup> Pagels, "Conflicting Versions," "A Valentinian Interpretation of Baptism and Eucharist"; cf. "Irenaeus, the 'Canon of Truth', and the Gospel of John."

history or definition of Valentinianism, we still are faced with the problem set forth by Emmel: the complexity of the Nag Hammadi sources. Beyond the problematic nature of attempting to fit the individual texts into broad theological or historical trajectories, is the added problem of appreciating these texts as part of a social exchange between real people dealing with the experiential implications of their beliefs within human interactions. In the study of modern religious traditions, there has been an increasing appreciation for religion as a social field that is an ongoing, lived process of interacting with and making sense of one's world. As Mary Pat Fisher insightfully opens her introduction to world religions, "Religion is not a museum piece. Religion is a vibrant force in the lives of many people around the world... The emphasis throughout is on the personal consciousness of believers and their own accounts of their religion and its relevance in contemporary life."<sup>62</sup> While historians of early Christianity, including Valentinianism, are dealing with dead traditions, Fisher's comments are very appropriate. While the remnants of second to fourth century Valentinianism may indeed belong in a museum, they were at one time part of living exchanges between real people. It is in getting back to the people producing, reading and responding to these texts that an approach to social function of paraenesis as rhetorical acts comes into play. Studying Valentinian paraenesis will hopefully shift our focus from the sweeping generalities of Valentinianism to the perhaps more human particularities of each text. By analogy, my approach is to shift away from a general look at a Baptist denomination toward the peculiar interactions of a specific Baptist church. While a sermon, email, church bulletin, or letter from such a church could be used within a more sweeping appreciation of theological and ethical trends within the development of the denomination (e.g., the emergence of a social gospel ethic or a contestation of postmillennial eschatologies), these same remnants of communication can be used to appreciate the social dynamics between actual people within the local community, dealing with specific local issues (e.g., a power struggle over the election of a pastor or the problems in financing a local daycare centre). In other words, the advantage in exploring paraenesis as rhetorical acts is to place at the forefront that "vibrant force... [of] personal consciousness."

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<sup>62</sup> Mary Pat Fisher, *Living Religions*, ix.

By considering each text as part of a series of discursive interactions on a local level, we can approach our sources as distinct “fragments” or “instances” of Valentinianism. Thus, a rhetorical study of Valentinian moral exhortation needs to recognize that we are dealing with not one or two branches of a movement (or other models of broad sociological or theological structures), but rather a series of movements and competing perceptions within these movements that are local, contingent, and particular. In a sense, therefore, perhaps we should speak less of “Valentinianism” than a series of “Valentinianisms.” A shift toward the local has significant implications on how we conceive such social units. I believe that Blumer’s definition of a society is helpful in this regard: “A society is seen as people meeting the varieties of situations that are thrust on them by their conditions of life. These situations are met by working out joint actions in which participants have to align their acts to one another.”<sup>63</sup> Blumer is building on Mead’s concept of social actions (or in Blumer’s terms joint actions). For both of them society is not simply a series of roles, structures, and social stimuli. Rather, human beings are “acting organisms” that address situations within interacting actions that are “fitted” into patterns of reaction, which results in the emergence and transformation of group identity (including conflicting identities).<sup>64</sup> For those of us studying Valentinian Christianity, especially by focussing on individual texts as discursive moments, it would be instructive to analyze these social groups, movements, or schools as moments of forming or contesting joint actions. While structures are certainly an important part of human society, they are not instances of “a self-operating societal system” whose importance “lie in an alleged determination of action.”<sup>65</sup> Rather, as Blumer indicates, social structures “are important only as they enter into the process of interpretation and definition out of which joint actions are formed.”<sup>66</sup> Each text (or substratum within a text) is one attempt as such social formation.

Paraenesis in particular is important in this process, as moral exhortation is a type of deliberative rhetoric that attempts to persuade or dissuade future action. Our two major examples of Valentinian paraenesis attempt to direct or form joint actions within their communities by

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<sup>63</sup> Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 72.

<sup>64</sup> Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 70–77.

<sup>65</sup> Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 75.

<sup>66</sup> Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 75.

defining, through social idealization, an in-group identity. The rhetorical strategies employed in each case do not speak to some grander history of Valentinianism, but rather are occasional in that they speak to the local or the immediate. By evoking and implying social structures, such as philosophical schools or a church or an itinerant mission, *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Truth* each attempt to shape their readers' in-group/out-group identities so as to motivate joint actions that will align the readers' actions and social interactions with the values of the author. Consequently, each textual source for Valentinianism is an attempt at forming joint actions. By studying Valentinianism as a set of social moments (i.e., joint actions), perhaps we can better appreciate these texts for the "vibrant force...[of] personal consciousness" of which each text is derived.

Some of the strategies used in the Valentinian sources to effect social formation are worth noting. First, Valentinian paraenesis typically indicates an interest in both ethical and cosmological concerns. Indeed, rather than fitting neatly into either Kloppenborg's type  $\alpha$  or type  $\beta$  for the two way schema, where the former is more mythological in focus and the latter shifts away from the mythic to the ethical, our sources tend to merge ethical concern with mythological or eschatological worldviews. Both the *2 Apoc. Jas.* and *Auth. Teach.* tie their paraenetic discourses to a concern over the ascent of the soul.<sup>67</sup> For these authors, to live "according to nature" is to live within an ethical alignment with the broader cosmological framework of their shared worldviews. Secondly, as a result of such a merging of the ethical and mythical, the use of paraenesis within Valentinian texts could be seen as tools moving or urging readers toward a greater good. In other words, moral exhortations, including the ethical behaviours urged, were not ends in themselves but rather functioned as instrumental goods leading toward, or reinforcing continuance of an intrinsic good. Within the Valentinian sources, this intrinsic or ultimate good is the heavenly Father and reunification with the spiritual realm. This is certainly the concern underlying both the *Gos. Truth* and the *Interp. Know.*, where the motif of ascent is linked to liberation and unity (e.g., *Gos. Truth* 22,4–7 and *Interp. Know.* 18,22–24). As with ritual ascension in Valentinianism (such as in *Pr. Paul* where the five invocations ascend to a climax of a full revelation of the first-born of the pleroma), ethical

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<sup>67</sup> See discussion of the two ways in both these texts in chapter 5.

behaviour guides the Valentinian Christian toward final redemption, oneness, or rest (i.e., ἀπολύτρωσις). Ethical behaviour is not presented in our sources as a good in itself, but is good only in how it links to the ultimate good while moving the Christian along a moral path to that good. Consequently, the ethical and mythical are closely interlinked within Valentinian paraenesis.

Paraenetic discourse is utilized to achieve the goal of motivating readers to embrace a social perception that will lead them to the ultimate good, both in how that good impacts the local network of social relations and their eschatological goals. It is in this utilization of paraenesis that we see attempts at social identity formation. I have not argued in the preceding chapters that each text maps out particular early Christian communities or factions within communities, but rather that they *use social re-presentation, through narrative articulation, in order to persuade the audience or recipient to identify with the social idealization of the author as a shared worldview*. In this sense, both our texts “create social identities”; this does not open the texts to historical reconstructions of actual social groups, but rather the elucidation of group formation processes as sets of joint actions. The communicative situation of each text, therefore, can be seen as an attempt to construct identities for persuasive purposes.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY FOR FUTURE STUDIES

There are various implications that arise from this study of Valentinian paraenesis. The full impact of these repercussions obviously lies outside the contours of this study, but are worth mentioning both in conclusion and for future research. First, this study has reinforced the findings of previous scholars on the importance of ethics for an adequate understanding of Valentinianism. The Valentinians were not only interested in ethics; they also engaged in moral hortatory discourse as did others in the Greco-Roman world. Indeed, the pervasive presence of paraenetic material in almost every Nag Hammadi source for Valentinianism is a profound indication of this importance. Despite Harnack’s recognition of the vital importance of ethics in Valentinianism, scholars in the past have tended to reduce Valentinianism to a form of Gnostic Christianity that was not, or should not, be interested in ethics. Rather than viewing Valentinians as less ethically concerned than other Christians, Harnack claimed that, “The fragments we possess from the writings of

Valentinus and his school, show rather that they were second to no Christian body in moral earnestness.”<sup>68</sup> It is this very moral earnestness, especially within the practical use of paraenetic discourse, that needs to be fully appreciated—both by specialists in the study of Gnosticism and other scholars of early Christianity. Future studies of Valentinian ethics must, therefore, seriously take into account the presence of paraenetic material and hortatory strategies found in this corpus. It might also be insightful to explore other instances of paraenesis within the Nag Hammadi material, especially the Sethian sources.

Second, studies of early Christian and Greco-Roman moral exhortation should expand their source base to fully include the Valentinian material. The lack of appreciation for this material in studies of paraenesis over the past half century is a serious omission that needs to be corrected. This lack of discussion of Valentinianism is not only surprising in the *Semeia* group’s work, but even more so in the recent collection of essays emerging from the Lund-Oslo group. It is in part my hope to encourage dialogue between those scholars specialized in the study of Gnosticism and those who work on paraenesis. Valentinianism, as one stream of Christian thought in the second and third century, should not be studied in isolation from the rest of early Christianity. Indeed, this book has reaffirmed the essentially Christian nature of Valentinianism as well as the growing model within the field of seeing Christianity as a heterogeneous series of religious innovations that co-existed within an ongoing process of social and ideological contestation. A full reassessment of the historical development of Christianity and Christian moral discourse is surely called for as an outgrowth of this study’s findings.

Third, there is room for a broader analysis of Valentinian moral discourse that is not hortatory in nature. The delimitation in this book to the paraenetic discourse within Valentinianism should not be seen as a

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<sup>68</sup> This quote is cited by Philip Stafford Moxom in his 1895 Lowell lectures and is evidently taken from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* 9th edition (see Moxom, *From Jerusalem to Nicaea*, 310–11). Harnack’s positive view of Valentinian ethics, however, was largely cast into the two-fold demarcation of libertine and ascetic directions taken by different Gnostics (see the very helpful overview of this aspect of Harnack’s work in King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 55–70, especially 63). Moxom clearly followed Harnack’s understanding of Valentinian ethics when he refers to “the twofold ethics illustrated in monachism [sic], in which we find set forth a morality for the ordinary Christians, and a higher, ascetical morality for those devoting themselves exclusively to a religious life” (311).

dismissal of the importance of non-hortatory moral discourse. Indeed, this study invites such a move in scholarship, especially for a reassessment of the moral discourse that pervades the *Tri. Tract.* and Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora*. Such an appreciation for moral discourse would surely invite further comparisons, and more extensive analyses, with Greek moral philosophy in late antiquity. In this sense, the study of ethics in Valentinianism, or Gnosticism more generally, should be inclusive of those who work in the fields of philosophy and especially classics.

Fourth, this study has offered a fresh method for the social and rhetorical analysis of early Christian texts. By drawing upon a culturally situated method from the social sciences, as a venue for socio-rhetorical work, not only can the Valentinian material be insightfully and creatively engaged without the methodological hindrances of traditional historical work, but so might other early Christian paraenetic (and non-paraenetic) texts be re-appraised of their discursive value. It is hoped that this study will encourage further developments in the construction of methods for the study of these texts, especially for those scholars who have advocated a socio-rhetorical model. Indeed, it is my hope that the value of positioning theory, as one rhetorical method that grounds argumentative strategies within narrative discourse and social interactions, will be recognized and more broadly applied within the academic study of religion.

Implications emerging from this study promise to open new vistas of research in the field of New Testament and early Christian studies. Rather than static philosophical texts, or remnants of an esoteric aberration that threatened the emerging orthodoxy of Christianity, this study and its broader implications challenge the historian of Christianity to more seriously recognize and appreciate the diverse, creative and culturally interactive dimensions of Christianity within these early formative centuries. As one innovation or set of innovations within this fluid and dynamic movement that we now call Christianity, Valentinianism offers fresh insights into the moral and social rhetorical playfulness that occurred within the second and third centuries as these early Christians attempted to establish and persuasively perpetuate their own particular identity construction.

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