Finding Lacan

St Paul and the Paradox of Jouissance

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This thesis is dedicated to all those who made it possible: Mum, Dad, Susan, Bill, Kerry, Aaron, Ben, Richard, Daniel and Genny; and also to Paul Fenton and all those at Oasis College.

ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου
νόμῳ ἀπέθανον,
ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω.
Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι.

For I, through the law,
died [to? in? by? with?] the law,
so that I might live [for? to? in? with?] God.
I have been crucified with Christ.

The ego-ideal's imaginary identification
Was killed by the law,
In order to live with the Other.
It saw *das Ding*.

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Que suis-Je? Je suis à la place d'ou se vocifère que « l'univers est un
défaut dans la pureté du Non-Être »… [Cette place] s'appelle la
Jouissance, et c'est elle dont le défaut rendrait vain l'univers.

What am *I*? *I* am in the place from which 'the universe is a flaw in the
purity of Non-Being' is vociferated… This place is called Jouissance,
and it is Jouissance whose absence would render the universe vain.

Abstract

Over the last few decades there has been a renewed interest in St Paul by continental philosophers, many of them from Lacanian traditions. This has arisen independent of the revolutionary developments in Pauline theology over the same period. This thesis bridges the gap between them, as a Lacanian study of Paul that is faithfully Lacanian and faithfully Pauline. Lacan's thesis that the unconscious is structured like a language, and some of the accompanying structures he discovered, are found in Paul's theology. Finding Lacan in Paul poses new solutions to many of the dilemmas facing both Lacanian readings of Paul and Pauline scholarship itself. A more faithfully Lacanian (and less Hegelian) version of Slavoj Žižek's Paul loses none of his political usefulness, without requiring atheism. The Pauline 'event' as Alain Badiou describes it is described again through Lacan, in a way that fits better with Pauline scholarship, allowing equal importance to both the death and resurrection of Christ. Refusing to sacrifice an authentically Lacanian understanding of 'alienation' forces a more nuanced reading of Paul than some other similar attempts; but it also reframes what some Paul scholars mean when they claim that in Christ the believer undergoes an ontological transformation. Inserting a Lacanian Paul into the modern philosophical discourse reveals a Paul who can be politically meaningful beyond his relation to 'Empire.' Interwoven in this is a reading of Paul opposed to Stoicism, revealed by qualifying Stoic ethics as obsessional neurotic in structure. This reading of Paul against Stoicism helps to demonstrate Paul's relation to the 'master signifiers' of his time, which also

helps to clarify what happened in Pauline Christian 'conversions,' and provides another way to theorise about what Paul might mean for today. This thesis demonstrates that Lacan's concepts are helpful to Pauline scholarship, and that they are not irreconcilable with the historical critical method, in the hope that many more Lacanian Pauls might emerge in the future.

Table of Contents

Referencing Scheme

References to biblical literature follow a standard scheme of abbreviation, with a colon between chapter and verse and no full stop, so that the third verse of the fourth chapter of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is abbreviated as 2 Cor 4:3.

References to the works of Sigmund Freud are from *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (24 vols.), trans. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1966). Citations follow the form *SE#* followed by the page number, where # is the volume number.

References to Jacques Lacan's annual seminars that have been officially published in English (1-3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 17, 20 and 23) are from the series edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*. They are referenced in footnotes with the format *S#* followed by the page number, where # is the seminar number, corresponding to the numbers given below, or in the main text with *Seminar* and the seminar number in Roman numerals. The volumes of the series do not all have the same publisher, and some of the volumes have been produced at different points by different publishers. The editions used here are as follows:

1. Jacques Lacan, *Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954*, trans. by John Forrester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 [1975]).

2. Jacques Lacan, *The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*, trans. by Sylvana Tomaselli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 [1978]).

3. Jacques Lacan, *The Psychoses 1955-1956*, trans. by Russell Grigg (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 1993 [1981]).

7. Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Dennis Porter (London: Routledge, 2008 [1986]). (This is the most recent new edition, and employs different pagination to earlier copies of the same text.)

8. Jacques Lacan, *Transference*, trans. by Bruce Fink (Cambridge: Polity, 2015 [1991]).

10. Jacques Lacan, *Anxiety*, trans. by A. R. Price (Cambridge: Polity, 2014 [2004]).

11. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Karnac, 1977 [1973]).

17. Jacques Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Russell Grigg (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2007 [1991]).

20. Jacques Lacan, *Encore*, trans. by Bruce Fink (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 1988 [1975]).

23. Jacques Lacan, *The Sinthome*, trans. by A. R. Price (Cambridge: Polity, 2016)

Lacan's seminars that have not been officially translated, but have been translated unofficially by Cormac Gallagher from his personal notes, are available at <www.lacaninireland.com> [accessed 6.12.2016]. These include seminars 5-25

(1957-1978). References to these are in the format *S#* as above, followed by the date of the individual lecture and the page number.

References to the remaining seminars (4 and 26-27) will be cited individually from the French or unofficial translations. Un-cited translations of these are the author's, and, as with references to the French, are from the editions published by Seuil in Paris, from 1973 to the present.

References to the articles Lacan published in *Écrits* are from Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. by Bruce Fink (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2006 [1966]). They are cited as *Écrits*, followed by the page number.

All New Testament quotations are from *Novum Testamentum Graece* 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), and translated by the author unless otherwise stated. Greek that appears in the main text is left in Greek script where it appears only for the interest or reference of biblical scholars, but transliterated into Roman script where the Greek is important to or recurs in the argument. The abbreviation NA28 is used, in reference to this edition of the Greek text. The Bible translation most frequently referred to is the *New Revised Standard Version Anglicized Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), which is abbreviated as NRSV. Occasionally the abbreviation NIV is used for *Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001 [1984]), and KJV is used for *Holy Bible: King James Version* (London: Collins, 2011).

Quotes from the Septuagint (abbreviated as LXX) are translated by the author from *Septuaginta*, eds. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

All quotations of Epictetus are from *Epictetus: The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, the Manual, and the Fragments*, trans. by W. A. Oldfather (London: Harvard University Press, 1925), and are either Oldfather's translation or, if stated, the author's translation from the Greek contained in this edition. The Discourses are cited as *Disc*. #.#.#, referring to the discourse number, the chapter and verse. The Encheiridion/Manual and Fragments are cited as *Ench.* and *Frag*.

The Paul and Lacan quotes from the front pages are my translation of Gal 2:19-20a, followed by Bruce Fink's translation of a quote from Lacan's 'The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire,' *Écrits*, 694. The French, from page 819 of the original edition, can also be found in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* II (Paris: Seuil, 1971), 182.

Chapter One

Introduction

1. What Found St Paul?

In a session with his most famous obsessive neurotic patient, known as the Rat Man,[1] Freud allegorised psychoanalytic inquiry into the unconscious traces of repressed memory by referring to the artefacts around his office: 'The destruction of Pompeii was only beginning now that it had been dug up.'[2]

What follows runs the risk of destroying Paul by digging him up. This most certainly will not be the first time, given how often over the last two thousand years his corpus has been prodded by theologians and other intellectuals (indeed, much of the discussion of theological and philosophical uses of Paul below amounts to pointing this out); but what follows is not just historical criticism, nor just a philosophical reinterpretation. By viewing the world of Paul's argumentation through a Lacanian psychoanalytic lens I will attempt to lay bare the structures into which he found his thought, and perhaps also the inventive and enigmatic ways he manipulated those structures into an interpretation of the

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[1] Real name Ernst Lanzer.

[2] *SE10*, 176.

new existence of the Christian subject, resurrected from the dead text of the paradox of *jouissance*.

The peculiar wording chosen above, 'into which he found his thought,' is intentional. It mirrors the temporally bizarre experience of psychoanalysis, in which one does not 'find' some structurally eternal symbolic version of oneself already there, any more than one, conversely, puts a structure on top of what is not already there.[3] The temporality of it all is confusing. Lacan compares it to a sentence, which is read forwards but interpreted backwards, bereft of meaning until the words at the end of the sentence give one a sense of where the divisions were between the words at the beginning of the sentence.[4] He graphs out the human subject in the same way, as a string of words that only exist in the present but only make sense when read retrospectively.[5] Because of this structure of the human mind, one does not 'find' one's unconscious written firmly in the past, or 'read into' the unconscious what the conscious wants, but, rather, one 'finds into' the unconscious, discovering it not in the codification of the past, but within the very words one speaks in the present. And there, one 'finds,' quite actively; or, in the case of Paul and Christianity, one finds *and* one founds.

To psychoanalysis this is no paradox, because when one digs back far enough, scratching into one's deepest memories and most embarrassing slips, the

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[3] Lacan himself uses this language to compare psychoanalysis to religion in *S11*, 7-8, both of which employ a 'hermeneutic demand,' in which one does not necessarily 'seek,' but instead one finds what one has found already.

[4] *S5*, 6.11.1957, 6. This concept is returned to several times in what follows.

[5] *Écrits*, 671-702. Part of this graph is discussed in the final section of Chapter 4.

line between finding and founding begins to fade;[6] particularly in Paul's case, where the event that founds the new Christian subject is one that happened *to* the subject, not one that the subject actively and intentionally creates: the death and resurrection of Christ.[7] What did Paul found when he found that he had found

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[6] This is close to the idea of repetition, which Marcus Pound explores in more detail, via Lacan and Kierkegaard, and with reference to some of the theological uses of this concept, in *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 56-72. The Lacanian subject does not necessarily remember and relate the past and dreams accurately, but, rather interprets them as she (mis-)remembers them. This is why if the analysand asks to show the analyst photos from a holiday, the analyst instead asks her to describe the picture: the truth of the unconscious emerges within the interpretation and description of the memory, and the words used, rather than the 'memory itself.' This is also why the Lacanian analyst does not tell the subject the 'true' meaning of her dreams, as the Jungian or Kleinian analyst might, attaching imaginary objects to other imaginary objects of eternal forms. As Lacan says in *S7*, 90, 'At the level of the unconscious, the subject lies.' Instead, the Lacanian psychoanalyst practices what Philip Hill calls 'equivocation,' allowing the signifiers to relate to each other as the subject speaks, and allowing the subject to interpret them herself – aided by the fact that she presumes the analyst already to have a true interpretation, which the analyst does not. This is only mildly related to the hermeneutical strategy termed 'equivocation' nearer the end of this chapter. This is all from Philip H. F. Hill, *Using Lacanian Clinical Technique —an introduction—* (London: Press for the Habilitation of Psychoanalysis, 2002), 286-296.

[7] At various points Paul emphasises the passivity of the experience of being in Christ; for example, in Rom 6:5-11 Paul uses a series of passive verbs and compound verbs prefixed with σύν ('with'), while describing how the Christian subject is united with Christ in death and resurrection: we 'grow together' in the image of Christ's death, our old ἄνθρωπος (person, appearance, ego-ideal) συνεσταυρώθη (co-crucified) with him, so that the body of sin is nullified, the one who has died with Christ is justified from sin. If one looks at these verbs in Greek, most of them are neither present nor active, but either aorist (signifying something that happened once, in the past, with Christ's death and resurrection) or perfect (signifying a present state existing as a result of a past event), and passive (signifying, particularly in a language that has active, middle and passive voices, that the subject is purely the object of the event). On the significance of this united passivity in crucifixion and resurrection with Christ, see Michael Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 69-79; or, by the same author, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001), 45-48. The centrality of this particular image to Paul's

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something? The answer to this question lies not in the historical discovery of Paul's opinions in their intellectual contexts, but in the psychoanalytic discovery of the structure of the event that Paul proclaimed had happened to him and to other subjects he calls 'in Christ.' The answer lies not in knowledge, but in the structure of the subject.[8]

The academic field of biblical studies has long known that when one attempts to interpret Jesus, one will always find oneself staring down a well at a reflection.[9] Attempting to read the past *as past*, in some analytically objective fashion, will always be, to some extent, a *reading into*, a creation of the past as one wills it to be. Psychoanalysis allows us, hermeneutically, to acknowledge this;[10] to acknowledge that desire even finds its way into our constructions of our

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soteriology is of course debatable, but the presence of it in Paul's concept of *how* the Pauline Christian subject experiences the event of Christ is less easily disputed.

[8] *S17*, 87-101. The structure of the subject in relation to master signifiers is what organises knowledge, not vice versa. This is a key Lacanian claim, in its many forms, and is the same claim as the statement that both the subject and a sentence are read retrospectively in the present. This is all expanded upon below, in the discussion on Stoicism and obsessionalism in Chapter 4.

[9] There is an often repeated quote, usually attributed to Albert Schweitzer, about how Jesus scholars always wind up finding the Jesus they want to find, so are metaphorically staring down a well at their own reflection. The actual quote, originally from George Tyrrell, not Schweitzer, is 'The Christ that Harnack sees, looking back through nineteen centuries of Catholic darkness, is only the reflection of a Liberal Protestant face, seen at the bottom of a deep well.' George Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Crossroads* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1909), 44.

[10] In Lacanian terms, this is the idea that the fantasy structures reality. The fantasy, 'an image set to work in a signifying structure' (*Écrits*, 532), is the means by which the subject defends itself against the lack in the Other (see Glossary, Appendix A). The Graph of Desire, which will be discussed below, graphs how the subject's fantasy defends it from the lack in the Other. Lacan reversed Freud's presumption, that dreams are the place of pure desire and protect us from reality (to keep us sleeping), and instead argued that we structure (waking) reality according to fantasy, which is why we wake to it when our dreams get too close to the real of what we really want (*Écrits*, 520-521). With a Lacanian view of reality, as structured by fantasy, it would be silly to

own pasts,[11] and then ask how we are going to *find into* that structure, consciously putting words to the 'bare bones' that might never cease to be more constructed by our own desires than we would like to realise they are. This is why psychoanalysis is always so exploratory in its form. Moving freely without restraint from one topic to the next is necessary; because it never gets easier to be certain that the structure just found is not found intentionally.

What follows, then, is a finding of Lacan into a structure of Pauline theology, interpreting Paul's texts as a series of signifiers that can only be made to mean something once entered retrospectively from a posterior position. It is a psychoanalytic approach, treating the Pauline text as a historical source as malleable and fluid as the memories of every patient to sit on the analytical couch, even if the source text could be perfectly critically established. This does not eradicate traditional hermeneutical difficulties – if anything, it exacerbates them. Instead, it allows me to employ historical critical methods in a way that is unashamedly historical critical, yet looking for a structural representation rather than a historical one.

If this project is daring, that is the reason why. It is not an exercise in reader-response criticism, and it is not even an exercise in Lacanian discoursr

carry on with the pretence that historical Pauline theology can be objectively discovered. More about the relevance of a Lacanian view of the subject for hermeneutics will be discussed below and throughout.

[11] It is an event frequently reported by psychoanalysts that in the progress of the treatment the analysand often realises how differently they remember their own pasts compared to what emerges to have actually happened – for example, dis-affected memories are a core symptom of obsessional neurosis (see below), or completely repressed memories in the case of the hysteric. If the individual subject does not escape the effects of desire on memory, how much more will desire affect our collective historical memories, particularly for those historical subjects like St Paul that are always under interpretative revision?

analysis. The aim is to tie into the historical-critical method, using it to some extent, yet in a way that is framed by Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts, looking for a Lacanian psychoanalytic structure – much the same way that social-scientific interpretations of the New Testament employ sociological categories as a tool for historical criticism. This works because psychoanalysis itself is an investigation into the past, but one that is aware that the remembered past is just as much created by the present as read by the present, which turn out to be related actions. The exact method of this mode of inquiry will be laid out below.

There are at least four sides to the expected audience of this work. Lacan now has at least two major audiences: the psychoanalytic practice he established, largely formalised into the World Association of Psychoanalysis (founded in 1992 by Lacan's son-in-law Jacques-Alain Miller), and the philosophical tradition he precipitated, including the Ljubljana school (most famously Slavoj Žižek), and others such as Alain Badiou. The other side of this study is also broken into two: there has already been some theological interest in Lacan, but the study of Paul usually comes under the heading of 'biblical studies' as a historical critical discipline, and this project falls along that trajectory much more than that of theology. So the potential audiences are: on the side of Lacan, both philosophy and psychoanalysis; and on the side of Paul, both theology and biblical studies.

Since the main goal of this study is to be a hermeneutical experiment with Paul, rather than a study of Lacan, the audience must chiefly be considered to be that of biblical studies and theology. Consequently, much of the main text will be taken up with explanations of Lacan, who is so difficult a thinker that this would be the case regardless. However, Lacan himself did have a more-than-passing

interest in Paul, and both sides of Lacan's modern audience should find some interest in this study, which touches upon the relationship between his ideas and those of a thinker in whom he was interested, but perhaps only explored superficially. Serious attempt is made to explain both sides to the other, constantly. There are introductions to the ideas and interpretation of both Lacan and Paul below.

This may also mean that both sides of the audience find occasional sections somewhat incomprehensible. Interpreting Paul to the level demanded by biblical studies requires constant reference to the Greek, and is aided by the use of some terminology specific to the field. Greek references in the main text will be transliterated or translated wherever possible, with the required precision mostly confined to the footnotes and appendices. Likewise, it is not possible to do an authentically Lacanian study that is both academically precise and totally readable to the newcomer, so some clarifications (largely confined to footnotes) might invoke the tired adage 'it's all Greek to me.'[12] The glossary includes terminology from both sides of the study.

On both sides of this study it would be impossible to invoke the whole of the subject at once. Both Lacan and Paul are thinkers whose ideas evolved over time and covered a lot of ground (though in both cases there are arguments over the extent of this evolution).[13] Lacan covers so much ground over the twenty-

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[12] Ironically, from the side of the audience much more likely to be versed in Greek. As stated in the Referencing Scheme, above, Greek that appears in the main text is left in Greek script where it appears only for the interest or reference of biblical scholars, but transliterated into Roman script where the Greek is important to or recurs in the argument.

[13] In the debate on development in Paul's thought, 'the example most commonly cited has been that of Paul's eschatology, the usual assumption being that the delay of the *parousia* weakened

seven years of his seminar, and arguably changes so much, that increased specification is urgently needed. Since Lacan's longest quote of Paul is his quote of Romans 7 in *Seminar VII*,[14] I will focus on these sections, fanning out slightly to the years immediately preceding and following *Seminar VII* (*Seminar V* will turn out to be of great importance), and to the whole of Romans (and some of Paul's other letters, but with the goal of interpreting Romans).

Finally, one might understandably ask what unites Paul and Lacan enough that this project should even be given the time of day. In his book *The Word Made Strange*, John Milbank devotes a chapter to a specific question: 'Can morality be Christian?'[15] He clarifies that he is not asking whether there can be a specifically Christian morality, but whether morality itself can be Christian. Having stated from the outset that the answer is definitively 'no,' he argues, mostly with reference to Nietzsche, that morality is based on the pre-existence of external threat, internal weakness, death and scarcity. Moral systems depend upon these four things, and exist as reactions to them that also perpetuate them – a point that both Lacan and Žižek make about 'charity.'[16] Thus morality, including

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Paul's imminent expectation or changed his understanding of the process by which transformation into the resurrection body took place.' James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998), 21. Development in Lacan's thought will be discussed below.

[14] *S7*, 102-103.

[15] John Milbank, *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 219-232. This is the follow-up book to the seminal *Theology & Social Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), which founded the academic theological approach known as 'radical orthodoxy.'

[16] Lacan at least makes a connected point to this, on *S7*, 229. Slavoj Žižek makes precisely this point on a regular basis, such as in *Living in the End Times* (London: Verso, 2010) 117; and *First As Tragedy, Then As Farce* (London: Verso, 2009), 53-55. The point being made by Lacan and Žižek in these sources is that not only does charity often have the function of prolonging that

law, and especially when systematised into something 'eternal,' is eternally dependent upon its own negation; so the statement 'morality is Christian' would be immediately problematic. Naturally, Milbank's question leads him to Paul. 'The eternal demand for uniformity is paradoxically an emergency measure to sustain a unity of a thoroughly abstract kind. And it is precisely because of this abstract character of the law that, as Paul realized, the law is a letter that can never be fulfilled.'[17] In the next sentence he is led somewhere unwittingly Lacanian (italics original): 'Not in the sense that love can never be fulfilled, since this follows from the *inherently* excessive, self-exceeding character of love, but in a sense which follows from law's presumption that something is *lacking*, and that something will resist it.' It is in the lack inherent to any system of law, the negation on which it depends, that both Lacan and Paul's thoughts on morality find common ground. Milbank then claims that Paul combats this lack with the plenitude of God, love and resurrection, which is not the particular direction in which this study will go. However, he rightly touches on Paul's awareness of the Nietzschean problem, regardless of how Paul solves it: 'As Paul puts it [in Gal 3:10-13], to be under the law is to be under a curse; to remain in the place of cursed impurity, and to have the threat of further slander hanging always over our heads.'[18] This is indeed one of the factors that leads Badiou to say that 'Nietzsche is Paul's rival rather than his opponent.'[19] What unifies Lacan and Paul most is

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which it formally opposes, but we also get a certain enjoyment out of the act of charity, which, more than curing the ill we seek to remedy, is usually the primary object of acts of charity.

[17] Milbank, *The Word Made Strange*, 226-227.

[18] Ibid,, 227.

[19] Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. by Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 72. Ward Blanton elaborates upon a similar thought had by the

their unrelenting commitment to an ethics beyond the law (with different but not unrelated understandings of what is meant by 'law').[20] For Lacan this is borne out in *Seminar VII*, in which he articulates the difficulty of transcending the law as the 'paradox of *jouissance*,' and his response to it eventually culminates in his reading of *Antigone* (discussed in Chapter 6, below). Paul is certainly not quite so anti-ethical, but there is a deep similarity in the way he is completely committed to persevering through the ethical dilemmas that Lacan later describes, until he can find his ethics, which, in the end, are based on a psychical transformation best described in Lacanian terms, and not inscribed on either side of the law/anti-law paradox. Both Paul and Lacan understand the dilemma of a law based in 'the letter,' and both arrive at systems of thought that attempt, somehow, to transcend this difficulty without denying its inescapability. Within this ground of overlap between Lacan and Paul is a certain fecundity; and it is the goal of this study not to find the greatest truth from within that ground, but merely to demonstrate its fecundity: to demonstrate the potential for both Lacan scholarship and Paul scholarship of a true discourse between the two, beyond surface readings of one by the other. By the end of this thesis it will hopefully be apparent that reading Paul's letters with Lacan can result in a helpful structure for bridging Paul's context with our own, and also for bridging Paul's philosophical and political ideas with some of those being suggested by continental philosophers today.

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great biblical scholar Albert Schweitzer, who suggested that 'Had [Nietzsche] lived twenty centuries earlier, he could have become Saint Paul.' Ward Blanton, 'Paul and the Philosophers: Return to a New Archive,' in eds. Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries, *Paul and the Philosophers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 35-37.

[20] See the brief exploration of this subject at the end of section 6 of Chapter 5.

I have now introduced the rest of what must be introduced in the introduction: introductions to both Lacan and Paul along with further comment on the source texts for this study; a survey of the relevant critical literature already in existence and a more specific elaboration of the hermeneutical method to be employed.

2. Introducing Lacan

The purpose of this introduction is not to introduce the reader objectively to the whole of Lacan's thought. Instead, the purpose is to introduce the reader to the elements of Lacan's thought that are essential knowledge for this project, and that are not introduced later on.

The figure introduced here is only one specific Lacan, selected from among the many. Firstly, it is the Lacan of psychoanalysis slightly more than the Lacan of philosophy (though understanding one always requires the other). Lacan's system of thought is consistently a combination of both, and nearly every sentence we have recorded from his seminars and writings could be interpreted in a philosophical context just as much as a psychoanalytic one, with Lacan perhaps intending to mean both all of the time. For example, his particular view of the human subject owes much to his attendance of Alexandre Kojève's lectures on Hegel;[21] so his most famous modern philosophical interpreter, Slavoj Žižek, successfully unites Lacan with Hegel into a philosophical critique of ideology,

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[21] Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. by Barbara Bray (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1997 [1993]), 98-103. The Hegel-Lacan link is elaborated below.

dependent upon Lacan's Hegelian view of the subject; on the other hand, Lacan's view of the human subject as alienated from itself owes just as much to Freudian topography, and can be read without any awareness of Hegel.[22] This reflects not only a divergence between readers of Lacan, but also a divergence between equally correct readings of Lacan: he was indeed simultaneously writing philosophy and psychoanalysis, and was actively and synthetically informed by both. This must be stated at the beginning of a study of Lacan because the Lacan who is going to be presented is primarily the Lacan of psychoanalysis, who is often *understood differently* to the Lacan of philosophy, but not *less correctly*, and vice versa. Nonetheless, despite the two different possible readings of many of Lacan's ideas, nailing them down precisely always requires reading both philosophical and psychoanalytical backgrounds anyway.

The distinction between the two is unsurprisingly not clear-cut, but it still needs to be clarified methodologically. Lacan's thought can be characterised as increasingly philosophical in his later years, and increasingly concerned with mathematics and set theory. In his earlier years, his thought fits more comfortably into traditional psychoanalytic modes of thought, though it never stops being fully psychoanalytic. This is possibly because he was more concerned with fitting into the norms set by the IPA (International Psychoanalytic Association) before it expelled him, in 1963.[23] For example, in his earlier writings he is already transforming the psychoanalytic concept of the Oedipus Complex into one that revolves around language more than sexuality (more specifically, grounding it in

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[22] Žižek's Hegelian-Lacanian critique of ideology is discussed briefly below in reference to his reading of Paul.

[23] Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, 244-259.

the symbolic rather than the imaginary), but his way of speaking about it does so

without denying the legitimacy of a traditional understanding of it – he just

designs a system that views language as the primary referent, in which things may

well play out in the traditional form psychoanalysis describes nonetheless.

However, in his later years he would shun the traditional view altogether, instead

viewing the process as being *entirely* about language.[24] Consequently, focusing

on Lacan's ideas from a more psychoanalytic than philosophical angle here results

in using the early Lacan (pre-1963) more than the late Lacan.[25]

    There are many good introductions to Lacan and his thought, so

occasionally the reader will be pointed to these texts for more information on

concepts that do not need to be explained fully here. With the divisions just

mentioned in mind, two of the best introductions from more of a psychoanalytic

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[24] Although Lacan made much use of a linguistic interpretation of the Oedipus Complex in the mid
fifties (specifically *S5*), in *S17* (1969-1970), 87-101, he says that he is moving away from Freud's
understanding of the Oedipus complex, and questions the extent to which Freud depended upon it,
and on the myth of the primal murder of the Father. In *S17* he actually says that the Oedipus
Complex is 'useless' in clinical context (p. 117), and develops the idea of the master signifier
because the real father is precisely *not* the figure in relation to whom the hysteric's condition
develops. Philippe Van Haute describes this shift in Lacan's thinking in '"Freud's Dream"? Some
remarks on Lacan's critique of the Oedipus complex in relation to his theory of hysteria in The
Other side of Psychoanalysis,' *European Journal of Psychoanalysis* <http://www.psychomedia.it/
pm/indther/lacan/van_haute.htm> [accessed 9.8.2016].

[25] This is not to say that Lacan underwent some sort of radical reversal, a claim that risks
emphasising development to the point of inventing inconsistency; but it is plain to see that Lacan's
notorious obscurity underlies an intended polyvalence that opens up so many possible
interpretations that, when combined with the developments in his thought, it necessitates a specific
positioning in interpretation in order to use his thought in any particular way. Thus, this
introduction is be more to the early Lacan than the late Lacan, more to his ideas as psychoanalytic
than as philosophical (though understanding one requires the other), and more about his ideas that
are directly relevant to this study than his ideas that will not be needed below.

angle are those of Malcolm Bowie and Joël Dor.[26] Should one be looking for an

introduction to the use of Lacan in philosophy (and gender studies, film theory,

sociology, etc.), two of the best are by Sean Homer and Slavoj Žižek.[27] There are

also introductions to the clinical practice of Lacanian psychoanalysis.[28] Élisabeth

Roudinesco has written both a long intellectual biography of Lacan, and a short

and exciting reflective biography focused more on the personality of Lacan.[29]

The larger biography is extensively researched, and written by someone skilled as

both a psychoanalyst and a historian, positioning Lacan's ideas biographically

with erudition and comprehensiveness.

It is difficult to know where to start when introducing Lacan. Wherever

one begins, it risks giving the impression that that is his 'main idea;' this is false

and problematic, because, like with Paul, it is difficult to place any one idea at his

'centre.'[30] Instead of starting with any one proposition, this introduction is

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[26] Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan* (London: Fontana Press, 1991). Joël Dor, *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan* (New York: Other Press, 1998 [1985]).

[27] Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan* (London: Routledge, 2005). Slavoj Žižek, *How to Read Lacan* (London: Granta Books, 2006).

[28] Hill, *Using Lacanian Clinical Technique*. Lionel Bailly, *Lacan: A Beginner's Guide* (London: OneWorld, 2009) is also largely focused on the clinical side of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Bruce Fink, *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1997), is more of a guide to the actual practice of psychoanalysis than to the theory of the clinic.

[29] Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*. Élisabeth Roudinesco, Gregory Elliott (trans.), *Lacan In Spite of Everything* (London: Verso, 2014 [2011]). She has also written a history of psychoanalysis in France, translated by Jeffrey Mehlman, *Jacques Lacan & Co* (London: Free Association of Books, 1990 [1986]).

[30] A most reasonable place to start might be with the equation that Freud + Saussure = Lacan; however: 'An influential early formula for reading Lacan in the English language was "Freud + Saussure = Lacan," [but] this misled many readers into reducing Lacan to a species of structural linguistics.' Ian Parker, 'Lacanian Discourse Analysis: Seven Elements,' in *Lacan, Discourse,*

composed in the form of a problematic: a situation that causes problems for the human subject, from the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis. This can be done through a series of four propositions in logical sequence, justified in some of the ways Lacan justifies them, opening onto a view of how Lacan understands the human subject.[31]

Firstly, consciousness knows itself primarily through the medium of language. While we can imagine images mentally, these are almost always images attached to words, and thinking in words is what the conscious mind is always doing.[32] So (1) consciousness knows itself primarily through the medium of language, but (2) language comes from a place exterior to consciousness. Language is learned from others in infancy, rather than being in the brain from birth.[33] Since (1) consciousness knows itself through language, and (2) language comes from a place exterior to consciousness, then (3) consciousness therefore is experienced as exterior to (alienated from) itself. To make this opening problematic authentically Lacanian: (4) the subject that experiences itself as alienated from itself is not a substance, but is actually absent from the equation, a gap in language. This is why identifications and self-understandings never quite seem to fit: the subject is alienated from itself in language.

Event: New Psychoanalytic Approaches to Textual Indeterminacy, eds. Ian Parker and David Pavón-Cuéllar (London: Routledge, 2014), 39.

[31] A good introduction to Lacan's understanding of the human subject is Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

[32] The inseparability of the signifier from its ideational content is a point made by phenomenology, but in Lacan's work it is a point that comes primarily from the inseparability of signifier and signified in Saussurean linguistics, which will be discussed below.

[33] Though there could perhaps be some neurological argument about precocious knowledge of language, 'language' does not just mean awareness of signifier and signified, but also of a particular language's form and structure, and one's place within it.

These four points open the way to the rest of Lacan's thought. They can be summarised as the symbolic, the Other, alienation and lack. I will elaborate on these points individually, which will also pave the way to introduce the three orders (sometimes 'registers') of symbolic, imaginary and real (though these terms, each themselves evolving throughout Lacan's career, cannot easily be described in full).[34]

2.1. The symbolic: consciousness knows itself primarily through the medium of language.

Many introductions to Lacan seek out the genesis of his thought in perhaps his most famous idea: the mirror stage.[35] In the mirror stage, the subject identifies with the body's image, as an attempt to solve the problem that already exists: that language is how it knows itself, but language comes from somewhere else.[36] So, what does it mean for language to 'come from somewhere else'? Let me begin by looking at some of the thinkers who influenced Lacan's earliest work, working towards an understanding of 'the symbolic.'

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[34] Some scholars capitalise the three orders, and others do not. I do not.

[35] For example Homer, *Jacques Lacan*, 21-28; Bailly, *Lacan*, 28-40; Roudinesco, *Lacan In Spite of Everything*, 17-22. This approach rightly places a central importance on the subject's alienation from itself in Lacan's thought; but beginning here makes a related, very important mistake: it lends primacy to *imaginary* alienation, when for Lacan this imaginary alienation is a symptom put in place in response to a *symbolic* alienation that already exists. Perhaps they decide to begin here because it was one of Lacan's earliest ideas that continued to be influential on his later work.

[36] This might sound farfetched, but Lacan is not necessarily suggesting that all infants are aware of the problem of their own alienation in language. One does not need to be aware of the exact nature of a problem in order to attempt to solve it.

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This idea comes from various places, each of which has special significance for Lacan as a psychoanalyst. Firstly, it comes from Lacan's earlier years exploring Hegel, Heidegger and phenomenology. From the mid-thirties Lacan had been increasingly involved in philosophical circles intensely studying these subjects. More specifically, he was a regular attendee of Alexandre Kojève's lectures on Hegel.[37] There he heard the idea that existence is characterised by a rational process, and that that rational process is driven by 'a truth without a subject.'[38] Kojève 'saw historical man as a void-creating subject, exercising his negativity in struggle and labor and driven by a desire that by its very nature could never be satisfied.'[39] Leading to this, Hegel writes:

> The simple 'I' is this genus or the simple universal, for which the differences are *not* differences only by its being the *negative essence* of the shaped independent moments; and self-consciousness is thus certain of itself only by superseding this other that presents itself to self-consciousness as an independent life; self-consciousness is Desire. Certain of the nothingness of this other, it explicitly affirms that this nothingness is *for it* the truth of the other; it destroys the independent object and thereby gives itself the certainty of itself as a *true* certainty, a certainty which has become explicit for self-consciousness itself *in an objective manner*.[40]

Anyone familiar with Lacan's ideas can spot the forebears of several of them in this quote, which is why it is given in full here; but the one most relevant for the

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[37] Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan,* 88-106.

[38] Ibid., 102.

[39] Ibid., 102.

[40] G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 109 (B.IV.174).

early Lacan is the idea of consciousness knowing itself only through language, expressed early on in the 'I,' a signifier that comes from an Other, the whole of the world outside the subject, in which the subject must cover up a sort of nothingness in order for consciousness to know itself with certainty. Whether or not this interpretation of the section is accurate, it is the interpretation Lacan heard. Kojève, commenting on the wider section around this paragraph, said in 1939 that

> Man is Self-Consciousness. He is conscious of himself, conscious of his human reality and dignity; and it is in this that he is essentially different from animals, which do not go beyond the level of simple Sentiment of self. Man becomes conscious of himself at the moment when—for the 'first' time—he says 'I.' To understand man by understanding his 'origin' is, therefore, to understand the origin of the I revealed by speech.[41]

Again, one can see forebears of a few of Lacan's ideas here, but, most importantly, that consciousness knows itself as conscious through the medium of speech and language. So, when Lacan in 1945 presented a paper in which he argued that 'Madness is lived *entirely* in the register of meaning,'[42] a claim that arises from both his doctoral thesis and teachings he received from Gaëtan Gatian de Clérambault in 1929-1931,[43] he argued it in a way so dependent upon the philosophies of Heidegger and Hegel that he was accused of being 'irresistibly attracted by metaphysics (Heidegger, Hegel, and "beyond Hegel, the *logic of*

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[41] Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. by James H. Nichols Jr (London: Cornell University Press, 1969 [1947]), 3.

[42] Marcelle Marini, *Jacques Lacan: The French Context*, trans. by Anne Tomiche (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992 [1986]), 113.

[43] Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, 27.

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madness").'[44]   Though there is no space here to discuss Lacan's early dependence

upon Heidegger, the point is that originally his view of the subject as caught up in

the world of language, subject to a logic outside of itself, long predates the main

arrival on the psychoanalytic scene of his understanding of human subjectivity in

1953.

The second primary source for Lacan's understanding of the symbolic

examined here is Ferdinand de Saussure.[45]   This will position Lacan squarely as

one who ties phenomenology and linguistics into a concept of how the subject

responds to its own alienation in language.

Lacan's debt to Saussure will be discussed much more below, specifically

as it influenced his understanding of *das Ding* and the synchronicity of clinical

structures (Chapter 2).   However, Saussure is also of immense importance to the

most basic level of Lacan's thought.   Saussure demonstrated the ease with which

a string of signifiers, taken as phonemes (individual sounds) can slide in meaning

until sense is attached retroactively.   He gives the example of the string of

phonemes *sižlaprã*. Depending upon how one divides the phonemes, into either

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[44] Marini, *Jacques Lacan*, 113, records this accusation as having come from Henri Ey.

[45] Lacan's understanding of the subject's alienation in language was then heavily influenced by his experience of surrealist thought and his friendship with Salvador Dalí; and affected even more by the discoveries of Claude Lévi-Strauss and early structuralism.   Darian Leader's introduction to Lacan, the text of which was most recently published as *Introducing Lacan: A Graphic Guide* (London: Icon Books, 2010 [1995]), places the most emphasis on the influence of surrealism upon Lacan's theories.   For more see Jean-Michel Rabaté, 'Lacan's Turn to Freud,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan*, ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 17-20.   Élisabeth Roudinesco, in both *Jacques Lacan*, 31 and *Jacques Lacan & Co*, 110-112, attributes Lacan's move from a constitutionalist to a linguistic approach to psychosis to Salvador Dalí's 'The Rotten Donkey.'   Sadly there is not space here to discuss all of the major influences on Lacan.

si-je-la-prends or *si-je-l'apprends*, it can mean either 'If I take it/her' or 'if I learn it.'[46] Breaking strings of phonemes down into signifiers, Saussure then sees each signifier (once differentiated from those around it) as an inseparable unit of signifier and signified.   There is some difference between how Saussure and Lacan are translated, but the French terms are those usually translated as 'signifier' and 'signified' in Lacan.   Saussure depicts the unit of signifier and signified as follows:[47]

$$\uparrow \; \frac{\text{Signified}}{\text{Signifier}} \; \downarrow$$
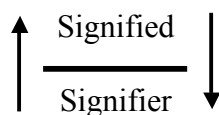
The signified is the concept that the word represents (ideational content), and the signifier is the word itself. The upward and downward arrows represent the inseparable interplay between the two, as the signified is brought into consciousness by the signifier, but that which the signifier means is dependent upon what is signified. This fits nicely with what Lacan would have been reading in Heidegger and phenomenology about the inseparability the subject, the object and the perception of the object.[48] Lacan makes much use of the Saussurean signifying unit, but he reverses it:

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[46] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. by Roy Harris (London: Duckworth, 1983 [1972]), 103.

[47] Ibid., 113.

[48] For example, Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982 [1927, 1975]), 55-76 (§9.b-c).

$$\frac{\text{Signifier}}{\text{signified}}$$

This reversal is to demonstrate the primacy of the signifier as that which determines the meaning, a point demonstrated by the whole of Lacan's philosophical system and psychoanalytic practice. He then represents the signifier with S and the signified with *s*, giving a basic Lacanian signifying unit of:[49]

$$\frac{S}{s}$$

Saussure follows up his portrayal of a signifying unit immediately with the point that 'A language is a system in which all the elements fit together, and in which the value of any one element depends on the simultaneous coexistence of all the others,' which, altered with Lacan's inversion, is represented as:[50]

$$- - - - - \; \frac{S}{s} \; \longleftrightarrow \; \frac{S}{s} \; \longleftrightarrow \; \frac{S}{s} \; - - - - -$$

Although this is an oversimplification of a single element of Saussure's contributions to the field of linguistics as it existed in Lacan's time, it is an important element in the background of how Lacan's system of thought arose. The language through which the subject knows itself is Language as identified by

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[49] See, for example, *Écrits*, 428.

[50] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 113.

Saussurean linguistics, as well as the rational system from which the non-substance behind Hegel's 'I' is subtracted. The subject knowing itself through language is part of what is meant by 'the symbolic,' the symbolic register. The symbolic is the register of structures, of language, of the law and of the signifier and its games. It is difficult to offer a definition of the symbolic so early, but suffice it to say, every aspect of Lacan that has been discussed so far has been to do with the symbolic.

2.2. The Other: language itself comes from a place exterior to consciousness.

This is a claim that initially sounds quite simple: the subject does not invent the language it speaks; it learns the language as something that pre-existed beyond itself. However, this surface meaning would hardly be enough to justify the complexity of emotions Lacan traces back to the anxiety caused by our alienation in language. Žižek goes so far as to make this the core difference between Lacan and Heidegger: for Heidegger the subject exists in language, but for Lacan the subject suffers in language as it twists and contorts according to its laws.[51] To explain just how oppressive is the subject's thrownness into language, I turn now to a monumentally influential paper by Roman Jakobson.

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[51] Slavoj Žižek, 'Why Lacan is Not a Heideggerian,' in *lacanian ink 32*, ed. Josefina Ayerza (New York: The Wooster Press, 2008), 143. '[Man] dwells in a torture-house of language: the entire psychopathology deployed by Freud, from conversion-symptoms inscribed into the body up to total psychotic breakdowns, are scars of this permanent torture, so many signs of an original and irremediable gap between subject and language, so many signs that man cannot ever be at home in his own home.'

In 1956 Jakobson published a paper on the subject of aphasia (difficulties in speech).[52] He was working from a Saussurean model of linguistics, and outlines two different axes along which difficulties in a discourse can arise: the metaphoric and the metonymic. The metaphoric axis involves signifiers in a state of similarity (such as 'love' and 'heart'): in metaphor, one signifier is used in place of another when the signifying units are similar ('I offer you my heart'). The metonymic axis involves signifiers in a state of contiguity (such as 'stock market' and 'wall street'): in metonymy, the signified of one signifier swaps with the signified of another when the signifying units are contiguous ('on wall street'). In Jakobson's view, aphasia occurs when there is a stoppage along one of these two axes.[53] Russell Grigg and others have identified various problems with Jakobson's article, from its claims about the origins of aphasia to his definitions of metaphor and metonymy.[54] However, what matters here is the way Lacan uses the theory. Later in 1956, Lacan wrote 'The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud,'[55] in which he identifies the Freudian concepts of condensation and displacement in dreams with metaphor and metonymy.[56]

Examples of how Lacan schematises metaphor and metonymy using common examples from today's language can be found in many of the

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[52] Roman Jakobson, 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances,' in Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), 67-96.

[53] Ibid., 90.

[54] Russell Grigg, *Lacan, Language, and Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008), 151-169.

[55] *Écrits*, 412-441.

[56] Ibid., 424-431.

introductions to Lacan's work, in lieu of the obscure ways Lacan tends to communicate the idea himself. Lionel Bailly uses the metaphor 'a star is born' to illustrate the first of these relations.[57] In this metaphor, there are two signifiers at play, in a state of similarity: the unspoken signifier 'person' (whichever person is being called a 'star') along with its signified, and the spoken signifier 'star' along with its signified. Let us say, to make things even clearer, that the person who 'is a star' is called Fred:[58]

$$\frac{S_1 \text{ ('Fred')}}{s_1 \;(\;\text{}\;)} \qquad \frac{S_2 \text{ ('Star')}}{s_2 \quad (\star)}$$
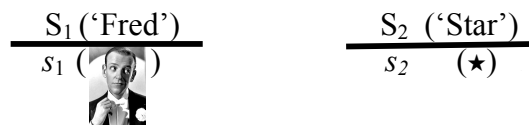
In the phrase 'a star is born,' a metaphorical substitution takes place, in which, due to the intended similarity between 'Fred' and what is meant by 'star,' the unspoken signifying unit 'Fred' takes the place of s_2, so that s_1 becomes the signified:

$$\frac{\dfrac{S_2}{S_1 \cdot s_2}}{s_1}$$
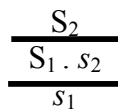
In metaphor a signified is replaced by a signifier of an unspoken unit, so that the original signifier is now ultimately paired with a new signified for the purpose of

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[57] Bailly, *Lacan*, 52.

[58] Perhaps the reason the signifier 'Fred' is the first to come to mind when imagining what to name a star is because of a star, Fred Astaire; or because Astaire not only sounds like 'a star' but is precisely the pronunciation of the Ancient Greek word for 'star' (ἀστήρ). If either of these is true, this illustrates the point Lacan is getting to: metaphor and metonymy operate in the unconscious, due to the similarity or contiguity of signifiers. The picture of Fred Astaire comes from his Wikipedia page at <www.wikipedia.org> [accessed 22.6.2016].

the metaphor. More simply, in metonymy the signified is replaced with another contiguous signified (not with a similar signifier). A common example is the signified of 'Wall Street' being replaced by the signified of 'the stock market,' as the part comes to represent the whole due to the contiguity of the concepts. One could string several of Bailly's examples of metonymy into a sentence with four cases of metonymical substitution: 'Downing Street wrote that the Crown will prosecute, as the pen is mightier than the sword.' These can all be represented with the simple formula:

$$\frac{S_2}{s_1}$$

Thus stated, the difference between metaphor and metonymy is that in metaphor the similarity between two signifying units allows one unit to swap for the signified of another, displacing it, whereas in metonymy the contiguity of two signifying units allows one to take over for the other, most commonly in the form of the part standing in for the whole.

Lacan used Jakobson's development from Saussure to illustrate how the rules of the unconscious as outlined by Freud actually amount to Freud discovering that the unconscious is structured like a language.[59] In Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* he outlines the theories of condensation and displacement in dream work, in which one thing substitutes for another in the

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[59] This style of claim, stating that a present way of putting something is actually a restatement of something already said in the past, is the style of claim that will be made below regarding some aspects of Lacan's thought and Paul's thought, and termed 'equivocation' and 'elaboration.' These are outlined in section 4.3 of this chapter.

unconscious. When Lacan reads the terminology of Jakobson back onto Freud he leaves us with another sense in which the human subject is subject to rules it does not even know exist: if the unconscious actually operates according to these rules, then the conscious mind, the *cogito*, is truly alienated from that which determines it.

Both Freud's initial claim about condensation and displacement in dreams and Lacan's insertion of it into the terms of linguistics and the rules of the signifier are claims that are only backed up by clinical experience; though, over the years since Freud began his practice, there are endless clinical examples. Lacan's own writing, like Joël Dor's *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan*, explains metaphor and metonymy with common examples, but only seeks to prove their existence in the unconscious by commenting upon Freud's case studies, which might not any longer be convincing enough for the sceptic. Bailly's introduction, on the other hand, contains a long series of examples of instances of metaphor and metonymy in the dreams, speech and slips of his analysands.[60] For example, one of his analysands recounted a dream in which she found herself crushing the feet of a monkey.[61] She then recounted the dream again, but this time said that she was crushing the monkey's 'tootsies' (toes). In speaking about the dream she eventually remembered that 'tootsie' was the nickname her parents used for her sister, and the meaning of the dream began to unravel. This is a case of metonymy, not metaphor, as the signifying units 'tootsie' (as the sister's name) and 'foot' are not similar, but, rather, contiguous

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[60] Bailly, *Lacan*, 55-61. 'Analysand' is the word Lacan prefers to use instead of 'patient' or 'client.'

[61] Ibid., 56.

(they are not different words for similar signifieds, but contiguous signifiers for different signifieds). That is to say, the signified s_1, the idea of the sister herself, through its contiguous signifier 'tootsie' (S_1), came to be the signified of the contiguous S_2, 'foot.' So metonymy is the linguistic function that produced the dream in the unconscious.

Lacan does much more with metaphor and metonymy, and the unconscious plays of the signifier, than could possibly be explored here. The important thing to note is that this is part of what allows Lacan to say 'The unconscious is the Other's discourse.'[62] 'The Other' is an extremely important term in Lacan's thought, which means many things and is difficult to pin down to one consistent definition. One part of it, though, is this very idea: that the unconscious functions linguistically, but language is something that comes from somewhere else, and the rules according to which the unconscious functions, and indeed, most of the time, the very signifying patterns that are transpiring according to these rules, remain unknown to us. So language as a whole, as it exists outside of us, is 'the Other;' but so is the internality of language, the language so internal that it is equally unknown to us.

2.3. Alienation: therefore consciousness is experienced as exterior to itself.

Having introduced a few of the thinkers upon whom Lacan's early ideas are dependent, it might be helpful to discuss the third point of my introductory Lacanian problematic using an example of the implications of the Lacanian subject on society and individuals.

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[62] *Écrits*, 10 and 316.

An example of consciousness as language being experienced as exterior to itself in today's society comes to us in the form of the self-consciousness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, particularly LGBT youth. The self-perception of sexuality and gender, especially in a Lacanian perspective, is a difficult topic. A basic reason for this is that the signifier never quite seems to sum up or encapsulate the signified. This is a very old philosophical problem, in part leading to Plato's concept of the forms, and leading to the very existence of modern analytic philosophy – the attempt to overcome the imperfections of language. However, the difference between any particular table and the signified of the word 'table' is a problem that pales in comparison to the difference between the signified of the word 'bisexual' (for example) and any particular person's perception of the self. This distance grows considerably when taking into account a Lacanian view of the subject, in which all parts of the subject's conscious and unconscious structure, including gender identity and sexual orientation, are indebted to the signifier both for their origins and current form. Even without this more controversial point, a Lacanian view of the symbolic origins of sexual orientation only adds to the symbolic alienation that already exists due to the subject's existence in language. The primary point here is that the words 'lesbian' or 'male,' etc., are words that describe the way a human feels about an element of their core essence, but they relate that essence-word to the world of matter, of perception, of social constructs, of biological existence. Since what exists in the world, either our own bodies or the other humans to whom we are attracted, are people and not words, any word that we use to describe an essential relationship

to bodies or persons will not fully encapsulate that relation. This leaves the subject alienated from itself in language.

Why is this example particularly apt? In a way, this problem is no more acute than any cultural, racial or religious identification: the signifier (and its structural games) never quite matches up with the signified, and the gap can create emotional turmoil. However, in the last few decades, 'gay rights' (or, more fully but not quite fully enough, LGBT rights), have been taken up by political parties on all continents, on the left, centre and sometimes right of the political spectrum. The emergence of LGBT rights as a commonplace political category has coincided with what some call a 'proliferation of identities:' the presence in modern politics of a continued drive towards more and more different ways of identifying. These identifications in themselves are often liberating new ways of understanding oneself – the point here is not to criticise this positive move in society. However, no new signifier will ever match its signified, especially over an extended period of time. So in response to the emergence of an ever-expanding list of signifiers with which one could identify, there is also a growing movement everyone will have heard at some point: 'I don't need your labels' (a statement addressed directly to the Other if ever there was one!). This is precisely the opposite of the ever-expanding world of identifications; or, rather, not its opposite but its obverse. It results in the LGBT youth (or even adult!) being torn between identification and anti-identification, when in a world without this particular problem neither side would exist. Identification brings the problem of socially fixing oneself in a way one might regret, and anti-identification does exactly the same should one later choose to identify. Non-identification, simply

exempting oneself from the situation, is a possibility, but is made difficult by a world that expects one either to have 'pride' and a place in the political discourse, or to be avowedly against the discourse and shout about the inefficacy of labels. So the subject is trapped in a discourse it did not write, alienated in the language that it must use to understand itself.

Everything in the world that the signifier fails at describing can be qualified by Lacan as 'imaginary,' meaning that it falls into the imaginary register/order. The symbolic is the order of logic, of language as such, the world of the rules of a game. The imaginary is the order of all of the *content* of that world. It is not just the order of the physical/material, but also of all that appears, and even of signifiers when not discussing *how* those signifiers relate. So, sexuality as a whole, and identification as well, are imaginary processes; but they happen according to the rules of the symbolic, and the modern LGBT person's potential alienation in language is a failure of the symbolic to contain the imaginary.

It might seem at this point as though I am introducing parts of Lacan's thought that could not possibly have any relevance to the interpretation of Paul. However, as I will argue in sections 4.1 and 4.2 below, and return to in chapters 5 and 6, understanding exactly what Lacan means by 'alienation' not only helps to clear up some of the errors made and difficulties faced by other Lacanian readings of Paul, but will also be helpful when it comes to outlining positively what Paul's ideas, in Lacanian terminology, actually are. When I discuss Pauline soteriology in Chapter 6, the schematic suggested only makes sense if one already understands Lacan's view of the human subject.

2.4. Lack: the subject that experiences itself as alienated from itself is not a substance, but is absent from the equation, a gap in language.

Part of what makes the Lacanian subject so alienated in language is the fact that the subject is, at its core, nothing; and here there is certainly an unbridgeable difference between not just Lacan and Paul, but Lacan and almost all Christian theology. Most studies of Lacan and theology acknowledge this to some extent. For example, Marcus Pound's *Žižek: a (very) critical introduction* begins with the observation that Lacan, following Freud, said that 'Religion in all its forms consists in avoiding this emptiness.'[63] As will be outlined below, the emptiness to which he refers is the emptiness of *das Ding*, in the very place where Christian theology locates the soul (and also a place that can be covered with the signifier 'God'). Pound then argues that Lacan's continual and generally positive dialogue with Catholics and historical theology justifies a Lacan-theology discourse nonetheless (a point that has been made often and is justified by the wealth of Lacan-theology discourse to be summarised below).[64] Likewise in *Theology After Lacan*, Adrian Johnston's rebuttal of a radical atheist reading of Lacan necessarily comes to the question of the soul, regarding which he rightly points out the inherent ambivalence in Lacan's understanding of *das Ding*: the fact that there is in it both the lack of presence and the presence of lack, and that there is something vaguely positive in *das Ding* (i.e., *jouissance*).[65] These

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[63] Marcus Pound, *Žižek: a (very) critical introduction* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008), 13, quoting Lacan, *S7*, 130.

[64] Pound, *Žižek*, 13-16.

[65] Adrian Johnston, 'Life Terminable and Interminable: The Undead and the Afterlife of the Afterlife—A Friendly Disagreement with Martin Hägglund,' in *Theology After Lacan: The Passion for the Real*, eds. Creston Davis, Marcus Pound and Clayton Crockett (Eugene, OR:

concepts have not been introduced yet, and *das Ding* will be discussed in detail below; but it is clear that any theological dialogue with Lacan must pass through the place of the soul.

Some way towards bridging this gap can be made right away, though perhaps only a quarter of a bridge on either side.[66] Tina Beattie attempts to confront the matter head-on, when in the introduction to her book on Lacan and Aquinas she states outright that she will 'resist Lacan's nihilism,'[67] and then points out that Freud himself often made use of the term 'soul,' alluding to something more mystical and complex than the mind as the subject of psychoanalysis, but this was translated out in the standard English edition of Freud.[68] However, be this the case for Freud, Lacan opted for the even more neutral word 'subject,' and discussed the subject primarily as something 'barred,' lacking, frighteningly empty. From the other side, this discussion of 'soul' slightly misses the mark with Paul as well, who did occasionally make use of the Greek signifier ψυχή (*psychē*), but always as something completely inseparable from the body, the body being the thing that is to be resurrected into the afterlife. Indeed, this is the exact point Rudolf Bultmann made in his attempt to connect Pauline terminology with a Heideggerian view of the soul (*Dasein*), in response to

Cascade Books, 2014), 106-111. The term *jouissance*, a Lacanian spin on 'enjoyment,' will be introduced in Chapter 2, and is defined in the Glossary, Appendix A.

[66] For an excellent related argument see Ward Blanton, *A Materialism for the Masses: Saint Paul and the Philosophy of Undying Life* (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2014). He argues with sweeping comprehension that Paul always should have been read by the continental tradition as a materialist in line with the 'underground current of aleatory materialism.' This supports the thesis argued below, that Paul was ruined for continental philosophy by Nietzsche, and thus he represents a missed opportunity.

[67] Tina Beattie, *Theology After Postmodernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3.

[68] Beattie, *Theology After Postmodernity*, 11.

which the more recent Paul scholar N. T. Wright says 'this is the only thing on which Bultmann and I agree.'[69] With the soul as something inseparable from the body, not as Plato's eternal seat of rationality, is there really such a necessary discord between Lacan and Paul, both viewing human consciousness as something thoroughly embodied but also surprisingly malleable, either through psychoanalysis or participation in Christ?[70]

The closest these two bridges can be brought together is to discuss, as Johnston tends towards, the extent to which the lack/void in the Lacanian subject is surprisingly full. Immediately after explaining how the unconscious operates according to the rules of metonymy and metaphor, Lacan asks whether it would be possible to come to understand oneself fully within the signifying play of the unconscious and then, finally, to 'be there,' to know that that is where the 'I' is. He answers in the negative, and then says this: 'What we must say is: I am not, where I am the plaything of my thought; I think about what I am where I do not think I am thinking.'[71] Since S and *s* are situated on separate planes, and since

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[69] N. T. Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body: All for One and One for All – Reflections on Paul's Anthropology In His Complex Contexts,' in N. T. Wright, *Pauline Perspectives* (London: SPCK, 2013), p. 470. In both 'Paul,' in *Shorter Writings by Rudolf Bultmann: Existence and Faith*, ed. Schubert M. Ogden (London: Collins, 1960), 153-161 and *Theology of the New Testament: Volume 1*, trans. by Kendrick Grobel (London: SCM, 1952 [1948]), 191-238, Rudolf Bultmann uses Heidegger's terminology to define Paul's anthropological terminology. This is an excellent example of the hermeneutical strategy termed 'description' below.

[70] Stanley Stowers takes this 'materialist' reading of Paul even further, pointing out how later theologians and philosophers have read Platonist and then Cartesian presumptions about subjectivity into Paul, forcing debates about the mind onto texts that Stowers reads in context of more practical concerns like self mastery. Stanley Stowers, 'Paul as a Hero of Subjectivity,' in eds. Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries, *Paul and the Philosophers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 159-174.

[71] *Écrits*, 430.

meaning can never be fixed and the full workings of the unconscious cannot fully be discovered, 'I think therefore I am' absolutely leads to its opposite: 'But "I" am not where I think.' What thinks is not a thing that knows what lies beneath, before and around the signifier 'I.' This sounds so pessimistic that any Lacan-theology dialogue should be immediately suspended; but there is more. Within this pessimistic, 'nihilistic' world (as Beattie calls it), Lacan posits himself, as blissfully arrogant as ever, as the one who also has discovered a clinical trajectory towards the knowledge of the self. This is not to say that Lacan thought that every subject possesses the power to understand oneself fully and come to think where one is not, but, rather that psychoanalysis provides a way to speak that which one did not know one was, and in so doing to alter the very form of one's being through discovering it (to found in finding, to use the terminology above). This is neither nihilistic nor pessimistic, but actually rather hopeful. Further, if one of the later theses of this study is correct, that 'conversion' and participation in Christ for Paul represents a psychoanalytic event, then, to the extent to which the subject in Lacan actually does have some semblance of positive being (through the full speech of the clinic), so also equally does the Pauline soul find its existence in recreation in Christ. Thus the exact way in which Lacan is perhaps most anti-theological, with the human subject as lack rather than substance, is also the idea that most opens the possibility of meaningful dialogue with Paul – because it is this pessimism that also allows Lacan to believe in the possibility of real psychical change, the kind to which Paul is a witness.

This introduction to Lacan is, as stated, nowhere near complete. It is a theological scraping of the surface, leading to what comes below. I can now, though, at least introduce the last of the three Lacanian registers: the real. The real is the register of the impossible, of that which does not exist.[72] The real is the gap in language, in which the subject finds itself; the piece not contained in metaphor and metonymy, despite the subject not actually having any positive identifiable 'being' outside of the play of language. The real is also a concept that will make more sense after the introduction of *das* in Chapter 2.

One can see after all this that things are not quite so simple as saying that Lacan = Freud + Saussure, or anywhere near as simple as a 'Hegelianized Freudianism.'[73] Lacan was certainly attempting a 'return to Freud,' as he said; but he returns with far more than just Saussure, and the vision of the human subject as alienated from itself owes just as much to Hegel's idealism as it does to Saussurean linguistics or Freudian topography. I have introduced some of the influences on Lacan's thought, but have not come close to introducing all of Lacan's influences or ideas. Nonetheless it should be clear how central the notion of the subject's alienation in language is to Lacan's thought; as well as the extent to which Lacan's system of thought remains entirely psychoanalytic despite his revelations about psychoanalysis having largely come from elsewhere, only to be

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[72] Though it might be frustrating that 'real' refers to that which does not exist, and 'imaginary' to that which does, this is the way it is. 'Imaginary' has unnecessary baggage in English, but is simply a reference to the image, to that which relates to the world of perception. 'Real' has a long history tracing back through Hegel and Kant, so might make more sense to the philosophical reader than the theological. Mark Fisher puts it nicely: 'For Lacan, the Real is what any "reality" must suppress; indeed, reality constitutes itself through just this repression.' Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009), 18.

[73] John Milbank, *Theology & Social Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 310.

confirmed (in his view and the views of Lacanian psychoanalysts worldwide) by clinical experience.

3. Introducing St Paul

Paul[74] is Christianity's earliest theologian, often earning the title, through scepticism or adoration, of the 'founder of Christianity.' As such, he is one of its most debated figures. He is the earliest extant Christian source (not just the first theologian), and wrote something about how it is that Jesus affects human existence – every detail is hotly contested, and some of them will be discussed below. Rather than attempting to present a neutral description of Paul's life and beliefs (which would not succeed), what follows is a brief history of the interpretation of Paul, through which some of the many Pauls that have emerged throughout history might be glimpsed. This introduction will also bear specific reference to Romans 7, which will be one of the key passages discussed in what follows. A translation can be found in Appendix B, below. Romans 7 could be

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[74] 'Paul,' refers to the theologising character discernable from the content of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians (which have similar theological content) and Philemon, augmented by Colossians and a cautious use of Ephesians, sometimes in opposition to the pseudo-Pauline theology of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. Of course, by beginning from the presumption that these texts reveal a 'theologising character' I am already forcing an anachronous fiction onto them, as with any subject's primal adoption of an ego identity; and the selection of texts that the author states are the ones presumed to be 'authentic' for the purposes of this study then bias the study to the image of Paul presented in those texts. Nonetheless, every study of Paul must state which letters the author of the study believes to be authentic, and must begin with some pre-conceived understanding of who 'Paul' is. The aim of a psychoanalytic study, as outlined repeatedly in this introduction, is to use certain tools that potentially allow one dig beneath the fantasies that every interpretation must begin by adopting. Paul is referred to as 'St Paul' in headings, but only as 'Paul' throughout the main text.

taken in many ways, either as Paul talking about the way he feels in the present, or Paul talking about his life pre-conversion, or Paul imitating someone else. As a result, its interpretation has varied throughout history. It is also the section that Lacan himself quotes in *Seminar VII*.[75]

There is no shortage of introductions to Paul, but one that stands out as a simultaneously accurate, comprehensive, concise and up-to-date introduction to the critical issues in scholarship is David Horrell's *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*.[76] Modern historians of Paul tend to track three major events in the history of his interpreters: St Augustine, Martin Luther and E. P. Sanders. I will take a brief look at some of the relevant parts of each of these, before summarising the major interpretative shifts since then. It is virtually impossible to present an objective view of the scenario, particularly of the impact of the first three main thinkers, as the debates over their legacies are the content of so much Pauline scholarship since them. As with the previous section, this is not a comprehensive introduction, but a scraping of the surface in order for the unacquainted to have a way in, and the subject matter of this study to be established – as such, it is probably guilty of summarising great trends in Pauline theology too briefly and crassly. Specifically, this study is biased in favour of certain aspects of what have come to be called the 'New Perspective(s) on Paul' (or, at first, the 'New Perspective'), which mostly begin with E. P. Sanders in 1977.[77] Though Sanders'

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[75] *S7*, 102-103.

[76] David G. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul* 3rd ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2015).

[77] The amount that one covers with the term 'New Perspectives' of course varies. Throughout this study I include any scholar who follows E. P. Sanders' rejection of the idea that Paul opposed 'legalistic Judaism' within this category. However, Sanders' replacement suggestion that first century Judaism was a monadic entity that can be qualified as 'covenantal nomism' has now also

argument has been widely accepted, it has also been revised in many different opposing directions by various scholars, and, of course, not all of the finer points of it have survived unaltered. Hopefully the brief summary that follows will make that clear.

3.1. St Augustine, Martin Luther and E. P. Sanders

Though he was not Paul's first major interpreter, the most influential of Paul's early interpreters is St Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE).[78] Augustine's method was chiefly philosophical, examining the nature of the will and the subject's ability to will moral action. Augustine believed that there was a will to affect one's moral behaviour, but not a will to affect one's will, leaving one in a state of Original Sin, which he read onto the biblical Creation story.[79] Augustine then saw Christians as having a sort of dual nature: sinners, still caught up in Original Sin, but forgiven and empowered by faith towards good works. Augustine thus laid the foundations for an autobiographical reading of Romans 7 in which Paul expresses his post-conversion religious experience as essentially (as

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been heavily revised or rejected by most scholars (particularly inasmuch as Judaism in the first century was far too varied for such a monolithic qualification, leading to the occasional use now of the term 'Judaisms'). Most of the scholars with whom I interact fit more into the category of 'apocalyptic' than 'New Perspectives,' but they are certainly not 'Old Perspectives' either. This distinction will be maintained as much as possible, but the main goal is to introduce those unfamiliar with Pauline studies to the major shifts in thought, the biggest of which is the change from 'old' to 'new.'

[78] Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), vi.

[79] Stephen Westerholm says some of this in *Perspectives Old and New on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 6-9. This is probably the best general introduction to the entire history of Pauline scholarship available. For much more depth on Paul's more recent interpreters, see N. T. Wright, *Paul and his Recent Interpreters* (London: SPCK, 2015).

Luther would say) *simul justus et peccator* – constantly torn between sin and grace.[80] This opens the way towards an assumption that Paul suffered from a guilty conscience, and that Christians have a dual state of perpetually *redeemed sinner.*

Martin Luther (1483-1546 CE) completely transformed the interpretation of Paul.[81] His impact was immortalised beyond what he could have expected, because (like all theologians and translators of Scripture) he translated his own theology into Scripture – three important examples of which will be seen below. Not only was he a personal influence on Tyndale's translation of the Bible, but he was also the first person to mass-publish (via printing press) a translation of the Bible into a vernacular tongue without permission from the Church, so all subsequent translations have read the original languages with the impact of Luther's translation already in mind, embedding his interpretation into the text itself.[82]

Martin Luther was primarily concerned with the injustices he witnessed being perpetrated by the Roman Catholic Church (though at this time it was simply 'The Church,' at least in the West). When he burst onto the scene in 1517 with his ninety-five theses, his main objection was to the practice of telling the masses that if they *do* certain things (such as purchasing indulgences, or giving offerings, etc.) then they will go to heaven, or have less time in purgatory (or their

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[80] Richard Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), 86-87.

[81] Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 164.

[82] See below for examples.

deceased relatives will have less time in purgatory).[83]   Luther then read this view

of the Church's soteriology[84] onto Paul, 'with first-century Judaism read through

the "grid" of the early sixteenth-century Catholic system of merit.'[85] This resulted

in Lutheran interpreters centuries later, most notably Rudolf Bultmann and Ernst

Käsemann, being accused of the same error.[86] Thus Paul's phrase 'works of the

Law' (ἔργα τοῦ νόμου) came to mean doing the deeds prescribed in the Jewish

Law in order to attain salvation, parallel to the works prescribed by the Church in

order to attain salvation, as Luther actively infused his false historical reading of

Judaism with his reading of the contemporary Church: 'This the Papists do not

believe, but being blind and obstinate, they defend their abominations against

their own conscience, and continue still in this their blasphemy, having in their

mouths these execrable words: He that doth this good work or that, deserveth

forgiveness of his sins; whosoever entereth into this or that holy order, and

keepeth his rule, to him we assuredly promise everlasting life.'[87]   Generally,

academics no longer widely presume this to be what was meant by the phrase

'works of the law.'[88]   Although Luther's view of Judaism was not quite as

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[83] Martin Luther, *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (London: Doubleday, 1961), 489-500.

[84] The study of salvation.

[85] James Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law* (London: SPCK, 1990), 185.

[86] E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), 42-48 on Bultmann and *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983), 154-160 on Käsemann.

[87] Commenting on Gal 2:16 in *A Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, trans. by Philip S. Watson (London: James Clarke & Co, 1953 [1535]), 144.

[88] N. T. Wright nicely combats the old view in *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013* (London: SPCK, 2013), 332-355, where he argues from the Dead Sea Scrolls (specifically, 4QMMT) that when Paul replaces the role of 'works of the law' for those in the Church with the

intensely anti-Semitic when writing his influential commentaries on Galatians and Romans as it would become by the time of his death, the argument that Paul's position against *Torah* observance for Christians was due to Jewish 'legalism' opened the way for the much more anti-Semitic readings of Paul that E. P. Sanders would later critique (see below).

Likewise, the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ (*pistis Christou*), which Paul posits in opposition to ἔργα τοῦ νόμου ('works of the Law') and which up until Luther had usually been taken as a subjective genitive meaning 'the faith of Christ,'[89] Luther took as a rare case of the objective genitive, and translated it as 'faith in Christ.'[90] In Luther's attempt to use Paul against the perceived legalistic soteriology of the Church, he shifted Paul from being concerned with the impact of Christ's faith upon the believer, to being primarily concerned with the importance of the believer's own subjective faith. Luther was influential in turning Christianity from a religion of the object – of God – into a religion of the subject, and this distinction is crucial when evaluating the veracity of modern philosophical interpretations of Paul.

Luther's interpretation also institutionalised Augustine's assumption about the dual nature of humanity under Original Sin and Christ, when he translated the

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'faithfulness of Christ,' this is in regards to what functions as boundary-markers of those in covenant with God, and not in regards to how one attains salvation.

[89] The Latin phrase *fidem Iesu Chrisi* retains the same ambiguity, so it is not particularly easy to trace how the phrase was understood before the Reformation. However, in the two main English translations to appear within a century of Luther, the Catholic Douay-Rheims version of 1582 and the KJV of 1611, both translate it as 'faith of Jesus Christ' (as a subjective genitive). The phrase appears in Rom 3:22, 26 and Gal 2:16 (and elsewhere in other permutations). *The Holy Bible: Douay Version* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1956 [1582]).

[90] German: *Glauben an Jesus Christus*, in Rom 3:22, 26 and Gal 2:16. Martin Luther, *Die Bible nach Martin Luther* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1999).

genitive δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Rom 1:17, probably best rendered 'the righteousness of God,'[91] as an objective or even ablative genitive, with 'a righteousness that is before God' (*die Gerechtigkeit, die vor Gott gilt*),[92] which has made its way into the modern NIV translation as 'a righteousness from God.'[93] This 'imputed righteousness'[94] is given to the Christian as a new status (along with the remaining status as that of the sinner) in return for the believer's faith.   In summary, Luther's impact upon Pauline theology was to create or cement, in translation itself, the ideas of (a) the Jewish soteriological system of works-righteousness; (b) faith as that which is on the part of the believer and is the only

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[91] This phrase was the subject of much debate in the twentieth century, with Bultmann and Käsemann on opposing sides. Sanders discusses this in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 523-542. It is now the general consensus among nearly all except the most faithful in the Reform tradition that the phrase should be understood in line with the 'righteousness of God' in the Hebrew Scriptures (for example in Daniel 9). There is, of course, still much debate, since the Reform tradition is not exactly small, and there are still some outside of it who maintain the Lutheran reading. Alister McGrath frequently touches on this debate in *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005 [1985]). N. T. Wright, under the name Tom Wright (which he uses for books addressed more to a popular than academic audience) penned an extensive but polemical argument for his reading (in the tradition of 'the righteousness of God,' but with a few more layers beneath it), in *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (London: SPCK, 2009), 37-52. More on the translation of this phrase can be found in any Romans commentary, under Rom 1:17.

[92] This has implications of a righteousness that is declared as such in front of a judge, which is precisely the image that Luther was trying to invoke. Luther's German is from *Die Bibel nach Martin Luther*.

[93] *Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001[1984]). More recent revisions of the NIV now translate the phrase in line with the majority academic opinion, but the NIV had been the bestselling Bible translation for decades before that was the case.

[94] 'Imputed righteousness' is a term usually traced back to Luther, though probably actually first used by Melanchthon, used to translate a related Greek phrase not being discussed here. Luther's translation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ was to bring it in line with his wider theology of imputed righteousness. See McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 218-234.

access to salvation and (c) imputed righteousness as a state of the believer given by God without altering the believer's status as 'sinner.' Luther had many other forms of impact upon Church history, many of which could be deemed positive legacies, at least by Protestant Christians; but these are three of the most important effects he had on the history of the interpretation of Paul.

The centuries that followed were certainly not some monolithic entity in which all Paul scholars agreed upon a Lutheran reading. The works of William Wrede and Albert Schweitzer differed in several marked ways, particularly in advocating a forebear of what came to be the 'apocalyptic' approach to Paul.[95] However, into the mid twentieth century a very Lutheran framework for Paul's theology was still being maintained by the bulk of academia, permitting Rudolf Bultmann to argue with strong distinctions between Jew/Christian and pre-faith/post-faith, as well as such a strong dependence upon Paul's justification texts and a view of the Jews as ones who 'work for salvation.'[96] Krister Stendahl opened one of the paths towards the New Perspectives in 1963, with his article

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[95] Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 101-116. Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (New York: Seabury Press, 1931).

[96] As Sanders points out (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 44-47), this is particularly the case in Rudolf Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting*, trans. by R. H. Fuller (London: Thames and Hudson, 1956), 59-71, where he offers an extensive caricature of first century Jews as legalistic, without any apparent interaction with Jewish scholars of Rabbinic literature. Despite Bultmann's usual rigour, Sanders' criticisms of Bultmann on this issue are far-reaching and devastating: Bultmann seems to have misunderstood most of the scholars he did read, being misled by headings without reading further, or stopping reading just before a section where a scholar changes his argument. Bultmann did actually read the scholars who had already been disagreeing with Luther's view, but misunderstands them and lends his weight instead, with milder terms, to the extremely anti-Semitic view espoused by Bousset and Weber.

'Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West'.[97]   He argues that Paul did not have the guilty conscience that Augustine and Luther assumed he had, but that they were simply reading their own problems into Paul. I will look at this in more detail in Chapter 5, below. Stendahl's argument has generally retained support since then, with only minor alterations.

In 1921, 1948 and 1961, three Christian scholars who were particularly interested in Judaism and rabbinic studies made the claim that Jewish scholars themselves had been making for centuries: that Martin Luther did not understand Judaism (and, therefore, could not have understood Paul's relation to Judaism).[98] For this point to be taken on board by a majority of New Testament scholars required the monumental 1977 work by the Jewish New Testament scholar E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, which marked the beginning of the 'New Perspectives.'[99] He argues that Luther's characterization of Judaism as a 'religion of legalistic works-righteousness' was historically inaccurate. More specifically, Sanders sees this view of Judaism as having been most strongly pushed since F. Weber's work in the 1880's, in which Christian theologians began moving from criticizing Jews as misunderstanding their own inherently Christian scriptures, to criticizing Jews for being conniving scheming practitioners of works-righteousness.[100] Another important implication of Sanders' study is that not only

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[97] Krister Stendahl, 'The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscious of the West,' in *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, ed. Krister Stendahl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1976 [1968]), 78-96.

[98] These are G. F. Moore, W. D. Davis and Richard Longenecker, respectively, as recounted by Douglas Campbell in *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 97.

[99] At first the accepted term was 'The New Perspective,' but increasingly this has become pluralised in order to note the variety of views since Sanders.

[100] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 33-59.

is Paul *not* anti-Semitic, but Paul's statement that people are saved by grace is not something new. For Sanders, Paul is merely carrying on the Jewish belief that God saves by grace (חֶסֶד/*hesed*). But whereas for the Jews, according to Sanders, the Law was a response to God's grace that denotes justification (maintaining it, not earning it), now *participation in Christ* is a response to God's grace, which denotes justification.[101] For Sanders' first century Palestinian Jews, the Law is a sign of status within the covenant with God; and for Sanders' Pauline Christians, faith is a sign of status within the covenant of God. While Martin Luther's main point was that salvation is *given* and not *earned*, Sanders' main point is that salvation had always been given and not earned, and Paul was therefore saying something else. Thus, Sanders nudged Pauline studies back from being primarily about the subject's faith to being concerned with the subject's passive experience of the object, God, through the event of Christ.

Most scholars now see Judaism in the first century as a much more diverse entity than Sanders suggested, and the scholars with whom I will interact here are primarily 'apocalyptic' (discussed in more detail below), rather than 'New Perspectives.' However, the important thing to draw from Sanders, and the reason the current study must discuss him, is that Luther's construal of Paul depended upon a fundamentally incorrect understanding of first century Judaism, *and it was Luther's Paul on whom most philosophical interpretations of Paul were based*. So the New Perspective's *un-reading* of Luther remains important for this study, even if the specifics of the New Perspectives' *re-readings* are debated.

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[101] Ibid., 236-237.

3.2. Pauline Theology Since Sanders

Since Sanders, many different interpretations of Paul have been offered. Within the decade following 1977, two people took up their places in what has been referred to as the 'Triumvirate of the New Perspective'[102] as early defenders of Sanders: James Dunn, perhaps the foremost New Testament scholar of the second half of the twentieth century, has advocated the view that justification is about demarcating who is within God's covenant (not about working one's way into heaven),[103] so that Paul's message in Romans is against ethnocentrism, that Israel no longer has the right to boast;[104] and N. T. Wright, another leading New Testament scholar, who sees justification as a demonstration of God's covenant-faithfulness, as well as an act of re-creating the subject as faithful and righteous.[105] Both of these scholars have written dozens of books and articles on Paul, so that fully summarising their contributions in a sentence would be impossible; but within the history of Pauline studies they are perhaps primarily known as major early defenders of Sanders' work, taking it from being a singular thesis to a 'New Perspective.'

The next major event in Pauline studies was the 1983 publication of Richard Hays' doctoral thesis: *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative*

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[102] David E. Aune, 'Recent Readings of Paul Relating to Justification by Faith,' in *Rereading Paul Together: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on Justification*, ed. David E. Aune (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 205.

[103] Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 190.

[104] James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary 38A (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), lxxii.

[105] Though Wright has been making this point consistently for decades, he most recently and fully argued it in *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (London: SPCK, 2013), 774-1042.

Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11.[106] Hays expanded on the centrality of the

notion of 'participation in Christ' to Paul's theology, by arguing that the phrase

(*pistis Christou*) does not refer to faith *in* Christ, but to participation in the faith *of*

Christ. This is Hays' first contribution to apocalyptic interpretations of Paul

(described below) that have developed much more since, often depending upon

this reinterpreted phrase as a central part of Paul's reference to the narrative of

Christ as the beginning of the apocalyptic victory of God.[107]

The 'apocalyptic' stream of interpreters could currently be seen as

stretching from Ernst Käsemann to Douglas Campbell (with an important forebear

in Albert Schweitzer). Käsemann was Bultmann's most prized student, who

legendarily began opposing Bultmann's interpretations of Paul the moment he

graduated. Whereas Bultmann had made use of Luther's interpretation of

δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (*dikaiosynē theou*) as man's imputed righteousness before God,

Käsemann was the most influential scholar in bringing back the interpretation that

this referred to the righteous status of God himself.[108] This was part of

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[106] The second edition was published in 2002 in Grand Rapids, by Eerdmans, with appended articles by James Dunn and a response by Hays. Dunn is still regarded as the key opponent of Hays' thesis, among many other proponents and adversaries. One might note at this point that I have ignored the importance of social-scientific readings of Paul. These are discussed in a bit more detail in the final part of this chapter.

[107] Hays' thesis was not actually primarily about the reinterpretation of *pistis Christou*, but included that as part of his wider goal of demonstrating that Paul's gospel presupposes a narrative of Christ, and that his gospel is an attempt to articulate the meaning of it (Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, xxiii-xxiv). This fits very well with the argument made by the study here, specifically Chapter 6, below: that Paul is not a philosopher building a rational argument, but rather is someone thrust into the interpretation of an event. Hays develops his apocalyptic theology of Paul more fully in *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 1996), 16-59.

[108] Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 24-30. On p. 29 he says that the phrase 'speaks of the God who brings back the

Käsemann's apocalyptic theology of Paul: that a righteous God was soon going to bring the end of the world.[109] Käsemann's student J. L. Martyn redefined apocalypticism in his studies of Galatians, leading us to where the apocalyptic school is currently: the apocalyptic moment (the arrival of 'the end times', to use a non-Pauline phrase) is not in the future, but is the death of Christ.[110]

Thus the theme of suffering began to become a central theme in interpretations of Paul, with Paul calling Christians to participate in the suffering of Christ. Michael Gorman has been highly influential in bringing out this theme,[111] and Roy Harrisville has written an interesting book outlining how the tortured death of Christ can be seen as a fracture in the fabric of history – an apocalyptic interruption of God into history.[112] Jürgen Moltmann's early work was one inspiration for this trend in Pauline scholarship as well as being influential in the theological side of the Death of God movement.[113] Notions of the suffering of Christ as an apocalyptic event have generally coincided with

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fallen world into the sphere of his legitimate claim… whether in promise or demand, in new creation or forgiveness, or in the making possible of our service, and… who sets us in the state of confident hope and… constant earthly change.' On a separate note, it is worth pointing out that God is referred to with masculine pronouns throughout this work for absolutely no other reason than because this is the case in the letters of St Paul.

[109] N. T. Wright, 'Paul in Current Anglophone Scholarship' in N. T. Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013* (London: SPCK, 2013), 480-481.

[110] J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, The Anchor Bible 33A (London: Yale University Press, 1997); and J. Louis Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997).

[111] Gorman, *Cruciformity*. The other book by Gorman mentioned above, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God,* is a particularly compelling work on the themes of kenosis and theosis (participation in God) in Paul.

[112] Roy A. Harrisville, *Fracture: The Cross as Irreconcilable in the Language and Thought of the Biblical Writers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

[113] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM, 1974).

emphasis on the believer's participation in Christ, which was also a central emphasis of Schweitzer and Sanders; thus leading Gorman to coin the phrases 'cruciformity' and 'co-crucifixion' to summarise the believer's relationship to Christ.[114] Wright seems to be correct in his note that this theology might be in protest of 'comfortable American religiosity,' as it is explicitly for Gorman.[115]

This brings us to Douglas Campbell, who, in his book *The Quest for Paul's Gospel*, refers to the apocalyptic school of interpreters as advocating the 'PPME' model: Pneumatological Participatory Martyrological Eschatology – theology that focuses on the *Spirit's* work of transforming the Christian into one who *participates* in the *suffering* of Christ, as part of God's *eschatological* intervention.[116] Campbell designates three other schools in Pauline scholarship: JF (the 'justification by faith' school, consisting of those who still largely protest the key tenets of the New Perspectives, or form new interpretations of Paul still largely focused on the centrality of justification); SH (the 'salvation history' school, typified by N. T. Wright, who sees every aspect of Paul's thought in light of the history of God's plans for salvation, although Wright still has apocalyptic elements to his thought, and is a primary defender of the New Perspectives); and

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[114] Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 17-18 and Michael Gorman, *Reading Paul* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), 51. The question this theology should leave us with is in what sense are Christians co-crucified with Christ? Is there only a historical sense of the early Church being persecuted? Is there something about Christian life that is inherently sacrificial? Is this a Pauline call to asceticism? More morbidly, is this some call for Christians actively to ensure their own suffering? This question has been answered in various and variously troubling ways throughout history. As will be seen in Chapter 6, it is a helpful question to keep in mind when attempting a psychoanalytic interpretation of the Pauline Christian subject.

[115] Wright, 'Paul in Current Anglophone Scholarship,' 481. Michael J. Gorman, *Reading Paul* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), 78-79.

[116] Douglas A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 38-42.

AT (the 'anti-theological' school, typified by Heikki Räisänen, who sees Paul as an internally inconsistent charismatic preacher whose contradictions cannot be resolved – E. P. Sanders also frequently employs this method when otherwise stumped).[117] Campbell is most notable for arguing that the PPME (apocalyptic) interpretation of Paul is correct, to the absolute exclusion of both JF and AT. In his next book, *The Deliverance of God*, Campbell employs various exegetical strategies, with varying amounts of success, to show how every single text in which Paul appears to advocate a JF soteriological model is actually either Paul quoting a theological opponent, or the text has been misunderstood (he subordinates SH to PPME, eliminates JF, and thus negates the contradictions that lead to AT interpretations).[118] In my MA dissertation (selections of which can be found in Appendix C) I examined Paul's attitude towards φύσις (*physis*, nature) throughout Romans and the rest of his letters, in order to defend Campbell's primary interpretative move, that Romans 1:18-32 is an example of speech-in-character (προσωποποιία, in English *prosopopoeia,* or *prosōpopoiia* to transliterate without Latinisation) mimicking Paul's theological opponent in Rome, rather than an opening argument in the voice of Paul himself. This theory forms the bedrock of Chapter 5, below. It has received some positive reception in America, but remains controversial to say the least.

Another approach to Paul, with roots in claims made by Adolf Deissman a century ago,[119] is to emphasise his perceived counter-imperial message. This has

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[117] Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel*, 22-52.

[118] He graphs his approach this way on 48-52 of *The Quest for Paul's Gospel*, but carries it out in Romans in *Deliverance of God*.

[119] Wright, 'Paul in Current Anglophone Scholarship,' 484.

been spearheaded since the nineties by Richard Horsley and Neil Elliott, and helped along by N. T. Wright and some others.[120] Interpreters of Paul have long been bound by Romans 13 to be obedient and supportive of government; but for Karl Barth, who was a member of the anti-fascist Confessing Church in 1930's Germany, this was no longer an option. To Barth, Romans 13 was neither for passive obedience, nor for revolution.[121] Political interpreters of Paul have wanted to see his Christological language, his ethics, his church practice, and his theology itself, as directly counter-imperial, putting Christ in the place of Caesar. It is key to note here that Christ is not posited as *another* Caesar, but as an *anti-*Caesar, who rules through his suffering and humiliation, and through non-violence, love, hope and (true) *pax*. John Howard Yoder foreshadowed much of this in 1972, but it was not until the nineties that the political Paul really started gaining prevalence.[122]

One school of interpreters has not yet been mentioned: modern philosophical interpreters. There have long been interpretations dependent upon finding Aristotle or Plato in Paul (and, to varying extents, both of these can be

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[120] Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008). Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003). Horsley focuses more on Jesus and the Gospels, but has edited a number of collections of articles on Paul's relation to the Empire, such as *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (London: T&T Clark, 2004). N. T. Wright balances his sympathies with this strand of thought with other aspects of his apocalyptic reading in *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (London: SPCK, 2013), 1271-1319. Marcus Borg and J. Dominic Crossan also fit into this category, but again work mostly with Jesus and the Gospels.

[121] Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968 [1928]), 476-477.

[122] John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994 [1972]). Particularly on pp. 193-227, it is interesting to see how Yoder clearly fits before 1977, yet his social reading of justification has him edging towards what was coming.

done in certain texts). Comparisons between Paul and Epictetus or Seneca have been popular since the Middle Ages.[123] More recently, Troels Engberg-Pedersen has argued for a Paul heavily influenced by Stoicism. He parallels Paul's participatory soteriology with Stoic participation in Wisdom.[124] This has led to much discussion about Stoic influence on Paul, and Stoic parallels in Paul, as well as arguments against any ancient philosophical influence on Paul. Gerald F. Downing has argued for considerable Cynic influence on Paul, seeing Paul and Jesus as forms of Cynic philosophers.[125] There have also been many readings of Paul by modern philosophers, some of which will be discussed in detail below.

4. Review of Similar Studies

Interest in Paul by Lacanian philosophers, as well as interest in Lacan by Paul scholars, has not been extensive enough to make possible a long review of previous studies of Lacan and Paul; and both of these sides have thus far been largely fraught with difficulty. There have been a few exceptions, though, as well as other places to ground the sort of study that follows. The relevant pieces to review fall into three categories: (A) studies of Lacan and Paul; (B) continental philosophical readings of Paul and (C) studies of Lacan in conjunction with other

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[123] This was helped along by the emergence in the fourth century of a pseudonymously written collection of letters between Paul and Seneca. See Wayne A. Meeks and John T. Fitzgerald, eds., *The Writings of St Paul* (London: Norton, 2007 [1972]), 149-153.

[124] Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000). Engberg-Pedersen seeks to demonstrate the structural equivalency of Paul's theology with Stoicism, in terms of Paul's vision of conversion and community life.

[125] Gerald F. Downing, *Cynics, Paul and the Pauline Churches* (London: Routledge, 1998).

thinkers, of a similar methodology/hermeneutic to this one. Each of these sections include criticisms, demonstrating potential problems that can be corrected in my own approach, as well as some positives from which to find inspiration.

4.1. Lacan and St Paul

The sort of project envisioned here, in which Lacan is brought into conversation with the Paul who is studied by scholars in biblical studies and theology departments, has very little precedent. There exists one study with a largely similar methodology, by Itzhak Benyamini, and some of its findings will be of use for Chapter 6, below, with revisions.[126] There have been several studies

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[126] Itzhak Benyamini, *Narcissist Universalism: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Paul's Epistles* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012). A chapter of this book is reprinted as '"Love your neighbour," the Son, and the Sons' Community: Reading Paul's Epistles in View of Freud and Lacan,' in eds. Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries, *Paul and the Philosophers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 413-436. He identifies the Pauline Christian community as one formed by narcissist identification with an image of Christ that is a reflexive image of the subject, but this core element of his theory (that the image of Christ is a reflection of the ego of the subject or community) is not something for which he ever argues persuasively; he makes this argument on pp. 19-26, but the texts he cites either plainly do not point toward this interpretation, or are much more easily interpreted as identification with an image of Christ that *affects* the believer, rather than being an image *of* the believer – for which I will argue in Chapter 6. Like the current study, he adopts a 'critical psychoanalytic approach' in search of the 'unconscious core of Paul's texts' (ix); but he poses this as an *alternative* to (not a compliment to or mode of) historical criticism (xiii). In each of the six chapters he applies this method to a different issue in Pauline theology, but his argument falters every time on a major historical critical point – or sometimes just on incoherent biblical interpretation. For example, the first chapter presumes Paul is responsible for Western introspection and guilt (against the bulk of modern scholarship that no longer believes this, and without citing any examples of texts that show this to be the case). The second chapter is dependent upon reading Rom 1:18-32 (discussed in Chapter 5, below) as a positive statement of St Paul's opinion, against the bulk of modern interpretations that read it as some sort of rhetorical device that is somewhat or totally incompatible with Paul's theology (again, see Chapter 5).

of Paul by continental philosophers influenced to varying extents by Lacan (to be

discussed below); but there has been very little dialogue between Lacanian theory

itself and academic Pauline theology. One noteworthy exception is the recent

doctoral thesis of Paul Axton, which has taken the Lacanian/Hegelian philosopher

Slavoj Žižek's use of Paul, and read it in dialogue with the Paul of biblical

studies.[127] These two thinkers (Žižek and Axton) will be my core examples of

previous work on Lacan and Paul. Peter Rollins has also done something similar,

reading Paul with Lacanian psychoanalysis, though he usually writes for a popular

rather than academic audience, and rarely writes on Paul specifically.[128] Concetta

Principe has recently sought to use Lacan with Walter Benjamin and Giorgio

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Perhaps his biggest errors come in chapters 5 and 6, reading Acts and the Synoptic Gospels into Paul, presuming that Paul endorses transubstantiation, and presuming that Pauline Christians spoke in tongues at baptism (against what is explicitly stated in Paul *and* the texts he cites in Acts, where it is an event specifically subsequent to water baptism). This fault is made even worse when he accuses Paul's image of Christ of being one of masochistic self-sacrifice (80-81), but in the two page argument cites *no* Pauline texts whatsoever, citing *only* Mark, and not interacting with either the complex question of the extent to which the notion of 'sacrifice' was actually central to Paul's soteriology, or the question of the narrative substructure of Paul's letters (the question of the actual narrative of Christ that Paul presumed). Nonetheless, despite faults such as these, Benyamini's psychoanalytic approach does yield some interpretations worth discussing in the study that follows, with qualification and modification.

[127] Paul Axton, 'The Psychotheology of Sin and Salvation,' (doctoral thesis, University of Nottingham, 2013). Axton later reworked and published his thesis as *The Psychotheology of Sin and Salvation: An Analysis of the Meaning of the Death of Christ in light of the Psychoanalytical Reading of Paul* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

[128] Peter Rollins, *The Idolatry of God: Breaking the Addiction to Certainty and Satisfaction* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2012), 95-140. His work is always extremely worthwhile and interesting, though largely dependant upon Žižek, and occasionally, as with many of the philosophical Pauls to be discussed below, is inseparable from an 'Old Perspective' reading; for example, on p. 40 of *The Idolatry of God* he claims that 'If an act is designed to bridge the gap between original sin [our original sense of loss] and the idol [any object of desire, *objet petit a*], then it falls into the theological category known in the biblical texts as "works".'

Agamben to identify how Pauline messianism and the Pauline real appear in modern culture.[129] This is an interesting approach, but not primarily concerned with the interpretation of Paul.[130] Other thinkers, including Marcus Pound,[131] Ward Blanton,[132] Clayton Crockett[133] and Tina Beattie,[134] have used Lacan to varying degrees in studying particular aspects of Christian theology, but without

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[129] Concetta V. Principe, *Secular Messiahs and the Return of Paul's "Real": A Lacanian Approach* (Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan, 2015).

[130] Where she does focus on the interpretation of Paul her reading wavers between interesting, implausible and ill-argued. She reads the notion of Paul's own death with Christ and resurrection as equally important to Christ's (111), cites the twentieth century's most influential Paul scholar as 'J. P. Sanders' (83), and, after quoting the two best-known Paul scholars to hold the minority opinion that Paul's view of the law is incoherent (Sanders and Räisänen, see above), states that N. T. Wright's standard, majority interpretation of Pauline coherence is 'apparently anomalous' (84). Still, the approach of looking deeper for the unconscious structure of Paul's theology and the ways in which it relates to (or is sublimated) today, is an approach thoroughly endorsed here.

[131] Marcus Pound, *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma*, and *Žižek: a (very) critical introduction*.

[132] Blanton, *Materialism for the Masses*, 168-173. In discussing Lacan's use of Paul, Blanton notes that in Romans 7 'the apostle imagines an economy whereby a perverse mode of power operates behind the back of an otherwise docile or submissive imaginary self, this hidden operation functioning to effect the self's problematic splitting or doubling.' This reading of Romans 7 as a response to the problem of perversion is laid out in more detail throughout Žižek's works (discussed below), and the study that follows will respond with a different model. It is worth commenting that Blanton's work is probably as close as we come to an interaction between a thorough understanding of Lacan *and* a thorough understanding of critical research on Paul – the current study echoes this, but looks exclusively at Paul and Lacan, not at Paul and continental philosophy as it occasionally includes Lacan.

[133] Firstly, on Paul, with occasional reference to Lacan: *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics After Liberalism* (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2011), 108-125. Secondly, on Lacan, with occasional reference to Paul: 'The Triumph of Theology,' in *Theology After Lacan: The Passion for the Real*, eds. Creston Davis, Clayton Crockett and Marcus Pound (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 250-266.

[134] Tina Beattie, *Theology after Postmodernity*.

sustained Lacan/Paul dialogue. Some of these studies will be discussed or referred to in the two sections that follow.

Slavoj Žižek has not written a book on Paul; however, his interest in Paul goes back at least to 1991,[135] and since 1998 he has published no fewer than seven discussions of Paul of between three and thirty pages in length.[136] Partially as a result of the varied natures and contexts of his short readings of Paul, he often approaches his thought from very different angles: chiefly via Hegel, Lacan and Badiou. Obviously the second is what interests us most here; but its inseparability from his other readings of Paul (and of Christianity) will be shown as problematic to my search for a Lacanian Paul (though not necessarily to his own wider argument).

When Žižek discusses Badiou's reading of Paul, which will be outlined in more detail below, he does so mostly positively, making some revisions to bring it closer into line with Lacan. This is his approach for the bulk of two of his longest discussions of Paul, in *The Ticklish Subject* and *Paul's New Moment*.[137] In *The Ticklish Subject* his use of Badiou concludes that although Badiou correctly posits the resurrection of Christ in Paul as an 'event' (a very loaded core term in Badiou's philosophy), Badiou's reading fails to account for the Lacanian death drive, errantly positing an event completely in the domain of life.[138] From Žižek's

[135] Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do* (London: Verso, 2008 [1991]), 29 and 78.

[136] These are all be referenced below.

[137] Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject* (London: Verso, 2008 [1999]), 145-198 and Slavoj Žižek, 'Paul and the Truth Event,' in *Paul's New Moment: Continental Philosophy and the Future of Christian Theology*, eds. John Milbank, Slavoj Žižek and Creston Davis (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 74-99.

[138] Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 176-180. Adam Kotsko, 'Politics and Perversion: Situating Žižek's Paul,' *Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory*, 9.2 (Summer 2008), 45-46, sees the

Hegelian perspective, he then reads Romans 7 as an acknowledgement of a Hegelian paradox that there is Evil only once the Law itself opens up and sustains the domain of Sin.[139] From Žižek's Lacanian perspective, he sees in Paul an awareness of the inevitable connection between law and death, as well as an event that in psychoanalytic terms amounts to a '"wiping the slate clean" that opens up the domain of the symbolic New Beginning, of the emergence of the "New Harmony" sustained by a newly emerged Master-Signifier;'[140] but to him Lacan's solution to this problem is not Badiouan (an event that opens a new domain of life) or Pauline (an event that replaces a morbid superego of sin with a law of love), but, rather, psychoanalysis merely possesses the power to wipe the slate clean, and does not make any prescriptions for what follows.[141] This leads to the question: will a reading of Paul that is more Lacanian than Žižek's produce a Paul more in line with the aims of psychoanalysis than Žižek's? Reading Romans 7 from the angle to be suggested below, rather than Žižek's, may just produce this result.

Žižekian correction to Badiou as a 'broad critique.' Badiou's emphasis on the resurrection of Christ as an event, to the exclusion of any meaning attached to the death of Christ, is something that will be touched upon below. Kotsko's article is an excellent summary of some of Žižek's many readings of Paul. Another one, tracking the development of his turn to Paul, and how it relates to his political arguments, is Roland Boer, 'Paul and Materialist Grace: Slavoj Žižek's Reformation,' in eds. Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries, *Paul and the Philosophers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 186-209. The term 'death drive' is one of the primary concepts introduced in Chapter 3, below, and can also be found in the Glossary.

[139] Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 174. The relevant section of Rom 7 is translated in Appendix B, below.

[140] Ibid., 179

[141] Ibid., 178-180.

There is a struggle throughout Žižek's work resulting from the conflict between Hegel and Lacan in his interpretation of Paul – a struggle that the study which follows is positioned to resolve. Žižek's Hegelian reading of Paul sees the law/sin problem as a problem of 'perspective,' as noted above. Thus, already in 1991, Žižek claims that Paul's Christ does not bring reconciliation by healing old wounds of scission, but by reversing the perspective of the scission.[142] 'The Fall' is already humankind's redemption, opening the way to liberty, and Christ sublates the law/sin dialectic as a law/love dialectic, allowing us to love without the morbid superego guilt of sin.[143] He makes the same argument, adding to a page of text he borrows from *The Puppet and the Dwarf*, in *The Monstrosity of Christ*.[144] Since in his view Paul's solution is a sublation of a morbid dialectic as a less morbid dialectic (a new perspective rather than a new situation), this means that his reading of the voice of Romans 7 throughout these texts is as a positive example of the Pauline perspective on the human subject: an ego formerly trapped by superego guilt is now an ego whose problematic relation to the law is to a law of love (a perverse relation to the law has become a hysterical relation – see below). In this reading, Romans 7 demonstrates that Christ has given Paul an awareness of the human subject as alienated from itself, and this new perspective on the situation is 'salvation.' The struggle this creates in Žižek's readings of

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[142] Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do*, 78.

[143] Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (London: The MIT Press, 2003), 107-118. As Hegelian readings of Paul go, this is certainly not far from psychoanalysis either, which 'would seem to have as its sole goal the calming of guilt' (*S7*, 5-6).

[144] Slavoj Žižek, 'Dialectical Clarity Versus the Misty Conceit of Paradox,' in *The Monstrosity of Christ*, ed. Creston Davis (London: The MIT Press, 2009), 270-273.

Paul is the tension between whether the subject is truly re-formed psychically, or merely re-perceiving (sublating) an old dialectic in a salvific manner.

When Žižek advocates an actual conversion in the Pauline Christian's subjective state, he tends to draw upon Lacanian terminology: 'As Lacan would have put it, one has to undergo the second, symbolic death, which involves the suspension of the big Other, the symbolic law that hitherto dominated and regulated our lives.'[145] Or, as he explained in more Lacanian language in 1991:

> Saint Paul centred the whole Christian edifice precisely on the point which up to then appeared, to the disciples of Christ, as a horrifying trauma, "impossible", non-symbolizable, non-integrable in their field of meaning: Christ's shameful death on the cross between two robbers. Saint Paul made of this final defeat of Christ's earthly mission (which was, of course, the deliverance of the Jews from Roman domination) the very act of salvation: by means of his death, Christ has redeemed humankind.[146]

This sort of reading of Paul, as advocating a Lacanian psychoanalytic event, makes a much deeper claim about the Pauline subject than the Hegelian claim: not that the subject's perspective or clinical structure changed, but that she passed through symbolic death into a new subjective state. This is the sort of reading conducted in Chapter 6, below, integrated with Žižek's reading of Antigone. However, particularly in Žižek's writings since 2003, he begins to read the Pauline event identically to his Hegelian reading of Christianity in its entirety: as the religion of the death of God, chiefly signified in God's abandonment of

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[145] Žižek, 'Paul and the Truth Event,' 98.

[146] Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do*, 29.

himself on the cross.[147] In 2009 Žižek wrote an article that calls itself 'a Paulinian reading of Chesterton,' but does not mention Paul or cite any of Paul's texts after the first paragraph.[148] Instead, it presents G. K. Chesterton's Hegelian defence of orthodoxy, then argues for a Hegelian reading of the cry of dereliction ('Father, why have you forsaken me?'),[149] and then concludes that it is 'the divine Substance (God, as a Thing-in-itself) which is sublated: negated (what dies on the cross is the substantial figure of the transcendent God) but simultaneously maintained in the transubstantiated form of the Holy Ghost, the community of

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[147] As Kotsko notes in 'Politics and Perversion: Situating Žižek's Paul,' 48-49, between the publication of *The Ticklish Subject* (1999) and *The Puppet and the Dwarf* (2003), two other important works are written: Eric Santner's *The Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2001) and Giorgio Agamben's *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. by Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005 [2000]). The former of these causes Žižek to think more deeply about the psychological relationship between Judaism and Christianity, and the latter opens up a wider dialogue about Hegelian sublation and Carl Schmitt's 'state of exception' in Pauline theology. The latter of these somewhat accounts for the increasing extent to which Žižek's reading of Paul is more Hegelian than Lacanian.

[148] Slavoj Žižek, 'From Job to Christ: A Paulinian Reading of Chesterton,' in *St Paul among the Philosophers*, eds. John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 39-58.

[149] Žižek, 'From Job to Christ: A Paulinian Reading of Chesterton,' 53 and 56. Though an interesting and powerful reading of the cross philosophically, it is full of problems exegetically. As argued here, it is irrelevant to Paul, who makes no reference to the cry of dereliction. But, further: both instances of it in the Gospels (Mark 15:34 and Matt 27:46) are not addressed to 'Father,' but to 'my God;' and, more problematically, although not all scholars support the claim (for example, R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* [Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002], 652-653 and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 753-755), it can be argued that in quoting Psalm 22:1 (as these dying words of Christ most certainly are), Jesus is invoking the positive and victorious ending of that Psalm, in which God does come to deliver and not to forsake, in a hermeneutical strategy called metalepsis that Hays finds throughout the Gospels and Paul (Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as an Interpreter of Israel's Scriptures* [Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004], 106). In this reading, the cry of dereliction was intended to be heard by Jews as a cry of hope in the victory of God.

believers which exists only as the virtual presupposition of the activity of finite individuals.'[150] This argument, which also forms the climax of one of the films about his philosophy, *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* (2012),[151] is at the core of his reading of Christianity: that in the cry of dereliction, the Other comes to know that the Other does not exist, and so the actual death of God in ideology becomes possible. 'At the very core of Christianity, there is another dimension. When Christ dies, what dies with him is the secret hope discernible in "Father, why hast thou forsaken me?": the hope that there is a father who has abandoned me.'[152]

So, on the one hand Žižek initially offers short explanations of the Pauline Christian event in Lacanian terminology. On the other hand, he eventually comes to account for this event more in terms of Hegelian philosophy than Lacanian psychoanalysis. This results in him not distinguishing his Hegelian reading of Paul (sublation of the law/sin dialectic as a law/love dialectic) from his Hegelian reading of Christianity (sublation of God as the God who does not believe in God, making Christianity the only way successfully to embed lack in the master signifier). This leaves us with a Paul whose concept of Christian salvation is dependent upon the event of Christian atheism.

This reading of Christianity is interesting, particularly as it relates to Žižek's vision for the relation between Christianity, culture and politics: if Capitalism is perverse, always demanding we enjoy, then placing lack in the position of the Other, who currently demands we enjoy, is a political gesture. However, when Žižek writes his 'Paulinian reading of Chesterton' he quotes the

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[150] Žižek, 'From Job to Christ: A Paulinian Reading of Chesterton,' 58.

[151] *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*. Dir. Sophie Fiennes. British Film Institute. 2014.

[152] Žižek *The Puppet and the Dwarf*, 171.

cry of dereliction twice but fails to refer to Paul at all beyond the first paragraph, leading to a totally Hegelian reading of Christianity. Since Pauline conversion, whatever it is, is most certainly *not* conversion to atheism, *Žižek's Lacanian Paulinism winds up being neither Lacanian nor Pauline.* Further, it fails to be Lacanian not just because it is subsumed by Žižek's larger Hegelian programme,[153] but also because Lacan was quite clear: God does not know he is dead, *and God will never know he is dead*, because *jouissance* forever remains forever forbidden.[154] Lacan says this by way of introducing the lecture that follows one he ended by referring to the Hegelian understanding of the death of God that Žižek advocates.[155] So Lacan states that Žižek's goal of realising the death of God through Christianity cannot succeed, because the symbolic will always forbid *jouissance*.[156] Axton also acknowledges that Lacan does not see Hegel as the answer to this problem.[157] To be fair to Žižek, his programme acknowledges this, and seeks to get as close to the death of God as possible by incorporating the lack of God into the place of the Other that will always be

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[153] That is to say, his Hegelian reading of Christianity. The claim here is that Hegel becomes increasingly central to Žižek's reading of Christianity, and that that reading of Christianity consumes his reading of Paul. The claim is not that Hegel overtakes Lacan in Žižek's thought in general, which would be a different question altogether.

[154] *S7*, 226-227. The term *jouissance*, a Lacanian spin on 'enjoyment,' will be introduced in Chapter 2, and is defined in the Glossary, Appendix A. *Jouissance* is always forbidden because it is a type of enjoyment that, although we do 'get' it to some extent, it does not exist in fullness. This will be clearer after discussing *das Ding*.

[155] Ibid., 218.

[156] There is a bit of a red herring here: Lacan's point is more that the Other can never fully cease to exist, whereas Žižek's goal is not to aim for this, but to seek a revelation of the lack in the Other that does exist. Still, this tension does reveal a tension between Žižek's political hopefulness and Lacan's pessimism, even if there is no direct contradiction.

[157] Axton, 'The Psychotheology of Sin and Salvation,' 95-100.

somewhere in the symbolic (and, in the reading of Kotsko and Axton, thus advocating hysteria in a perverse society). This makes sense. However, one *cannot* read Paul as being in agreement with this political programme when put in terms of atheism. What one can do instead is exactly what Žižek was doing before his Paul was drowned in Hegel: read the Pauline Christian as one who passes through the lack in the Other, experiencing symbolic death *through sharing in Christ's trauma*, rather than through sharing in Christ's 'atheism.' This, then, is the lesson to be taken from Žižek's reading of Paul: there *is* a Paul to be found who becomes acutely relevant to the modern political situation when read in Lacanian terms, because he reorients our relation to the master signifiers of today through the event of Christian conversion; but this Paul is *not* a Hegelian atheist.

Further, when Žižek mostly abandons Lacan for Hegel in his explanation of Pauline theology he also abandons the psychological explanation of exactly how Paul and early Christianity got there, leaving us with a Paul who discovered something that might be Hegelian, but not a Paul who was psychologically *caused* by the Christ-event/narrative *to* discover something Hegelian. This is not a problem for leftist critical theory; indeed, from Žižek's perspective, 'the Paulinian community of believers is to be found today in radical political groups, not in churches.'[158] However, it lessens the extent to which Žižek's Paul might actually lead to a practicable Christian theo-politics, and also fails to explain exactly how Paul came to these

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[158] Slavoj Žižek, 'The Necessity of a Dead Bird: Paul's Communism,' in eds. Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries, *Paul and the Philosophers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 176.

Hegelian ideas (and thus how this event might be replicable to some degree today). It separates the theoretical idea of Christ from the psychical event of Christ. Thus in Chapter 6 I look for a Lacanian Pauline psychical explanation for the mass origins of Žižek's Hegelian Paul.

A few other points about Žižek's Lacanian Paul should be made. Something I will also do is use the Lacanian clinical structures (psychosis, perversion, hysteria and obsessional neurosis), as a way to approach the situations into which Paul writes his interventions – these will be explained throughout the thesis, some initial comment can be made here.[159] Žižek is precisely correct when he says that in 1 Corinthians Paul encounters the clinical structure of perversion, and that he refers to this same structure in Romans.[160] This dynamic allows one to agree with Žižek's statement that 'Everyone who aims at really understanding Lacan's *Écrits* should read the entire text of Romans and Corinthians in detail.'[161] However, Žižek's reading of Romans 7 is that Paul is advocating a hysterical attitude to the law instead of a perverse one.[162] Conversely, my reading is that

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[159] Each of these terms are also defined in the Glossary, Appendix A.

[160] Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 171-172; 'Paul and the Truth Event,' 95-96. I make this point at length in Chapter 3.

[161] Žižek *The Ticklish Subject*, 172-173; 'Paul and the Truth Event,' 96. However, as Žižek makes clear in *The Puppet and the Dwarf*, 113, in his view these are the key texts because they contain Rom 7 and 1 Cor 13, the 'paradigmatic' Pauline texts, not because the contents of the entirety of each of these letters is important. This is a typical failure on the part of philosophical readings of Paul: they read the minor passages that ring of philosophical discourse and presume them to be paradigmatic. Few Paul scholars would see either of these chapters as more important than, depending on the scholar, Rom 3 or 8; Gal 3; Phil 2 or 2 Cor 5, etc.

[162] According to Kotsko in 'Politics and Perversion: Situating Žižek's Paul,' 47 and Axton, 'The Psychotheology of Sin and Salvation,' 111-116, hysteria is usually seen positively by Žižek, and Žižek's reading of Rom 7 is that it is an example of Paul moving from a perverse position with respect to the law to a hysterical one. Žižek does not state directly, in any of the texts consulted,

Romans 7:7-25 is Paul stereotyping an obsessional attitude to the law (not a hysterical one), and that Paul's own solution is none of these.

Another positive point in Žižek's reading is that he does make an attempt to dialogue with academic biblical studies: at one point he even summarises the *pistis Christou* debate, and uses it as a way to cite Paul in connection with Hegel, attempting to solve the *pistis Christou* debate by suggesting that it is Christ's faith (as characterised by faithfully dying despite feeling abandoned on the cross) in which we are to have faith.[163] However, this dialogue with biblical studies has not led him to be aware of the fundamental issues of the New Perspectives, which puts him at odds with the Paul known by biblical studies. For example, despite having read David Horrell's introduction to Paul and so commenting on the debate between participatory and substitutionary models of the atonement,[164] Žižek then carries on to presume that what Paul objects to is primarily the guilt imposed by the law (this view has long been abandoned by the New Perspectives),[165] and specifically to endorse a Lutheran reading of Paul in which

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that he reads Rom 7 as a positive example of the hystericisation of perversion in Christian conversion, but this does seem to be an accurate description of what he suggests.

[163] Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf*, 101-102. This is really quite ingenious, and would go a long way towards reconciling the Lacan/Hegel problem in Žižek's interpretation as described above, if he were to develop it instead of only talking about Hegel and the cry of dereliction. The idea that we are to believe in Christ's belief maintains a Lacanian structure, putting Christ in the position of the Other-supposed-to-know, but incorporating lack (belief, as opposed to knowledge) into this very place of the master's knowledge. The key distinction to make, which would perhaps make Žižek's interpretation work, would be that this does not amount to suggesting that Paul's Christ is an atheist, but rather that Christ's belief, rather than knowledge, in the place of the Other, incorporates lack into the master signifier of Christian ideology.

[164] Ibid., 102-104.

[165] Ibid., 104-107, 113.

the law is seen as a purely negative force.[166] Lastly, where Žižek does read Paul

in Lacanian terms, he effortlessly matches Lacanian and Pauline concepts in a

way I hope to replicate. For example, in *The Fragile Absolute*, while offering a

multi-faceted reading of Paul containing many more elements than those

discussed above, he briefly discusses how the Christian subject, as a *kainē ktisis*

(new creation), has passed through a violence of the death drive, beginning afresh

from a zero-point and erasing one's past through sublimation.[167] Ultimately, it is

this very act of sublimation that I will describe in more detail.

Žižek's readings of Paul are in fact so multi-faceted that both the above

summary and the work of Axton discussed below cannot possibly deal with every

angle through which his rambling prose passes;[168] but selectively discussing a few

of these aspects is helpful nonetheless. One aspect of Žižek's reading that Axton

emphasises heavily is Rom 7 as an example of a positive move from a perverse to

a hysterical relation to the law.[169] Axton's way of remedying this problem is to

carry on from Žižek's reading of Rom 7 and read chapter 8, which allows him

correctly to read the Pauline solution to the problem posed in chapter 7, instead of

reading chapter 7 as the solution itself. Of course, the debate as to the exact

purpose of chapter 7 (and 8 for that matter!) is a primary discussion going back

millennia in Pauline studies; but it is worth noting that Axton's emphasis on

chapter 8 as the solution to the problem is generally in line with Campbell's

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[166] Ibid., 118.

[167] Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute* (London: Verso, 2008 [2000]), 118-120.

[168] Žižek's prose, like Lacan's, has the feel of the rambling speech and free association of a psychoanalytic session.

[169] Axton, 'The Psychotheology of Sin and Salvation,' 138-154.

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reading, and other apocalyptic readings. Even if we were to come from the opposite angle, and posit a Lutheran interpretation of Rom 3:21-26 as the main solution presented in Romans, this would be equally valid. The point is that when Žižek finds his hysterical solution in Rom 7:7-25, he is positing a centre to Paul's message in a passage that is not generally read as the 'solution' part of Romans.

Axton rightly reads Žižek's approach, particularly in his more recent work, as being predominantly laid out in Hegelian terms. So, citing page 292 of *The Monstrosity of Christ*, he notes that 'Baptism, like the death of Christ, brings life and death into their properly "parallactic" relationship of being "one and the same event".'[170] Again, citing page 287 of the same, he reads Žižek as saying that for Paul 'It is Christ alone that reveals the nonexistence of God, not through a symbolic gesture, but at the level of the real, opening up, as a result, new forms of human community built on an alternative subjectivity.' Since Žižek's reading is that Paul's solution is to bring the real of God's nonexistence into awareness, Axton rightly sees this (Hegelian) reading as insufficiently Pauline. The primary problem with Axton's approach is that, after a very good reading of Rom 7, when he reads Rom 8 as a more authentically Pauline solution to this Hegelian problem, the solution he argues for does not fit with a Lacanian view of the subject at all – which does not necessarily make it incorrect, but does make it less useful for the current study. After very successfully using Pauline scholarship to critique and support different aspects of Žižek's reading,[171] he then goes on to argue for a reading of Paul against Žižek that fails to operate coherently in Lacanian terms.

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[170] Ibid., 190.

[171] Ibid., 202-235. Specifically, noting that Romans 7 probably identifies a problem, not a solution, but biblically supporting Žižek's understanding of Sin as a lie.

For example, he argues 'against Žižek, that "death to sin" is an ontological participation in the death of Christ and not simply symbolic or subjective destitution as it involves being "joined to" Christ.'[172] In Lacanian terms there is no such thing as an ontology that can be altered in terms not subject to the signifier, as the subject without the symbolic is nothing. Axton eventually suggests that the change in the Pauline Christian subject that Žižek describes is due to an ontological change rather than a symbolic change,[173] and that this involves 'the overcoming of symbolic alienation through adoption by God.'[174] The moment he suggests that alienation is resolvable through ontological change (or at all), his argument is no longer being done within the remit of Lacanian psychoanalysis, since Lacanian alienation *is* the subject's existence in language.

The goal of this study is to find a way to hold these two sides together: acknowledging that Žižek's Paul is a pawn in Žižek's wider Hegelian reading of Christianity, and does not bear much resemblance to any of the Pauls of biblical studies; but also refusing to throw the baby out with the bathwater, and still attempting to find out what Paul's theology looks like when described in Lacanian terms. There is a radical solution to this problem: to deal with it not by positing Paul against Žižek's interpretation of him (Axton's approach), but by positing a *Lacanian* Paul against Žižek's *Hegelian* interpretation of him.

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[172] Ibid., 237.

[173] Ibid., 243-245.

[174] Ibid., 253.

4.2. Continental Philosophical Readings of St Paul

Commentary on Paul by continental philosophers has a long history; but philosophical commentary on a Paul recognisable by biblical scholars does not.[175] Negative portrayals of Paul have been based upon Lutheran stereotypes, and positive portrayals of Paul have been based upon Lukan biography,[176] rather than the content or impact of his teachings. Serious dialogue with Paul has occurred to some extent, but often suffers from several pitfalls that will be discussed below. Of the many different studies of Paul by continental philosophers that do now exist, most do not make direct use of Lacan, so I will not go into depth on all of them. The purpose of summarising and critiquing them here is not to survey the field of knowledge about Lacan and Paul, since this is not where they fit. Instead, they are discussed here in order to see what approaches have been taken in continental philosophical readings of Paul, and what methodological errors can be avoided. This section should be read as an '… and Paul' section, complimented by the 'Lacan and…' section below, in order to supplement the scarcity of philosophical 'Lacan and Paul' studies already in existence.

It was Nietzsche who first set a strongly negative tone for continental philosophical readings of Paul, in a reading that 'is unscholarly and so full of faults that only a pedant could have any wish to catalogue them.'[177] Indeed, not

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[175] Ward Blanton summarises or refers to a large number of philosophical interactions with Paul in 'Paul and the Philosophers,' 1-38. The rest of the volume is incredibly useful as an overview of the many different angles and issues of the complex relationship between Paul and (particularly, continental) philosophy.

[176] That is, the story of Paul's life found in the Acts of the Apostles, the second part of Luke-Acts, the two-part history traditionally attributed to St Luke.

[177] From Walter Kaufmann's preface to *The Antichrist* in Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche,* trans. by Walter Kaufmann (London: Penguin, 1954), 568. Paul himself acknowledges

much would be gained here from such a catalogue; but, fulfilling his claim that the errors of great men are more fruitful than the truths of little men,[178] some of his errors have been eternally repeated. His book *The Antichrist* is an assault upon organised religion, and Paul's founding role in Christianity in particular, that should not be dismissed despite its inaccuracy: its efficacy as a critique of power and ideology is no more diminished by its historical errors than is Foucault's that followed it. However, a few enduring errors, in this work and others, have also been found in successive readings of Paul (whether inspired by or merely first exemplified by Nietzsche).

Firstly, Nietzsche makes a mistake not unique to philosophical interpretations: he takes Paul as secondary to the Gospels, suggesting that Paul took the Church off-track from where it started. In *Will to Power*, Nietzsche makes a series of such statements: 'Christianity: a naïve beginning to a Buddhistic peace movement… but reversed by Paul into a pagan mystery doctrine;'[179] 'A God who died for our sins: redemption through faith; resurrection after death—all these are counterfeits of the true Christianity for which that disastrous wrong-headed fellow [Paul] must be held responsible;'[180] because of Paul 'the concept "sin," "forgiveness," "reward"—all quite unimportant and virtually excluded from primitive Christianity—now comes into the foreground.'[181] The problem is that

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that contempt for his letters goes back to their original audiences, in 2 Cor 10:10. The NRSV translates it beautifully: 'For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."'

[178] Ibid., 30. From 'Fragment of a Critique of Schopenhaur.'

[179] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 167.

[180] Ibid., 169.

[181] Ibid.

Paul's writings are decades *prior* to the Gospels, presumably the texts from which Nietzsche constructs his idealistic notion of 'primitive Christianity.'[182] This vision of Paul as the destroyer of the pure Christianity of the Gospels is not only anachronistic, but also risks a false positioning of Paul as one who took the earthly and made it theoretical (the allegation made in *Antichrist*), rather than as a theoretician trying somehow to respond to the earthly event to which he is also our first witness.[183] It is worth noting this failure of Nietzsche's because, as argued below, it affected the vision of Paul inherited by subsequent continental philosophers.

Secondly, Nietzsche makes the understandable mistake of reading Paul through Martin Luther. This is a mistake Nietzsche had no choice but to make; he would have been reading Paul in Luther's translation, as the son of a Lutheran minister in a country with a Lutheran state church. However, by following Luther, he contributed towards the cementing of a Lutheran Paul in the continental philosophical tradition, which has not been subject to an un-reading of Luther from Paul in the way that modern biblical studies has, as will be seen below. A 'Lutheran' Paul in Nietzsche is found most clearly in *Daybreak* 68, where he begins his detailed description of Paul by calling him a 'very tormented,

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[182] Most of the Gnostic texts from which the modern sceptic might today construct a counter-vision of primitive Christianity were not yet discovered when Nietzsche was writing; he also refers to the Gospels in *Antichrist* 44 as testimony to the 'first community' of Christians, which Paul, 'with the logician's cynicism of a rabbi,' corrupted.

[183] This idea of Nietzsche's, that Paul took the fact of Jesus' earthly life and turned it into interpretation, moving from primitive to institutional Christianity, is discussed by Béatrice Han in 'Nietzsche and the "Masters of Truth": the pre-Socratics and Christ,' in *Nietzsche and the Divine*, eds. John Lippitt and Jim Urpeth (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2000), 124-127. Han does not point out the falsity in claiming that there is a primitive Christianity that can be known apart from Paul's influence, since Paul's letters are the closest we have to 'primitive Christianity.'

very pitiable, very unpleasant man, who also found himself unpleasant.'[184] What makes this depiction particularly Lutheran in character is that Nietzsche then describes Paul as someone who had been consumed with the question of the Jewish Law, and with guilt over his own inability to follow it, for all of his days, *leading to* his conversion to Christianity, as a contrived way to escape the law. Nietzsche even makes the comparison:

> Luther may have felt a similar thing when he wanted in his monastery to become the perfect man of the spiritual ideal: and similarly to Luther, who one day began to hate the spiritual ideal and the Pope and the saints and the whole clergy with a hatred the more deadly the less he dared to admit it to himself – a similar thing happened to Paul. The law was the cross to which he felt himself nailed: how he hated it! how he had to drag it along! how he sought about for a means of destroying it - and no longer to fulfil it![185]

One can understand why Nietzsche presumed Paul felt like Luther, since this was precisely Luther's presumption; but it is an assumption that has largely been given up by Paul's modern interpreters. One of the key claims that E. P. Sanders made about Paul was that 'Paul did not, while "under the law", perceive himself to have a "plight" from which he needed salvation.'[186] Sanders' claim is thus that Paul did not see the law as a failed trap meant to lead to guilt to lead to Christ, but, that Christ presented a solution to a problem Paul did not previously know existed (in this case, it was indeed the solution that posed the problem, not the problem that

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[184] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 40.

[185] Ibid.

[186] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 443.

led to the solution). The presumption that Paul had a guilty conscience, and with it that this guilty conscience was the primary factor of his conversion, has been largely based upon Romans 7, which Sanders notes is not generally now seen as a reference to Paul's former life (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5, below). It is important to introduce these details: on the one hand, Nietzsche's portrayal of Paul is at least partly responsible for the lack of interest in Paul by continental philosophers for some time after him; but it also ensures that when that interest did eventually occur, the Paul in the mind of the philosopher was the Lutheran figure of extreme superego guilt. This is a problem that needs addressing.

The final problem with Nietzsche's Paul that needs to be discussed here is the death of Christ. Paul's theology has many parts, all interrelated to form a fairly coherent whole. Though the coherence of Paul's theology is debated, the extent to which every part depends upon the other parts is not. Is the death or resurrection of Christ of greater importance? This is not a question Paul would understand, because the two are always linked together. For example, in Rom 4:25 Jesus 'was given over because of our trespasses and raised for our justification.' In Rom 6:5: 'For if we have grown together in the likeness of his death, then also we will be of his resurrection.' Does Paul's theology work without the resurrection of Christ, since it was Christ's death that paid for sin? 'If Christ has not been resurrected then your faithfulness is useless; you are still in your sins.'[187] Does Paul's theology work without the crucifixion of Christ, since it is his resurrection that assures eternal life? 'I have been crucified with Christ;

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[187] 1 Cor 15:17.

and I live no longer as "ego," but something lives in me: Christ.'[188] Romans 12

demonstrates that the teachings of Christ make up the content of the life in Christ

that Paul advocates.   However, in Nietzsche's view, Paul invented Christian

theology in order to cope with the death of Christ.[189] When Nietzsche quotes 1

Cor 15:17 it is not because the death and resurrection of Christ are inseparable in

Paul's theology, but because Paul maliciously wanted to promise something after

death in order to con the people further.[190] When Nietzsche talks of Paul's talk of

Christ, the concern is primarily with Paul's theology of Christ's death, and

occasionally with resurrection as an afterthought, painting Paul as one obsessed

with crucifixion; in Nietzsche's view, Paul primarily needed the death of Christ,

but then decided to add a little more, so made up the resurrection.[191] This great

imbalance in Nietzsche's presentation of Paul, though only one part in a grand

presentation of Paul as a mad and villainous wretch, has resulted in continental

philosophers presenting Paul either in line with or against the image of a Paul

obsessed with death, which is discussed below.   It is a drama that academic

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[188] Gal 2:19b-20a. Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι· ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῇ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός. The odd
translation given above serves not just to translate into psychoanalytic terms, but also to highlight
the strange gap that exists in the Greek between the subjects of the verbs and the nouns placed in
apposition to them at the end of the latter two phrases. Though this gap of two to three words is
perfectly acceptable in Greek grammar, it highlights the strangeness implied in first saying 'I live
no longer' before getting to '[as] I,' and in saying 'he lives in me, Christ.' A more 'literal'
translation that preserves this might be 'and I live no longer as I, but he lives in me, Christ.' Still,
this does not translate the ambiguity of first saying '*something* lives in me,' before the singular
subject is revealed to be masculine, Christ.

[189] Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 171.

[190] Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, 616 (*Antichrist* 41).

[191] Ibid., 617 (*Antichrist* 42).

theological study of Paul enacts as well, but with a much greater sense of the mutuality and equality of importance of the different parts of Paul's thought.

Jumping ahead to the world of continental philosophy in which Lacan found himself, it is a world in which most French philosophers were raised as Catholics, have read Nietzsche and do not talk about Paul. Michel Foucault is widely noted to have made almost no reference to Paul, despite his interest in Christian origins – though Paul does eventually get a mention in his 1983-84 lectures.[192] Gilles Deleuze makes no more than the occasional passing reference to Paul, except in one essay that discusses how D. H. Lawrence's reading of Revelation parallels Nietzsche's reading of Paul, and seems totally to endorse both readings.[193] Jacques Derrida makes several references to Paul, but never goes into any detail.[194] One such reference reads 'What I admire most in

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[192] Valérie Nicolet Anderson, 'Becoming a Subject: The Case of Michel Foucault and Paul,' *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, 11.1 (Winter 2010), 127. She cites Michel Foucault, *Le Courage de la vérité: Le gouvernement de soi et des autres II*, Cours au Collège de France (1983-1984). It has now been translated as *The Courage of the Truth (The Government of Self and Others II)*, trans. by Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011 [2008]), and the chapter discussing Paul is pp. 325-342, where he briefly touches on Paul while tracking the changes in theological understanding of the word *parrēsia* from the Septuagint through to the Early Church. This was his last ever lecture at the Collège de France, on 28.3.1984.

[193] Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997 [1993]), 36-52. The essay is entitled 'Nietzsche and Saint Paul, Lawrence and John of Patmos,' and was originally published in 1978. He also agrees with Lawrence that not only does Paul follow Christ and ruin his message, but Paul actually follows John of Patmos (the author of Revelation), ruining Christianity even more than he already had (this claim is repeated throughout, most clearly on pp. 50-51). Since the actual chronological order is much more likely to be Paul → Synoptic Gospels → Revelation, not Jesus → Revelation → Paul, this is not particularly plausible.

[194] Jennings lists them and gives comment on each one. Theodore W. Jennings, Jr, *Reading Derrida / Thinking Paul* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 10-16.

Nietzsche is his lucidity about Paul.'[195] Studies on the relationship between each of these thinkers and Paul have been written nonetheless, but they generally use these thinkers for reading Paul, rather than using these thinkers' readings of Paul.[196] It is in this environment that Lacan shocks his readers by reading from Romans 7 as though he had written it himself, and then telling them that Paul makes great holiday reading.[197] However, despite the resonances between Lacan and Paul's thought to be explored below, there is no extended study of Paul to be found in Lacan's seminars or writings; this could be because even though he mentions Paul positively in *Seminar VII*, he states many years later that this is an example of the fact that 'I compromise myself by discussing people whose status and lineage are not, strictly speaking, the kind I keep company with.'[198] Ironically, despite the potentially Nietzschean nature of the link between Lacan and Paul explored in the first few pages of this study above, Nietzsche himself was the main reason Lacan was alone among his peers in showing any interest in Paul at all.

Yet recently there has been a well-known 'turn to religion,' specifically to Paul, in continental philosophy. What sparked this? Stanislas Breton provides one of the finest examples of a continental philosophical reading of Paul, but his

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[195] Quoted in Jennings, *Reading Derrida / Thinking Paul*, 16, from Jacques Derrida, 'A Silkworm of One's Own,' in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2001), 325.

[196] On Paul and Foucault: Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Louisville: Westminster-John Knox, 1991). On Paul and Deleuze: Clayton Crockett, *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics After Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 126-144. On Paul and Derrida: Jennings, *Reading Derrida / Thinking Paul*.

[197] *S7*, 102-103.

[198] *S20*, 12.

turn to Paul was one made as a theologian studying philosophy, not vice versa.[199]

The same can be said of Jacob Taubes,[200] whose philosophical study of Paul was certainly an influence in the 'turn,' at least for Giorgio Agamben.[201] Breton's study of Paul was published in 1988, and Taubes' was in 1993 (though it was based on lectures he delivered in 1987). However, by the mid nineties neither Breton nor Taubes had been translated into English or been widely read, nor had Agamben yet written on Paul. The event that changed this is almost certainly Alain Badiou's interest in Paul, as the first continental philosopher (not theologian) since Nietzsche, to devote a significant amount of study to Paul, with his 1996-1997 seminar, in which he would recommend reading Breton.[202] Badiou's philosophical interest in Paul goes back at least to 1982, and probably not much earlier,[203] when he began writing *The Incident at Antioch*, his play about 'Paula,' a female Paul-figure in a twentieth-century context.[204] The play obviously mimics the form of Pier Paolo Pasolini's screenplay *St Paul*, which

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[199] Stanislas Breton, *A Radical Philosophy of Saint Paul*, trans. by Joseph N. Ballan (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2011 [1988]). Sadly space constrictions do not permit a fuller discussion of Breton's work here, as he is not a Lacanian, and more can be gained from discussing Badiou. Nonetheless, his work was helpful in contributing to the method used in this study, and it should not be underrated just because it is not within the remit of this introduction.

[200] Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. by Dana Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003 [1993]). Based on lectures first delivered in Heidelberg in 1987.

[201] Taubes' work is the first study of Paul mentioned in Agamben, *The Time That Remains*, 2.

[202] Alain Badiou, *La Fondation de L'universalisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 3.

[203] Though there is not much from Badiou before this period, references to Paul are scarce. There are two in *The Theory of the Subject*, trans. by Bruno Bosteels (London: Continuum, 2009 [1982]), written between 1975 and 1979, neither of great significance.

[204] Alain Badiou, *The Incident at Antioch: A Tragedy in Three Acts*, trans. by Susan Spitzer (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2013), vii.

Badiou discusses at length in his main theoretical work on Paul, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (the translation of the aforementioned seminar), where he also points out that Pasolini's screenplay was published in French, which happened in 1980.[205] Thus it is reasonable to suggest that Badiou's interest in Paul, the first case of an important atheist French philosopher writing on Paul after Nietzsche, and the first Lacanian, was inspired by his reading of Pasolini somewhere between 1980 and 1982. The presentation of Paul in this screenplay, as a radical communist revolutionary, marks a turning point towards a new Paul; an intervention, into the dominance of Nietzsche's pessimistic picture, of a Paul who looks a bit more like the nonviolent political revolutionary described by some modern biblical scholars. A few points about how continental philosophy got to its Paul, and what should be lauded or avoided, can be gleaned from Pasolini.

Pasolini presented a Paul who was, on the one hand, a bit like Nietzsche's in terms of his eventual effect on the world; but also, who was trying to be a nonviolent antiestablishment egalitarian revolutionary.[206] He created a Paul who is a split subject: simultaneously both institutionalising founder and political revolutionary. He did so intentionally: 'I make a double Saint Paul, I mean schizophrenic, completely dissociated in two: one is the saint (obviously Saint Paul had a mystical experience – that's clear from the letter – that was authentic),

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[205] Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. by Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003 [1997]), 37.

[206] Pier Paolo Pasolini, *St Paul: A Screenplay*, trans. by Elizabeth A. Castelli (London: Verso, 2014 [1977]). To quote Pasolini's own view of Paul, quoted in p. xl of Castelli's introduction: 'My violence against the Church is profoundly religious, insofar as I accuse Saint Paul of having founded a Church rather than a religion. I do not revive the myth of Saint Paul, I destroy it.'

the other is the priest… the founder of the Church.'[207] The presentation of the 'saint' side, the real hero of the screenplay, is possibly why there has been a philosophical turn to Paul; but the schizophrenic presentation, and the errors that caused it, have then been borne out in that philosophical turn, along with some of Nietzsche's errors described above. Within academic literature, a similarly schitzophrenic picture of Paul can be found in the work of Marcus Borg and J. Dominic Crossan, who go so far as to suggest 'three Pauls,' and then question how to deal with the apparent contradictions in Paul's ideas, which is also a main theme of Douglas Campbell's work, described above.[208] The liberal-communitarian Paul portrayed so well by Pasolini, especially in the New York scenes towards the end of the screenplay, is similar to the Paul described throughout David Horrell's *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics*.[209] As discussed in the introduction to Paul above, the political Paul is certainly very well attested academically. Though none of Pasolini's Pauls are unattested in academic literature, his presentation of them has caused difficulties; beginning with the fact that the above-mentioned biblical scholars also mention the possibility of contradiction in Paul, but each find their own way to find coherence. It is probably fair to suggest that Pasolini would have done the same, had he been reading an ancient philosopher rather than a contentious religious figure.

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[207] Ibid., xxxix. Quoted in the introduction by Castelli.

[208] Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon* (London: SPCK, 2009).

[209] London: T&T Clark, 2005.

However, Pasolini was writing a screenplay, not theoretical prose. Since his piece has narrative form, and since he is coming from an artistic direction rather than an academic one, he draws quite heavily from Acts. This makes sense for a non-academic narrative piece; but Badiou and those that followed him *are* writing academic pieces, so following Pasolini's dependence upon Acts could be problematic. For example, Pasolini is quite clear that he dislikes Luke for 'ruining' Paul, but the image of Paul as founder of the institutional Church comes in no small part from Acts.[210] Pasolini's split Paul is split in part because of the merger of primary and secondary New Testament sources on Paul; and not just Acts, but also the Pastoral Epistles.[211] One way to find a philosophical Paul less

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[210] One does eventually grow weary of continental philosophers suggesting that one biblical figure was venerable, but another biblical figure was evil and ruined him, such as Nietzsche's reading of Christ and Paul, Badiou's reading (following Pasolini, discussed below) of Paul and Luke, or Deleuze's reading (following D. H. Lawrence, discussed below) of John the Evangelist and John of Patmos. Surely it is possible to read a biblical figure from a philosophical perspective and simply acknowledge that there are parts we like and dislike, without constructing a fantasy of purity and posthumous desecration?

[211] The Pastoral Epistles are the three letters in the New Testament that are traditionally attributed to Paul, but most universally acknowledged as pseudepigraphal by scholars: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus. 1 Timothy's extensive concern with the quiet submission of wives to their husbands, saved only through bearing children, and with the establishment of firm church hierarchy, far exceeds the concerns found in any of Paul's authentic epistles (for example, 1 Tim 2:8-3:13). Paul does mention hierarchy in the Church (Phil 1:1), but not in such a way as to be overly concerned with its rigid establishment and preservation; just as in 1 Cor 14:33b-36 and Eph 5:22-33, both of which *might* be authentically Pauline, he does ask women to stay silent in church and submit to their husbands. However, even if these sections are Pauline, in Paul's authentic letters they are balanced out with the claim that there is no longer 'male and female' in Christ (Gal 3:28); with reference to a female deacon in a church (Rom 16:1); a female apostle (Rom 16:7); women praying and prophesying, presumably in church (1 Cor 11:5) and a recurring concern for the egalitarian celebration of difference within the Church (Rom 14-15, 1 Cor 10, 11:17-32, Gal 3:26-29). Of course, there is endless debate surrounding each of these passages, as they have always been at the core of debates over the Church's social teaching. However, the point here is that the

plagued by Nietzsche's critique is to look for him from the ideas contained in his authentic letters, rather than from the narrative in Acts. This is part of what forms the approach in this study: I am not looking for a narrative of a Paul whom the Lacanian psychoanalytic tradition would call a hero, but for a Lacanian interpretation of the structure of Paul's theology.

I turn now to the work of Alain Badiou. Although there are many philosophical readings of Paul that could be discussed here, Badiou's work on Paul is useful for this study in four ways: firstly, its content is influenced by Lacan, though Badiou's philosophy is largely distinct from its Lacanian origins; secondly, some aspects of his methodology will be copied directly in the study that follows; thirdly, some errors he makes, particularly following from Nietzsche and Pasolini, can be avoided and fourthly, there has been some interaction between him and Paul scholars that can be discussed (allowing criticism of not just Badiou, but also of the reaction from biblical scholarship to philosophical interest in Paul). There is one main source for Badiou's interpretation of Paul, combined with many minor sources. The main source is his book *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, a translation of his 1995-1996 seminar. His play *The Incident at Antioch* should be considered a narrative form of his earlier ideas about Paul. He contributed an article about Paul to the volume *St. Paul among the Philosophers*, and many of the other articles it contains are biblical scholars in

conservative caricature of Paul that Pasolini presents alongside his revolutionary Paul, and which influenced later philosophers, would have been much milder had he or they been more aware of the pseudonymous nature of 'Paul's' most conservative and institutionalising texts.

dialogue with Badiou and Žižek.[212] He also wrote a short foreword to the English publication of Pasolini's *St Paul* screenplay,[213] and has discussed Paul occasionally in interviews.[214]

Badiou's reading of Paul, which he admits falls more into the critical category of reader response than historical criticism,[215] has many aspects, and cannot properly be explained without going through much of the rest of Badiou's philosophical system, which will not be explained here. Indeed, it is so inseparable from the rest of his philosophy that the main critique that needs to be made of biblical scholars' responses to Badiou is that they have responded to *Saint Paul* without reading *Being and Event* (which is not an easy task, but is a significant flaw in their responses nonetheless).[216] Rather than pretending it is possible to go through the entirety of Badiou's argument in a paragraph, I am just going to touch on a few of the ideas that positively relate to a Lacanian reading of Paul.

The core of Badiou's argument is that the Christian subject emerges as a result of the experience of the 'event' of Christ's resurrection; 'event' being a very central and elaborately defined term in Badiou's wider philosophy. The

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[212] Alain Badiou, 'St Paul, Founder of the Universal Subject,' in *St Paul among the Philosophers*, eds. John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 27-38.

[213] Alain Badiou, 'Foreward,' in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *St Paul: A Screenplay*, trans. by Elizabeth A. Castelli (London: Verso, 2014 [1977]), vii-xi.

[214] For example, 'An Interview with Alain Badiou: Universal Truths and the Question of Religion,' ed. Adam S. Miller, *Journal of Philosophy and Scripture*, 3.1 (Fall 2005), 38-42.

[215] 'My reading of Saint Paul is absolutely on the surface of the text and in this way it is not a hermeneutic.' Ibid., 38.

[216] Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. by Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005 [1988]). This claim will be developed more below.

event of having faith in something external to the life/death situation of humanity (in resurrection), in the form of a 'conviction' (how Badiou translates *pistis*), constitutes a new subject. Because the constitution of the subject through something that lies outside of the situation is the definition of the event,[217] and the event is something Badiou arrives at through meticulously reasoning via set theory, the event is something universal, not tied to any predicates (to Badiou, the event is an eternal ontological possibility). This means that the formation of the subject because of the event is a universal possibility, and the Christian subject is an example of the event breaking into the particular ('Jew or Greek') with the universal. Thus Badiou's argument is that the theology of Paul is a form of the foundation of universalism (meaning something very different than what 'universalism' means to the theologian!). This is a methodology that will be outlined in the next section below, and termed 'description.'

Beyond this basic outline, another detail stands out as a particularly Lacanian aspect of Badiou's interpretation: the constant theme of the alienation of the subject, which is not otherwise a major theme in Badiou's work, at least not in these Lacanian terms.[218] For example, Badiou describes Paul's conversion as an 'aleatory experience' that 'summons the "I am" as such,' instituting a new subject.[219] The chapter 'The Division of the Subject' focuses on a number of ways in which the subject is divided, but the main one is the division between the flesh (as 'conventional lawfulness and particular state of the world') and the spirit

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[217] Or, more precisely, something presented but not represented by the state of the situation.

[218] Also, at least not as late as 1995 – Lacanian terminology and direct use is much more common in his earlier work *Theory of the Subject*.

[219] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 17.

('private inhabitation by grace and truth').[220]   This is a use of Lacanian terminology for a split that is still more Badiouan in nature, but this too changes nearer the end of the book, where Badiou interprets Paul's 'apart from the law sin is dead' in a way that borrows from Lacan much more directly,[221] leading him to point out the parallel between his own thought here and Lacan's.   He quotes Lacan's reformulation of Descartes after accounting for the de-centering (alienation) of the subject: 'There where I think, I am not, and there where I am, I do not think.'[222] Badiou's brief commentary on Romans 7 here, explaining it in a Lacanian exegesis longer than the one Lacan himself provides in *Seminar VII*, is possibly the earliest theological/philosophical elaboration of Lacan's use of Paul.

There are many aspects of Badiou's methodology that deserve to be copied almost exactly. Badiou's understanding of Paul's relationship to truth is perhaps the most astute aspect of Badiou's work. He treats Paul as a 'poet-thinker' militant of the event, making local interventions on its behalf, rather than as a theoretical thinker as such.[223] To elaborate this further, Paul is not a philosopher, but an 'antiphilosopher,'[224] even a 'prince of antiphilosophers.'[225] Badiou placed Paul at the end of a series of seminars on four such

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[220] Ibid., 64.

[221] Specifically, on pp. 82-83 Badiou talks about the law as that before which one cannot really speak of a desiring subject, in a way that reads like an explanation of the bottom right corner of Lacan's Graph of Desire.

[222] Ibid., 83, quoting a saying of Lacan that occurs, for instance, on *Écrits*, 430.

[223] Ibid., 1.

[224] Ibid., 27-29, 108.

[225] Alain Badiou, *Lacan: L'antiphilosophie 3 1994-1995* (Paris: Fayard, 2013), 264, *au. trans*.

antiphilosophers: Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Lacan and Paul.[226] Posing Paul as an

antiphilosopher is quite simple: he basically says as much in 1 Cor 2:1-5, where

he states that his preaching is not based on words of wisdom but Spirit, and faith

does not rest on the wisdom of men but on the power of God. Yet Paul's texts

have been philosophical enough to inspire millennia of philosophical

commentary. This is because Paul *is* a theoretician, but this theorising is by way

of necessity, in response to an event, not because Paul is someone who set out in

life to discover the truth through reason. This is also why it is important that

Badiou mentions that we only know Paul through his interventions: Paul is not

objectively reasoning for fun or for career prospects, but is forced to reason in

order to intervene on behalf of the event; an event which, Badiou claims, is the

foundation of universalism. Thus, Badiou's complete claim: 'Paul is an

antiphilosophical theoretician of universality.'[227] This is the most effective way

out of the accusation of anachronism that can spring up when blending Paul with

philosophy. My claim is not that Paul was a philosopher, but that Paul defended

the event by arguing philosophically *against philosophy*. Paul can and should be

discussed in philosophical terms as one in dialogue with philosophy; but he

should not be discussed as though he were one whose interest was actually in

philosophy itself.[228] Badiou also here offers a significant correction to Nietzsche:

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[226] Ibid., 9. He also refers here to Pascal, Rousseau and Kierkegaard as antiphilosophers, so in total listing six philosophers whose relation to truth is similar to that of St Paul.

[227] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 108.

[228] The author of Colossians 2:8, who seems to have been very well acquainted with Paul's theology, has Paul state how he feels about philosophy quite bluntly: 'Look out, so that none of you will be ensnared by philosophy and deceit!'

Paul was not a theoretician who turned the 'earthy' into the abstract, but an antiphilosopher forced by circumstance to defend an event with theory.

There are some other positive notes to make about Badiou's methodology. Firstly, he begins his book by constructing a philosophical framework that applies both to Paul's world and to ours, and then uses it to address him with the question 'What are the conditions for a universal singularity?'[229] Likewise, I will construct a framework that allows us to address questions and criticisms to Paul. Secondly, Badiou often builds a bridge in the other direction as well, from past to present, by translating Pauline words and phrases with modern referents, similar to Bultmann's approach.[230] For example, he makes the claim that Paul's 'brothers [and sisters]' is 'an archaic form of our "comrades".'[231] This stems from his reading of Pasolini, in which he praises him repeatedly for treating Paul as our contemporary, with something to say to the modern world.[232] Thirdly, Badiou shows evidence of having done some research into modern biblical studies, being aware that Acts provides an unreliable narrative and that there are only six undisputed Pauline letters.[233] These all inform the methodology outlined in the section below.

Lastly, there is one aspect of Badiou's methodology that is not a mistake *per se*, but represents something recognisable to Pauline studies as an old approach from which things have long since moved on. Badiou posits Paul as being stuck between two discourses, the Greek and the Jewish, and invoking a

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[229] Ibid., 13.

[230] See note 67, above.

[231] Ibid., 20.

[232] Ibid., 36-39.

[233] Ibid., 18.

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third discourse, the mystical, to split the two into a new universal discourse, Christianity.[234] The view of Paul as trapped between discourses is the view of the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (history of religions school), and what Paul is referring to with the Jew/Gentile divide is the roles of the law and national/ethnic identity in response to grace, not the cultural/academic background of the ideas.[235] The history of religions approach is usually traced back to F. C. Baur, heavily influenced by Hegel, who posited early Jewish Christianity as thesis, Pauline Hellenistic Christianity as antithesis, and early Catholicism as synthesis. But this approach has since broken down, not just because of the complexity and indivisibility of 'Jewish' and 'Greek' ideas in Paul's world, but also, more recently, under the accusation of 'orientalism:' it essentially posits that oriental ideologies need the intervention of Western ones to save them.[236] In order to avoid this approach, when discussing the roles of certain philosophies and signifiers below, these are in reference to ideas of which Paul was aware without invoking a false dichotomy that wasn't actually in his mind. Along with Badiou, some way to correct the Hegelian polarity of the *religionsgeschichtliche* school can be made by pointing out the structural identicality of certain 'Jewish' and 'Greek' ideas, which will be explored more below.[237]

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[234] Ibid., 40-41.

[235] Wright, *Paul and his Recent Interpreters,* 3-25.

[236] Anders Gerdmar, 'Baur and the Creation of the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy,' in *Ferdinand Christian Baur und die Geschichtes des frühen Christentums*, eds. M. Bauspiess, C. Landmesser and D. Lincicum (Tübingen: Mohr, 2014), 107-128.

[237] Badiou makes the claim on p. 42 of *Saint Paul* that both Jewish and Greek discourses employ the same 'figure of mastery.' Without reducing the abundance of Jewish and Hellenistic discourses that existed to monolithic stereotypes, or claiming that they were separable in the first

Having briefly discussed the content of Badiou's argument, and then his methodology, there are a few criticisms of Badiou that can be made in order to avoid repeating them. Some are merely products of a lack of interaction with Pauline studies, which is understandable since he set out to do a philosophical reader-response interpretation. He treats Paul as a reformer of the message of the Gospels (perhaps as a result of his favourable reading of Nietzsche's Paul),[238] despite acknowledging that Paul precedes them.[239] Breton also sometimes perpetuates this Nietzschean error, such as when he presumes that 'ransom' language cannot originate in Paul because it is used in the Gospels.[240] Badiou often makes points about Paul that could be much better supported if he were more aware of recent scholarship on Paul; for example, one of his main points is that the Christian subject does not pre-exist the event he declares.[241] This is the same point made by Sanders and militantly defended by Campbell, as referenced above, that Christ is the solution to a problem not known until the solution is presented. A much bigger demonstration of how much we need a philosophical reading of Paul that takes Pauline scholarship into account is Badiou's statement that 'the only continuity between the Good News according to Paul and prophetic Judaism is the equation Jesus = Christ.'[242] This is most certainly not the only element of continuity between Paul and prophetic Judaism, and one is forced to

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century, a similar point will be made below about a discourse that was already united: Stoic Jewish philosophical defences of the Torah.

[238] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 13.

[239] Ibid., 32.

[240] Breton, *Radical Philosophy of Saint Paul*, 81.

[241] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 14.

[242] Ibid., 20.

wonder how much more of 'the event' Badiou would have found in Paul if he had been more aware of how indebted Paul is to the prophetic Jewish tradition.[243]

Perhaps the biggest flaw in Badiou's work is the antithesis he represents in a dialectic opened by Nietzsche. As discussed above, Paul's theology is remarkably holistic, consisting of many inseparable and equally important parts, including the life, teachings, death, resurrection and current spiritual/embodied existence of Christ. Badiou rightly criticises Nietzsche for reading Paul as someone whose thinking constitutes 'a moribund paradigm, an eventalization of the hatred of life.'[244] For Badiou, death 'cannot be constitutive of the Christ-event.'[245] However, Badiou then carries on this bizarre compartmentalisation of Paul's thought, by claiming the opposite. For Badiou's Paul, the death of Christ is just another predicate absorbed and obliterated by the resurrection of Christ;[246] 'the event is not death, but resurrection;'[247] it is the resurrection, and not the life or death of Christ, that is 'the uniqueness of the real onto which [Paul's] thought fastens.'[248] He even goes so far as to say that 'for Paul, we have the cross, but not the way of the cross: this will be my formula,'[249] and, incredibly, 'suffering plays

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[243] Summarising the extent of this here would be difficult. Rediscovering how indebted to Judaism, and to the prophetic tradition, is Paul's theology, has been one of the core elements of the New Perspectives, and something N. T. Wright's work particularly brings out. Richard Hays' book *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), though now dated, is an excellent demonstration of just how deeply embedded are the references to the prophetic tradition (and the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures) in Paul's thought.

[244] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 65.

[245] Ibid., 68.

[246] Ibid., 63.

[247] Ibid., 66.

[248] Ibid., 61.

[249] Badiou, 'St Paul, Founder of the Universal Subject,' 33.

no role in Paul's apologetic, not even in the case of Christ's death.'[250] This error in Badiou's interpretation has been criticised by Paul scholars, including John Barclay and Daniel Boyarin.[251] Even in readings of Paul that specifically take a philosophical angle, to produce a Pauline theology in which one aspect obliterates another is to produce something decidedly un-Pauline. If Badiou had had more contact with modern biblical studies, he might have made the connection that the faith of Christ, meaning the faithfulness involved in going to the cross, is for Paul the central figure of fidelity that Badiou finds instead in Pascal in *Being and Event*.[252]

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[250] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 66

[251] John Barclay, 'Paul and the Philosophers: Alain Badiou and the Event,' *New Blackfriars* vol. 91, iss. 1032 (March 2013), 182-183; Daniel Boyarin, 'Paul among the Antiphilosophers; or, Saul among the Sophists,' in *St. Paul among the Philosophers*, eds. John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2009), 113. While discussing the reaction of biblical scholars to continental readings of Paul, it is worth mentioning a comment made by John Barclay at his Ethel M. Wood Lecture, 'Paul and the Gift,' delivered on 26.2.2014 at King's College London. Barclay is one of the foremost Paul scholars in the world, holding one of the highest-ranking theology professorships, as the Lightfoot Professor of Divinity at Durham University, formerly held by James Dunn. He has also written, to my knowledge, the only dedicated response by a Paul scholar to Badiou's work (outside of the volume here discussed), mentioned above. Yet he refers to the book *Paul's New Moment*, a collection of continental readings of Paul containing one of Žižek's works discussed above, as 'so abstract as to be inaccessible beyond a circle of experts.' Barclay is no fool, but this bears witness to a general feeling of the insurmountable incomprehensibility of the 'continental philosophical Paul' by Pauline scholarship, whether we blame continental philosophers or Paul scholars more for this barrier.

[252] The overlaps between Badiou's chapter on Pascal in *Being and Event*, 212-222, and many of the interpretations of Paul being presented by modern biblical studies are remarkable, but cannot be entered into here. Badiou remarks in *Lacan: L'antiphilosophie*, 109, *au. trans.*, that he could perhaps have used Paul for that chapter, yet never, as far as I know, fully develops a commentary on Paul's notion of *pistis* as it relates not to the conviction of the event (as in *Saint Paul: the Foundation of Universalism*), but to fidelity to the event as laid out in *Being and Event*.

The last aspect of Badiou's reading of Paul that needs to be discussed here is its relation to the response of biblical scholars that it earned. Paula Fredriksen accuses Badiou not only of de-emphasising the death of Christ in Paul's theology, but also of 'de-eschatologising' Paul by only focusing on the universality of the event.[253] E. P. Sanders responds to Badiou by discussing the theological meaning of 'universalism,' without really addressing the philosophical meaning Badiou employs (the universal offer of grace, the universal possibility of 'the event').[254] Dale Martin understands what Badiou means by universalism better, but still challenges it as an accurate reading of Paul.[255] All of these criticisms suffer the same problem: they critique Badiou's reading of Paul as it stands on its own, but Badiou's reading of Paul does not at all stand on its own. Throughout his book *Saint Paul* he uses, as always, the language he develops in *Being and Event*, but uses it as a language for communicating Paul's theology. Does Badiou 'de-eschatologise' Paul? Perhaps, in that he does not appear to emphasise eschatology in *Saint Paul*; but inasmuch as the event is a case of the future erupting into the present, every word of *Saint Paul* is eschatological – only one would not know it from reading only *Saint Paul* without *Being and Event*. Likewise, has Badiou misread Paul's universalism? Not at all. Badiou's claim is not that Paul advocates an identity that applies to all humans, but that the event of

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[253] Paula Fredriksen, 'Historical Integrity, Interpretive Freedom: The Philosopher's Paul and the Problem of Anachronism,' in *St. Paul among the Philosophers*, eds. John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2009), 71.

[254] E. P. Sanders, 'Paul Between Judaism and Hellenism,' in *St. Paul among the Philosophers*, eds. John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2009), 74-90.

[255] Dale B. Martin, 'The Promise of Teleology, the Constraints of Epistemology, and Universal Vision in Paul,' in *St. Paul among the Philosophers*, eds. John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2009), 91-108.

which Paul was a 'poet-thinker' militant *is* the event as a universal possibility ensured by mathematical ontology that Badiou writes about in *Being and Event*. However, the blame here falls on both sides: while biblical scholarship has not widely read Badiou's philosophy before criticising him, he has not written in such a way as to invite the world of biblical scholarship to dialogue with the wider theoretical body upon which his work depends. In the study that follows, Lacan will be explained as much as possible, despite how difficult this often is; and, on the other hand, his ideas will be used in various ways (some influenced by Badiou's methodology) to interpret Paul, who will be, as much as possible, the Paul who is read by the academic field that studies him.

4.3. Lacan and…

I argued in the last two sections that most previous studies of Lacan and Paul have not been studies of Lacan and Paul: they have been either studies of Hegel and Paul, or studies of continental philosophy influenced by Lacan and a version of Paul that predates the subject of modern biblical studies. There is one last category of relevant previously existing studies, which will prove more useful in developing a methodology: studies of 'Lacan and' someone else. While there has not yet been a good study of Lacan and the Paul known to his academic interpreters, there have been several studies of Lacan and other thinkers. I term such studies 'conjunctive readings.'

Lacanian conjunctive readings begin with Lacan. *Seminar VII* begins with two chapters that set his seminar in context of the similarities and differences

between psychoanalytic ethics and Aristotle's.[256] His most famous conjunctive reading, of Kant with Sade, is discussed in chapters 2-3 below. In a fascinating example of what I will shortly term 'equivocation,' he claims that Sade was in fact Kantian.[257] Lacan's affinity for conjunctive readings justifies such a reading of his own thought.

There have been several conjunctive readings of Lacan in recent years, which will serve to refine the methodology of my own. With this as the goal, I will comment more on their methodologies than on their findings. Four recent conjunctive readings of Lacan are Alenka Zupančič's study of Lacan and Kant, *Ethics of the Real: Kant and Lacan* (2000);[258] Marcus Pound's study of Lacan and Kierkegaard, *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma* (2007); Tina Beattie's study of Lacan and Aquinas, *Theology after Postmodernity: Divining the Void—A Lacanian Reading of Thomas Aquinas* (2013) and Samo Tomšič's study of Lacan and Marx, *The Capitalist Unconscious: Marx and Lacan* (2015).[259] From these four studies I will be able to discern at least six different conjunctive interpretative

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[256] *S7*, 1-40.

[257] Interpreting Lacan's article 'Kant with Sade' (*Écrits*, 645-668) is difficult, and will be discussed more in Chapter 2, below. Žižek opposes others and reads Lacan as saying that 'It is not Kant who is a closet sadist, it is Sade who is a closet Kantian,' in 'Kant and Sade: the Ideal Couple,' *lacanian ink 13* (New York: The Wooster Press, 1998), available online at <http://www.lacan.com/zizlacan4.htm> [accessed 5.8.2016]. Or, as Marc DeKesel puts it, Lacan regards Kant as 'the truth of Sade.' Marc DeKesel, *Eros and Ethics: Read Jacques Lacan's Seminar VII*, trans. by Sigi Jöttkandt (Albany: State of New York University Press, 2009 [2001]), 135. Lacan gets closest to making his opinion clear in *S7*, 94-99, where he briefly develops an interpretation of the interrelation of Kant and Sade's ideas, that ends with the statement 'Kant is of the same opinion as Sade.'

[258] London: Verso, 2011 (2000). This is slightly older than the rest, but has been republished more recently and is still highly influential.

[259] Samo Tomšič, *The Capitalist Unconscious: Marx and Lacan* (London: Verso, 2015).

strategies, which I will term **equivocation**, **elaboration**, **description**, **combination**, **synthesis** and **genealogy**. There have also been some shorter studies of Lacan and Martin Luther, which are interesting but would not contribute further to the development of my methodology.[260]

Throughout his book, Pound reads Kierkegaard and Lacan to be talking about the same thing, creating a ground for the interplay of their ideas. For example, he does this with 'repetition' in Kierkegaard and Lacan,[261] and by claiming that Kierkegaard wrote about our alienation in language before Lacan did,[262] and by equating Kierkegaard's 'chatter' to Lacan's 'empty speech' by

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[260] Herman Westerink has written on the Reformation, and specifically Luther, in terms of Lacan's thoughts on *das Ding* in *Seminar VII*: *The Heart of Man's Destiny: Lacanian Psychoanalysis and Early Reformation Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2012), and 'Spinoza with Luther? Desire and the Problem of Evil in Lacan's *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*,' *European Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 33.2 (2012), 1-20. He helpfully notes the demonstrable influence of Luther's thought on Lacan (especially on *S7*), though perhaps overstates the similarity between Luther's and Lacan's anthropologies: Luther saw humanity as having an evil heart, leading to a deep sense of guilt that is discussed in chapters 1 and 5 here; but for Lacan things are more complex than this, and the aim of psychoanalysis is to alleaviate guilt, not to show that guilt is justified (*S7*, 5-6). Carl Raschke responded by noting the importance of Luther's relationship to God as a sublimation of *das Ding* as a foundational moment in the history of Western Christianity, in his review 'Luther, Lacan, and the Heart of Human Destiny – What Psychoanalysis Can Tell Us About Our Own Political Theology (A Review),' *Political Theology Today*, 2.8.2013. Raschke has developed this idea a bit further, leading to the conclusion that the last two thousand years of Christian musings amount to a prolonged Lacanian psychoanalytic session, in his paper 'Subjectification, Salvation, and the Real in Luther and Lacan,' in *Theology After Lacan: The Passion for the Real*, eds. Creston Davis, Marcus Pound and Clayton Crockett (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 58-70. Dominik Finkelde has also been developing a reading of Luther and Lacan, towards furthering Lacan's own reading of Luther in *S7*. He wants to 'put Luther in the context of what Lacan sees in him, not of scholasticism.' He said this in a presentation called 'Luther and Lacan' at the conference 'The Actuality of the Theologico-Political' at Birkbeck, University of London, on 24.5.2014.

[261] Pound, *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma*, 66-71.

[262] Ibid., 88-94.

demonstrating a genealogy through Heidegger's 'idle chatter.'[263] This approach highlights a natural fecundity resulting from the equivocation of concepts. In the same way that Lacan's reading of Freud sometimes gets summarised as saying that what Freud said was true but he was really talking about language,[264] this 'but he was really talking about' sums up a part of my approach to Lacan and Paul. It is, in essence, what Lacan does with Paul by translating *hamartia* (sin) as *das Ding* in *Seminar VII*.[265] It is as if he is saying 'Everything Paul said about Sin was true, but he was really talking about *das Ding*!' Alenka Zupančič also employs the same strategy throughout her book, for example when she mentions an obscure passage from Kant where he suggests that ethical transformation amounts to an act of new creation *ex nihilo*, then asks 'Is not Lacan's own conception of the *passage à l'acte* itself founded on such a Kantian gesture?'[266] This structure of hermeneutical claim allows authenticity to both Paul and Lacan without sacrificing any historical veracity. I term it 'equivocation,' as it involves taking an idea from one author and equating it directly to an idea from another, causing the interplay between contiguous ideas in both authors.

Tina Beattie provides an excellent example of a conjunctive reading employing 'elaboration.' Instead of writing a study on the relationship between Thomas Aquinas and Lacan, she uses Aquinas and Lacan to do theology, mostly *using Lacan to read Aquinas*. She systematically seeks 'continuities and discontinuities between Thomas and Lacan, [using Lacan] within Thomas's own

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[263] Ibid., 124-125.

[264] Ibid., 6; Axton, *The Psychotheology of Sin and Salvation: An Analysis of the Meaning of the Death of Christ in light of the Psychoanalytical Reading of Paul*, 103.

[265] *S7*, 102-103.

[266] Zupančič, *Ethics of the Real*, 11.

theology,' and then uses her Lacanian critique of Thomas to take Thomism beyond modernity.[267] The line between methodologies is not so clear-cut, as one could certainly argue that this is not far from Pound's approach, and she is only mildly less synthetic than Zupančič (see below). Yet her use of Lacan to further elaborate and criticise Aquinas's ideas stands out, using Lacan to expand and 'update' Aquinas. The study that follows has its strongest similarity to Beattie in that it is primarily a Lacanian study of Paul, rather than a study of Lacan. Conversely, there is fairly little use of Paul to read Lacan. The most inspirational element to draw from Beattie's methodology is that she does not just use Lacan to critique Aquinas, but she then, consistently with the approach of Radical Orthodoxy, uses Lacan to bring Thomism to the present. This is the biggest advantage of adopting the method 'elaboration,' alongside the other methods. My ultimate goal here is to use a Lacanian understanding of Paul's theology and the Pauline theological event in order to bring Paul to bear on the twenty-first century in a way that is much more Pauline than Žižek's atheistic Hegelianism.

However, this leads into the territory of the third conjunctive methodology discernable from these four texts: description. One key claim below is that Paul recognised some problems that Lacan articulated more precisely, such as alienation (where I agree with Žižek and Axton that Romans 7 at the very least demonstrates awareness of it), the paradox of *jouissance* (here I position Paul as precisely aware of both sides of this paradox, not just the paradox of perversion) and our subjection to the signifier (the source of our alienation in the paradox, articulated by Paul with reference to the *Torah*), and he described a solution that

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[267] Beattie, *Theology After Postmodernity*, 211.

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is better formulated in Lacanian terms (the psychoanalytic nature of Christian conversion as Paul understood it). When Pound notes that Lacan is the true heir of theology,[268] this is because the problems to which Lacan's thought responds can easily be retroactively reconfigured into theological territory.[269] A better example of this is Badiou's work, which, by studying 'the event' with Paul as a witness to it, studies the historical situation of Paul more than the thought of Paul, and describes it in different terms (as stated above). So, this is description, in the case of the study that follows: to claim that an event to which Paul bears witness is a psychoanalytic event, and to wager that this claim might be worthwhile.

Another fruitful method of conversation between Paul and Lacan is not to be found in the equivocation of their ideas, but in the combination of them, allowing them to play off of each other, and to compliment or combat each other. Tomšič demonstrates this when he juxtaposes different but related Marxian and Lacanian theories of alienation, in order to conclude that 'While capitalism considers the subject to be nothing more than a narcissistic animal, Marxism and psychoanalysis reveal that the subject of revolutionary politics is an alienated animal, which, in its most intimate interior, includes its other.'[270] Throughout the book Tomšič discusses Marx and Lacan's differing applications of understandings of alienation, and the use of Marx's idea by Lacan, so that by the end he is able to combine them into a Lacanian Marxist critique of Capitalism. This is not too dissimilar an approach to Axton, above, who uses Žižek's understanding of sin to discuss Paul's soteriology, combining them into something he sees as both

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[268] Pound, *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma*, 19.

[269] Ibid., 20.

[270] Tomšič, *The Capitalist Unconscious*, 233.

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Pauline and Lacanian. Combination is a suitable approach when Lacan and Paul are most definitely not saying the same thing, but might nonetheless be saying complimentary things.

Of all of the conjunctive readings of Lacan, Alenka Zupančič's work stands out as a true work of synthesis. She takes on board a Lacanian critique of Kant (that his ethics are a discourse of the master) and a Kantian critique of Lacan (that the ultimate horizon of Lacanian ethics is one's own life), and attempts to provide an ethics that synthesises Lacan and Kant without being susceptible to either of these critiques.[271] Her method is flawless in its synthesis, drawing from both Lacan and Kant consistently, employing the methods described above but also treating them both on their own terms and working towards a unified ethical idea at the end of the discussion. Žižek's work also falls into this category, in that most of his writing can be regarded as a seamless synthesis of Hegel (and occasionally other German idealists) and Lacan. Such a synthesis will not be quite as possible with Paul and Lacan; but, ironically, synthesis will at least be more possible with Lacan and Paul than with Hegel and Paul.

Though not quite meeting the requirements of what Nietzsche or Foucault meant by the term, 'genealogy' is still the best term for a sixth identifiable conjunctive methodology. When Samo Tomšič sets out to write about Marx and Lacan, he is faced with the problem of Lacan's well-known anti-revolutionary stance, and potentially conservative politics.[272] This is not dissimilar to the

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[271] Zupančič, *Ethics of the Real*, 5.

[272] Tomšič, *The Capitalist Unconscious*, 1-2. There is an excellent discussion of Lacan's politics in Alain Badiou and Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan Past and Present: A Dialogue*, trans. by Jason E. Smith (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2014 [2012]), 19-30. Lacan often

problem with some philosophical readings of Paul: Paul cannot be made an atheist. Nonetheless, Tomšič remains true to both Marx and Lacan when he arrives at the thesis that Marx actually caused a shift in Lacan's thought, from a Freudianism supplemented by structuralism to a Freudianism supplemented by the mental economy of the production of *jouissance*.[273] Pound, Beattie and Zupančič at points also adopt a genealogical approach, tracing the direct or indirect influence of their other subject upon Lacan.[274] However, when it comes to Lacan and Paul there is not much room for this sort of claim other than what Lacan states quite overtly: that his reading of desire's dependence upon the law is the same phenomenon described by Paul.[275] This is equivocation done by Lacan himself, leading to elaboration, and he explains himself enough that it does not leave anything to be gained through further genealogical claims. What little reference to Paul and Paul's influence there is in Lacan will be commented upon in passing. Instead, the project that follows is non-genealogical: it intends to widen the dialogue that does not necessarily exist already.

In summary, these four conjunctive readings of Lacan with people other than Paul, as well as the thinkers discussed in the previous two sections, demonstrate at least six conjunctive methodologies. Equivocation, elaboration,

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made his thoughts on revolution clear, for example in *S17*, 207: 'What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You will get one.'

[273] Tomšič, *The Capitalist Unconscious*, 11.

[274] Pound, *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma*, 142-144; Beattie, *Theology after Postmodernity*, 4-5. Zupančič does this consistently throughout *Ethics of the Real*, though it is much easier with Lacan and Kant since Lacan refers to Kant directly much more frequently.

[275] His exact wording is that in Romans 7, 'the relationship between the Thing and the Law could not be better defined than in these terms' (*S7*, 103). In other words, Lacan reads Paul to be describing the same phenomenon precisely but briefly, while Lacan expands in more detail.

description and combination will be used extensively in the study that follows. Synthesis will also be attempted where possible, and genealogy will not. These approaches help me to avoid the pitfalls inherent to an attempt actually to psychoanalyse Paul himself. This was the approach of psychoanalytic historian Erik Erikson, who wrote a biography of Martin Luther that 'simply imposes the classic Freudian topology of id, ego, and superego—or the developmental model of the oral, anal, and genital stages—on the life of Luther.'[276] As Peter Gay notes, 'One cannot, when all is said, psychoanalyse the dead.'[277] Instead of analysing the person Paul, when attempting 'equivocation,' 'elaboration' or 'combination,' this is *an analysis of the structure of his theology*.

5. Methodological Summary

Not much more needs to be said regarding methodology, which has been slowly unveiled throughout the literature review. What follows is a sort of hermeneutical experiment, primarily attempting to demonstrate the fecundity of a field of overlap, through a multi-pronged conjunctive reading. The goal is to mix

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[276] Raschke, 'Subjectification, Salvation, and the Real in Luther and Lacan,' 67-68. Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (London: W. W. Norton, 1958).

[277] Peter Gay, *Freud for Historians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3, 5 and 182. On the pages immediately following Gay is also heavily critical of Erikson's attempt to psychoanalyse Martin Luther, despite the fact that Gay's book was written as a defence of the use of psychoanalysis in the study of history. The middle phrase of the above quote, 'when all is said,' is even more crucial for Lacanian psychoanalysis than for Gay's more 'orthodox' Freudian tradition. Lacanian psychoanalysis is the analysis of the unconscious as it hides in plain sight, in speech. Paul does not speak, so he cannot be psychoanalysed.

Lacan and Paul as much as possible, throwing them at each other in various different ways to see what emerges. As a result, it should be stated from the start that the goal is not to plumb the depths of journal articles on Paul in order to find a truth that might be Lacanian, but, rather, *to pair some of the interpretations of Paul from modern biblical scholars with the ideas of Lacan in a way that demonstrates the potential productivity of the discourse.*

There is far too much internal disagreement within the field of Pauline scholarship to be able to defend a 'neutral' reading of Paul at every turn, while making room for Lacan; instead, this study is merely a demonstration of how some of the many readings of Paul currently available can produce lines additional of inquiry with input from Lacan's ideas. The use of the work of Douglas Campbell should neither be taken by biblical scholars as a signal that a Lacanian reading of Paul is only possible via the most controversial of interpretations, nor as a signal to philosophers that Campbell's work represents a consensus among Paul scholars (far from it – but neither does the work of any other one scholar). Campbell's work is used because the author agrees with many of his controversial stances, despite this not being the place to defend them at length.

Further specification might be needed regarding how this study goes about equivocation, elaboration and description. In attempting to adopt an approach that uses Lacan, while still remaining true to the methods employed by modern biblical scholars, it is necessary to defend equivocation, elaboration and description as forms of historical criticism. 'Historical criticism' is a term that describes the approach of the vast majority of biblical scholars over the last two

centuries,[278] and can be defined as the attempt to ascertain the historical truth referred to in a text.[279] Historical critics and theological conservatives tend to see postmodern, structuralist, poststructuralist and deconstructive readings as opposed to historical readings; though it is important to note here that Lacanian readings of any sort have not happened widely enough to merit enough attention to be discounted with other poststructuralist readings.[280]

Within the tradition of historical criticism a more recent field has emerged: social-scientific criticism. This approach '[retains] a close link with the aims of historical criticism; the intention is that the use of the resources which the social sciences offer, alongside the other methods of textual and historical criticism, may enable a fuller and better appreciation of the biblical texts and communities within their historical, social, and cultural setting.'[281] John Elliott adds to this definition, outlining three historical elements studied by the approach: (1) 'the conditioning factors and intended consequences of the communication process; (2) the correlation of the text's linguistic, literary, theological (ideological) and social dimensions; and (3) the manner in which this textual communication was both a

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[278] Wright, *Paul and his Recent Interpreters*, 3-8.

[279] I. H. Marshall, 'Historical Criticism,' in *New Testament Interpretation*, ed. I. H. Marshall (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1977), 126-127.

[280] For example, see G. R. Osborne, 'Hermeneutics/Interpreting Paul,' in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 388-397, who groups all of these hermeneutical methods together, but devotes the most time to discussing deconstructionist readings, since it is Derrida who has had the most influence here, and Lacan virtually none.

[281] David Horrell, 'Social-Scientific Interpretation of the New Testament: Retrospect and Prospect,' in *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, ed. David Horrell (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 3.

reflection of and a response to a specific social and cultural context.'[282] Two of
the most groundbreaking studies of Paul to have occurred since the start of the
New Perspectives have taken this approach, studying Paul's social world: Francis
Watson's *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*[283] and
Wayne Meeks' *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle
Paul*.[284] Watson uses sociology to argue that 'the social reality underlying Paul's
discussions of Judaism and the law is his creation of Gentile Christian
communities in sharp distinction from the Jewish community.'[285] Meeks studies
the social life of people in the urban centres where Paul proselytised, including
the class, political and ritualistic lives, to demonstrate the urban setting of Paul's
message. Common sociological routes of inquiry in New Testament studies
include the sociology of honour and shame;[286] group develop-
ment/sectarianism;[287] cleanness and uncleanness,[288] etc. Social-scientific

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[282] John Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1993), 7.

[283] Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007 (1986).

[284] Yale: Yale University Press, 1983. Meeks published a revised second edition in 2003.

[285] Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 51. In the second edition of this text Watson largely reworked his argument, having developed and changed many of his positions in the intervening twenty-one years; he remained, however, fully convinced of the merits of a sociological approach to the interpretation of Paul's notion of justification.

[286] Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006); David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000), 23-94; Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2001), 27-57; Jerome H. Neyrey, '"Despising the Shame of the Cross": Honor and Shame in the Johannine Passion Narrative' in *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, ed. David Horrell (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 151-176.

[287] Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 20-25, 343-347; Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 163-287; Malina, *The New Testament World*, 58-80 and 198-220; Robin Scroggs, 'The Earliest

approaches include the psychological: John G. Gager applies cognitive dissonance theory;[289] Gerd Theissen uses psychodynamic theory, examining at length the role of the unconscious in Pauline theology[290] and Krister Stendahl's seminal paper 'Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,' mentioned above, is essentially a psychological meta-critique of Pauline scholarship. Theissen's work also includes a long study of the role of psychology in Romans 7-8, which will be helpful for Chapter 5 below.[291]

With psychological criticism as a minor strand of social-scientific criticism, itself a modern incarnation of historical criticism, Lacanian 'equivocation,' 'elaboration' and 'description' as outlined above can be posited as orthodox approaches within academic biblical studies. The kind of elaboration attempted below takes Pauline theology and elaborates how, within a Lacanian psychology, its claims can fit into a Žižekian programme and be of greater

Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement,' in *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, ed. David Horrell (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 69-92.

[288] Jerome H. Neyrey, 'Clean/Unclean, Pure/Polluted, and Holy/Profane: The Idea and the System of Purity,' in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard L. Rohrbaugh (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 80-104; deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 241-316; Malina, *The New Testament World*, 161-197.

[289] John G. Gager, 'Christian Missions and Theory of Cognitive Dissonance,' in *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, ed. David Horrell (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 177-194.

[290] Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*, trans. by J. Galvin (London: T&T Clark, 1987). Theissen's work will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

[291] Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*, 177-265. For more on the history of social-scientific readings of the New Testament, see David G. Horrell, 'Whither Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation? Reflections on Contested Methodologies and the Future,' in *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later*, eds. Todd D. Still and David G. Horrell (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 6-20. Horrell actually cites Theissen as the originator of social-scientific methods in New Testament studies, with his work in the 1970's.

political and cultural relevance than when viewed in nothing but historical context. The kind of description attempted below uses the psychological structures attested to by Lacanian psychoanalysis to evaluate Paul's social and psychological world, in order then to interpret the psychical event he presumes to have happened to himself and those in his churches, later termed 'conversion' by his interpreters. These approaches transfer Paul's message into a psychoanalytic framework so that equivocation and combination can also take place, leading eventually to synthetic claims. (Combination and synthesis are perhaps the additional steps being made here that are not made by historical-critical social-scientific approaches – but they are grounded in the other methods.) The use of Lacan to discuss Paul's historical context[292] supports the claim that this study is historical-critical in form, and is a Lacanian form of historical social-scientific criticism; but the use of Lacanian psychoanalysis for historical criticism also allows us to bridge historical and modern horizons successfully.

This thesis is structured like *Seminar VII*: it introduces *das Ding*, then discusses the paradox of *jouissance*, then presents a reading of *Antigone* in light of it, then concludes with some assorted implications. Chapter 2 lays a framework for the use of Lacan that follows by explaining two terms that are key to the study: *das Ding* and the paradox of *jouissance*. It then creates a link between past and present by showing that the paradox of *jouissance*, still a psychical reality today, was experienced in ancient Mediterranean culture as illustrated by the conflict between Nero and Stoic thought. Chapter 3 is a reading

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[292] Which, as I argue in chapters 2-4, involves studying the relations to *jouissance* in his world, as well as the clinical structures of both Stoic ideology and the perverse response his gospel sometimes caused.

of 1 Corinthians, demonstrating that Paul's theology forced him to deal with the reality of the paradox of *jouissance*, and in this letter he did not yet know how to respond to it. Reading 1 Corinthians also sets up a discussion of Paul's relation to desire, which must be discussed in a Lacanian study. Chapter 4 is an extended argument that Stoic philosophy in Paul's time represented the 'obsessional side of the paradox.' This also introduces the concept of master signifiers. Both of these arguments set up Chapter 5, which reads Paul as consciously framing his theological opponent as someone overly troubled by the symptoms of his obsessional Stoic theology. This clarifies Paul's position with respect to the paradox of *jouissance*, but does not discuss the actual solution Paul presents, which is laid out in Chapter 6 with reference to Lacan's reading of *Antigone*. Chapter 7 is a brief conclusion, summarising the argument, outlining some criticisms of Paul, Žižek, Badiou and Lacan, and then asking the question of where all this might lead in the future.

Chapter Two

Das Ding and the Paradox of *Jouissance*

1. *Das Ding* and the Death Drive

In this section I will explain Lacan's understanding of the Freudian death drive, with reference to Lacan's concept of *das Ding*, which he argued could be found in Freud's work. This paves the way for a reading of 1 Corinthians and then of Romans that uses a Lacanian psychoanalytic and philosophical framework, constructing a philosophical interpretation of Paul's theology while remaining mindful of the historical-critical method.

Throughout the seventh year of his seminar, 1959-1960 (*Seminar VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*), Lacan spoke about ethics in relation to the Thing, *le chose, das Ding.*[1] It appears only that year of his seminar, and very sparsely in *Écrits*.[2] After this the concepts underlying *das Ding* were rolled into his evolving

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[1] In the French Lacan uses both *le chose* and *das Ding* regularly and interchangeably, occasionally also using the English 'the Thing.' I mostly use the German, aside from occasional exceptions where it does not fit.

[2] *Écrits*, 550, 724.

notions of the *objet petit a* and the real.[3] Despite the eventual obsolescence of the term in Lacan's own thought, it remains important to my study because Lacan found it easiest to explain using Paul's own ideas,[4] and because many of my arguments below will depend upon *das Ding* and the death drive. Firstly, I will detail some of the many facets of Lacan's concept of *das Ding*: its development in relation to the ideas of Immanuel Kant, Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein and Ferdinand de Saussure; and also how *das Ding* is the void around which language is structured, and is related to the figure of the mother and maternal enjoyment.

The history of Lacan's understanding of *das Ding* goes back to the death drive (*Todestrieb*)[5] in Freud's later writings, specifically, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.[6] Freud had noticed that the internal conflicts engulfing the human subject are not simply reducible to the primary process (the pleasure principle, the instinct to seek pleasure and the reduction of unpleasure) and the secondary process (the reality principle, the struggle to come to terms with the way things really are). Rather, there is another instinct at work in the human: the death drive. Since Freud saw human consciousness and the unconscious as the transfer of energy according to certain rules and processes, the death drive was the tendency of all life forms to work towards the state of inertia from which they began.[7]

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[3] Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1996), 205.

[4] Lacan mentions St Paul six times throughout the seminar, but the most striking is his extended quote from Romans 7 on p. 102.

[5] Sometimes translated as 'death instinct' in Freud and psychoanalytic literature.

[6] *SE18*, 3-64. Lacan connects *das Ding* with the death drive, which Freud began to write about here.

[7] *SE18*, 46-51.

By Lacan's time, Melanie Klein had developed the idea of the death drive to the point that she assigned 'a major role to the death instincts from the beginning of human existence, and not only inasmuch as these instincts are oriented towards external objects, but also in that they work within the organism and induce anxiety about disintegration and annihilation.'[8] As psychoanalysts around the world were forming ranks behind either Melanie Klein or Freud's daughter Anna, Lacan was instead formulating a psychoanalytic view of the human subject not focused on the strength of the ego or the power of the death drive, but on the signifier. His battle was on the one side against the ego-psychology of Anna Freud *et al.*, and on the other also against Klein's dependence upon notions of instinct. Put in theological terms, the disagreement with Klein was with the idea that Original Sin is the human *instinct* to do evil. According to Lacan, the Freudian drive has nothing to do with instinct.[9] So, in opposition to the burgeoning power of the concept of instinct in contemporary psychoanalysis, Lacan developed the idea of *das Ding* (though, as we will see below, he of course claims that the idea is entirely founded in authentic Freudian thought).

The foundations for *das Ding* are laid in the theoretical work surrounding the Oedipus complex and the paternal metaphor in *Seminar V*, which were largely developed in response to Klein. This is clear from the outset of the section, when on pages 4-5 of the lecture of 15.1.1958 Lacan places his vision of the Oedipus complex in context of Klein's alleged overdependence upon a precocious

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[8] J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac Books, 1988 [1973]), 101. For example, see Melanie Klein, *The Psycho-Analysis of Children*, trans. by Alix Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1959 [1932]), 210-216.

[9] *Écrits*, 722.

knowledge in every child of the imaginary (the physical genitals of the parents).[10]

Lacan reconfigures the Oedipus complex around his linguistic understanding of what happens in castration: it is not that the physical father gets in the way, but that the child accepts a signifier of paternal prohibition; the child accepts that something is getting in the way of it being the sole thing that the mother (or primary caregiver) desires. In Lacan's system there is no need for the child to have a precocious knowledge of its parents' sex lives or organs. Instead, 'the father' is a metaphor;[11] a signifier taking the place of the signifier of the mother's (or other care-giver's) desire, of which the child had hoped itself to be the signified.

In this symbolic relation, the child's development is not related to imaginary objects (such as a real physical phallus) but to its place in a relationship of signifiers. This opens the way for Lacan to continue his attack on Klein: Klein not only placed the Oedipus complex in relation to imaginary objects, but, along with many other psychoanalysts at the time (such as Winnicott), believed that even before language there is an imaginary satisfaction of need through hallucination, as a result of instinct. This is the place at which Lacan's criticism of Klein is most focused: Klein ultimately depends entirely upon instinct, without explaining how it is that the child reaches such a union of perception and need. For Klein the child is born with the ability to be satisfied by hallucination of that

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[10] Lacanian opposition to Kleinian dependence upon the idea that children are aware of the real phallus (as opposed to the symbolic phallus) is illustrated by this typically Lacanian comment by the psychoanalyst Phillip Hill: 'Generally it is only Kleinians and young children who confuse the penis with the phallus,' in *Using Lacanian Clinical Technique—an introduction—* (London: Press for the Habilitation of Psychoanalysis, 2002), 168.

[11] *S5*, 15.1.1958, 14.

which it needs. It has the instinct to hallucinate the satisfaction of its needs. But if this is the case, why ever accept reality? Why are we ever unsatisfied by our ability to achieve satisfaction through the hallucination of objects?[12]

Lacan's answer, conceptually prefiguring *das Ding*, is that instinct is always already desire, and desire is always under the signifier.[13] It is not 'instinct' that knows what it wants and desires it, but, rather, need does not make itself known without the signifier. There must be the Other, and the desire of the Other, and the other of the Other who prohibits something (tells you that you do not already possess it and something is keeping it away from you), before there can be any desire at all. Another way of putting this is that unless there is something or someone getting in the way of the subject having an object, then the subject has the object and it is not desired. When the subject employs a signifier to try to get the object, that signifier, like all signifiers, comes from the Other;[14] so, desire is the desire of the Other. Lacan's symbolic structure for the Oedipus complex and castration allows him to remove instinct from the equation altogether. What remains, then, is the signifier acting as a lure to bring desire into existence from a void that could not properly desire before this, not having language. The void, pre-conscious matter without desire or language, will become Lacan's *das Ding*, a part of his growing understanding of 'the real,' and the eventual possibility in Lacan's thought of the *objet petit a*.

In the human, 'the hallucinatory response to need is not the emergence of a phantastical reality at the end of the circuit inaugurated by the exigencies of need,'

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[12] *S5*, 5.2.1958, 4-5.

[13] Ibid., 6.

[14] *Écrits,* 684: the subject speaks the language of the Other to others.

but rather 'has this character of being something which has a relationship of such a kind with this object, that it deserves to be called a signifier.'[15] It is related to an object (as Winnicott argued), but this object *is a signifier*; not a response to an instinct, but a signifier that acts as a lure and *awakens* instincts already in relationship with other signifiers – with the signifier, for example, that is directly opposed to it, signifying its absence (the phallus).

Lacan gives an example of this from Freud. According to Lacan,[16] when Freud's daughter Anna is hungry and dreams of food she does not *just* dream of food, but specifically dreams of the foods that her father has already prohibited ('cherries, strawberries, raspberries, flan').[17] It is not that there is an instinct or need that is capable of producing hallucinations of its own, but, rather, there is no need without signifiers to lure it into existence, since human consciousness of need occurs in a way bound to the signifier. No matter how hungry one is, what one dreams of is the signifier. While one could perhaps argue that the object of which one dreams is a representation of the thing, rather than of the signifier, psychoanalytic experience confirms what Ferdinand de Saussure theorised: the two are inseparable.[18]

So Lacan positions himself against Klein, for whom there are instincts and need before signification, instead arguing that there are no instincts, and even

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[15] *S5*, 5.2.1958, 7.

[16] I was unable to locate the source of this example in Freud's own writings.

[17] *S5*, 5.2.1958, 7.

[18] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. by Roy Harris (London: Duckworth, 1983 [1972]), 65-70. This fact of the unconscious is a core element of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory: even in a dream where no words are spoken, the images in the dream relate in the unconscious as signifiers, through metaphor and metonymy (see Chapter 1, section 2.2).

need cannot exist without the signifier. This leaves us with the question, then, of what it is that does exist before and without the signifier? What is it that one needs before it is signified, and what is it that does the needing before it is represented by a signifier? Many years later Lacan eventually named the unconscious (or a certain aspect of it) *parlêtre*, a speaking being.[19] This is because the unconscious is not a repressed, thinking, other being, but is a being that only emerges within speech itself. Human consciousness is inseparable from the language it uses about itself, and the linguistically structured unconscious emerges through speech. So what is there before and beyond speech? The answer that Lacan comes to in *Seminar VII* is *das Ding*.

Das Ding is what remains beyond signifier and signified. It is at the point of discussing the relationship between pleasure and reality principles, and between the subject and the signifier, that Lacan takes up this discussion in *Seminar VII*, on the way to introducing *das Ding*. He again says that the primary process in the unconscious results in us hallucinating what we want,[20] but now argues from Freud's texts themselves (specifically the *Entwurf*) that that which appears takes the form of a signifier.[21] The thing that is desired when a baby cries 'would remain obscure and unconscious if that cry did not lend it, as far as the

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[19] Jacques-Alain Miller, in his concluding speech to the ninth Congress of the World Association of Psychoanalysts on 27 April 2014, pins the coining of the neologism *parlêtre* to Lacan's untranslated article *'Joyce le Symptôme II'* in *Autre Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 2001), 568, where he refers to a particular form of the unconscious (*'la forme de cet ICS'*) that he terms *parlêtre*, in reference to the unconscious as it emerges in the James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Miller's speech, *'L'inconscient et le corps parlant,'* is available translated at <http://www.lacan.com/actuality/2014/07/lecture-by-jacques-alain-miller-paris-41514/#more-506> [accessed 18.8.2016].

[20] *S7*, 36.

[21] Ibid., 37.

conscious is concerned, the sign that gives it its own weight.'[22] When he then

actually introduces the concept of *das Ding* it is at this precise point at which he

arrived in *Seminar V*: *das Ding* is that which the subject has/is without signifier or

signified, that which is there before the signifier has allowed need to exist in the

form of desire.

Lacan finds his structuralist point of entry into Freud in the notions of

Wortvorstellungen and *Sachvorstellungen*, word-representations and thing-

representations.[23] Although Lacan does not mention Saussure by name in the

whole of *Seminar VII*, his interchangeable use of these two German terms of

Freud's with 'signifier' (for *Wortvorstellung*) and 'signified' (for

Sachvorstellung) ties the discussion to the Saussurean linguistics Lacan had long-

since embedded in his thought.[24] Freud uses these in his article 'The

Unconscious' as two different things that appear in the unconscious:

representations of words, which are always opposed to representations of things.[25]

But Lacan notes that Freud chooses not to form the word *Dingvorstellung*, using

the other German word for 'thing.'[26] Why? Lacan then points to a roughly

contemporary letter of Freud's to his friend Fleiss, in which he is talking about the

subject's very first experiences of reality in the form of the *Nebenmensch*, the

neighbour.[27] *Das Ding* is the neighbour (the whole of outside reality) first

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[22] Ibid., 37-38.

[23] Ibid., 52.

[24] See Chapter 1, section 2.1, above.

[25] *SE14*, 201.

[26] *S7*, 54-55.

[27] Letter 52 (6.12.1896), found in *SE1*, 233-239.

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experienced as something outside, something alien (*fremde*).[28] Based on this,

Lacan can defend his position that the reason Freud refers to signifieds in the

unconscious as *Sachvorstellungen* is because *Ding* is already the word he is using

for the whole of reality as first experienced *apart* from the signifier, before it has

arrived – nomenclature consistent with that of Kant. This is reality as experienced

before the signifier has aroused need. However, *das Ding* never stays the same:

every time the subject encounters it in reality there is something different about

it.[29]

This could be because of the connection Lacan's concept has to Kant,

who, 'better than anyone else, glimpsed the function of *das Ding*.'[30] Lacan

mentions this having just described *das Ding* as 'the thing in its dumb reality' and

'the beyond-of-the-signified.'[31] This is similar to Kant's *Ding an sich*, which is

the thing as it exists in itself, unmediated by perception and essentially

unknowable to the subject.[32] Lacan is appropriating the Kantian concept of the

Ding an sich, the thing in itself that must exist but cannot be known or perceived,

and seeing it in Freud's unnamed beyond of the *Wortvorstellung* (signifier) and

Sachvorstellung (signified).

This is one of the senses in which *das Ding* is the original lost object,

which one never really had. So Lacan claims that when Freud in 1925 wrote an

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[28] *S7*, 62.

[29] Ibid., 62-63.

[30] Ibid., 65-66.

[31] Ibid., 65.

[32] Immanuel Kant, *Prologemena to any Future Metaphysics*, trans. by Gary Hatfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004 [1783]), 85 (§13, Note II).

article entitled '*Verneinung*,' negation, on the lost object, it is about *das Ding*.[33] The pleasure principle, then, rather than simply regulating a quest for more pleasure and less unpleasure, is regulating a circling around the lost object, never getting close enough to realise it is not there, nor far enough away to stop thinking it is just out of reach. It is this sense of *das Ding* that will become the *objet petit a*, around which the drive circles.[34] The rest of *Seminar VII* is about the subject's relation to *das Ding* as a lost object it never had, which is what all signifying units have as the void around which they are wrapped.[35]

Is Lacan correct in his interpretation of Freud, positing *das Ding* as an authentically Freudian concept? His case is strong, but perhaps still unconvincing. While he might be correct that Freud avoided coining the phrase *Dingvorstellung* because he already had in mind a Kantian concept of *Ding* as connected to that which is not included in representation, this does not really amount to a Freudian idea, and certainly not an idea with any significant place in his thought. However, all this means is what we already knew: Lacan intentionally tries to posit his own system as authentically Freudian, particularly in his earlier years when he was still accountable to the International Psychoanalytic Association. Whether or not *das Ding* is an authentically

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[33] *S7*, 70.

[34] *S11*, 178.

[35] It is in this sense that Lacan compares *das Ding* to the inside of a vase or pot, drawing on Heidegger's metaphor, though the origins of Lacan's understanding of *das Ding* are much more dependent upon the other thinkers stated here than on Heidegger. *S7*, 148-150 citing Martin Heidegger, 'The Thing,' in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (New York: HarperCollins, 2001 [1971]), 161-184.

Freudian concept, it is a foundational concept in Lacan's linguistic return to Freud, and, in his understandings of the death drive and *jouissance*.

Lacan finishes his second lecture on *das Ding* drawing helpful connections between *das Ding* and other concepts, which sets up his writings on Kant and Sade: 'There is no Sovereign Good – the… Sovereign Good, which is *das Ding*, which is the mother, is also the object of incest, is a forbidden good, and… there is no other good.'[36] Here, locked up in the real, is the only universal good: the repressed memory of oneness with the (m)Other, before desire and incest prohibition entered via the signifier, before the Other (in this case the mother) was other.[37] Thus in *das Ding* is the subject of the incest prohibition, the desire of the mother.

> What we find in the incest law is located as such at the level of the unconscious in relation to *das Ding*, the Thing. The desire for the mother cannot be satisfied because it is the end, the terminal point, the abolition of the whole world of demand, which is the one that at its deepest level structures man's unconscious. It is to the extent that the function of the pleasure principle is to make man always search for what he has to find again, but which he never will attain, that one reaches the essence, namely, that sphere or relationship which is known as the law of the prohibition of incest.[38]

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[36] *S7*, 85.

[37] It is important to note here that *das Ding* is not *just* the memory of the initial relationship with the mother, or else Lacan would be Melanie Klein, and we would be back with a theory of instincts evolving in relation with a human. Rather, Lacan is specific that *das Ding* is related to the primordial relationship with the mother, but he is seeking 'to reestablish a broader function' than Klein does; for him *das Ding* is the world before a signifier got in the way of the mother. See *S7*, 130-131.

[38] *S7*, 82.

The developmental phase during which the subject was actually fully dependent upon and fulfilled by the mother is the world so complete that there is no demand, only *das Ding*. To return there would be overwhelming. The subject 'cannot stand the extreme good that *das Ding* may bring him.'[39] This is the reason that the pleasure principle causes him to circle around it.

Suffering begins to be tied into *das Ding* from page 146 of *Seminar VII*: 'The Thing is that which in the real… suffers from the signifier.'[40] While in English we discuss suffering and evil as two separate things, Lacan uses only the French *le mal*.[41] First using the example of the medieval Cathar heresy, Lacan argues that *le mal* is what we call *das Ding*, partially in order to stay away from it. We have learned this from the time of the incest prohibition (which, for Lacan, is primarily about our relation to desire in language, rather than exclusively about the real mother). We tell ourselves that *das Ding* is suffering/evil, and that accessing it is sin.

At this point, where we flee from *das Ding* for fear of its overwhelming power to give us what would bring so much completion that consciousness could not bear it, Lacan is ready to use the language of 'aggressivity' that psychoanalysis traditionally ties to instinct, but now in his own fashion. When Freud talks about the love of the neighbour he finds it a repulsive concept because the neighbour is just as deeply aggressive by instinct as he is.[42] But for Lacan it is not *instinct* that causes aggressivity to be turned back in against the subject, but

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[39] Ibid., 90.

[40] This is repeated on p. 154.

[41] *S7*, 220, n. 1.

[42] *SE21*, 142-143.

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das Ding: 'For as soon as I go near it, as *Civilization and its Discontents* makes clear, there rises up the unfathomable aggressivity from which I flee, that I turn against me, and which in the very place of the vanished Law adds its weight to that which prevents me from crossing a certain frontier at the limit of the Thing.'[43] There must always be something in place to stop us from getting to *das Ding* (whether sublimation, incest prohibition, 'Sovereign Good' or the Moral Law, etc.). In the history of each subject it is necessary for our own protection from *das Ding* that we receive from the Other the law; any law, that will keep us protected from that which many call sin: *das Ding*.

One can see here why Lacan sees fit to quote Paul's letter to the Romans, and does so so naturally that he quotes it directly, exchanging 'sin' for 'the Thing,' and not telling his audience that he is quoting someone until afterwards. Lacan says:

> Is the Law the Thing? Certainly not. Yet I can only know of the Thing by means of the Law. In effect, I would not have had the idea to covet it if the Law hadn't said: "Thou shalt not covet it." But the Thing finds a way by producing in me all kinds of covetousness thanks to the commandment, for without the Law the Thing is dead. But even without the Law, I was once alive. But when the commandment appeared, the Thing flared up, returned once again, I met my death. And for me, the commandment that was supposed to lead to life turned out to lead to death, for the Thing found a way and thanks to the commandment seduced me; through it I came to desire death.[44]

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[43] *S7*, 229.

[44] Ibid., 102, quoting Rom 7:7-11.

I will return to the relationship between this section of Romans and Lacan's thought in Chapter 5. For now it suffices to say that here we find, first expressed by Paul, the link between *das Ding* and the death drive that Lacan will map out much later in the Seminar.

So far I have outlined several aspects of *das Ding*: (1) it is rooted (for Lacan, and possibly also for Freud) in the Kantian *Ding an sich*, an element as it exists unknowable beyond what is perceived; (2) the concept is developed in part to counter a Kleinian emphasis on instinct, and is the thing that is nothing before the signifier acts as a lure; (3) Lacan argues that Freud had a notion of *das Ding*, and that this is what remains beyond the *Vortvorstellung* and *Sachvorstellung* (the signifier and signified); (4) this places Freud in context of Saussure, with the Freudian *Ding* as what remains beyond signifier and signified; (5) as such, Lacan develops the theme of *das Ding* as the void around which all language is constructed; (6) the mother as alienated from the self prior to language is a formative experience of *das Ding* and (7) as a remainder of pre-linguistic maternal enjoyment, and as something beyond language that has the power to render language (and with it desire) null, *das Ding* is overwhelming in its potential for enjoyment. It is the last of these aspects that, for Lacan, leads to us erecting moral systems, concepts of the Good, and using them to refuse ourselves any access to *das Ding*. If we get too close to it, we aggressively turn ourselves away from it. Thus, for Lacan, *das Ding* and language are the cause, not the result, of aggressive 'instinct.'

By way of evaluation of this subject, it is fair to comment that none of Lacan's concepts can be taken uncritically as some sort of eternal truth,

particularly when it comes to claims that there is no such thing as instinct without the signifier. Especially now, in 2017 rather than 1959, it is impossible to deny the existence of the entire field of neuroscientific inquiry, and the very real importance of a theory of instincts to the stuff of the brain. However, this is neither what Lacan requires nor what Lacan does. He is not attempting to deny the existence of chemical reactions in the brain or the role of genetics in the formation of the subject. Instead, like psychoanalysis itself, his thoughts trace themselves back to a phenomenological theory more than a scientific one. Although Freud in his earlier work was obsessed with neurological theorisation,[45] his theory of the mind traces further back to his attendance of Franz Brentano's lectures on phenomenology, at the very beginning of modern phenomenological inquiry.[46] So although there are a handful of studies into the relationship between neuroscience and the Lacanian view of the human subject,[47] neuroscience, and the scientific inquiry into the nature of human instinct are not ultimately a successful

[45] See Freud's *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895), in *SE1*, 283-397; Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (London: W. W. Norton, 2006 [1988]), 78-80. Although Gay's biography is a much more in-depth introduction to Freud, Richard Wollheim goes into more detail on this period, in *Freud* (London: Fontana, 1991 [1971]), 42-64.

[46] Wollheim, *Freud*, 34-36. From pp. 34-35: 'We need to grasp an underlying philosophical assumption that Freud retained throughout his work and which probably derives from the Viennese philosopher Franz Brentano, whose seminars he had attended as a student. And that is that every mental state or condition can be analysed into two components; an idea, which gives the mental state its object or what it is directed upon, and its charge of affect, which gives it its measure of strength or efficacy.'

[47] Two of them can be found in Adrian Johnston and Catherine Malabou, *Self and Emotional Life: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, and Neuroscience* (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2013). Éric Laurent has also written on psychoanalysis and neuroscience, such as 'Uses of the Neurosciences for Psychoanalysis,' *The Symptom*, 11, trans. by Marcus A. K. Andersson (Spring 2010), <http://www.lacan.com/symptom11/?p=73> [accessed 16.8.2016].

critique of Lacanian concepts, including *das Ding* (and, in conversation with Lacanian analysts, they are generally quite quick to point this out). Lacan's view of the human subject as only knowable to itself through a language received from the Other, an imperfect language that can never retrieve a *Ding* that is unknowable through language, remains as legitimate as ever; that is, as legitimate as can be shown from the religion of 'analytic experience.'

Inasmuch as the subject is the result of the encounter of language with *das Ding*, and all language is constructed around an empty space, Lacan can claim to be a creationist, as opposed to an evolutionist: for him, human consciousness as we know it is not something that evolves naturally for the subject, but something that is created by an exterior force (the Other, language as it pre-exists the subject) when it meets the void of *das Ding*.[48] This distinction between him and others is clear: for Klein and Winnicott, and Freud, the death drive exists because of a natural tendency for order to return to chaos, for energy to return to zero (entropy); but from Lacan's perspective, there is no 'instinct' without the signifier. So the death drive is not a natural instinct to tend towards death, explainable only as a part of nature,[49] but, rather, it is a product of the trace memory of *das Ding*: the desire to return to the nothing before the signifier. The will to destruction is actually the will to a new thing, a fresh start: an Other-thing.[50]

This completes the Pauline thought that Lacan quoted above: 'through [*das Ding*] I came to desire death.' It is, quite literally, *das Ding* (the thing we

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[48] *S7*, 149-150, 259-264.

[49] Lacan criticises this idea on *S7*, 259-263.

[50] *S7*, 262.

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have called 'sin') that makes us desire death. The desire for death is not actually the desire to be exterminated, but the desire to trade the old signifier in for a new one; it is the desire to return to *das Ding*, the land before the signifier, and start again. This is why Lacan praises the early Christians for believing that it is the Word that leads to new life.[51]

The drive is the fact of desire's constant wish for *das Ding*, for the nothingness that is the signified of the signifier and the repressed memory of maternal *jouissance* ('enjoyment'). Drive is not hunger or thirst; these are needs. Drive is not instinct; that is animals being programmed to survive. Instead, 'drive is the impact of language upon the body.'[52] In *Seminar XI* Lacan will outline how the drive's relation to the *objet petit a* manages the overwhelming *jouissance* we desire in *das Ding*, which Lacan describes in *Seminar VII*.[53] By this time Lacan will have developed the thesis that 'every drive is virtually a death drive,' because every drive is a result of the signifier.[54] At the point of *Seminar VII*, however, Lacan is only addressing the death drive, which is the subject's wish to return to the place before the signifier and begin again.[55]

This is why *jouissance* is enjoyment that does not exist. *Jouissance* is enjoyment that comes from the object, *das Ding*; but *das Ding* does not exist. *Das Ding* is that which is excluded from language, the trace memory of maternal

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[51] Ibid., 263-264.

[52] This is a quote of the Lacanian psychoanalyst Phil Dravers, from his New Lacanian School lecture entitled 'Desire, Drive and the *Objet a*,' at Conway Hall, London, on 3.6.2015.

[53] This is Jacques-Alain Miller's reading of the relationship between *S7* and *S11*, as cited by Dravers in the lecture cited above.

[54] *Écrits*, 719, from 'Position of the Unconscious,' which was written during *Seminar VII* but rewritten during *Seminar XI*.

[55] *S7*, 261-262.

enjoyment, even of our existence in the womb. *Das Ding* is also death. Since we only ever enjoy *das Ding* through sublimation (the raising of an object to the dignity of *das Ding*), *jouissance* is enjoyment that only ever comes through sublimation.[56] It is a shade of enjoyment that comes from not getting what we want – or from getting the thing that we did not want instead. After examining some of the other concepts that arise out of Lacan's discussion of *das Ding* and the death drive I will outline more of how they provide a framework to understand better the historical and philosophical context of Paul's letters and theology.

2. The Failure of the Marquis de Sade

Freud began thinking about the aggressive instinct in humans because, in his view, psychologists thus far had failed to account for sadism, a sexual practice named after the 'master of perversions,' the Marquis de Sade.[57] The works of Sade were of particular interest to Lacan. This traces back to the time immediately after the war, when French and German intellectuals were beginning to try to offer explanation for the horrors of the Holocaust.[58] Lacan was not a

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[56] 'Sublimation' is defined briefly in the Glossary, Appendix A, and explored in more detail in Chapter 4, below.

[57] *SE21*, 119-120.

[58] Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Lacan In Spite of Everything*, trans. by Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2014 [2011]), 143. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, Edmund Jephcott (trans.), *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002 [1947]), 63-93. Many of Lacan's commentators believe his claim that he is the first to pair Kant with Sade (*Écrits*, 645), though Rabaté points out that this requires the Lacan never to have read Adorno and Horkheimer, which is possible but unlikely. Jean-Michel Rabaté, 'Kant with Sade, Lacan with Adorno: "Enjoying

philosopher to shy away from encountering the horror of the human capacity, and so turned to Sade as an example of someone committed to the endless pursuit of enjoyment, regardless of moral judgments. His writings on Sade mostly occur between 1959 and 1963, opening with a large section in *Seminar VII*, and largely closing with his now infamous article 'Kant with Sade.'[59] Lacan's work on Sade not only helps provide a way into a historical critical Lacanian reading of Paul (as argued in Chapter 3), but is also conceptually significant for Paul's understandings of the law and desire. Ultimately Lacan's interpretation of Sade's failings helps to paint a full picture of the way humans relate to *jouissance*, and also sets the stage for his reading of *Antigone*.

The Marquis de Sade was born into the extravagant world of the mid-eighteenth-century French aristocracy. He followed his duty, married the woman whom his father chose, and then sought pleasure elsewhere. Simone de Beauvoir puts his actions down to the fact that the aristocracy was losing its former power: Sade used his time in brothels to enact fantasies wherein he was a feudal tyrant, demanding whatever he wanted.[60] Throughout the rest of his life he either abused and assaulted countless men and women (prostitutes, hired servants, or whomever else he fancied) or did so in non-abusive ways that still provoke interest,[61] while

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Bodies," the Ram and the Law' (unpublished manuscript), <http://www.apres-coup.org/mt/archives/title/2005/01/kant_with_sade.html> [accessed 4/4/2016].

[59] Marcelle Marini lists all of Lacan's references to Sade from this period. *Jacques Lacan: The French Context*, trans. by Anne Tomiche (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992 [1986]), 187.

[60] Simone de Beavoir, 'Must we Burn Sade?' in *The One Hundred & Twenty Days of Sodom*, trans. by Annette Michelson (London: Arrow Books Ltd, 1989 [1955]), 8.

[61] There is much debate over the extent to which, in his life rather than his writing, Sade was actually abusive towards others. For example John Phillips, *How to Read Sade* (London, Granta

writing works containing sexual fantasies far exceeding any acts he would actually carry out, and also containing detailed philosophical interludes (or viewed the other way, detailed philosophical tracts with gory sexual fantasy written around them). He was imprisoned in the Bastille for ten years and elsewhere for another twenty, but during the Revolution managed to become both a judge and an elected politician.

His works of fantasy eventually led to him being declared mad. His lengthy tome *The One Hundred & Twenty Days of Sodom* was written from within the Bastille, and is a collection of every form of depravity that the Marquis could muster.[62] The storyline is as follows: four very wealthy men (including a duke and a bishop) have seemingly endless supplies of money, and use it to organise a hundred and twenty days of pleasure for themselves. They source the finest sex-slaves in all the land (through paying procuresses and pimps to abduct hundreds of adults and teenagers, then choosing thirty-two from among them, and at one point enjoying selling the remainder into slavery), and then use them for their fantasies. These fantasies include a great deal of torture and murder,

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Books, 2005), 1, 15-18, is largely defensive of his historical character, and concludes that 'there is no indication that [he] was ever seriously suspected of having committed any of the appalling crimes represented in his anonymous fictions.' On the other hand, Vincente Palomera, 'The Sadean Fantasy' in *NLS Seminar on 'Kant with Sade': Fantasy and the Limits of Enjoyment* (unpublished manuscript), 44, admits that Sade did engage in some sadistic activity, but it was apparently mild enough that the women involved defended him, and 'He was not a blood-monster, not at all.'

[62] Marquis de Sade, *The One Hundred & Twenty Days of Sodom*, trans. by Austryn Wainhouse and Richard Seaver (London: Arrow Books Ltd, 1989), 183. This summary is given here only to give a flavour of the sort of work Sade produced. Lacan's discussions of Sade draw from many different sources, and discuss Sade's work in general just as much as any particular piece.

insatiably creative abuse, and an endless list of obscene acts that need not be described here.

Lacan tells us directly why he reads Sade: it is 'an experiment that through its action cuts the subject loose from his psychosocial moorings – or to be more precise, from all psychosocial appreciation of the sublimation involved.'[63] He reads Sade as an experiment in the psychical affect that the work has upon the reader; this is the same reason he then reads *Antigone*, inviting comparison between the impact upon the subject had by both works. Sade's goal was, in Lacan's interpretation, 'a sexual *jouissance* that is not sublimated.'[64] Sublimation, in Freud's vocabulary, is a sexual instinct enjoyed as something else (say, as renunciation, art, physical labour, etc.).[65] Lacan's definition of sublimation is 'to raise an object to the dignity of the Thing.'[66] So, when he interprets Sade as aiming for a sexual *jouissance* without sublimation, what Sade is really trying to do is to access *das Ding* directly, through sexual acts. Since *das Ding* is the place to which the death drive attempts return, a place of incredible violence towards the self, aimed at eliminating the signifier, Sade uses a considerable degree of violence in his attempts to get there.

Lacan's contentious claim here, *contra* Freud, is that this is what the love of the neighbour really looks like. To do unto others as we would have them do unto us is for everyone to seek *das Ding* through each other, because *das Ding* is the only universal thing that everyone wants (by virtue both of being a maternal

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[63] *S7*, 248.

[64] Ibid., 250.

[65] *SE21*, 99-107.

[66] *S7,* 138.

thing we desired before the signifier, as well as being the universal object of desire without a particular signifier, unlike every other object). However, since *das Ding* is the obliteration of the subject's existence in language, attempting to (re-)find *jouissance* means doing violence to the neighbour. Lacan's claim that the Golden Rule of 'love thy neighbour' requires doing a certain violence to the neighbour also refers back to his initial argument for *das Ding*, though he does not say this explicitly. As stated above, his argument for *das Ding* is partially based on Freud referring to how the very first time a subject sees something of the *Nebenmensch* ('neighbour,' though here and in Freud it refers to one's external surroundings) *als Ding* (as 'thing'), it experiences this *Ding* as *fremde* (alien).[67] Freud uses 'neighbour' to mean everything external to the subject, and *Ding* to refer to that very first time a bit of one's surroundings is experienced as separate/alienated from oneself. Lacan then argues against Freud that it is not the natural fact of entropy that is the basis of the death drive, but instead it is the desire to (re-)find *das Ding*.[68] So there is a slight pun here: since *das Ding* is *der Nebenmensch*/neighbour, it is the neighbour within the neighbour that requires 'Love thy neighbour' to involve harming them.

Sade is unique because he is not merely writing a singular fantasy about some sadistic thing he enjoys; instead, the Marquis de Sade embarked upon a lifelong journey, attempting to pursue *jouissance* completely *without inhibition*, immediately implementing whatever came into his head.[69] His commitment to

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[67] Ibid., 61-62.

[68] Freud, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, argues for the death instinct from nature's movement from order to disorder and life to death. See above.

[69] *Écrits*, 667.

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jouissance was one aimed at the central emptiness of the other,[70] always trying to go beyond the limit to discover the laws of the neighbour's space.[71] This glimpse of how *das Ding* exists in every neighbour led Sade to believe that nature contains an imperative to do evil, because nature is 'a vast system of attraction and repulsion of evil by evil.'[72]

Marc DeKesel states clearly the problem that Sade, and the rest of his contemporary libertines, then ran into:

> Certainly, the Sadian heroes break with the most elementary social and ethical laws (including the incest prohibition) and in this way profess to give free rein to the orgy of excess and crime that represents in their eyes the free reign of nature. However, simply the fact that they must endlessly repeat that the law no longer rules already in itself provides a sort of negative proof of how the law remains immune from all transgression. The fact that Sade's heroes must declare *time after time* that the law is null and void indicates that it has never really been cornered, proving its inviolability by default. Perpetually repeating how all laws are empty nothings and God a hideous delusion only makes it clearer how persistently the law and the lawgiver always remain standing.[73]

Sade is forced to maintain the social reference.[74] It is because of the extent to which Sade attempts to be uninhibited in his pursuit of *jouissance* that he ultimately reveals *jouissance*'s inescapable paradox: attempting to touch *das Ding*

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[70] *S7,* 248.

[71] Ibid., 243.

[72] Ibid., 243.

[73] Marc DeKesel, *Eros and Ethics: Read Jacques Lacan's Seminar VII*, trans. by Sigi Jöttkandt (Albany: State of New York University Press, 2009 [2001]), 136.

[74] *S7.* 248.

in someone else through transgression of the law only reveals the extent to which this move is always dependent upon the law, and thus upon the signifier.

This paradox of *jouissance* is outlined in the two lectures prior to the discussion of Sade's work in *Seminar VII*.[75] Lacan outlines two paths, one towards the *jouissance* of *das Ding*, and one towards the law. However, even after the death of God there is only more prohibition stopping one from finding *jouissance*, and this prohibition is required to sustain the place of *jouissance* beyond prohibition. 'Whoever enters the path of uninhibited *jouissance*, in the name of the rejection of the moral law in some form or other, encounters obstacles whose power is revealed to us every day in our [analytic] experience.'[76] Sade comes close to removing all of these obstacles, in his relentless quest for evil, but ultimately reveals two final barriers (see below). The other approach one could take, of course, is to give up on *jouissance* and seek always to obey the law. The problem here is that 'whoever attempts to submit to the moral law sees the demands of his superego grow increasingly meticulous and increasingly cruel.'[77] We never get to a point of feeling as though we have perfectly fulfilled the law; instead, we get a form of enjoyment from the guilt that our inevitable failure brings. If one imagines *jouissance* to the left of the subject and the law to the right, turning to either side results in a shade of enjoyment coming from being turned away from *das Ding*. The fact that both routes are ultimately identical is the paradox of *jouissance*; our happiness is founded upon this circuit with respect

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[75] Ibid., 205-234.

[76] Ibid., 217.

[77] Ibid.

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to the law and *jouissance*.[78] Thus we know from the start that Sade is not going to

succeed in his attempt at uninhibited *jouissance*. This is also why Lacan states

that it is impossible to kill God, because to most he is already dead and yet the

law still exists (meaning the Other, God, still exists). God may be dead, yet

jouissance remains forbidden. In summary, either *jouissance* remains forbidden

because attempting to get it by breaking the law results in us eternally finding the

law still standing, never lying broken; or *jouissance* remains forbidden because if

we try to follow the law we will never find ourselves satisfied by the *amount* of

law we have followed – we always need more law, and enjoy the guilt when we

fail. I write more on this 'neurotic' side of the paradox in Chapter 4.

Both of Lacan's major writings on Sade conclude noting instances of what

is essentially the same problem for Sade: he deduces from nature an imperative to

do evil to the evil neighbour in the neighbour, but he cannot come to terms with

the neighbour in himself, for 'What is more of a neighbour to me than this heart

within which is that of my *jouissance* and which I don't dare go near?'[79] At the

end of Lacan's main lecture on Sade in *Seminar VII*, he points out that although

Sade repeatedly stated that he wished his existence as signifier to end with his

death (his grave to be covered over with bracken), he also takes pleasure in the

idea of killing people in such a way as to send them straight to hell so that they

can suffer there also.[80] Lacan suggests that in his desire for his victims to survive

death and suffer in hell, Sade betrays his own desire to go on past the first death

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[78] Ibid.*,* 237

[79] Ibid.*,* 229. This quote is from the lecture *before* Lacan begins to speak about Sade, but should
be read as an allusion to the end of the lecture that follows it, in which Lacan reveals Sade's failure
to live up to his own imperative.

[80] Ibid.*,* 249-250.

and not suffer the second, i.e., to remain alive as signifier. In the final analysis, the Marquis de Sade fails to pursue *das Ding* uninhibited. And so, 'In this sense, even the sadist remains the subject (bearer) of a persistent fidelity to the law, illustrating in this manner the primacy of the law and the symbolic order.'[81]

Two years later Lacan ended his article 'Kant with Sade' with essentially the same conclusion, though this time regarding Sade's rejection of the death penalty: 'Sade does not have neighbourly enough relations with his own malice,' for, in his rejection of the death penalty for himself Sade 'stopped at the point where desire and the law become bound up with each other.'[82] If he was truly willing to accept the evil that lies at the heart of every human, and of his own desire, he would not have objected to the state dealing him death. In the end he turns away from *das Ding* and accepts the law; and so 'There is precious little here—in fact, nothing—by way of a treatise that is truly on desire.'[83] Sade demonstrates the paradox of *jouissance* and the truth about *das Ding*, but we need *Antigone* for a treatise on desire.

In the first conclusion above (Sade's failure to desire his own death as signifier in *Seminar VII*), Sade is found to have displaced the realisation of his absolute contingency upon the signifier onto the object of his torture, and thus disavowed it in himself, enabling him to express a (false) desire to have the signifier die with him. In Lacanian psychoanalysis there are four ways in which any particular subject might exist, which psychoanalysts term 'clinical

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[81] DeKesel, *Eros and Ethics*, 139.

[82] *Écrits,* 666-667.

[83] Ibid., 667.

structures.'[84]   They are the psychotic, perverse, hysterical neurotic and obsessional neurotic structures. More will be said about these over the following chapters, but in Sade we encounter the perverse structure: the disavowal of a signifier of castration, displacing it onto another subject, and seeking to cause in them the anxiety disavowed in oneself.[85] Most commentators on the article 'Kant with Sade' note that this is also the structure Lacan describes at length in his notorious article.[86] Sade's pursuit of uninhibited *jouissance* demonstrates that 'the perverse subject has to give himself or herself up completely in the name of the Other's jouissance.'[87] Sade's heroes must place themselves in the position of the Other in order to enjoy causing anxiety in the subject.[88] So while the neurotic distances herself from a will of *jouissance*, the pervert tries to occupy the position of the will of *jouissance*.[89] These are the two sides of the paradox of *jouissance*: the pervert, like Sade, who tries and fails to occupy the position of the Other while

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[84] Lacan himself called them 'Freudian structures.' They are defined throughout, but please refer to the Glossary (Appendix A) for any required clarification.

[85] *S10*, 46-51, 152-154. Joël Dor, *The Clinical Lacan* (New York: Other Press, 1999 [1997]), 39-44. Philip Hill, *Using Lacanian Clinical Critique*, 163-167.

[86] This position is taken by Alexandre Stevens in 'The Paradox of the Universal,' in *NLS Seminar on 'Kant with Sade': Fantasy and the Limits of Enjoyment* (unpublished manuscript), 16-29; by Palomera in 'The Sadean Fantasy'; by Pierre-Gilles Guégen in 'Desire and Jouissance,' in *NLS Seminar on 'Kant with Sade': Fantasy and the Limits of Enjoyment* (unpublished manuscript), 46-60; by Pierre Naveau in 'The Mother-Daughter Relationship,' in *NLS Seminar on 'Kant with Sade': Fantasy and the Limits of Enjoyment* (unpublished manuscript), 61-73 and Rabaté in 'Kant with Sade, Lacan with Adorno.'

[87] Rabaté, 'Kant with Sade, Lacan with Adorno,' 5.

[88] Naveau, 'The Mother-Daughter Relationship,' 63.

[89] Palomera, 'The Sadean Fantasy,' 32-33. 'Will of *jouissance*' is a term Lacan only uses in 'Kant with Sade.'

running after *jouissance*; and the neurotic, trapped in the law and hopelessly trying to escape *jouissance*, whom I discuss at length in chapters 4 and 5.

Though his language, particularly regarding 'Sade's maxim' in 'Kant with Sade,'[90] can cause some confusion, it is clear that Lacan is not suggesting that there is an ethical imperative we should follow to do evil to one another. Rather, the life and work of the Marquis de Sade are employed in both *Seminar VII* and 'Kant with Sade' as an illustration of the paradox of *jouissance*, and the extent to which even the most extreme libertines are still trapped under the signifier, incapable of escaping the law.[91] With the tools of Lacan's understanding of the death drive, and of the relation to suffering and *das Ding* in *jouissance*, some headway can be made in analysing the relations to *jouissance* that existed in Paul's time, and the response to them of Paul's own writings about the law and desire.

3. The Paradox of *Jouissance*: Nero v. the Stoics

It is to this paradox of *jouissance* that I now turn. As argued above, for both Lacan and Freud there are structures in place that allow us to carry on without ever finding *das Ding*, keeping sight of the *jouissance* that lies just past the barrier nonetheless. This is why, despite Freud saying that we possess an

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[90] *Écrits,* 650.

[91] And thus, in Lacan's final Sade-related curve ball, even the great pervert Sade was, in a way, a neurotic trapped in his own law (*S7,* 250).

'inborn human inclination to "badness",'[92] and Lacan referring to the 'evil heart' within us,[93] there is a tremendous difference between a psychoanalytic view of the human subject and an Augustinian or Calvinist one. It is not simply the case that all are evil or that all possess the capacity for evil, but rather, for every subject *there is already a psychological mechanism in place to allow us to enjoy evil without getting closer to it than we can bear*. It is true that we want to do evil, but also true that we are inescapably subject to a structure preventing us from accessing the greatest evil, our own *jouissance*. It is not just that some voice in our heads is telling us 'no,' but that this very 'no' is part of the enjoyment of the paradox; and when we run in the opposite direction, not towards law but towards enjoyment, we find that we only have access to that enjoyment through law. 'The basic paradox of *jouissance* is that it is both impossible *and* unavoidable: it is never fully achieved, always missed, but, simultaneously, we can never get rid of it—every renunciation of enjoyment generates an enjoyment in renunciation, every obstacle to desire generates desire for an obstacle and so forth.'[94] One finds only *jouissance* when running towards law, and one requires law in order to pursue *jouissance*, for, 'As soon as I go near it… there rises up the unfathomable aggressivity from which I flee, that I turn against me [which is the superego], and which in the very place of the vanished Law adds its weight to that which

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[92] *SE21*, 120. Freud compares his own hesitance to acknowledge the existence of an instinct of death by comparing this hesitance to the fact that '"little children do not like it" when there is talk of the inborn human inclination to "badness", to aggressiveness and destructiveness, and so to cruelty as well.' According to the *Standard Edition* footnotes, the quotation is from a poem by Goethe.

[93] *S7*, 229.

[94] Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London: Verso, 2011), 304.

prevents me from crossing a certain frontier at the limit of the Thing.'[95] That is part of what the works of the Marquis de Sade reveal: the true horror of a world in which we traverse the self-imposed unconscious barriers that are there to stop us from getting what we want, and thus the true horror of what we want. However, the primary purpose for the discussion of Sade in both 'Kant with Sade' and *Seminar VII* is to show that the paradox of *jouissance* encapsulates both a life aimed at law and a life aimed at enjoyment: Sade's greatest efforts to enjoy without law could never successfully produce an enjoyment not ultimately contingent upon the letter.[96]

The paradox of *jouissance* is the paradox of being trapped in the law and so never getting *jouissance*: when on the intentionally transgressive side of the paradox, one cannot transgress without law, and so needs law in order to continue transgressing. This transgressive but always necessarily 'legal' part of the paradox reveals how the whole thing is a 'dialectic of happiness.'[97] It is the subject's desire for happiness that causes her to recoil both from the moral law

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[95] *S7*, 229.

[96] Slavoj Žižek, in his article 'Kant and Sade: the Ideal Couple,' in *lacanian ink 13* (New York: The Wooster Press, 1998), 12-25, argues that in 'Kant with Sade' Lacan is not intending to leave the reader only with the knowledge that Sade is the truth of Kant, but that even here Lacan is specifically setting up the reader for the study of *Antigone* that he does in *Seminar VII*. This is the correct conclusion that should be drawn from both of Lacan's studies of Sade, for, as argued above, both have the primary purpose of pointing out the subject's utter contingency upon the signifier whether applying Kant's imperative as Kant understands it or as Sade's work interprets it. So Sade does not manage to succeed in non-pathological behaviour even though he declares perversion non-pathological; ultimately it will be Antigone who succeeds in following Kant's categorical imperative, not by declaring perversion non-pathological (becoming the *jouissance* of the Other), but by declaring desire non-pathological (becoming the desire of the Other, which is the subject's essence). This will be expanded upon later.

[97] *S7, 237*

(whether the imperative of Kant, Christ or any other Sovereign Good), and from the horror of uninhibited pursuit of *jouissance;*[98] but in this recoiling from the end of both sides of the paradox there is a degree of happiness. In this sense, happiness is to be found in *not* getting what you want. DeKesel even goes so far as to make this notion, of relative *distance* from *das Ding* within the paradox of *jouissance*, the dominant theme he draws from *Seminar VII.*[99]   Nonetheless, despite there being some degree of happiness to be found for the subject in the paradox itself,[100] and no way out of it, many are driven to psychoanalysis by the discomfort of their symptomatic relations to the law and *jouissance*, leading both Lacan and Paul to write in response to it. In other words, Lacan and Paul are attempting to find ways to help us cope with neurosis that are not just attempts at perversion (and vice versa!), both of which can be symptomatic in ways some would rather not have to enjoy.[101]

In Paul's time there was a philosophical school advocating a relation to *das Ding* that falls on the neurotic/law side of the paradox: Stoic philosophers believed in the renunciation of desire in the name of self-control (law).   In

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[98] Ibid., 239.

[99] DeKesel, *Eros and Ethics*, 18-23.

[100] Lacan uses the Greek εὐδαιμονία (*eudaimonia*), thus referencing Aristotle and the whole history of the philosophy of 'happiness.'

[101] More will be said about the meaning of 'neurosis' later. In his discussion of the paradox of *jouissance* the analyst and commentator Bruce Fink warns against attempting to cure a neurosis with perversion (Sade's approach), precisely because of the logic of the paradox: most perverse behaviours are dependent upon a neurotic relation to the law, transgressing for the sake of transgression even when the specific law transgressed isn't itself problematic. Again, this is the reason Lacan considers Sade's attempt to free himself from the law with perversion to be a failure. Bruce Fink, *Against Understanding, Volume 2: Cases and Commentary in Lacanian a Key* (London: Routledge, 2014), 60.

Stoicism the wise man acts in accordance with nature by following a virtue 'based on knowledge,' and through self-control exercises reason over the passions/emotions (πάθεα, *pathea*), which are always products of some form of error.[102] The Stoics (and Kant) seek freedom from the passions through complete submission to the law; and in both the cases of Kant and the Stoics, submission to the law comes about through pure reason, exercised through self-control. Much more on the Stoics and neurosis will be said in Chapter 4, at which point it should be clear that in Paul's time, when Stoicism was the largest philosophical school, the Stoics were a popular representative of the neurotic side of the paradox of *jouissance*.

Conversely, in Paul's time there were also people who were committed to the uninhibited pursuit of *jouissance* – to the Sadean attempt at the symbolisation of *das Ding* – in a way that is not possible in the modern world of surveillance and a much more developed legal code.[103] Even 230 years ago, when Sade recorded fantasies about the uninhibited pursuit of *jouissance*, he was imprisoned and then executed for it; but in Paul's time, even those without substantial money or power could exercise what little power they had in futile pursuit of the horror

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[102] Christopher Gill, 'The School in the Roman Imperial Period,' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brad Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 41. Kurt von Fritz, 'Stoa,' in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, eds. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 1015.

[103] This should not be taken as a comment on whether modern surveillance and law are 'good' or 'bad.' Lacan's approach is to describe the subject's relation to the law, and attempt to cure unwanted symptoms that arise from it, not to comment on the objective ethical status of the law itself. As such, Lacan's own political views were much more complex than a simple positive or negative stance towards state authority. See Samo Tomšič, *The Capitalist Unconscious: Marx and Lacan* (London: Verso, 2015), 233-238 or Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. by Barbara Bray (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1997), 158.

of *das Ding*: slaves were cheap, brothels were omnipresent, and patriarchs were unquestioned. Ancient literature is riddled with descriptions of people whose insatiable lusts for the mythical *Ding* just past the barrier of the law were rigourously pursued. One such person was the emperor Nero.

In his biography of Nero, Suetonius describes some of his sexual habits.[104] He notes the well-known instance of Nero having his lover Sporus castrated in order to 'transform him into a woman' and prove his divinity over nature (an inherently anti-Stoic aim); but there is also an element of this being one of many instances of Nero wanting to demonstrate his own possession of the other's body. More interestingly, it describes Nero's desire to use Sporus 'as his wife' in public (in the eyes of the Other), while being paraded around. But *das Ding* then gets closer in two other psychoanalytically interesting notes: Nero was rumoured to have desired his own mother, having acquired a concubine who was said to resemble her; and it was also said that from the stains on his clothes it was obvious that when he was with his mother he was up to something. This is interesting whether rumoured or actual: either it shows an instance of a man who attempts lawlessness in desiring his mother, or it shows that a man famous for sexual liberty is *presumed* to desire his mother. Nero demonstrates the aspect of *das Ding* that is maternal *jouissance* in the pursuit of his mother, and so also demonstrates that in Paul's time there was an awareness of the pursuit of one's mother as a possible part of the perverse pursuit of *jouissance*. Thirdly, Nero's

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[104] The following is all from Suetonius, *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, trans. by H. M. Bird (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1997), 258-259 (sections 28-29). Lacan directly compares the behaviours described by Sade to those described by Suetonius in *S7*, 246, though he does not specify to which behaviours in Suetonius he refers.

pursuit of *jouissance* eventually led to a point where he enjoyed dressing in the skin of an animal and attacking people's genitals. In psychoanalysis, the desire to use specific parts of the body is called the desire for the partial object,[105] and Lacan reads it in Sade as an effect of the pursuit of *jouissance*: as *das Ding* gets closer, the body fragments into pieces, because when one presumes oneself to be pursuing the object him/her/itself, the true object (*das Ding*) lurks behind and is never truly gotten; thus, to continue the pursuit, one must move on to the partial object, the pieces of the body (since once cannot actually move on to *das Ding*).[106] This is the third way that Nero acts as a paradigm for the extent to which the Sadean perverse pursuit of *jouissance* was something conceptually possible in Paul's time – if not for everybody, then certainly at least for those with

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[105] The term 'partial object' is psychoanalytically loaded, particularly in Lacan's time. It was deployed extensively by the object relations school, against which Lacan argued regularly. Melanie Klein developed a theory of good and bad objects in relation to the infant's experienced of particular partial objects of the mother, the mother's breasts. Instead of wanting to analyse the subject's relation to particular partial objects, here Lacan sees the subject/partial-object relation as an effect of the subject's relation to *the object*, that being *das Ding*. This is part of how the entire programme Lacan sets forward in *Seminar VII* can be seen in part as a continuation of his diatribe against Klein and the object relations school (Winnicott, Fairbain *et. al.*, and Maurice Bouvet in France), and of course, conversely, their opponents in Anna Freud and the ego-psychology school. Lacan's meta-psychological system is not based upon strengthening the ego's relation to objects or to strengthening the ego itself, but rather the subject as a relation to *das Ding*, which is itself a product of the subject as a speaking being. For more on Lacan and object relations theory see DeKesel, *Eros and Ethics*, 16-23; LaPlanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, 273-281; Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, 123-124. *Seminar IV* is a discussion of object relations, written against Klein, Bouvet and Winnicott, though, typically for Lacan, it does not address them directly. Instead, he begins to move the discussion towards the symbolic definition of castration he will outline in *Seminar V* (see above), and leaves the question of the part object open (Marini, *Jacques Lacan: The French Context*, 162-163).
[106] *S7*, 248-249.

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money and power; which, since desire is the desire of the Other, places the perverse pursuit of *jouissance* in the field of desire for everyone.

In summary, Nero's attempt at Sadean perversion takes three easily identifiable forms: (1) he attempts to escape the master signifier of the law ('nature'), but all of his attempts therein are dependent upon the signifier and so cannot escape it; (2) he attempts to find the maternal *jouissance* of *das Ding* directly in both a prostitute who resembles his mother as well as in his mother herself, but, in the sequence in which Suetonius records, he does not find himself sated and so moves on to (3) the diffusion of *jouissance* in partial objects. In all of these cases Nero thinks that he will be able to gain real pleasure from so enacting his every liberated desire (like the eighteenth century libertines), and is really trying, but fails. However, he does arrive at the exact Lacanian libertinist conclusion that a world posited against law should precipitate: 'he was absolutely sure that no man was chaste or pure in any part of his body, but rather that most people disguised their viciousness and cleverly concealed it; and thus in those who confessed their lewdness to him he pardoned all other crimes as well.' His Sadean libertinist pursuit of uninhibited *jouissance* led him to a Sadean inversion of the law; and yet, like Sade, he found himself never achieving complete *jouissance* and eventually begging to survive his own death sentence.[107] Both

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[107] Suetonius, *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, 277 (section 49). Although the case of Nero is quite different to Sade, there is something similar in their attitudes towards their own deaths. Sade begs to survive his death sentence, while Nero commits Suicide; but Nero's suicide was committed while centurions were coming to kill him, and he is recorded as having spent the moments up until he died instructing people to dig his grave in front of him and bury his body intact immediately, to ensure he makes it to the afterlife unharmed; he is also recorded here to have begged Sporus to wail a lament while he dies. His death thus represents *even more* of a desire to survive as signifier than does Sade's: Sade begged for his life and demonstrated in his torture of others a wish to

claimed to recognise the universal evil in humanity, but failed to recognise it in themselves. So, just as the Stoics demonstrate for us the failure to reach tranquillity or equilibrium through the neurotic/law side of the paradox, Nero exactly replicates what Lacan demonstrated through Sade about the perverse/transgressive side of the paradox: it is impossible to escape the signifier, and even those who spend their lives attempting to only wind up begging to be included in the order of the signifier when faced with their own actual abolition.

The Stoic/libertine (neurotic/perverse) dichotomy is the hermeneutical horizon of the text that should not be neglected by historical-critical interpretation. Just as in today's world there are structures of enjoyment being analysed by Lacanian cultural critics like Slavoj Žižek,[108] so in Paul's world there were structures of enjoyment that historical critical approaches should be mindful of; and good historical critical interpretation should build bridges between these two horizons.

Nero was probably the emperor during the time when Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, or possibly very shortly afterwards (54-68 CE). Whereas now Nero's behaviour would result in life imprisonment, and would barely be comprehensible as the behaviour of a human, in Paul's time it was merely detestable behaviour – but behaviour that was written about, gossiped about, and permitted to continue for fourteen years. The point made here, regardless of any debate over the historicity of events as portrayed by Suetonius, is this: in Paul's

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survive death; Nero specifically demanded to be immortalised as signifier in his death, and ensured a safe journey to the afterlife.

[108] Most of Žižek's work falls into this category, but a particularly effective example is his *Violence* (London: Verso, 2009).

time it was perceived that some pursue *jouissance* ruthlessly, while others renounce desire in the name of the law (nature). Suetonius records that which was known about the Emperor who reigned while Paul wrote most of his letters,[109] from the perspective of the rumours that dominated the discourse a few decades later.[110] Conversely, both casual and devoted followers of Stoic wisdom and Jewish religions believed ardently that the mind can be trained to control the body and successfully overcome the seductive power of *das Ding*. This first century incarnation of the paradox of *jouissance* plays out over the coming chapters, as it becomes evident that Paul's letters were written in a world where *jouissance* was conceptualised in relation to perceptions of libertines like Nero (even before Nero was emperor), and neurotics like the Stoics.

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[109] Wayne Meeks and John Fitzgerald's edited collection *The Writings of St Paul* (London: Norton, 2007), 1-97 uses the most accepted dating, placing the entire authentic Pauline corpus except the very early 1 Thessalonians between 54 and 62 CE. This dating is based upon the tradition of dating Paul's letters using the chronology given in Acts. In Douglas Campbell's recent *Framing Paul: An Epistolary Biography* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2014), he strikes against the grain and attempts to date all of Paul's letters from internal evidence alone, 'by concentrating almost entirely from epistolary material, storming out of the room if Acts data is introduced prematurely into the framing' (24). He arrives at dates between 41 and 51 CE for the entire extended Pauline corpus, including 2 Thessalonians, Ephesians and Colossians as authentic (412-414). The most recent major commentary on Romans, Robert Jewett's *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007) dates its composition to 56-57 CE, placing the focus of the current study a few years into Nero's reign. While the dating of Paul's letters remains imprecise, and ultimately grounded in one's presuppositions about the priority of the Lukan account, it suffices to say here that my purpose is a structuralist Lacanian reading of the historical context; what Nero reveals about the relation to the Other's *jouissance* of the first century Mediterranean man regards the cultural, linguistic and sexual environment of a time much wider than Nero's reign. Indeed, Nero's relationship to *jouissance* is just as much a product of the world in which his reign began as it is a sign of the world others inhabited during his reign.

[110] Suetonius' *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* was first published around 121 CE. Courtenay Edward Stevens, 'Suetonius Tranquillus,' in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, eds. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 1020.

The sublimation of *das Ding* is still the story of the human subject, only now with different social laws and different objects. We may take for granted that from the perspective of modern human rights, society should be structured in such a way that a woman is not forced into prostitution because she disobeyed her father; but this 'modern advantage' does not reduce the New Testament's value as an ethical, philosophical or psychoanalytic text. In fact, our modern advantage serves to highlight the question: how does Paul's theology relate to modern *jouissance*, and to that which is written into the Other of modern humans? What are our social and psychical laws today, and does Pauline theology relate to them in a similar way? These are a few of my questions for a Lacanian reading of Paul, especially beyond the arguments made in chapters 5 and 6. Although it is not fully possible in this study to build all of the possible bridges from past to present, the sketch of the paradox of *jouissance* outlined in this chapter should be read as a framework for future work on what Paul might mean today.

Before moving on, a disagreement with Lacan opens the way for me to interpret Paul differently than he did. Near the end of the lecture of 16 March 1960,[111] just after the very first time Lacan describes the paradox of *jouissance* as split between a direction of transgression and a direction of law (though he hasn't yet named this the paradox of *jouissance*), he pauses to make a biographical comment about Paul. 'Sin needed the Law, Saint Paul said, so that he could become a great sinner – nothing, of course, affirms that he did, but so that he

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[111] *S7*, 205-219.

could conceive of the possibility.'[112] This is probably a reference to the very same passage Lacan refers to near the end of the next session, when he says that 'if the moral law is, in effect, capable of playing some role here, it is precisely as a support for the *jouissance* involved; it is so that the sin becomes what Saint Paul calls inordinately sinful.'[113] This is Romans 7:13, which says, 'Did the good, therefore, cause my death? May it never be! But sin, so that it may be made apparent as sin, through the good, worked death in me, so that sin might become inordinately sinful through the commandment.'[114] As will be seen in Chapter 5, this passage is fraught with all sorts of difficulties; particularly the question of whose voice it represents. Although it will be contended that this is an instance of *prosōpopoiia* in Paul, Lacan's comment here is incorrect regardless.[115] When Lacan states that nothing indicates Paul was ever 'inordinately sinful,' he forgets the life Paul left behind.[116]

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[112] Ibid., 217.

[113] Ibid., 233.

[114] In order to accommodate Dennis Porter's translation of Lacan, and also Lacan's use of Aristotle, I have translated τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the good,' and retained the valid translation 'inordinately sinful.' I have not capitalised 'sin,' in order not to comment on debates over whether there is a difference between sin with or without the definite article, which is left up to the reader. This translation is identical to the one offered in Appendix B.

[115] *Prosōpopoiia* is 'speech in character,' a rhetorical strategy in which the author plays the part of another. It is defined in the Glossary in Appendix A, and is a key term in Chapter 5.

[116] A related criticism could be made of Eleanor Kaufman, who takes from this verse (Rom 7:13) that Paul is caught up in a dialectic of life and death, despite wanting to choose life, because this verse demonstrates 'a desire at work in Paul's letter that shows a drive toward that unrealized opportunity [of inordinate sinfulness].' Eleanor Kaufman, 'The Saturday of Messianic Time: Agamben and Badiou on the Apostle Paul,' in eds. Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries, *Paul and the Philosophers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 300-301. She correctly argues that Paul authentically sought freedom from a dialectic of law/sin, the very dialectic that Sade could not realise had trapped him (referred to in this study as the paradox of *jouissance*); but Rom 7:13

The Acts of the Apostles (7:54-8:3) first mentions Paul as a young man named Saul who approves, or possibly even orchestrates, the murder of the first Christian martyr St Stephen, and proceeds to organise the very beginning of the persecution of Christians. Luke's account here can be trusted, since in Phil 3:6 Paul himself refers to this, as does the author of 1 Tim 1:13. Taking Paul's own words as evidence, he mentions 'inordinately ravaging and persecuting' the Church (Gal 1:13), using the same phrase translated as 'inordinately' above.[117] Clearly Paul was not a foreigner to the idea of the perverse enjoyment of suffering, treating humans as pure objects. Neither were those who made up his church innocent of perverse enjoyment; in 1 Cor 6:9-11 Paul casually refers to members of the church at Corinth as having been 'perverts, idol worshippers, adulterers, sissies, child-abusers, pilferers, greedy drunken verbally-abusive swindlers.'[118] Lacan's error here means that his conception of Paul was not one that allowed for him to be someone whose 'conversion' experience was psychoanalytically significant, because he has glossed over both the secondary

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causes her to posit that Paul is nonetheless trapped in another deadly dialectic. In Chapters 5 below I argue that this section of Rom 7 does not reveal that Paul was trapped in the paradox of *jouissance*, or in the life/death dialectic, but rather that Paul was acutely aware of these problems and portrayed his opponent as trapped in both of these things until he accepted Christ.

[117] καθ᾽ ὑπερβολὴν.

[118] I have chosen words and grammar carefully in this translation, to reflect the tone evident in this list of ways in which the Corinthian congregants had previously behaved. Though Paul often uses lists of ten, possibly to mirror the Decalogue, this is not a list of words for offenders of each of the Ten Commandments. Rather, here Paul is using highly derogatory language, possibly inventing a word for men who have sex with men, and using the only biblical instance of the slang word for a man perceived as overly passive/effeminate (μαλακοὶ). πόρνοι is translated as 'perverts' because it is a word referring to whatever one views as sexually immoral. I have translated the repeated conjunction οὔτε as a comma, and omitted οὐ (and changed nouns into adjectives) in order to communicate the rambling nature of this extensive list.

(Lukan) and internal (Pauline) references to Paul's own previous symptomatic behaviour (his persecution of the Church). This does not necessarily mean that Paul's clinical structure was that of a pervert, but, at least, that Paul was well acquainted with the perverse behaviour he criticises – and thus it is possible that the 'inordinate sinfulness' referred to is something with which he was well acquainted.[119] It also opens the way to my main thesis, which will be worked out in chapters 5-6: that the Christian subject about which Paul writes is one who has been through a psychical event akin to that of the psychoanalytic clinic. Lacan could not possibly have seen this, because he clearly did not have Paul's 'previous life' in mind when reading his letters.

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[119] As noted by Alexandre Stevens in 'The Paradox of the Universal,' 28, it is possible for there to be elements of a perverse structure without the analysand actually *being* that clinical structure. We cannot truly know Paul's clinical structure without hearing him speak; but one can nonetheless comment on elements of a perverse structure that his early lifestyle of persecution demonstrates.

Chapter Three

The Paradox of *Jouissance* and Corinthian Perversion

1. 'All Things are Lawful'

In this chapter I argue that in 1 Corinthians Paul responds to the fact that his kerygma resulted in a libertinism.[1] This libertinism is the libertinism of Sade, because it is a libertinism trapped in the paradox of *jouissance*. Paul has freed the Corinthians from the law, so they express their 'freedom' from the law by transgressing it. As such, like Sade, they are not actually free from it, and Paul has just moved them from the neurotic side of the paradox to the perverse. Though of course Paul would not have framed the problem in psychoanalytic terms, this potentially puts Paul's subsequent writings in the shadow of the problematic of the paradox of *jouissance*. At the end I clarify Paul's exact position with respect to desire in 1 Corinthians – which will be described as a

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[1] 'Kerygma' is the theological term (from the New Testament Greek word) for one's proclamation/message. See the Glossary in Appendex A.

'knee-jerk' response to the libertinism he accidentally caused – through entering the debate over Paul's relationship with Stoicism in 1 Corinthians 7.[2]

I use the word 'libertinism' to refer to the perverse attempt to access *das Ding* through transgression, as described by Sade and practiced by Nero.[3] I use the word 'liberalism' to refer to Paul's message of freedom from the law, whatever it was that meant.[4] Paul's first canonical letter to the Corinthians is an example of him struggling with the paradox of *jouissance*, in that his liberalism (attempted freedom from the law) has led to a libertinism (attempted opposition to the law), and he has not at this point come up with a solution to the problem that is consistent with the rest of his teaching. Demonstrating that he is aware of the contours of the paradox of *jouissance* by the time he writes 1 Corinthians means

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[2] After much deliberation, 'knee-jerk' really is the best way to describe Paul's attitude to desire and the law 1 Corinthians – though that is not to say that the whole of the letter beyond this aspect is knee-jerk. It will be argued that Paul's responses to the problems in Corinth that disturbed him are immediate, reactionary and poorly thought-through. 'Knee-jerk' sums up these other adjectives nicely. Other adjectives that have been thrown at all or parts of 1 Corinthians are 'non-Pauline,' by Jerome Murphy O'Connor in 'The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16?,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 95.4 (Dec., 1976), 615-621, and 'reactionary' by David A. Ackerman in *Lo, I Tell You a Mystery: Cross, Resurrection, and Paraenisis in the Rhetoric of 1 Corinthians* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2006), 76. According to Anthony Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000), 491, Wolfgang Schrage reads 1 Cor 7, which will be discussed below, 'not as systematic,' but 'as what emerges in confrontation with specific and contingent issues in Corinth.'

[3] M. D. Goulder, 'Libertines (1 Cor 5-6),' *Novum Testamentum*, 41 (1991), 334-348, argues that the people in question are not libertines, but rather are those extending a spiritual freedom from the freedom to eat meat sacrificed to idols to a sexual freedom of the body. Nonetheless, the libertines in the Corinthian church are a precise fit for the meaning of 'libertine' set out by Lacan.

[4] An excellent study of Paul's liberalism is James Dunn *Christian Liberty: A New Testament Perspective* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1993). It, and most similar studies (such as Robert Jewett, *Christian Tolerance: Paul's Message to the Modern Church* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982]) focus on Rom 14-15, but 1 Cor 8-10 is no less relevant.

that when he wrote his letter to the Romans it was a problem of which he was already aware, a fact that will be further demonstrated from evidence in Romans itself in Chapter 5.

In 1 Corinthians Paul responds to two issues, concerning which he has been written directly (cps. 7-10).[5] He also writes about six issues that he has heard about from other sources (such as 'Chloe's people,' 1:11), in cps. 1-6 and 11.[6] Next follows a section on spiritual gifts and love (cps. 12-14), which seems to be something he speaks about because he wants to, rather than because he is responding to a specific situation.[7] This could be his 'advanced material,' to follow on from the infants' milk (beginner teaching) that he previously stated is all he has yet given them (2:17-3:23). He concludes by recapping his vision of the gospel itself (cp. 15), and then giving some concluding greetings and comments, and signing the letter with his own hand (cp. 16).

There is much debate over the ideologies and practices of the members of the church at Corinth.[8] Among the many views, some even claim that the Christians at Corinth had been heavily impacted by Stoic philosophy, though this

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[5] These are: whether to marry/remain married to unbelievers (cp. 7) and whether to eat food sacrificed to idols (cps. 8-10).

[6] These are: divisions in the church (cps. 1-4); a man who is sleeping with his step-mother (cp. 5); Christians suing other Christians (6:1-11); Christians sleeping with prostitutes (6:12-20); the role of women in the church (11:2-16) and disorder during the Lord's Supper (11:17-34).

[7] He explicitly says in 12:1 that he is speaking because he does not *want* them to be ignorant: οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν. So he claims that here he speaks from his desire, not from theirs.

[8] Wolfgang Schrage outlines at least thirteen different theories about the nature of the Corinthian church, in *Der erste Brief an die Korinther vol. 1*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Zurich and Braunschweig: Benziger Verlag, 1991), 38-63; as cited in Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 8.

is argued based on 1 Corinthians 15,[9] and the same point could hardly be made from the chapters discussed below (5-7). The chief obstacle to theorising about the problem Paul was responding to is the fact that he begins the letter by stating that there are several factions in Corinth, and one of them is those people following himself (1:10-17); since he does not state which of the many problems he responds to belongs to which faction, it makes speculation about the character of each of the factions difficult. However, 'the long tradition of modern scholarship since F. C. Baur associates [the Pauline faction] with convictions about radical emancipation from the law (cf. 6:12), perhaps claiming Paul's own authority for a quasi-libertarian position.'[10] At least some of the problems to which Paul responds bear the mark of his own teaching, and so were probably committed by 'his' faction. This is what is argued below. We know that Paul is responding to a letter written to him because he introduces some of the material responding to it with the words 'concerning what you wrote about' (7:1).[11] Paul defends himself against the allegation that these problems are the result of his teaching by claiming that he was only giving them milk as to infants, and not yet full teachings (3:1-3). Later he again takes a defensive tone, clearly distinguishing between that which is merely his opinion and that which is his command as an apostle (compare 7:6, 12 and 25 with 7:10 and 40; or 10:15 with 14:37).

Giving a clue to the contents of the received letter, Paul four times quotes the phrase 'all things are lawful' in order to respond with a reason why this should

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[9] Albert B. Garcilazo, *The Corinthian Dissenters and the Stoics* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007).

[10] Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 125.

[11] περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε.

not be used as an excuse specifically to do evil, in 6:12 and 10:23.[12] This leads

most scholars to presume, quite rightly, that the author of the letter Paul has

received is someone from the Corinthian church complaining that others in the

church are taking this phrase as a justification for their own libertinism.[13] An

important question is whether this phrase originated with Paul, thus proving that

the Corinthian problem resulted from Paul's own teaching, or with the

Corinthians, from an influence beyond Paul. This question, as with many

questions regarding the reconstruction of the situational context to 1 Corinthians,

is impossible to answer definitively. C. K. Barrett argues that the Corinthians'

libertinism came from a gnostic source, but is open to the idea that 'Corinthian

gnostics could have used in their sense words that Paul had uttered in another.'[14]

Hans Conzelmann states that the Corinthians derive this maxim from Paul's

doctrine of freedom, and that Paul seems to recognise it.[15] He also cites Hans

Leitzmann, who argued in his German commentary of 1949 that this maxim was a

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[12] In both instances Paul quotes πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν twice, with a response following each. In the second case he edits μοι out of what is presumably the whole phrase. His responses are 'but not all things are beneficial;' 'but I will not be mastered by anything;' 'but not all things are beneficial' (again) and 'but not all things build up.'

[13] Nearly all scholars agree that the phrase 'all things are beneficial' is a Corinthian maxim, quoted in the letter to Paul. See Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1999), 243; Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 108; J. Paul Sampley, 'First Letter to the Corinthians,' in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, 10, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 860; C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: A & C Black, 1992), 144; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 460; Gordon Fee, *First Corinthians*, New International Commentary of the New Testament (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1987), 251. A notable exception is B. J. Dodd, 'Paul's Paradigmatic "I" and 1 Cor 6:12,' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 59 (1995) 39-58.

[14] Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 145.

[15] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 108-109.

slogan of Paul's own.[16] Though still not wagering full endorsement of the theory that the slogan is Paul's, Hays goes furthest among English-speaking commentators in stating that 'The inspiration for this idea may well have come originally from Paul himself (cf. 9:1, 19); at least, many of the "wise" Corinthians might have supposed that Paul would agree with their slogan. Was he not the great apostle of freedom from the rules of the Jewish Law?'[17] This is as far as one can take this theory with confidence: whether or not the maxim is one that the Corinthians learned from Paul himself, the Corinthian church was founded by Paul and still (in whole or in part) submitted to his authority, and brandished the maxim that all things are lawful, in defence of behaviour of which it turned out Paul himself did not approve.

Raymond Collins ties the Corinthians' use of this phrase to Stoic criticisms of Roman royalty, playing off of precisely the same dichotomy posited in Chapter 2, above. He points back to 1 Cor 4:8, in which Paul accuses the Corinthians of having 'become kings' independently of his teaching.[18] In the decades immediately following Paul, the leading Stoic philosophers Seneca and Dio Chrysostom criticised Roman emperors for their behaviour, specifically accusing them of acting as though πάντα ἔξεστι, as though all things were

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[16] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 108. Conzelmann does not give a specific page reference to this argument in Leitzmann and Kümmel's commentary, but does state that where he only mentions one of them in his citation it is because he has seen elsewhere that he, and not the other, is the originator of the argument in question. Hans Leitzmann and Werner Georg Kümmel, *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 9 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949).

[17] Hays, *First Corinthians,* 101.

[18] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 186-187.

lawful.[19] Similarly, and directly contemporary to Paul, Collins cites the leading

Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus as having said that Caligula justifies his

actions with 'it's lawful for me,' ἔξεστιν μοι.[20] It would be a step too far to

conclude that the Corinthians were intentionally claiming a libertinism for

themselves that traditional moralisers mockingly attributed to depraved despots;

yet *within the discourse of the time they occupied a position logically aligned with*

those who make up my example of first century libertinism. Intentionally or not,

they used the same slogan *positively* that libertinist emperors were *negatively*

accused of using by the Stoics.

2. Sinning in the Name of the Lord

Not only the language and the maxim, but also the specific activity of the

Corinthians establishes them as Sadean libertinists. After his lengthy argument

for unity in the church (cps. 1-4), the first moral issue Paul writes about is in

response to him hearing that 'there's a perversion among you so bad that even the

gentiles aren't doing it: so that some man has his father's wife' (5:1). A few

things are notable here. Firstly, Paul makes it clear that this is not an isolated

case.   Rather,   Paul   has   heard   that   there   is   a   general   sexual

immorality/fornication/perversion (πορνεία, *porneia*) among them, and that this is

a sexual immorality that is somehow *worse* than that normally found among

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[19] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 187. Since Seneca wrote in Latin I presume these words come from
Dio Chrysostom, and Collins is reporting that Seneca said something similar.

[20] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 243. Collins does not say from where in Musonius Rufus he has
drawn this quote.

gentiles. In other words, the gospel (or perhaps even Paul's message in particular) has resulted in *many* of them behaving *worse* than they did before they were Christians. Secondly, the statement of the particular man's sin is grammatically presented as a consequence clause: he sleeps with his father's wife *as a consequence* of the fact that there is general immorality worse than that of the unconverted.[21] The sin is a result of the libertinism, not 'libertinism' a description of the sin. Thirdly, this is something specifically and repeatedly prohibited in the *Torah* (Lev 18:8, 20:11; Deut 27:20), and Paul makes no reference to this whatsoever. Not only is this evidence that Paul does not consider the *Torah* to be law for Christians, it also shows that the very problem he responds to is one he created: the Corinthians believe all things are lawful, and so set out to do that which the law prohibited. This is the perverse side of the paradox of *jouissance*: attempting to be free from the law they run towards transgression, but in transgression are still equally bound to the law, as their desire is tied to the law's prohibition, and every transgression further establishes the omnipresence of the law. One could not even argue that Paul is exaggerating and really they were just finding a theological justification for actions that were permissible before conversion: marrying one's step-mother was also illegal in Roman law,[22] and Stoic philosophers (in this case Cicero) detested the idea of a woman laying with her step-son; so Corinthian libertinism resulted in the transgression not just of the Jewish law, but also of state law and common moral law.[23] It is clear that, as far as Paul is concerned, the Corinthian Christians' behaviour was a libertinism they

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[21] The consequence clause is ὥστε γυναῖκά τινα τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχειν.

[22] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 209.

[23] Hays, *First Corinthians,* 81, citing Cicero, *Pro Cluentio*, 5:14-6:15.

claimed resulted from the gospel itself – the gospel that Paul had brought to them. This perfects them as examples of Lacan's interpretation of Sadean/perverse behaviour: they intentionally sought freedom from the law through its transgression. This is why it is so important that Paul claims they are guilty of things 'even the gentiles aren't doing' (5:1). In attempting to be free from the law by transgressing it, the Corinthian Christians are behaving in ways that Paul deems worse than if they hadn't converted at all.

This point can be clarified further following a grammatical judgment. 1 Corinthians 5:3-5 appears as follows in NA28:[24]

[Phrase 1] [3] ἐγω μὲν γάρ, ἀπὼν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι,
 For I on-the-one-hand, being-apart in-the body am-present on-the-other-hand in-the spirit,

[Phrase 2] ἤδη κέκρικα ὡς παρὼν τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον·
       already having-judged as being-present the-[man] thusly this-[thing] having-done;

[Phrase 3] [4] ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ
               in the name   of-the lord [of-us] Jesus

[Phrase 4] συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμου πνεύματος
       when-gathered-together you and - *my*   spirit

[Phrase 5] σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ,
           with the power of-the lord   of-us   Jesus,

[Phrase 6] [5] παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ Σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός,
            to-hand-over the such-a-person to Satan for destruction of-the flesh,

[Phrase 7] ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ
       so-that [his] spirit will-be-saved

[Phrase 8] ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου.
           on the day of-the   Lord.

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I divided it into phrases in order to show where the debate arises. Despite most translations dividing the sentence into two or three, this is in fact one particularly long run-on sentence. Within this sentence, phrase 3 can be paired with a number of different phrases in the run-on sentence, or perhaps more than one. Conzelmann lists six different possibilities, not including the one argued for here.[25] The decision by the editors of NA28 to end phrase 2 with a semicolon biases the translator to attach phrase 3 to one of the phrases following it rather than anything preceding it, though neither is more grammatically valid. So, for example, in Tom Wright's translation he pairs phrase 3 with phrase 4, translating v. 4 as 'When you are assembled together in the name of our Lord Jesus, and my spirit is there too with the power of our Lord Jesus.'[26] This means he agrees with the decision made by Thiselton in his massive and extensively researched commentary, where he reflects on the possibilities listed by Conzelmann and decides that phrase 3 describes phrase 4.[27] However, Thiselton's primary reason for concluding thusly is that if Paul is stating that the Corinthians are gathered in the name of the Lord, this is a speech-act.[28] While this fits nicely with Thiselton's interest in speech-act theory and biblical hermeneutics, the fact that this *could* be a reference to a speech-act is in no way an argument that it *is*, regardless of how nicely it fits in with Thiselton's particular philosophical interests.

In this case, the punctuation of the Textus Receptus is actually preferable, which maintains the ambiguous phrasing of the run-on sentence by punctuating

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[25] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 97.

[26] Tom Wright, *The New Testament for Everyone* (London: SPCK, 2011), 374.

[27] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 393-394.

[28] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 394.

with commas instead of full stops or semi-colons. Perhaps even more surprisingly, one could then argue that the King James Version translates it best by replicating this overuse of commas and re-creating the Greek ambiguity for the English reader. The New Revised Standard Version then follows the lead of its predecessor the Revised Standard Version, in a tradition going back to the King James Version and the Textus Receptus's punctuation, and translates vv. 3-5 as follows: 'For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present I have already pronounced judgment in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.' Without any grammatical reason to divide the phrases any particular way, especially once it has been acknowledged that all punctuation (including that of NA28) is an addition to the text, there is a division between commentaries, which tend to give historical reasons to attach phrase 3 to later parts in the sentence,[29] and translations, particularly ones in the tradition of the King James Version, which tend to read the phrase as a continuation of what came before it.

However, since neither historical nor grammatical arguments provide any conclusive evidence, is it simply the case that we should follow the lead of the Textus Receptus and attempt to take no side at all? The NRSV perhaps provides a way forward. In a footnote it notes another possible translation: 'Or *on the man who has done such a thing in the name of the Lord Jesus*.' Among English-speaking commentators it seems only Richard Hays defends this reading. For, he

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[29] For example Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 124-125 and Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 97.

says, this interpretation 'would fit well with the hypothesis that the Corinthians were actually boasting about this man's freedom from ordinary sexual constraints: the man would be explicitly claiming in the name of Jesus to be beyond the jurisdiction of merely human moral laws.'[30] There are no grammatical reasons or convincing historical reasons to read phrase 3 with any other phrases in the sentence, but to read it with the two words immediately preceding it is both sequentially intuitive and *contextually* intuitive: a core purpose of this entire letter is to respond to the Corinthians' use of the slogan 'all things are lawful;' a slogan either contained within or enabled by the gospel taught by Paul. It is thus most reasonable to match phrase 3 with the latter half of phrase 2: '…having judged as though I were already present the man who is doing such things in the name of the Lord.' Of all of the moral problems to which Paul responds in 1 Corinthians, the one given highest priority (the first moral issue he addresses after addressing schisms in general) is the issue of a man sleeping with his stepmother in the name of the Lord. The man is not doing this because this is what gentiles do, but because Corinthian libertinism was practicing freedom from the law through the specific transgression of the *Torah*; and, perhaps coincidentally, in this case also through the transgression of the very first law, the paternal incest prohibition.

Having objected to the use of his own kerygma as a cause of libertinism, one might expect Paul to proceed to give a theological argument for a Christian ethics that results from his gospel and is not libertine in nature. This is where

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[30] Hays, *First Corinthians*, 84. Hays also notes that to take phrase 3 with phrase 4, as do Thiselton and Wright, is made less likely (though not impossible) by the Greek word order. In other words, it seems unlikely that Paul would state the formula through which they gather before the fact of them gathering.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians disappoints. In response to the man sleeping with his stepmother in the name of the Lord, Paul does not argue for why this is immoral from a Christian perspective. Instead, he presumes knowledge that the act is immoral, and then implores the Corinthians to expel the guilty man from their community. Thiselton argues that Paul is arguing based on his theology here, noting that he uses 'old/new' imagery in allusion to the New Creation, and refers to the atonement with the reference to the πάσχα (which could mean 'Passover' or 'Passover Lamb').[31] While both of these allusions are possible, they are theological references adding weight to an apostolic command, not theological/moral arguments for that command. Further, when expanding upon exactly whom the church should expel, Paul gives a sin list that Brian Rosner has argued is drawn from those whom it is said should be killed in Deuteronomy.[32] Whether or not Paul is imitating deuteronomic prohibitions, the justification given for why the man's actions are immoral is only the ἤδη κέκρικα ('I have already judged') of v. 3, having already judged the man's actions to be κακίας καὶ πονηρίας, bad and evil (v. 8). That is to say, Paul's argument is based upon his own prior understanding of the act as evil, so its ultimate source is likely to be the religious prohibition from the *Torah* with which Paul was brought up, and Rosner's assertion provides evidence of this. So although he (surely intentionally) does not quote Lev 18:8, 20:11 or Deut 27:20, these verses are the ultimate ground of his moral reasoning. This means that, despite his best efforts, he has responded to the libertinism he accidentally created with law, and not with

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[31] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 403-404.

[32] Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics* (New York: Brill, 1994), 69. See also Hays, *First Corinthians*, 87-88.

an elaboration of what he thinks should replace the law in the ethical actions of Christians. If this is correct – and Paul has taught freedom from the law, it has been interpreted in defence of libertinism, and Paul has accidentally tried to rein it in with law (and not with the theology he intended to be *liberal*) – then 1 Corinthians is indeed the bearer of a knee-jerk, 'anti-theological' response.[33]

Likewise there is a problem with his response to the Corinthians' (or his own) slogan 'all things are lawful,' discussed above. None of the four responses he provides consist of or precede a description of what exactly constitutes that which is not lawful for Christians, or what positively replaces/reinterprets the law for Christians. In 1 Cor 6:12 Paul responds to the maxim with 'but not all things are beneficial' and then 'but I will not be mastered by anything.' The latter of these echoes Stoic language.[34] Neither of these responses is particularly Christian: Paul does not respond positively with a defence of Christian ethics. Instead, he tries to do damage control with slogans that do not stem from his own theological system. In what comes next, he argues that Christians should not be joined with prostitutes because they are the body of Christ, and prostitutes would pollute the purity of Christ's body. He even makes a joke at the end of this section, discussing the Church and prostitution, concluding with 'For you were

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[33] 'Anti-theological' in the sense of being a non-theological response to a problem caused by theology, but also in the sense Douglas Campbell attaches to the term in *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 29-34 (discussed in the introduction to Pauline scholarship above). Campbell uses the term to denote any approach to Paul's theology that reads him as internally contradictory and inconsistent, an approach against which he posits himself as the strictest opponent. The suggestion above amounts to an 'anti-theological' interpretation of 1 Corinthians, by way of introduction to a theological interpretation of Romans. Or, in other words, Paul's theology is mostly consistent but he does make mistakes.

[34] Hays, *First Corinthians*, 103.

bought with a price; so glorify God with your body' (1 Cor 6:20). Calling the Corinthians God's prostitutes might have been amusing, but it is not particularly connected to the rest of Paul's theology. So when J. Paul Sampley comments on this section he fills in the gaps by saying 'We can see elsewhere in Paul's letters that a believer's obligation is to love (Rom 13:8), to put one's faith, that is one's right relation to God, into expression via love (Gal 5:6).'[35] The fact that Sampley has to reach into Paul's other letters in order to find a properly theological response to the Corinthians' maxim demonstrates Paul's failure here: not an absolute systematic failure, but, in this instance, a knee-jerk response that will be reconsidered later.[36]

The problem posed for Paul, of responding to a libertine expansion of his own liberal gospel, is one that persists through the rest of the letter; particularly, the rest of cps. 5-11, dealing with moral issues. Within this letter, Paul's approach is consistent: he finds ways to limit libertine behaviour without sacrificing any of his original liberalism. However, on a theological level, his responses seem poorly considered. This is not overly surprising, since he is providing an immediate response to what he considers an incredible abuse of his own message. Indeed, this could well be the letter he refers to in 2 Cor 2:4 has having been written 'out of great affliction and distress… with many tears.'[37] He

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[35] Sampley, 'First Corinthians,' 860-861.

[36] It will be argued in Chapter 5 below that in his letter to the Romans Paul attempts to think through the issue more carefully and systematically.

[37] Douglas Campbell makes a convincing argument that 1 Corinthians is the so-called 'Letter of Tears' in *Framing Paul: An Epistolary Biography* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2014), 61-80; though this has not been the commonly accepted academic view since the mid nineteenth century. Margaret Thrall, in *2 Corinthians 1-7*, International Critical Commentary (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 57-61, summarises the original arguments by Fredrick Bleek in 1830 against the

does not provide thought-out theological approaches, but instead fishes for immediate responses. This creates an unusually complex and unsystematic relation to desire.

3. In Your Desire, Do Not Sin[38]

One final example makes this clear, and takes us in the direction of that which remains to be solved after 1 Corinthians. In 1 Cor 7:1 Paul begins a response to another quote from the letter he received: καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἅπτεσθαι ('it is good for a man not to touch a woman/his wife').[39] His response is complex and multi-faceted, with different pieces of advice to men and women in various situations; however, the constant theme is that it is generally better not to be married, except for in some situations. The precise reason for this view is contested, and requires some untangling. Dale Martin argues at length that Paul was influenced by Stoic philosophy to oppose desire itself, and saw

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identification of 1 Corinthians as the Letter of Tears, one of which is that Paul considered himself to be at fault for the problems caused, and, so the argument goes, in 1 Cor 5 Paul is not at fault. However, as I have argued, this is *precisely* what Paul thought in 1 Cor 5: that their libertinism was caused by his own message. This and several others of Bleek's arguments are countered by the reading provided above. Thus, it being reasonable that Paul himself does refer to 1 Cor as having been written in great distress, it is even more reasonable to refer to his arguments as 'knee-jerk.'

[38] This is of course a reference to Eph 4:26, 'Be angry but do not sin!' This verse acts as additional justification for the main argument of this section: Paul is not against emotion or desire, even though he occasionally balks at the thought of their excess.

[39] The main issue of contention in this verse is whether this Corinthian slogan regards intercourse ('touching') with a woman to whom a man is already married, or any woman at all. γυναικὸς can mean either.

marriage only as a tool for the reduction of desire.[40]   William Loader (among others), arguing from an expertise more focused on first century Judaisms than Hellenism, disagrees with Martin and says both that Stoicism was not opposed to passion within marriage, and that Paul sees both passion within marriage and celibacy as gifts.[41]   Stoicism actually had a wide range of views on desire and marriage in the first century, many of them cited by Foucault in his work on Roman sexuality.[42]

One point of entry into the debates over Paul's relation to desire in 1 Cor 7 is through v. 9.[43]   It is generally paired with the preceding verse, in which Paul says 'To the unmarried and widows I say that it is good for them to remain [unmarried] as I am.'   Verse nine then reads εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται, γαμησάτωσαν, κρεῖττον γάρ ἐστιν γαμῆσαι ἢ πυροῦσθαι, which can be translated as 'But if they are not exercising self-control let them marry, for it is better to marry than to [burn with] desire.'   Here there are a few necessary debates, one of

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[40] Dale Martin, *Sex and the Single Savior* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 65-76, 111-116. Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (London: Yale University Press, 1995), 198-228.

[41] William Loader, *Sexuality in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 2010), 45-48, 108-116.

[42] Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self: The History of Sexuality: 3*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990 [1984]), 154-164. Foucault also discusses first century Stoic and cynic attitudes towards marriage, in greater detail, in his lectures at the Collège du France of 4 and 11 February, 1981, which are due to be published in English later this year. Michel Foucault, *Subjectivité et Vérité* (Paris: Seuil, 2014), 98-148.

[43] In some ways exegesis and Lacanian psychoanalysis are similar pursuits: phonemes and signifiers mean nothing certain in isolation, but form a chain that must be entered into at some point. The point of entry of a chain of signifiers, whether they stem from a deceased author or a living analysand, does not matter nearly as much as where the chain ends up at the end; and the chain can only 'end up' somewhere after having been entered into. For more on the relation between hermeneutics and Lacanian psychoanalysis see Ian Parker, 'Negotiating Text with Lacan,' in *Lacan, Discourse, Event: New Psychoanalytic Approaches to Textual Indeterminacy*, eds. Ian Parker and David Pavón-Cuéllar (London: Routledge, 2014), 52-65.

which relates to the translation of the final word, πυροῦσθαι, rendered here as 'to desire.'

The word's literal meaning is 'to burn,' which is its most widely attested usage in extra-biblical sources, as well as in the Septuagint.[44] M. L. Barré[45] and K. C. Russell[46] have written defending this reading, with G. F. Snyder arguing for it in his commentary.[47] In such a reading, Paul's suggestion is that it is better to find a place for desire in marriage than to succumb to it outside of marriage and be thrown into hell, which would fit with his suggestion about what to do with the man in 1 Cor 5 discussed above ('hand him over to Satan'), and with the metaphor used in 1 Cor 3:13 of one's works being tested by fire on 'the day' (of judgment). It does not fit, however, with the absence of any reference to eternal suffering as being in fire, or indeed to any word for 'hell,' in Paul's letters.[48]

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[44] Friedrich Lang, 'πυρόω,' in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 6, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1968 [1959]), 948-949.

[45] M. L. Barré, 'To Marry or to Burn: *pyrousthai* in 1 Cor. 7:9,' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 36 (1974), 193-202. His argument is based on Septuagint, Qumran and New Testament lexicography.

[46] K. C. Russell, 'That Embarrassing Verse in First Corinthians,' *Bible Today*, 18 (1980), 338-341. His argument is based on analysis of rhetorical strategy.

[47] G. F. Snyder, *First Corinthians: A Faith Community Commentary* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1992), 97.

[48] Alfred Schmoller's *Handkonkordanz zum griechischen Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1989) helped in finding all of Paul's uses of the words πῦρ and πυροῦσθαι. Though there are references to God's wrath and eternal punishment in Paul, there are not references to hell as such, and Paul's eschatological focus is upon the presumption that whatever 'divine punishment' consists of, it transpires entirely on an earth onto which all humans have resurrected in Christ (Rom 11:32 and 1 Cor 15:20-28). Indeed, most recent major studies of Paul focus on the themes of sin and death, and justification and participation in Christ, to the exclusion of any detailed discussion of 'hell,' for example, James Dunn's *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998) and N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (London: SPCK, 2013). While this 'sidelining' of hell occurs without note in Dunn and Wright's works,

Most commentaries other than Snyder instead opt for a figurative reading of πυροῦσθαι, as something like 'burning desire.' Though the verb is used literally ('to burn') in its three non-Pauline occurrences in the New Testament,[49] its only other use by the authentic Paul is in 2 Cor 11:29, where its precise meaning is again uncertain, but it is certainly figurative as opposed to literal.[50] The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* notes a strong attestation in the Greek world for the translation 'to be consumed with the fire of sexual desire,' which it states with some confidence is its 'clear sense' in 1 Cor 7:9.[51] The number of arguments made on both sides throughout the centuries would be insurmountable here. However, having examined all of it, Thiselton decides on the latter reading ('burning desire') for two reasons: (1) because it lines up with 'positive' views about sexual intimacy and marriage as God-given (this point, however, is irrelevant from a historical-critical perspective) and (2) because it is combined with ἐγκρατεύονται (cognate with ἐγκράτεια, 'self-control'), which 'has a long history in Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman philosophy from Plato to the first-

Douglas Campbell refers to it frequently in his tome on Romans, and puts it bluntly just before his conclusion: 'It does not follow from the fact that Paul occasionally endorses an aggressive process of divine action… that this process is functioning *in a theologically foundational location within his thinking*.' Douglas Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 929-930, italics original; see also 87-95 and 924-927.

[49] 2 Pet 3:12; Rev 1:15, 3:18.

[50] The New Revised Standard Version translates πυροῦσθαι here as 'indignant,' and the sentence would make little sense if Paul intended the word literally. It is also used in Eph 6:16, though Ephesians is rarely considered authentically Pauline, or, more commonly recently, the last two chapters are considered a pseudepigraphal expansion of an original Pauline circular letter. See John Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Continuum, 2001), 1-54.

[51] Friedrich Lang, 'πυρόω,' 949-950.

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century Cynic and Stoic traditions.'[52] This is the most persuasive argument yet, and is also aided by the fact that among Jewish authors πυροῦσθαι is most frequently used in a figurative sense by the Stoic-Jewish philosopher Philo, who 'usually employs the term figuratively for "to be enflamed" with emotion, whether favourably or unfavourably.'[53] Philo was, much more clearly than Paul, heavily influenced by Stoicism. Further, Dale Martin has demonstrated very well that 'burning' was such a common metaphor for desire that it is perfectly legitimate, should it be well argued, to read it as a reference to desire in general, not just to intensely passionate desire.[54] This completes the argument for the above translation 'But if they are not exercising self-control let them marry, for it is better to marry than to [burn with] desire,' given above, which sounds so Stoic that it then warrants all of the comparisons with Stoicism made in commentaries.[55] But we still do not know whether Paul is opposed to all desire as such, or just this 'burning' desire.

At this point Paul's precise meaning hinges on the extent to which Stoic thought influences him.[56] Thiselton surveys some of the many studies on the potential Stoic influence on 1 Cor 7,[57] and points to Will Deming's study of the

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[52] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 518.

[53] Friedrich Lang, 'πυρόω,' 949.

[54] Martin, *Sex and the Single Savior*, 68-70. See also Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (London: Harvard University Press, 1990), 25-62 for a detailed analysis of the role of the notion of 'heat' (among other things) in ancient sexuality.

[55] Nearly every commentary makes some sort of comparison between Stoicism or Cynicism and 1 Cor 7, including every commentary discussed in this chapter.

[56] The most important major study of the relationship between Paul's thought and Stoic philosophy is Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000). Much more on the relationship between Paul and Stoicism will be said in the following three chapters.

[57] Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 487-492.

place of 1 Cor 7 in Stoic-Cynic debates about the merits and disadvantages of marriage.[58] As mentioned above, Dale Martin takes the theory of Stoic influence even further and reads Paul as saying that marriage is a tool for the reduction of desire, not its expression.[59] Such a neurotic approach would be of great relevance to the current study. The most often cited single text used for placing Paul in this context is Epictetus's *Discourses*, 3.22.76.[60] I will now evaluate the extent to which the Stoic material may actually be seen as a background to Paul's text, and then look at the text's internal evidence for its precise relationship to the Stoic background, which I will argue is not as extensive as it seems. Proposed translations of 1 Cor 7:1-9 and the relevant section of Epictetus can be found in Appendix B.

Discourses, 3.22.76 is by no means the only Stoic passage on marriage or desire; but it is the one most frequently cited as an example of a Stoic argument analogous to Paul's. It concludes the section 3.22.67-76, in which Epictetus discusses whether the ideal philosopher (Epictetus refers to him as 'the Cynic') should marry. The conclusion is that a philosopher should not marry, so that, like a king, he has time to devote to more important pursuits. While Epictetus would like to imagine an ideal world in which all men are wise ('sages,' as traditional

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[58] Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003).

[59] Martin, *Sex and the Single Savior*, 65.

[60] Thiselton, *First Corinthians* 487-488; Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 203; Loader, *Sexuality in the New Testament*, 112. Of these, Dale Martin is alone in not citing Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy* as the reason he is discussing Epictetus. I argue below that Epictetus' comment isn't as relevant as it might seem. Rather than this argument flying in the face of all commentary on the passage, it is merely a comment on Deming, who, in discussing Epictetus, caused everyone else to need to pass comment on what had been discussed prior.

translations render it), he grants that in the present world in which this is not the case, and not all are philosophers, the philosopher should not be tied down by a role including a commitment to the duty of family life. After arguing this his interlocutor interjects, reminding him that Crates, the founder of the Cynics, was himself married. Epictetus responds by pointing out that Crates' marriage was out of passionate love, and to a woman who was also wise like him. Thus he refutes the objection by restating his original point: marriage is usually done out of duty and comes with more time-consuming duties; and in a world in which most are not wise philosophers, it is better not to marry.

Epictetus clearly thinks that a marriage based on passionate desire is, if anything, the *only* form of marriage into which a wise philosopher should enter, but that most marriages are done for duty. This reflects the most common view of the day: that marriage is primarily a matter of duty and only rarely entered into because of love. So, when Caesar Augustus passed a law in 17 BCE encouraging men to marry (in itself evidence that marriage was commonly seen as a duty), he quoted the following from an old speech, saying it seemed written for the hour: 'If we could survive without a wife, citizens of Rome, all of us would do without that nuisance; but since nature has so decreed that we cannot manage comfortably with them, nor live in any way without them, we must plan for our lasting preservation rather than for our temporary pleasure.'[61] Contrary to Epictetus, most other Stoics take precisely this view, in line with which was Augustus: not that the only time marriage is ideal is the exceptional one based on passionate love, but that all men

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[61] From Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Flant, eds., *Women's Life in Greece & Rome* (London: Duckworth, 2005), 103.

should perform the social duty of marriage, that this is natural, and that desire within marriage should be controlled and moderated.

So Musonius Rufus, Epictetus's teacher and direct contemporary to Paul, said that sex is justified when it is in marriage and for child-bearing, and unjust when it is 'mere pleasure-seeking.'[62] Then Hierocles, a Stoic philosopher in the second century, inverts Epictetus's view precisely: 'The married life is to be preferred by the wise man, but life without a wife is not, except in special circumstances.'[63] For him, and most Stoics, having children is in line with nature; and he goes even further: 'living with a wife even before childbirth is advantageous,'[64] 'having all things in common, including their bodies.'[65] So he 'marvels' at those who think that married life is burdensome (such as, perhaps intentionally, Epictetus).[66] For Hierocles marriage should be entered into even by someone who is strong, self-controlled and moderate, and there is no hint at all that the sex within marriage should be without desire.[67]

Gretchen Reydams-Schils correctly notes that Stoic views on marriage varied; but Epictetus's views on marriage are in the minority at best, and the pro-marriage views of his teacher Rufus seem more reflective of Stoicism, and much

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[62] Abraham J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation, A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 153. The following citations are all from this compendium, which contains, among other things, a rare example of an English translation of Hierocles.

[63] Ibid., 100.

[64] Ibid., 102.

[65] Ibid., 103.

[66] Ibid., 103.

[67] Ibid., 103.

of the rest of society, at large.[68] This is a very important point. Even though Epictetus says something that sounds similar to Paul, that marriage is only suitable in cases of passionate love, he says this decades after Paul, and says it in opposition to the usual view espoused by the Stoics – that marriage is a duty stemming from nature. It is difficult to see, then, how it is relevant to the question of what Paul meant. Further, Epictetus says it for very different reasons to Paul: Epictetus argues against the Stoic view that marriage is a duty and argues that the only way it is not just a 'common marriage' is if it arises out of love. Paul makes no reference to marriage being about love in this passage, nor any specific reference to marriage as duty, but rather addresses marriage as something that might be necessary due to *porneia* (7:2), or is already present (7:10-24) and already as though not existing due to the imminent return of Christ (7:29-31). Despite not specifically mentioning it, Paul's discussion of marriage makes sense within the context of the common conception of marriage as duty, shared by most Stoics, in which marriage is *not* seen as a tool for the reduction of desire. There is therefore no evidence here that Paul saw marriage as a defence against desire as such, since this is not a Stoic view that Paul would have been replicating. Instead, it makes more sense in context that Paul was defending against specifically 'burning' desire, lest it lead to *porneia*. Between Martin and Loader's positions summarised above, the evidence seems to side with Loader.

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[68] Gretchen Reydams-Schils, *The Roman Stoics: Self, Responsibility, and Affection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 143-176.

It is better to marry than 'to [burn with] desire,' yet at the end of the chapter Paul says that as long as one's desire (θέλημα) is under control, one can marry and do well (though 'the one who does not marry will do even better').[69] Martin is correct that Paul does not refer to desire *positively*, here or elsewhere, but there is certainly a 'neutral' desire that can be a part of a good, procreative, marriage, as opposed to a burning desire that leads to *porneia*. Though θέλημα is not negative in Stoicism either, and is not the 'desire' that Stoicism sought to reduce, it is certainly a form of desire in a Lacanian sense, and it is something Paul sought (like the Stoics) to control, rather than to eliminate. Paul did have a concept of neutral/necessary desire (θέλημα) as opposed to excessive (and sometimes bad) desire (ἐπιθυμία), and, at least with a Lacanian wider view of 'desire,' this is precisely consistent with the Stoic norm before Epictetus's anomalous anti-marital position.[70] Paul, here and elsewhere, treats desire (θέλημα) as a neutral thing, natural and beneficial when under control. Conversely, when Paul condemns ἐπιθυμία (*epithymia*), which he does often, this is in reference to 'excessive desire,'[71] not desire in itself. This is consistent with

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[69] 1 Cor 7:36-38.

[70] Epictetus's anti-marriage view is actually more in line with the Cynics; though they opposed marriage in order to fornicate more freely, whereas Epictetus opposed it as a distraction from the duties of a philosopher.

[71] Schmoller, in his *Handkonkordanz zum griechischen Neuen Testament*, 184, lists ten occurrences of ἐπιθυμία in the authentic Pauline epistles. While these references are mostly negative, they are occasionally positive, such as in 1 Thes 2:17 where Paul tells the Thessalonians that he longs ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ to see them, or Phil 3:23, in which we are presumably meant to read Paul's verbalisation of the death drive as a positive.

his use of it to translate the commandment traditionally translated 'Thou shalt not covet,' which is not a prohibition of desire in itself.[72]

The answer to the above questions, of Paul's views of marriage and desire, is that in 1 Cor 7:8-9 Paul argues for marriage as a place for desire without too much *jouissance* ('burning'), because excessive *jouissance* might lead to *porneia*, the thought of which (and presence of which) he cannot bear; and the first instance of *porneia* he feels the need to oppose is the man sleeping with his stepmother in the name of the Lord. The claim that Paul's primary purpose here is to oppose *porneia*, not desire, is consistent with Paul's own stated purpose in v. 2, and does not require theorising about underlying Stoic philosophical motives.[73]

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[72] For example, Rom 7:7.

[73] In 1 Thessalonians, probably Paul's earliest extant letter, the relation to Stoicism, desire and *porneia* is similar. As stated above, in 1 Thess 2:17 he uses *epithymia* positively, but in 4:3-6 uses language reminiscent of the Stoics to implore the Thessalonians to avoid *porneia* by controlling their own bodies, in order to avoid allowing their excessive desire to lead them farther than it should (μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν), so that they would not be like the gentiles in the passion of excessive desire (ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας). Paul, consistently from the start, does not respond to *porneia* with the Torah, but does believe that excessive desire can lead to it, and is not yet sure how Christian ethics (and not Stoic injunctions), can respond to this. So in a letter in which the rest of his ethics are deeply Christian (see 1:2-3 or 5:13-15), when it comes to his fear of *porneia* his imperatives seem unfounded in the rest of his thought, and so here he depends upon his prejudice against the 'ways of the gentiles' (just as we also see in 1 Corinthians). Yet he also sometimes seems to strike against Stoic thought: in 5:14 his attitude towards the weak is to console and encourage them, upholding them in their weakness, not to tell them to accept their illness as nature's will (see Seneca's advice in the fifth section of Chapter 4, below). Whereas Seneca in Letter 122 condemns staying awake at night and connects this to those who engage in drunkenness (see citations in Appendix C, 1.3), Paul's advice is that we should neither drink nor sleep at night, but keep awake and sober to watch for the one who comes like a thief in the night (1 Thess 5:5-8). Paul may sometimes retreat to Stoic-like reason, but it is foolish to suggest that this is a major or central influence on his ethics. He is *not* unequivocally negative about desire, so long as we resist the temptation to read the occasional use of Stoic signifiers as a wholesale endorsement of a mythically monadic view of 'Stoicism.'

He sometimes argues using Stoic terms and with reference to Stoic concepts, but not for the reason that desire itself is necessarily evil. When he does appropriate from Stoicism, or at least from the discourse of self-mastery, with his 'do not allow yourself to be mastered' responses to libertinism, this is part of his knee-jerk' relation to desire in 1 Corinthians. In Lacanian terms, throughout 1 Corinthians he advocates obsessional neurosis (seeking self-control) as the prophylaxis against perverse libertinism, because *jouissance* ('desire that burns') involves getting too close to *das Ding* (maternal enjoyment, *porneia*). His preaching resulted in one side of the paradox of *jouissance*, so he combats it with the other.

While this is not the first time it has been suggested that parts of 1 Corinthians should be read as containing an urgent and immediate ('knee-jerk') reaction, rather than as a thoughtful and consistent argument,[74] it is made clearer that this is the case with a Lacanian analysis of the problem Paul was facing, just as the development of his response to the problem will be made clearer through a Lacanian analysis of Romans. So far my conception of Paul's gospel is floating in the breeze, being no more nuanced than any other ethical system that lies trapped in the paradox; but, helpfully, not so Stoic that it is by nature not Lacanian. After explaining more of what is meant by 'obsessional neurosis' (which so far has been employed without as much qualification as 'perversion'), I will turn to see how Paul progresses to approach this problem in his letter to the Romans.

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[74] See n. 2, above.

Chapter Four

The Paradox of *Jouissance* and Stoic Obsessionalism

1. Obsessive Neurosis[1]

So far I have laid out the theoretical basis of the paradox of *jouissance*. It can be described as composed of a perverse and a neurotic side, and Paul's first canonical letter to the Corinthians is an example of Paul responding with a knee-jerk neurotic message to a situation in which his kerygma resulted in perversion. Expanding upon Lacan's reading of Sade demonstrates the perverse side of the paradox: one cannot gain freedom from the law through its transgression. So far I have also suggested that Stoic moralisation represents a neurotic approach to the

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[1] Translations of Freud tend to use the adjective 'obsessive' with neurosis, and the adjectival noun 'the obsessive.' Translations of Lacan, and English-speaking Lacanian psychoanalysts, tend to use the adjective 'obsessional' with neurosis, and the adjectival noun 'the obsessional,' following the French *obsessionel*. Accordingly, in order to match up with quotations, 'obsessive' will be used when discussing Freud and 'obsessional' when discussing Lacan, with some overlap. This seems the clearest way forward, without altering all of the quotes one way or the other. Their meanings are the same, and the difference, like with 'fantasy' and 'phantasy,' is merely a result of historical psychoanalytic discourse happening between German, French and English. This first section of the chapter is mostly concerned with Freud, so the heading above is 'obsessive neurosis.'

law. However, before progressing with a Lacanian reading of Romans, more depth regarding the clinical structure of obsessional neurosis is required. As I will argue in the following chapters, it is a helpful category for unpacking not only the paradox in which Paul found his ethical ideas played out, but also the intellectual field in which he wrote, and the history of interpretation of his letters that followed. After outlining obsessional neurosis in more detail it will be possible to read Paul's theology as it is precisely argued in relation to the signifier and human behaviour.

However, this does not permit blasé statements about the clinical structures and diagnoses of long-deceased historical figures. Lacanian psychoanalysis is particularly concerned with the speech of the subject, so it is impossible to make any conclusive statements about a deceased subject's clinical structure. Nonetheless, since obsessional neurosis is a clinical *structure* it enables a structuralist reading of history at its finest: we can talk about the structure of Stoic ethics as a way of thinking, and the structure contained within Paul's ideas and those of other figures. This is a form of 'elaboration,' as outlined in the Introduction. While one might agree completely with Roland Barthes' or Michel Foucault's assertions of the death of the author, this is no reason not to posit an obsessional neurotic structure to the *ideas* of, for example, Kant or Augustine.[2] So, having said that, what is obsessional neurosis? What marks a set of ideas or an ideological system as obsessional neurotic in structure? I will examine how

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[2] Freud himself eventually moved away from seeing certain ideas as obsessive, preferring instead to talk about obsessive structures or obsessive thinking (*SE10*, 221-222). However, this is consistent with what I am suggesting: I use obsessional neurosis here less as a structure for an individual human or an individual idea, but for a set of ideas, or a way of thinking.

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obsessional neurosis is laid out by Freud and Lacan as a diagnostic tool for individual humans, but then argue that structure can just as easily be identified in systems of thought; particularly, Stoic philosophy as it existed in Paul's world.

'Obsessional neurosis' is a term characterising a set of symptoms, which is given various different definitions by Freud, Lacan and other psychoanalysts, and defined in various ways at different points by each of the above. Lacan describes the obsessional neurotic in many different ways, listed below. These descriptions are by no means mutually exclusive, but formulating a precise definition for a term that has a usage long predating Freud requires tracing it back historically, then forward through Freud to Lacan, to understand what is meant by this signification of a collection of symptoms. Although modern psychoanalysts of various traditions, as well as psychological schools outside of psychoanalysis, have many different opinions about the nature and causes of obsessional neurosis, the purpose of the inquiry into Freud's ideas below is only to provide a background to the Lacanian understanding. For this reason, modern non-Lacanian theories will not be examined here. However, tracing back to Freud's understanding is entirely necessary, because Lacan does not invent his own theory of obsessional neurosis from scratch or lay out in a dedicated work what his precise understanding of it is;[3] instead, he comments upon it in brief throughout his career, always while detailing his reading of the Freudian concept. I begin

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[3] He does have one dedicated work on neurosis, largely focusing on obsessional neurosis in particular, which will be referred to below: 'The Neurotic's Individual Myth,' *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 48 (1979 [1953]), 404-425. However, it is too early a piece to treat as a sole indicator of his thoughts on the matter, and too brief to contain the nuance of some of his later ideas.

with Freud's understanding of neurosis in general, before getting to obsessive neurosis in particular.

The term 'neurosis' traces back to the eighteenth century, and originally referred to a disease of the nerves (thus the French, *névrose*).[4] Freud then recounts that between 1893 and 1895, while studying cases of hysterical neurosis with Joseph Breuer, they found that most hysterical symptoms were not ultimately caused by the nervous system, but by an inability to deal with powerful traumatic experiences.[5] Although their claims were not immediately met with the recognition they would eventually receive, 1895 marks the year in which they published *Studies in Hysteria* and began to transform the understanding of neurosis from an essentially biological one to an essentially psychological one.[6] In its first chapter they write jointly, and claim that 'We found, to our greatest surprise, that the *individual hysterical symptoms immediately disappeared without returning if we succeeded in thoroughly awakening the memories of the causal process with its accompanying affect, and if the patient circumstantially discussed the process in the most detailed manner and gave verbal expression to the affect.*'[7] This is a central claim to Freud's work that he still maintains in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* twenty years later: 'The thesis that symptoms disappear when we have made their unconscious predeterminants

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[4] Charles Rycroft, *Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* (London: Penguin, 1995), 109.

[5] *SE16*, 274-275. In this chapter I refer to Freud frequently, but only ever by reference to the *Standard Edition*. Should one wish to know from which of Freud's works any individual quote is drawn, without the need to access the *Standard Edition* itself, every source is listed individually in the bibliography, below the *Standard Edition* as a whole.

[6] *SE2*.

[7] Ibid., 6. Italics original.

conscious has been confirmed by all subsequent research.'[8] 'In other words: *The hysteric suffers mostly from reminiscences.*'[9] Through studying hysteria, a form of neurosis, they came to redefine neurosis.

This metaphorical substitution, in which the signifier 'neurosis' swaps the signified 'disease of the nerves' for 'disease of the mind,' marks the beginning of the subject of Freudian inquiry.[10] Throughout the rest of Freud's career he would develop his theory of neurosis. Although in 1926 he is still rethinking and clarifying various aspects of the theory in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*,[11] he is working from a fairly consistent outline of the theory as he paints it in *The Unconscious* (1915)[12] and *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1916).[13] This outline of neurosis forms the bedrock of psychoanalytic theory, and is refined and expanded upon by all later psychoanalysts.[14]

A symptom is a substitute for an unfulfilled instinctual satisfaction.[15] While there are different types of instinctual satisfaction, Freud defines all *obsessive neurotic* symptoms as substitutes for *sexual* satisfactions.[16] The process

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[8] *SE16*, 280.

[9] *SE2*, 7. Italics original.

[10] This is appropriate since, in Lacanian terms, every non-psychotic subject begins with the acceptance of a metaphorical substitution, the paternal metaphor (see Chapter 2, above).

[11] *SE20*, 77-181.

[12] *SE14*, 159-215.

[13] *SE15* and *SE16*.

[14] See, for example, Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1946), a textbook that greatly expands upon Freud's theory while sticking to the original model, or Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1937), a tome in which Horney asks the question of whether there are common features to the neurotic personality in a given culture.

[15] *SE20*, 91.

[16] *SE16*, 298-300.

that leads to a neurotic symptom begins with repression,[17] and repression can happen when the libido is frustrated by the reality principle.[18] That is to say, the ego, in the face of its interpretation of reality, finds the idea of the satisfaction of a certain instinct unbearable.[19] In what Freud would call 'economic' terms (to do with the transfer of energy in the brain), the satisfaction of the instinct might be unbearable because it is incongruous with reality, but, in the case of a traumatic neurosis, the instinct is unbearable because there is an excess of stimulation – 'an experience which within a short period of time presents the mind with an increase of stimulus too powerful to be dealt with or worked off in the normal way.'[20] Or, conversely, a symptom could arise as a result of a repression of an instinct that was too *little*, the symptom then allowing the ego to achieve its substitute satisfaction despite the *underwhelming* instinct.[21]

In response to an excess or lack of excitation, the ego deflects the instinct, preventing it from becoming conscious.[22] Cathexis is withdrawn from the idea to which the instinct was attached, so the idea can then be called unconscious (un-conscious).[23] This is repression. However, repression leaves the subject in a *state of tension* because the instinct is still present in the unconscious, despite the de-cathected idea.[24] So neurotic subjects usually find themselves with unexplained

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[17] Ibid., 294.

[18] Ibid., 358.

[19] *SE20*, 91, 94.

[20] *SE16*, 275.

[21] Ibid., 300-301.

[22] *SE20*, 91; *SE14*, 166.

[23] *SE16*, 294-296.

[24] Ibid., 349-350.

feelings of *anxiety*, which is a central affect of neurosis.[25] The symptom then

forms as a way to resolve this tension. The ego sends a signal of unpleasure to

repress the instinctual impulse, and it then finds satisfaction elsewhere.[26]

'Neurotic symptoms are the outcome of a conflict which arises over a new method

of satisfying the libido.'[27] At this point the libido might perhaps find an alternate

satisfaction, which the subject will be unable to explain. For example, Freud

describes a case in which a woman compulsively asks her maid to spill ink on the

table cloth, and it eventually emerges that she feels upset that her much beloved

husband failed to cause her to stain the bed sheet on their wedding night. Since

she loves her husband she feels unable to acknowledge this anger, so it is

repressed and emerges instead in the symptom involving the maid.[28] But what

happens when the repressed idea, connected to the deflected instinct, cannot find

expression in a symptom?

This brings us to the key to Freud's explanation for the various forms of

neurosis, including obsessive neurosis: regression. Obsessive neurosis is, in its

simplest sense, neurosis experienced more intensely as obsessive or compulsive.

However, Freud, and others after him, found common traits and causes to neurosis

when it is obsessive or compulsive. Through clinical experience, Freud found

that all those who suffered with obsessive neurotic symptoms eventually revealed

similar causes to those symptoms, which he explains through the idea of

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[25] *SE20*, 92-93; *SE16*, 411.

[26] *SE20*, 94-95.

[27] *SE16*, 358-359.

[28] Ibid., 261-264.

regression, detailed below. Some of these common characteristics and symptoms of obsessive neurotics, according to Freud, are as follows:[29]

- **Anxiety.**[30] Anxiety is described as the central affect of obsessive neurosis, leading Karen Horney to describe it as the 'dynamic centre.'[31] It can be an affect that proceeds immediately from the unconscious,[32] but for the obsessive neurotic it is usually also experienced as a result of the other symptoms below.

- **Compulsive ideas (obsessions) or actions (impulses).**[33] These compulsions are a form of *repetition*, and the subject is compelled to repeat them again and again.[34] The compulsions are experienced as imperatives or prohibitions that make little sense to the subject, but which must be obeyed nonetheless.

- **Ambivalence or internal conflict.** Ambivalent behaviour towards the superego, sometimes striking against it, and sometimes obeying it.[35] 'One part of the personality champions certain wishes while

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[29] Otto Fenichel's textbook *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* is also used here because, unlike most psychoanalysts of his generation, he is one who receives unanimously positive review from Lacan, who even borrows an idea from him (the idea that the girl is the phallus). This puts him in an excellent position as a source for the background to Lacan's understanding of obsessional neurosis. See, for example, *Écrits*, 471 and 617.

[30] *SE20*, 92-93.

[31] Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, 41.

[32] *SE14*, 179.

[33] *SE16*, 258-259.

[34] Richard Wollheim, *Freud* (London: Fontana, 1991 [1971]), 137. *SE16*, 270, 274-275.

[35] Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, 290-291.

another part opposes them and fends them off.'[36] The compulsive commands/prohibitions themselves conflict, such as in a compulsive thought of protecting someone being immediately followed by a compulsion to hurt them,[37] or impulses that are symptoms of conflicting deflected instincts (such as hate and love).[38] The compulsive commands might seem to be missing a (repressed) logical step, which leads to heightened anxiety from confusion.[39]

- **Doubt.[40]** They draw themselves away from reality by constantly talking about the things about which no one really knows: 'paternity, length of life, life after death and memory.'[41] This doubt, as well as the ways that the obsessive neurotic masks it in speech about uncertain subjects, is a symptom of the ambivalence and internal conflict described above, as well as being a partial (but never complete) satisfaction of the desire to see and know described below. It is also, like the ambivalence described above, a symptom of conflicting repressed instincts.[42]

- **Feelings of diminished freedom.** Fenichel puts it well: 'In compulsions and obsessions, the fact that the ego governs motility

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[36] *SE16*, 349.

[37] *SE10*, 193-195, 242-243.

[38] Ibid., 191-195.

[39] Ibid., 226-228. The contradictions that arise from the repressed logical step are one of the key features that Lacan will emphasise.

[40] Ibid., 232-233.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 238-241.

is not changed, but the ego does not feel free in using this governing power.'[43] Part of the cause of this feeling of diminished freedom is the presence of inhibitions, reduced bodily or mental functions, in which the ego does not feel free because anxiety, superego, or a symptom have forced a lowering of function (though sometimes inhibitions exist for none of these reasons).[44]

- **Superstition.**[45] Usually intense superstition felt as an impulse or prohibition,[46] but simultaneously intellectually disavowed as nonsensical.[47] This is often connected with an increased tendency towards religiosity,[48] religion itself being something Freud considered neurotic.[49]

- **Orderliness.** A compulsive need for orderliness or cleanliness.[50]

Beyond the symptoms the obsessive initially presents are some common elements revealed by Freud's obsessive analysands throughout therapy:

- The compulsions, imperatives and prohibitions are often felt as connected to childhood **paternal commands**,[51] and always trace

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[43] Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, 268.

[44] *SE20*, 87-90.

[45] *SE10*, 229-232.

[46] *SE6*, 260-269.

[47] *SE10*, 230.

[48] Ibid., 233.

[49] *SE21*, 84-85; *SE23*, 80-93.

[50] Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, 284.

[51] Ibid., 58.

back to commands coming from a parent.[52]   However, it is important to note that although the superego imperatives/prohibitions are connected to parental commands and memories of childhood, this accounts for the *form* of the commands, not their *source*.[53]

- **Fear.** Very often the impulse repressed was a fear, and the conversion of fears into obsessions is easily observed.[54]   In the case of the client Freud calls the Rat Man,[55] his obsessions took the place of his fear that his father would die, which was actually a repressed *wish* that his father would die.[56]

- **Guilt.** 'Every neurosis conceals a quota of unconscious sense of guilt, which in its turn fortifies the symptoms by making use of them as a punishment.'[57] The sense of guilt is exceptionally strong in obsessive neurosis, though this isn't always apparent to the subject before analysis.[58] 'A feature in the character of obsessional neurotics is a scrupulous conscientiousness…   If their illness becomes more acute, they develop a sense of guilt of the most

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[52] *SE10*, 204-214.

[53] Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, 269-270.

[54] Ibid., 269-270.

[55] This is Freud's most important obsessive neurotic patient, about whom he wrote the most. Lacan also devoted considerable study to the case of the 'Rat Man' (real name Ernst Lanzer), and stated that the case of the Rat Man 'should be read like the Bible' (*S5*, 14.5.1958, 13).

[56] *SE10*, 178-183.

[57] *SE21*, 139.

[58] *SE19,* 48-59.

intense degree.'[59] The fact that the actual source of this guilt is hidden from the subject him/herself is part of the cause of the obsessive's anxiety.[60]

- Belief in the **omnipotence of thoughts**.[61] This is a term that Freud was introduced to by the Rat Man after his analysis had been completed, as a description of how 'the uncanny' had led him to believe that his thoughts had real power (that is, that the threat coming from his superego, that if he did not do a thing then someone would die, actually had the power to result in death).[62]

- Connected to this is the obsessive neurotic's preoccupation with **thoughts as opposed to actions**.[63] Compulsive thinking is abstract and disconnected from the real world;[64] and as fear of actions increases, so also do deliberative thoughts about the preparations for actions.[65]

- **Dis-affected memories**. Unlike hysterics who tend to have repressed memories, obsessives tend to have memories that remain conscious, but the emotions attached to them have been

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[59] *SE13*, 68.

[60] *SE13*, 69.

[61] *SE10*, 233-235.

[62] Freud recounts this years later in *Totem and Taboo* (1913), *SE13*, 85-88. The function of 'uncanny' events as confirmation of the omnipotence of thoughts (or of animism, magic, superstition, etc.) was also the subject of *The Uncanny* (1919, *SE17*, 217-256).

[63] *SE10*, 244-245.

[64] Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, 297.

[65] Ibid., 298.

repressed.[66] Of course, Freud's entire programme is dependent upon the phenomenological teaching of Franz Brentano, and he is not suggesting that memories exist in the brain without any affect attached to them; quite the opposite, it is because memories cannot exist without affect that when it appears they do the reality turns out to be that the affect is existent but repressed.[67]

- Defence of the symptom through **resistance**.[68] Despite having come for relief from the symptom, obsessive neurotics demonstrate exaggerated defence of the symptom. Though all psychoanalytic patients engage in resistance to some degree, the pervert does so to a much lesser extent, and the obsessive neurotic expends great effort to cling on to the symptom. Five forms of resistance are: repression/anticathexis (see below), transference onto the analyst, gain from illness (assimilation of the symptom by the ego), unconscious resistance and guilt itself.[69]

- The form of resistance most aggressively engaged in by obsessive neurotics is **anticathexis**. Freud first began using this term in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), in reference to when an idea or position in opposition to the repressed thought is cathected in place of it.[70] Obsessive neurotics constantly find themselves desiring one thing then its opposite, or repressing hate so consciously

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[66] *SE16,* 282-284.

[67] Wollheim, *Freud*, 34-36.

[68] *SE16,* 286-294.

[69] *SE20*, 160.

[70] *SE5*, 605.

striving to love, or having obsessive thoughts about something extremely unhygienic but also demanding cleanliness.[71]

- **Infantile sexuality**.[72] 'Obsessional neuroses make it much more obvious than hysterias that the factors which go to form a psychoneurosis are to be found in the patient's *infantile* sexual life and not in his present one.'[73]

The obsessive neurotic subject is brought to the point of desiring psychoanalysis by the anxiety produced by the constant state of conflict described above.[74] Freud's theory, which he saw as confirmed in his clinical experience, was that *the first cause of the obsessive neurotic's anxiety is the frustration of the libido seeking a release of energy, which then regresses back to modes of enjoyment it previously held*.[75] He first recorded the beginnings of this theory in his 1908 paper 'Character in Anal Eroticism,' in which he noted the continued observance of similarities in character between infants in the anal-erotic stage (aged 1-3, when learning to control bowels) and adults with obsessive neurotic symptoms.[76] These character traits are (1) orderliness, (2) parsimoniousness and (3) obstinacy.   He argues that these character traits in adults are either prolongations or sublimations of the instincts in infancy, or reaction-formations against them.   So, when analysing the Rat Man a year later he explains his

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[71] *SE20*, 256-259.

[72] *SE10*, 204.

[73] Ibid., 165. Italics original.

[74] *SE16,* 349-350.

[75] Ibid., 343-344, 359.

[76] *SE9*, 167-175.

tendency to gain satisfaction from thought instead of action by calling it a regression, back to the stage in which so many infants enjoy delaying the action, refusing to let the parent take away the freedom to enjoy defecation whenever they please.[77] However it was not until he had formally developed his theory of the different stages of libidinal development through which all infants pass (in 1910-1912) that he had groundwork for a unifying theory of the regressive form of obsessive neurosis.[78] In 1913 he first outlines his theory that, although there are many constitutional and accidental determinants factoring in on the choice of neurosis, it is by regression that all neurotic structures are formed: 'the total function of the libido passes through "fixation points" throughout infancy, to which it might regress if the subject falls ill through some external disturbance.'[79] He abandons earlier theories that the difference between hysteric and obsessive choice of neurosis is due to activity or passivity, and instead sees the difference between them as a question of how far back the libido regresses before finding a satisfactory arrangement. This theory works well for him both in the obvious anal-erotic features of the Rat Man's obsessive neurosis (whose initial complaint was that he could not escape the obsessive image of rats burrowing into his father's anus), as well as in that of the patient he calls the Wolf Man, whom he treated from 1910-1914, suffering with obsessions and bowel/intestinal problems.[80]

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[77] *SE10*, 244-246.

[78] J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac Books, 1988 [1973]), 386.

[79] 'The Disposition to Obsessional Neurosis,' *SE12*, 311-326.

[80] *SE17*, 3-122. His real name was Sergei Konstantinovitch Pankejeff, and the case study is titled *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis*.

The fully developed theory, then, is stated in Freud's *Introductory Lectures* (1917), as well as in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1924).[81] In response to reality (which covers a number of different causes) the libido regresses to find satisfaction in organisations it had previously outgrown. It withdraws from the ego and its laws and flows backwards, cathecting previously repressed positions.[82] This escape is made possible through the presence of past fixations/fixing points – modes of enjoyment that had existed and then were repressed, such as the enjoyment of the sensation of defecation, or of holding it in despite the commands of one's parents, or the enjoyment of thought, ownership, or pity as an infant.[83] The foundation for the development of the neurosis is laid when the child first progresses on from the anal stage, when, optimally, they would have passed through to the phallic stage, in which pleasure becomes founded on the genitals and identification with the same-sex parent, thus (for a male) overcoming the Oedipus complex.[84] For the obsessive neurotic, the genital organisation of desire is found to be feeble, so the libido reverts to a previous fixing point.[85] The anal stage involves both anal-eroticism and anal-sadism, in which the infant enjoys the pleasure and pain associated with defecation, as well as the defiance associated with retention and the submission associated with

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[81] *SE16*, 358-377; *SE20*, 113-117.

[82] *SE16,* 359.

[83] Ibid., 360-361.

[84] *SE20*, 113.

[85] In the paper of 1913 mentioned above he theorises that there may be another two 'fixing points' between the anal stage and the phallic stage: the narcissistic stage, and possibly another pregenital sexual stage in which there is an object choice but it is not yet genital. However, even in 1924 (*SE20*, 113-114) he only reads this case as exceptional, and not necessarily indicative of a stage through which all infants pass.

expulsion.[86]   So while for 'normal' people the latency period begins with a strengthening of the superego against the Oedipus complex, for the obsessive neurotic it begins with an over-strengthening of a very aggressive superego, due to the anal-sadistic mode of enjoyment.[87]   This over-strengthening of an aggressive superego then produces reaction-formations against it, such as conscientiousness and pity; and, likewise, the anal-eroticism produces a reaction-formation of cleanliness/orderliness.

2. Lacan's Obsessional Maxims

The reason for this summary of Freud is that when Lacan discusses obsessional neurosis, he is speaking of the same group of people as Freud, with the same symptoms.[88]   It is easy to see from the lists of symptoms above why

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[86] For more on these see Freud's essay on 'Infantile Sexuality,' *SE5*, 173-206, specifically 185-187.

[87] *SE20*, 114-115.

[88] Needless to say, one would not find Freud's theory outlined in DSM-V or a neuroscience journal.   An example of a modern neuroscientific approach to 'neuroticism' (the psychiatric term for a collection of symptoms similar to psychoanalytic obsessionalism), see Colin G. DeYoung, Jacob B. Hirsh, Matthew S. Shane, Xenophon Papademetris, Nallakkandi Rajeevan, and Jeremy R. Gray, 'Testing Predictions from Personality Neuroscience: Brain Structure and the Big Five,' *Psychological Science*, 21.6 (2010), 820-828.   An earlier version of the article can be found for free at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3049165/> [accessed 26.1.2017].   The study used MRI scans of 116 people to link the 'Big Five' personality traits in psychiatry (extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness/intellect) to increased activity in certain parts of the brain, counting itself successful with the first four of five.   On neuroticism, it concludes that 'neuroticism was associated with reduced volume in dorsomedial PFC and a segment of left medial temporal lobe including posterior hippocampus, and with increased volume in the mid-cingulate gyrus, including both gray and white matter. These

Freud was compelled to speak of an obsessive neurotic structure as opposed to an obsessive neurotic thought; it is the structure of all of these symptoms in relation to their causes that merits the collective designation 'obsessive neurotic thought.' This structure became one of the four main 'clinical structures' of Lacanian psychoanalysis, alongside hysteria, perversion and psychosis, into which Lacan would categorise all human subjects. Since Lacan's interpretation of obsessional neurosis is both a return to and a reformulation of Freud's idea, but with the emphasis shifted from sexuality to language, it was necessary to outline the Freudian theory he modifies. So, what is Lacan's understanding of obsessional neurosis?

Within Lacan's earlier texts (culminating with *Seminar VII*), the references to obsessional neurosis are mostly in passing. However, there are also three main texts primarily concerned with obsessional neurosis: 'The Neurotic's Individual Myth,' 'The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power'[89] and the final lectures of *Seminar V*, numbers 22 to 28 in particular.[90] All three of these were written in the context of debate with the IPA, so the way he phrased his interpretation of obsessional neurosis morphed throughout this period: from more traditional psychoanalytic terms, towards the formulations in *Seminar VII* and

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associations are consistent with the theory that Neuroticism represents the primary manifestation in personality of sensitivity to threat and punishment, encompassing traits that involve negative emotion and emotional dysregulation.' The interesting question of the overlap between neuroscience and psychoanalysis, as well as the reasons for Lacanian psychoanalysts' general disinterest in the question, have been pointed out elsewhere in this study. Just as Lacan de-emphasises the role of temporal regression in the development of neurosis, so also the neurology of obsessionalism does not affect discussion of its symbolic form.

[89] *Écrits*, 489-542.

[90] Lectures dating from 14.5.1958 to 2.7.1958.

Seminar VIII. *Seminar V* provides the happy median in this development: he discusses obsessionalism in more depth than when referring to it in context of later arguments, and, unlike some of the smaller texts he wrote in this period, is not specifically writing against anyone else. A good book on Lacan's clinical structures (though it sometimes over-simplifies things), is Joël Dor, *The Clinical Lacan*.[91]

Much more than the average philosopher or psychoanalyst, Lacan was a thinker deeply associated with teaching in the form of maxims. Throughout his seminars, he would frequently quote his own maxims and formulations, using them as springboards for arguments that might otherwise lack anything memorably reducible. Lacan's discussions of obsessional neurosis are no exception, and throughout his career he produced many maxims that seem to reduce the obsessional to a particular structure. In Lacanian style, I begin my investigation of Lacan's concept with a survey of some of his maxims (and a few longer statements) that see obsessionals reduced to individual sentences.[92]

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[91] New York: Other Press, 1999 (1997).

[92] Regarding the use of male-gendered pronouns in these maxims, Lacan, writing in the late nineteen-fifties and in a romance language in which gender is much more deeply entrenched than in English, uses masculine pronouns for the generic. Further, one could also accuse him of following the psychoanalytic tradition of seeing obsessionals as always male and hysterics as always female, and this deserves to be clarified. He is not rigidly following this old psychoanalytic presumption. In *Seminar III*, after using the generic male pronoun for a hysteric, he says that 'The obsessional is precisely neither one [gender] nor the other – one may also say that he is both at once' (*S3*, 249). Lacan's thoughts on gender, discussed at length in *Seminar XX*, are far too complex for this footnote, but one can definitely observe that although Lacan's psychoanalytic terminology is gendered (he uses the term 'phallus' and *non/nom-du-père*), and these terms are not *totally* devoid of reference to the way gender *tends* to play out in many people's infancies, his use of these terms is in reference to the function of language in and on the unconscious. Quotes from Lacan here will be given without anglicising his gendered use of

Maxim/Saying	Year	Source
'What is the obsessional waiting for? The death of the master.'	1954	*S1*, 286. See also: *Rome Discourse*, 79, where Lacan says the same thing in 1953.
'If the obsessional mortifies himself, it is because more than any other neurotic, he binds himself to his ego, which bears within itself dispossession and imaginary death.'	1955	*S2*, 268.
'What is an obsessional? In short, it's an actor who plays his role and assures a certain number of acts as if he was dead.'	1956	*S4*, 27 *au. trans.*
'The obsessional tends to destroy his object… It is the aiming at desire itself, at the beyond of demand which is constitutive of the obsessional.' In aiming at desire itself the obsessional attempts the 'destruction of the Other.'	1958	*S5*, 14.5.1958, 14, 17.
'The obsessional is a Tantalus.'[93]	1958	*S5*, 21.5.1958, 8.
'The obsessional is always in the process of asking for permission.'	1958	*S5*, 21.5.1958, 8.
'The obsessional resolves the question of his desire by making of it a prohibited desire.	1958	*S5*, 21.5.1958, 11.
The obsessional 'spends his time destroying the desire of the Other,' so that his relationship with the Other is fully articulated at the level of demand, that his own desire might be destroyed.	1958	*S5*, 18.6.1958, 11-13.
In obsessional neurosis the subject is related to an object 'that gives too much pleasure.'	1959	*S7*, 64.

pronouns, but this should not be taken as an indication that Lacan's clinical structures are descriptive of genders. For more information on gender and obsessional neurosis see Serge Cottet, 'On Feminine Obsessional Neurosis,' trans. by Alexandra Beaurieux in *The Psychoanalytical Notebooks Issue 18: Obsessional Neurosis*, ed. Philip Dravers (London: London Society of the New Lacanian School, 2009), 67-85 or Marc Strauss, 'On Female Obsessional Neurosis,' *European Journal of Psychoanalysis*, <http://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/on-the-female-obsessional-neurosis/> [accessed 8/6/2016].

[93] For the sake of maintaining some hint of brevity this quote does not appear again in what follows below – and neither does Lacan elaborate on this statement at all after delivering it. This is a shame, as Tantalus is a beautiful metaphor for the obsessional's woes. For some excellent commentary on this metaphor, see Bogdan Wolf, 'The Mysterious Ways of the Obsessional,' *The Psychoanalytical Notebooks Issue 18: Obsessional Neurosis*, ed. in Philip Dravers (London: London Society of the New Lacanian School, 2009), 149-150.

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| The obsessional is characterized by 'impossible desire,' that is, 'desire instituted in its impossibility.' | 1961 | *S8*, 366. He has made similar statements since 1958.[94] |
| The obsessional suffers 'a thought that burdens the soul, that it doesn't know what to do with.' | 1973 | *Television*, 6.[95] |

It is easy to track the slow shift in the emphasis of his statements about obsessionals (though some of this is due to the debates he was involved in at these different points). From 1953-1957, or seminars *I-IV* (including passing comments in *Seminar III* not listed above), his emphasis is on the obsessional's unconscious relation to death. This is first enunciated before his seminars had begun, in the paper 'The Neurotic's Individual Myth,' in which he outlines a theory that all neurotics have some sort of unconscious founding myth like that of the Rat Man, and the players involved are not just the three players of the Oedipal drama, but also death (specifically, imaginary unrealised death).[96] In *Seminar IV* this concept begins to be merged with his phenomenology of the Other, as the obsessional subject is one whose legalistic relation to the Other allows him to relate to his own life as if he were dead, as if he were a marionette. After *Seminar V*, and the connected essay 'On the Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power,' his structuralist reading of the neuroses shifts from the emphasis on the repetition of childhood figures towards the structure of one's relation to the Other.

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[94] *Écrits*, 528; *S5*, 18.6.1958, 11.

[95] Jacques Lacan, *Television: A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1990 [1974]), 6.

[96] Owen Hewitson, 'Reading "The Neurotic's Individual Myth" – Lacan's Masterwork on Obsession,' <http://www.lacanonline.com/index/2013/09/reading-the-neurotics-individual-myth-lacans-masterwork-on-obsession/> [accessed 8/6/2016]. He suggests that Lacan's assertion that the figure of death is present in the narcissistic relation is a result of the influence of Alexandre Kojève's reading of Hegel.

This is linked to his criticism of over-emphasis on temporal regression, and is where we find the most detailed description of the structure of obsessional neurosis in fitting with the paradox of *jouissance*.[97]

3. The Obsessional Neurotic Structure

Lacan's discussion of the structure of obsessional neurosis in *Seminar V* begins at lecture 22, of 14.5.1958. After criticising theories of obsessional neurosis that focus solely on regression,[98] Lacan sets out to establish the 'essential structure' of obsessional neurosis, which in his view is its structure in reference to demand, desire and the Other.[99] He then fires off a number of short points, summarising some of the key points in the development of Freud's idea: Freud

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[97] Lacan's de-temporalising of regression really merits its own discussion here, since this is the process through which obsessionalism really becomes transferable to ideology: one can speak of an obsessional structure of ideology because to Lacan regression is about the fixing points in the present structure of the unconscious, regardless of how one developed through Freudian stages to get there (though he never directly controverts Freud's schema of regression either). Sadly, discussing this in full would be beyond the remit of a Lacanian study of Paul. Two quotes make the point quickly: 'Needs become subordinate to the same conventional conditions as does the signifier in its double register: the synchronic register of opposition between irreducible elements, and the diachronic register of substitution and combination, through which language, while it does not fulfil all functions, structures everything in interpersonal relations' (*Écrits*, 517). 'The regression [that] people foreground in analysis (temporal regression, no doubt…) concerns only the (oral, anal, etc.) signifiers of demand, and involves the corresponding drive only through them' (*Écrits*, 530). Nonetheless, he does still state that 'insofar as the anal stage is involved, you would be wrong not to distrust the relevance of your analysis if you have not encountered this on every occasion' (*S8*, 204-206).

[98] He also here criticises the perceived 'splashing about' of Karl Abraham's attempt to explain obsessional neurosis through object relations theory and the partial object.

[99] *S5*, 14.5.1958, 12. All of these terms can be found in the Glossary (Appendix A).

observed that the obsessional repressed enjoyment of a trauma, unlike the hysteric who repressed memory of a trauma; the obsessional is marked by an affective ambivalence between love and hate; the obsessional's symptoms trace back to a precocious separation of life and death instincts. So, Lacan concludes, how should we fit this into our dialectic of desire and demand?[100] In this dense section Lacan is pointing out that even Freud's understanding of it was so multi-faceted, and developed so much over time that it is difficult to find an essential structure; and if one does, it is a structure characterised by relation to the instincts, which Lacan has reformulated in terms of demand, drive, desire and need (i.e., in terms that become wholly dependent upon the lure of the signifier, and the symbolic nature of the paternal metaphor/castration complex).

In his first attempt to outline the structure of obsessional neurosis in these terms, he describes it like this:

> The obsessional in so far as his fundamental movement is directed towards desire as such, and above all in its constitution as desire, implies in every movement towards the attainment of this desire what we call the destruction of the other, even though it is in the nature of desire as such to require this support of the other. This desire of the other is not a way of access to the desire of the subject [as in hysteria], it is quite simply the place of desire, and every movement in the obsessional towards his desire runs into something which is absolutely tangible in, what I may call, the movement of their libido. The more something plays the role in the psychology of an obsessional of object, even a momentary one, of desire, the more the law of approach as one might say of the obsessional with respect to this object, will be conditioned by something which manifests itself literally in what one can call a veritable lowering of libidinal tension at the moment that he approaches it, and to the

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[100] All of this happens on p. 13 of Gallagher's translation.

extent that at the moment that he hold this object of his desire, for

him nothing more exists.

You will see this. It is absolutely observable.[101]

Before expanding upon the meaning of this quote, it is worth pointing out here how much Lacan's speech, at least as transcribed and translated by Gallagher above, resembles the clinical speech of the obsessional: it is riddled with interjections and clarifications (even more-so than his speech always is), which serve the purpose of responding to the objections of the other before they are raised; particularly 'what we call,' 'as one might say,' and 'what one can call.' Perhaps unintentionally, his speech itself here makes the point at which his argument is aimed: in the obsessional neurotic there is an attempt to destroy the Other. This is not a literal attempt at murdering one's father (or some other other), but the attempt to obliterate the Other *as other* through the reduction of its voice as subject. So the example Lacan gives immediately before the above quote is of a toddler who demands a box from the parents, and boils this demand down to an insistence that either the parents love him and give him the box or do not give him the box because they do not love him. Thus the relation to the parents as Other is one of desire reduced to demand; and demand does not require the Other to be other. (Did Lacan demonstrate this obsessional neurotic way of speaking because his own psychoanalysis revealed him to be an obsessional neurotic? We do not have access to that information specifically[102] – but his psychoanalyst son-

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[101] *S5*, 14.5.1958, 16-17. Gallagher's translation of his original notes from 1958 does capitalise the O on 'Other,' but most of the occurrences of this word here would probably be capitalised in a modern edition.

[102] Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. by Barbara Bray (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997 [1993]), 69-82. We know next to nothing about the content of Lacan's

in-law perhaps alludes to the answer when he notes that whenever Lacan spoke of obsessional neurosis, 'Clearly [he] knew what he was talking about.'[103] Further, such an allusion should not be considered beyond the realm of possibility when referring to a man who obsessively listed every book, artwork and other possession he owned, and then organised his lists into lists of lists.[104] This is, of course, just musing, for 'you cannot psychoanalyse the dead;' but it is worth asking this question nonetheless, to make the point that there is nothing 'wrong' with being obsessional neurotic, and that is not what one should take away from the chapter that follows this one. It is a category that can help historical analysis, and not an intrinsically negative category.)

The purpose of the extended quote above is to defend the statement that the obsessional tries to destroy her object, and she does so in order to aim at desire itself, beyond demand.[105] This is achieved by, as with the example of the toddler, turning one's desire into an absolute condition, something that must be met with the force of an absolute imperative or prohibition. Doing this destroys the Other, absolutising desire as such, in a way that attempts to have desire without the Other. Of course, desire comes from the Other (this is one of Lacan's key concepts: desire is a product of language, and language comes from and exists as

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own analysis, other than that it lasted for six years, and was made extremely tumultuous by various factors, not least of which was Lacan's presumption of his own superior intelligence to that of his analyst's, Rudolph Loewenstein.

[103] Jacques-Alain Miller, 'The Pivot of the Desire of the Other,' trans. by Adrian Price, *Psychoanalytical Notebooks Issue 18*, ed. Phil Dravers (London: London Society of the New Lacanian School, 2009), 25.

[104] Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Lacan: In Spite of Everything*, trans. by Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2014 [2011]), 109-128.

[105] *S5*, 14.5.1958, 14.

Other); the subject hears the imperatives and prohibitions as coming from the Other. So the obsessional subject is simultaneously attempting to destroy *and* reinforce the Other as other. In the end it is this contradiction itself, not the half of it that attempts to absolutise desire, that succeeds in preserving desire: 'desire carries in itself this internal contradiction which makes of it the impasse of the desire of the obsessional.'[106] In terms of how one analyses the obsessional, then, Philip Hill's textbook *Using Lacanian Clinical Technique* focuses almost exclusively on the contradictions presented by the obsessional's compulsions and prohibitions, recommending analysts to use the analysand's demands to reveal them.[107] This is precisely in keeping with the approach recommended in Lacan's other text on obsessionals from 1958, 'The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power.'[108] The contradictions that stem from attempting to destroy and reinforce the Other, as well as the contradictions that result from any attempt to find something absolute in the Other (the Other being language, and thus being a system of contradictions that always fail at concrete description), allow for the preservation of desire, fixing it in place and prevent regression back to *das Ding*.

In the next lecture, that of 21.5.1958, Lacan further describes the obsessional's desire, in a way that Jacques-Alain Miller helpfully puts in terms of a Lacanian matheme:[109]

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[106] Ibid., 16.

[107] Philip H. F. Hill, *Using Lacanian Clinical Technique –an introduction–* (London: Press for the Habilitation of Psychoanalysis, 2002), 138-162.

[108] *Écrits*, 489-542.

[109] Miller, 'The Pivot of the Desire of the Other,' 14.

$$(\; [d(A)] \rightarrow [d//A] \rightarrow [d//A_0] \rightarrow [d_0//A_0] \rightarrow [d(A)] \;)$$

The sequence here is as follows:

1. $d(A)$ 'Desire is the desire of the Other.' The subject desires an object because the Other has prohibited it (the maternal object, or *das Ding*, or any object). Or the subject desires an object because the Other desires it. Or the subject desires an object because of a repressed metaphorical substitution relating it to another object. This precise relation of the subject to every object as a result of language is developed much more in Lacan's later works, with the concept of the *objet petit a*.[110]

2. $d//A$ The obsessional subject attempts to absolutise desire itself, separating it from the Other: by taking on desire as a complex contradictory system of absolute imperatives and prohibitions, the subject seeks desire transubstantiated as demand, without the Other.

3. $d//A_0$ This equates to an attempt to destroy the Other: separating desire from the Other reduces the Other as subject, the Other as other.

4. $d_0//A_0$ Since desire is the desire of the Other, this has the effect of also nullifying desire. In the extended quote above, Lacan states that as the obsessional attempts to move towards any of its objects he experiences a reduction in libidinal tension. This is the reason why. Attempting to exclude the Other from the situation reduces desire. Using the example of

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[110] Particularly *S11* where the *objet petit a* is a signifier for the object of desire that is leftover when the symbolic meets the real, and *S17*, where this same notion is developed as 'surplus *jouissance*,' influenced by Marx's 'surplus value.'

the toddler who destroys the Other by making his desire into an unconditional demand, the toddler desires the object less as soon as the Other is absent from the picture: if getting the object is simply a matter of giving the parents an either/or demand to which they either submit or refuse, then getting the object is less fun, and the toddler will move on to demand something else.

5. *d*(A) The equation cancels out, and we are back at the beginning. As Miller puts it, 'Then comes the bad surprise, your desire is also reduced to zero… Once you've got to this point of impasse, you have to rush back and reconstitute the beginning, and then, it goes round.'[111]

There is much more that could be said about the structure of obsessional neurosis. Lacan does not fail, in the remaining lectures of *Seminar V,* to discuss many more aspects of the obsessional structure, relating much of Freud's theory to the structure he posits. Moving on to *Seminar VIII*, Lacan eventually realises that he has not yet told his seminar attendees about the formula for the structure of obsessional neurosis, despite having lectured on the subject so many times, and writes it on the board:[112]

$$\text{Ⱥ} \diamond \varphi\,(a,\,a',\,a'',\,a''',\ldots)$$

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[111] Miller, 'The Pivot of the Desire of the Other,' 14.

[112] *S8*, 250. As with all of the mathemes, graph and formulas used in this study, the purpose of giving this here is not to confuse any non-Lacanians who have read thus far. It helps to tie the study into Lacanian academic discourse, and many of the graphs and formulas used in this and the following chapters also help to demonstrate equivocation between Lacan and Paul.

This could be read as 'the lack in the Other in relation to objects of desire situated as a function of erotic equivalences.'[113] This equation communicates the structure of the cycle Miller systematised above: It is the lack in the Other, the fact that the Other is not actually an absolute complete being but is characterised by lack, that produces the signifier φ, the phallus – for many psychoanalysts, bearing some relation or other to the literal penis, but for Lacan, the signifier of the object of desire that is produced by prohibition, produced by the gap between signifier and signified that prohibits ever 'getting' what we want. The lack in the Other produces the phallus, which, for the obsessional, is experienced as an endless chain of signifiers, due to the process above in which desire transubstantiated as demand requires infinite signifiers as objects. By this point, having come from the articulation of the obsessional in relation to death and the Oedipal triangle in his earliest seminars, through the articulation of the obsessional in *Seminar V* (the obsessional transubstantiates desire as demand in order to destroy the Other and create a contradiction in which desire is preserved), and the obsessional in *Seminar VII* whose neurotic relation to an unbearable *das Ding* is one side of the paradox of *jouissance*, Lacan in *Seminar VIII* sums up the obsessional one more time, in a way that agrees with all of the above and was stated already in 1958: the obsessional is characterised by 'impossible desire.'[114] As Esthela Solano-Suarez

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[113] The barred capital A is his symbol for the lack in the Other, and the second half of the formula is stated as above on p. 252. See entries on the Other and lack in the Glossary, Appendix A. Also, the term 'erotic equivalences' should not necessarily be read to refer exclusively to what common speech would term 'sexual,' as it is merely Lacan using the language of psychoanalysis to describe his thought.

[114] See the bottom of the table of quotes above.

puts it, 'By destroying desire, he preserves it and maintains it at the level of impossibility.'[115]

A few more notes round out the complex structure Lacan presents for the obsessional, and add to the list of obsessional symptoms/affects from the previous two sections.

- Lacan calls **'Oblativity'** (*oblativité*) an obsessional fantasy.[116] The reason for saying this is to combat practices of other analysts that he thinks encourage this fantasy; however, this specific characterisation will be useful for the current study. It follows quite naturally from the structure detailed above, as a word to describe the obsessional strategy of enforcing the absoluteness of the Other (whom he simultaneously attempts to destroy), and of the persecutory prohibitions and compulsions that the obsessional feels as coming from the Other.

- 'The obsessional is always in the process of asking for **permission**.'[117] The wording of this quote is important. It is not that the obsessional likes to ask for permission often, but that, in the context of psychoanalysis but also in life in general, the obsessional is *always* in the *process* of asking for permission – life, for the obsessional, consists of comporting oneself in such a way

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[115] Esthela Solano-Suarez, 'Learning to Read Obsessional Neurosis,' trans. by Philip Dravers, in *The Psychoanalytical Notebooks Issue 18: Obsessional Neurosis*, ed. Philip Dravers (London: London Society of the New Lacanian School, 2009), 35.

[116] *S5*, 21.5.1958, 12.

[117] Ibid., 8.

as to be permanently dependent upon the Other for permission. Part of this structure involves near-constant **guilt**, no less a component of Lacan's obsessional than Freud's obsessive.

- The obsessional wants to dominate his experiences through **thought**. Whether because of the anal fixations or the will to embed the desire of the Other (language) in demand, obsessional neurosis involves wanting to 'dominate the experience through thought,' through 'mastery,' hoping 'that the signifier can absorb the whole of the real and that he would be able to trace the entirety of his experience through thought.'[118] So Lacan calls obsessional neurosis 'a thought that burdens the soul, that it doesn't know what to do with.'[119]

- Part of the reason for the obsessional structure is the **too-much-ness of *jouissance***, pressing us back to look for ways to have desire without actually pursuing what we desire.[120] Lacan's interpretation of regression is that the fixation of desire into an obsessional structure is a way to stop oneself from regressing 'all the way back,' to *das Ding*.[121] The reason for the clinical structure, and, as it happens, for two of the other three structures, is because

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[118] Philippe de Georges, 'A Thought that Burdens the Soul,' trans. by Bogdan Wolf, in *The Psychoanalytical Notebooks Issue 18: Obsessional Neurosis*, ed. Philip Dravers (London: London Society of the New Lacanian School, 2009), 55.

[119] Lacan, *Television*, 6.

[120] *Écrits*, 700.

[121] *S5*, 4.6.1958, 7-8.

we are caught in a paradox between *das Ding* and *jouissance*; this

is just another articulation of the paradox of *jouissance*.

In conclusion to this description of the obsessional structure, it should also be stated that this is in no way a complete picture of the Lacanian obsessional structure. It has barely mentioned the way Lacan links the obsessional structure to the initial response to the paternal metaphor; it has not mentioned the fact that the obsessional's relation to demand stems from the demand for love;[122] neither has it entered into the place of 'anxiety' in all of this for Lacan (which would necessarily involve stretching the discussion to *Seminar X*); it has not described what exactly the 'anal stage' means for Lacan, or the relation between obsessional neurosis and the mirror stage, and it might justly be accused of conflating need into demand for the sake of brevity.[123] However, in limited space, this is reasonably accurate summary of the core of Lacan's conception of the obsessional neurotic structure; and, further, it is a structure that, to answer the question posed near the beginning of this section, can describe a system of thought just as much as a person.

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[122] *S5*, 14.5.1958, 14-15; 4.6.1958, 4-6.

[123] The description of obsessional neurosis here is accurate, but perhaps glosses over the role of need. In Lacan's terms, 'need' is the closest one comes to a term for that which is purely biological, and 'demand' is a more relational term for what the subject demands of the Other. 'Drive' and 'desire' also have totally distinct meanings. Differentiations between them can be found in most clinically-based introductions to Lacan, including Hill, *Using Lacanian Clinical Technique*, 46-55; Lionel Bailly, *Lacan* (London: Oneworld, 2009), 109-127 or Joël Dor, *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan* (New York: Other Press, 1998), 181-194.

4. The Structure of the Paradox of *Jouissance*

Lacanian psychoanalysis today recognises three 'clinical structures,' nosological categories that Lacan referred to as 'Freudian structures:' psychosis, perversion and neurosis, with the two varieties of neurosis being obsessional and hysterical.[124] I have chiefly been looking at two of these structures, the perverse and obsessional. To put these in context, Bogdan Wolf summarises all four nicely, fitting with the descriptions of obsessionalism and perversion above (the other two summaries are also highly apt but do not directly concern us here): 'The obsessional believes in absolute being. The pervert believes in absolute *jouissance*. The hysteric believes in absolute love. The psychotic does not believe.'[125] So far I have been developing a picture of the paradox of *jouissance* as an opposition between a Sadean/Neronian/libertine/perverse/*jouissance* side on the one hand, and a Kantian/Stoic/legalistic/neurotic/law side on the other. Now it becomes necessary to tread more carefully; for not all of these terms necessarily sit in apposition to one other in perfect comfort. Further, to be precise, on the neurotic side of the paradox sit both obsessionals and hysterics (as part of the same neurotic 'dialect'), despite having somewhat different laws set up for themselves.

However, regardless of who sits where in the paradox of *jouissance*, the paradox as seen in the particular historical setting studied here is between the

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[124] Evans, *Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1996), 194, points out this evolution in terminology. See the Glossary (Appendix A) for definitions of each of the clinical structures.

[125] Adapted slightly from Wolf, 'The Mysterious Ways of the Obsessional,' 146.

perverse structure on one side, and the obsessional on the other, with Stoicism being a system of thought that has an obsessional structure (as I argue more below). Paul finds himself arguing in context of exactly this articulation of the paradox. So, the paradox in which Paul finds his thought trapped is between the perversely structured action he accidentally precipitated at the church in Corinth (as argued in Chapter 3), and the obsessional structure he encountered in a theological opponent at Rome (as will be argued in Chapter 5). In order to formulate this, we need a matheme for the perverse structure, to add to the matheme for the obsessional structure.   According to Lacan in 'Kant with Sade,'[126] the perverse structure is formulated as:

$$a \diamond \$$$

This reads left to right, with the object itself (*a*) being what relates to the subject (*$*), who, in attempting to pursue *jouissance* without inhibition, becomes totally enslaved to the law and whatever objects its signifiers offer the deluded 'transgressing' subject. The subject disavows its own lack and madly searches for *a*, presuming it will be found in transgressively objectifying other subjects, but remains locked in relation to it, never actually finding *it*.[127]   Reversing the

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[126] *Écrits*, 653.

[127] This italicised '*it*,' the *objet petit a*, is the 'it' of the Tom Milsom song 'Take Me Out,' *Organs* (London: Dog Dream, 2013), with the lyrics 'You've got it and I want it / This is what we can't be without / Dark scheming and light dreaming / This is what it is all about.' The perverse structure is the attempt to get this *it* not through love, but through transgression, while disavowing the lack that ensures we will never have it. In the line 'this is what it is all about,' declaring that the endless cycle of *wanting but not having* is what makes up human existence, the song is placed well outside of a perverse structure, because it knows that this *it* is never truly gotten; the singer knows

perverse matheme to read right to left, so that the subject can be placed in the middle of the perverse structure to the left and the obsessional structure to the right, Paul's theoretical position in the paradox of *jouissance* can be formulated like this:

$$\$ \diamondsuit\, a \leftarrow \$ \rightarrow \cancel{A} \diamondsuit\, \varphi\,(a, a', a'', a''', \ldots)$$

The subject (not Paul himself, but the human subject in the trap to which Paul's theology is eventually forced to respond) is caught in the middle. Stoic philosophy and Paul's opponent in Rome turn right, towards the Other, and enter the obsessional's paradox, believing in the absolute being of the Other (and engaging in an unconscious game of attempting to destroy and reinforce the Other), but then finding desire strengthened and maintained by the infinite series of objects produced in the place of the phallus, which the Other, barred, fails to possess. The series of objects is infinite, as one never gets to a 'complete' (non-lacking) Other, no matter how much one obeys the law – the Other never gives you what you want; so, around we go in the obsessional's paradox. Conversely, some members of the church in Corinth turned to the left, engaging the perverse paradox: the object, *a*, as that which is in relation to the subject, given over to the quest for *jouissance* from the position of the object, disavowing lack; but trying to

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that lack is what keeps us going, so there is no disavowal of lack. The perverse structure, whether of Sade, Nero or the Corinthian, disavows lack, and believes that *it* can indeed be gotten, and it can be gotten through transgression. Thus the structure of the pervert is much simpler than that of the obsessional: it is just *a*, which the subject believes she can acquire, forever remaining un-acquired, spurring the subject on to increasingly transgressive acts. Lack, the *object petit a* and perversion are all defined in the Glossary, Appendix A.

be the object and disavow lack forces an encounter with it, as the signifier is inescapable, and at the end of the perverse side of the paradox the subject finds himself still bound to the signifier, and still 'barred.'[128] And around we go. The paradox of *jouissance* posed in this way, in terms of two of the clinical structures, is of course not a paradox in which anyone finds themselves consciously making a decision. The adult speaking subject is already a clinical structure. This articulation of the paradox, however, is precisely the paradox in which Paul finds his theological argument, caught between systems of thought and action characterised by opposing structures; trapped in a paradox (of *jouissance*) between two paradoxes (of perversion and obsession).[129] As I continue not only this structure, but also the three lists of symptoms and characteristics of the obsessional neurotic, will be helpful in describing Paul's theoretical position (since Lacan formulates an obsessional structure, but does not alter the Freudian symptomology).

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[128] The word 'barred' for Lacan refers to the fact that the subject is always bound to the signifier, and to the bar in the signifying unit that separates the word from 'that which it means' (the signified). Since the signifier is never identical to the signified, but the subject knows itself as and through the signifier, the subject is thus always 'barred,' split in two with 'that which thinks' never being able to get truly beyond the finitude and lack inherent to its alienation in language.

[129] The three paradoxes could be (over)simplified as such:

The paradox of *jouissance*: whether you run towards or away from *jouissance* you get a bit of it, but never enough.

The perverse paradox: attempting to get *jouissance* through transgressing the law (running away from it) only succeeds at sustaining the law, preventing full *jouissance*.

The obsessional paradox: attempting to get *jouissance* through obeying the law (running towards it) infinitely increases the amount of law one feels one needs.

5. The Obsessional Neurotic Structure of Stoic Ethics

It is finally time to pin first century Stoic thought to an obsessional neurotic structure. The claim that follows is one of form and structure, not regarding any specific historical thinker. Even in terms of such abstractions, I noted in the previous chapter the amount of internal debate that took place within Stoicism. This combined with the fact that the school spanned across several centuries with only a few extant sources per century makes general abstractions much more difficult.[130] As a result of this, what follows is an attempt at diagnosing a constant structure to an evolving system of thought, specifically as it existed in first century Rome whenever this is possible, with reference to the points that have already been discussed, and to Stoic thinkers as contemporary to Paul as possible. This means chiefly looking at Seneca (d. 65 CE) and Epictetus (d. c. 130 CE), since Dio Chrysostom (d. c. 110 CE) was just as much a Cynic as a Stoic (though these categories do get blurred in the first century), and Musonius Rufus (exiled 66 CE) is not widely extant.[131]

My first claim is that the signifier 'nature' (φύσις/*physis*, or *natura* in Latin) functions as the master signifier in Stoic philosophy, the ultimate ground of all ethics. 'Master signifier' is not a term used in any of the main works I have

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[130] For example, one could say that Stoic philosophers did not believe that God was conscious, but the definitions of both 'God' and 'conscious,' as well as the range of Stoic philosophers' positions on precisely this issue, changed greatly over time. John Sellars, *Stoicism* (London: Routledge, 2006), 91-95.

[131] These dates are from Sellars, *Stoicism*, xviii, except for that of Dio Chrysostom, from Christopher Gill, 'The School in the Roman Imperial Period,' in Brad Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 53.

discussed so far. It is used much less frequently by Lacan himself than by some modern Lacanian philosophers.[132] Despite only coming into use by Lacan in his seventeenth seminar, of 1969-70,[133] it is a core term in Žižek's masterful explanation of Lacan's Graph of Desire, which is first fully introduced in Lacan's 1960 text 'The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire.'[134] This is because the place labelled as either S_1 or $s(A)$ in Lacan's graphs is the S_1 that becomes the 'master signifier' in Lacan's later seminars.[135] To be more precise, when Lacan describes the function of master signifiers in the discourse of the master in *Seminar XVII*, the master signifier (meaning any master signifier) functions according to the rules laid out in the Graph of Desire nine years earlier. In order to make the claim below that *physis* functions for the Stoics as a master

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[132] Žižek uses the concept regularly in his critique of ideology, for example 111-113 of *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008 [1989]), or *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (London: Verso, 2012), 597-599, 646-647, which explains the concept quite nicely. The emerging field of Lacanian discourse analysis has also taken to the concept, as can be seen in Mark Bracher, *Lacan, Discourse, and Social Change: A Psychoanalytic Cultural Criticism* (London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 53-80 and in the constant references to it (see the index) in Ian Parker and David Pavón-Cuéllar, eds., *Lacan, Discourse, Event: New Psychoanalytic Approaches to Textual Indeterminacy* (London: Routledge, 2014).

[133] The term is used frequently throughout *Seminar XVII*, where Lacan first develops the 'four discourses,' one of which, the discourse of the master, has the master signifier in place of S_1. *S17*, 32-33, 89-93. Though nine years apart, his description of the way a master signifier as S_1 relates to 'knowledge' as S_2 is fully consistent with S_1 and S_2, or $s(A)$ and (A), in the Graph of Desire as presented in the 'Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire,' *Écrits*, 671-702.

[134] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 111-116. 'The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire' can be found in *Écrits*, 671-702. Žižek's comments are in explanation of the section 681-690, the first of Lacan's four graphs and the bottom half of the completed graph. Lacan has been developing the graph since its earlier forms began appearing in *Seminar V*. See *S5*, 6.11.1957, 4-9; 27.11.1957, 4-5 and 5.2.1958, 8-9 for a few places where this is happening.

[135] Alfredo Eidelsztein, *The Graph of Desire: Using the Work of Jacques Lacan*, trans. by Florencia F. C. Shanahan (London: Karnac, 2009), 108-109.

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signifier (and thus both S_1 and $s[A]$ as well), it is necessary to detour, as briefly as possible, into the Graph of Desire.

Lacan's first and second graphs, which become the bottom half of the final (fourth) graph, are as follows:[136]
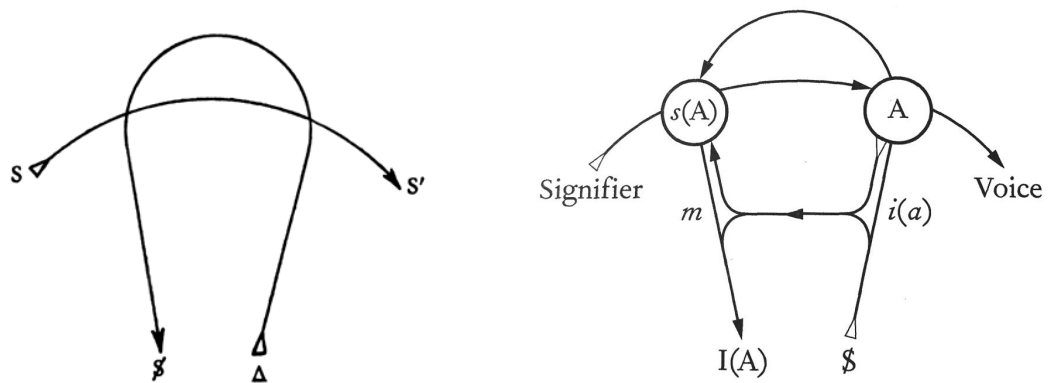
Both of these graphs illustrate the passing of the subject, from bottom right around to bottom left, through the signifying chain. These graphs begin to sketch how the subject exists synchronically in language. Since the line from left to right in the first graph represents the signifying chain, the points at which the subject crosses the line, from right to left, can be called S_2 and S_1.[137] The first graph depicts that in a chain of signifiers (say, for example, a sentence, though that is

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[136] These are from *Écrits*, 681 and 684.

[137] It may be helpful here to see what this looks like. Eidelsztein, *The Graph of Desire*, breaks Lacan's first graph itself into three, the third of which (p. 85) depicts S_1 and S_2:
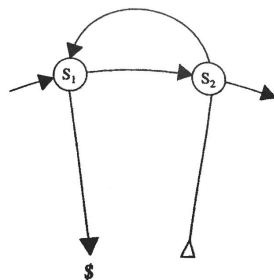
not the only application of this graph), the subject encounters the chain first before it is able to interpret it in completion. That is to say, the subject begins to hear the sentence, and is greeted with signifiers, before the conclusion of the sentence allows the beginning of the sentence to have meaning.[138] In the same way, the titular opening sentence of Mark's Gospel ('The beginning of the good news of Jesus the Messiah the son of God') does not arrive at its meaning until near the end of the Gospel when Jesus, in his crucifixion, is finally revealed as the son of God (Mark 15:39).[139] In the same way also, the subject in infancy learns a language that already exists outside of the subject; language is a complete code that exists outside of the subject. This is why Lacan says that

> The Other, as preliminary site of the pure subject of the signifier, occupies the key [*maîtresse*] position here, even before coming into existence here as absolute Master… For what is omitted in the platitude of modern information theory is the fact that one cannot even speak of a code without it already being the Other's code… the subject constitutes himself on the basis of the message, such that he receives from the Other even the message he himself sends. Thus the notations of A and *s*(A) are justified.[140]

In order to arrive at a point that explains the meaning of a signifying chain, the subject must first pass through some other point in the signifying chain, that is to say, encounter the signifying chain as such before it signifies anything in particular. Lacan calls the point at which one first encounters the Other the *point*

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[138] *S5*, 6.11.1957, 6.

[139] Since the inclusion of the words 'son of God' in the first verse of Mark is contested, one could make the same point with the word 'Christ' (or 'messiah'): that the meaning of the word is unknown, even after Peter's revelation in chapter 8, until the crucifixion makes it clear.

[140] *Écrits*, 683.

de capiton, quilting point, or 'button tie' as Bruce Fink translates it.[141] The reason there is a sort of 'quilting' effect here is that it is only when there is an S_1 or $s(A)$ discovered, a primary signifier for the Other, that the sentence/language/ideology can begin to make sense. Thus there is a retroactive effect here: the subject first passes through a signifier (S_2), simultaneously passing through language as Other (A), but the Other has no content until the subject then passes through an S_1, an $s(A)$, a 'master signifier,' and gives it some. In *Seminar XVII* Lacan begins to use the term 'master signifier' for S_1,[142] but one can see in the quote above that the origins of this are already in Lacan's head in 1960, when commenting on Hegel and referring to S_2 as the master (*maîtresse*) position that exists before coming into contact with S_1, the absolute master. Žižek gives an excellent example of why this schema is important when he points out that the signifiers 'freedom,' 'state,' 'justice' and 'peace' all exist for both the Cold War American and the Cold War Russian; but when the Russian is addressed with the master signifier 'Communism' (or another master signifier), these words take on different meaning than they do for the American and her master signifiers.[143] Thus Lacan graphs the common observation of structural linguistics that 'a signifier only takes

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[141] Ibid., 681-682.

[142] *S17*, 29-38, 88-93. In the first of these two sections it might sound obscure as to whether the master signifier is meant to be S_1 or S_2, but this is made clear in the second section, particularly by its position in the discourse of the master as laid out on p. 92 compared with on pp. 29 and 39. This should be made more clear in the explanations above.

[143] Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 112-113.

on value by virtue of its relation with other signifiers,'[144] but does so in a way that mimics the observations noted by Louis Althusser's concept of 'interpellation.'[145]

Since this 'absolute master' is what signifies retroactively the 'master position,' S_1 being used to interpret S_2, $s(A)$ designating (A) and taking its place, it can be called the 'master signifier' that gets used to name the Other. We do not know the Other as other (language as itself), but instead know it via the master signifier that designates it. So with Bogdan Wolf's summary of the obsessional neurotic's relation to the Other given above, the obsessional neurotic is one who believes in the absolute being of that which is signified by the master signifier. The first reason to evaluate Stoic philosophy as obsessional neurotic in structure is that its master signifier is φύσις (*physis*), and it ascribes to *physis* absolute being, in such a way as simultaneously to destroy and reinforce the Other, transubstantiating desire as demand. The argument below has two parts: (1) that *physis* is the Stoic master signifier, and (2) that the Stoic relation to *physis* is obsessional neurotic in structure.

Having clarified what is meant by 'master signifier,' it should not be too controversial a point to state that this is precisely the function of *physis* in Stoic philosophy, at least in Stoic ethics. A master signifier functions as a central explanatory point giving meaning to other signifiers, and this is what *physis* was to the Stoics. The Stoic ethical ideal is to live 'according to nature' (usually a translation of κατὰ φύσιν, though it can be written in various ways in Greek, as

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[144] Ian Parker, 'Lacanian Discourse Analysis: Seven Elements,' in *Lacan, Discourse, Event: New Psychoanalytic Approaches to Textual Indeterminacy*, eds. Ian Parker and David Pavón-Cuéllar (London: Routledge, 2014), 41.

[145] Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 112.

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seen throughout Paul's letters).[146] This places *physis* at the centre of all ethical statements made by Stoics, whether the signifier is present in the statement or not. So, for example, with the signifier present Epictetus argues, as always, from the first principle that that which is in accordance with nature is reasonable:[147]

> Does family affection seem to you to be in accordance with nature and good?—Of course.—What then? Is it possible that, while family affection is in accordance with nature and good, that which is reasonable is not good?—By no means.—That which is reasonable is not, therefore, incompatible and one of them is in accordance with nature, the other must be contrary to nature, must it not?—Even so, said he.—[148]

Thus Epictetus can state that although investigating logic and syllogisms is good, it is in 'devoting [oneself] to keeping in a state of conformity with nature' that one really makes progress – and will always make progress.[149] As Brian Johnson notes, the reason that Epictetus can say that 'the self-controlled individual is following nature' is because 'he accepts the Stoic model of the cosmos in which

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[146] Sellars, *Stoicism*, 125.

[147] One might object here that Epictetus is being used as an example of Stoic thought despite being used in Chapter 3 above as an example of an *exception* to Stoic thought. However, it is much more reasonable to use Epictetus as an example of how the Stoics related to the signifier *physis*, a core element of Stoic thought with which he is in agreement (and must be as a Stoic philosopher), than in the case of his dissenting views on marriage, with which he was clearly in the minority. Also, as stated above, there are not many options for primary Stoic sources near contemporary to Paul other than Seneca and Epictetus.

[148] Epictetus, *Disc.* 1.11.17-18. The similarity in style between Paul and Epictetus that has been pointed out so many times is evident here, particularly with Epictetus' use of the phrase translated as 'By no means.' However, one wonders if the translator here (W. A. Oldfather) was influenced by traditional translation of Paul. 'By no means' is a fair idiomatic translation of Paul's frequent expression μὴ γένοιτο (see Rom 3:4, 6, 11, etc.), but a more questionable translation of Epictetus' οὐ δοκεῖ μοι, which might be better translated as 'it doesn't seem so to me.'

[149] Epictetus, *Disc.* 3.6.3-4.

obligations follow as a consequence from nature because of God's providence over the world.'[150] Although the Stoic understanding of the divine is complex and quite dissimilar to a Judeo-Christian god, one can see that for the Stoic ethicist it is the signifier *physis* as S_1 that becomes the signifier for the Other, S_2; $s(A)$ occupying the place of 'the universe' or 'God,' giving them meaning, grounding Stoic ethics. Thus, in the occasional ethical statement where Epictetus does not mention *physis* directly, one can still hear the principle of living life according to whatever is 'really' the state of things in nature: 'If you undertake a role which is beyond your powers, you both disgrace yourself in that one, and at the same time neglect the role which you might have filled with success.'[151] *Physis* is the signifier grounding ethics even when it is not present.

Of course, *physis* meant many different things, and there are many ways in which it was the centre of Stoic ethics (and, in different ways, most other contemporary Western philosophical ethical systems). A complete survey of the Stoic use of *physis* is not possible here, though some way towards it has been made in previous work, reprinted here in the appendix.[152] Despite the additional work that could be done, I have already gone far enough here in demonstrating that *physis* is a Stoic ethical master signifier. Lacan's claim is not that everyone has one master signifier, but that master signifiers exist for the subject and in a discourse, and it is clear at the very least that *physis* is *a* Stoic master signifier,

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[150] Brian E. Johnson, *The Role Ethics of Epictetus: Stoicism in Everyday Life* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2014), 44, referencing Epictetus, *Disc.*, 3.1.8.

[151] Epictetus, *Encheiridion*, 37.

[152] Appendix C, 'Paul's View of *Physis*.' This survey includes Epicurean and Cynic uses of *physis*, because it concludes that they all share a common meaning and use of the word, despite using it for different purposes.

which is enough to ground the reading of Romans that follows. However, Stoicism using *physis* as a master signifier does not actually equate to it being obsessional neurotic. The reason Stoicism is obsessional neurotic is not because of the *identity* of its master signifier, but because of its *relation* to this master signifier, which represents the Other.

The first step on the way to demonstrating this relation is that the Stoic relation to the signifier *physis* as master signifier is one that posits a belief in its absolute being. The easiest way to demonstrate this is not through the statements made about *physis*, but by the expectations placed upon it, the demands made of it. This can be illustrated with a reading from Seneca. In his 78th letter he writes to a friend who is suffering with a constant runny nose, and after summarising some of the advice he is likely to get from his doctor, he says this:

> 'My own advice to you – and not only in the present illness but in your whole life as well – is this: refuse to let the thought of death bother you: nothing is grim when we have escaped that fear. There are three upsetting things about any illness: the fear of dying, the physical suffering and the interruption of our pleasures. I have said enough about the first, but will just say this, that the fear is due to the facts of nature, not of illness. Illness has actually given many people a new lease of life; the experience of being near to death has been their preservation. You will not die because you are sick, but because you are alive. That end still awaits you when you have been cured. In getting well again you may be escaping some ill health but not death. Now let us go back and deal with the disadvantage which really does belong to illness, the fact that it involves considerable physical torments. These are made bearable by their intermittency. For when pain is at its most severe the very intensity finds means of ending it. Nobody can be in acute pain and feel it for long. Nature in

her unlimited kindness to us has arranged things as to make pain either bearable or brief.[153]

After this Seneca goes on to describe some of the ways that pain naturally brings itself to an end, and in the following pages describes just how thought can be his solution, that 'if by contrast you start giving yourself encouragement, saying to yourself, "It's nothing – or nothing much, anyway – let's stick it out, it'll be over presently", then in thinking it a trivial matter you will be ensuring that it actually is. Everything hangs on one's thinking.'[154]

Though mentioned only twice in this section, *physis* (in Seneca's Latin, *natura*) stands behind the whole thought: nature has decreed when and how you will die, so there is no point in worrying about death. Since your fear is actually of nature, not illness, stop fearing nature and instead align yourself to its will. Nature will ensure that pain goes on no longer than nature intends. In this train of thought the desire of the Other, *physis*/*natura*, is separated out from the Other, being known by humans to such a degree that the subject, through thought, can master suffering. This ascribes a great plenitude or absoluteness to the Other, claiming that *physis* should be so trusted that the concerns of life float away. While for most humans life's events transpire in a way Heidegger might call 'inauthentic,' letting things happen as they happen (*physis* acting as it pleases), Stoicism removes this element of the desire of the Other: in claiming that we should submit fully and calmly to the desire of *physis*, all power of *physis* to hurt us or shock us is removed. Thus we pass from $d(A)$ to $d//A$, with the Other understood, its desire now firmly 'on our side.' However, with *physis* now

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[153] Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*, trans. by Robin Campbell (London: Penguin, 2004 [1969]), 132.

[154] Ibid., 134.

accounted for in our thoughts and actions, its own desire is nullified, as $d//A$ takes us immediately to $d//A_0$. This point in the paradox is precisely the one Seneca advocates, when he follows up his thoughts on thinking with a very orthodox Lacanian rant on how everyone's desire actually comes from the thinking of others (desire is the desire of the Other): one thinks one wants to be rich because other people think being rich is good, etc, leading to his claim that we even want suffering because we enjoy bragging to others about the extent of our suffering.[155] Further, through mastering oneself through thought, getting to this point of $d//A_0$, the power of the desire of *physis* being obliterated, Seneca is advocating the next step, the common goal of the Stoics, that desire itself be reduced because *physis* has been mastered through logic and thought: $d_0//A_0$. His final advice is essentially to stop desiring life itself: 'An illness that's swift and short will have one of two results: either oneself or it will be snuffed out. And what difference does it make whether I or it disappears? Either way there's an end to the pain.'[156] Is that the end of things? Did Seneca succeed in preaching and practicing a successful Stoic philosophy leading to the *ataraxia* (tranquillity) of d_0, desire reduced to nothing through the successful punctuation and completion of the obsessional's paradox? We do not know whether the man to whom Seneca wrote suddenly reached complete peace with his illness, but history has been unkind to Seneca's personal *ataraxia*: 'He has been charged throughout the ages with hypocrisy, stemming from the apparent incongruity between his high-minded moral precepts and some of the details of his life (including his role as tutor to the

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[155] Ibid., 134-135. This section really does make an excellent defence of one aspect of what is meant by 'desire is the desire of the Other,' represented by $d(A)$.

[156] Ibid., 136.

tyrannical Emperor Nero).'[157] It might not be fair to judge him for whom he taught, but on the other hand might be fair to judge him for being lured into the luxurious life of the royal court after claiming that the desires for wealth and power are merely the desire of the Other; and he certainly does not seem to have been successful in teaching his ways to Nero. Here the sides of the paradox meet: Paul tried to apply a bit of neurosis to a bit of perversion in his first letter to the Corinthians (countering attempted freedom from the law with more law). Much more acutely, Seneca embodied a perfectly obsessional philosophical system, yet tutored my paradigmatic ancient example of the perverse side of the paradox (Nero, above) to no avail. Around we go: $d(A)$ → $d//A$ → $d//A_0$ → $d_0//A_0$ → $d(A)$.

A few more points need to be made, in additional demonstration of the obsessional structure of Stoic thought, compared with the lists of obsessional symptoms/characteristics above:

- Despite 'obsessive structure being known to be common among the intelligentsia,'[158] there is a concerted effort in Stoic philosophy in particular to 'master the real through thought,' a key symptom of obsessional neurosis noted above, with Seneca's emphasis on **thinking**. This is very clear in the quotes from Seneca above, or in passages like the twentieth chapter of Epictetus's third book of *Discourses*, an extended argument that one's logical faculties can be employed to turn everything

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[157] Sellars, *Stoicism*, 12.

[158] *Écrits*, 686.

that *physis* gives us into a good, even death.[159]   These passages also demonstrate the relation between obsessional neurosis and *das Ding*, the source of both the death drive and the **'too-much-ness' of** *jouissance*, regression to which the obsessional structure exists to prevent.

• Stoic philosophers most certainly do *not* report a sense of 'diminished freedom,' as noted in both Freud and Lacan's obsessional/obsessive structures, above.   On the contrary, Stoic philosophers write at length about how reason in line with nature allows a much greater freedom, enabling the subject to decide which impressions and impulses to select and which to deselect.[160]   However, opponents of Stoicism, as well as proponents of Stoicism, acknowledged the deep tension caused by the simultaneous emphases on determinism *and* freedom,[161] it being very difficult for them to continue talking about greatly increased freedom whilst having a much stronger point about the inescapable causality in the

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[159] Epictetus, *Disc.* 3.20, particularly vv. 1-4 and 13-15.

[160] This can be seen in the selections of Epictetus and Seneca discussed in the preceding paragraphs, as well as most of Epictetus' writings, within which the freedom to discern between impressions that are under and not under our control is a major theme.   One instance of this is *Disc*. 1.22.9-10: 'What, then, does it mean to be getting an education? It means to be learning how to apply the natural [φυσικὰς] preconceptions to particular cases, each to the other in conformity with nature [τῇ φύσει], and, further, to make the distinction, that some things are under our control [ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν] while others are not under our control [οὐκ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν].'   Note, however, that 'freedom' itself (ἐλευθερία) is not a word commonly used in the discussion, since at the time it was still a word associated more with politics than philosophy. Dorothea Frede, 'Stoic Determinism,' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brad Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 200.

[161] Frede, 'Stoic Determinism,' 180.

universe, even in the human mind.[162] So, while a sense of **'diminished freedom'** does not appear to have been a problem for individual Stoic philosophers, it was seen as a theoretical problem for the structure of the system of thought as a whole, and it is that structure itself, not the people, that is here being diagnosed as obsessional neurotic.

- In this situation it is then reasonable tentatively to suggest, though it will not be further argued here, that the constant Stoic emphasis on enlarged freedom despite causality represents a classic obsessional neurotic reaction formation, a form of **resistance**.

- Again, since I am discussing the structure of the system of thought, not any individual Stoics, the Stoic war on the *pathea* (passions) is the structural element akin to the obsessional's **dis-affected memories**. While the Stoic philosopher works consciously to suppress the passions through thought (again, as exemplified by the quote from Seneca above), the obsessional neurotic works unconsciously to repress the passions through de-cathexis and the symptom. Dis-affected memories are part of the obsessional individual's symptom, and, equally, dis-affected actions are part of the obsessional ideology's symptom.

- Another criticism ancient Stoic philosophers often received was that they did not actually need their concept of God.[163] Their understanding of *physis* worked just as well whether or not they added the word 'God' to it. Yet they often worded their intellectual dependence upon a good *physis* as

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[162] Frede, 'Stoic Determinism,' 192-201 is mostly about the great difficulty caused for Stoic philosophers (such as Cato) by this dilemma. See also Sellars, *Stoicism*, 99-104.

[163] Sellars, *Stoicism*, 93.

a trust in God, and theorised about just how their concepts of God and *physis* related to each other.[164] They 'regarded theology as part of physics, more specifically as that part which does not focus on the details and the purely physical aspects of cosmic processes, but rather on their overall coherence, teleology, and providential design, as well as on the question of how this cosmic theology relates to popular forms of belief and worship.'[165] Thus the Stoic philosophical system produced an unnecessary **oblativity**, further aligning the system of thought with the personality of the obsessional neurotic individual. Though their system of thought was structured in such a way that they could have treated *physis* as something that speaks for itself, simply as reality as we know it, their obsessional relation to *physis* involved them applying oblative theological terminology to it nonetheless.

In the paper found in the appendix below it is argued that Stoics, Epicureans and Cynics all meant the same thing by *physis*; the signifier and its signified were nearly identical.[166] However, it is the *relation* of the Stoics to this master signifier that can be classified, in a remarkably precise way, as structurally obsessional neurotic. The structure is one of preserving the place of desire in its impossibility, through simultaneously believing in the absoluteness of the Other (its signifier being *physis*), while also attempting to destroy the desire of the

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[164] Sellars, *Stoicism*, 90-95.

[165] Keimpe Algra, 'Stoic Theology,' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brad Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 153.

[166] Appendix C, 'Paul's View of *Physis*.'

Other, which they do by consciously choosing dependence upon the Other to such an extent that its desire no longer has any power, and all that remains is the demand that the Other protect them (demand in the psychoanalytic sense of the form of the relation, not in the sense that they consciously make demands of *physis*). This obsessional neurotic structural relation to the Other then produces the same characteristics and symptoms within the system of thought that obsessional neurotic clinical structure causes in the individual subject. This structure of Stoic thought will be helpful in placing Paul's theological arguments in context of the paradox in which he found himself trapped, already in 1 Corinthians, but more consciously in Romans (next chapter).

A Lacanian critique of Stoicism, and of why, in the end, an obsessional neurotic system of thought is not a way one should consciously choose to attempt escape from the horror of *das Ding* (though obsessional neurosis is the way many of us have chosen to live with *das Ding* nonetheless), can be demonstrated via Star Trek. In Star Trek, as many will be aware, there is an alien race called the Vulcans. The Vulcans are, essentially, successful Stoics. This is because 'the ancient philosopher Surak, revered as the father of Vulcan civilization, led his people some two thousand years ago to reject their emotions in favor of a philosophy that embraced pure logic… Vulcan society is now based entirely on logic, and any trappings of emotion are considered to be socially unacceptable.'[167] Though this is stated as having originally been a conscious move towards a stoical philosophy, it is clearly also something *constitutionally* possible for the Vulcan race *in specific*: the character Spock has a human mother and a Vulcan father, and

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[167] Michael Okuda, *The Star Trek Encyclopedia: A Reference Guide to the Future, Updated and Expanded Edition* (New York: Pocket Books, 1999), 553.

'as a result, he [is] torn between two worlds, the stern discipline of Vulcan logic and the emotionalism of his human side. The struggle to reconcile his two halves would torment him for much of his life.'[168] Whether this constitutional ability of the Vulcan race to function entirely logically is due to their genetics and neurology, or due to the success of their culture in eradicating emotion, or perhaps some evolutionary mix of the two, the point is that even being *half*-human makes it constitutionally *impossible* to function in this successfully totally logical way. That is to say, the point is that the Vulcans are capable of this logic *because* they are aliens, and not human. For the human to try to live a dispassionate perfectly logical life is not only impossible because of the inescapability of human emotions, but also because the lack in the Other, the imperfection of language, means that it is no more possible for the obsessional to find absolute being in law than it is for the pervert to find absolute *jouissance* in transgression. Subordinating one's life to the language of logic does not remove *das Ding* from the game, it only establishes a relation to the Other that is itself a way of defending oneself from *das Ding* and preserving desire; at least for the speaking human. The Vulcans are the fantasy of the obsessional, but they can never be the end of the obsessional, because language guarantees that we will continue desiring to desire.

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[168] Okuda, *Star Trek Encyclopedia*, 458.

Chapter Five

The Paradox of *Jouissance* and Romans

In this chapter, I make use of some of the ideas of Douglas Campbell and Stanley Stowers, towards a reading of Romans within the Lacanian framework now established. I attempt not to get bogged down in a defence of Campbell, as that would be a large task and is not the purpose here; though with such a contentious scholar it is inevitable to some extent. Instead I argue that the figure in Rome whom Campbell posits Paul to be opposing is someone Paul stereotypes as one deeply indebted to Stoic philosophy (thus partially infusing Campbell's reading with that of Stowers); and that, in opposing this man, Paul finds himself arguing against Stoic ethics. In line with the findings of the previous chapter, this positions Paul as one opposed to an obsessional system of thought, and thus as one who is aware of both sides of the paradox of *jouissance* as it was popularly present in his time (as a tension between perversion and obsessionalism). Aware of this paradox, Paul attempts to present an understanding of the Christian subject as one whose ethics are not subject to it. He is looking for a solution to the problem of the law's relation to the paradox. The nature of this solution will be discussed in the next chapter. In this chapter I outline the *psychoanalytic positioning* of Paul's solution, not the solution itself; a psychoanalytic positioning

that, by acknowledging rather than denying the present human reality of the paradox of *jouissance*, thus places itself firmly in context of our alienation in language, a prerequisite for a real dialogue with modern Lacanian philosophy. Just before concluding, I digress briefly in order to theorise about how this position of Paul's theology affects the interpretation of the history of Pauline studies.

Reading Romans for the purpose of one chapter in a larger study is difficult; not only because it necessitates depending heavily upon other scholars' readings, but also because it requires focusing on only small parts of the letter, which of course form a coherent whole (though scholars often come to very different interpretations of the letter depending upon which section they take as the main argument). Thus it is not possible to work to the usual depth employed in academic biblical studies, but the footnotes will be used to make further reference to wider research, and to position this work more precisely. This is not a 'rereading' in the scope of Stowers or Campbell, or even, in primary purpose at least, a new reading of any sort; instead it is a reading of only some parts of Romans, dependent upon other scholars' previous work but with some new ideas suggested, supplemented by and geared towards a Lacanian reading of Paul. In what follows I will pay most attention to Romans 1:18-32 and 7:7-25, because these are main the sections that will be determined to be written in the voice of Paul's opponent, through the rhetorical strategy of *prosōpopoiia*, 'speech-in-character.' Translations of these sections can be found in Appendix B, below, which also makes note of which parts are intended to be read in the voice of 'the Teacher.'

1. History of the Interpretation of Romans 1 and 7

There is a long history of debate over the question of voice in Rom 7; that is, the question of in whose voice Rom 7:7-25 (or certain shorter passages within it) are intended to be read. While the suggestion that Rom 1:18-32 is written in a non-Pauline voice has occurred less frequently, it has not universally been seen as a positive statement of the foundation to Pauline theology, and the question of its intended voice is certainly raging now.

Among ancient commentators, however, Rom 1:18-32 was taken as Pauline opinion. Patristic commentators from Origen to Augustine affirm the passage as Pauline in voice.[1] While these authors proceed unsurprisingly with Stoic or Platonic/Neoplatonic resonances, Thomas Aquinas ties the passage to his Aristotelian/scholastic theology, so to him the people described in 1:18-32 knew God as the stable, changeless cause of all good things, but put a limit to his power and knowledge, attributing blessings to their own talents, and so became vain in their thoughts.[2] In his commentary as well as in the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas ties his theory of natural law to Rom 1:19-20.[3] Martin Luther reads the section as a demonstration 'that all men live in sin and folly, in order that they may realize that their wisdom and righteousness are in vain and they need the righteousness of

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[1] Gerald Bray, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998), 32-49.

[2] St Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, trans. by Fabian R. Larcher (Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012), 44.

[3] Eugene F. Rogers, Jr, 'The Narrative of Natural Law in Aquinas's Commentary on Romans 1,' *Theological Studies*, 59 (1998), 254.

Christ,' and as an illustration of 'the moral condition of the heathen.'[4]   Until

recently, the scathing tone and view of humanity as deeply depraved in this

passage does not seem to have been a problem (indeed, for Calvin, the 'total

depravity' of humanity is one of his central doctrines). However, in modern times

this passage has not been read so simply as a straightforward Pauline universal

condemnation of humanity. E. P. Sanders notes that as a universal condemnation

of humanity, Rom 1:18-2:29 is both exaggerated and inconsistent.[5]   He then

suggests that the mass inconsistencies between parts of Rom 2 and 1:18-32 are a

result of Paul having lifted this whole section from sermons he had heard in

synagogues, and dropped it into his letter without much qualification.[6]   To

Sanders, 'What is said about the law in Romans 2 cannot be fitted into a category

otherwise known from Paul's letters.'[7]   As Campbell points out, Richard Hays, N.

T. Wright and Thomas Tobin have all suggested that the purpose of this section is

to trap the reader into agreeing with it, before turning the tables in 2:1.[8]   However,

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[4] Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. by J. Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954 [1516]), 26.

[5] E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983), 123-125.

[6] Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, 125-132.

[7] Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, 132.

[8] Douglas Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 363, citing Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 1996), 289; N. T. Wright, 'Romans,' in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, 10, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 437-448 and Thomas Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 112. Neil Elliott's reading is quite similar to this, with Paul using Rom 1:18-32 in order to trap his gentile Christian audience in a syllogism with 2:1-6 and 2:7-16: Elliott interprets Paul as diatribe (depending on Stowers), so that Paul is setting up several 'characters,' inviting the audience to identify first with the preacher who condemns gentile idolatry, then with the judge who thinks he is exempt but is a hypocrite, so that they then realise that if (A) God judges all gentile pagans and (B) God also judges the

many leading scholars still take it to be thoroughly Pauline in voice.[9] So while

the problem of voice has not been quite so pronounced as in Rom 7, it nonetheless

presents difficulties.

The problem of voice in Rom 7 was introduced in Chapter 1, above, but

needs to be sketched out again. Origen read sections of Rom 7 as *prosōpopoiia* in

the voice of someone Stoics (and others) would view as lacking in self-control,

and thought that the Stoic resonances were obvious.[10] Thus Origen's view was

that it represents someone pre-conversion, 'under the law,' and many have

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hypocritical judge of gentile pagans, then (C) God's judgment can be universal, based in kindness, and just (because he is the judge of both the judged and the judge). It is difficult to imagine Paul expecting his audience to follow this logic, which Elliott admits is 'subtle;' but he nonetheless provides an excellent illustration of the way Rom 1:18-2:16 can be read as varying in voice, as presenting a sort of 'trap' that might not be Paul's opinion, and as containing logic that remains difficult to decipher and merits further study. Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007 [1990]), 108-126.

[9] James Dunn sees the passage as Pauline in voice, but nonetheless notes that he speaks 'as a Jew,' writing about 'the degradation of Gentile ethics' 'from a Jewish perspective,' also using 'Stoic categories,' with a vice list that is 'particularly Stoic,' in *Romans 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 53. His reading comes very close to the one suggested below, without going so far as to place the passage in non-Pauline voice. Robert Jewett is perhaps surprisingly traditional, seeing the section as a universal condemnation of Jews and gentiles, in *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 150-152. Richard Longenecker reads it as Pauline voice, but as an introduction to the series of diatribes Longenecker sees in the following chapters, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2016), 361. Even when reading the passage as Pauline in voice, there is usually some sort of concession made to its function within the argumentative flow as less-than-fully Pauline.

[10] Stanley Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, & Gentiles* (London: Yale University Press, 1994), 264-269. Bryan Dyer, in the process of arguing against Stowers' reading of Rom 7, admits that Stowers 'convincingly shows that Origen understood Paul as presenting a character in this passage.' Bryan R. Dyer, '"I Do Not Understand What I Do": A Challenge to the Understanding of Romans 7 as *Prosopopoeia*,' in *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Context*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Bryan R. Dyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 195.

repeated this view.[11]   Then, 'when Augustine retrospectively reinterpreted his [own] conversion in light of the Platonic myth of the soul's falling, alienation from the Good, and return to it, he created a model of religious experience that would become characteristic of the West, especially in late medieval piety and the individualism of Protestantism.'[12]   This philosophical interpretation of his own conversion led to an interpretation of Rom 7:7-25 as Pauline autobiography, detailing his condition before his conversion; though eventually Augustine changed his mind and saw it as demonstrating the post-conversion Paul's internal conflict.[13]   Martin Luther claims to be disagreeing with Augustine but must just be referring to Augustine's earlier view, because he draws heavily from him and then essentially repeats Augustine's position: that this passage details Paul's continued condition after conversion, as *simul justus et peccator*, divided by two laws.[14]   This interpretation of Romans 7 as demonstrating the condition of the post-conversion Christian continued to dominate (having been defended by the greatest Catholic and Protestant heavyweights), until 1907 when William Wrede moved to a universal interpretation, with the passage describing the pre-Christian state of Paul and of each believer.[15]   In 1929 Werner Kümmel pointed out that the passage cannot be Pauline autobiography, because the line 'I was once alive

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[11] Such as Richard Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), 86-87. One should not, however, immediately assume that Origen's view was one shared by all before him, back to the original audience. Nonetheless, it is the oldest developed interpretation of Romans that remains extant.

[12] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 259.

[13] Eugene TeSelle, 'Exploring the Inner Conflict: Augustine's Sermons on Romans 7 and 8,' in *Engaging Augustine on Romans: Self, Context, and Theology in Interpretation*, eds. Daniel Patte and Eugene TeSelle (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002), 111-112.

[14] Luther, *Epistle to the Romans*, 94-100.

[15] William Wrede, *Paul* (London: Green, 1907), 145-146.

without the law' directly contradicts Phil 3:5; so, instead, the text contains a 'theory' of man's life under the law.[16] Gerd Theissen offered a psychological interpretation that returned to a theory of Pauline pre-conversion autobiography, which will be discussed in comparison with my conclusion below.[17] Stanley Stowers has suggested returning to Origen's view, that this is a case of *prosōpopoiia*, impersonating a person whom Aristotle or the Stoics would label weak in self-control (an ἀκρατής/*akratēs*).[18] Richard Longenecker, who long ago foreshadowed the New Perspectives with his *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*,[19] is also the author of the most recent major commentary on Romans, in which he agrees with

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[16] Werner Kümmel, *Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1929). Gerd Theissen summarises this on 177-178 of *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*, trans. by J. Galvin (London: T&T Clark, 1987), stating that up until the time he was writing no one had successfully refuted this.

[17] Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*, 177-265.

[18] Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 264-272. Bryan Dyer recently attacked the use of ancient rhetorical strategies, specifically *prosōpopoiia*, to interpret Romans, in '"I Do Not Understand What I Do".' He provides an excellent summary of the three main proponents of this reading (Stowers, Thomas Tobin and Ben Witherington III, though only the former is discussed at length here), and then makes three brief counter-arguments: that Paul, unlike ancient rhetoricians, does not mark the opening of the *prosōpopoiia*; that they depend upon patristic readers as typical of the original audience; and that they presume Paul was educated in the formal rules of rhetoric. The first and third of these can be met by the same point: as is argued throughout this chapter, since Paul so clearly was deeply aware of Stoic philosophy, he would have seen and heard rhetorical strategies being used by philosophers in the agora, and thus been aware of them – an often-made claim that Dyer wrongly dismisses on pp. 203-204. It is precisely this casual awareness of the ways philosophers speak, rather than a deep knowledge of rhetorical manuals, that leads to Paul casually engaging in extended *prosōpopoiia* without realising that technically there should be introductory markers (just as he does with his letter quotations throughout 1 Cor and most of his quotations of Scripture). Finally, his awareness of the way philosophers are heard speaking, and the way orators makes speeches in public, is something he could expect his Roman audience to share, thus putting them in line with later patristic writers who were also aware of rhetorical strategies.

[19] Longenecker wrote *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* in 1964.

Stowers that it is a case of *prosōpopoiia*, but sees its purpose as a description of 'people who attempt to live their lives by their own natural abilities and acquired resources, apart from God.'[20] Robert Jewett, author of the 2007 Hermeneia commentary, also agrees with Stowers' suggestion of *prosōpopoiia*, but thinks the caricature is one inspired by the pre-conversion Paul.[21] Thus there are many options: the passage can be Pauline autobiography, or an impersonation of someone else, or a theoretical objective description of a psychological state. It can describe the sincerely conflicted state of a Christian, or it can be a description of a 'depraved' state of a non-believer, or a Pauline attack on life under the Jewish law.[22] From these options, there is now widespread acceptance of Stowers' suggestion that the passage is written as *prosōpopoiia*, though certainly not widespread agreement on just whose voice is being adopted.[23]

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[20] Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 673.

[21] Jewett, *Romans*, 443-445.

[22] In summary and simplification of the history of interpretations described above:

Origen (3rd c.): a Jew who fails at Stoic self-mastery.

Augustine (4th/5th c.): pre-conversion autobiography; then post-conversion autobiography.

Luther (16th c.): post-conversion autobiography – the post-conversion Christian.

Wrede (1907): pre-conversion autobiography – the pre-conversion Christian.

Kümmel (1929): the 'theory' of man's life under the law.

Theissen (1983): this 'theory' is pre-conversion autobiography.

Stowers (1994): *prosōpopoiia* of a gentile who uses Stoic self-mastery to try to follow the law.

Since Stowers: general acceptance of a theory of *prosōpopoiia*, with its purpose interpreted variously.

[23] To Stowers it is a gentile of the sort Paul stereotypes in 1:18-32 trying to follow the Jewish law, which fails to enable self-mastery (*Rereading of Romans*, 264-272). To Longenecker he is speaking in the voice of anyone who seeks to live by his own abilities (*Epistle to the Romans*, 673). To Jewett Paul is speaking in the voice of a character constructed in light of his own past experience as Saul (*Romans*, 443-445). Jewett notes two other possible interpretations of the voice here, including the view that it is Paul impersonating his previous self (Saul, not just a figure influenced by Saul) or Paul impersonating himself understood as a slave of Christ.

So there is a recent but important question of voice in Rom 1:18-32, and a constant widely debated question of voice in Rom 7:7-25. However, there is also the question of the rhetorical style of Romans as a whole: was Paul writing to or regarding an individual, or is the addressee of verses like 2:1 ('Therefore you are without excuse') fictive? To investigate this fully would require extended interaction with the very complex issue of the purpose of the letter, which will not be entered into with any depth here.[24] The Lacanian reading of Paul that follows positions Paul against obsessional Stoicism, so in order to ground this reading of Paul in academic biblical studies, it will need to be the case that Romans, at the very least, could have been a diatribe written against either a fictive or real person.

Suggestions that Romans is written in the style of a diatribe have also been frequent, and mostly draw upon comparisons with Epictetus's (slightly later) diatribal style – though the parallels in style are so close that in this case the comparison is justified. Rudolf Bultmann was the first modern scholar to argue extensively that Paul wrote Romans in a diatribe style similar to Epictetus,[25] and read Rom 1:18-32 as Paul '[making] use of the Stoic theory of natural knowledge of God,'[26] which, combined with his knowledge of other Stoic concepts like 'conscience,' 'freedom' and 'duty,' as well as his use of diatribe, demonstrate an

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[24] The most recent commentary, *The Epistle to the Romans* by Richard Longenecker, settles on five different purposes for the writing of the letter (pp. 8-12). The matter is far from resolved, as virtually every major interpretation offers, to some extent, a different suggestion for the primary purpose of the letter.

[25] Rudolf Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910).

[26] Rudolf Bultmann, 'Paul,' in Schubert M. Ogden (ed.), *Shorter Writings by Rudolf Bultmann: Existence and Faith* (London: Collins, 1960), 147.

acquaintance with Stoic philosophy.[27] Bultmann was able to catalogue such a list

of Stoic-influenced ideas in Paul that an awareness of Stoicism, at the very least,

is fairly uncontested to this date.[28] His paper remains one of the best-stated

arguments for diatribe in Paul, but sadly also remains un-translated.[29] Stowers

has written two major works on diatribe in Romans: his PhD thesis that argues

that Romans is a diatribe meant to be instructive to one of Paul's students rather

than in opposition to a real or fictional character,[30] and a book in which he

advances a complete rereading of Romans as diatribe.[31] The book contains a

chapter so influential that it was reprinted in 2007 as part of the Norton Critical

Edition *The Writings of St Paul*, which is where he argues that Rom 7:7-25 is a

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[27] Bultmann, 'Paul,' 131.

[28] Rudolf Bultmann, Kendrick Grobel (trans.), *Theology of the New Testament* vol. 1 (London: SCM, 1952 [1948]), 70-72.

[29] Abraham Malherbe said in 1980 that 'Rudolf Bultmann's dissertation is still the best general description of diatribal style and remains the authority on the subject for most NT scholars.' Abraham J. Malherbe, 'ΜΗ ΓΕΝΟΙΤΟ in the Diatribe and Paul,' *The Harvard Theological Review*, 23.1 (January – April 1980), 231.

[30] Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Williston, VT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1981). The fact that it is directed towards students is important, because Stowers' argument is actually that the diatribe's normal function was not intended to be written against anyone, but to be instructive in a classroom setting. Suggesting that the Teacher is entirely fictive does not damage the thesis that follows, but virtually every scholar in the last few decades would at least agree that Romans is written in response to real issues with which Paul wished to engage (Jewett states that this is now the consensus in *Romans*, 3), as indicated by 16:17-20; so, even if Romans is read as instructive diatribe rather than diatribe against a real figure, the Teacher should be taken as someone Paul consciously presents in a certain way in order to speak to certain issues.

[31] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*.

case of *prosōpopoiia*.[32]   Changwon Song compares Romans and Epictetus's

diatribes extensively, noting that Paul's frequent use of μὴ γένοιτο ('may it never

be!'), his use of the vocative ὦ ἄνθρωπε (oh, man!) and the structuring of his

argument as a first person plural arguing against a second person singular are

identical to the form of Epictetus's diatribes.[33]   In Epictetus's diatribes the second

person singular to whom the argument is addressed is probably not a real person;

but, as just stated, it is irrelevant to the present wider argument whether or not 'the

Teacher' (as Campbell calls him) was real.[34]   Either Paul is stereotyping a real

Stoic-Jewish teacher, or inventing one based upon his view of Stoic-Jewish

teachers.   However, it is worth pointing out that in the section just cited, Song

defends reading Romans as diatribe by comparing Paul's style therein with both

Galatians and 1 Corinthians, which were certainly written in response to specific

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[32] Stanley K. Stowers, 'Romans 7:7-25 as Speech-in-Character,' in *The Writings of St. Paul*, eds. Wayne A. Meeks and John T. Fitzgerald (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007 [1972]), 525-538.

[33] Changwon Song, *Reading Romans as a Diatribe* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), 24-40. ὦ ἄνθρωπε could be translated simply as 'person!' since an ἄνθρωπος can just mean 'person,' and the particle ὦ merely denotes the vocative.   However, as a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher/teacher, the figure was probably male, and in *Koine* Greek the use of ὦ was not required as it was in earlier Greek dialects, adding further weight to the argument that Paul is specifically using it here as part of the diatribal style, in which it was normal to address one's fictive opponent with ὦ ἄνθρωπε (as Song notes).

[34] Campbell was already using this term for Paul's opponent(s) in Rome in 'Natural Theology in Paul? Reading Romans 1.19-20,' *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 1.3 (November 1999), 244, and, as he also does throughout *Deliverance of God*, cites J. L. Martyn's apocalyptic reading of Galatians as its source: Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, The Anchor Bible 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), especially 117-135, 236-240 447-466.

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situations involving real people; and also that Romans concludes with the suggestion that real people be expelled from the church (16:17-20).[35]

Both Romans 1 and 7 have historically been read as examples of Paul stating positive foundational arguments to his theology, or as diatribe in Romans, or as straw-arguments meant to draw the reader into a view Paul opposes or even as *prosōpopoiia*, speech-in-character, not necessarily representing Paul's opinion at all. The Lacanian reading of Paul I suggest here reads Paul as opposed to the 'figure' of the Stoic-Jewish obsessional, who for my purposes may be taken as either real or fictive.

2. Stanley Stowers and Douglas Campbell on *Prosōpopoiia* in Romans

Within Stanley Stowers' reading of Romans as an instructive diatribe against an imaginary interlocutor, he posits Rom 7:7-25 as an example of *prosōpopoiia*. He notes that *prosōpopoiia*, is described in rhetorical manuals and other texts by Cicero, Quintilian, Theon, Hermogenes and Aphthonius; and that Origen (the oldest extant major commentator on Romans) believed it to be the

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[35] For these reasons, as well as the argument to be outlined below, I resist the claim made by Frank J. Matera, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 60, that 'Because Paul is using the form of the diatribe, there is no need to speculate about the identity of the interlocutor.' Diatribe means that there is not necessarily a real interlocutor to identify, but not that there is necessarily not a real interlocutor to identify.

strategy employed in Rom 7.[36] Since Paul was clearly an educated person with

knowledge of Stoic philosophy and letter-writing, and (according to Stowers) both

Theon and Nicolaus claim that practicing writing in *prosōpopoiia* was standard in

letter-writing and rhetoric instruction, Paul is likely to have been skilled at using

it.[37] Stowers objects to reading Romans with presuppositions that it concerns

theological debates resulting from later Christian religious questions, and instead

claims that the true theoretical context for the letter is the story of Christian

salvation as a recovery of lost self-mastery.[38] Thus he reads Rom 1:18-32 as a

description of gentile pagans who have no self-mastery (i.e., he reads it in Pauline

voice describing non-Jewish non-Christians), but then reads Rom 7:7-25 as a

psychological reconfiguration describing the same group through *prosōpopoiia*.[39]

This reading, similar to Dale Martin's reading of 1 Corinthians described in

Chapter 3, puts Paul on the same side as the Stoics, defending self-mastery

through renunciation and control of the passions.[40] Stowers attempts to reconcile

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[36] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 17. As Campbell points out, the same rhetorical strategy is termed ἠθοποιία in some of these texts (*Deliverance of God*, 533).

[37] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 17. As Paul says in 2 Cor 11:6, 'I may be an idiot when it comes to speech, but not when it comes to knowledge.'

[38] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 42.

[39] Ibid., 42-43. As Stowers points out, Origen's position is slightly more complex than this, describing instead various stages of un-self-control through which the impersonated figure passes, but his position as a whole can be described as an impersonation of an ἀκρατής.

[40] There have been countless other studies of Paul's relation to Stoicism, in addition to the ones mentioned throughout this chapter. Where this study differs from the bulk of them is that I am not examining how Paul was influenced by Stoicism (which he surely was, to some degree), or how his arguments employ Stoic argumentation, but how Paul specifically, intentionally relates to Stoicism in Romans through his presentation of the Teacher. The fact that so many studies demonstrate his awareness and occasional dependence upon Stoic thought does not rule out the argument that in Romans he specifically positioned himself against it; it just rounds out the picture of Paul as someone aware of Stoicism, thinking positively of certain aspects of it, but ultimately

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some of the many contradictions within Rom 1:18-3:20, such as described by Heikki Räisänen in *Paul and the Law*,[41] by reading 2:1-5 as an admonition, involving brief *prosōpopoiia* in 2:2, against the potential judgmentalism of gentile

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using his knowledge of it to strike against someone whose disagreement with him was defended with it. Indeed, all of this demonstration that Paul used Stoic argumentative strategies (such as in Paul A. Halloway, 'Paul as a Hellenistic Philosopher: The Evidence of Philippians,' in eds. Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries, *Paul and the Philosophers* [New York: Fordham University Press, 2013], 52-68), only strengthens the necessary prior argument to the one being made here: for Paul to argue against Stoicism, he must at least have been deeply aware of it. Two important studies on Paul and Stoicism not otherwise mentioned below are Niko Huttunen, *Paul and Epictetus on Law: A Comparison* (T&T Clark, 2009) and Runar Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism: A Comparitive Study of Ancient Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 89-104 (focusing on Stoic allusions in Rom 12-15, as Thorsteinsson also does in some of her other work). These works both demonstrate parallels and claim dependences of Paul upon Stoicism, but do not suggest that Paul had a specific attitude towards or interaction with Stoicism other than thinking of it positively enough to depend upon it. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), is probably the most extensive work on Paul and Stoicism, suggesting a structural equivalence between them, in another reading of Paul as heavily influenced by Stoic thought. Unlike many of the others, Engberg-Pedersen appeals broadly across all of Paul's writings; but he is perhaps insufficiently cautious, alleging a large degree of dependence upon Stoicism where Stowers would more reasonably see Paul as situated within a wider discourse of self-mastery. On the other hand Emma Wasserman, *The Death of the Soul in Romans 7: Sin, Death, and the Law in light of Hellenistic Moral Psychology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), is an excellent example of a trend true of many of these, including Stowers: the tendency to depend heavily upon Rom 1-2 and 7 for the densest proliferation of clearly Stoic/Hellenistic philosophical references. She presents this argument (that in Rom 7 Paul's *prosōpopoiia* presents the middle-Stoic use of a passage from Euripides' *Medea* to outline the 'death of the soul,' similar to Stowers' reading) more briefly in 'Paul Among the Ancient Philosophers: The Case of Romans 7,' in eds. Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries, *Paul and the Philosophers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 69-83. The reading suggested here explains why Paul's Stoic resonances are so heavily concentrated in certain sections of one of Paul's letters, while studies focusing on passages outside of these tends to make more general claims about similarity of argumentative strategy rather than concepts (for example, the difference between the studies by Wasserman above, and those by Huttunen or Thorsteinsson above).

[41] Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010 [1983]), 201-209. Sanders, when writing about the internal contradictions of Rom 1:18-2:29 as cited above, says this in agreement with Räisänen.

Christians who were formerly the sort of people described in 1:18-32.[42] So he reads 1:18-32 as a Pauline description of gentile ἀκρασία (*akrasia*, 'un-self-control,' as in the translation of 1 Cor 7:1-9 in Appendix B, below), and Rom 2:1-5 as condemning any pride one might have after advancing past such a condition. Thus in 1:18-32 Stowers' Paul accuses gentile sinners of being so ignorant of the laws of nature that they commit every evil imaginable and deserve to die, and then follows it up by warning converts not to be judgmental; if there is any irony in this, it is lost on Stowers' Paul. However, this reading of Paul against *akrasia* then leads Stowers to agree with Origen that Rom 7:7-25 contains (either in part or in whole), *prosōpopoiia* of a person whom Stoic philosophy would deem to be without self-control (an *akratēs*).[43] So Stowers makes use of *prosōpopoiia* in his reading of Paul, but in such a way that still reads Rom 1:18-32 as Pauline in voice, and reads the *prosōpopoiia* in Romans to be in the voices of different figures throughout the letter (in the voice of a judgmental gentile Christian in 2:2, and in the voice of a gentile who tries to live by the Jewish law in 7:7-25).[44] Stowers successfully defends the legitimacy of using the rhetorical strategy of *prosōpopoiia* to interpret Romans, but fails to employ it in such a way as actually to reconcile the contradictions between Rom 1:18-32 and 2:1-29 (by keeping the former as Pauline in voice, the accusation of judgmentalism contained in the latter rings hollow – as well as the other contradictions between the passages that will be discussed below).

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[42] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 100-102. It is worth noting that the NRSV confidently notes Rom 2:2 as *prosōpopoiia* (or simple quotation), putting it in quotation marks and adding the words 'You say' before it.

[43] Ibid., 264-269.

[44] Ibid., 273-284.

This is where Douglas Campbell picks up. He writes that that when Stowers published his argument for *prosōpopoiia* in Romans, in 1994, he had already been presuming that some sort of strategy akin to this must be what is happening in Rom 1:18-32, but was not yet convinced it was *prosōpopoiia*. He then found Stowers' argument so convincing that he was persuaded it is also the strategy in 1:18-32.[45] The full context of Campbell's reading of this passage, as part of a complete rereading of Romans and Paul, is far too much to summarise here; but some of his observations about 1:18-32 justify his assertion that this is the opening statement of Paul's impersonation of an opponent he labels 'the Teacher.' He lists nine 'underdeterminations' in the wider section of 1:18-3:20; that is, arguments one would expect Paul to have made if he was really saying what he has traditionally been interpreted to be arguing.[46] Holding more weight, since they speak from presence rather than absence, are the overdeterminations he lists in 1:18-32 (aspects of this text that stand out as unnecessary, exceptional or inconsistent, if the text were to be taken as Paul's own opinion): (1) it has a specific style distinct from the rest of Romans, with an excess of alpha-privatives, alliteration, third-person-plural verbs and word plays; (2) it describes in detail God's judgment as revealed in the present, directly contradicting Paul's specific claim that God's judgment is a future event in Rom 2:5, and that it is God's righteousness, kindness and patience that are revealed in the present, in 1:17 and 2:4; (3) it posits the collective decline of all pagan civilisation, and all individuals therein, which negates the possibility of the individual correctly discerning God from nature in the way that the same passage (and the wider theological system

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[45] Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 532-533.

[46] Ibid., 339-353.

Campbell seeks to subvert) suggests they should have; and (4) the extensive and often-observed intertextual relation with the Wisdom of Solomon, a text that seeks to establish the necessity of *Torah* observance for all mankind.[47] More reasons will be added to these in the discussion below, on top of the many other underdeterminations and overdeterminations Campbell lists on pages 338-411.

Campbell seeks to remedy these problems, not only with this passage but also the contradictions he sees in Romans and the whole of the Pauline corpus, by reading 1:18-32 (and other parts of Romans and Paul) as *prosōpopoiia*, and specifically as what Paul 'takes to be the Teacher's usual opening – his arresting προοίμοιν, or *exordium*. Here Paul provides what we might call a cameo of this material.'[48] Campbell reads this as a six-step argument: (1) universal culpability because of general revelation/natural theology; (2) humanity has turned away from natural theology; (3) this is described in terms of exchange, trading the glory of God for figures that were popularly recognised to refer to pagan idols; (4) this exchange also involved surrender to unnatural passions; (5) Paul formulates for the Teacher a precise list of sins of a 'debased mind,' including 'attitudinal' sins such as hatred, arrogance and schism, of which Paul can then accuse the Teacher of being guilty and (6) the list of sins concludes by condemning those who 'approve' of such sins, again crafted so that Paul can condemn those who agree with the Teacher's venomous sin list and are thus also its object, by being so hateful, arrogant and schismatic. Campbell reads Rom 2 as Paul's initial argument against the Teacher, and summarises Paul's 'main problem with the Teacher' as holding that 'the Teacher's rather traditional Jewish instructions in

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[47] Ibid., 356-362.

[48] Ibid., 542.

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terms of circumcision and law observance are ethically inadequate.'[49] Campbell

does not mention the apparent extent to which the Teacher's arguments depend

upon Stoic thought in either the section outlining the problems with seeing 1:18-

32 as Pauline, or the section proposing his solution;[50] and he does not see a

decision on *prosōpopoiia* in Rom 7 as necessary for his study.[51]

There have been positive and negative reviews of Campbell's work, and a

good representation of them now exists in a volume published following a

conference in 2014.[52] The argument below combats some of these criticisms, and

circumvents others, but is not a full solution. This is a step in a Lacanian reading

that makes use of Campbell's theory, not a thesis dedicated to defending

Campbell's reading of Romans. I use some of the individual interpretative moves

of Campbell and Stowers – primarily, reading parts of Rom 1 and 7 as

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[49] Ibid., 570.

[50] Ibid., 355-376 and 542-571.

[51] Ibid., 532.

[52] Chris Tilling, ed., *Beyond Old and New Perspectives on Paul: Reflections on the work of Douglas Campbell* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014). *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 34.2 (Dec. 2011), contains many responses to Campbell, and a response by him. Michael Gorman read an advance copy and comments on it repeatedly, both positively and negatively, in *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 7-8 (n. 20), 43 (n. 11), 45, 47, 48, 71, 75 (n. 97), 82-83, 104 (n. 180) and 167-168. Larry Hurtado responded on his blog, and engaged in conversation with Campbell in the comments. Larry Hurtado, 'Douglas Campbell's "Rereading" of Paul,' *Larry Hurtado's Blog* <https://larryhurtado.wordpress.com/2012/04/23/douglas-campbells-rereading-of-paul/> [accessed 27.8.2016]. N. T. Wright responds with an article devoted to Campbell's reading, in *Paul and his Interpreters* (London: SPCK, 2015), 187-218. The present chapter is too long already to engage in prolonged response to Campbell's critics, but the reader familiar with them will note that the reading I suggest meets some of the concerns raised.

prosōpopoiia – in order to position Paul clearly *vis-à-vis* Stoic philosophy and its psychoanalytic correlates.

Some general methodological concerns should be addressed before continuing. John Barclay has outlined the problems associated with 'mirror reading,' i.e., reading an argument in light of the presumed argument it is structured against, particularly in Paul's more polemical letters.[53] However, what Campbell is doing and what is continued below is not mirror reading because it does not involve reconstructing an absent argument based on inference, but reading an actual argument from within the text and discussing its voice. Nonetheless, even if one were to agree with Nijay Gupta's categorisation of Campbell's project as mirror reading, I am merely suggesting this 'mirror reading' as a possibility, rather than a fact.[54] This is, in fact, all I am suggesting: that one possible Lacanian reading of Paul is as follows. Another accusation that might be made is that, in light of the highly influential 1962 paper by Samuel Sandmel, my reading of the Teacher is some sort of 'parallelomania,' citing parallels between his speeches and Stoic philosophy.[55] However this study specifically negates that accusation, as the claim being made regards not the specific content of the arguments made, but the form of the logic, the use of signifiers and above all the clinical structure of the arguments.

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[53] John M. G. Barclay, 'Mirror Reading a Polemical Letter: A Test Case,' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 31.1 (1987), 73-93.

[54] Nijay Gupta, 'Mirror-Reading Moral Issues in Paul's Letters,' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 34.4 (2012), 377.

[55] Samuel Sandmel, 'Parallelomania,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 81-1 (March, 1962), 1-13.

3. The Stoic Obsessional Teacher

Romans 1:18-32 is an ethical argument that bears no obvious relation to Christ:[56] neither the revelation of God it espouses (1:19-20);[57] nor the benediction in which Paul would usually include Christ (1:25); nor the ethical model it employs (1:26-27); nor the view of wisdom as good and foolishness as evil (1:22) and certainly not the ferocious and malicious judgmentalism (1:28-32).[58] It is thus, from first reading, apparently at odds with Pauline theology; and the rest of the letter confirms this. In Romans 8 there is an alternate story of the revelation of God, not through creation (κτίσις) but through his children in Christ. In Rom

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[56] Compare to the use of some similar signifiers in Eph 4:17-24. This could be authentically Pauline, or could be a pseudepigraphal imitation of Rom 1:18-32. Either way, the fact that the second half of it (vv. 20-24) is all about how the darkened way of the gentiles is 'not the way you learned in Christ' demonstrates how bizarre it is that we have fifteen verses of judgmental anger in Romans that fails to mention Christ at all.

[57] When Campbell first outlined his theory of Rom 1:18-32 as *prosōpopoiia*, in 'Natural Theology in Paul?,' 231-252, he made countering the natural revelation espoused in 1:19-20 his opening argument; it takes much more of a back seat in his eventual full argument in *Deliverance of God*, where Campbell's main goal is unseating justification theory. The reading presented here re-integrates the relationship between Pauline theology and natural revelation, via Stoicism, as a core question of Romans, explaining its pride of place in the Teacher's opening argument.

[58] Jewett notes that Paul 'does not reiterate the Christological grounding of his theory here,' in *Romans*, 150, and attributes this to Paul presuming the Roman Christians to know that the grounding of his moral theory is Christological; but it is difficult to see how 1:18-32 leaves any room for a 'grounding' other than nature itself as a revelation of God. Paul makes a sweeping series of ethical statements, all founded on the self-revelation of nature to all humans, and neither mentions nor leaves room for Christ's role in ethics and theology, since nature itself makes plain enough what can be known about God (1:19-21), that those who do not live by it (1:24-27) are justly condemned to death (1:28-32). A more correct statement along the lines of Jewett's logic would be that since Paul presumed the Roman Christians to know that his theory is Christologically grounded, this sustained development of a non-Christian ethical theory would not have sounded Pauline!

7:25 there is an alternate benediction, now referring to Christ. The ethics based on living κατὰ φύσιν (aligned with nature) are subverted in Rom 11:21-24 when God himself acts παρὰ φύσιν (unaligned with/against nature). The superiority of the wise over the foolish is contested in the verses immediately before and after it, as is the judgmentalism towards gentiles. These arguments are added to and expanded upon below, towards the theory that in Rom 1:18-32 Paul stereotypes the Teacher as overly dependent upon Stoic logic, which Paul then contests.[59] In

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[59] The reading suggested here is close to that of Diana Swancutt, 'Sexy Stoics and the Rereading of Romans 1.18-2.16,' in *A Feminist Companion to Paul*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 42-73. She argues that in Rom 1:18-2:16 Paul diatribes against a Stoic philosopher, using a familiar trope of accusing Stoic philosophers of hypocrisy on the basis of a common perception that their sexual behaviour is often in contravention of their own interpretation of natural law. With this reading she suggests that Romans is actually placed in a triangular relation, with Paul excluding Stoicism in 1:18-2:16 before moving on to Judaism, and eventually positing the Christian gospel against both (71). She demonstrates with comprehensive reference to Stoic literature the extent to which 1:18-2:16 should be read in context of Stoicism, with which I obviously agree; however, in making Paul's direct object here Stoicism itself, she (with Stowers) presents a reading of Romans which, while fitting better with ancient pagan culture, fails to present a consistent purpose to the letter. Her Paul strays into dialogue with pagan philosophy for no apparent reason other than because it was an available mode of thought to Christians in Rome. This weakness is most present when considering the strong resonances between 1:18-32 and the Wisdom of Solomon, which she acknowledges (44). If the purpose of this section is to attack the vices hypocritically practiced by Stoic philosophers who claim to follow nature, and it is totally separate to Paul's dialogue with Torah observance, why is Paul making frequent reference to the Wisdom of Solomon (or its discursive setting), which is a Jewish philosophical assault on gentile pagans? My reading accounts for this. Swancutt also fails to make the link between the Stoic in Rom 1:18-2:16 and the Stoic in 7:7-25; a link made much clearer by her translation of 2:14-15 as '[the few wise gentiles] show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, *although* their inner conviction (συνείδησις) testifies and their conflicting thoughts bring accusations or even make defences among themselves on that day when according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus' (italics and parenthetical comments original). If 1:18-2:16 is against a Stoic, and 2:17-29 against a Jew, then the former figure is clearly the sort of person Paul opposes in 7:7-25 (and here Swancutt follows Stowers, who also sees 2:1-16 as opposing a gentile and 2:17-29 as opposing a Jew). If Swancutt's triangulation of Romans is correct, why does Paul

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this section I argue for this identification of the Teacher, in order to place Paul's theology in relation to the Stoic obsessionalism described in Chapter 4, in addition to Paul's relation to Corinthian perversion described in Chapter 3. This sets up the rest of the chapter, drawing out the implications of Paul's opposition to Stoic obsessionalism for a Lacanian reading of Paul.

This theory is not an overarching explanatory theory of Romans. It is merely a theory about an aspect of the character posited in the diatribe, and the way Paul argues against him. So, very much unlike Campbell's reading, I am not arguing specifically against any other overall reading (neither am I arguing for one, other than that whatever Paul's message in Romans is, it is posited against 1:18-32). Within 1:18-32 most interpreters see allusions to various types and sources of 'fall' narratives.[60] This is also not being contested here. Whatever the

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return to his caricature of a Stoic in 7:7-25, when the relation of Christianity to the Jewish law seems to be the predominant theme of the rest of the letter? This is a major fault in both Swancutt and Stowers' readings: in seeking to put Romans so predominantly in context of Hellenistic philosophy, they do go some way towards removing the possibility of anti-Semitic readings, but they perhaps go much further towards returning to the days of *religionsgeschichtliche*, reading Paul as moving from Judaism to Hellenism, and this might be even more problematic. As Campbell notes (*Deliverance of God*, 1022), Swancutt is also wrong to deny the similarities between her alleged two figures opposed in Rom 2. The reading suggested here, of Paul responding to Stoicism as part of his dialogue with a Hellenistic Jewish teacher who employs it, accounts for the extent of dialogue with Stoicism that Swancutt comprehensively reveals, without failing to account for the place of this dialogue within the argumentative structure of the rest of the letter.

[60] Dunn claims in *Romans 1-8*, 72, that 'It is sufficiently clear that Paul had in mind the figure of Adam and the narrative of the fall (Gen 3), as of course is true also of the Wisdom of Solomon (2:23-24).' Dunn notes, again on 72, that his reason for thinking the passage alludes to Genesis is that it is impossible that a Jew could be talking about the fall to sin and about looking at creation without Gen 1-3 in mind. (Most commentators do not accept Dunn's thesis that the Adamic fall is a strong subtext of Romans.) Another potential 'fall' narrative being alluded to is retold in Wisdom of Solomon 10-11 and 16:5-6, where Israel's time wandering in the wilderness is read as

inspiration of the narrative of the condemnation, what is being argued here is that the logical justification for this condemnation is built upon Stoic logic, much more than on biblical argument. Since the two are not exclusive, and, as will be seen, it was perfectly normal to fuse them together (and this tendency is what Paul critiques), there is not a binary position to argue. Nonetheless, it remains the case that the bulk of the argumentation Paul presents falls upon Stoic concepts, and that Paul opposes the figure he stereotypes for this very reason: though *Torah* observance is what he defends, the Stoic form of his argument is part of his flaw.

One last clarification: 'Stoicism' is also not as clearly defined a category as one might like it to be. Epictetus is the most often cited near-contemporary source for Stoicism when researching Paul, but he considered himself both Stoic and Cynic; and since Stoicism was the most popular of the philosophical schools, its language appears in authors who might not necessarily adhere to it entirely.[61]

full of rebelliousness and sinfulness (Wright, 'Romans,' 429). Wright also states as fact that Paul draws from the Wisdom of Solomon.   In the case of both of these proposed fall narratives, they come as side-effects of the importation of the Wisdom of Solomon, rather than as specific points Paul intended, and so do not affect the reading presented here. Of course, as Stowers points out in *Rereading of Romans* 97-100, there is also a long history of fall narratives in Hellenistic literature, frequently employed by philosophers as examples of what life was like before humans ceased to live according to nature. There are also other Jewish fall narratives (such as that contained in 1 Enoch) that one could point to as subtexts for Rom 1:18-32, but none that can be argued so easily as the possibilities above, and also none that would actually undermine the proposed reading. Likewise, Alec Lucas finds the section 1:18-2:11 to be evoking the figure of the idol of the golden calf created by the Israelites while Moses was on Mt Sinai (as recounted in Psalm 106, or 105 LXX). Alec J. Lucas, *Evocations of the Calf? Romans 1:18-32 and the Substructure of Psalm 106 (105)* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015). This strikes against the majority view that 1:18-32 is directed against gentile idolatry, but requires Paul to be implying an allusion so subtly that it can hardly be regarded as a central theme of the section.

[61] As can be seen in the translated passage from Epictetus in Appendix B, Epictetus uses the term 'the Cynic' for his concept of the ideal philosopher, and draws from Diogenes the Cynic alongside

Many of the patterns in Stoic thought, such as self-mastery and ethics grounded in a notion of *physis*, can also be seen as characteristics of wider Hellenistic thought. The usual approach of scholars attempting to define Stoicism is to clarify which ancient thinkers they group under this malleable designation.[62] This is where the clarifications of the previous chapter are helpful: while Stoicism was the most prevalent philosophical school and the one with most influence on wider culture, one distinguishing mark of it is the *obsessional* form of its self-mastery and *physis*-based ethics. Paul's stereotyping of not just Stoicism but specifically the perceived obsessionalism of his opponent marks him out as the same sort of character as other Stoic obsessionals. So, why should the fictive or real object of diatribe in Romans be characterised as Stoic?

Much of what is extant of Paul's writings is taken up with opposing those who fought against his inclusion of gentiles in the Church. The basic connection between Paul's argumentative context, in defence of gentile inclusion in the Church, and Stoicism, is that in Paul's time it was common for academic Jews to defend the law (and Jewish proselytisation), by connecting it to the Stoic master signifier *physis*.[63] For example, Philo claimed that he had 'studied philosophy in

his Stoic sources and Socrates; yet, despite this, his philosophical system is Stoic enough that A. A. Long insists that those who pay close attention to Epictetus will rightly identify him 'solely and completely with the Socratic-Stoic tradition.' A. A. Long, *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 98.

[62] For example, Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism*, 21.

[63] Some examples are sketched in this paragraph. See the author's wider study of the subject in the appendix. *Physis* functioned in a similar way in Cynic and Epicurean philosophies, as is outlined in the complete version of the study in the appendix; and, as seen in the case of Epictetus, the lines between these philosophical schools were not clear-cut. One of the benefits of the Lacanian approach being taken here is that while all of these schools treated *physis* as a master signifier, it was Stoicism whose relation to this signifier was particularly obsessional in structure,

a genuine spirit,'[64] and effectively combines elements of Jewish and Stoic ethical systems: 'The law corresponds to the world and the world to the law, and… a man who is obedient to the law, being by so doing, a citizen of the world, arranges his actions with reference to the intention of nature, in harmony with which the whole universe is regulated.'[65] Likewise, the author of 4 Maccabees appropriates *physis* in a typically Stoic way: in 5:8-9 we are told that it is not wrong to eat meat that nature has provided for us, and which is not shameful to eat; we then find out in 5:25 that 'the law is divine', and the Creator has shown us sympathy by 'imposing a law that is in accordance with nature.' The author of the Wisdom of Solomon spends most of chapters 12-15 mocking all who do not believe in God for not having seen evidence of him in nature, including the line 'all beings who are ignorant of God are by nature [φύσει] foolish' (13:1). The Wisdom of Solomon, and in particular cps. 11-15, is so similar to Rom 1:18-32 (including in its Stoic tone) that most commentators see either it or the tradition from which it stems as

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and it is this obsessional structure that will also be seen in the way Paul presents the Teacher. However, made without Lacan, the point that the Teacher was connected primarily to Stoicism rather than the other schools still stands, because the connections made between the theologians mentioned in this paragraph and philosophy are specifically to Stoicism. The language that the Teacher employs, of mentally exhausting self-control based on reasoning from nature, sounds much more Stoic than Cynic or Epicurean, even considering the blurred lines between the schools.

[64] Philo, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. by C. D. Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 682 (from *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* 1.3). More specifically, Philo is here describing the teachings of a Pythogorean sect with which he agrees, but the fact that he has studied philosophy closely is borne out across all of his works, and demonstrated by his agreement here with the belief common to most contemporary philosophies, that careful philosophical thought is the way towards a happy life.

[65] Philo, *The Works of Philo*, 3 (from *De Opificio Mundi* 1.3).

the primary source from which Paul adapts the section.[66]   Given all of this

evidence, both of the following statements are fully plausible: either (1) the real

figure whom Paul opposed in Rome was a Roman (Messianic?) Jewish theologian

who used Stoic logic to defend the universal requirement of *Torah* observance or

(2) in setting up a fictive opponent in the diatribe, Paul incorporated Stoic

philosophical defence of law observance because it was a common motif in the

discourse (perhaps particularly when he has in mind that he is writing to a church

in Rome).[67]   However, at this point it is still possible to argue that Paul's opponent

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[66] Brendan Byrne summarises the similarities concisely: 'Both works (Romans and Wisdom) assume that human beings can attain to knowledge of God the Creator through the contemplation of the created world (Wis 13:1-5; Rom 1:20-21). Both find human failure to do so inexcusable (Wis 13:6-9; Rom 1:21d)… Both see a link between lapse into idolatry and immoral behavior (Wis 14:12-14, 27; Rom 1:24-31); both refer to "unnatural" sexual behavior in this connection (Wis 14:26; Rom 1:26-27). Both feature catalogues of vices (Wis 14:23-27; Rom 1:29-31), seen as liable to divine retribution (Wis 14:30 [cf.12:27]; Rom 1:32). Both mention and condemn complacency in wrongdoing as well as the wrongdoing itself (Wis 14:22; Rom 1:32). Both believe that sin has resulted in a "darkening" of the human mind (Wis 11:15; Rom 1:21).' Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007 [1996]), 64-65. Peter Stuhlmacher, though believing that the basis of Paul's message in 1:18-32 is his missionary preaching, states that 'in terms of content, Paul follows closely the way of thinking found in the (Hellenistic) Jewish wisdom tradition, as it is represented, for example, in the Wisdom of Solomon.' Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. by Scott J. Hafemann (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 34. As noted in footnote 60 above, James Dunn comments extensively on the similarities between Rom 1:18-32 and the Wisdom of Solomon, and N. T. Wright is confident that Paul actually used the latter as a source. Campbell cites several more people who have outlined this intertextual link in *Deliverance of God*, 1027, n. 63, then gives eight of his own observations of similarities that are 'too precise and/or numerous to be coincidental' on 360-362. The fact that in Romans Paul 'seems to undermine the theological program of the Wisdom of Solomon far more than he leans on it,' which Campbell calls 'orthopractic Judaism,' is the fourth of the 'textual overdeterminations' in 1:18-3:20 that Campbell lists (360-362, also see above).

[67] Note that for my specific purposes in this particular Lacanian reading of Paul it is only necessary to argue that the above is 'plausible.' For Campbell's argument it is not just plausible

is characterised as Jewish and philosophical in his arguments, but not necessarily Stoic (for, as stated, all Hellenistic philosophical schools gave *physis* a central place in their systems, in one way or another). So, having established that it is plausible that Paul knew or presumed a real or fictive opponent in Rome to argue using Stoic philosophical concepts, what evidence is there in the text that this actually was the case, and that Paul characterises his opponent specifically as Stoic?

Firstly, Stoic writers frequently referred to Stoic philosophers in a special, elevated way, usually as σοφοί (*sophoi*, 'wise men' or sages), and to those who are not sages in some other way, usually as fools.[68]   In 1 Corinthians Paul intentionally posits Christians within the latter category, professing them not to be wise but foolish, constantly referring to Christians, including himself, as fools (μωροί).[69]   In Romans Paul continues this, acknowledging in Rom 1:14 that he is a debtor both to the wise and to the foolish.[70]   However, in the voice of the

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but *crucial* that Paul faces a Jewish Christian opponent. This is what allows him to go beyond the New Perspective and see Paul's argument in Romans as a particular argument in which Paul was engaged in a contingent situation – rather than as a foundational juxtaposition of Christianity against Judaism. But for this study I am not really dealing with the question of Paul's relation to Judaism, be it foundational or contingent to his thought.

[68] John Sellars, *Stoicism* (London: Routledge, 2006), 36-41. Sellars mentions that Cicero, in *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, has a section devoted to the claim that 'every non-sage is mad.' He also provides the helpful clarification that there was a third category employed, those who are 'making progress:' philosophers who love wisdom but are not themselves yet wise.

[69] 1 Cor 1:17-4:21, specifically 1:18-25, 27, 3:18-19 and 4:10. 1 Cor 2 is a speech against wisdom and rhetoric, which sounds as though it was written against a Stoic sage. Paul's thoughts on the matter are perhaps summed up best in 3:18-19, where he says 'If anyone among you thinks himself to be a sage, let him become a fool, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.'

[70] This point is complex, due to both the wide semantic range of ὀφειλέτης (in what sense does Paul owe something to both Greeks and Barbarians, both the wise and foolish?), and the argument

Teacher he claims that all those who fail to learn about the things of God from nature (1:20) have had their logic confused and their 'stupid hearts darkened,' claiming to be sages but made fools (1:22). The Teacher again calls them foolish with the word ἀσύνετος, in 1:31. This is all quite opposed to Paul's proud claim to have a debt to fools in 1:14. Afterwards, Paul, true to his habitual refusal to side with those who see themselves as greater than a fool, attacks the Teacher's hypocrisy in 2:20-21, saying 'An instructor of fools and teacher of babes… will you not teach yourself?'[71] This use of language is a strong defence of Campbell's reading: Paul first proudly claims to owe something both to the wise and the foolish, then has the Teacher lambast his opponents for their foolishness, and then retorts that the Teacher teaches fools but does not teach himself. This is not only additional evidence that 1:18-32 only makes sense when read in opposition to

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by Runar Thorsteinsson, in 'Paul's Missionary Duty Towards Gentiles in Rome: A Note on the Punctuation and Syntax of Rom 1.13-15,' *New Testament Studies*, 48 (2002), 531-547, that a full stop should be placed before the noun, making the last two words of 1:14 the beginning of the sentence of 1:15. However, in any possible reading the point stands. If one takes ὀφειλέτης in the sense of Paul owing a debt to the wise and foolish, then this can be read as Paul acknowledging that he borrows ideas and rhetorical style from both those who consider themselves wise, and those they might consider foolish. If it means Paul has an obligation to preach to them (the most common reading), then Paul is reinforcing that his obligation is not just to wise philosophers but to all, and no less to the foolish. If Thorsteinsson's reading is upheld, then Paul is prefacing his repost to the Teacher with the claim that he has had success both with Greeks and barbarians (this opposes the Teacher's defence of his gospel with specifically Greek logic), and both the wise and the foolish (this opposes the Teacher's insistence, in 1:18-32, that salvation is for the wise; a notion Paul consistently opposes).

[71] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 101, notes that typifying one's opponent as foolish was usual for the diatribal style; but Paul goes further, introducing the theme of the wise against the foolish as early as 1:14, and not only caricaturing his opponent as foolish, but specifically caricaturing him as one who presents himself as wise, lampoons those who claim to be wise but are foolish, and is foolish.

what precedes and follows it, but is also an example of Paul positing and opposing the Teacher as one who sounds like a Stoic.

Secondly, the clearest argument for reading 1:18-32 as intentionally Stoic is the form of its logic. As outlined in the previous chapter, Stoicism treats *physis* as its central explanatory mechanism, as a master signifier that determines the meaning of other signifiers in a signifying chain. Its relation to this master signifier is obsessional in form, transubstantiating desire as demand by placing upon *physis* the expectation that it will regulate all of life, and submitting entirely to whatever it is determined to be dictating. This level of psychoanalytic demand is parallel to an extreme level of argumentative demand placed upon it, with *physis* as the ultimate object of all ethical appeals. As stated, due to the influence of Hellenistic philosophy on Jewish thought, *physis* was also being used in Paul's time to defend *Torah* observance, which could be read not as a specific allusion to Stoicism but merely as the way such arguments generally went. However, though this is the argument Paul caricatures in his opening *prosōpopoiia*, he caricatures it to such an extent that the Teacher's argument is almost *exclusively* Stoic in form, mimicking the extreme demand placed on *physis* and the obsessional structure it elicits, and only *minimally* Jewish in form, perhaps containing allusions to Gen 1-3 but not necessarily.[72] So this passage is not saying that gentile pagans should

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[72] The extent to which Rom 1:18-32 contains an *exclusively* Stoic argument is one of the main things that separates it out from the only other place where Paul definitely uses *physis* positively, and indeed in a Stoic way, in 1 Cor 11:14. While the Teacher advances an extended argument for why *physis*, and not Christ, is the foundation of ethics, Paul in 1 Cor 11:14 only gets around to *physis* eventually, as an additional minor argument in a section that begins by stating that Christ is the head of the Church. However, in order to further allay any concerns that 1 Cor 11:14 is the spanner in the works of my argument, I should perhaps say a bit more. Firstly, within the wider reading of Paul in this study, I have already outlined 1 Corinthians as bearer of a knee-jerk

have known God's law from the *Torah*, which happens to be aligned with *physis* (the more common Jewish academic argument described above), but, rather, that 'the invisible things of God have been understood and clearly known through the created things from the creation of the world' (v. 20). Indeed, the Teacher has just said that what can be known about God has been made clear to them, and he explains that it is clear in creation/nature, without linking this to the *Torah*.

Upon nature the Teacher places an extreme burden of thought and rationalisation, which he sees as universally required of the subject: 'the *knowledge* of God is *known* among them. For God revealed it to them. For the invisible things of God *have been understood* and *clearly known* from the creation of the world… Despite *knowing* God [they] became *perverted in their reasoning* and their *stupid* heart was darkened.'[73] It is as a result of failing in the attempt to master the real through thought (one of the definitions of the obsessional), which Stoics do through striving for correct knowledge of *physis*, that the people described by the Teacher are given over to the passions, exactly as the Stoics say

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neurotic reaction, so it would be perfectly consistent to read 1 Cor 11:2-16 as part of this. Secondly, my argument is that *in Romans* Paul caricatures his opponent as *overly* Stoic; not that Paul was consistently anti-Stoic. There is far too much evidence to overlook that Paul was often positively influenced by Stoic ideas. Thirdly, it has been suggested both before Campbell and then again in a way influenced by Campbell that this section of 1 Corinthians does not represent Paul's own opinion; though, for the reasons just stated, it is not at all necessary that one agree with that judgment for the present reading to succeed. See Jerome Murphy O'Connor, 'The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16?,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 95.4 (Dec., 1976), 615-621 and Lucy Peppiatt, *Women and Worship at Corinth: Paul's Rhetorical Argument in 1 Corinthians* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015).

[73] The italicised words and phrases here are γνωστὸν, φανερόν, νοούμενα, καθορᾶται γνόντες, ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς and ἀσύνετος.

happens when one fails to learn from nature.[74] So, not only is the cause of the

failure insufficient intellectual oblativity to *physis* (failure to be an obsessional

Stoic), but the result of the failure is Stoic as well: one is punished *by* being given

over to the passions, which is punishment in itself, because the sage learns from

nature to avoid the passions. Stoicism from its earliest times taught that to live

according to nature, and to discern right action from nature, *is* human nature.[75] It

is this view of human nature, of all humans as rational beings programmed to

learn about God and ethics from nature, which lies at the core of the Teacher's

condemnations in 1:18-32; the expectation that we should learn from Christ is not

present in the section, and any implied references to narratives or commands in

the *Torah* are secondary to this clear core logic. So all of the core arguments in

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[74] Jewett traces this formulation in Rom 1:24 to Wis Sol 11:16, 'by what things a man sins, by these is he punished,' in *Romans*, 167. He then builds a case that this verse is not mirroring Stoic logic because Paul uses the plural of ἐπιθυμία, which I have translated throughout as 'excessive desire,' whereas a Stoic would see desire itself (in the singular) as the root of evil. As I argued in Chapter 3, both the Stoics and Paul, particularly when talking about sex, did make room for a good desire that becomes evil when in excess, and this excessive desire is what Paul means by ἐπιθυμία – whether in the single, or here, in the plural, as 'desires of the heart.' It is thus perfectly consistent with the Pauline caricature of Stoicism I am here suggesting that he portrays the Teacher, based on Wis Sol, as overly Stoic in his thought because he sees ἐπιθυμία (or the plural, ἐπιθυμίαις) as punishment. (In 1 Corinthians, where Paul borrows slightly from Stoicism and notions of self-mastery for his knee-jerk neurotic defence of law, and is not in a diatribe against Stoicism, sees ἐπιθυμία as to be avoided; but he certainly does not go into the more specifically Stoic territory of the Teacher here and Wis Sol, where ἐπιθυμία is presented as evil and unnatural in itself.

[75] Malcolm Schofield, 'Stoic Ethics,' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brad Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 239-246. Schofield gives examples from many different Stoics, including both early and late Stoics, to show that they believed humans to be programmed to follow nature, so that all those who do not seek harmony with nature are denying their own rational instinct. This is essentially what the Teacher is posited as suggesting pagans are guilty of.

this section operate together in a specifically Stoic fashion: extreme demand is placed upon *physis*, to which one should submit intellectually with great mental effort, which is presumed as the natural route for a human, or risk being given over to unnatural passions.

Thirdly, as noted above, Campbell points out a temporal problem with 1:18-32: it announces God's wrath as something being revealed in the present, in direct contradiction to Paul's response to it in 2:1-5, where judgment is located in a future event. This is indeed a clear marker that this section is *prosōpopoiia*; not just because of the temporal issues, but also because if Paul presumes that the Christians in Rome will recognise the God he posits, a God whose kindness rather than wrath leads to repentance (2:5), then it is totally legitimate to see the beginning of 1:18 ('God's wrath is being revealed') as something that would have been heard as a change in voice, particularly since it immediately follows the claim that God's righteousness is what is being revealed in the present, through faithfulness (1:17).[76] However, something Campbell does not mention is just why it might be that the Teacher sees judgment as a thing of the present. Although there are certainly streams in first century Jewish thought that see divine judgment in present actions,[77] the structure of the argument here comes from Stoicism, and what identifies this as primarily Stoic rather than Jewish is temporality: there is no

[76] As C. K. Barrett notes, there is no other place in the authentic Pauline corpus in which the word 'wrath' takes the genitive 'of God', nor is there anywhere where God is the subject of a verb for wrath (though he does note that the wrath of God appears in Col 3:6 and Eph 5:6, but these are both probably pseudepigraphal). C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: A&C Black, 1971 [1957]), 33.

[77] Jewett, *Romans*, 167-168. Since Jewett uses the Wisdom of Solomon as his primary evidence for this, it does not oppose the present argument, that it is precisely this stream, influenced by Stoicism, that Paul presents the Teacher as representing in an exaggeratedly Stoic way.

mention *at all* of future judgment, and only mention of passion and its consequences in the present. Paul may be stereotyping Stoic-Jewish theologians, but it is the Stoic side of the thought that is here emphasised. Robert Jewett's well-argued translation of 1:27 lends further weight to this argument, and also gives the section additional coherence: 'the males… were inflamed with their lust for one another, males who work up their shameful [member] in other males, and receive back for their deception the recompense that is tightness in themselves.'[78] Though it is difficult to see such a translation making it into church lectionaries, it fits ancient understandings of desire, gender and sexuality much better than traditional renderings, and also fits with the theme of punishment being in the present. Paul's stereotype of the Teacher's use of Stoic logic depicts him as one who posits divine judgment in a *temporally* and *causally* Stoic way: present, not eschatological, and as an inherent result of unnatural passion, not as a result of disobeying divine ordinance as known through Scripture.[79] The extent to which the Teacher's logic is no longer even distinctively Jewish assists my suggestion that the Teacher, as Paul is portraying him, is *exaggeratedly* dependent upon Stoic

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[78] Jewett, *Romans*, 163.

[79] Emma Wasserman seeks to add to this case, paralleling the use of the passions as a present punishment with Philo, *On Rewards and Punishments* 71-72, where he invokes the Stoic passions of pleasure, desire, sorrow and fear, notifies us that he is using them in specifically Stoic sense by describing them in terms of their temporality (defining desire as good in the future, as do the Stoics, noted in the previous chapter above), claiming that God punished Cain by removing even pleasure and desire. Wasserman compares this to how Paul has God punish humans by giving them over to their passions. However, Paul is using Stoicism much more than Philo here, since Philo clearly denotes Stoic concepts and then has God punish by *removing* desire. So Philo does not provide, as Wasserman argues, a parallel that reveals Paul to be a Stoic, but, rather, provides an example of the sort of figure Paul lampoons (a Stoic Jewish philosopher) being *even less* Stoic than Paul's exaggerated caricature. Wasserman, *Death of the Soul in Romans 7*, 126-128, citing Philo, *Works of Philo*, 670-671.

logic. If there was a teacher using Stoic-Jewish logic to try to convince the members of the church at Rome to follow the *Torah*, Paul is portraying him as being so Stoic that he fails even to arrive at biblical arguments.

Fourthly, Paul's arguments against the Teacher agree with the picture I have suggested: his counterarguments continue to imply that the Teacher's logic has gotten 'too Stoic.' As just stated, Stoic philosophy taught that to seek right action in *physis* is human nature. Since 1:18-32 seems to be mostly or entirely constructed on Stoic logic, it is fair to see this concept as the root of the assumption in 1:19-20 that *everyone* should see God in nature. This, then, also explains the sudden appearance on the stage of the so-called 'righteous gentile' in 2:14: the Stoic Jewish teacher has already suggested that all gentiles possess the ability to gain knowledge of God from nature, so Paul posits that this subverts what Stoic Jewish theologians are also claiming, that thus all should obey the *Torah*. He explains this, using Stoic terminology to subvert the Teacher's argument: 'When gentiles who do not have the law by nature [φύσει] do the things of the law, those without the law are a law to themselves. They demonstrate that the work of the law is written on their hearts, bearing witness to their conscience [συνείδησις]' (Rom 2:14-15a).[80] In the closing section of the

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[80] There is debate over whether φύσει is to be read with the phrase preceding it ('have the law by nature') or the phrase following it ('by nature do the things of the law'). While the former reading makes more sense with the similar phrase in 2:27, referring to circumcision as how the law is written onto the body in its nature, the latter reading makes more sense with the argument Paul is making in 2:12-16, particularly in response to 1:19-21; so the immediate context should probably be given more weight, giving us 'who by nature do the things of the law.' In either reading Paul is using the Teacher's Stoicism against him: either showing that Jewish privilege as marked in *physis* itself can be undone when one whose *physis* is uncircumcised does the law, or, with the latter reading, showing that since Stoic philosophy believes that all have the ability and inclination to

argument (2:26-29) Paul draws on the concepts of the 'inwardly' and 'outwardly,' one of the central themes of most of what Epictetus would write, using, like him, words from the root φαν-, to do with appearance. Jewett notes this parallel with Epictetus.[81] Käsemann, though trying to advance the theory that Paul's thought here is primarily eschatological, is forced to concede that 'Paul can use the Hellenistic tradition in which Epictetus, for example, asks concerning the true Stoic. Here the appearance, which depends on the evaluation of spectators, is set over against the inward and essential existence. According to the Stoics the latter rests in itself… and pays attention to harmony with God and the all.'[82]

In summary, it can be seen that Paul not only presents the Teacher as one who, like many other academic Jewish theologians, defends law-observance with Stoic logic; but further, Paul caricatures this aspect of his thought in order to use it against him. The Teacher's argument can be seen as Stoic because of the repetition of the theme of the wise versus the foolish (which Paul opposes here and elsewhere); argumentation based on an obsessional relation to the master signifier *physis*; a repeated emphasis on thought and reason as opposed to passion and the present consequences of passion, rather than divine judgment in the future. Paul then argues against the Teacher by pointing out that his Stoic logic should allow for righteousness through inborn natural rationality aside from the *Torah*, and that his Stoic logic should emphasise the inward, which Paul connects to spirituality, rather than external physicality (2:26-29). One more argument

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follow *physis* written into their own instinct, 'those who by [their] nature do the things of the law' are a law unto themselves.

[81] Jewett, *Romans*, 235.

[82] Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 74-75.

related to these can be added, from Stanley Stowers. He judges the theme of 1:18-32 to be that 'Those peoples who refuse to honor God and instead worship idols have lost the capacity for self-mastery.'[83] In 1:18-32, 'God punished the gentiles by allowing their passions and desires to become dominant, a loss of self-mastery.'[84] Though Stowers believes 1:18-32 to be in the voice of Paul, he also sees in it a theme of self-mastery, another theme of Stoic ethics (though one that was certainly known in Roman culture beyond Stoicism). This will return in Stowers' interpretation of 7:7-25, to which I now turn.

In Rom 7:7-25 the Teacher gives his dramatic concession speech, in a *prosōpopoiia* that sounds so much like an obsessional on the couch that it could easily be mistaken for a Woody Allen monologue. I have already discussed Stowers' reading of it, but reading 1:18-32 as an opening speech by a Stoic obsessional sheds new light on the Teacher's second, and final, sustained *prosōpopoiia*. In Stowers' view Origen is correct and it is a speech in the voice of a person whom Stoic philosophy would deem to be without self-control, an *akratēs*.[85] Paul's final assault on the Teacher is to present him conceding the argument, comically, acknowledging that his attempt to ground *Torah* observance in Stoic naturalism, and consciously exercise self-control in line with it, has failed. There are several points that link this passage to the figure debated with in 1:18-2:29 (and much of the rest of the letter, but the current study is limited to these two texts). There is an emphasis on the failure of both reason and knowledge to bring about right action, particularly in 7:14-23, where, despite

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[83] Stowers, *Rereading Romans*, 42-43.

[84] Ibid., 92.

[85] Ibid., 264-269.

knowing that the law is spiritual, the Teacher does not understand his own actions. He now knows that 'the good,' the object of his philosophical ethics, is not what dwells within him, but, rather, contrary to the post-conversion Christian anthropology espoused by Paul in Gal 2:19-20, what dwells within him is sin. He finds his will, so important in Stoic ethics, to be powerless. He speaks of the 'law of the mind,' but finds himself captive to a different law 'in his members.' This discordance between his actions and his intentions has led some commentators to link him to the character in Rom 2.[86] So here the Stoic judgmental figure admits his hypocrisy and resigns from the Stoic attempt at self-mastery through rationalisation. Having stated in 1:20 that gentile pagans who do not reason from *physis* are without excuse (ἀναπολογήτος), because he believes them to have been born with a natural instinct to reason the good from nature, and then ranted about their evil actions until he condemned them to death, and then been condemned by Paul as a judge who is without excuse (ἀναπολογήτος) because he is doing the same things (2:1-5), the Teacher now confesses 'that which I hate, I do' (7:15). The Teacher offers a benediction near the end of his speech (7:25), just as he did in 1:25, but this time it is addressed to Christ, whom he proclaims as Lord. Having confessed and proclaimed Jesus Christ as Lord, Paul then responds that there is now no condemnation for him (8:1). So Paul responds to the first

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[86] Theissen, in *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*, 240-243, argues that the figure Paul argues against in Rom 2 is Saul the Pharisee, with Paul revealing that as Saul he had a demonstrative pride in the law combined with an inability to recognise his own violations of the law, repressing memory of them. This links the figure of Rom 2 with the figure of Rom 7:7-25, whom Theissen also reads as Saul. Stowers reads 2:1-16 as a diatribe against a gentile confident of self-mastery without the Jewish law, containing *prosōpopoiia* (*Rereading of Romans*, 126-142), and 7:7-25 as a *prosōpopoiia* of a gentile attempting self-mastery through the Jewish law (273-284), thus linking them in the voice of a gentile attempting self-mastery.

prosōpopoiia by telling him that he has condemned himself in his hypocrisy (2:1), and the second *prosōpopoiia* by telling him that there is now no condemnation because he has confessed to his hypocrisy (and sworn Jesus as Lord, which will be to his benefit in 10:9).

In Paul's comic portrayal of the Teacher here, he highlights several obsessional symptoms, as outlined in Chapter 4. It is easy to detect high levels of anxiety, ambivalence, internal conflict, doubt, feelings of diminished freedom (he feels as though his ego is powerless), fear (sin has wrought death in him) and guilt. These can be added to the obsessional symptoms already discernable from his opening speech, of oblativity, preoccupation with thoughts, attempting to dominate experience through thought and making of his desire a prohibited desire. Lacan's last obsessional maxim on the table in Chapter 4 is that the obsessional suffers with 'a thought that burdens the soul.' This seems apt to describe the 'law of the mind,' at war with the greater law of sin, as the Teacher struggles under the obsessional's experience of 'the too-much-ness of *jouissance*.'

The theory of Stoic philosophy as structurally obsessional thus helps to unify the readings of Stowers and Campbell, which aids both of their interpretations. Stowers wants to read Paul as advocating Christ in the gentile's quest for self-mastery, but reads Rom 1:18-32 in the voice of Paul, despite it making absolutely no mention of Christ. If Romans is about self-mastery, and it opens with Paul declaring that self-mastery should be learned from nature, then there is a contradiction at the heart of the letter. Reading 1:18-32 in the voice of the Teacher allows Paul to be disagreeing with the Stoic route to self-mastery, but instead suggesting his own, should one read the rest of Romans that way. As for

Campbell, he opts out of taking a stance on *prosōpopoiia* in Rom 7 in his own work, presumably because it seems irrelevant to his central argument, about the presence of justification-theology in Paul's soteriology.[87] This would seem to leave Campbell with a problem he otherwise deplores: a passage in Paul whose presence his construal fails to justify (an 'overdetermination'). My reading solves this problem: Rom 7:7-25 is indeed another instance of *prosōpopoiia*, as Stowers claims, because once it is recognised that Paul is stereotyping the degree of Stoic logic involved in his opponent's argument, Rom 7 is easily read as the Teacher conceding the failure of his own Stoic arguments; and Paul stereotypes the Teacher in such a way as to mock the features of Stoic thought that are here deemed 'obsessional.'[88] So combining Campbell's and Stowers' readings posits a consistent opponent to Paul, with an opening argument and a closing concession speech; it explains Paul's many references to *physis* in Romans, much more than any of his other letters;[89] it explains why there are so many references to Stoicism in the commentaries on these passages and it neatly places Paul as one opposed to the place of *physis* as a master signifier. This then also places Paul as opposed to

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[87] Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 532-533.

[88] To be clear, the claim made here is not that the historical figure Paul opposed is someone Paul thought was obsessional. That would be anachronistic, and would presume, probably falsely, that Paul had actually personally met the person rather than just heard about him. Instead, the claim here is that, building on the thesis of the previous chapter that Stoicism as a popular philosophical movement was obsessional in its theoretical structure, the Teacher is thus presented as having an obsessional neurotic way of thinking, which, conveniently for my thesis, results in him also being presented with obsessional neurotic symptoms (perhaps, if psychoanalysis is correct, this is because the two are linked!).

[89] According to Alfred Schmoller, *Handkonkordanz zum griechischen Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1989), of the eighteen occurrences of φύσις and its cognate adjective and adverb, thirteen are in Pauline epistles (including one in Ephesians), and nine of those are in Romans.

the sublimation of *das Ding* through both a perverse relation to the law and an obsessional one.

Thus I disagree with Slavoj Žižek's reading of Romans 7 as a positive suggestion of hysteria as opposed to perversion, outlined at length in the introduction, above. I also disagree with Concetta Principe's suggestion that Paul's 'unplugging' from the law represents a psychotic structure.[90] However, Žižek is absolutely correct in his framing of part of the *question* of Romans: Romans, like 1 Corinthians, is addressed to perversion (which could be because of Paul's experiences with the Corinthians, but either way it is certainly the case in Romans).[91] While combating the Teacher's obsessional neurotic relation to the law, Paul frequently, and possibly in the form of interjections in the Teacher's voice, objects to his own arguments with various forms of the question 'Won't that lead to perversion?' In 3:8 Paul complains that some report him to say 'Let us do evil so that good may come.' In 6:1, Paul responds to his own argument (in the voice of the Teacher?), with the question 'What then shall we say? Should we continue in sin so that grace may increase?' Again, in 6:15: 'What then? Shall we sin, since we are not under the law?' Thus, in response to the perverse side of

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[90] Concetta V. Principe, *Secular Messiahs and the Return of Paul's "Real": A Lacanian Approach* (Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan, 2015), 83-111. It is remarkable how many interpretations of Rom 7:7-25 are possible, with theologians having cited it both as examples of what we are saved from and what we are saved to, and psychoanalytic interpretations having seen it as positive examples of hysteria (Žižek) or psychosis (Principe), or as a negative example of obsessionalism enslaved by a perverse law (the reading proposed here). Nineteen verses of one of Paul's letters somehow simultaneously contain both the plight and goal of human existence, and all four of the Lacanian clinical structures of the subject.

[91] Slavoj Žižek, 'Paul and the Truth Event,' in *Paul's New Moment: Continental Philosophy and the Future of Christian Theology*, eds. John Milbank, Slavoj Žižek and Creston Davis (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 94-97.

the paradox, Žižek puts the Pauline question as: 'How can I break out of this vicious cycle of the law and desire, of the prohibition and its transgression, within which I can assert my living passions only in the guise of their opposite, as a morbid death drive?'[92] But Paul is also writing against the obsessional side of the paradox as it was known in the first century: 'How can I break out of the vicious cycle of desire and law, of transgression and the need for more prohibition, so that I can feel alive without thinking about the law constantly?' How can the subject relate to *das Ding* in such a way that does not feel stuck in a perverse, obsessional or any other paradox? The Teacher is not only seeking freedom from the power of the law to generate the enjoyment of transgression (perversion), but also from the enjoyment of law itself (obsessionalism).

I will look at the solution Paul poses, his interpretation of the Christian subject, in the next chapter. Putting that to the side for now, I am now also positioned to ask: how does Paul respond to the paradox of *jouissance* in Romans? He is positioning his argument in response to both sides of the paradox, but what are his attitudes towards these sides of the paradox in Romans, and what can be learned from them?

4. Reading Romans 1-2 and 7: St Paul as Anti-Obsessional

Throughout Romans Paul is engaged in a response to the suggestion of an obsessional approach to the law, while attempting to combat the alternative he is

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[92] Žižek, 'Paul and the Truth Event,' 97.

now accustomed to facing, a perverse approach to the law. This does not detract from Paul's main purpose (whatever that is); he caricatures Stoic obsessionalism, and in doing so expresses an attitude towards it, while making other points. It is worth noting, though, that Paul is not arguing against obsessionalism itself. That is not his point in Romans, and it would be senseless to argue 'against' a clinical structure. Instead, Paul is arguing against one who defends law observance with Stoic thought by demonstrating that the life aimed at law-abidance-perfected-through-thought is one that leads to spirals of obsessional symptoms. He caricatures Stoic obsessionalism as a way of demonstrating a failure in the Teacher's approach.

I sketched some of how Paul caricatures the Teacher above, but this deserves more attention. It is not just the case that the Teacher is obsessional and so has certain symptoms, but, rather, Paul is opposing the Teacher's advocacy of law-observance, and in so doing presents the Teacher as one exaggeratedly plagued by the symptoms of his (obsessional) Stoic approach to the law. (So Paul is not opposing law-observance as something 'Jewish and thus obsessional,' which is the very anti-Semitic theory to which the New Perspectives object, but is opposing law-observance, for reasons not discussed in the present chapter, and doing so by caricaturing *Stoic* obsessionalism.) Of course, we know nothing about the historical 'Teacher,' if there was one, so it is entirely possible that he was known as an extremely neurotic individual and Paul presents him as such. This would not work against my point (it would just mean that Paul is accurately presenting the obsessional character of the Stoic system he opposes); but the character presented in Rom 7:7-25 is so exaggerated in his obsessive and

emotional deliberation that it appears as caricature. Some of the affects listed in the previous chapter that appear here are feelings of internal conflict, feelings of diminished freedom, anxiety, fear and guilt. The language used to express all of these feelings is extreme: the Teacher talks about how even the good becomes a vessel of sin and death (13), not understanding his own actions (14), and, again and again throughout the section, describes not being able to do what he wants to do or stop himself from doing what he does not want to do. He repeats this obsessively, until he refers to a law at work in his members (23), and refers to himself as miserable (24). He ends his obsessive monologue with 'Who will rescue me from this body of death!' (25), which is itself an obsessional symptom (in Lacan's earlier work he linked obsessionalism more with one's unconscious relation to death, as can be seen in the table of maxims in the previous chapter).[93] All of this obsessional affectivity proceeds out of his argument with Paul, beginning in verse 7 with the initial realisation that he would not have known what sin was without the law prohibiting it. As explained from the beginning of my look at the paradox of *jouissance* in Chapter 2, above, the very core of the obsessional side of the paradox is the conundrum that attempting to follow the law somehow breeds the desire to transgress it. In other words, through the Teacher Paul demonstrates that, while his freedom from the law is something that comes from an unexpected encounter with Christ, he now sees that the law has a relationship to *jouissance* that, when approached through a method of attempting

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[93] Also, in *S3*, 179-180, he briefly discusses how the subject's existence is something that the signifier will never be able to explain, and the question of death is how the obsessional formulates a question that helps cope with this form of alienation.

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to *think* one's way into obedience, results in a spiral of the emotions symptomatic to obsessionalism.

In the Teacher's closing *prosōpopoiia* Paul connects these affective symptoms to those aspects of obsessionalism that have to do with thought: in summary, the attempt to dominate and master one's experiences through thought. Just as 1:18-32 demonstrates the centrality of this approach to the Teacher's Stoic argument for law-observance, Paul makes this a feature of the Teacher's downfall, which means that part of Paul's critique of the Teacher is a critique of Stoic obsessionalism itself, not just law-observance. From the start of the Teacher's closing speech he connects the failure of his approach to the law with a failure of its intellectualism, when he says that he would not have *known* sin without the law, and would not have *known* excessive desire without the law's prohibition of it (7:7). This means his complaint is that the law itself acts to introduce sin to the rational process he seeks to employ in defence of the law against sin. In 7:14-23 the dense proliferation of words to do with knowing mirrors the same phenomenon in the Teacher's opening speech: he knows the law is spiritual; he does not understand his own actions; he agrees that the law is good; he knows that nothing good dwells in him and the law of his mind is not strong enough to win against the law of his members. Added to this is the problem of feelings of diminished freedom. The bulk of 7:13-23 is an obsessive repetition of the complaint that he does not feel that his ego has freedom over the strength of his passions. He expresses this as a conflict between what he wills (θέλειν) and what he does (ποιεῖν and πράσσειν), using the same verbs that take the object 'these-sorts-of-things' in the argument about the Teacher condemning but practicing

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those who do the actions described in 1:28-32. Thus, another part of Paul's critique of attempting to defend law-observance through Stoic obsessionalism is that attempting to solve one's problems and master one's passions through thought is tied into the conflict and feelings of impotency that this very approach creates, since this whole section begins with the problem that the law itself introduces sin into knowledge. So Paul sees the obsessional symptoms of ambivalence and powerlessness as the law's effect on the subject who approaches it obsessionally, through belief in the power of thought. To put it in terms more connected with Alain Badiou's philosophy, Paul characterises the Stoic Teacher as one who *believes that the Event is thought itself*, rather than as one for whom *the Event has changed thought itself*.

There is another way that Paul opposes the Teacher's obsessionalism, though he puts it more clearly in 1 Corinthians. As I argued above, part of Paul's caricature of the Teacher is as one who thinks of himself as a sage and those who do not intellectually choose to learn from and obey *physis* (and the law) as fools. Connected to this, it has also been noted that Romans 1:18-32 is curiously elaborate in style: it employs much more rhyming and alliteration than one generally finds in Paul's letters,[94] using rhetorical speech to try to argue sinners into employing their minds against these vices (which are grouped into fours, in

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[94] Virtually every commentator makes this simple observation, usually focusing on 1:29-32; see Jewett, *Romans*, 189. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 54, notes the 'neat wordplays,' rhyming and alliteration. He also quotes Matthew Black, *Romans*, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1973), 50, who notes that 1:28-32 reads like the spoken part of a diatribe, and resembles 'the section in Attic comedy known to the ancient rhetoricians as the *pnigos*, a long passage to be spoken in a single breath.' This all aids the claim that Paul is specifically mimicking the known style of a Stoic preacher.

keeping with Stoic vice lists).[95] Paul accuses the Teacher of seeing himself as an instructor of children and a teacher of babes, having the embodiment of knowledge and truth in the law (2:20). However, in Romans Paul does not specifically launch an attack on the Teacher's use of rhetoric for persuasion, other than in what he implies in the way he presents him.

So one perhaps senses this attack in the way he caricatures the Teacher, but the substance of this position of Paul's is found in 1 Corinthians. Here there is an extended discourse against Greek wisdom and wise speech (cps. 1-3). Paul says that using wise speech (σοφία λόγου) would 'empty' the cross of Christ (1:17), then quotes Isaiah 29:14 where God says he will 'destroy the wisdom of the wise,' and adds that God has made foolish the wisdom of the world – using the same words here, to condemn those who think themselves wise, as the Teacher uses in 1:22 to condemn gentile pagans. The argument goes on to the end of 3:23 and has too many components to be summarised here – Paul does even get to a positive statement about speaking the right sort of wisdom to the right people (2:6). Two sentences in particular make an interesting point about what Paul opposes to 'wise speech:' 'Jews ask for signs and Greeks seek wisdom but we proclaim Christ crucified, a scandal to Jews and foolishness to Greeks' (1:22-23) and 'I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified' (2:2). Alain Badiou makes much of the former, as testament to the

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[95] Jewett, *Romans*, 183-184. 'The literary model for Paul's catalogue is from Greco-Roman ethics, particularly in its Stoic form… Emulating the Greek tradition of four cardinal vices that stand as the opposites of the cardinal virtues, paralleled by the four passions in Stoicism…'

resurrection of Christ as 'non-being,'[96] but a Lacanian reading perhaps reveals more. Paul here, and in this section, refers to the foolishness, the scandal of worshipping someone who was crucified – even though he was resurrected. The foolishness here is the thought that someone who was crucified could possibly be someone worth worshipping; but the reason for why this person is worth worshipping is something that cannot be communicated through signs or wisdom, and would be 'emptied' (of its power?) if one attempted to prove it with persuasive rhetoric. In Lacanian terms, Paul preaches, but the core of his message is not found in the signifier – it cannot be proven through appeal to the symbolic alone. Badiou is also empirically wrong in his reading of the text, since what confounds logic and language here is not the claim of resurrection, but the crucifixion of Christ. I will return in the next chapter to the nature of the thing Paul defends. The point here is that part of the folly of the Teacher is that his entire approach takes place in the domain of the symbolic: he is presented as one who wants to use the intentional control of speech itself, through the wise speech of his rhetorical argument, in order to convince people of his rational approach to the mastery of desire. The Teacher's defence of the *Torah* through *physis* is carried out via rhetoric; but just as one cannot reach the end of psychoanalysis through thinking about one's speech, so here Paul portrays the attempt to master the real through thinking about the symbolic as part of a doomed approach.

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[96] Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. by Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003 [1997]), 45-54.

5. Reading Romans 1-2 and 7: St Paul as Anti-*Physis*

This brings me from Paul's arguments against obsessional approaches to the law to Paul and Lacan's arguments against *physis*, for when Lacan refers to the subject of psychoanalysis as *antiphysis*, it is this very attempt to master the real through thinking about the symbolic against which he speaks.

At the beginning *Seminar XVI*, written on the board behind him were the words 'The essence of psychoanalysis is a discourse without words.'[97] Following the events of the students' revolt of 1968 (in which Parisian students reacted against the perceived intellectualism of structuralism with the declaration that 'structures do not march in the streets,' and Lacan responded with 'you are looking for a new master, and you will find one'),[98] Lacan was now responding to the event formally, by examining the relationship between psychoanalysis and knowledge, the Other.[99] Naturally, the discussion begins with mustard pots.[100] Mustard pots had been, in *Seminar VII*, his illustration of the way language is

[97] Jean-Michel Rabaté, 'Lacan's Turn to Freud,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan*, ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1. Rabaté was at the lecture and records that this was on the board. Lacan also refers to having done this at the beginning of his next seminar, in *S17*, 12.

[98] See Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. Barbara Bray (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1997 [1993]), 332-348, specifically 341-342.

[99] The seminar is summarised in Marcelle Marini, *Jacques Lacan: The French Context*, trans. by Anne Tomiche (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992 [1986]), 215-217. Note from the previous chapter, above, that 'knowledge' is another name for the Other, the place where there is pure knowledge without yet a signifier to structure it.

[100] *S16*, 13.11.1968, 5-6. According to Henry Krutzen's index to Lacan's seminar, the mustard pot makes its way into at least six of Lacan's seminars (7, 10, 12, 13, 16 and 21). Henry Krutzen, *Jacques Lacan Séminaire 1952-1980 : Index referential* (unofficial 1995 manuscript, later published by Paris: Economica, 2009), 419.

wrapped around a void, *das Ding*.[101] Does the truth speak through language,

through knowledge? If the truth of human existence is *das Ding*, and our

fantasies about reality are sublimations of it, then knowledge and language are the

mustard pot around *das Ding*, gaining form once the signifier relates them to the

former contents, which may once have been inside, but are now void. The

mustard pot is called a mustard pot from the moment it is created, whether or not

there is any mustard contained within – its form is matter, but its signifier is the

effect of the void it creates. Likewise, the essence of psychoanalysis is a

discourse without words, because, while the human being is speech and so is

psychoanalysis, its goal is to bring about realisation of the pure structure of

human existence, as it exists without the signifier. The form of psychoanalysis is

entirely verbal, but its essence is to bring about realisation of that which is not

verbal; and, for Lacanian psychoanalysis, one of its primary tools is anti-verbal,

the sudden end of the session. Another of its tools is the slip of the tongue, in

which truth makes a sudden appearance in language; the truth, hiding in plain

sight in what is spoken, speaks. Thus in the next lecture of *Seminar XVI*, Lacan

refers to the staged 'speaking out' (*prise de parole*) of May '68 as an occasion

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[101] *S7*, 148-150. Lacan acknowledges that he adopts this image from Martin Heidegger's use of
the vase/jug in his essay 'The Thing,' in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter
(New York: HarperCollins, 2001 [1971]), 161-184. Mustard pots also signify Lacan's own place
as a signifier absented from the historical family business of vinegar and mustard sales
(Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, 3-7). Lacan and his two siblings were the first generation not to
work for the family firm, Dessaux Fils, which sold vinegars and mustards, etc. Their grandfather,
Emile Lacan, had married the sister of the manager Ludovic Dessaux (grandson of the founder,
Charles-Prosper Dessaux), so it was the Dessaux line that ran the firm and the Lacan line that
worked for it; until Jacques Lacan and his brother and sister excepted themselves from it, the void
in the mustard-pot tradition.

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where the truth was written on the walls without actually 'taking' anything,[102] which Jean-Michel Rabaté rightly connects to Lacan's frequent uses of *prosōpopoiia*, in which he usually describes psychoanalysis as an event in which 'The Truth has said: I speak.'[103] How does the Truth speak? Lacan has the truth, in *prosōpopoiia*, tell us: 'I slip in not only via falsehood, but through a crack too narrow to be found at feigning's weakest point and through the dream's inaccessible cloud, through the groundless fascination with mediocrity and the seductive impasse of absurdity.'[104]

It is for this reason that psychoanalysis aims to be a discourse without words: not based on formulating a knowledge of chemical deterministic factors, but speaking that which will never fully exist in words, only occasionally appearing as *prosōpopoiia*, mirror-reading itself into speech; even allowing the unconscious to speak through a *prosōpopoiia* into the voice of the Other through the analyst.[105] In his article 'The Direction of the Treatment and the Principle of its Power,' where Lacan frequently elaborates on obsessional neurosis in his main discussion of transference, he thus condemns behaviourism, because 'they had no

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[102] *S16*, 20.11.1968, 12-13.

[103] Rabaté, 'Lacan's Turn to Freud,' 3. *Écrits*, 340-342 (in 'The Freudian Thing, or the Meaning of the Return to Freud in Psychoanalysis'), Lacan's longest *prosōpopoiia*, where he has 'the Truth' speak in the mouth of Freud to Heidegger,

[104] *Écrits*, 342.

[105] My attempt at reading *prosōpopoiia* faces the danger of mirror-reading, but mirror-reading is exactly what psychoanalysis is: the analysand figures out what she want by discovering what her speech is saying the unconscious wants (analogous to discovering what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians by mirror-reading what his speech says the contents of the letter he received was saying), and, even more directly analogously, the transferential relationship in psychoanalysis is a mirror-reading of the unconscious through the analyst, transference making him the Other through *prosōpopoiia*.

other thoughts concerning our particular subject matter, which is *antiphusis*.'[106]

Lacan parallels this psychology-by-*physis*, the investigation of the subject as produce of nature, with the obsessional's oblativity, seeking his truth in the belief of the absoluteness of the Other without realising that it is the lack in the Other that is creating his anxiety. This is what Lacan means by 'Thought is an action that undoes itself,'[107] a sentiment mirrored in Paul's attitude towards the Stoic obsessional in 7:7-25, as described above. Since the subject as *antiphysis* (lack in language), presents itself in the world of *physis* (speech and language), for the analyst to try to understand the subject through thought would be unproductive (and thus the analysis progresses not through the analyst's own knowledge or thought, but through transference and the analysand's *presumption* of the analyst's knowledge). For Lacan *physis* involves not just the world of physical nature, but also the attempt to discover solutions to one's psychological ills through the symbolic, through words, through the logical investigation of the Other, rather than through the study of the subject's true nature as a lack alienated in *physis*; that is, as *antiphysis*.

This leads back to Paul. The Teacher is portrayed as one engaged in the attempt to persuade others of his particular thinking of salvation, through

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[106] *Écrits*, 514. The Greek letter upsilon (Υ/υ) can be transliterated with the Roman letters Y or U. It is more common for it to be transliterated via Latin as Y/y, but occasionally it is transliterated more directly as U/u, resulting in the transcription of the above Lacanian neologism as *antiphusis*.

[107] *Écrits*, 514. This also brings us to the link that makes sense of the quote with which this chapter opened. On *Écrits*, 515, Lacan states that 'Nothing is to be feared more than saying something that might be true, for it would become entirely true if it were said.' This is because if one tries to force progress in the analysis by thinking one's way towards saying 'the right thing,' one runs the risk of causing that thing to be true whether it was or not. Thus the goal of analysis is not self mastery but speaking at the right time.

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elaborate rhetoric. Paul stereotypes this, presenting him in *prosōpopoiia* as one who mocks fools who pretend to be wise, and then accuses him of claiming to teach fools without teaching himself. Paul's position here, stated in 1:14, is to consider fools no less worthy of his time than the wise, aligning himself consistently with his anti-rhetoric stance in 1 Cor 1-3. Though Paul is opposed to the obsessional Stoic's relation to *physis* in other ways, in this way he is opposed to what *Lacan* means by the obsessional's relation to *physis*: looking for salvation through the study of and logical manipulation of speech itself, rather than through Truth's *prosōpopoiia* in speech.

For both Lacan and Paul, then, *physis* is a word used for the Other, an S_1 for S_2, an $s(A)$ for A; and both oppose the obsessional approach of oblating oneself towards the Other (behaviourism's attitude to Science and Stoicism's attitude to *physis*), in search of answers for the subject. In the way described above, a particular aspect of Paul's opposition to Stoic thought, which forms a part of his caricature of the Teacher in *prosōpopoiia*, turns out to be a similar critique to Lacan's critique of behaviourism, which Lacan coincidentally happens to phrase as a failure to realise that the subject is an *antiphysis* deceptively presenting itself as *physis*. So among the ways Paul opposes obsessional attitudes to *physis* is a way only Lacan would later recognise as an obsessional attitude to *physis*.

Paul himself adds even more ways he is opposed to the obsessional Stoic's use of *physis*. In Rom 8:18-30 Paul identifies a problem with Stoicism in a way remarkably similar to Slavoj Žižek's criticism of some aspects of modern environmentalism: 'nature' itself is not 'harmonious,' as the Stoics would have it,

but chaotic.[108] Lacan, commenting on Sade, would go so far as to say that nature itself (including human nature) is evil, a system of evil repelling evil.[109] If Origen and Stowers are correct that the original audience of Romans would have heard in it the language of Stoicism (or at least the language of self-mastery, which is then presented in a form so obsessional that it would have been identified with the sort of Stoicism described in Chapter 4, above),[110] then Rom 8:20-21 would have also been heard against the Stoic view of creation as something imbued with a natural harmony in light of which we must live: 'For Creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of the one who subjected it, in the hope that even Creation itself will be freed from the slavery of decay into the freedom of the

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[108] Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London: Verso, 2010), 80-84, points out that some express a fantasy that if we simply return to a non-technologised relation to nature, removing all industrialisation, the environment will fix itself; but it is more likely that, since nature has already adapted to us, the sudden absence of part of this system would cause catastrophe. Žižek discusses the same subject from 23-25 minutes in the video lecture that accompanied this book, 'Living in the End Times,' online video recording, YouTube, 11.3.2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v =Gw8LPn4irao&t=1346s> [accessed 4.12.2016]. Here he goes even further, and says that we should not accept the view that 'nature is a balanced harmonised circulation which is then destroyed through excessive human agency. That nature does not exist. Nature is in itself a series of mega catastrophes. Nature is crazy. Things go wrong all the time in nature.' The opposing view sometimes taken up by modern environmentalists, that one's goal should be to live in harmony with nature, is closely paralleled in the ancient Stoic attitude towards nature (detailed in Sellars, *Stoicism*, 125-129), though perhaps even more closely paralleled in the Cynic view of nature. If I am correct that Paul posits the Teacher as exaggeratedly Stoic then Romans 8 should be read even more as being against this deification of 'nature' as the solution to its own problems, pushing us towards a discourse in which it is not presumed that the fantasy of the removal of human impact from nature is, by virtue of nature itself, the best solution. That is to say, here Paul sides with Žižek, and the Paulinist's first port of call in regards to environmental issues should not be to assume the omnipotence of the signifier 'nature' (though it is still possible that one might reach environmentalist solutions regardless of any assumptions about 'nature').

[109] *S7*, 259-264.

[110] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 42-82.

glory of the children of God.' In opposition to the notion in Stoicism and Rom 1:18-32 that nature is how we know God because God is seen in nature, Paul posits that God himself caused Creation to be in a non-harmonious state, describing it here as decaying, and in 8:22 as 'groaning and in labour pains.'

This opposition is repeated again in the incongruity between Rom 1:26-27 and 11:21-24, which becomes even more striking when Romans is read as a diatribe against a Stoic. In 1:26 the fault of those described is that they exchange the natural for τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, that which is against/unaligned with nature. In opposition to the ethical approach this implies, in 11:24 God himself acts in a way described as παρὰ φύσιν, against nature. This can be added to 2:27 where those who are in *physis* uncircumcised will judge those who keep the letter of the law, and 2:14, which refers either to gentiles not having the law in *physis* (circumcision) but nonetheless keeping it, or to gentiles who by *physis* are able to keep the law.[111] In all of these cases, aside from the latter translation possibility of the final example, Paul opposes the value of action according to *physis*. Thus, Paul opposes the use of *physis* as a master signifier.[112] One implication, then, of

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[111] This is discussed briefly in footnote 80, above. As stated there, either Paul is once again using *physis* negatively, with one's status in nature made irrelevant, or Paul is subverting the Teacher's argument by showing that with a Stoic understanding of *physis* it negates the necessity of Torah observance for ethics.

[112] One might object here with the role *physis* plays in the argument of 1 Cor 11:2-16, specifically v. 14. However, as argued in Chapter 3, above, Paul's relation to Stoic thought in this earlier letter is complex. He seems to be offering a knee-jerk neurotic reaction to perversion, which he then corrects in Romans. His discordant use of *physis* in 1 Corinthians aids this theory: it adds another dimension to Paul's realisation that he needed to think through his response to perversion in order to offer a consistent Christian theological ethic, not a knee-jerk adoption of available neurotic, non-Christian, positions.

Christian conversion, is that it sets one at odds with the master signifiers of others. This will be discussed more in the two following chapters.

Similarly, for Lacan psychoanalysis is not the study of nature. He means this both in the sense described above (with psychoanalysis not being about appeals to nature as a signifier for 'knowledge' and language, but rather about the study of the subject as *antiphysis*), as well as in the sense of nature as the physical universe. He says that many presume psychoanalysis to be a search for natural ethics, based in the subject as a natural instinctual entity, but it actually belongs to the realm of the pastoral (and not instinct).[113] In fact, he sees treating psychoanalysis as a new natural law of instincts as dangerous.[114] Both Paul and Lacan firmly oppose ethics based on nature, and both Paul and Lacan expand upon this thought, meaning various things by it, some of which have been seen here; so while Paul's opposition to *physis* as a master signifier is best understood in Lacanian terms, so also when one understands Lacan's opposition to the study of the subject 'as *physis*,' it turns out to be a position Paul had already taken up much earlier.

6. Is Romans 7 Lacanian?

Rom 7:7-25 is a key passage in historical theology for grounding the history or present of the Pauline subject in guilt and internal conflict, and is an even more central passage in the history of philosophical and psychological

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[113] *S7*, 108-110.

[114] Ibid., 383.

readings of Paul. If this section is also *prosōpopoiia*, is it then useless for understanding Paul's own opinion? Have philosophical and psychological readings of Paul now been rendered impotent?

No, because Rom 7:7-25 is more complex in its voice than 1:18-32. 1:18-32 is a straightforward statement of the foundation of the view Paul opposes. 7:7-25, on the other hand, contains more argument between the two, with interjections of 'May it never be!' and potential interruptions of Pauline voice (see the translation in Appendix B). It is also not a statement of the Teacher's original contrary position, but, in the reading suggested, is the Teacher's concession speech, finally working his way toward Paul's opinion, and ending with his dramatic proclamation of Christ's lordship. This means the passage is a positive example of Paul's interpretation of the problems with the Teacher's position, but from the Teacher's voice. This reading is most aligned with Stowers and Origen, except that instead of this passage bearing witness to a Stoic's view of those without self-mastery, it is bearing witness to a Stoic's view of his own failed philosophy of life (it is an example of the result of the correctly lived Stoic life, not failed self-mastery). Emma Wasserman builds upon Stowers' reading, and argues that the figure Paul describes here is a gentile attempting self-mastery through Jewish law; and thus that this passage is not presenting any universal view of subjectivity, but only presenting the plight of historically contingent gentile subjectivity.[115] I suggest that she is correct to see the figure of Rom 7:7-25

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[115] Wasserman, 'Paul Among the Ancient Philosophers,' 82-83. Stanley Stowers himself expresses a similar sentiment, arguing that Paul should be read in a more materialist way, and less as a philosopher of Cartesian subjectivity, in 'Paul as a Hero of Subjectivity,' in eds. Ward

as one attempting self-mastery through 'gentile' (including Stoic philosophical) reason, but incorrect that this removes the passage from any construction of a Pauline view of human subjectivity. Paul is indeed not suggesting his own view here, but is nonetheless addressing the symptoms of the obsessional neurotic approach to law, and treats these symptoms as the modus operandi of obsessional neurosis: it is not just the gentile who finds that the law brings 'excessive desire' and death, but any who use the pursuit of law as a way of life (obsessional neurosis), because Paul sees this as a property of law itself.[116] Rather than being

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Blanton and Hent de Vries, *Paul and the Philosophers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 159-174, particularly 172-174.

[116] This is important to point out because, as Ward Blanton states, if Paul is only describing a contingent temporally-bound situation in which he opposes a certain modality of gentile subjectivity, and not discussing the law and the human subject in general, then this both removes him from the philosophical/theological/anthropological theories that were later built upon this passage, and means that he was 'not fascinated with interior spaces of the psyche or experiences of self-consciousness in the same way as were influential interpreters of this passage from Augustine to… Bultmann [or] Lacan.' Ward Blanton, 'Paul and the Philosophers: Return to a New Archive,' in eds. Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries, *Paul and the Philosophers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 14. As I stated in the Introduction above, it is true that Paul was not intentionally setting out to do philosophy; but he was nonetheless lured by necessity into debating and employing philosophical concepts, and, as I argue here, putting his argument into a psychoanalytic framework does throw light onto what he was arguing, as well as what he was arguing against. He may not have been fascinated with psychology like Lacan, but he discusses 'law' in general and arrives at similar positions anyway. Of course, Blanton rightly points to Foucault, on the same page as above, in connection with Wasserman's argument about the historical contingency of Paul's understandings of sexuality and subjectivity. From a Foucauldian perspective, the aims of this study, linking the past to the present through psychoanalysis, might not be viewed positively, because it involves claiming that desire and law have real structures in human consciousness, transcending time. The debate between Foucauldian historicism and Lacanian psychoanalysis is an old one, and will not be settled here. For a defence of the Lacanian side, see Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (London: Verso, 2015 [1994]), specifically pp. 1-14 where she summarises the issues of the debate and gives her opening argument.

Pauline pre- or post-conversion autobiography, Rom 7:7-25 is Stoic conversion autobiography in *prosōpopoiia*, revealing Paul's understanding of and arguments against the attempted imposition of obsessional neurotic approaches to the law on others.

Since this section is a statement of Pauline opinion in non-Pauline voice, increasingly accepting Paul's theology up to the moment of conversion in 7:25, elements that equate to Lacanian concepts can be read as such (though one should resist the temptation to presume that since it seems to line up with Lacan it is thus entirely identical in argument). There is a perverse function of the law itself, which Paul recognises, and Lacan later elaborates upon it in terms of a psychoanalytic topography. This 'perverse function of the law,' as Žižek calls it, refers to the way the law's relation to humans is perverse, not a perverse structure akin to the one Paul opposes in 1 Corinthians and Romans.[117] This is because the law itself sits in a perverse position relative to humankind, creating the conditions for its own transgression, and then enjoying our suffering under it. As described in the Introduction, in Lacan's view humans do not merely exist in language, but suffer under it, tormented by its demands and plagued by the irreparable alienation it institutes. As Alenka Zupančič describes, it even acts as a justification for our own evil acts to each other.[118] In both of these senses the law might be said to 'enjoy' our suffering. So while it would be false to claim that

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[117] See discussion in Introduction, 4.1.

[118] Zupančič shows that it is not the exceptions to Kant's hypothetical situations that demonstrate the flaw in his ethics, but the fact that the Moral Law itself opens up a situation in which we may use it to our own ends, justifying things we know to be unethical by interpreting the Moral Law to our own perverse ends. In this way the law becomes Sadean. Alenka Zupančič, *Ethics of the Real: Kant and Lacan* (London: Verso, 2011 [2000]), 56-61.

Paul recognises the depth of this perverse function of the law to the extent that Lacan develops it, there is certainly here, in lines such as 'Sin, taking its opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through [the commandment] killed me' (7:11), an awareness of the law's perverse and paradoxical function as cause of that which it prohibits. All of this follows from the Teacher's opening question of whether Paul's theology leads to a perverse understanding of law in 7:7, 'Is the law then sin?' In Rom 7, it is the obsessional who uses this perverse question as a line of defence, as a sort of defence against Paul, which could be reformulated as: 'If this argument of yours, that I'm coming to adopt, is true, and the law creates the conditions of its own transgression, is the pervert then correct, who says that the law is sin?'

So in Rom 7 Paul is quite consciously setting both sides of the paradox of *jouissance* against each other. He has the Teacher repeatedly restate the argument that Paul's view leads to perversion, until he realises that even his obsessional behaviour does not stop the law from being perverse in its treatment of humans, no matter how well aligned it is with 'the good.' Thus the Teacher is presented as one fully trapped in the paradox, defending one side with the reality of the other. He then comes to understand the neurotic side of the paradox, in the realisation that the letter lacks the power completely to sublimate, or to obliterate, *das Ding*. This is not a sublation of the law/sin dialectic as a mind/flesh or law/love dialectic. It is simply a clear restatement of the very realisation that this speech began with: he begins by saying 'Is the law sin?' and ends by realising that, more precisely, the problem is that the law is always perverse because obsessional thinking is a sublimation of *das Ding*, not its end. The reason this should not be

read as Hegelian synthesis resulting in a new dialectic is because Romans does not end with verse 23, 24 or 25. When the Teacher claims that there are two laws at war within him (the law of his own inescapably obsessional behaviour and the law of the inescapability of *das Ding*), he then cries out to be rescued, thanks his Lord Jesus Christ and proclaims that he is still a slave to the law of God and the law of sin; *and then Paul continues*. When Paul continues, he proclaims that there is now (as opposed to his previous response in 2:1) no condemnation for him, and then lays out how Christian salvation affects the man's paradoxical existence. So this passage is not hysteria triumphing over perversion or hysteria triumphing over obsessionalism, but is an obsessional realising that the law he serves is perverse in its relation to him, rendering his existence eternally structured by *das Ding*, leaving him in a position to hope that Christ really is the way out of this paradox. Whether or not this is the case will be examined in the next chapter.

Thus Paul's main idea here is that obsessional neurosis is indeed one possible relation to the law, *but it does not lead anywhere except to more obsessional neurosis*. He does this in terms that discuss the law as such, and a certain relation to the law (the obsessional one) as such, so his claims can be taken to speak to the present through their relations to the clinical structures. Having seen the perverse side of the paradox of *jouissance* in his relationship with the Corinthians, Paul now sees its neurotic side (through obsessionalism), and caricatures his opponent as one deeply trapped by the reality of both, positing one as a defence against the other.

I mentioned another idea that Paul is here aware of: the perverse nature of the law as the cause of sin. This is where things get tricky, because interpreting Paul in Lacanian terms could easily go too far and become reading Lacan into Paul. The simplest way to interpret Paul would be to say that he has realised that the things labelled 'sin' are only called sin because the law has said they are; therefore, logically, there cannot be sin without the law. But, firstly, if scholars are correct that the purpose of the law is to define the boundaries and markers of Israel's covenant relationship with God, why is Paul's argument against it that it is a list of sins? Secondly, Paul's argument here seems to be much more than the law simply 'labelling' sin, bringing it into existence by giving it a name. The Teacher claims that his struggle is that the more he tries to do good, the more sin lies at hand, and the commandment seems to be, for him, *why* he wants to sin so much. Paul's argument is not that the law is a list of sins that creates them, but that, whatever the nature and purpose of the law, the problem with the law for the obsessional is that the conditions of the commandment generate a will to transgress from the very inner material of the subject. The Teacher begins by talking about knowledge of sin being the problem, but moves from knowledge to the interior, with the cause of his sin eventually being that knowledge of law arouses something within him, the law of the flesh. (Keep in mind that from 1:18-32 the Teacher has posited 'knowledge' as his solution, and that which those who fail at self-mastery are lacking.)

Gerd Theissen prefaces his extended psychodynamic interpretation of Rom 7 by saying that uses of psychoanalysis for the interpretation of this passage seem appealing because of the topographical language of both, but ultimately fail

because Freud espoused a theory of instincts, and what Paul expresses here is clearly not a 'psychodynamic doctrine of drives,' but a conflict between 'the law as life-giving Spirit and as death-bringing Letter.'[119]   Thus he turns to behaviourist thought before psychodynamic.[120]   Lacan is not very influential in Germany (at least not in the 1970's), so Theissen can be excused for being unaware of a psychoanalytical school that argues precisely that the drives are a result of the Letter.   The question, though, is to what extent Paul's idea really foreshadows this; and this is difficult to say.   Theissen is quite helpful in demonstrating that Paul and the traditions from which he drew did have a concept of the 'inner self' similar to modern psychodynamic theories of the unconscious.[121]   It is thus reasonable to say that his 'law of the flesh' is somehow related to the rules that govern the 'inner self,' that which is unknown to the conscious self.   Seeing the two as linked is something Theissen could not posit, because he was unaware of a psychoanalytic tradition in which the unconscious exists in relation to the signifier, not to biological instincts.   Speaking of sin as something somehow caused by the law that operates in the unconscious and determines behaviour against the will comes close to Lacan, and is perhaps as close as the text permits.

Lacan's theory of *das Ding* has many influences and alludes to many different thinkers' ideas, and while Paul here comes close to some of them (evil as something unconscious and interior, awakened by the presence of 'law,' and only

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[119] Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*, 223.

[120] Ibid., 223-228.

[121] Ibid., 57-114.   He uses the term 'psychodynamic' because psychoanalysis is not alone in theorising about the unconscious; but this includes psychoanalysis.

strengthened when opposed by conscious effort), Paul is not here suggesting that the drives are the effect of language hitting the body.[122] Indeed, he cannot be suggesting that sin is entirely the effect of law, because he states in Rom 5:13 that sin was in the world before the law. Nonetheless, it is fair to state that Paul's idea here represents a proto-Lacanian anthropology, positing in some way unconscious desire to do evil as the effect of law (and 'law' in general, because he here talks in philosophical terms not about *Torah*, but 'transgression' and 'commandment,' and unconscious desire). This understanding is Lacanian enough that it opens him up to a much deeper understanding of the intricacies of humanity's imprisonment in the paradox of *jouissance*, and the effects of both perverse and obsessional responses to it.

One last question is crying out to be addressed here: is it fair to equate so simply Pauline and Lacanian concepts of 'law'? So far I have been using the term 'law' as though they are identical, which is not the case. By 'law' Lacan means paternal prohibition, which, in his interpretation, is the prohibition that causes desire, instituted not by the real father but by the existence of language, which binds human existence in a state in which that which we get is never that which we asked for (because the signified never equals the signifier, because the real of our desire is something leftover from the world of language and because *das Ding* is the point where the real suffers from the signifier, not the point where the real is named by the signifier). For Paul the most common signified of 'the law' is the *Torah*, and its status as definer of Israel's covenant relationship with God.

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[122] This precise formulation of the drives as 'the effect of language hitting the body' is in keeping with the view described in Chapter 2, above, but comes from Phil Dravers, 'Desire, Drive and the Object *a*,' public lecture with the New Lacanian School at Conway Hall, London, on 3.6.2015.

Nonetheless there are strong cases to be made that this is not its exclusive meaning in Paul.[123] In Rom 13 Paul discusses how Christians should act regarding the state, and, perhaps deeply subversively, states that 'the one who loves the other has fulfilled the law' (13:8). The context of this verse in 13:8-10, and the implied reference to Lev 19:18, establish that Paul is here talking about the *Torah*; but, in the context of the wider argument of Rom 13, he is also implying that fulfilling the Jewish law satisfies or supersedes one's obligations to Roman law.[124] Understanding what Paul means by 'law' and its 'just requirements' in Rom 2:12-29 is quite difficult,[125] especially with the difficulties

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[123] For example, Brigitte Kahl argues that in Galatians Paul is specifically writing to encourage the Galatian Christians that both Jewish and gentile Galatian Christians can stay strong despite the attempts of the imperial Roman law to 'Other' them as it divides and conquers, setting Galatians in context of the dying Gaul. (Note: her frequent use of 'Other' throughout bears little relation to the meaning of the term in Lacan's thought.) At the very least, what she shows it that νόμος (law) in Paul should not be taken exclusively to refer to the Jewish law, but can also refer to imperial law, and perhaps to law in general. Brigitte Kahl, *Galatians Re-imagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010).

[124] One could thus comment that in this sense Paul really is a supersessionist: he posits that the Jewish law supersedes state law! Jewett argues forcefully that Paul is here suggesting that love fulfils both Jewish and Roman law (*Romans*, 805-809), showing that most of the closely parallel statements in contemporary literature are from Roman and Hellenistic sources. Since Paul then goes on to quote the Torah in 13:9-10, defining the love that fulfils the law as the love first commanded by the law, the Torah fulfils Roman law. As one can work out, such a perspective would hardly have been acceptable to the Roman authorities, thus the attitude towards the law in Rom 13 is much more complex than Pasolini realised. Pasolini uses Rom 13 as his moment when Paul turns from revolutionary to establisher of the Church, and supplements this with Rom 7:7-12 as evidence that Paul's stance was, in the end, pro-law. Pier Paolo Pasolini, *St Paul: A Screenplay*, trans. by Elizabeth A. Castelli (London: Verso, 2014 [1977]), 92-96. This might partially explain why the complex way in which biblical scholars grapple with Paul's stance towards the Roman law has not made it into the world of continental philosophical interpretations.

[125] According to Jewett, *Romans*, 233, this is the only place where Paul uses the plural of δικαίωμα, for his phrase 'the righteous requirements of the law.' As Jewett here also notes, its meaning is dependent upon what Paul is saying in 2:14-16. For a fairly recent discussion of what

in translating 2:14 mentioned above; however, the idea that the law's requirements are 'written onto the hearts' of some or all gentiles in 2:15 clearly demonstrates a concept of law separated from conscious knowledge of the letter of the *Torah*. Most importantly, in Rom 7:7-25, whatever Paul or the Teacher mean by 'law,' it is the prohibitive force of the law that is generating the unconscious mechanism described. Since Paul is here discussing the power of the law to generate a will of transgression from the inner material of the subject, he must, to some extent, be taking the effect of 'law' in general as his object, since he is describing the effect of prohibition, not the *Torah* in specific. So while Paul and Lacan have concepts of law that would mostly be graphed in differing circles in a Venn diagram, the law as source of prohibition would certainly be in the overlap, and since this is the aspect chiefly discussed in 7:7-25 a cautious degree of equation with Lacan (as outlined in the preceding paragraph) is justified.[126]
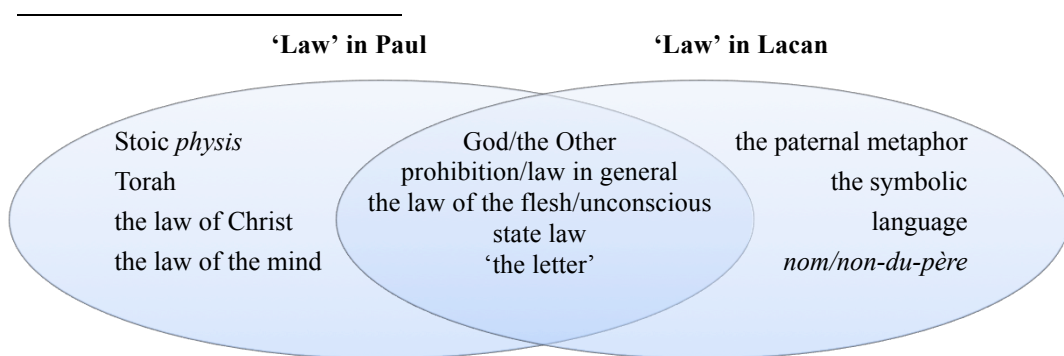
Paul means by 'law,' see Hans Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought* (London: A&C Black, 2004), which touches upon many of the issues discussed in this chapter (such as, for example, that the law does not just make sin recognisable but actually provokes it, on p. 26, against Luther and Calvin). Ultimately there is not room here to discuss the full dynamics of the overlap between Pauline and Lacanian 'law,' but only to sketch out some of them as in the note below. I believe that a fuller study of the relationship between Pauline and Lacanian understandings of the law/the Other's 'enslavement' of humanity would be highly productive. This study makes some way towards that by reading Paul against Lacanian alienation in the paradox of *jouissance*.

[126] Should one attempt to create such a Venn diagram, it might look something like this (though doing this properly would require much more argument and qualification, so this is only an exploratory sketch):

7. Obsessionalism in the History of Pauline Interpretation

The question of the meaning of 'the law' is important, because it is a central issue in theological and philosophical interpretations of Romans. Looking at how philosophical interpretations have handled it, regarding the place of the superego in Paul's view of the law, leads into a discussion of how issues of the superego and guilt have also lurked behind the history of the interpretation of Paul by theologians.

Within Slavoj Žižek's many readings of Paul, Adam Kotsko notes the presence of two different interpretations of Paul's understanding of the law in Rom 7: firstly, the 'normal' or 'pagan' law that generates its own transgression through an obscene superego supplement (the perverse law discussed above that creates the situation for its own transgression, and enjoys our suffering under it), and secondly, the Jewish law, which he says already does not require any obscene superego support.[127] Kotsko then points out the contradiction here, because Paul,

'Law' in Paul		'Law' in Lacan
Stoic *physis* Torah the law of Christ the law of the mind	God/the Other prohibition/law in general the law of the flesh/unconscious state law 'the letter'	the paternal metaphor the symbolic language *nom/non-du-père*

Note that the words in the centre of the diagram are not intended to correlate to the words directly to their left and right, but are in random order.

[127] Adam Kotsko, 'Politics and Perversion: Situating Žižek's Paul,' *Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory*, 9.2 (Summer 2008), 51, citing Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (London: The MIT Press, 2003), 113.

even Žižek's Paul, is opposed to the Jewish law in Rom 7. The obscene superego supplement spoken of is part of what makes the obsessional's law so perverse: when one attempts to think one's way to an absolute and all-encompassing conception of the law, and devise a way one can use the will and the intellect to follow it, not only will one find oneself breaking the law, but breaking the law also brings with it a certain *jouissance*, in the act of breaking the law or in the guilt that accompanies it, so that the obsessional winds up with far more guilt than the pervert whose enjoyment is from breaking the law itself (so less from the guilt accompanying it). In Žižek's view the role of Christ is to move the superego supplement from the law, allowing the law/sin dialectic to be sublated as law/love, for the difference between sin and love is whether it is accompanied by superego. This would be a coherent psychoanalytic interpretation of Rom 7 if it were not for the problem Kotsko points out, which also places Žižek on the wrong side of the New Perspectives: his view necessarily places Paul as opposed to the obscene superego present within Judaism itself, despite the fact that he wishes not to fall into this problem. This is not dissimilar to the problem Badiou faces when he sees law/grace as a Pauline dualism.[128] That may have been true of the Lutheran Paul Badiou read, but scholars now usually read Paul's concept of grace as a *continuation* of Judaism, in which God also claims to save by grace, and not as the antithesis of what Badiou calls the 'Jewish discourse of the rite and the law.'[129]

With this reading of Rom 7:7-25 as Paul opposing the Teacher's defence of the universal requirement of Jewish law obedience *by opposing the*

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[128] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 63-64.

[129] Ibid., 64.

obsessionalism of the Stoicism he employs in order to make his argument, Žižek is granted the missing piece for his picture of Paul: in Rom 7 Paul is indeed opposing the superego supplement to the law, but he locates this supplement in the 'normal' 'pagan' law, as Kotsko puts it. Here Paul avowedly claims, as he does throughout Romans, that the law is *not* sin. Paul is simultaneously defending the Jewish law while he argues that the gentile Christian does not need to follow it: the law that is sin is the superego supplement that comes with *pagan* obsessional approaches to the law; and by demonstrating this he counters the way that the Teacher, specifically, advocates universal law observance, without ceding ground on his belief that the Jewish law is good and sufficient in the function in which it is intended: as an indication of Israel's covenant relationship with God. He just thinks that this grace of God is also available to gentiles through Christ.

Also, with this position of Paul against the guilt induced by the paradox of the obsessional's relation to law, a brief metacritique of the historical interpretation of Paul is now possible. This is a short diversion from the main goal of simply using Lacan to read Paul, but is too important a point to gloss over, now that its foundation has been built. Despite the negative approach taken by Paul in Romans, obsessional neurosis, objectively, is not a more 'negative' way of life than any of the other three clinical structures available to human subjectivity. The paradox of *jouissance* is not actually an eternal game between perverse and obsessional structures; it is a paradox that exists without them, but, as argued in the previous chapters, is a paradox that can be seen in the first century Roman world as related to on a popular level as a conflict between perverse and obsessional approaches to life. Within this world, Paul can be seen to understand

the pitfalls of both, and to believe that Christ has provided another alternative (which will be addressed in the following chapter). The clinical structures are not prisons to be escaped, but structures to be understood. Thus, what follows from my current position is not a claim that Paul thinks obsessional neurotics are 'wrong' (though he does think that obsessional neurosis is not a solution to the paradox of *jouissance* that one should prescribe to others). Instead, what follows now is not a theological claim about the merits of a structure, but a historical question about the role that clinical structures have had to play in the history of Pauline studies.

This particular study has in fact already been done, only without Lacanian terminology. Krister Stendahl's 1963 paper 'The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,' mentioned briefly in the Introduction, is one of the most important forebears of the New Perspectives.[130] In it he argues that Augustine is, broadly speaking but with a fair degree of precision, the foundation of an introspective tradition in the West, set in stone by Martin Luther.[131] He demonstrates that the combination of deep introspection with a constant sense of guilt is something found in both Augustine and Luther, and something absolutely not attested in Paul, outside of the possibility of Rom 7. Instead, he shows that Paul demonstrated a remarkably clean conscience (citing Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 1:12 and 5:10f),[132] and saw himself as one who was successfully

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[130] Krister Stendahl, 'The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West (1963),' *The Writings of St. Paul*, eds. Wayne A. Meeks and John T. Fitzgerald (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007 [1972]), 501-510.

[131] Ibid., 503-505.

[132] Ibid., 507.

blameless in his life under the law (Phil 3:6)[133] – a far cry from the notion that Paul thought righteousness under the law impossible. Perhaps the only place in his paper where his argument feels somewhat contrived is when he gets to Rom 7:7-25, the main text into which a Pauline introspective conscience has been read, and he argues that rather than bear witness to a guilty introspection, it is an acquittal of the ego, which is ultimately seen not to be the cause of blame.[134] However, this potential weakness in Stendahl's argument highlights a strength in the argument here: in the same way that Rom 1:18-32 is out of place with many aspects of the rest of Paul's theology (most of all by containing no reference to Christ), so also is the figure caricatured in 7:7-25 directly opposed to the personality of Paul known from elsewhere in his letters: the Teacher is presented as deeply introspective and suffering from a guilty conscience, whereas 'When [Paul] speaks about his conscience, he witnesses to his good conscience before men and God,'[135] and 'He would be suspicious of a teaching and a preaching which pretended that the only door into the church was that of evermore introspective awareness of sin and guilt.'[136]

To put this into Lacanian terms, Stendahl posits Augustine and Luther as pillars of obsessional thinking (endless introspection and near-constant guilt) in the West. He demonstrates that this obsessional thinking is not found in Paul, though the part of Paul that takes the most effort for him to say this about is Rom 7:7-25. In my summaries of the interpretation of Rom 7 above it is Augustine and

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[133] Ibid., 502.

[134] Ibid., 508.

[135] Ibid., 507.

[136] Ibid., 510.

Luther who embed in theological history the reading of this section as describing Paul's post-conversion inner conflict, as typical of universal post-conversion Christian inner conflict. Augustine and Luther also both make use of Rom 1:18-32 as a foundational text for a notion of Original Sin. The picture with which we are left, then, is composed of four important steps: (A) Paul wrote a diatribe in which he caricatured an obsessional character, then (B) in time Christian theology was hijacked by two exceptionally skilled theologians who happened also to be obsessionals (in either clinical structure or at least the form of their theological thought), so (C) they quite naturally identified with the texts intended to be read in the voice of the obsessional Paul opposed, largely basing their theologies on these texts, leading to (D) the course of the history of Pauline theology in the Church being commandeered by the texts in which he intended to parody his opponent. Paul, on the other hand, is not even largely concerned with the issues on which their theologies are based. Obsessionalism is a side issue for Paul; just a part of his argument against the Teacher, demonstrating a flaw in the Stoic logic he employs in his argument.

This opens up an important wider question, for if obsessionalism has been worked so deeply into Paul by Augustine and Luther, simply pointing out introspection and guilt will not be enough to remedy the problem. By attacking Augustine and Luther's 'introspective conscience' without making a wider psychoanalytic attack on an obsessional relation to law and guilt, their introspective conscience will be sublimated in another way, returning. As Stendahl notes, Augustine is in many ways 'the first modern man,'[137] so we

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[137] Ibid., 504.

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cannot overwrite the negative parts of his influence simply by observing a symptom or two. This is why a reading of Paul that focuses on the problem of law in the widest way possible, law as language itself causing superego guilt when it institutes the subject, is so essential. Stendahl noted some of the obsessional symptoms that have biased our reading of Paul, and then the New Perspectives moved the question of the interpretation of Paul from being about the universal subject's relation to law, to being about the law as covenant identity marker; but the human relation to law in general still forms some part of Paul's theology (and some part of Christian theology), so without discussing this specifically, in the philosophical and psychological terminology it demands, 'Pauline' obsessionalism will inevitably return.

This is perhaps the most impressive aspect of Campbell's work. *The Deliverance of God* makes a long controversial plan for the rereading of the entirety of Pauline theology, replete with extensively researched summaries and critiques of the scholarly works that influence and oppose his theory;[138] but it opens with an almost completely un-sourced theoretical sketch of the theological system he seeks to displace, as he sees it.[139] Methodologically, Campbell's work represents a step forward because he is willing, from the start, to consider how Pauline theology relates, both causally and responsively, to Christian theology in the abstract form of a logical structure he subjectively perceives (despite the near impossibility of 'citing' the subjective perception of a structure). This move is what allows him to place the foundational role of guilt in a contractually prospective schema as a key issue that needs to be addressed in Pauline studies. It

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[138] Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 1-309.

[139] Ibid., 15-35.

is on this subjective, abstract and utterly non-empirical level that Lacan could have the most relevance for biblical studies, because it is at this level, if any, that the impacts of Augustine's and Luther's (and others') obsessional readings of Paul's obsessional opponent must be weeded out, lest we run the risk of simply displacing obsessional symptoms elsewhere in theology. If the current structure of Christian proselytisation, worship, mission, and, to be frank, power, is dependent upon an obsessional reading of Paul, is it really realistic to think that the conscious efforts of biblical scholars to re-read Paul will filter 'down' to the way Christian religion functions, unless it is linked directly to the present and historical structure of that functioning?

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, I will look at some potential modern Lacanian applications from the interpretation just sketched. Rom 7:7-25 is a caricature in *prosōpopoiia* of the Teacher's concession speech, in which the Teacher is presented as one who feels constantly guilty for his inability to put his own law into practice. Paul then responds to his eventual acceptance of Christ by telling him that 'Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,' a reversal of his position in response to the first *prosōpopoiia* in 2:1 by telling him that in his hypocrisy he condemns himself. If it is correct that 7:7-25 is *prosōpopoiia*, as is now a common view, then the presentation of the Teacher is not just caricature, but can also be read as comedy. The repetition of the sorry state in which he finds himself, if acted out by Phoebe in the way *prosōpopoiia* was meant to be

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performed, would have been sure to elicit a laugh. Paul thus establishes a situation in which a man's guilt under the weight of prohibition leads to obsessional symptoms, and laughs at him, before telling him that his guilt is unnecessary because there is now no condemnation. If one were to accept this reading, just what is Paul laughing at the Teacher for?

In a Lacanian view, the only thing of which one can be guilty is giving way on one's desire. While the law perversely makes demands of us in order to enjoy the guilt it elicits in our failure to meet its demands, this guilt is an expression of our own regret at being caught in the paradox of *jouissance*, caught in the trap of language itself without even knowing how to express what we want. This is why the object of psychoanalysis is not to enable self-mastery (that is the Stoic/obsessional approach), but to learn how to speak; and not to learn how to speak with fine rhetoric (that is what Lacan and Paul opposed and Lacan called *physis*), but to learn how to speak our desires; to learn *when* to speak.[140] Thus when Ward Blanton reads Rom 7 with Lacan, he reads it as a description of humanity's struggle under the perverse demands of the law, which, in the modern western world, equates to the struggle under the perverse demands of the market, which demands that we enjoy.[141]

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[140] *SI*, 3. Learning *when* to speak is an important lesson of psychoanalysis, tied to learning what one really desires: desire can be deceptive, and there is no point in saying something that only sounds like what you want, when you know it is not really what you want, and the analyst might end the session if she believes you.

[141] Ward Blanton, 'Afterword: Appropriation's Excess, Paul of Tarsus for an Age of the Capitalization of Mastery,' in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *St Paul: A Screenplay,* trans. by Elizabeth A. Castelli (London: Verso, 2014 [1977]), 122-137.

The perverse structure of the modern western world is something many Lacanians have written about: the market disavows castration, demanding we enjoy, setting us in an endless pattern of failing to live up to this perverse law, for we can never enjoy enough.[142] This comes from Lacan's own thoughts on the Capitalist Discourse.[143] However, for Lacan this modern condition is a reversal of what was previously the case: Paul was indeed theorising about the perverse core of the law, which is its mode particularly when tormenting an obsessional subject; but he was doing this in a world that does not equate directly to the perverse world of modern consumerism. The modern world is the one in which now that God is dead[144] everything is prohibited, since the complete enjoyment of *das Ding*

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[142] Samo Tomšič, *The Capitalist Unconscious: Marx and Lacan* (London: Verso, 2015), 149-153. Žižek, in *Puppet and the Dwarf*, 56 (and elsewhere), says more briefly exactly what Blanton argues: that capitalism gives us the superego injunction 'Enjoy!', and that in demanding we enjoy, the modern 'late capitalist' law is just as perverse as the one Paul sets up in Rom 7, demanding transgression.

[143] *S17*, 31-32. In *Je Parle aux Murs* (Paris: Seuil, 2011 [1972]), 96, Lacan ties the capitalist discourse to a rejection of castration, which, though he uses a term he usually reserves for psychosis (*verwerfung*, foreclosure), is the perverse structure. As opposed to the philosophical Lacanians who see capitalism as perverse, the psychoanalyst Mario Goldenberg ties the capitalist discourse to hysteria, in 'Capitalist Discourse (The),' in *A Real for the 21st Century* (Paris: École de la Cause freudienne, 2014), 55-57, noting that the structure Lacan gives to the capitalist discourse is actually a hysterical structure. Matthew Sharpe and Geoff Boucher note that before 1997 Žižek treated capitalism as hysterical, analysing the symptoms within it, but after reading Schelling changed his diagnosis to that of perversion, because 'the superego imperatives of capitalist consumerism and fundamentalist reaction are just the flipside to how global capitalism is the new world Symbolic Order.' Matthew Sharpe and Geoff Boucher, *Žižek and Politics: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 159-162.

[144] This of course should be read in terms of what Nietzsche meant; that is, not that God was once a real conscious being and has now expired, but that the impact of God/religion/theology on human consciousness in the West is not what it used to be. The phrase has a long history in continental philosophy, through Heidegger (reading it as a reference to the end of metaphysics) to philosopher theologians like John Caputo and Gianni Vattimo, in *After the Death of God*, ed.

is found to be prohibited at the end of every attempted hedonistic avenue. In connecting the modern perverse law of enjoyment to the death of God, Lacan situates the modern condition after the rise of atheism.[145]

This creates a different setting in which to read Paul's response to the Teacher. If Paul was laughing at the Teacher for feeling guilty for the form of his *jouissance*, for the guilt that the law of the flesh, provoked by the law of his mind, was giving him, then perhaps Paul today would laugh at the person who feels guilty for *not* having *jouissance*. In today's world it is not the obsessional's law of perfect mental obedience to *physis* that one feels guilty for breaking, but the perverse law of perfect enjoyment after the 'end of prohibition' that one feels guilty for failing. If Paul laughed at the Teacher for feeling guilty for enjoying, perhaps he is laughing at us for feeling guilty for not enjoying? In this way, what does 'There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' mean today? Perhaps it means that, if the psychoanalytic event of Christ that Paul interpreted were to be replicated today, Christians would find themselves naturally exempt from the law of consumerist enjoyment, and from the social

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Jeffrey Robbins (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2007), as well as a long history in theology in the form of the death of God movement, involving theologians like Jürgen Moltmann, Paul Tillich, Thomas Altizer, etc.

[145] In *S2*, 128, Lacan reverses the quote from Dostoyevsky that 'If God doesn't exist, then everything is permitted,' to 'If God doesn't exist, then nothing at all is permitted any longer,' and states that it is neurotics in analysis who reveal this to be the case. In *S7*, 226-227, he states that God is dead, but God will never know he is dead because *jouissance* remains forbidden. In other words, now that the general cultural consensus is God's nonexistence, we feel an imperative to enjoy, but also even stronger the impossibility of *jouissance* (prohibition) that lies at the end of any attempt to enjoy. Thus, tied in with a Lacanian view of modern capitalism as a perverse law is the fact that when Lacan discusses this he posits in relation to the change in mindset that results from a move to a society in which the signifier 'God' has lost its literal force.

causes of mid-life crises, and from the unconscious demand we face with the deep-rooted feeling that we must 'do life right,' in the sense of enjoying life enough. A sermon by the Lacanian Paul, then, might be titled 'You are Not Condemned for Not Having a Corvette.' The question this all opens up might be titled 'Paul in modern *jouissance*,' and it would be an interesting question to investigate further.

Another question opened up by the discussion opened above is the question of master signifiers. How has the Christian gotten to the place of having different master signifiers? And how does the Pauline Christian subject relate not just to the Stoic master signifier that the Teacher uses in defence of the law (*physis*), but to Jewish and state master signifiers? Is such a displacement of master signifiers possible today? Is the Pauline Christian subject, on this level, a replicable psychical event? Or is normativity not a possible goal of psychoanalytic readings of Scripture?

In *Seminar VII*, Lacan's actual interpretation of Rom 7, as more than just a predecessor to his own thought, comes a few pages after he first quotes it. He eventually says that 'Freud is telling us the same thing as Saint Paul, namely, that what governs us on the path of our pleasure is no Sovereign Good, and that moreover, beyond a certain limit, we are in a thoroughly enigmatic position to that which lies within *Das Ding*, because there is no ethical rule which acts as a mediator between our pleasure and its real rule.'[146] Since Lacan appears to read classical texts in the original languages, the use of the word 'enigmatic' (*énigmatique*) could perhaps be a reference to the other chapter of Paul's letters

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[146] *S7*, 118 (114-115 in the French).

that philosophers and psychoanalysts like to use, 1 Cor 13, where in verse 12 Paul says that 'We see through a mirror enigmatically [ἐν αἰνίγματι], but then we will see face to face.' However the main referent of this interpretation is Rom 7, where Lacan sees Paul as describing the relationship we have to *das Ding*, in which the law of the mind is not what governs our actions, and neither is any Sovereign Good that any law posits as the goal of ethics, but instead it is the law of the flesh, of sin as a result of the prohibition, to which we relate enigmatically, the contours of desire dictated by something we do not understand. This Lacanian elaboration of Paul is not unfaithful; however, it is also not the full picture.

Paul makes use of a notion that is legitimately proto-Lacanian, but he makes use of it as something that the Teacher recognises as the fault to obsessional arguments for law-observance. This is a Pauline idea, but it is far from being *the* Pauline idea, and it does a great disservice to Paul when philosophers and psychoanalysts treat him as though this minor detour in the flow of his diatribal logic is his key contribution to history. Paul is neither describing his soteriology nor his complete anthropology, but merely using a part of his anthropology against a counterargument against his soteriology. This leaves us asking the question of what, then, is Paul's soteriology, in Lacanian terms? And does it line up with Lacan's ideas as nicely as Rom 7 does?

Chapter Six

Antigone Resurrected

If the obsessional is one who wants to master the real through language and intense concentrated thought (i.e., the Stoic Teacher), and the pervert is one who seeks to occupy the very position of the law, disavowing symbolic castration, and grasp enjoyment through the weakened law's alleged absence (i.e., the Corinthian Christian), then Lacan paints Antigone as one whose approach to the law, and to the Thing it both evokes and masks, stands in defiance of the logic of this yet inescapable paradox. Lacan's Antigone is not an example of a clinical structure opposed to the others, but is an example of a sublimation of *das Ding* that has the potential to affect its viewers. In this chapter I propose that it is *Antigone* that provides the best Lacanian model for interpreting Paul's understanding of Christ, *and not the Lacanian clinical structures*.[1] Antigone's faithfulness causes her to ignore the power of the law, with absolute fidelity to the

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[1] Throughout this chapter 'Antigone' refers to the heroine of the play *Antigone*, with this distinction always denoted by the presence or absence of italics. Greek and English references to the play not otherwise cited are from Sophocles, 'Antigone,' in *Sophocles II*, trans. by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Loeb Classical Library, 21 (London: Harvard University Press, 1994), 1-127.

signifier she has chosen, running headlong towards *das Ding*. Embracing the law's power to kill, emptied of all but *pistis* (faithfulness/fidelity), she somehow radiates an unsurpassable beauty; unsurpassable, but perhaps not unparalleled. For, some time after *Antigone* was written, another play was penned; it sets out from the start to declare its hero the son of God, but is devoid of full human recognition of this until the very end, when Christ cries out in pain and expires, and *then*, when a gentile Roman guard 'saw how he died, he said "Surely this man was the Son of God!"'[2]

In this chapter I advance my reading of Paul past two interpretative deadlocks, by using a Lacanian framework to understand the psychical transformation that Paul's theology describes and demands. In continental philosophical terms, this chapter is a Lacanian interpretation of what Louis Althusser calls 'interpellation.' In theological terms, this investigation will be into the psychological impact upon the believer described by Pauline soteriology (the study of salvation). The first deadlock is the question of what Paul poses in response to the Teacher's obsessional neurosis, as well as in response to Corinthian perversion – the deadlock being that Lacanian readings of Paul tend to

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[2] It was undoubtedly the case that most early Christians' contact with the Gospels, and any of the rest of the emerging Christian scriptures they encountered, would have been through hearing and not reading; particularly since the traditions eventually inscribed into the Gospels were probably mostly transmitted in oral form before that point, and most people were illiterate. Further, there is a strong case to be made that Mark's Gospel, quoted at the very beginning of this chapter, was actually written to be an oral performance, akin to the many 'passion plays' that were in circulation at the time. Whitney Shiner argues for this in *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (London: Continuum, 2003), and provides a helpful bibliography of other works that have made this or similar claims on pp. 197-200. The reading of Paul in this chapter should be read in light of the proliferation of passion plays in the Early Church, though it is not central to the argument.

descend into simple placements of Paul's ideas within clinical structures, which runs the risk of severe reductionism; but what else does Lacan offer by way of psychoanalytic interpretation? In the Introduction I summarised Žižek's reading of Rom 7 as a positive suggestion of hysteria in response to the perverse demands of the law. Throughout Chapter 5 other approaches were discussed, with many Lacanian readings seeing it as bearing witness to some sort of change in clinical structure. Since I am not reading Rom 7 as a hysterical response to perversion, but as an obsessional's final attempt to raise the spectre of perversion in defence of his own symptom, and Paul is not suggesting hysteria as a solution, just what is Paul suggesting in response to the Teacher's internment under the paradox of *jouissance*?

The second interpretative deadlock is witnessed in the already existent question of the ontology of Pauline soteriology; specifically, the problem represented by the insufficiently qualified use of ontological language by some recent Pauline scholarship. Within participationist interpretations of Pauline soteriology it has become normal to describe the transformation of the Christian subject as 'ontological.'[3] This quick way out, anachronistically positing Paul's

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[3] In *The Quest for Paul's Gospel* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 41, Douglas Campbell suggests that Paul's participatory language is a 'metaphor for being or ontology,' which is the core claim he defends and applies in the two chapters that outline his core vision for Pauline soteriology, pp. 95-131. Michael Gorman then cites this argument for Paul's ontological soteriology at the beginning of his *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 7, which reads the patristic concept of 'theosis' (ontological participation in the divine) into Pauline participatory soteriology. Benjamin Blackwell makes much more use of the language of ontology throughout his *Christosis: Engaging Paul's Soteriology with His Patristic Interpreters* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2016), though he is very careful and precise, using ontological language because it was so common in patristic interpretations of Paul, and systematically clarifying the different ways it was used. However we

view as ontological without clarifying exactly how Paul might have understood salvation ontologically in his own terms, is a mistake that is also replicated by Paul Axton, in such a way as to confound an otherwise successfully Lacanian reading (as described in the Introduction, section 4.1, above).[4] This deadlock is the symptom of analytical biblical studies lacking a philosophical framework to describe its own concepts. By understanding in Lacanian psychoanalytic terms the psychical transformation that Paul witnessed and described in his own terms ('justification,' being 'in Christ,' and occasionally 'salvation'), I will be making an actual claim about the content of the event to which Paul was witness, circumnavigating the need for the language of ontology.

In addition to these two aims of my interpretation of Pauline soteriology, I defend Žižek's wider programme by embedding Paul in the debate over the role of *Antigone* in modern politics. Žižek posits Lacan's Antigone as a paradigm for the successful political act. As argued in the Introduction, Žižek's conception of Pauline soteriology usually defaults into his reading of the Gospels, or into a theory of clinical structures, or into a use of Hegelian sublation (thus not being a Lacanian reading, so not being within the aims of the present study); I posit instead that Žižek's reading of *Antigone* (and of Lacan's reading of *Antigone*)

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are perhaps still left, like the medieval Catholic who knows the doctrine of transubstantiation but wonders what 'really happens' inside the elements, wondering what exactly Paul (and the Church Fathers) *meant* with their language of ontological transformation. Since Lacanian ontology is that the subject really does not exist outside of language (but the subject's existence in language *is* its ontology, as the unconscious is the discourse of the Other), a Lacanian view of subjectivity allows one to read Pauline soteriology as ontological without any further possible question of *how* it is ontological. It is ontological because it is indeed possible for the subject's total existence in and as language to be altered.

[4] Paul Axton, 'The Psychotheology of Sin and Salvation,' (doctoral thesis, University of Nottingham, 2013), 237.

maps seamlessly onto Paul, and would give him a more consistent and critically sound reading of Paul to use in his own wider political/philosophical programme. This does not at all affect Žižek's reading of Christianity in general, i.e., his reading of the cross and the cry of dereliction.

The purpose of this chapter, and indeed this entire study, is not to argue for any one of the many Pauls that scholars have put forward, from within or outside of the New Perspectives. Instead, the main interpretative goal is to demonstrate the usefulness of Lacanian concepts for the interpretation of Paul, regardless of the Paul one reads. In latter half of this chapter I make extensive use of the Paul that Douglas Campbell calls 'PPME,' as discussed in chapters 1 and 5. Specifically, I use the readings that have emphasised participation in the narrative of Christ discernable from the substructure of Paul's letters – the succession of readings that trace back from Campbell to E. P. Sanders through Michael Gorman and Richard Hays, among others. Sanders helped move the notion of participation to the centre of Pauline soteriology, then Hays argued that the Pauline Christian participates in 'the faith of Christ,' which acts as a term for the narrative of Christ's death and resurrection as attested by the substructure of Paul's letters, then Michael Gorman expanded extensively on the centrality of participation/'co-crucifixion' with Christ, all leading to the soteriological model Campbell argues lies exclusively at the core of Pauline soteriology. This is recounted in more detail below. Of the many possible interpretations of Paul, this

is the one that happens to be read here with Lacan, in order to use it rather than defend it.[5]

1. Lacan's Antigone

For the last quarter of *Seminar VII* Lacan engages in a deep discussion of Sophocles' play *Antigone*, the third part of his Oedipus trilogy.[6] Having described *das Ding* and the paradox of *jouissance*, and then set out how the work of the Marquis de Sade brings us close to a vision of *das Ding* (but is ultimately the work of a man who remained bound to the perverse side of the paradox), Lacan reads *Antigone* as something that is, unlike any of Sade's works, 'a treatise that is truly on desire.'[7] Of the six final sessions of the seminar, he argues for his reading of *Antigone* over three, and then spends three more discussing its implications and concluding. *Antigone* is not only naturally situated within psychoanalytic discourse as part of the Oedipus trilogy, but was also already

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[5] As it happens, this approach is exactly the approach Lacan recommends taking to Freud, on *S7*, 255; and I am sure he would not mind me changing its referent to Paul, as Lacan himself casually changes Paul's 'sin' to *das Ding*: '[One does not] attempt to measure [Paul's] contribution quantitatively, draw up a balance sheet – what's the point of that? One uses him. One moves around within him. One takes one's bearings from the direction he points in. What I am offering you here is an attempt to articulate the essence of an experience that has been guided by [Paul]. It is in no way an effort to measure the volume of his contribution or summarize him.'

[6] It was the first play of the trilogy to be written, but in the chronology of the story takes place last, after *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

[7] He does not explicitly use these words in *S7*. Rather, this is precisely what he succinctly accuses Sade of *not* giving us in 'Kant with Sade' (*Écrits*, 667). In *S7* Lacan offers reading of Sade followed by a reading of *Antigone* that presents several theses on desire in conclusion, implying that Lacan finds in *Antigone* that which he did not find in Sade.

embedded in continental philosophy, as the subject of discussions by both Hegel and Heidegger. Lacan makes no explicit reference to Heidegger's reading, but specifically counters Hegel, who reads Antigone as caught between a law of the state and a law of the family.[8]

1.1. Summary of *Antigone*

Antigone begins immediately after a civil war fought between her two brothers, Eteocles and Polyneices, which ended with the brothers killing each other and Antigone's uncle Creon becoming king. Creon has declared that Eteocles is to be regarded as the hero and Polyneices the enemy of the state, thus Polyneices is to be denied ceremonial burial (safe passage to the afterlife), and instead be humiliated by having his corpse left to carrion and decay. Anyone who defies this order is to be put to death. Antigone and her sister Ismene argue over what to do, with Antigone insisting that Polyneices must be buried, and eventually disowning Ismene who wants to leave Polyneices and spare her own life. Antigone performs the burial rite, and then is caught when she performs it a second time. Ismene attempts to take the blame, but Antigone confesses, and they are both thrown into prison. Eventually Creon decides to release Ismene, but

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[8] Lacan's explicit positioning of his reading against Hegel's can be found on *S7*, 307, and Hegel's reading in G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 261-289, sections 437-476. It might be significant that Lacan does not mention Heidegger, if the reason is *because* his positive reading of Antigone might realistically be compared with Heidegger's use of her as an example of resolute authenticity, of which he was probably aware. Heidegger's reading of *Antigone* is originally from lectures in 1935, but had recently regained prevalence with the 1953 English translation of these lectures, now re-translated as Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (London: Yale University Press, 2000), 156-176.

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sentences Antigone to be sealed in a cave indefinitely. Antigone continues to defend her actions, and once in the cave begins to lament, reflecting on what her life might have looked like. Much of the play is taken up with Antigone defending her insistence upon burying her brother, no matter the consequences, to various people (Ismene, Creon, the chorus and others). There is also drama less central to Lacan's reading, regarding Antigone's fiancé (Creon's son Haemon), and Creon's wife Eurydice. The play is quite short, and in addition to the Loeb edition and the wonderful translation by David Grene (both cited here), it has also been translated by Hölderlin (which influenced Heidegger's reading), Seamus Heaney and many others, recently including Slavoj Žižek.[9]

1.2. What is Lacan Doing with Antigone?

Lacan opens his discussion of *Antigone* by noting that it is often discussed in terms of the inner conflict that can result from even a just law, which confirms that we are still reading something pertinent to the struggles faced by the Teacher.[10] He then introduces *Antigone* by way of Aristotle: it was one of Aristotle's primary examples of 'catharsis,' the cleansing of the subject through

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[9] Hölderlin's translation has been translated into English as *Hölderlin's Sophocles: Oedipus & Antigone*, trans. by David Constantine (Hexham: Bloodaxe Books, 2001). Sophocles, *The Burial at Thebes: Sophocles'* Antigone, trans. by Seamus Heaney (London: Faber and Faber, 2004). Slavoj Žižek, *Antigone* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016). Žižek's translation is more of a paraphrase for the purposes of his own agenda with the text (which is why he is listed as author), much like Alain Badiou's translation of Plato's *Republic* (*Plato's Republic: A Dialogue in 16 Chapters*, trans. by Susan Spitzer [Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2012]).

[10] *S7*, 299.

pity and fear, in the participatory experience of watching tragic drama.[11] In Lacan's reading, *Antigone* purges the viewer of pity and fear in the imaginary order, through the image of Antigone.[12] Through inducing a state of excitation, the subject loses its power-relations, and then Lacan says something happens, which, contra Hegel, is *not* a moral lesson arising from a sublation.[13]

Instead of a moral lesson, learned from watching a hero with a tragic flaw (ἁμαρτία, *hamartia*) fall, the subject (viewer, reader, audience) is on the side of a hero who is *against* the character with the tragic flaw (Creon); and that character's tragic flaw is not a *disobedience* to the law, but the attempt at perfect *obedience* to the law (a neurotic position).[14] Thus what is revealed in the anti-hero, the character with the *hamartia*, is not that the law must be followed, but rather that 'the Good cannot reign over all without a [fatal] excess emerging,' an excess Lacan would later write about at length as the *objet petit a*.[15] So while Creon occupies both the obsessional and perverse positions,[16] Antigone occupies the place of the law's *objet petit a*: she is what remains leftover, unaccounted for by

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[11] Ibid., 300-304. Aristotle develops this in *Poetics*, 1449-1459, which can be found in the Loeb edition, or 'Aristotle: Poetics,' trans. by M. E. Hubbard, in *Classical Literary Criticism*, eds. D. A. Russell and Michael Winterbottom, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 57-80.

[12] *S7*, 305.

[13] Ibid., 306-307.

[14] Ibid., 317-319.

[15] Ibid., 319.

[16] Creon's unique position in the place of the law's voice and tormented by it experienced as Other allows this contradiction: he is a neurotic object of a perverse law, forced to subject himself to it and prosecute his own family; but he also occupies the position of the perverse law himself, enacting it upon others. Creon can thus be seen as occupying the full force of *both* sides of the paradox of *jouissance* as I have argued it was experienced in the first century CE.

the law/transgression dialectic, as both a member of the family and that which is cast out by the law of the family.

Antigone's voluntary decision within this position establishes her as a figure of particular Lacanian interest. Antigone is handed, by decree of a perverse law, the forced choice of either letting her brother's corpse remain un-buried, or dying herself. This is a position in which tragic heroes often find themselves: tragically forced into a decision that will inevitably lead to their doom. In this sense, they run up against some sort of 'barrier,' a situation in which the good of their desire lies beyond an impossible limit. Lacan implies an equivalence between the function of the Greek word ἄτη (*atē*) and *das Ding*, when pointing out that according to the play's chorus this placed Creon ἐκτὸς ἄτας, beyond the limit of *das Ding* – meaning, according to Lacan, that Creon's position caught in the paradox of *jouissance* also places him on the other side of the barrier from *das Ding*, incapable of 'getting there,' as are we all.[17] So Antigone and Creon both come up against a barrier before *das Ding*, but Antigone takes the astounding position of choosing to go πρὸς ἄταν, towards *das Ding*.[18] Of course, this is exactly what the Marquis de Sade also attempted; so the question is, will Antigone succeed where Sade failed?

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[17] *S7*, 332-335. The reference to Creon as ἐκτὸς ἄτας comes from *Antigone*, 614. Lacan here argues that all of Sophocles' heroes 'begin at a limit,' not accounted for by their relationships to others, placed at a limit between life and death in which they are trapped. It should also be pointed out that ἄτη does not equate exactly to *Ding*, but is also a word for the fate and doom Antigone inherits from her family, which is closer to its meaning in the play; but Lacan certainly ties it to the exposition of *das Ding* in which he has been engaged throughout the seminar.

[18] *S7*, 333.

If *das Ding* is 'the point at which the real suffers from the signifier,' then that signifier, in this instance, is 'brother,' as it relates to the symbolic domain of funeral rites. Antigone states directly that the reason her brother is so special to her is precisely because of his status as signifier 'brother;' for if her husband died she could remarry, and if her son died she could have another, but with father and mother dead she will not have another brother.[19] So, simply because her brother is her brother, he must be buried. Evoking a Lacanian understanding of the subject's alienation in language and the symbolic, the chorus has told Antigone that she does not understand the law at work in her, her αὐτόνομος (*autonomos*, line 821); but she responds that she has heard the story of Tantalus' daughter, and knows death, and proceeds nonetheless.[20] Thus, 'Antigone appears as αὐτόνομος, as a pure and simple relationship of the human being to that of which he miraculously happens to be the bearer, namely, the signifying cut that confers on him the indomitable power of being what he is in the face of everything that may oppose him.'[21] By being aware that in order to retain the signifier 'brother' she must head towards what is now its signified, *das Ding*, she is fully autonomous,

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[19] Lines 909-912.

[20] Lacan does not mention Antigone's reference to the death of Tantalus' daughter here (*S7*, 344); but one cannot help but elaborate the very precise link alluded to here. Antigone defends her decision for *das Ding* by stating that she has heard of Tantalus' daughter, who was murdered by being turned into stone, yet wept eternally. Antigone, likewise, will be locked away in stone, while still alive, weeping; so she is stating that she already knows the horror of her end, yet proceeds towards it. Tantalus, on the other hand, is Lacan's most vivid illustration of the predicament of the obsessional neurotic (*S5*, 21.5.1958, 8), placed in an eternal paradox wherein the object of his desire is just out of reach, and yet he does not die (life somehow sustained by constantly relating to and recalling death, but never actually grasping the enjoyment linked to it). Antigone thus, in Lacan's reading, positions herself as an alternative to obsessionalism – not Tantalus, but his daughter.

[21] *S7*, 348.

knowing that the object of her desire is *das Ding*, and being faithful to her desire nonetheless. Since all desire results from the signifier, and all signifiers are predicated upon the repression of *das Ding*, Antigone incarnates this dynamic intentionally when she makes the rare decision to pursue something that she knows is just a signifier, while also knowing that it is a signifier for *das Ding*. She 'pushes to the limit' and incarnates the 'desire of death as such;' she 'incarnates that desire,' and, in doing so, 'perpetuates, eternalizes, immortalizes that *Atè*.'[22]

Incarnating desire and immortalising *das Ding*, Antigone finds herself locked in a cave, her social death in the past and her imminent carnal death ensured. In this way, Lacan claims that Sophocles presents humanity not in terms of physical decay or historical generational progress, but 'along the paths of his solitude,' in a sphere 'where death encroaches on life' in his relationship to 'the second death.'[23] In this function, when Lacan comments frequently throughout these chapters/lectures on Sophocles' description of the radiant beauty of Antigone,[24] it is a beauty that appears as she commits to her desire for *das Ding*, and eventually finds herself looking back on life from her position trapped between the first and second death; and it is this beauty that causes catharsis.[25] Lacan imagines the beauty Sophocles attributes to Antigone to be the beauty that the analysand often mentions when approaching the barrier to *das Ding*; so part of

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[22] Ibid., 348.

[23] Ibid., 351.

[24] Ibid., 345-348, citing *Antigone*, 944-987.

[25] *S7*, 351-352.

the beauty Sophocles describes is a consequence of Antigone's voluntary sacrifice of her life for her desire.[26]

Another part of why Antigone's immortal desire is perceived as beautiful is that 'the question of the realization of desire is necessarily formulated from the point of view of a last judgment,' and this is a position she uniquely reaches.[27] As discussed in chapters 1 and 4, the subject always pierces the signifying chain backwards, being presented with phonemes and signifiers but not giving them signification until it punctuates back through the sentence or text. The biblical scholar who doubts this point needs only to attempt to translate Rom 5:16 from the Greek, in isolation from its surroundings.[28] Is the first part a negative statement, or a rhetorical question expecting the answer yes?[29] In the second part, does judgment come from one man or one trespass?[30] An implication of Lacan's insistence that desire plays out along metonymical lines is that desire never 'comes to rest' before we do;[31] desire is connected to words, and words never fully convey that which we desire; which is, ultimately, *das Ding* (that which words exclude). This all means that one is never really able to look back and say

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[26] Lacan has already mentioned that beauty can act to shield the subject from *das Ding* in *S7*, 268.

[27] *S7*, 361, and again on 386.

[28] The Greek text reads: καὶ οὐχ ὡς δι᾽ ἑνὸς ἁμαρτήσαντος τὸ δώρημα· τὸ μὲν γὰρ κρίμα ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς κατάκριμα, τὸ δὲ χάρισμα ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων εἰς δικαίωμα.

[29] Robert Jewett strikes against the norm and reads it as the latter, so that the sentence compares Adam and Christ instead of contrasting them, which is quite a major theological difference. Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 381-383.

[30] This one is a much less crucial difference, but still demonstrates the indiscernibility of the text without punctuation and context – of course this itself is hardly a controversial hermeneutical point!

[31] On *S7*, 361, and again on 395-396, Lacan uses Rev 10:10 as an illustration of the true nature of desire: the Other's response to our needs is the gift of a book to eat, as language is the infinite plane of our desire.

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'that is what I wanted' and 'that is what I did not want' (one is never able fully to un-confuse the Teacher's rant in Rom 7:7-25), until one has arrived at the end of the sentence – or, in the case of Antigone, one has been sentenced. When Antigone is in the cave her social world has ended: most of her family is dead, the law has judged her, the signifier 'brother' has been given its symbolic burial, and she will not talk to another human again. So, having committed to the signifier in the purest sense, and with it *das Ding*, she has found herself in the position of a final judgment, having articulated her desire, having achieved what she desired, and being able to look back and see her desire laid bare before her; and she knows (and the audience with her) that the real object of that desire truly was *das Ding*, death itself.

Antigone's potential impact upon the subject is similar to that of psychoanalysis. Antigone's commitment to her own desire, and the depiction of her as someone who gets exactly what she wants, able to look back from the perspective of a final judgment and know it, *know herself*,[32] means that the catharsis the subject experiences is one of witnessing humanity's true relation to the law: the law comes with *atē*, *das Ding*, and understanding one's own *autonomos*, one's desire and law, requires the acceptance of *das Ding* with it. The point Lacan makes that ties the effects of psychoanalysis and *Antigone* together is that analysis involves realising one's dependence upon and inheritance of *das Ding* as it structures the world in which one has existed as long as one has spoken.[33] In this sense, the goal of psychoanalysis is not to end alienation, but to help the subject to realise her alienation and indebtedness to the lack in language,

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[32] Ibid., 336.

[33] Ibid., 368-369.

in order thusly to adopt a position of intentional desire, after the realisation of lack. Antigone is able to have this effect upon the subject because she is one who has passed through death on our behalf, having passed through social/symbolic death before carnal death, revealing the truth of desire in a way that might affect the viewing subject.

Much more could be said of Lacan's interpretation of *Antigone*, upon which the entire thrust of the argument of *Seminar VII* turns;[34] particularly since the above sketch includes only the points Lacan makes that work towards the picture sketched here.[35] For now I turn to the question: what is Lacan's main

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[34] This is true not just in the sense of the aspects of his interpretation I have not discussed, but also in the wealth of opportunity to discuss and critique Lacan's Greek translation and interpretation, which, particularly in Chapter 21, is not nearly as solid as he claims. For example, on page 339 he seems to be completely unaware of the range of possible translations of the Greek genitive when he offers a particularly obscure reading of νόσων δ᾽ ἀμηχάνων φυγὰς (*Antigone*, 363) as 'an escape *into* impossible sickness' (italics original), and then claims that 'There is no way of ascribing another meaning to that phrase than the one I ascribe.' While his reading is somewhat plausible, it is considerably less likely than the more obvious reading of an escape *from* impossible sickness, which is attested in both the Loeb edition and in Sophocles, 'Antigone,' in *Sophocles I*, trans. by David Grene, eds. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore (London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 174. Having followed Lacan's reading of *Antigone* in the Greek in preparation for writing this chapter, it is apparent that he falters frequently in translation, but these errors do not affect his overall argument, and (as in the case cited here) usually concern his comments on Creon more than his understanding of Antigone.

[35] Important themes I have glossed over here include the relationship between *atē* and Antigone's family history (discussed more below); the voluntary nature of Creon's submission to his own *hamartia* (which is where a lot of Lacan's Greek translation and interpretation errors occur); the importance of *anamorphosis* in how *Antigone* affects the subject and the role of the chorus in acting on behalf of the audience to cause catharsis. Some of these will be discussed a bit more in what follows. Further, I have not yet paid any attention to the last two lectures of the seminar, in which Lacan summarises much of what he has said and offers some brief concluding thoughts. These will be referred to more in the discussion of some interpretations of Lacan's reading of *Antigone* that follow.

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point in his use of *Antigone*? I have attempted initially to sketch Lacan's reading

of *Antigone* above without much reference to secondary literature, because there

is so much disagreement over what exactly Lacan is doing with it. So let me now

examine a few of the possible interpretations, towards answering the question,

'What exactly is Lacan doing with Antigone?'

The only book-length English language commentary specifically on

Seminar VII provides the clearest picture, without embedding the text in a larger

philosophical or political project.[36] Marc DeKesel makes several observations

that will help me to untangle what Lacan was actually doing with Antigone.

Firstly, DeKesel observes that when Lacan sets out to discuss *Antigone*, he states

that he does so specifically 'with a view to finding something other than a lesson

in morality.'[37] Indeed, Lacan has spent much of the seminar arguing that all

notions of 'the good' are a sublimation of *das Ding* acting as a barrier to stop us

from accessing it, which precludes any interpretation of *Antigone* via Lacan as a

moral example.[38] But is Lacan using Antigone as any other sort of example, not

necessarily a moral one? Is Antigone an example for how to act in relation to

one's own desire, regardless of ethics? Or is she a political example? Again,

DeKesel thinks otherwise, correctly noting that Lacan uses Antigone not as an

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[36] Perhaps surprisingly, the two non-English commentaries on *S7* of which I am aware are not French, but German and Dutch. Tim Caspar Boehme, *Ethik und Geniessen. Kant und Lacan* (Vienna: Turia & Kant, 2005) and Paul Moyaert, *Ethiek en sublimatie: Over De ethiek van de psychoanalyse van Jacques Lacan* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1994). The former is an examination of the viability of Lacan's concept of *jouissance* for ethics, and the latter is an attempt to bring Lacan into the Dutch philosophical world by closely examining his ethics.

[37] Marc DeKesel, *Eros and Ethics: Read Jacques Lacan's Seminar VII*, trans. by Sigi Jöttkandt (Albany: State of New York University Press, 2009 [2001]), 212, 318. *S7*, 307.

[38] And thus also precludes the interpretation of Paul that follows from being one that places him in the school of moral influence theories of the atonement.

example, but as an image that comes into view slowly (anamorphosis), in a different way for each viewing subject, and has some sort of influence upon the subject, which Aristotle called catharsis.[39]

Eventually, after outlining everything that Lacan does in his interpretation of *Antigone*, DeKesel states that it is 'not a moral example but a sublimation.'[40] *Das Ding* is what lies beyond the second death (symbolic death: the death of symbolic, social, linguistic existence, the end of one's existence/memory as signifier). Antigone intentionally heads towards *das Ding*, aware that it means symbolic death; and when she gets there she is described as beautiful, because beauty is what lies at the barrier of the second death: 'the good' is what stops us from going towards the first death (somatic death), but the final barrier before the second death cannot be a signifier, because the second death is the end of the signifier. Lacan's opinion, based on clinical experience, is that what turns the subject away from seeking the second death is beauty; but Antigone radiates this very beauty, while nonetheless heading towards *das Ding*. This is what creates the ethical dimension in the play, which is not something one could transcribe or prescribe, but is simply this event of *Antigone*, and what it has the power to do to the subject. 'For Lacan, Antigone's *ethical* dimension is to be found in the viewer's aesthetic moment of catharsis.'[41] In Lacanian terms, this moment of catharsis is brought on because Antigone herself becomes a sublimation of *das Ding*, showing us what it really looks like when a human is able to symbolise desire, and this beauty shines through in the imaginary.

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[39] DeKesel, *Eros and Ethics*, 211-212.

[40] Ibid., 241.

[41] Ibid., 247. Italics original.

In summary, there are several elements that work together to make Lacan's *Antigone* into an object capable of instigating psychical change. Firstly, when Antigone commits to bury her brother despite the consequence of death, and even more so when she is permanently sealed in the cave, she becomes someone who, though living, is already dead – and she states that she already regards herself as dead.[42] In this way she sublimates *das Ding* by becoming a symbol for the way all humans, according to Lacan, already exist, since 'the idea that a human being, as a real being, is always already "dead" lies at the heart of the Lacanian theory of the subject. Being the subject/bearer of signifiers, human beings have left behind their real being and only live by grace of the signifiers that represent them.'[43] Secondly, in her decision to bury her brother Antigone is not only edging towards *das Ding* by committing to her somatic death, but also by instigating her own symbolic death – a Lacanian term for experiencing symbolic death being *passage à l'acte*.[44] Normally one reaches the second death long after the first, when one is no longer spoken of as signifier; but Antigone consciously makes a decision that she knows will result in her symbolic death, as she is excluded from the world of speaking beings, punished by the law and assured that she herself will not get the symbolic ritual burial she secured for her brother. Thirdly, her conscious decision for the first and second deaths is done *for the sake of a signifier*, and a signifier alone: her brother is already dead, and it is only his unique status as 'brother' that she states as her motive. She insists that this

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[42] Line 559, ἡ δ᾽ ἐμὴ ψυχὴ πάλαι τέθνηκεν.

[43] DeKesel, *Eros and Ethics*, 214. As DeKesel also notes, the idea of the human subject as 'dead already' is a theme that stretches back to Lacan's previous seminar, on Hamlet.

[44] The distinction between the two will be clarified below.

signifier remain in the Other through the symbolic rite of burial. Fourthly, when she is in the cave, she is actually able to look back on her desire from the perspective of a final judgment. In this moment her story represents for the audience the fact that *das Ding* is the object one desires once one understands one's own desire. So, lastly, she sublimates for the audience the realisation of *das Ding*. This is not meant to inspire the audience actively to seek the first and second deaths, but to realise that this is already the obverse of their desire, causing for each subject, in a different way, an increased awareness of the law already at work in them.

One last comment must be made here, and it is perhaps the most useful observation made by DeKesel: the great Lacanian maxim 'Do not give ground relative to your desire' *is not a Lacanian maxim*.[45] The purpose of Antigone in Lacan's reading is not to inspire one to pursue all that one desires, or even, in a deeper reading, to commit to the discovery of what one truly desires. Lacan's actual argument in this passage is that giving up on one's desire is the ultimate source of guilt: 'the only thing of which one can be guilty is of having given ground relative to one's desire.'[46] The contribution from *Antigone* here is a narrative of what it would look like actually not to give up on one's desire. Antigone, like psychoanalysis, does not help the subject to get what they really

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[45] DeKesel, *Eros and Ethics*, 262. He refers directly to Simon Critchley treating this phrase as a Lacanian maxim, but it is also frequently treated as a maxim by Slavoj Žižek and Alain Badiou. Alenka Zupančič treats it as a maxim throughout *Ethics of the Real: Kant and Lacan* (London: Verso, 2011 [2000]), particularly 256-259. Badiou, in *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. by Peter Hallward (London: Verso, 2012 [1993]), 47, says that with this phrase Lacan 'proposed his ethical maxim.'

[46] *S7*, 392.

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want, but rather helps the subject to have a more accurate view of desire as something eternally dependant upon lack, eternally castrated by the lack of *das Ding*.

1.3. What is Žižek Doing with Antigone?

Slavoj Žižek and Alenka Zupančič use Antigone as a model for 'the act,' in similar ways.[47] This is not a connection that is overt in the three chapters in which Lacan reads *Antigone*, but it does appear in the final chapter of the seminar. Here, leading up to the statement that the only thing of which one can be guilty is having given ground relative to one's desire,[48] he says that tragedy (meaning *Antigone* in specific) poses a question 'with the force of a Last Judgment' that otherwise can only be asked in the context of psychoanalysis: 'Have you acted in conformity with the desire that is in you?'[49] It is quite clear from these final pages of *Seminar VII* that Lacan sees Antigone as one who has successfully 'acted,' because her act is the one that poses this question to the audience. This use of the term 'act' is consistent with Lacan's subsequent development of it, in which an act is something that actually sends a message to the Other.[50]

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[47] Zupančič does not discuss Paul or add enough to Žižek's reading of *Antigone* to merit a full discussion here, beyond mention. She uses Antigone as one example among many, places a strong emphasis on the importance of the *passage à l'acte* in leading to the act, and is reading Lacan synthetically with Kant (as Žižek does with Hegel) in order to ground and elaborate her ethical/political theory. Nonetheless, her book *Ethics of the Real* has helped greatly in informing this chapter.

[48] *S7*, 392, and again on 395.

[49] Ibid., 386.

[50] His understanding of the act largely develops between seminars 14 and 20, with *S15* devoted to it specifically. Marcelle Marini articulates Lacan's definition of the act as something that 'entails

Lacan specifically (but briefly) contrasts the effects of Antigone's act with the demands of what modern theologians might call 'Empire:' Antigone knows her desire and acts upon it, whereas when Alexander or Hitler conquer new places they essentially tell the people 'We have liberated you from such and such, and so you need not act upon your desire for rebellion now.'[51] In an act one acts upon desire to send a message to the Other, but Lacan's view here of Empire is similar to his view of tyranny in 'Kant with Sade:' a tyrant is one who attempts to enslave the desire of the Other.[52] Antigone poses the question of desire from the perspective of a Last Judgment (from the perspective of the Other), but Empire tells you that your desire can wait.

It is also important to note that in this section Lacan is specifically discussing ethics. He begins it by pointing out that ethics is the question of one's actions, and then proceeds to discuss *Antigone* and the act.[53] However, DeKesel's prescient reminder remains correct: 'For Lacan, Antigone's *ethical* dimension is

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a signifying doubling that allows for an insertion of the subject in a chain where he inscribes himself—or else it entails the institution of a signifier.' Marcelle Marini, *Jacques Lacan: The French Context*, trans. by Anne Tomiche (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992 [1986]), 206-207.

[51] *S7*, 387. The word 'Empire' is often used by theologians to denote state powers of domination in general. For example, Richard Horsley's book *Religion and Empire: People, Power, and the Life of the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003) is about various times in history when religion has risen up in opposition to 'Empire.' He bluntly argues for a parallel between Rome as Empire and America as Empire in conclusion to his *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 137-150. N. T. Wright uses it throughout his chapter on Paul's relation to the Roman Empire, referring to the 'question of "Paul and Empire"' on page 1277 of the chapter 'The Lion and the Eagle: Paul in Caesar's Empire,' in *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (London: SPCK, 2013), 1271-1319.

[52] *Écrits*, 661-663.

[53] *S7*, 383-387.

to be found in the viewer's aesthetic moment of catharsis.'[54] *Antigone* has an ethical dimension, in its presentation of an act; but this ethical dimension is not in Antigone's act as a model, but in Antigone's act as the source of a question for the subject. It is even proper to distance this question from Antigone herself: it is not that *Antigone* presents a question which, when separated from Antigone and asked in a separate conversation retains its meaning; but, rather, the question as Lacan words it is one way of putting *the* question that *is* Antigone. This is what he means by suggesting reading *Antigone* more as the subject of anamorphosis than catharsis: what Antigone's act means for the subject is something that comes into view slowly, and differently, for each subject. In summary, Antigone's act, through the cathartic/anamorphotic power of tragic drama, poses for the subject the questions of their own action and desire, opened up by presenting Antigone's act directly in relation to *das Ding*. In this way Antigone's act affects the subject with a demand opposite to the demand of Empire: *Antigone* poses the psychoanalytic question of your own desire, and 'Empire' demands that you not ask the question.[55]

Žižek first outlines his reading of *Antigone* and the act in 1992's *Enjoy Your Symptom!*[56] This begins with a description of the same clinical paradox

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[54] DeKesel, *Eros and Ethics*, 247.

[55] Note again that this use of the signifier 'Empire' is not Lacanian or Žižekian, but serves to tie both of them to theological discourse.

[56] Slavoj Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!* (London: Routledge, 2008 [1992]), 34-76. He also writes about *Antigone* in the short introduction to his recent translation, Slavoj Žižek (trans.), *Antigone* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), xi-xxv. Here he responds to the other main philosophical readings of *Antigone* (those of Hegel, Lacan, Kierkegaard and Judith Butler), and concludes by suggesting how he would rewrite *Antigone* for a modern audience, before accomplishing some of this in his own translation. His argument in *Enjoy Your Symptom!*, though dated, provides a much more in-

described at the very beginning of the first chapter above: that in psychoanalysis the subject speaks, 'remembering' trauma, but at the same time these utterances '*make* the subject what it asserts to be;' the remembrance of the past 'transforms the very place from which the subject speaks.'[57] Žižek quite rightly compares this with speech-act theory, so popular at the time of Lacan's earlier writings,[58] but clarifies that from a psychoanalytic perspective speech-acts gain their power from the expression of a real trauma being brought out of repression through its symbolic enunciation (thus sending a message to the Other). Since Lacan's view of the subject is one of Saussurean synchronic structure, a relation of repressed and conscious signifiers in the present, the Lacanian psychoanalytic (speech-)act is not so much a matter of remembering and declaring the historical truth of an event, but of speaking the signifiers presently repressed in the unconscious. Žižek emphasises his Lacanian/Hegelian view of the subject, in which the 'true subject' is not the essence one believes oneself to be, but is found instead in exactly the imaginary-symbolic discursive form in which one presents oneself: 'wearing a mask actually *makes* us what we feign to be.'[59] This widens the extent to which for Žižek an act is not just a posture or pretence, but consists exactly of taking the

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depth use of what *Antigone* actually says, and does so in a way that follows Lacan more closely, thus being more useful here.

[57] Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!*, 37.

[58] Ibid., 36-37., discussing J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962). For a collection of articles outlining and explifying the use of speech-act theory in biblical studies, by the leading proponent of this approach, see Anthony Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics: Collected Works with New Essays* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), 51-150. Thiselton also supervised an original and precise formulation of the use of speech act theory in biblical interpretation, in the doctoral thesis of Richard S. Briggs, *Words in Action: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001).

[59] Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!*, 39.

very pretence seriously as the true location of action. That is to say, an act does not consist of trying to escape the symbolic through *doing* something, but instead consists precisely of realising how the symbolic was always the only domain in which we can do anything at all. Here Žižek is quite faithful to a core Lacanian idea: that the real is not hiding in some magical deep interior that exists in a concrete form to be revealed (as one could read Jung), but rather the real already exists in plain sight, in what we had been saying but not taking seriously – saying without realising we were saying it.

So Žižek looks at three Rossellini films that in his view treat the subject this way – as subjects whose existence is located in the very domain from which their problems arrive, the Other – the last of which, *Stromboli*, he uses as an example of someone who reaches 'the proper dimension of the act.'[60] Like with Zupančič, this begins by tying the act to the *passage à l'acte* and Antigone: the protagonist (called Karin) commits social/symbolic suicide, cutting off all real links with her social world.[61] Whereas in French psychiatry contemporary to Lacan the phrase *passage à l'acte* referred to a sudden negative reaction, usually suicide or another violent act,[62] Lacan developed it into a notion of symbolic death (the second death), in which one suddenly does something to extricate oneself from the Other.[63] For Lacan this is something specifically passive, in

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[60] Ibid., 49. Žižek discusses *Stromboli* on pages 48-53.

[61] Alenka Zupančič opens the argument of *Ethics of the Real*, 7-20, by finding a parallel for the Lacanian *passage à l'acte* in Kant's ethics. As can be seen on p. 20, she depends upon Žižek for her understanding of the *passage à l'acte*.

[62] J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac Books, 1988 [1973]), 5.

[63] Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1996), 136-137; *S10*, 113-130.

which one is *caused* to pass through symbolic death – thus it is not a 'proper act,' in which one *chooses* to send a message to the Other.[64] This posits Lacan's understanding of the *passage à l'acte* as opposed to the traditional psychiatric one, because suicide is specifically a successful act: it is 'the only successful act,'[65] because it sets out to send the message to the Other 'you no longer exist,' and the message is received and obeyed by the Other. Conversely, in the *passage à l'acte*, one is put through symbolic death, in 'an exit from the symbolic network, a dissolution of the social bond.'[66] It is a last resort, prompted by anxiety, in which one 'rushes and topples off the stage, out of the scene'[67] through a 'flight from the Other into the dimension of the real.'[68]

In Žižek's interpretation, Karin's act of symbolic suicide should be opposed to real suicide: real suicide sends a message to the Other, but symbolic suicide cuts one off from the Other.[69] Since it is an act cutting oneself off from the Other, a *passage à l'acte*, whatever emerges afterwards is not a result of planning, but is simply the result of the act itself: there is a simple 'No!' said to the symbolic, and a new state that emerges from a new perspective is 'essentially a by-product.'[70] Žižek combines the act and the *passage à l'acte* in his understanding of Karin, and of Antigone, in suggesting that their acts were

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[64] Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, 1-2, states that Lacan saw the *passage à l'acte* as 'not a proper act.'

[65] Jacques Lacan, *Television: A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1990 [1974]), 43. 'Suicide is the only act that can succeed without misfiring.'

[66] Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, 137.

[67] *S10*, 115.

[68] Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, 137.

[69] Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!*, 50.

[70] Ibid., 51-53.

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examples of the *passage à l'acte*. This means reading the *passage à l'acte* as something that can be consciously chosen, in the same way that suicide can be, despite Lacan having sought specifically to distinguish the two: suicide, which is a successful consciously chosen act, and the *passage à l'acte*, which is an unsuccessful passive action.[71] However, while the former is what Lacan directly attributes to Antigone, the latter is a concept Lacan had not yet developed when he delivered *Seminar VII*. It might not be defensible to go as far as Žižek and tie the *passage à l'acte* and the act together; but it is reasonable to claim that Antigone's actively chosen symbolic death, though not a *passage à l'acte* (because it was active), had the effects of the death of the Other and the reconstitution of her symbolic field in line with her own desire that Lacan would later describe as the effects of the *passage à l'acte*. Thus, when Žižek and Zupančič describe the effects of the *passage à l'acte* they are quite legitimately expanding upon the implications of an ethics that mimics Antigone; and perhaps even doing so in a way that Lacan himself would have done, had he considered Antigone to be an example of recommendable action rather than the source of a psychoanalytic question, and had he been writing about Antigone after developing his understandings of the *passage à l'acte* (*Seminar X*) and the act (*Seminar XV*).

I will proceed by using the term 'symbolic death' to include the implications of the *passage à l'acte* described by the later Lacan, but will not employ the term *passage à l'acte* as though it can refer to a chosen and successful act, because this is clearly not what Lacan ever meant by it, despite describing in better detail some of the effects that Antigone's act had. So, to be more precise

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[71] This criticism is made by Yannis Stavrakakis, 'The Lure of Antigone: Aporias of an Ethics of the Political,' in *Umbr(a): Ignorance of the Law*, 1 (2003), 122-125.

with Žižek's reading of *Antigone*, Antigone is an example of a successful act in which she chooses to undergo symbolic death, because she knows that her chosen fidelity to the signifier 'brother' and to its signified of *das Ding* means being cut off from the Other (the state, what remains of her family, and all social relations). In this faithfulness to the signifier and death she also encounters the real, evident in the text from her 'radiance,' and from her ability to know her desire from the perspective of a last judgment. She is a 'figure of fidelity,'[72] whose act Lacan reads to have a psychoanalytically transformative effect upon the subject.

When reading Žižek describing the act we find something very Pauline that is not present in his reading of Paul. Whereas his reading of Paul inevitably slides into his reading of the Gospels as soon as he gets close to soteriology, seeing Pauline salvation as effected by Christ's cry of dereliction (the symbolic realisation of the lack in the other through the enunciation of this lack coming from the incarnate voice of the Other itself), when Žižek describes the act he is describing exactly the Pauline Christian's experience of Christ, so *this would be a much more natural vehicle for Žižek's reading of the Pauline Christian subject*, and would not require a post-Pauline jump to Gospel tradition not necessarily known by Paul. Take for example this extended quote from the text I am currently discussing:

> What lies ahead of Karin is undoubtedly what, in a vulgarly pathetic way, we call "a new life": sooner or later, she will return to the village, make peace with her husband or return to the mainland and assume new symbolic mandates, a new place in the community, in one way or another, she will begin again to be active—but the film ends *before*

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[72] Zupančič, *Ethics of the Real*, 205.

> Karin finds her place in a new symbolic identity (or reassumes the old one), *before* the new performative, the new "founding word." There is of course something exceptional, excessive even, in such an encounter with the Real, with the abyss of the "abstract freedom": it takes place only in the utmost intimacy of what some call the "mystic experience." The emphasis of Lacan is, however, that such a passage through the "zero point" of symbolic suicide is at work in *every* act worthy of this name. What is namely an act? Why is suicide the act *par excellence*? The act differs from an active intervention (action) in that it radically transforms its bearer (agent): the act is not simply something I "accomplish"—after an act, I'm literally "not the same as before." In this sense, we could say that the subject "undergoes" the act ("passes through" it), rather than "accomplishes" it: in it, the subject is annihilated and subsequently reborn (or not)… I put at stake everything, including myself, my symbolic identity; the act is therefore always a "crime," a "transgression," namely of the limit of the symbolic community to which I belong.[73]

Žižek also describes Karin's act in Hegelian terms, as a negation of negation when she cries out to God in frustration before fainting, then exclaims God's name while staring at nature in the morning, thus realising the lack in the Other but negating that negation by reaffirming the master signifier nonetheless.[74] This parallels Žižek's interpretation of Christ on the cross; but this Hegelian interpretation of the Lacanian act is not necessary for Paul. The act as Žižek describes it in the above quote is already sufficient to account for the Pauline subject, without Hegel or the Gospels. The Pauline Christian subject faithfully participates in Christ's faithful suffering death, which Paul states happened in such a way as to place Christ (and the Christian 'in Christ,' crucified with him)

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[73] Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!*, 50-51, italics original.

[74] Ibid., 50.

under the curse of the Law at the moment of crucifixion.[75] The Christian subject has also been affected to commit to this symbolic death through an encounter with the traumatic real, which will be discussed below. The subject passes through this act not entirely as a result of planned action (agency), but as something the subject undergoes, in a mystical experience, preceding a new founding act (the affirmation of a new master signifier, in the proclamation *kyrios Iēsous*, 'Jesus is lord'). This all will be argued in more detail in the next part of this chapter, 'St Paul's Christ,' with reference to modern Pauline scholarship.

Part of this possible oversight can be explained by asking the question of the identity of the Other in Paul's theology. The simplest historical reading is that the Other is discussed in theology under the signifier 'God,' with the Lacanian provision that in addressing the Other directly as God we actually address the unconscious, which is where the discourse of the Other takes place (where there is still prohibition even though 'God is dead'); thus, 'God is unconscious.'[76] However, it should be evident that in Paul the Other, as always, goes under many names (there is not just one master signifier for any subject). 'Rome,' 'Caesar,' '*Torah*,' 'honour,' 'family' and 'nature' are all also historical master signifiers, as cultural concepts that occupied the place of the Other in Paul's world. So while one might need to look from Paul to the Synoptic Christ to find the cry of dereliction, and with it a handy theological instance of the symbolic inscription of the lack in the Other, it is actually quite simple to find symbolic death, precipitating the act, within Paul's theology itself – when taken in historical context.

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[75] Gal 3:13.

[76] *S11*, 59.

In order to situate this argument properly, there are some problems that have arisen with the interpretation of the Lacanian Act by Žižek (primarily) and Zupančič, which should be discussed. Firstly, there is the common accusation of infidelity made against Žižek, Zupančič, Badiou and all radical leftist Lacanians: Lacan specifically did not advocate radical politics, and is even sometimes described as politically conservative.[77] There is an irrelevant point here, but also a legitimate one. There is certainly no reason why Lacanian theory should not be used in ways Lacan did not intend; but this criticism does lead to the more pressing concern, that a political reading of Lacan on *Antigone* is actually irreconcilable with Lacan's intent. As Matthew Sharpe points out, Lacan in *Seminar VII* not only takes an explicitly neutral stance towards the political discourse, but within this context Creon should be read as a representative of this discourse, which Antigone opposes.[78] Antigone's act is one that Lacan reads in line with his ambivalence to politics, as something happening beyond that realm, not opposed to it or in order to alter it. Antigone's act does not change the symbolic/political order Creon represents, it only attains for her some autonomy

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[77] For example, Tomšič is forced to begin his book on Lacan and Marx by stating that any attempt to 'turn Lacan into a leftist thinker' is 'immediately countered by a wealth of biographical trivia and more or less trustworthy anecdotes regarding Lacan's political preferences, which, it is said, inclined towards Charles de Gaulle's conservatism.' Samo Tomšič, *The Capitalist Unconscious* (London: Verso, 2015), 1. Alain Badiou and Élisabeth Roudinesco debate the legitimacy of the use of Lacan for far-left or radical leftist politics in Alain Badiou and Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan Past and Present: A Dialogue*, trans. by Jason E. Smith (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2014 [2012]), 19-30.

[78] Matthew Sharpe, 'Lacan's *Antigone*, Žižek's Antigone, Psychoanalysis and Politics,' paper presented at the 13th International Conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas at the University of Cyprus, <https://lekythos.library.ucy.ac.cy/bitstream/handle/10797/6176/ISSEIproceedings-Matthew%20Sharpe.pdf?sequence=1> [accessed 22.11.2016], 7-8.

from it, in a way that affects the viewer.[79] Of course, even this does not demolish Žižek's reading: there is no reason why one should not read *Antigone* via Lacanian psychoanalysis in a more political way than Lacan, and, further, no reason one should not even use Antigone as a model of the structure of an act that Lacan did not specifically link to her. The implication that Lacanian readings of *Antigone* should follow Lacan's 'original intention' treats Lacan himself as an omniscient master, an Other who knows – and this is a position Lacan explicitly rejected both when he dissolved his school before his death, and when he accused the radical political students Badiou praises of only 'looking for a new master.'

Another criticism reveals how much closer to Paul Žižek should be. As summarised in the Introduction, in *The Ticklish Subject* Žižek criticises Badiou's reading of Paul for failing to account for the Lacanian death drive, instead focusing entirely on life and resurrection.[80] I then discussed Badiou's reading of Paul in more detail, and noted that he does indeed focus on the resurrection of Christ to the exclusion of the death of Christ, rejecting the idea that death ('morbidity') is a major theme of Paul's theology, (earning Badiou much criticism from a host of biblical scholars).[81] However, almost immediately following his criticism of Badiou's reading of the Pauline event for ignoring the domain of the death drive, Žižek goes on to criticise Badiou's view of the subject in general for being insufficiently Lacanian by omitting the death drive, *and does not go on to*

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[79] Stavrakakis, 'The Lure of Antigone,' 118-120.

[80] Chapter 1, section 4.1, above. Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject* (London: Verso, 2008 [1999]), 176-180.

[81] Discussed at length in Chapter 1, section 4.1, mostly in response to Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. by Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 61-74.

discuss how this should affect his own reading of Paul.[82]   Instead, having found

the death drive in Paul only in the role of death in Rom 7, he counters Badiou's

vision of the event with his Antigone/act/*passage-à-l'acte* trope, rightly

concluding that, against Badiou, for Lacan 'a Truth-Event can operate only

against the background of the traumatic encounter with the undead/monstrous

Thing,'[83] and that Badiou is ultimately led to 'oppose the full revolutionary

passage à l'acte.'[84]   This is something that Žižek's Paul never really does,

because he either takes the subject through a Hegelian sublation of law/death and

law/sin as law/love, or he is dependent upon Žižek's reading of the Gospels for a

salvific effect of Jesus on the cross, symbolically declaring God destitute of God.

The first of these options depends upon a weak reading of Rom 7, as argued in the

previous chapter, and the second depends on the error of reading Paul through the

Gospels, thus failing to account for what Paul might actually imagine the

Christian subject in his own time to be.[85]   In order to solve these problems, but

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[82] Žižek, *Ticklish Subject*, 184-191.

[83] Ibid., 191.

[84] Ibid., 195.

[85] On 2.11.2016, at Birkbeck, University of London, I asked Žižek exactly the above question: are
your readings of Paul and Christ completely separate, or does your reading of Paul depend upon
him being aware of the cry of dereliction as it eventually made its way into the Gospels? He
restated his reading of Christ's death, but said that he understands that Paul wrote first. I asked
him whether this then meant that there was something in Christ's death itself that carried with it
the effects of the cry of dereliction, and he answered that indeed this is contained within the notion
of God being crucified. Earlier in his lecture he had stated that the cry of dereliction is his 'one
piece of evidence' for his reading of Christ. Thus it is the aim of this chapter to expand upon the
notion of the psychoanalytic effects of the cry of dereliction being contained within Paul's earlier
understanding of Christ's death, and to show that it is not just the effect of the idea of 'God
crucified,' but the effect of the power of the narrative of Christ's *pistis* to traumatic death. This is
in aid of Žižek's programme, not opposed to it, showing how the cry of dereliction need not be his
one piece of evidence for his reading of Christ, because its implications are already contained in

retain the place of Paul in Žižek's programme, I formalise the structure of Antigone's act (without misappropriating the *passage à l'acte*), and then look at how this helps us to understand Paul's vision of the Christian subject.

1.4. The Structure of Antigone's Act

Instead of arguing that Antigone herself is a model for the political act, I suggest that the cathartic/transformative event Lacan describes in his discussion of *Antigone* is the same event Paul witnesses in his discussion of the nature of Christian subjectivity. Aiming to do no more than describe the Pauline Christian event, without suggesting any normative imperative for Christian life, this should be regarded as pure psychoanalytic history. If early Christians were transformed by symbolically participating in a symbolic death like Antigone's (but this time followed by symbolic resurrection, the immutability of the signifier as such shining through even more clearly), what does this mean for modern Christian life? That is a secondary question, which is not my concern here, because it requires a wider theory of Scripture and inspiration, and here I merely offer a psychoanalytic interpretation of a historical text/event.

So I join with Žižek and Zupančič, and read Lacan's *Antigone* in light of the act, aided by Lacan's further thoughts on symbolic death that emerged through his separate notion of the *passage à l'acte*. However, rather than use Antigone for an example of how one should choose to act, she is an example of how a narrative of an act, specifically of faithfulness to a signifier and to symbolic then physical death, can result in the transformation of others. Thus, if Christ's act based in

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Paul's letters; particularly when read alongside Žižek's understanding of *Antigone* and the act. The lecture was titled 'Between Philosophy and Psychoanalysis,' and a recording is available online at <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/bih/podcasts> [accessed 5.12.2016].

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symbolic death led others to experience symbolic death and be able to act, then this process fits snugly with Lacan's reading of *Antigone*. Whether or not her act is fully paradigmatic of 'the act' in Žižek's politics, her faithfulness to her own desire and symbolic death, and the effect it potentially has on the subject, is paradigmatic of the phenomenon witnessed in Paul's letters.

What is the structure of Antigone's act, that so impacts the subject? Conveniently for this study, Antigone's act is characterised, on several levels, by *pistis*, fidelity.[86] She is a figure of fidelity to the signifier 'brother,' insisting upon preserving the place of this signifier in the symbolic through ritual. She is also, quite uniquely, a figure who (unlike Sade and unlike the Teacher) manages not to give way on her own desire, being faithful to both her symbolic and physical deaths, since both are implicit in her fidelity to the signifier 'brother,' acting as the signified of her fidelity to him. This relation of fidelity can be formulated with the symbol (↔), since Antigone is faithful to these things, but also through this fidelity comes to assume the position of a final judgment, knowing what is truly signified by her faithfulness to the signifier; thus the arrow points in both directions, since the relationship is reciprocal. What she is faithful to, in 'brother' and the first and second deaths that this faithfulness implies, is the Signifier itself, *qua* signifier. In Lacanian theory, the entirety of the symbolic is a world of signifying chains masking the horror of *das Ding* – a world the subject enters as soon as a baby cries out, trying to use language to acquire or hide the lack of a *jouissance* that will never be, the fullness of the world before language/desire. Antigone manages to be faithful to a signifier that is no more than a signifier itself

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[86] The translation of *pistis* will be discussed briefly below.

('my brother is my brother'), but at the same time faithful to a signifier whose signified is the death that she now walks towards voluntarily, out of fidelity, knowing that she will wind up sealed in a cave, symbolically dead but still breathing. 'She pushes to the limit the realization of something that might be called the pure and simple desire of death as such. She incarnates that desire.'[87] Thus Antigone is 'a pure agent of death drive [in] her unconditional demand for the symbolic ritual to be performed.'[88] This can justly be called an encounter with the real. By so incarnating the drive, she is confronted with the *objet a*, a signifier for *das Ding* that she would never otherwise encounter directly. A representation of Antigone's Act begins to look like this:

$$\underline{S_1} \quad \longleftrightarrow \quad \frac{\underline{S_2}}{a} \uparrow$$

Antigone is represented by the signifier S_1. She is in a reciprocal relation of fidelity and effect with S_2, 'brother *qua* signifier,' whose signified is the implied death at which her fidelity aims, the *Ding* that is normally excluded within the symbolic (in what Lacan would call an 'extimate' relationship).[89] Since a result of the reciprocity of this relationship is that Antigone is incarnating the desire of

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[87] *S7*, 348.

[88] Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (London: Verso, 2012), 84.

[89] Note that the *objet petit a* is not a later term for *das Ding*, but they are closely related concepts. The former can be regarded as a signifier for an instance of the latter, but is tied even closer to language itself (it is that which remains excluded by every signifying unit), rather than being primarily concerned with maternal *jouissance* and the second death. Since I am here constructing a formulation I use *a*, as does Lacan in his mathemes, and also because I am discussing a particular instance of the death drive as what is implied by but not specifically contained within the signifier 'brother.'

death as such, and she is actually consciously aware of death as the implied object of her desire, there is an arrow up from *a* to S_2, to represent that here the signified is affecting the meaning of the signifier, and becoming known through the signifier.

Lacanians will recognise the developing schematic. The signifier 'Antigone' is the signifier that 'represents the subject for another signifier.'[90] Its signified is Antigone as barred subject, that which is represented by Antigone's 'I,' but only exists as alienated within language. Thus below the bar one can put $\math$ for the subject Antigone, with a downward arrow demonstrating that Antigone as subject is contingent upon her alienated linguistic understanding of herself, which is here in relation to the signifier 'brother' and its signified of her own death drive, excluded as *a* from the signifier 'brother' as set in the signifying chains of Creon's state law and religious rites. Of course, the alienated subject of Antigone, the lack that is contained within Antigone's own understanding of herself, is not what comes to desire death. Desire is the desire of the Other, existing on the part of Antigone's self-understanding, her ego-ideal; so it is not $\math$ that desires *a*, but S_1 that is in relation to S_2. There is a double bar (//) between $\math$ and *a* to show that it is not Antigone's 'pure self' coming to desire death, but the signifier that represents the subject for another signifier which has as its signified an instance of *das Ding*. So, here is the complete schematic:

$$\downarrow \frac{S_1}{\$} \quad \overleftrightarrow{//} \quad \frac{S_2}{a} \uparrow$$

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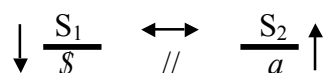
[90] This is Lacan's definition of the signifier, as given, for instance, in *S11*, 207. 'A signifier is that which represents a subject for another signifier.'

This is a representation of the discourse in which Antigone's act occurs. It is a discourse Antigone enters through her symbolic death, in which her faithfulness to S_2, due to its new position with respect to Creon's law (and not due to any action of her own), substitutes that which was the signified of 'brother' with Antigone's own symbolic (and then physical) death. It is also the 'discourse of the master' as Lacan formulates it in *Seminar XVII*;[91] the only difference is that instead of the subject being in a subservient/receptive relation to the Other, S_2, Antigone's *pistis* creates a reciprocal relation, made possible by her incarnation of the death drive. This is an appropriate appropriation of the discourse of the master, because it is the very discourse in which Lacan believes the psychoanalytic treatment to transpire, with the unconscious of the analysand putting the analyst into the position of the Other-supposed-to-know, through transference; and Lacan believed the effect of *Antigone* to be analogous to the clinic.

This is the structure not only of the discursive position of Antigone's act, but also of the subject who views the play *Antigone*, and through catharsis identifies with her, coming to know something of his/her own relation to *das Ding* through identifying with Antigone in the cave, the place of 'final judgment.' Thus the audience member is also represented by *$*, because in both cases (the fictional Antigone and the real audience member) they are represented by S_1, 'Antigone.' So the discourse of the master, with the central term in the top half adjusted to (↔) to represent *pistis*, is my model of the subject's participation in Antigone's act, and also in her passage to it, through the real.

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[91] *S17*, 29-32.

2. St Paul's Christ

In his *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma*, one of Marcus Pound's claims is that psychoanalysis can be read as analogous to faith.[92] Although his argument is ultimately concerned with using Lacan and Kierkegaard to show that 'the Sacred Mass may be seen in terms of a social form of analysis,'[93] on the way to this he provides an excellent summary of Lacan's reading of *Antigone*, describing it in much the same way as above, and then comparing Antigone's act (and the psychoanalytic effect it elicits) with Christ's: 'Christ assumes the status of the sublime object, short-circuiting the real and the symbolic, and in bringing the real into the symbolic he *traumatizes* us… In reading the Gospels one is purged through the confrontation with the real.'[94] Thus he understands the Christian subject's relationship to Christ to be one wherein the subject is affected in a way similar to the viewer of *Antigone*, via the reading of the Gospels (or, in the case of early Christians, via the *viewing* of the Gospels).[95] My thesis here is that this effect was so strong for the earliest Christians, with whom Paul interacted, that it formed the basis of Paul's understanding of Christian existence.

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[92] Marcus Pound, *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma* (London: SCM, 2007) and *Žižek: a (very) critical introduction* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008), 125-126.

[93] Pound, *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma*, 142.

[94] Ibid., 114. To be more specific, the point of the discussion of *Antigone* in this chapter of Pound's work is to show that Lacanian psychoanalysis, not ego-psychology, is the proper framework through which to understand Kierkegaard's reading of Abraham, and then to claim that the subjective change (assumption of desire, religious subjectivity) that they find in Abraham and Antigone is also the interpretative action that founds the Church – which Pound finds replicated in the sacrament of the Sacred Mass.

[95] See n. 2, above.

In his summary of Lacan's reading of *Antigone* Pound points out something not yet emphasised here: the fact that Antigone's *atē* is a fate specifically *received from her family*. The doom that awaits Antigone is one that results from her location not just as sister to her brother, but as member of the family of Oedipus. In this sense *atē* means more than *das Ding*, as it is not just death in the abstract, but the death that was already sealed by one's history before one was even born. So when Pound addresses her situation, he says that 'this is precisely the predicament Antigone faces, compelled to act by the collective guilt of the family, the crimes of Oedipus.'[96] In this dimension of Antigone's embrace of the situation into which she was born, her fidelity to the Other that is her symbolic position within her own family, there is a parallel not just with Christian incarnational and atonement theology (wherein Christ takes the form and guilt of humanity), but also with Paul's specific presentations of Christ.[97] Paul refers to Christ as being 'born of a woman, born under the law' (Gal 4:4), meaning in Lacanian terms that in Christ's very birth he enters the world in a symbolic construction not his own – Christ is born into the alienation in language and in one's family history that constitutes human subjectivity. Thus placed in human

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[96] Pound, *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma*, 107.

[97] Antigone, born into the *atē* of her family, might make a fine parallel for Christian understandings of the incarnation (Christ born into the *atē* of humanity), but one should nonetheless be careful to be more specific when drawing comparisons with Pauline Christology, since Paul did not mention the virgin birth and there is debate over what the incarnation meant to Paul. See James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Marking: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1989 [1980]), 98-128 and 163-212, or Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), especially 500-512 for the question of Christ's pre-existence in Paul. Further, one should also not presume that any of one's assumptions about the nature of Christian atonement theology are necessarily also Pauline.

symbolic/linguistic networks, receiving the law, it is also possible for Paul to say that 'on our behalf [God] made the one who did not know sin to be sin' (2 Cor 5:21).[98] Like Antigone, Paul's Christ is born into the symbolic world, the law, the sin and guilt of his forebears; and, put even stronger, like Antigone he chooses to incarnate this doom and 'become sin' (Paul), to 'incarnate the desire of death as such' (Lacan).[99] I follow this line of thought more below.

For Pound the purpose of this is to show how Christian religion and sacramental practice can affect the subject in ways analogous to *Antigone* and psychoanalysis. Here our aims are quite similar, except that this study is not primarily concerned with the present. Instead of using Lacan's *Antigone* to argue that religious experience can be positively psychoanalytically transformative, I instead argue that the experience of Christ that Paul described *was* psychoanalytically transformative. This assumes as a starting point the reading of Christ via *Antigone* that Pound provides. The story of Christ received by the early Church was one in which he assumes the death drive, a desire for the real itself, demonstrating a faithfulness clearly paralleling Antigone. However, it is the

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[98] For Pound, *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma*, 113-115, Christ is born into a pre-existent *atē* of a 'family drama,' which presumably means his relationship to the Father, and he also receives the *atē* of human mortality as a consequence of 'the fall (Gen 2:17).' This certainly fits in with a Radical Orthodox or Catholic Lacanian reading of Christ, but is not the exact approach taken here, where I am instead seeking to show that Antigone maps onto *Paul's* understanding of Christ (for whom Christ clearly partakes in the the *atē* of his human family, and for whom Genesis is not necessarily witness to a fall narrative as Augustine later understood it). In 2 Cor 5:21 we also see Paul most clearly verbalising how Christ sublimates *das Ding*: he literally has him 'become sin.'

[99] Note that saying Christ 'incarnates the desire of death as such' is quite different from claiming that Christ desired death – the former is merely saying that, like Antigone, in wilfully embracing *das Ding* Christ incarnates the desire that is specifically human: the drive towards and around *das Ding* that results from existence in language.

Pauline formulation of this specifically, even more than that contained in the Gospels, which justifies this comparison; because it is in Paul's letters that these very 'Antigonine' elements constantly reappear when Paul discusses the transformation that he believes has happened to the post-conversion Christian subject.

The parallels between Christ and Antigone that Pound points out are specifically clear in Paul's letters: Christ is born into human *atē* and commits to it, embodying the death drive, thus bringing the real into the symbolic. However, Paul goes even further, providing a direct link to the very aspect of Antigone's character that causes catharsis (her fidelity), in the way he summarises the narrative of Christ with the signifier *pistis*. Pound points out that like Antigone, Christ incarnates the death drive in his relentless push to Jerusalem, the 'city that kills prophets' (Matt 23:37).[100] This persistent indefatigability of Christ's faithfulness to God's plan is something typically associated with the Gospels, where Christ repeats the maxim 'not my will but yours' on the way to the cross.[101] While this is perhaps most overt in Mark, it has recently been seen by some apocalyptic Paul scholars as an essential core to Paul's gospel as well; and, not only a core to it, but so key that it is even present in Paul's writing where it is not overtly stated.

In Chapter 1 I briefly mentioned the work of Richard Hays, as an early example of a scholar building upon the findings of E. P. Sanders at the beginning of the 'New Perspectives on Paul.' Hays is now best known for what is often regarded as the main idea contained within his doctoral thesis: that the phrase

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[100] Pound, *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma*, 113.

[101] Matt 26:39, Mark 14:36 and Luke 22:42. See also John 6:38.

pistis Christou does not mean 'faith in Christ,' but 'the faith *of* Christ.' However, this was not actually the main point of his thesis. In his introduction to the second edition Hays clarifies this, stating that the discussion of *pistis Christou* plays a 'subsidiary role' to the central thesis that 'a story about Jesus Christ is presupposed by Paul's argument in Galatians, and his theological reflection attempts to articulate the meaning of that story.'[102] In other more Lacanian terms, Hays' point is that lurking beneath the overt meanings of Gal 3:1-4:11 is the constant presence of the unconsciously remembered trauma of the narrative of Christ's death – and to Hays *pistis Christou* is one instance of something that was originally written as a result of the shock of the crucifixion. I will discuss *pistis Christou* more below; but its foundation is here, in Hays' wider claim that Paul's theology should be read as the *result of trauma* that can be found *beneath* the text (in its 'substructure'). Hays' reading of the trauma of the crucifixion is neatly analogous to the Lacanian unconscious: it is not a positively charged location of easily symbolised 'meaning,' but is that real gap that exists within and between the words themselves, resisting interpretation; the unconscious trauma that affects the words spoken without being fully represented by them.

Michael Gorman is one example of a scholar who builds upon the implications of Hays' study, and helps to complete several of the parts of the analogy between Antigone and Christ.[103] He again makes clear that Paul should

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[102] Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002 [1983]), xxiv, italics removed.

[103] Gorman has written substantial amounts on Paul and 'cruciformity,' some of which have been discussed briefly already. Here I will be drawing from his most major work on the subject, Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

not be regarded as a theological thinker *as opposed to* the narrative of the Gospels, since Paul's thoughts do not depend upon an 'idea' of Christ, but upon a narrative of Christ, regardless of whether he ever feels the need to expound this narrative specifically in detail (though Phil 2:6-11 is certainly an example of where he does!).[104] In investigating Paul's references to his own 'conversion,' Gorman rightly notes that Paul's initial 'mystical' experience was an experience of the *narrative identity* of Jesus, forming a basic framework for his 'master story.'[105] It is this *story* of Christ, like the story of Antigone, that lies at the heart of the experience that founded the subject Paul, and that he expected to see replicated in the lives of those who made up the 'body of Christ.'[106] The crux of Paul's argument is not the advocacy of the 'fact' of Christ's divine sonship, but, rather, what Paul preaches is 'Christ crucified' (1 Cor 1:22); and the entire narrative of Christ's faithfulness, crucifixion and resurrection is implied by the signifier 'Christ.'[107] This is metonymy in its most basic sense: the signifier Christ comes to mean the entirety of the narrative of Christ.

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[104] Scholars will be quick to point out here that Phil 2:6-11 is in fact Paul quoting an early Christian hymn, not Paul spontaneously deciding to recount the narrative of Christ. However, this is only the most overt and extended instance of Paul summarising the narrative of the *pistis Christou*. Gorman lists thirty-nine other such texts from Paul's authentic letters in *Cruciformity*, 77-81.

[105] Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 23. Gorman draws upon a number of citations (such as Gal 2:15-21 and 1 Cor 15:3-6) to build the point that Paul's understanding of his encounter with Christ was as an encounter with one inextricably bound to a narrative.

[106] Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 75-94.

[107] There is now a major trend in Pauline studies of emphasising the narrative of Christ that lies behind Paul's theology, often using Algirdas Greimas's structural model of narrative to detail the specific events of this narrative, such as Hays does in *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 73-117. Several different scholars' approaches to narrative dynamics in Paul, as well as responses to these claims,

Gorman also makes a point that provides the true Pauline form of the idea that Žižek locates in Christ's cry of dereliction. For Žižek it is the cry of dereliction that allows the Christian subject to be able to identify with God when feeling abandoned by God (thus, as he often says, 'Christianity is the only true way to atheism,' because only in the cross is atheism actually located in the place of the Other). This leaves Žižek with a basic problem: I have discussed at length his many interpretations of Paul's theology; but the key event that Žižek believes founded the Christian subject (the cry of dereliction) is something only recorded decades after Paul, to which Paul makes no overt reference. If Paul did know about it, it was not important enough to mention. But is there something of that which is revealed in the cry of dereliction that is also contained in the very notion of God incarnating and being crucified? Gorman shows that this is indeed the case, and in such a way as to carry my reading of Christ and Antigone another step forward. Gorman argues that 'Paul's experience of God was transformed by his encounter with the crucified – and exalted – Christ… If the Christ of Paul's experience was the faithful, obedient Son of God, then he acted in life and especially in death according to the will and character of God.'[108] Eventually he quotes N. T. Wright: 'For [Paul], the meaning of the word "God" includes not only Jesus, but, specifically, the crucified Jesus.' This is not a suggestion of patripassionism,[109] but instead is the belief that if Christ is to be regarded as faithful to God's plan, then the whole narrative of Christ's crucifixion is inscribed

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are collected in Bruce Longenecker, ed., *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

[108] Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 15-16.

[109] An ancient Christian heresy stating that God the Father suffered on the cross.

into the Christian understanding of God himself: the Christ subject comes to know *das Ding* as part of what 'God' means. Thus the inscription of 'lack' into the Other is something that happens just as much for Paul's Christ as for the Christ of the Gospels; and it is specifically this Christ, who incarnates the real and inscribes it into the signifier 'God,' in whom the Pauline subject 'participates,' as the centre of Gorman and Campbell's Pauline theologies. The rest of Gorman's book is indeed an argument that this suffering-Christ-who-represents-the-character-of-God-himself is the object of Paul's participatory soteriology.

Curiously, Roy Harrisville's work *Fracture: The Cross as Irreconcilable in the Language and Thought of the Biblical Writers* makes no reference to Richard Hays, as it carries on the project of examining the unconscious impact of the crucifixion narrative.[110] He opens by summarising the debate over whether what Paul experienced was 'conversion,' from one religion to another, or a calling – of course citing Sanders, who found that Paul's concept of 'grace' was continuous with Judaism, not a break from it.[111] Later he argues that in fact what Paul experienced was a revelation that 'fractured' his identity; the sort of retrospective event Campbell's work advocates.[112] Paul's 'experience was so overwhelming that he was impelled to use figurative language to do it justice.'[113] 'The death of Jesus… heralded as Son of God, was an event that thwarted every

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[110] Roy A. Harrisville, *Fracture: The Cross as Irreconcilable in the Language and Thought of the Biblical Writers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

[111] Harrisville, *Fracture*, 2, citing E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), 197, 422 and 543.

[112] Harrisville, *Fracture*, 39-47.

[113] Harrisville, *Fracture*, 3.

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attempt to assimilate or absorb it in a scheme,'[114] which Hans Küng, as quoted by Harrisville, labelled 'fracture' because 'the conceptual material of that period does not suffice, but must be continually broken through, if the meaning of the Christ event is to be explained… The concepts, metaphors, analogies and comparisons which the New Testament uses… prove to be insufficient for grasping the reality created by Christ.'[115] The fact that the cross 'continually' ruptures any attempts to signify it is what causes Küng and Harrisville to use the word 'fracture.'

The specific language with which Paul attempts to signify Christ's death is interesting, beginning with the repeated use of the verb σταυρόω ('I crucify') – which seems obvious, since Christ was indeed crucified, but one does not normally constantly refer to the means of death as a term for the death itself.[116] As Harrisville points out, this is the very word used in the Septuagint for Haman, the villain Jews remember at Purim by repeatedly wishing 'Let his name be blotted out.'[117] This verb also leads to Paul's declaration in Gal 3:13 that Christ is cursed by the Torah, which says 'cursed is the man who hangs on a tree,' and which Harrisville notes may be a core early interpretation of Christ's death that Paul references, not invents.[118] In both of these ways, the language that Paul uses to interpret his experience of Christ is language that commemorates him as one who went willingly towards the second death (symbolic death). Harrisville's

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[114] Harrisville, *Fracture*, 39.

[115] Hans Küng, '*Die Religionen als Frage an die Theologie des Kreuzes*,' *Evangelische Theologie* 33 (1975), 420, quoted in Harrisville, *Fracture*, 39.

[116] This is another example of metonymy in Paul, and, like the metonymy of 'Christ' as a signifier for an entire narrative in which he features, the choice of 'to crucify' as the signifier for the narrative of his death reveals much of the unconscious structure behind Paul's theology.

[117] Harrisville, *Fracture*, 20.

[118] Ibid., 21. Deut 21:22-23.

extended reading of Paul thus begins with the argument that the death of Christ forced Paul to break with Judaism; but his ultimate argument is that Christ's death fractures all symbolic constructions, not just the Torah, so that even Paul's attempts to communicate Christ with wisdom theology, apocalyptic and Stoic concepts fail.[119] While Paul does constantly apply theoretical mechanisms to his understanding of Christ, the crucifixion 'continually puts all systems into question,' as no reflection can give ultimate coherence to the event at the core, which spells the death of all systems;[120] so in the end Harrisville labels the cross as a 'minus sign' drawn over everything everyone else says, but also over whatever Paul himself tries to say.[121] In Harrisville's view, this fracturing effect of Christ's death causes Paul to move from theological explanation to 'identification,' stating that Paul 'replaced the idea of substitution or representation with that of identification.'[122] Pursuing this further would open up a much larger conversation of Pauline soteriology, but here Harrisville is in agreement with Campbell and Gorman: Pauline soteriology is primarily about what shifts in the subject's identification, not about a theological mechanism of punitive substitution. Without mentioning Gorman's work of five years prior, Harrisville reads Christian participation in Christ as one of cruciform identification through the psychical experience of the cross; an indicative that is inseparable from imperatives, resulting from the revelation contained in the

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[119] Harrisville, *Fracture*, 65-109.

[120] Ulrich Luz, '*Theologie crucis als Mitte der Theologie im Neuen Testament,*' *Evangelische Theologie*, 34 (1974), 130, quoted in Harrisville, *Fracture*, 108.

[121] Harrisville, *Fracture*, 108. Harrisville again uses the language of the cross being something that refuses all expression, assimilation and reflection in his final concluding paragraph on p. 279.

[122] Ibid., 101.

crucifixion narrative itself, and not from mystical experiences during baptism or an altered theoretical understanding of oneself.[123]

Harrisville's work is relevant to the current study in several ways. Firstly, he argues persuasively throughout that for Paul and early Christians the event that we now label 'conversion' was a passive experience of the fracturing effects of the narrative of Christ. Their experience of Christ was one that shifted the significance of the signifiers already forming their consciousness, retrospectively re-signifying them. Secondly, he shows that this 'fracturing' is a form of eternal negation, of a 'real lack' that resists symbolisation. This is the real in its purest, that which Gorman argued the narrative of Christ inscribes into God, the Other. So between Gorman and Harrisville the narrative referred to by *pistis Christou* is that which inscribes lack into the Other, and that which arrests and transfixes the subject in such a way as to cause a passive psychically transformative experience (or at least this is what New Testament authors record as having been the case historically, whether or not it is precisely reproducible millennia later). Thirdly, this experience caused the subject to make new ego identifications; specifically identifying with Christ in cruciformity. Just as the viewer of *Antigone*, in Lacan's interpretation, is asked psychically transformative questions through identificatory participation in Antigone's narrative, the Pauline Christian subject is caused by the trauma of the narrative to identify with Christ, in a transformative experience. Putting this all together brings Paul to a place of profound parallel with both Lacan's Antigone and Žižek's Christ: the narrative that transforms is one in which a narrative subject (Antigone or Christ) demonstrates the eternal presence of the

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[123] Harrisville, *Fracture*, 118-124.

real in the symbolic; of the lack in the Other; of *das Ding* hidden by law, God, family/human history, one's own desire; of the *objet petit a* leftover in every symbolic construction and present in every identification.

All of this fits neatly with Campbell's understanding of Pauline soteriology, describing the mechanism he places at the centre of Paul's gospel to the exclusion of all other soteriologies. At the core of both Campbell's reading of Paul and Lacan's reading of *Antigone* is the English signifier 'fidelity.' Throughout several pieces of Campbell's work he argues with sweeping comprehension that *pistis* in Paul should almost always be translated as 'fidelity' or 'faithfulness.'[124] Having done this, he cements the parallel suggested here between Lacan's Antigone and Paul's Christ by reading the phrase *ek pisteōs*[125] as a reference to this *pistis Christou*, positing Christ's fidelity (the narrative it refers to) as the primary operator and central term of Christian salvation. A test case of this can be found in his reading of the thesis paragraphs of Romans, 1:16-17 and 3:21-31, where Campbell makes the following assertion: '*Christ's* fidelity, that Paul explicates elsewhere in particular relation to the story of his crucifixion, is functioning in 1:17 and 3:22 to reveal or disclose some righteous characteristic of,

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[124] He makes this argument throughout *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), such as on 610-613 and 867-870, but devotes an astoundingly comprehensive and well-argued chapter to it in *The Quest for Paul's Gospel*, 178-207. He was already arguing for this translation of *pistis* and *pistis Christou* in his doctoral thesis, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21-26*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 65 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 58-69. He also makes a compelling argument for the subject translation of *pistis Christou* based on 2 Corinthians 4:13, in '2 Cor 4:13: Evidence in Paul that Christ Believes,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 128.2 (Summer 2009), 337-356.

[125] 'From or by faithulness/fidelity,' traditionally translated as 'by faith.'

or action by, God.'[126] In both of these he reads the phrase *ek pisteōs* to mean 'by [Christ's] faithfulness,' making Paul's gospel boil down to the effects of the narrative of Christ's fidelity, not just in narrative substructure, but also in Paul's overt theological claim.[127] In Campbell's reading, the evidence permits me not only to posit that Paul's theology is in response to a psychically transformative narrative similar to *Antigone*, but also that Paul's theological claim is overtly that this is the case; that the narrative of Christ's faithfulness is the revelation of God's character that causes some to become 'in Christ.'

Returning to the discourse of the subject's participation in Antigone's act, every element now aligns with the discourse of the subject's participation in Christ's act:

$$\downarrow \frac{S_1}{\$} \quad \overset{\longleftrightarrow}{/\!/} \quad \frac{S_2}{a} \uparrow$$

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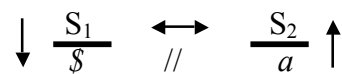
[126] Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 613. Italics original.

[127] In my dialogue with Pauline scholarship I interpret the phrase *pistis Christou* as 'faithfulness of Christ,' with Campbell, Hays and others, and not 'faith in Christ,' with James Dunn, Barry Matlock and others. However, this is far from set in stone; there are hundreds of published papers on either side of the debate, including many arguing that the phrase expresses both senses, different senses, or varying senses at different points. Matlock has himself published many articles arguing for the 'objective' ('faith in Christ') reading, such as R. Barry Matlock, 'ΠΙΣΤΙΣ in Galatians 3.26: Neglected Evidence for "Faith in Christ"?,' *New Testament Studies*, 49 (2003), 433-439. Against his many papers are many more by Bruce Longenecker, Douglas Campbell, etc. Richard Hays' book *The Faith of Jesus Christ* is the originator of the modern debate, and the 2002 edition cited here contains a response by Dunn at the end, which is a good entry point for the debate. More recently, many different views and arguments have been collected in Michael Bird and Preston Sprinkle, eds., *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Pistis Christou Debate* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2009).

S₁ is the signifier that represents the subject Jesus (by Paul's time this signifier was *Christos*, even though the word still also meant 'messiah'), and also the same signifier as it represents the Pauline Christian subject, analogous to how the signifier 'Antigone' represents both the character in the play and the viewing subject's identification with that character. As argued by the four Paul scholars discussed above, S₁, *Christos*, is also in a metonymic relationship with the whole traumatic narrative of Jesus's fidelity (so that S₁ also refers to a narrative structured like the discourse of which it is a part). Within that narrative, S₁ is in a relationship of fidelity with S₂, 'God.' Like with Antigone, that which is signified by S₂ is actually the real as such: Christ's symbolic and physical death, the trauma emitted from that death, and, in the case of Christ and not Antigone, the impossible real of resurrection.[128] All of these ways in which Christ's fidelity to God has the real as its signified are stated overtly by Paul. Faithfulness to God meant symbolic death, as being 'hung on a tree' meant being cursed by the law (Gal 3:13), and being crucified was the greatest form of symbolic death in Roman culture and law. Faithfulness to God meant being 'obedient unto death, even death on a cross' (Phil 2:8). Paul's first thesis in Romans (Rom 1:16-17) is that Christ's faithfulness also leads to life (resurrection), and he does the same thing he does in Galatians, quoting Hab 2:4 as evidence that *pistis* leads to resurrection/life (Gal 3:11). Christ's faithfulness to God, knowing that this faithfulness amounts to a desire for *das Ding*, is a narrative that changes the very

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[128] Though this is not relevant to the current study, it should be noted that the inclusion of the resurrection in this structure of Christ's act, as the real *qua* impossible signified by his fidelity to God, connects this reading of Christ with Badiou's, for whom the resurrection as real *qua* impossible is the only presence of the real in his reading.

meaning of 'God,' and transforms the subjects who view or hear this narrative and are transfixed by its power.

At this point one might raise two objections: firstly, that the cathartic effect of a text/play could not possibly bear the full weight of an explanation for the mass phenomenon of early Christianity, which commanded so much authority that many even became devoted martyrs; and secondly, that the above schema gives little to no attention to the resurrection of Christ – the very charge levelled earlier at Žižek and Nietzsche's readings. The same response can be given to both charges: it is exactly the resurrection of Christ that differentiates Paul's Christ from Lacan's Antigone. Without entering any discussion of the historicity of Christ's resurrection, it certainly seems to be the case that Paul believed Jesus had actually risen from the dead into a new physical/spiritual body, and believed that this resurrected Christ appeared to him and to at least five hundred other people, most of whom were still alive.[129] The effect that the narrative of Christ had on early Christians was an effect of the same kind that Lacan argues *Antigone* can have on its viewers; but the scale of this effect, both for the individual subject and in respect to the size of the early Christian movement, is amplified by the fact that this narrative is one about a real person whom Christians believed actually resurrected. The resurrection of Christ served to eternalise the psychoanalytic realisation of the inscription of lack into the Other; and this too is consistent with a Lacanian view of the subject, because lack *is* an eternal part of the Other. As long as a human lives, and as many times as one passes through an experience of symbolic death, the signifier remains, and it remains lacking. Christ demonstrates

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[129] 1 Cor 15:6.

not just the reality of what it is like truly to incarnate the real and know one's desire (by voluntarily going towards symbolic death), but also the inescapability of life under the signifier even after 'symbolic death.'

Another reason the narrative of Christ gave rise to a phenomenon so much larger than the effects of *Antigone* is because the effects of this narrative underwent institutionalisation, which affected the rest of history. Part of this institutionalisation, this attempt at preserving some form of ritual symbolisation of the event, is baptism. Conveniently, a fairly well researched Lacanian reading of Pauline baptism has already been done, albeit wedged into a work otherwise laden with empirical errors. It will take a bit of unpicking before I can affirm the central point. Itzhak Benyamini's book *Narcissist Universalism: Psychoanalytic Reading of Paul's Epistles* concludes with two chapters on baptism and the Lord's Supper,[130] and in the former of these posits that in baptism Pauline Christians traversed a liminal state in which they passed from the symbolic (law), through the real, to an imaginary identification with Christ.[131] In reading baptism as an experience of the real, he first claims that early Christians spoke in tongues, Lacan's *lalangue*, during or immediately following baptism. However, this claim is dependent upon reading Acts into Paul, and is directly contradicted by Paul's own words in 1 Cor 12, where tongues is clearly not a universal experience among Pauline Christians.

More persuasively, Benyamini points to Wayne Meeks' study, which connects the Pauline Christian calling out *abba ho Pater* upon baptism to the

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[130] Itzhak Benyamini, *Narcissist Universalism: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Paul's Epistles* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 58-88. See discussion of Benyamini's work in Chapter 1, part 4.1.
[131] Ibid., 66-67.

work of the Spirit, similar to speaking in tongues.[132]   One could add to this experience of the real the fact that early Christian baptisms were conducted with the subject completely naked, being clothed in white afterwards, as a symbol of dying and resurrecting with Christ; in this way the subject not only symbolically participates in Christ's death, but also undergoes a touch of symbolic death as he/she stands naked in front of others.[133]   Baptism also amounted to a public re-enactment of Christ's symbolic death in the declaration *kyrios Iesous*, 'Jesus is Lord,' which Paul's political interpreters have pointed out posits the Christian as opposed to the Roman state from the very start, regardless of how one then interprets Rom 13.[134]   Benyamini also reads baptism as a moment where the *non/nom-du-père* is temporarily foreclosed upon, producing the experience of the

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[132] Ibid., 71. Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (London: Yale University Press, 1983), 152, 156.

[133] Wayne Meeks states as a fact (and briefly argues) that early Christian baptisms were conducted naked, which explains the prevalence of 'clothing' metaphors whenever Paul discusses baptism, in *The First Urban Christians*, 150-157. He also closely connects the experience of public nudity in baptism with symbolic death. Of course, one should not presume that ancient attitudes to nakedness were identical to modern ones, which they were not (and not even identical between ancient Greece and Rome). Nonetheless, public nakedness was associated with shame to some degree, particularly in the biblical tradition (from Gen 2:25 to Rev 3:18), and was part of the metaphor of symbolic death.

[134] N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (London: SPCK, 2013), 1284-1305. Wright's position is somewhat more complex than this, as he tries not to take sides with those who want Paul to be anti-Empire 'in the way they want to be anti-empire' (1298), or with those who read Rom 13 as a sign that he is explicitly in support of the ruling powers. Instead, Wright reads Paul as one who lives in a present already impacted by the future world in which the power of Empire has been abolished, leading to a paradoxical political situation in which Paul advocates *not* rebelling against the powers, precisely because they do not really have power (or, not for long). Nonetheless Wright is a good example of someone who, even though he attempts to be as balanced as possible, argues quite forcefully that the claim 'Jesus is lord' was inextricably political, one way or another. It was a political anti-Imperial claim, but not necessarily one that led to real political revolutionary sentiment.

real that he associates with speaking in tongues, and then re-emerges as the cry of *abba ho Pater*.[135] However, this argument largely depends upon his idea that speaking in tongues was closely associated with baptism in Pauline Christianity, and also probably misuses a Lacanian concept in the implication that the foreclosure of the *non/nom-du-père* would consistently lead to its re-emergence in the form of a signifier for one actually viewed as Father, whereas for Lacan the paternal metaphor is *not* about the real father.

Nonetheless, Benyamini's final description of Pauline baptism accurately describes it as a chosen act of participation in Christ, in such a way that would act to confirm the view of the Christian subject posited above: 'The experience of baptism in Jesus, which does indeed unify the community under one signifier… at the same time forces an encounter between the baptized and the Real. Baptism represents a liminal/real stage which poses a menace to the baptized subject.'[136] Based on his theory of a connection between the gifts of the Spirit and baptism he also calls it a 'break-through of the Real into symbolic reality.'[137] That Paul sees baptism as a symbolic confirmation of the subject's participation in Christ's passage through death and resurrection is confirmed in Rom 6:3-8, beginning with the sentences 'Or are you unaware that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? Therefore we were buried with him into

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[135] Benyamini, *Narcissist Universalism*, 72.

[136] Ibid., 78.

[137] Ibid. Note that he also offers a lot of criticisms of Paul in this same concluding paragraph, which have been omitted above because they do not affect the content of his understanding of baptism. As with most of his criticisms of Paul, they do not mesh well with the actual text – for example his claim here that 'Paul does not want to establish a community based on the dismantling of absolute hierarchies,' in defiance of Gal 3:28, and of Paul's insistence that economic class has no place in church life in 1 Cor 11:17-22.

death, through baptism, so that just as Christ was raised from among the dead through the glory of the Father, in this way we also will walk in newness of life.'

3. Implications

In the previous chapter I argued that Paul's interpretation of the Christian subject is posited against the paradox of *jouissance* as it was popularly experienced in his world, and that his response to it was not to posit one clinical structure over the others. In this chapter I argued that the event of Christian subjectivity that he posits against the paradox of *jouissance* is one identical in structure to the effect Lacan describes Antigone's act having on the subject. The way this works out, with Antigone and Christ's acts inscribing lack into the Other, means that Pauline theology fits just as well with Žižek's politics even without the cry of dereliction, and also, conveniently, fits with Žižek's politics of the act, otherwise not directly related to his readings of Christ or Paul. However, with respect to the previous chapter, we are still left with a very important question: how does the structure of the Pauline subject described above relate to the paradox of *jouissance* as described in the previous chapters?

In short, it *does not* relate to the paradox of *jouissance* as described in the previous structures; or, at least, it does not have the effect of altering the basic structure of the paradox, or allowing one somehow to escape it. Like the psychoanalytic analysand, the Christian subject Paul describes is not one who is brought to some idealised pseudo-perverse position in which the law no longer

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has any effect – for this is not a symptomless relation to the law, but is either psychosis or death. The Pauline subject has a law: it is the *nomos Christou*, the 'law of Christ,' which in my interpretation refers to the effects of transformation by the *pistis Christou*, though this is certainly up for debate.[138] Rather, what is relieved for the Pauline and psychoanalytic subject is some of the *symptoms* of the subject's clinical structure. This is expressed quite explicitly in Paul's response to the Teacher's final speech: 'Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.'[139] In response to the Teacher's complaint of his obsessional symptoms, that there is a law of death at work in his body that is only provoked by the law of his mind, Paul responds with the belief that those who have been affected by their participation in the *pistis Christou* are not plagued by superego self-persecution ('there is now no condemnation'), as Žižek puts it correctly, removing the 'superego supplement' of the law's 'obscene un-written underside.'[140]

However, despite being psychoanalytically affected, the subject is not now without clinical structure, because she still exists in language. Instead, there is a new law at work, 'of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,' which, again, clearly refers to the effects of a life transformed by Christ. The obsessional neurotic is still obsessional neurotic, but the effects of Christ's impact include the relieving of the force of one's symptomatic relation to the law. This is exactly what allows Paul's

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[138] 1 Cor 9:21 and Gal 6:2.

[139] Rom 8:1-2. See Appendix B for the Greek and brief defence of translation, though there is little contentious translation work to be done in these two verses.

[140] Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (London: The MIT Press, 2003), 113.

non-symptomatic relation to the law: in both Romans 14-15 and 1 Corinthians 10 Paul is able to take a removed stance from the debate over Christian Torah observance, despite having his own opinion, and advise that Christians simply take whatever stance best holds the community together, because to follow or not to follow the law is not a question to which Paul attaches an obsessional or perverse superego (he does not feel impelled to guarantee subservience to it, or thrilled at the thought of breaking it). The main point of Rom 6, which is followed by the Teacher's last speech, is that one who has been baptised into the death and resurrection of Christ is no longer a slave to 'the old self,' the 'body of sin,' the 'body of death.' For the Christian subject as Paul imagines him there is still a law (the law of Christ), and there is even still the paradox of *jouissance*; but the law is simply the effects of a psychoanalytic transformation, and whatever signifier follows it – there is a new law, but it has such a small weight of guilt that Paul is able to laugh at the Teacher's guilty conscience, and instead write extensively about how Christ breaks down the entire honour/shame system.

In summary, the Teacher's argument, especially in Rom 7 where he posits the problem of perversion in defence of his neurosis, is simply the paradox of *jouissance* itself. This is why Paul's argument in Romans should be read in context of the paradox. Paul's solution then, participation in the *pistis Christou* which can be structured in the form of the formula above, is not something that replaces the central term $ (for the subject) in the matheme for the paradox of *jouissance*. The subject is still bound by the paradox of *jouissance* – the subject is still alienated in language. But the structure given above for the subject's participation in the *pistis Christou* narrative is the argument Paul posits against

the Teacher's. The Teacher says 'My situation is ($\$ \Diamond a \leftarrow \$ \rightarrow \cancel{A} \Diamond \phi$ [a, a',

a", a"',...]), and its weight is unbearable!' Paul says, 'Me too, but

($\downarrow \frac{S_1}{\$} \; \overset{\leftrightarrow}{/\!/} \; \frac{S_2}{a} \uparrow$) happened, and I think you will find it lessens the burden.'

Martin Luther's problem is that by reading Rom 7:7-25 the way he does, and also

proclaiming himself *simul justus et peccator*, he stops at 'me too.'

Another question that might arise at this point is, what does this mean for

Christian soteriology? Again, the initial answer is 'absolutely nothing.' The

psychoanalytic transformation of the subject is not a theory posited against

traditional literal interpretations of Pauline soteriology, or a theory meant to

replace them. The current study is a psychoanalytic reading of Paul, specifically

interacting with theological readings, but not intended to subvert them. As Lacan

says, specifically in defence of his reading of grace in Paul: 'We analysts… do not

have to believe in these religious truths in any way, given that such belief may

extend as far as what is called faith, in order to be interested in what is articulated

in its own terms in religious experience – in the terms of the conflict between

freedom and grace, for example.'[141] Lacan then goes on to defend 'grace' from

attack by Freud, saying that 'religious experience… was literally a dead letter for

him,' and the reason he defends grace is exactly in line with the thesis of this

chapter: 'A notion as precise and articulate as grace is irreplaceable where the

psychology of the act is concerned, and we don't find anything equivalent in

classic academic psychology.' Psychoanalysis is analogous to Pauline religion in

that the analyst must give a piece of himself when he takes the place of the Other,

putting his own desire on hold, occupying a place from which, at the right time,

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[141] *S7*, 210.

he might intervene on the analysand's behalf. When Lacan here argues that grace should not be left to the believers, this is what he means. When the analysand intervenes from the place of the Other, Lacan compares the way the analyst in that moment enables the subject to 'act,' with Paul's understanding of grace. This is exactly the comparison I am making from the opposite starting point: *Paul's understanding of the formation of the Christian subject is analogous to a psychoanalytic act.*[142] It is a psychoanalytic act that, from Paul's perspective, resulted in the lessening of superego guilt without the increase in an imperative to transgress.

Another loose end from the previous chapter that needs to be cleared up is the matter of master signifiers. I first discussed master signifiers in Chapter 4, where I argued that *physis* acted as a master signifier, in an obsessional relation, for the Stoics. In Chapter 5 I argued that Paul believed the Christian subject to be set at odds with the master signifiers of others, in particular with *physis*. In this chapter I have argued that Paul's interpretation of the formation of the Christian subject is analogous to Lacan's description of *Antigone's* effects, i.e., analogous at least in part to the effects of psychoanalytic treatment. This is what explains why Pauline Christians were at odds with the master signifiers of others. One of the

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[142] I have also suggested that the effect of this event of the *pistis Christou*, which ultimately reforms the signification of the Other (working *das Ding* into the signified of 'God,' revealing the lack in the Other, changing Paul's understanding of God), then also affects the subject's superego, reducing the weight of the paradox of *jouissance* and the perverse demands of the law. This demonstrates how religion is uniquely in the position for revelations that affect the Other and the superego, which is the argument of Eric L. Santner in his reading of Freud and Franz Rosenzweig, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), especially pp. 97-104.

effects of psychoanalytic treatment is the production of new signifiers. Mark Bracher summarises:

> What must be done, essentially, is to reveal to subjects that what they are asking for (and perhaps think they are getting) in their values, ideals, conscious wishes, and identifications is not the only expression or even the most truthful embodiment of what they really desire or find gratification in. By exposing the Real, which the system of signifiers, and particularly master signifiers, fail to grasp, the discourse of the Analyst interpellates those subjects who have responded in the particular way that one is examining to an activation of their alienated condition, their non-identity with their master signifiers, and thus creates an impetus for them to produce new master signifiers.[143]

Paul's interpretation of the Christian subject fits this description. Participation in Christ's act, particularly identification and conscious faithfulness to crucifixion *qua* social death/religious exclusion, exposes the real. This reveals their non-identity with philosophical, religious, social and imperial master signifiers. Thus wisdom ceases to be the goal of their thought; the *Torah* cannot any longer occupy the position of religious law (because it cursed the man who resurrected as divine); the entire honour/shame system loses control over their lives because they consciously identify with a crucified man; and the signifiers *kyrios* (Lord) and *huios tou Theou* (son of God) now refer to the new master signifier *Christos*, *and not to Caesar*.[144] Not only has the new master signifier displaced these former master signifiers, but it has also, as master signifiers do, disrupted previous

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[143] Mark Bracher, *Lacan, Discourse and Social Change: A Psychoanalytic Cultural Criticism* (London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 77-78.

[144] This is put fairly explicitly in 1 Cor 15:24-25, Phil 2:9-11 and Eph 2:20-21. In these passages the subjection of all rulers to Christ is made explicit, as he is placed as ruler over them, and the day when earthly rulers are destroyed is hoped for.

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signifying chains so that the wider field of signification for the subject changes. A perfect example is the signifier 'grace' (*hesed/charis*), which is not a new signifier but an old one with altered meaning – it is still a chief attribute of God, but now signifies God's gift of the *pistis Christou*, rather than God's gift of the law.[145] This displacement of master signifiers naturally affected Pauline Christians' relation to the Roman state, because their passage through the real in Christ displaced the very signifiers through which imperial power was psychologically established.[146]

Another study could perhaps be more systematic and thorough, looking at all of the different language Paul uses for the transformation he presumes all Christians to have undergone, and the Lacanian implications of the underlying psychological anthropologies. I have not fully explored the precise formulations Paul uses in Rom 6-8, or exactly what he means by the notoriously difficult to translate Gal 2:19-21.[147] What do Paul's statements about Christ, and not sin or the flesh, living inside the Christian, mean for the affect of the *pistis Christou* on the individual unconscious of the Pauline Christian subject? I have only scratched the surface here. And another potential direction of this sort of study would be into the question of what it is about Pauline theology that causes the Calvinist/Arminian split in Reformation theology. Could it be that the psychoanalytically transformative experience that Paul described created subjects who, like the Lacanian analysand, were able to feel both the weight of

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[145] This is of course one of E. P. Sanders' points, which has been mentioned several times already.

[146] Again, see 1 Cor 15:24-25, Phil 2:9-11 and Eph 2:20-21, as well as Eph 6:12 and Col 1:15-20; 2:13-15.

[147] Offering a Lacanian translation of this passage was going to be a chapter of this study, and would make an excellent project for furthering a Lacanian reading of Paul.

determinism and the freedom to act, simultaneously?[148]   Applying a Lacanian

schema to the Pauline Christian subject does not solve every problem in the

interpretation of Paul, and perhaps creates more than it solves; but it does open a

way for new approaches to Pauline theology, and, with the Lacanian approach to

political thought being taken by many continental philosophers today, perhaps

also opens the way to more Pauline approaches in fields of thought beyond

theology.

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[148] Badiou has opined that Lacan is the only philosopher who, in his view, avoids both complete determinism and a neoreligious or superstitious obscurantism, in positing a subject who is capable of accepting her complete impotency *and then acting*, only made possible once unconscious desire has been spoken into the symbolic. The act happens entirely within the deterministic plane of unconscious structures, but, in taking account of them, is finally able to transcend them. If the Pauline Christian subject has experienced a transformation like the realisations that occur in psychoanalysis, is this why Paul remains oblivious to the tension that caused later conflicts in his theological interpretation – because the Christian subject is both determined and free? Did early Christians feel that they were both 'called' in a deterministic way, but also as though they had achieved a true radical freedom? Badiou and Roudinesco, *Lacan: Past and Present*, 16-18.

Chapter Seven

Findings

ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπέθανον καὶ εὑρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ εἰς ζωήν, αὕτη εἰς θάνατον·

I died; and the law 'that leads to life' was found in me, leading to death.[1]

1. What did St Paul Found?

The main goal set out at the end of the very first section of the Introduction

was to demonstrate the fecundity of the ground in the overlap between Lacan and

Paul, specifically arising from the commitment found in both of them to develop

an ethics that finds a way to move beyond 'law.' In *Seminar VII*, Lacan presents

the difficulty of transcending the power of law as the 'paradox of *jouissance*,' in

which one is caught between the enjoyment that results from failing at trying to

follow the law, and the fact that trying to enjoy breaking the law requires and

supports the law's continued dominance. In Lacan's system of thought, this is

one aspect of humanity's alienation in language. In Paul's world, the two

approaches that make up this inescapable paradox were represented by a perverse

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[1] Rom 7:10, from the translation offered in Appendix B, below.

libertinism and an obsessional Stoicism (though this is not to suggest that these were the only incarnations of those clinical structures, or that perversion and obsessionalism are the only ways one can attempt to cope with the paradox). Alongside advancing a reading of Romans against a Stoic Teacher (dependent upon the readings of Douglas Campbell, Stanley Stowers and others), in Chapter 5 I presented Paul as positioning his theology squarely in context of the paradox of *jouissance*. This amounts to a clear and precise definition of the 'ground of overlap' described above: Paul and Lacan overlap in that their ideas force them both to encounter the paradox of *jouissance*, and to try to overcome some of the difficulties related to it. In the final move of equivocation above, I argued that Lacan's response to the paradox of *jouissance* is similar to Paul's: they describe a narrative of fidelity to both the law and its 'ex-timate core' of *das Ding*, which they believe has the power to fixate and transform the subject in such a way as to reduce the weight of the paradox.[2]

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[2] Though published near the end of the writing of this study, and read in the final stages of editing, this reading of Paul is broadly in line with the hopes for a new 'critical theology' set out by Carl Raschke in *Critical Theology: Introducing an Agenda for an Age of Global Crisis* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2016), 111-129. By looking to Paul not for an example of the 'essence' of Christianity as a religion, but as an example of the way an event has disrupted a signifying field, a Paul is found who is positioned for the discourse of critical theory, examining the religious as the eruption of a singular event into semiotic domains, past and present. In the book's final chapter (131-151), Raschke borrows John Milbank's interpretation of Christ in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel as 'the Word made strange' (in *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997]), in order to argue that Christ should not be read as *orthos logos* or as Stoic *logos* (reason), but as a singular event enabling critical theological engagement with politics and culture. My reading of Paul compliments this, with Paul also seeing Christ not as an instance of Stoic *logos*, but as its foil; an event disrupting the (individual or collective) subject's symbolic existence.

Here we find Lacan and Paul positing similar ideas, but by no means identical ones. Neither of them actually have the definition of a new ethics as their primary goal. Despite making use of a broad selection of philosophical ethics' greatest thinkers (Aristotle, Kant, Bentham, etc.), Lacan's goal in *Seminar VII* is not to contribute to ethics, but to contribute to the ethics *of psychoanalysis*; specifically, the question of how the analyst is to handle the power given to intervene in the mind of the analysand, and to direct the treatment towards the 'good' of the subject. This forces Lacan to discuss how it could possibly be that the analyst can decide what is 'good' for the analysand, when the analysand exists like all of us within the trap of the paradox of *jouissance*, gaining enjoyment from acts that are not overtly for their own good. Likewise Paul, constantly embroiled in ethical debates, did not write any of his extant letters with the development of an ethical idea as his primary goal. He mostly wrote in response to situations, and in Romans he is forced to discuss ethics in light of the paradox of *jouissance* because his insistence that those in Christ do not live according to law has landed him there. So Lacan and Paul both discuss the paradox of *jouissance* and ethics, and do so with a commitment to transcend the impossible demands made upon humanity by the law; but they are brought there by very different motives.

They do however wind up in somewhat similar territory in one sense: neither of their solutions is complete. Lacan does not cure alienation or free us from the paradox, but helps the subject to realise his/her own castration (the impossibility of existing without the problems of language), and Paul does not actually give the subject a way of immediately and completely existing without the power of sin, but instead posits the Christian subject as caught between two

worlds, with Christ being the first fruit of a new creation that has not yet fully come. Lacan and Paul both, in a way, fix the human condition by not fixing it; but they do this through discussing the impact of a psychoanalytic event upon the subject, not through positing a Hegelian sublation.

Lacan's 'solution' is, ultimately, psychoanalysis itself, with *Antigone* as an illustration of some of the aims of psychoanalysis; but Paul's solution is not an idea that he posits, but something he believes really to have happened, which is both the source of his awareness of the problems he discusses, and their solution. Paul presents his solution prescriptively, which is far from Lacan: even though the Lacanian solution is psychoanalysis itself, he did not believe that everyone should go through psychoanalysis. This is a crucial distinction I discuss more below. Paul's solution is one he preaches as universally available and recommendable, and Lacan's solution is not, because Paul believes that 'Antigone' is real and exists now in resurrected form, as part of a divine plan to redeem the world. This is not a difference we should try somehow to overcome; it is a real difference between the systems they describe.

So the overlap between them produces enough common ground that the structures Lacan develops for the problems Paul faces, as well as for the parts of their response to this problem that are similar (Antigone and Christ's fidelity), are helpful in elaborating upon why the narrative of Christ's suffering had the effect it did; but *this is not a full explanatory mechanism for the origins of Christianity*. I have not suggested a new or total interpretation of Pauline Christian conversion, since I have not discussed eschatology, Judaism and the prophetic pre-history of Christianity, or the actual history that might be 'behind' the *pistis Christou*.

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Perhaps there will be further studies using Lacanian psychoanalysis to investigate some of the other details in Pauline theology. This is only a layer of explanatory commentary regarding the world Paul inhabited and the structure of his position within it, which provides useful insights for the present use of Pauline theology, perhaps more than a 'pure' analytic historical approach.

Despite their differences, the primary goal here has been achieved: to demonstrate that Lacanian psychoanalysis provides helpful tools for understanding the context and structure of Paul's theology, aiding in the construction of bridges from past to present. Clinical structures still exist in society and ideologies (and individual subjects) today as they did then, and Paul's politics of *das Ding* and the signifier complement modern continental philosophical approaches to political intervention in a way that further embeds the philosophical return to Paul, and perhaps provides a stronger ground for a relationship between the Church and the continental philosophical Academy.

2. Criticisms

Creating a new Lacanian reading of Paul using academic biblical research is an approach that has not previously been widely explored; but in another sense it presents yet another philosophical reading of Paul to the world of continental philosophy, which, as described in the Introduction, is not suffering a shortage of them. More specifically, it posits a reading in dialogue with the Pauline theologies put forward by two prominent Lacanian philosophers in specific, Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek. In light of this, I can now draw some conclusions in

criticism of both of these, as well as make some Lacanian comments about Pauline theology itself.

Lacan climaxes *Seminar VII* by arriving at the question that Antigone was uniquely able to ask from the perspective of a 'last judgment:' 'Have you acted in conformity with the desire that is in you?'[3] Due to the intervention of a narrative structured like Antigone's, Paul found himself with an experience at hand that enabled that very question to be asked, since a vision of the sublimation of *das Ding* had been forced upon the subject in such a way as to induce a collective of subjects who have participated in an act, revealing in the narrative itself something of the desire common to all. It is here that I am now situated to make a fundamental Lacanian critique of Paul's theology: he reaches a point that enables him to formulate what Lacan would call 'a thesis that is truly about desire,' but he stops just before this boundary.

I argued in Chapter 3 that, against those who read Paul on the side of the Stoics, Paul is not against desire but afraid that excessive (or 'surplus') *jouissance* might lead to *porneia*. In attempting to escape the law without advocating the pursuit of *jouissance*, in 1 Corinthians Paul defends his gospel with a knee-jerk retreat to neurosis; but in Romans he realises that his gospel is stuck between perversion and neurosis, and this time posits nothing other than the event of the transformation caused by participation in the Christ narrative as his response to the paradox of *jouissance*. For both Lacan and Paul there is not actually a maxim that lies beyond the *pistis* narrative as a higher virtue; but for Lacan there is still the question of one's desire, which psychoanalysis is intended to help one to

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[3] *S7*, 386.

formulate, live and assume. For Paul instead there is, if anything, another form of the message Lacan phrases as 'as far as your desires are concerned… make them wait.'[4] 'Desire' for Lacan does not mean sexual want, but refers instead to the very linguistic existence in which one is ever driven forward by the lack in the Other, and psychoanalysis acts to bring one to a better knowledge of one's place in this schematic. Paul discusses an event that also does this, but does not open the question of what this means for the individual subject, and instead gives his own opinion of what the new master signifier means. He tries to keep this somewhat open, allowing ethics to differ from person to person and community to community, but he does not directly impel the Christian onward to a deeper discovery of oneself, because he believed Christ's return was imminent and the New Creation was coming.[5] So when discussing what a modern Lacanian

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[4] Ibid., 387. This is the message Lacan attributes to that which theologians call 'Empire,' discussed briefly in Chapter 5, above. Should one wish to join the throngs of cynical Nietzschean readings of Paul, but from a Lacanian perspective, expanding upon Paul's failure to link the Christ event to the subject's desire might be the way to do this. However, I would like to suggest that there are more interesting things to study Paul for than the ways in which he failed. Should one wish to pursue that route, a more balanced approach might be to look for the ways in which Paul's understanding of the Christ event *did* affect his relation to Pauline Christians' individual desires. Perhaps it has something to do with love, or joy, or the freedom Paul first posited, which led to libertinism?

[5] Sadly there has not been occasion in this study to enter deeply into Pauline eschatology, and I am not convinced that Lacanian psychoanalysis offers the best tool for doing so (Alain Badiou's philosophy of fidelity to the event might provide more a productive ground for comparison). A study that aimed to do complete justice to Paul would have to account for the place of eschatology in his thought, but this study has instead been concerned with forcing a particular Lacanian point of entry into Pauline studies. However, were one to stick doggedly to a Lacanian approach, the above question would indeed be the most essential: what is the effect of the future upon the subject's desire in the present? And how does Pauline eschatology, construed in either a literal or perhaps a Badiouan philosophical sense, affect one's relation to political enjoyment, or to political action?

Paulinism might look like, this question is a problem. It does not appear that Christ is coming back soon; so what is the state of the subject's desire, freed from the full weight of the paradox of *jouissance*, but still alive? I do not believe that Paul answers this satisfactorily, and if Paul is to mean something today, and Christ is still to be preached in response to the paradox of *jouissance*, there must be more Christian thought on the actual place of the human subject *as* desire.

The main Lacanian reading of Paul that has been interacted with throughout this study has been Slavoj Žižek's, especially in chapters 1, 5 and 6. This is not just because he has written so frequently about Paul, but also because of the primacy of importance he gives to Paul in his wider political programme. The fact that he gives so much weight to Paul, but at the same time fails to provide a truly Pauline reading of Paul (similar to criticisms often made of his readings of both Lacan and Hegel), begs for dialogue; particularly since he has spent so much time working to build up a dialogue with academic theological circles. His politics actively make space for the Church to be involved in his revolution, and it is my conclusion that if his reading of Paul were truer to Paul, more informed by the academic study of Paul, and indeed more Lacanian, then Žižek might have more success in bringing Christians on board with his wider theo-political programme. One could even add to this that I have demonstrated the possibility of a Žižekian Paul who is not an atheist – or, at least not any more of an atheist than the Lacanian clinic aims to create; and Lacan was very clear that, as opposed to many Freudian analysts, the creation of atheists was not his

goal.[6] I hope that this study opens the way to more Lacanian Christian reflections on politics: what should the Christian relation to the state be, and does a psychoanalytic perspective on the Christ event help the Church to get there, and to understand where it is currently at?

The 'Žižekian Paul who is not an atheist' follows from reading Paul's term *pistis Christou* as a central reference to Christ's fidelity to *das Ding*, rather than making the Pauline Christian subject somehow dependent upon the alleged atheism implicit in the cry of dereliction. If the lack in the Other is primarily present in the trauma of the crucifixion narrative rather than in the non-existence of God, then the Christian psychoanalytic event can be structured upon an act precipitated by the lack in the Other without implying atheism. This indeed seems to be where Lacan is going in *Seminar VII* when he states that 'Only Christianity, through the drama of the passion, gives full content to the naturalness of the truth we have called the death of God.'[7] This leads to him

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[6] The aim of the Lacanian clinic is not to cause the subject to cease believing in God, particularly inasmuch as 'God' is a name for the Other. Rather, regardless of Lacan's personal atheism, Lacanian psychoanalysis insists upon the impossibility of complete atheism, since one cannot escape the fact that *jouissance* remains forbidden (by the Other). In this sense, the paradox of *jouissance* itself is another name for the inescapability of God. This does not mean that Lacan affirms the existence of a conscious divine figure, but only that, since once cannot escape the Other without becoming a psychotic, and God is just a word some use for the Other, the analyst has no cause to desire to change the subject's name for the Other, unless the subject's own desire to do that leads in that direction. At any rate, Lacan's non-participation in the militant atheism that sometimes arises in psychoanalytic circles is noted by Élisabeth Roudinesco, who states that unlike most French analysts at the time, Lacan would not only actively engage with religious thinkers, but would even, when analysing Jesuit priests (whom Roudinesco claims were strangely drawn to his teachings), recommend that they remain as priests if that was their desire. Alain Badiou and Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan Past and Present: A Dialogue*, trans. by Jason E. Smith (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2014 [2012]), 14-16.

[7] *S7*, 238.

describing how its horror makes the violence of the Coliseum pale in comparison, and does not lead to the cry of dereliction. Expanding upon the parallel between the fidelities of Antigone and Christ cements this link, and, by finding the 'drama of the passion' so deeply wedged at the centre of Pauline theology, shows that it was exactly this that was at the heart of Christianity (with the resurrection), and not any implicit atheism. Indeed, Lacan's only reference to the cry of dereliction in *Seminar VII* is not in any of his discourses on Paul or Christ, but when he describes Antigone as one who was 'moved to a kind of "Father why hast thou forsaken me?"' this is not a statement of atheism, but an effect of her fidelity to *das Ding*.[8]

Eventually Lacan does mention briefly how the death of God sublated the law as love[9] – a main theme Žižek and Badiou develop in their interpretations of Paul. This is probably correct, but it should be noted that it is the *pistis Christou*, not the ethics of love, that is at or near the centre of Paul's theology, regardless of whether that means 'faith in Christ' or 'faith of Christ.' This is not a major criticism of either Žižek or Badiou, but a brief comment on the tendency of philosophical and psychoanalytic interpretations of Paul to presume that the ideas most closely tied to philosophy or psychoanalysis must therefore be Paul's core ideas, rather than offering philosophical/psychoanalytic interpretations of the actual core ideas (as has been done here in Chapter 6).

The main criticism that needs to be made of Badiou's reading of Paul, which was already made in the Introduction, is that he sacrifices the sacrifice of Christ for the sake of the resurrection; but the death of Christ *is* the event of

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[8] Ibid., 313.

[9] Ibid., 238-239.

fidelity to which Paul refers. When Badiou speaks in *Being and Event* of 'fidelity to the event,' this event for Paul is the fidelity of Christ, as it affects the Christian subject.[10] Badiou's resurrection-only theology (where the only function of death is as something negated in the resurrection) is consistent with his thought: the resurrection is the exception that grounds Christ in the impossible; but inasmuch as Badiou is a reader of Lacan, and some of his language has been Lacanian, this schema is not. He connects *pneuma* (spirit) to life and *sarx* (flesh) to death, as does Paul; but Paul also connects *hamartia* (sin) to death, tying it again with *sarx* – and for Paul these are not merely things negated in the resurrection, but things *participated in* in the *pistis Christou*.[11] Lacan then provides the psychoanalytic commentary to this latter equation, translating *hamartia* as *das Ding*, which is (among other things) death. So Badiou's construal of Pauline anthropology misses the connection with death, using death only as something that is negated in the impossible resurrection. But the real is not *only* present in Paul as the impossible resurrection, but also in the *pistis Christou*, faithfulness to *das Ding*, which is the point where the signifier suffers in the real.[12] Lacan goes a little bit of the way towards a reading of Paul in *Seminar VII*; if he had gotten further, it is my thesis here that his Paul would be placed in relation to the full paradox, the letter that brings both the eternal life of the signifier and its obverse, the death of

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[10] I made this point at length in an article that I presented at the conference 'St Paul in Continental Philosophy' at Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent, UK, 28.6.2013. A summary of the paper is included in the conference report: Matthew Edward Harris, 'Conference Report: "St. Paul in Continental Philosophy" Staffordshire University, 6 June 2014,' *International Journal of Badiou Studies*, 4.1 (Dec. 2015), 145-149.

[11] Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. by, Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 55-85.

[12] *S7*, 154.

das Ding.   Lacan opens the way to a more genuine Pauline philosophy than Badiou, because his system makes room for the death *and* resurrection of Christ to be equal in significance, as the resurrection links us to the real in its impossibility (agreement with Badiou) and the eternality of this impossibility (the Signifier), but the death links us to the real in its inevitable omnipresence as long as we are under the signifier (the Lacanian death drive, which Žižek notes is the missing element in Badiou's Paul).[13]

Are there any criticisms to be made of Lacan's work based on this study? Several have been made throughout, which mostly amount to no more than the comment that Lacan could have done much more with Paul than he did.   As argued at the end of Chapter 2, Lacan could not have advanced a theory of psychoanalytic transformation in Paul's theology because he did not believe that Paul came from a place that needed transformation.[14]   As argued just above, he could not have suggested that Paul's theology is based on the sublimation of *das Ding* contained in the passion narrative, because the extent of the narrative substructure to Paul's theology had not yet been written about when Lacan delivered *Seminar VII*; likewise, he had no option in 1959-60 but to read Rom 7 as Paul's own opinion.   Nonetheless, the little that Lacan does do with Paul arises from initial cursory readings, and so there is not much to criticise except that fact itself.   More positively, this also leaves us with a much blanker slate for where the Lacanian reading of Paul could go in the future.

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[13] Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject* (London: Verso, 2008 [1999]), 168-184.

[14] The very criticism that Ward Blanton levels at a whole host of continental philosophers throughout *A Materialism for the Masses: Saint Paul and the Philosophy of Undying Life* (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2014).

3. The Future

Throughout this study I have occasionally returned to Lacan's response to the student riots in 1968: 'You are looking for a new master, and you will find one.'[15] This statement fits with Lacan's well-known political pessimism: all political movements involve the search for a master, which can be anything from 'God' to 'the market' to 'the will of the people' to 'the common good' or 'social justice,' etc. To him the students only believed they were expressing a general discontent, but what they were really doing was looking for a new master. Since all subjects enter language by affirming it as master, and by placing certain signifiers in positions of mastery with respect to other signifiers, political movements are just rearrangements of the positions of power within the symbolic. Against this backdrop, there now exist many leftist and far-left Lacanian political philosophers: spearheaded by Žižek and Badiou, but also including Alenka Zupančič, Samo Tomšič and others. These philosophers all get accused of overlooking the fact that Lacan was most certainly not a communist, and possibly not even a political 'progressive,' as apparently evidenced by his statements in 1968. However, these criticisms can be naïve, implying that philosophers who have spent decades studying Lacan are simply ignorant of his politics. Yes, they are using Lacan's theories in a way that is not Lacan's; but they do so from a position that does not actually disagree with Lacan's political pessimism. When Zupančič suggests an ethics of the real that is predicated upon a realisation of the

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[15] Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. by Barbara Bray (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1997 [1993]), 341-342.

role that the death drive *already* plays in ethics, and when Žižek suggests that an act (including Christ on the cross) accomplishes a sublation in which the present state of things re-emerges as viewed from a different perspective, they are taking Lacan's political pessimism fully on board, and *then* asking what Lacan means for politics nonetheless.

Many books have been written on the 'revolutionary' or 'radical' nature of early Christianity, and Pauline theology.[16] Further, there has been much work that criticises the Church in the centuries that followed, tracking the emergence of 'Christendom,' the end of Christian non-violence, etc.[17] Whether or not earliest Christianity itself can be characterised as merely 'looking for a new master,' new masters are what they found; and, quite predictably, the new masters arguably bore few dissimilarities to the old. But just because Christianity predictably turned into the search for a new master, does that mean it was always reducible to

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[16] Neil Elliot, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008) is an example of exactly such a piece, forcefully arguing for an anti-Imperial reading of Romans, and collecting together references to many of the other arguments for a politically radical Paul, particularly with reference to the difficulties posed by Rom 13. Andrew Bradstock and Christopher Rowland have edited a collection of radical Christian texts from the whole of Church history, *Radical Christian Writings: A Reader* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002).

[17] The critique of Christendom is hardly a recent phenomenon, and in one way or another is as old as Christendom itself. Stuart Murray-Williams surveys the emergence of the (often violent) dominance of Christian religion in the West in *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World* (London: Paternoster, 2004), 23-144, one of many books along these lines that characterise Christianity as originally non-violent but eventually violent and imperial. It is the first in a series of books called *After Christendom*. J. Denny Weaver tracks the development of atonement theory from its non-violent origins to its later Anselmian (and violent) form in *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2011 [2001]), even persuasively arguing that probably the last book of the New Testament to be written, Revelation, is adamantly non-violent (pp. 20-34). Wes Howard-Brook has recently brought this all together, including the theological 'empire' language, in the extended argument so poignantly summarised in the book's title: *Empire Baptized: How the Church Embraced what Jesus Rejected* (New York: Orbis, 2016).

it? Lacan was not a political revolutionary, but that merely serves to amplify the extent to which his theories can aid those who are in understanding a framework in which change is possible – it is only once one understands that all of one's life has been the search for a master that one is able to begin to think seriously about whether any alternative is possible; or, perhaps, more seriously about *which* master one would like to have.

By placing Paul in this context, of the pessimism of a certain irreducibility of humanity's political situation, his struggle is illuminated as an attempt, like every historical advocate of major ideological change, to gain some degree of freedom from the paradoxes in which we find ourselves trapped. Specifically, he is demonstrably bearing witness to a shift in the significance of signifiers, and in the positions of master signifiers, which he thinks ruptures previously assumed modes of political and ethical existence. To him the event of Christ is a narrative of an act of symbolic death capable of inducing symbolic participation in a traumatic encounter with the real, reframing the political situation and dislodging master signifiers, replacing them with new ones, thus altering the meanings of other signifiers. To him this event is so impacting that it should bring some degree of freedom from the weight of the paradox of *jouissance*, inducing the subject to act in a way that is neither a quest for more law nor a presumption of the enjoyment of transgression.

In Paul's world his participation in the *pistis Christou*, and the resulting ability to 'act' in the Lacanian sense, involved a symbolic death that nullified the mastery of master signifiers, replacing them with the pure real of 'not signs, not

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wisdom, but Christ (i.e., Christ crucified).'[18] Then, of course, following the act, our alienation in the symbolic immediately resumes, with the symbol of the resurrected/crucified Christ coming to occupy a permanent position as master signifier. The end of psychoanalysis includes the emergence of new signifiers, and Paul happily prescribes them. Perhaps, here, to mimic the cynicism one might detect in Elizabeth Castelli's Foucauldian reading of Paul, one could accuse him of the Lacanian definition of tyranny: attempting to enslave the desire of the Other, in not simply preaching the real trauma of Christ crucified, but also preaching that Caesar is not really 'lord' *because Christ is* (Rom 13).[19] Indeed, this is the form of Christianity that Paul inherited, as evidenced by the fact that the 'Christ Hymn' he quotes in Phil 2:6-11 begins by trumpeting the traumatic narrative of the *pistis Christou*, but carries on to boast that Christ was then exalted, and at his name every knee shall bow. It is the inescapable essence of the Christian narrative that it makes this step, for it is only the resurrection of Christ that makes the trauma of the real into a fact of the divine.

In Mark's Gospel one gets the impression that Christ's fidelity is so absolute that it would remain unchanged even if there was to be no resurrection and Christ knew it, and this unwavering aspect of Christ's fidelity is central to the 'Antigonine' effect of the narrative; but equally important to Paul is the fact that the consequence of (Christ's) *pistis* is life, and this is why he places so much emphasis on Habakkuk 2:4: the righteous one will live by *pistis*. If this is a tyranny, it is a tyranny inseparable from the ecclesiastical use of Pauline theology,

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[18] This is of course a close paraphrase of 1 Cor 1:22.

[19] Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Louisville: Westminster-John Knox, 1991).

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and I suggest it should simply be read as the Christian iteration of the fact of our alienation in language. Christian *pistis* is participation in the *pistis Christou*, transformation by Christ's symbolic death, and the affirmation of a prescribed master signifier. For Pauline Christians at least, this was a legitimate act because they committed to the pure death drive of symbolic death, and then *chose* a new master signifier – the tyranny is Paul's attempted prescription of that choice. Pauline Christian politics in its purest, in the Lacanian reading that has been initially sketched out in this study, is this very formula.

It is my hope that this opens the way to a new discourse between Pauline and Christian theology on the one hand, and the Lacanian politics so popular in the modern continental philosophical scene on the other. Of all the New Testament writers, Paul is the only one who makes any direct comment on the place of the signifier *physis*, despite it being such an important master signifier for nearly every contemporary Mediterranean philosopher. This should not be too surprising, given that the New Testament is not primarily a book written as a philosophical tract (and neither indeed are Paul's letters); but seeing how the impact of Christ thrust Paul and other Christians into a situation of irreconcilability with other master signifiers should provoke modern Christians to question where the master signifiers are in their own theological and culturally Christian systems of thought. In Lacan's later works he discussed the role of 'the market' as a master signifier today, so that, for example, a politician can win an election by claiming that if she does not then 'the market' will lose confidence.[20]

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[20] Bert Olivier details specifically Lacan's evolving ideas on capitalism and the role of 'the market' in the capitalist discourse in 'Lacan on the discourse of capitalism; Critical prospects,' *Phronimon*, 10.2 (2009), 25-42.

What effect should the *pistis Christou* have on the place of 'the market' as master signifier?

What about the use of the word 'nature' today? We live in a very different world and language to the first century, and the meanings of this word have definitely shifted – it perhaps today has fewer connotations of 'natural harmony' and more connotations of 'the natural world' and ecology when used in defence of environmentalism. Should the Church fully endorse the notion that attempting to subordinate human desire to 'nature' will solve our problems? In what other ways do we use 'nature' and other master signifiers, like 'science' and 'gender' and 'freedom' in today's world? As Mark Fisher notes, en route to explaining why one should not mistake 'reality' for the real, 'Emancipatory politics must always destroy the appearance of a "natural order", must reveal what is presented as necessary and inevitable to be a mere contingency, just as it must make what was previously deemed to be impossible seem attainable.'[21] There are endless possibilities for Lacanian/Pauline theological studies examining the structure of modern society and politics in a way similar to Lacanian philosophers, but asking Pauline questions of the meaning of Christ in response.

All of this should lead to another perhaps more important question: to what extent is the impact of the *pistis Christou* actually replicable in today's world, where 'crucifixion' is no longer a location of universally recognised imaginary trauma, and 'resurrection' is not something that we can feel in a way identical to Paul, who said that Christ appeared to five hundred people at once,

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[21] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: O Books, 2009), 17.

most of whom were still alive in his time?[22] Does the form of the formation of the Christian subject need to change? Has it changed already?

Paul seeks to remove the superego supplement to the law.[23]   In what ways do modern forms of law (social, religious, state, etc.) enact themselves through superego? Can modern Christians relate to these laws in ways not determined by the enjoyments of transgression or submission, and does Christ still affect this? If this is the case, should the Church have a function as a community that reveals the lack in the laws of the Other, demonstrating what politics less plagued by the enjoyment of superego might look like?

One can see that the purpose of this study was not to outline a definitive model of 'the Lacanian Paul,' but to open the possibility of the emergence of Lacanian Pauls by working Lacanian problems and structures deep into Paul's texts, and hoping to find some of them already there. I have found the perverse and obsessional formulas, the paradox of *jouissance,* the structure of Antigone's act, the presence of *das Ding* in the narrative, and a general psychoanalytic effect at work in the Pauline Christian community. This reveals a Paul who is better positioned for dialogue between Lacanian philosophy and theology, and leads to many more questions.

The paradox of *jouissance* is not one of Lacan's major concepts; it appears only in *Seminar VII,* and only as a by-product of Lacan's other points. Instead, the paradox is just another articulation of the problem of the subject's alienation in language. As soon as language exists, along with its

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[22] 1 Cor 15:6.

[23] That is, the role that the law plays in the subject's avoidance of *das Ding* by turning aggression inward at itself. The law's role here is that it helps us to *enjoy* superego, through the paradox of *jouissance*.

prohibitions, the subject is caught in relation to those prohibitions, incapable of making any decisions that do not depend upon a law that comes from beyond the subject, and yet *is* the subject. It is this particular incarnation of the problem of alienation that Paul's theology specifically came up against: as soon as he preached freedom from the law he was faced with the paradox of *jouissance*. Thus Paul was faced with the very problem of our imprisonment in the games of the signifier that Lacanian philosophers also face when they attempt to articulate a progressive politics that is not a just search for a new master. How do we *act* in a way that is not just a game of enjoyment? Lacan and Paul both answer with the psychical impact of a narrative of fidelity to *das Ding*; and *not* with a model.[24]

This is not an easy answer. Ultimately, included in both of their answers is that annoying thing Lacan said as soon as he started getting close to talking about politics: 'Don't expect anything more subversive in my discourse than that I do not claim to have a solution.'[25] Both Paul and Lacan leave alienation as it is. Master signifiers continue to exist, as the subject

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[24] To clarify, I am not denying that there is a sense in which Christ is an ethical model for Paul. It would be ridiculous to suggest otherwise. However, there is a distinct difference between ethics based upon a model, and Paul's theology based upon the transformative effects of a narrative, which also implies a sense of Christ as model. In Cor 6:9-11 Paul lists ten behaviours of which he clearly does not approve; but his message is not 'you should imitate Christ and so not do these things,' but rather 'Christ has already transformed you, which is why you are not doing these things.' The psychical effects of the event of Christ are primary, and the imperative of Christ as model is a method Paul used in his attempt to preserve faithfulness to this event. Paul does not evangelise by trying to convince people that a new ethical model has arrived, but claims only to preach Christ crucified, and since for him that means a resultant ethics, those ethics sometimes take the form of Christ as model.

[25] *S17*, 70.

remains trapped in language. But they posit an event with psychoanalytic effects, in which a realisation of alienation brought on by close contact with *das Ding* results in participation with symbolic death, and the assumption of one's place with respect to alienated desire.

The early Pauline Christian subject picked a new master signifier; one that included suffering and death, and a resilient joy that came from being caused to abandon the quest to get what the old order suggested one wanted. The effect of this new signifier, *Christos*, metonymically including the whole narrative of the *pistis Christou*, was such that Paul was constantly faced with the impossible task of using words to defend his own interpretation of the event that transformed him. I am not convinced that he succeeded, or that it was even possible for him to succeed. The *pistis Christou* still sublimates a Thing that cannot be fully assimilated to any given linguistic or political order, and communicating or defending that thing with words is still impossible. We are left with the question of how one's desire relates to 'the law' in its widest sense, including all religion, politics, prohibition, language, culture, gender, family, consumerism, etc. This is the question that the *pistis Christou* still asks, and a question that the Church needs to ask once more. This is the question Paul repeatedly struggled to answer, and could only posit the *pistis Christou* itself in response. There is not a neutral, objective, academic answer. What found Paul was the assumption of a dizzying question, core to human existence, which deserves to be the centre of theological inquiry once more.

Appendix

Appendix A: Glossary

This glossary includes only a small fraction of the hundreds of terms Lacan either invented or used in a way particular to his own work. It only includes terms that are necessary to comprehend this study, and only the ones that Lacan used in a sufficiently unique way to merit explanation. Most definitions include reference to where in the thesis they are first introduced or explained, and some of them depend upon the sources cited in the thesis. Definitions are also given for non-Lacanian and Greek words used or translated in a specific way here. Finally, there are also definitions for words particular to academic biblical studies and theology.

Several dictionaries were consulted in the process of writing this glossary, all of which are invaluable sources for further definitions of the terms used in this thesis:

- Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1996).

- J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac Books, 1988 [1973]).

- Barclay M. Newman, *Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament: Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013).

- Arthur G. Patzia and Anthony J. Petrotta, *Pocket Dictionary of Biblical Studies* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2002).

Other sources cited below include Joël Dor, *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan* (New York: Other Press, 1998 [1985]); Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002 [1983]); Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan* (London: Routledge, 2005); Bogdan Wolf, 'The Mysterious Ways of the Obsessional,' *The Psychoanalytical Notebooks Issue 18: Obsessional Neurosis*, ed. Philip Dravers (London: London Society of the New Lacanian School, 2009), 143-161 and Alenka Zupančič, *Ethics of the Real: Kant and Lacan* (London: Verso, 2011 [2000]).

Many of the Lacanian terms below are introduced more fully in Chapter 1, sections 2.1-3, and in the first section of Chapter 2, above.

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Act: A moment in which the subject finds a way to express her desire, putting into speech something previously unconscious, and thus sending a message to the Other. The analyst can also act, when using his own desire to intervene on behalf

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of the subject. (The analyst's transferential position in the place of the Other is what enables him to act on the subject's behalf – the difficult ethics of the analyst's action being the reason Lacan devotes seminars to both the ethics of psychoanalysis, *Seminar VII*, and the psychoanalytic act, *Seminar XV*.) A true act is something that actually sends a message to the Other, though the only act than can fully accomplish this is suicide. Some philosophers link this to Antigone, and to the *passage à l'acte*, so that symbolic death is a factor that can lead to an act (though in Lacan's understanding of the *passage à l'acte* it is something the subject does passively/involuntarily, whereas the act is specifically voluntary). The act is discussed in Chapter 6.

Alienation: An 'essential constitutive feature of the subject' (Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, 9), in which the subject is alienated in the imaginary (the ego-ideal is formed through identification with one's mirror image) and in the symbolic (one's existence is bound to language), so that in both orders one cannot speak of a 'true' subject without alienation, despite the fact that neither one's symbolic nor imaginary forms ever absolutely or concretely describe the subject. Lacan borrows the term from Hegel and Marx, but his meaning is different, and Lacanian alienation is not something that can be transcended. It is introduced in section 2.3 of Chapter 1.

Analysand: Lacan coined the word 'analysand' for the patient in the psychoanalytic clinic, as opposed to the analyst.

Apocalyptic: Theology or literature focused on a theme of the revelation and in-breaking of a divine/eternal age into the present. Since the late nineteenth century, many books of the New Testament, including Paul's letters, have been characterised as apocalyptic literature. Literature of the apocalyptic genre tends also to discuss the faithfulness of a community to its principles, or to God, through suffering. God's plan for history is seen as justifying action, rather than passivity. Note that in theological terms, 'apocalyptic' does not specifically refer to a chaotic scene of destruction (though this is often an aspect of apocalyptic literature). This understanding of the word 'apocalyptic' probably comes from the book of Revelation, often translated as the Apocalypse (from its Greek name, *Apokalypsis*, meaning 'revelation'), which is only one example from the genre of apocalyptic literature.

Atè/atē: This is the Greek word in *Antigone* designating Antigone's inherited doom from her situation and from her family history, and from Lacan's perspective also implicitly also designating *das Ding*, the second death towards which she voluntarily heads. It is transliterated as *atè* in the English translation of *Seminar VII* used here (and so in quotations from it), but outside of quotations is transliterated as *atē*, consistent with other Greek transliteration throughout. It is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, sections 1-2.

Clinical structure: Lacanian psychoanalysis recognises three 'clinical structures,' which Lacan referred to as 'Freudian structures.' Every subject is a clinical structure, though might also demonstrate symptoms typical of other

structures. The three structures are psychosis, perversion and neurosis, with the latter divided into hysteria and obsessionalism (thus there are really four clinical structures). The origins of one's clinical structure have to do with the way the child responds to castration (the inability to get what one really wants caused by language itself), and to the *nom/non-du-père* (see below), during the stages in infancy when one enters into language, first experiences alienation, and struggles to place oneself with respect to the desire of the Other. Since everyone is a clinical structure and most people are neurotics, there is no such thing as the 'normal condition;' the structures cannot be 'cured,' and it is not 'bad' to be a clinical structure. Modern Lacanian philosophers and cultural theorists often apply these structures to cultures or ideologies, etc. The current study uses them to discuss the relations to *jouissance* present in Paul's world, and the structure of some of those against whom Paul argued, and who have interpreted him since.

Cry of dereliction: The theological term for the moment Jesus cries from the cross, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' It is a central element of Slavoj Žižek's theology, in which the Christian subject has a place to identify with God's own disbelief in himself (the lack in the Other). It can be found in Mark 15:34 and Matt 27:46, and is a quotation of Psalm 22:1.

Das Ding: Discussed at length in the beginning of Chapter 2, above, *das Ding* is a concept Lacan employs almost exclusively in *Seminar VII*, after which he included most of its meanings in either the real or the *objet petit a*. It represents maternal *jouissance*, the trace memory of enjoyment before language, the void

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excluded from the world of language, that which remains beyond signifier and signified, death, the Kantian *Ding an sich* and the true object sublimated in our desire for other objects. According to Lacan Freud also thought of *das Ding* in this way, but the veracity of this interpretation is certainly up for debate.

Demand: For Lacan, 'demand' is a very specific term, which exists in a triangle with 'need' and 'desire.' 'Need' is perhaps the most simple, as instinctual biological need. When the infant is in need, but does not understand this need, it is communicated in a cry, which is pure demand. Demand is always a demand for something in return, such as love, pity, respect, etc. It is not a demand in the sense of a forceful imperative, but in the sense of insisting upon a response. In psychoanalysis, the analyst does not give in to demand, specifically frustrating it, in order to make the object of the demand clearer. The obsessional prefers demand to desire, because demanding something of the Other involves playing a game in which the Other's presence is constantly assured (thus the obsessional's demand is a form of regression, to the same game played during infancy). The concept is chiefly used in this study in the discussion of the structure of obsessional neurosis, in Chapter 4. Demand is the insistence upon a certain response from the Other, whereas desire is the lack in the Other (see below).

Desire: Desire is the lack in the Other of language, and is the most central term of Lacanian psychoanalysis, especially at the time of *Seminar VII*. Since our conscious and unconscious existence is entirely in the medium of language, and language itself is something always in movement, as soon as we enter language

our existence can never reach a terminal 'complete' point, other than death. Thus we are impelled within language, moved by its own incapability of ever settling down, as we circle around and sublimate any awareness of the pure lack (*das Ding*) at the heart of language, and of our own existence. This movement of desire within/as language is what remains of demand after need is met. Need evokes demand, and demand is met with specific objects taught to the infant as words; thereafter the child can communicate its demands as specific signifiers, and also theorise about which signifiers are getting in the way of desire. Since desire is the word Lacan uses for human being itself, it is not possible to speak of a Lacanian philosophy as being 'against desire,' unless one is advocating for suicide. Thus, in the face of interpretations of Paul that align him with Stoic philosophy 'against desire,' a Lacanian articulation of Pauline philosophy requires some clarification – and neither can Stoic philosophy be understood to be 'against' what Lacan means by 'desire.' An attempt is made at untangling this mess in Chapter 3.

Drive: Drive is *not* an element of the triangle of need, demand and desire. Neither is drive a word for instinct, which is only represented in Lacanian terminology by 'need.' Drive is the effect language has on the body, the force of movement within our linguistic existence. Thus it is the pulsive force behind desire (the French is *pulsion*). Since language acts as a mask of *das Ding*, which is death, the drive ultimately has death as its object; though the aim of the drive is not to die, but to circle around death, keeping our desire in movement while avoiding 'getting there.' In 1964 Lacan first stated that all drives are virtually

death drives, as he explained the drive with a quote from Paul: 'The signifier as such, whose first purpose is to bar the subject, has brought into him the meaning of death. (The letter kills [2 Cor 3:6], but we learn this from the letter itself [2 Corinthians, a letter].) This is why every drive is virtually a death drive' (*Écrits*, 719). The drive is introduced near the end of the first section of Chapter 2, above. It is mostly used in the singular in *Seminar VII*, but in the plural in Lacan's later works.

Empire: A word used by some theologians in order to build a bridge between New Testament political relations to the Roman Empire, and modern forms of political domination. This is used in chapters 6 and 7.

Epithymia: As argued near the end of Chapter 3, Paul uses the word *epithymia* (ἐπιθυμία) to mean *excessive desire*. Both Stoicism and Paul understood there to be varying degrees of desire, and to Paul *epithymia* was desire of such an intensity that he worried it would bring too much *jouissance* (and might lead to *porneia*). In Rom 7, discussed in Chapter 5, above, Paul translates the commandment commonly remembered today as 'Thou shalt not covet' as the prohibition of *epithymia* – that is to say, not the prohibition of the wanting of any object, but the *excessive* wanting of *another's* object (the desire of the Other, but to a degree Paul found undesirable). Using the word *epithymia* also connected this commandment to sexual desire, an allusion that remains present throughout Rom 7.

Eschatology: The study of the end times.

First and second deaths: The first and second deaths are bodily death and symbolic death. After one dies, one is still remembered by the Other as signifier (funerals ensure this, and while living many fantasise about their own funerals, or about how they will be remembered after death). The two deaths are introduced near the end of the second section of Chapter 2, in the discussion of Lacan's reading of the Marquis de Sade as one who claimed to desire death itself, but eventually betrayed his desire not to suffer the second death.   In Chapter 6, Antigone's fidelity to the signifier is one that she knows is a desire for the first and second deaths, and heads towards them voluntarily, resulting in her being trapped between the second and first deaths (physically alive, but already symbolically dead).

Hysteria: A form of neurosis in which repressed trauma is not consciously remembered, and instead presents itself in the form of neurotic symptoms. The complete repression of the trauma leaves the subject plagued by questions of sex, gender and love. The hysteric desires the desire of the Other by unconsciously seeking to preserve this desire by ensuring that he is never its object, thus engaging in patterns of behaviour that either negate the possibility of really being loved, or presume that the other's love is always directed elsewhere. The hysteric also avoids being the object of love by fantasising about being the instrument or subject of love (and thus not its object). All of these symptoms allow the subject to go on believing that absolute love exists (Wolf, 'The Mysterious Ways of the Obsessional,' 146) – if one avoids the situation of being its object, its absolute

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existence is always still theoretically possible. The main reference to hysteria in this study is in discussions of Žižek's reading of Romans 7, throughout.

Imaginary: One of Lacan's three 'orders' or 'registers,' to do with the image. Like with the symbolic, the subject is alienated in the imaginary, which begins with Lacan's famous 'mirror stage' when the subject first identifies with its own image and begins to form the ego. The imaginary is the world of the image, and of what can be imagined, but it is structured by the symbolic. Lacan accuses ego-psychologists of attempting to work only in the imaginary, since their goal is to cause the subject to identify with the analyst's ego. The imaginary is also the order of both the signifier and the signified, *but not the relationships between signifiers and signifieds*. To steal an analogy sometimes used by Žižek: in a game of chess the pieces and the board are imaginary, the rules are symbolic, and the real is what emerges when an angry players suddenly sweeps the board, interrupting the entire game with the human emotions not otherwise formally present for the rules or the pieces.

Jouissance: *Jouissance* is enjoyment that does not exist, the perfect enjoyment of *das Ding*. As such, *jouissance* is precisely the enjoyment that one gets shades of from *not* getting what one wants. The paradox of *jouissance* is that whether one attempts to get one's *jouissance* by pursuing it directly, against the laws that forbid it, or one attempts to follow the law perfectly and sacrifice one's *jouissance*, both paths are impossible, and result in shades of the *jouissance* that come from not getting what one wants.

Kerygma: The Greek word *kērygma* is used in biblical studies to refer to the general content of one's preached message.   Thus, Mark's Gospel is often theorised to be heavily influenced by 'Petrine kerygma,' the content of St Peter's sermons, and Pauline kerygma is Paul's evangelistic message.

Lack: The incapability of the Other ever to produce enough signifiers, or the 'right' signifiers, for the subject to feel complete; this is the impossibility of the subject ever finding the signifier or object that satisfies his desire. Desire is an effect of the lack in language. Since language is composed of signifiers that slide in their relations to each other, desire always plays out along these metonymical lines, infinitely sliding to different signifiers. Since language will never arrive at a fully 'complete' set of stable relations between signifier and signified, this lack ensures the continuation of desire, as an effect of the lack in the Other – and thus, Lacan says, 'desire is the desire of the Other.' Further, it is this lack in the Other that allows the subject to exist, and which is the subject's existence.

Liberalism: In Chapter 3, 'liberalism' refers to Paul's message of freedom from the law. The specifics of what Paul meant by this are debated, but in 1 Corinthians it is clear that it was a liberalism he intended not to lead to libertinism.

Libertinism: Libertinism was a favourite topic of Lacan's, specifically the work of the Marquis de Sade.   Libertinism is the relentless pursuit of *jouissance* through the transgression of the law. This makes libertinism a perverse pursuit.

Master signifier: A signifier that determines the meaning of other signifiers, thus functioning as a name for the Other. Master signifiers function as a *points du capiton*, quilting points through which the subject passes retrospectively, in order to interpret knowledge (for example, a sentence, which cannot be understood until its completion). In Pauline theology *Christos* functions as a master signifier, retroactively re-determining the meanings of other signifiers, like *nomos*, *agapē* or *pistis*. The concept is described in more detail in Chapter 5, section 5, and is particularly important in the final three chapters.

Neurosis: In psychoanalysis a neurosis is a particular curable symptom in which a repressed memory comes to be expressed through an unwanted action or association. Freud and Breuer's discovery that a neurosis is not a nervous disorder but an effect of repressed trauma, in 1895, marks the beginning of psychoanalytic inquiry. For Lacanian psychoanalysis, neurosis is one of the three clinical structures (with perversion and psychosis), and is itself divisible into hysteria and obsessional neurosis. Every subject is a clinical structure, and they are not curable; instead, Lacanian psychoanalysis aims to affect one's relation to a clinical structure, curing particular symptoms of one's neurosis, not neurosis itself. This means that 'neurosis' is not a negative term in Lacanian psychoanalysis, but is just the most common clinical structure, which throws up more problems for some than for others. The origins of the theory of neurosis are discussed in Chapter 4, section 1.

New Perspectives: Interpretations of Paul since 1977 that have sought to move away from Martin Luther's interpretation, which had posited Paul against a notion of 'Jewish legalism,' interpreting Paul's phrase 'works of the law' as a reference to Jews trying to earn their way into heaven. Though this has been done in several ways, they all depend upon a new understanding of the problem Paul was up against, which is not Jewish legalistic soteriology, but the question of the role of the law in the definition of God's people. This reframes much of Paul's theology as a conversation about identification, and about the appropriate response to God's grace, rather than as primarily concerned with soteriology. The New Perspectives on Paul are elaborated upon at length in Chapter 1, section 3.2.

Non/nom-du-père: This is a core term for Lacan, especially in *Seminar V* (discussed in Chapter 2, above), though it is not as prevalent in *Seminar VII*. The *nom-du-père* ('name of the father'), pronounced in French in a way that could be heard as the *non-du-père* ('no of the father'), is part of the 'paternal metaphor' through which the child achieves mastery over the lost object by affirming a signifier that represses the *non/nom-du-père*, the prohibition of enjoyment. In a more orthodox Freudian construal this might mean repressing the memory of the real father's prohibition of the mother; but for Lacan this is an early metaphor that helps the child to cope with the fact that language forbids them from ever getting what they want. For example, the signifier that the child uses in the paternal metaphor (the acceptance of the *non/nom-du-père* by repressing it) could be a signifier for an object that the child imagines is what the primary caregiver really wants, that which keeps him/her away when the child cries. In Lacanian theory,

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the use of a signifier to deal with the loss of the object marks the entrance into language as such, in which signifiers in signifying chains forever swap signifieds with each other through metaphor and metonymy. The repression of a primal signifier through a metaphorical substitution with another signifier opens the possibility of the 'sliding' structure of language as a whole. See Joël Dor, *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan*, 111-119.

Objet petit a: This term originates in *Seminar II*, but develops throughout Lacan's work, being used most frequently from *Seminar XI*. The *objet petit a*, with the little 'a' for little other, *autre*, is the object-cause of desire. Thus the formula for the fantasy is the subject in relation to *a*, *$\$\diamondsuit a$*. However, the *objet petit a* is that which is leftover in every object – that which is still not there even after one gets what one wants. So it is the part of the signifier that causes one's desire, but also the very part that will never be found to be there. To use the language of *Seminar VII*, the *objet petit a* is that which stops a sublimation of *das Ding* from ever actually being *das Ding*, because neither of them can actually be represented by language. The *objet petit a* is not actually contained in language, but is a projection of the ego, because it is the object-cause of desire that the subject hopes to be contained in the object, something the subject has placed there in an attempt to find an imaginary object for the ego-ideal.

Obsessionalism: A form of neurosis in which repressed trauma is dis-affected, remembered without the actual emotions that accompanied it. The obsessional copes with life through various forms of the question of one's existence. For

example, he/she has a specific relation to the Other in which the Other's desire is transubstantiated as demand, which succeeds at ensuring continued belief in the Other's absolute existence (see Chapter 4, section 3). Thus the obsessional can be said to 'believe in absolute being' (Wolf, 'The Mysterious Ways of the Obsessional,' 146), as the obsessional's symptoms express, question and preserve this belief. The obsessional is plagued by various more specific symptoms, such as guilt, fear and anxiety. Obsessionalism is a major theme of this study, particularly in chapters 4 and 5. It is elaborated upon at great length, including lists of symptoms, in Chapter 4, sections 1-3.

Other: Represented by A, or by a barred A (A̶) because the Other is always lacking. The Other is radical alterity (otherness) itself. This has many meanings for Lacan, though the biggest is the subject's alienation in language. The Other is also the other subject, in the Levinasian sense of every other human being radically unknowable, and the other sex, in the sense of gender itself being another linguistic construct in which the subject is alienated.

Paradox of *jouissance*: The paradox Lacan discovers in *Seminar VII*, in which the subject is caught between two different ways of failing to get *jouissance*: either one seeks to obey the law perfectly, but the law generates a desire to transgress that one enjoys, and then one frequently secretly enjoys this transgression (a neurotic position), or one seeks to get one's enjoyment apart from the law, but is nonetheless always bound by it, enjoying transgressing it but always needing the law in order to continue transgressing (a perverse position).

The paradox of *jouissance* is an effect of alienation in the symbolic: one's existence in language prevents one both from ever fully getting *jouissance*, and from ever being able to try to get *jouissance* in a way that is unrelated to the Other. Lacan does not specifically posit the paradox of *jouissance* as between neurosis and perversion, but the argument of this thesis is that the reality of the paradox of *jouissance* for the subject was experienced in the first century Mediterranean world as a conflict between the lifestyle choices of perverts and obsessional neurotics.

Passage à l'acte: A term Lacan inherited from French psychiatry, he modified it from referring to any sudden self-destructive behaviour, and instead uses it from *Seminar X* on to refer to a passive experience in which one is suddenly caused to extricate oneself from symbolic identification. The term is defined more fully in Chapter 6, section 1.3.

Perversion: The attempted disavowal of castration (which for Lacan is symbolic castration, the inability to get what we want that is an effect of the impotency of language itself). While for Freud 'perversion' had strong connotations of sexual impropriety, for Lacan it is one of the 'Freudian structures,' which Lacanians today call 'clinical structures.' Bogdan Wolf defines perversion as belief in absolute *jouissance* ('The Mysterious Ways of the Obsessional,' 146). The pervert disavows castration, and so relentlessly pursues enjoyment. As such, the formula for the perverse structure is ($a \diamondsuit \$$), in which the subject attempts to occupy the place of the Other (compare to the structure of the fantasy, given in the

section on the *objet petit a*, above). The Lacanian understanding of perversion is first introduced in Chapter 2, section 3.

Phallus: Lacan's use of this term changed over time, though it never refers to the male genitalia, except on the rare occasion when this is what he means by the term 'real phallus.' In his earlier work it is the signifier for the desire of the mother (or other primary caregiver), denoted by φ. The Oedipal drama plays out as a result of the infant's desire to be the phallus, the object of the mother's desire. Eventually he or she has to move from desiring to be the phallus to desiring to have the phallus (accepting that he or she is not the phallus, and then that he or she has or does not have the phallus). This is related to gender, in ways that Lacan discussed in great detail long after the works chiefly discussed in this study (*Seminar XX*); but the phallus is a signifier that has no signified, so it is not directly connected to one's genitalia. The phallus is not discussed at length in this study (because it is not mentioned often in *Seminar VII*), but it does come into play in Chapter 2.

Physis: The signifier used as a foundation for ethics in most ancient Greek and Roman philosophies (*natura* in Latin), usually translated as 'nature.' It referred to the natural world, as in the modern English phrase 'the environment,' but also to nature as an abstract concept of natural harmony, and to the natures of individuals, to the concept of human nature, and to the whole of existence. Chapter 5 builds upon the thesis set out in Chapter 4, section 5, that *physis* functioned as a master signifier in an obsessional neurotic structure for Stoic philosophy. For both Stoic

philosophy and Paul (in Rom 1:26-27 and 11:21-24), *para physin* means 'against nature' (or 'unaligned with nature'), and *kata physin* means 'according to nature' (or 'aligned with nature').

Pistis Christou: These two words of Paul's occupy a central position in Paul's theology according to most interpreters, whether they are translated as a reference to the believer's 'faith in Christ' or Jesus's 'faithfulness of Christ.'   The history and importance of this are discussed in Chapter 1, section 3.2, and Chapter 6, section 2.   In line with many of Paul's 'apocalyptic' interpreters, it is used in this study as a reference to the entire narrative of Christ's obedience to God unto crucifixion and resurrection (see discussion in Chapter 6).   The '*pistis Christou* debate' is the debate that has raged since Richard Hays' 1981 doctoral thesis on the question of whether the phrase should be translated 'subjectively' as 'the faithfulness of Christ,' or 'objectively' as 'faith in Christ' (as a subjective or objective genitive).

Porneia: A New Testament Greek word often translated as 'fornication,' but actually referring more generally to whatever the author considers sexually immoral. Thus, the best English word for it might actually be 'perversion,' but in a Lacanian study 'perversion' has a more precise definition (see above).   It is easiest and clearest to leave it un-translated.   Instead, the word 'perverts' is used to translate the closely related word πόρνοι (*pornoi*) in 1 Cor 6:9, near the end of Chapter 2.

Prosōpopoiia: An ancient rhetorical strategy in which one performs a speech in the character of someone else, which occasionally appears in English in the Latinised form 'prosopopoeia.'   Lacan uses the term to discuss how in psychoanalysis the Truth speaks through the subject's speech. Douglas Campbell argues that Rom 1:18-32 was originally intended to be performed as *prosōpopoiia*. Stanley Stowers argues that Rom 7:7-23 was originally intended to be performed as *prosōpopoiia*. All of this is discussed in Chapter 5.

Psychosis: A clinical structure in which the subject has foreclosed upon the *non/nom-du-père*, and thus never fully enters language. There is little discussion of psychosis in this study.

Real: One of Lacan's three 'orders' or 'registers,' to do with reality in its purest; that is, nothing. The real is 'that which resist symbolisation absolutely' (*S1*, 66), and the 'domain of that which subsists outside of symbolisation' (*Écrits*, 324). Thus the real is the limit of both the symbolic and the imaginary, similar to the Kantian *noumenon*. As Lacan lays out in the tenth and eleventh seminars, it is the object of anxiety, when a missed encounter with a 'real object' presents itself in the form of trauma. Towards his later seminars, Lacan increasingly connects it with the idea of 'the impossible,' though from the start it was that which it is impossible for a signifier to represent. In exactly this sense it is also connected with *das Ding* in *Seminar VII*, where he refers to *das Ding* as 'that which in the real suffers from the signifier' (*S7*, 154). The real itself does not contain gaps or negatives, because it is rationality in its purest (Hegel: 'the real is rational, the

rational is real'); thus, *das Ding* is the effect that the signifier (always containing lack) has upon the real.

Signifier and signified: A signifier is a sign, symbol or word that forms a unit with its ideational content, the signified. These terms come from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, the father of modern linguistics and one of the most influential thinkers on Lacan's earlier work. Though translation of Saussure is not consistent, in English Lacanian scholarship the terms are always 'signifier' for the word and 'signified' for that which it represents. The Lacanian subject is represented by a signifier for another signifier, meaning that we identify with and understand ourselves with signifiers, which we use in order to represent ourselves for others, and for the Other.

Soteriology: The study of salvation, *sōtēria*. In the above study, the term is used more widely to refer to the study of the entire mechanism of conversion in Pauline theology, though Paul himself perhaps uses terminology explicitly connected to 'salvation' less often than the casual reader might expect.

Subject: The subject of the unconscious, in the same way as someone might call a lab-rat subject to experimentation. It refers to the human subject, but, specifically, as it is placed in the symbolic, not as it identifies in the imaginary (that is the ego, with the ego-ideal being the subject's imaginary identification itself). The subject is always 'barred,' in that it only exists as alienated in the Other, despite being a gap in the symbolic; the subject is that which is 'under the

signifier,' under the bar in Lacan's modified Saussurean symbolisation. Since the subject exists within language, and this is both the language that is spoken and the language of the unconscious, one can agree with Alenka Zupančič that 'The subject is at once subject to and subject of the unconscious' (*Ethics of the Real*, 35).

Sublimation: For Freud, sublimation is a sexual instinct enjoyed as something else. For Lacan in *Seminar VII*, sublimation is the raising of an object to the dignity of *das Ding* (*S7*, 138). Sublimation is how we enjoy *das Ding* without getting too close to it; thus sublimation accounts for most human enjoyment, explains why *jouissance* can sometimes be both painful and enjoyable (since *das Ding* is suffering and death), and is a tool aiding the drives in circling around *das Ding* without getting there. *Antigone* is a sublimation of *das Ding* that simultaneously poses a question to the subject of the nature of his/her desire – as is the *pistis Christou* (as argued in Chapter 6). Sublimation is introduced in the second section of Chapter 2, and discussed throughout.

Symbolic: One of Lacan's three 'orders' or 'registers,' to do with the symbol. Lacan's understanding of the symbolic emerges from his psychoanalytic reading of Claude Lévi-Strauss: symbolic rules unconsciously structure the social world. The symbolic is the world of the signifying play of language. Signifiers themselves are imaginary (and that which they exclude is real), but the way they relate to each other, the rules according to which they operate, and their power to represent the subject and cause desire, are all what Lacan calls 'the symbolic;'

thus language has imaginary and real dimensions to it, but the symbolic dimension of language is the play of the signifier. Since the subject experiences the signifying play of language as something foreign to it, but also as the very fabric of its existence, symbolic alienation is the key sense in which the subject is always alienated in 'the Other.' The unconscious is the discourse of the Other because its symbolic structure transpires according to the rules of language, not consciously generated by the subject.

Torah: The first five books of both the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, containing the laws/instruction kept by Jews in Paul's time (and today) as a sign of continued participation in covenant with God, identifying the nation of Israel, God's chosen people. Paul's debates about the function of the law occurred as a result of the question of whether converts to Christianity should follow the requirements the *Torah* – though he often argues about 'law' in general, discussing the requirement of *Torah* observance by way of a conversation about prohibition, or state law, etc. The question of what Paul means by 'the works of the law,' and what this phrase meant to others in Paul's time, is central to the debates that led to the New Perspectives on Paul.

Appendix B: Translations

Included here are the Greek texts and translations of the core passages discussed above. Defences of any potentially controversial translation, or of instances where translation has been done in a certain way for the sake of this study, are given afterwards.

1 Corinthians 7:1-9

Greek	English
[1] Περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε, καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἅπτεσθαι·	Now concerning what you wrote, 'It is good for a man not to touch [a woman/his wife];'
[2] διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἐχέτω καὶ ἑκάστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἐχέτω.	but because of the *porneias* let each husband have *his* wife and let each wife have *her* husband.
[3] τῇ γυναικὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ τῷ ἀνδρί.	The husband should give marital rights to the wife, and likewise also the wife to the husband.
[4] ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλὰ ὁ ἀνήρ, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλὰ ἡ γυνή.	The wife does not have authority over her own body but her husband does, and similarly the husband does not have authority over his own body but the wife does.
[5] μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε ἀλλήλους, εἰ μήτι ἂν ἐκ συμφώνου πρὸς καιρόν, ἵνα σχολάσητε τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἦτε, ἵνα μὴ πειράζῃ ὑμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς διὰ τὴν ἀκρασίαν ὑμῶν.	Do not deprive each other, unless out of agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves in prayer, and you will be together again, so that Satan may not tempt you through your un-self-control.
[6] τοῦτο δὲ λέγω κατὰ συγγνώμην οὐ κατ᾽ ἐπιταγήν.	I say this as a concession, not as a command.
[7] θέλω δὲ πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἶναι ὡς καὶ ἐμαυτόν· ἀλλὰ ἕκαστος ἴδιον ἔχει χάρισμα ἐκ θεοῦ, ὁ μὲν οὕτως, ὁ δὲ οὕτως.	And I wish that all people were as even myself; but each has his/her own gift from God, some this gift, some that gift.
[8] Λέγω δὲ τοῖς ἀγάμοις καὶ ταῖς χήραις, καλὸν αὐτοῖς ἐὰν μείνωσιν ὡς κἀγώ·	To the unmarried and widows I say, it is good for them that they should remain as I am.
[9] εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται, γαμησάτωσαν, κρεῖττον γάρ ἐστιν γαμῆσαι ἢ πυροῦσθαι.	But if they are not self-controlled, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to desire [passionately?].

[1] The word γυνὴ means both 'woman' and 'wife.' The phrase is likely a general maxim that it is good not to 'touch' (sexually) a woman, but the immediate context shows that it was being used to discourage marital relations. It may be the case that it is best to leave both meanings in the translation, since the phrase was probably being used both ways. At any rate, I have left both possibilities in the above translation, in an attempt at offering a relatively neutral translation, where it does not distract from the goals of this study, for the reader who is not proficient in New Testament Greek.

[2] *Porneia* is the Greek word used in the New Testament for all sexual acts deemed immoral. It is usually translated as 'immorality' or 'fornication.' Perhaps in a psychoanalytic study the best word would be 'perversion,' but that would pervert the clarity of an essay that already has a different technical definition for perversion (running towards the intentionally transgressive side of the paradox of *jouissance*). This bears on the fact that Lacan did not see 'perversion' in the same way as other psychoanalysts: to him perversion was just a clinical structure, not a moral judgment. Even outside of psychoanalysis, translating this word into modern English is difficult because there is no general consensus in the world as to what denotes sexual immorality, and whatever our modern society might view as sexually immoral is certainly not congruent with ancient Jewish/Christian views of immorality. One could argue that this is the reason 'fornication' seems out of place in modern English: we do not now always apply a negative connotation to the idea of sex outside of marriage, and it is arguable that neither did the majority of ancient Romans or Jews. So, due to there

being no equivalent concept to *porneia* in Lacanian psychoanalysis or modern English, it is left un-translated.

There is some room for debate here over whether it should be translated 'let each man have a wife' (be married), or 'let each man *have* his wife' (continue to consummate the marriage). However, the object of the verb is a woman/wife who is already qualified as 'his' with a genitive reflexive pronoun in the attributive position (a 'sandwiched genitive,' as many grammarians call it). The simplest and most likely way to read this is that the definite article is there for its most common reason: it qualifies the woman as *the* woman of the man. Also, the rest of this section (7:1-7) is talking about married couples. For these reasons it makes the most sense to translate this verse as given above, with the jussive/imperative being for the man to *have* his wife (and then vice versa). Thus the first italics contained in the translation above are to reflect the emphasis contained in Paul saying 'the of-himself wife' (an articular sandwiched genitive) rather than the much simpler 'his wife' (γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ). The second italics are added for emphasis, to reflect the unnecessary insertion of the adjective ἴδιον (literally, 'her own husband'). Since, as far as we know, there was not a culture of polyandrous polygamy present, Paul is not stating that a woman should have only one husband, and is thus either implying that women are sleeping with men who are not their husbands, or he is finding a near synonymous way of expressing the same thought as the first half of the sentence, varying vocabulary for euphony. The strange emphasis on the wife being 'the wife of himself' and the husband being 'her *own* husband' might suggest that part of the *porneia* Paul is responding

to is a sharing of spouses; or it might be in reference to the use of prostitutes discussed in the previous chapter.

[3] This is the clear meaning of τὴν ὀφειλὴν (most commonly 'the debt,' but with a fairly wide semantic range) in the context of the two verses preceding and following it.

[5] 'Un-self-control' is used here in order to preserve the consistency of potential references to the Stoic understanding of self-control in the Greek.

[7] The masculine gender in the Greek could here be taken either as referring only to men, or as inclusive of other genders as well.

[9] The heated debate over the meaning of πυροῦσθαι is addressed in Chapter 3.

Epictetus, *Discourses* **3.22.76**

Greek	English
–Ναί· ἀλλὰ Κράτης ἔγημεν.–	'Yes, but Crates married!'
Περίστασίν μοι λέγεις ἐξ ἔρωτος γενομένην καὶ γυναῖκα τιθεῖς ἄλλον Κράτητα.	You mention a situation that arose out of passionate love, and a woman who is another Crates.
ἡμεῖς δὲ περὶ τῶν κοινῶν γάμων καὶ ἀπεριστάτων ζητοῦμεν καὶ οὕτως ζητοῦντες οὐχ εὑρίσκομεν ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ καταστάσει προηγούμενον τῷ Κυνικῷ τό πρᾶγμα.	But we are concerned with common marriages, and are seeking without extenuating circumstances; seeking thusly we are not finding in this position a primary action[1] for the Cynic.

This translation attempts to mirror the Greek as closely as English syntax can permit, in order to preserve the logical flow and specific meaning of the argument.

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[1] Foucault makes much of Epictetus' phrase τό πρᾶγμα, here τό πρᾶγμα προηγούμενον, which refers not just to an action, but to 'the true proposition inasmuch as it can be transformed into a precept of action.' *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, trans. by Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2005), 349-351.

Romans 1:16-2:6, 26-29

The words in italics are intended to be read in the voice of 'the Teacher.'

Greek	English
[16] Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ 'στιν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι.	I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power of salvation for all of the faithful, both the Jew first and also the Greek.
[17] δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.	For in it God's righteousness is being revealed, out of faithfulness and for faithfulness, just as it stands written: The righteous one will live as a result of faithfulness.
[18] Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ᾽ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων,	*For God's wrath is being revealed from heaven, upon all impiety and unrighteousness of men who repress the truth in unrighteousness.*
[19] διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφανέρωσεν.	*Because the knowledge of God is known among them. For God revealed it to them.*
[20] τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἥ τε ἀΐδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους·	*For the invisible things of God have been understood and clearly known through the created things from the creation of the world, and [this means] both his everlasting power and divinity, so that they are without excuse.*
[21] διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ηὐχαρίστησαν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία.	*Because, despite knowing God, they did not honour or thank him as God, but became perverted in their reasoning and their stupid heart was darkened.*
[22] φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν,	*Professing to be sages they were made fools,*
[23] καὶ ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνος φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἑρπετῶν.	*and they traded the glory of the undying God for the likeness of a statue of a dying man and birds and quadrupeds and reptiles.*
[24] Διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς,	*Therefore God gave them over, in the desires of their hearts, to uncleanness, so that their bodies would be shamed among them.*

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Greek	English
[25] οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει, καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, ὅς ἐστιν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.	*They traded the truth of God in for a lie, and they worshipped and served the creature alongside he who created, who is blessed into the ages, amen.*
[26] Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας· αἵ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν,	*Because of this, God gave them over to dishonourable passions, for even their women exchanged the natural function for the unnatural,*
[27] ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες.	*and also in the same way the men, having abandoned the natural function of the woman, became enflamed in their lusts for one another, men working up their shameful [members] in men, and receiving back in themselves the punishment that was a result of their error.*
[28] Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα,	*And just as they did not see fit to hold God in knowledge, God gave them over to an unfit mind, to do improper things,*
[29] πεπληρωμένους πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ πονηρίᾳ πλεονεξίᾳ κακίᾳ, μεστοὺς φθόνου φόνου ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας, ψιθυριστὰς	*having been filled with every kind of unrighteousness, evil, greediness, badness, full of envy, murder, strife, treachery, whisperers,*
[30] καταλάλους, θεοστυγεῖς, ὑβριστὰς ὑπερηφάνους ἀλαζόνας, ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς,	*slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, egotists, inventors of bad things, disobeyers of parents,*
[31] ἀσυνέτους, ἀσυνθέτους, ἀστόργους, ἀνελεήμονας·	*unthinking, unfaithful, unaffectionate and unmerciful.*
[32] οἵτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες, ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν.	*They know the just requirement of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, but they not only do them but also approve of those who practice them.*
[2:1] Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, ὦ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων· ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις, τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων.	Therefore you are without excuse, oh all judging man; for in this judging of the other you condemn yourself, for you do the same things, judge.
[2] οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας.	*But we know that God's judgment upon those who do these-sorts-of-things is in truth!*

[3] λογίζῃ δὲ τοῦτο, ὦ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά, ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ;	But do you reckon, oh man who judges those who do these-sorts-of-things while doing the same things, that you are going to escape the judgment of God?
[4] ἢ τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς, ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει;	Or do you despise the richness of his kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that it is 'the kind[ness]' of God that leads you into repentance?
[5] κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ	But with your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you store up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and the revelation of God's just judgment,
[6] ὃς ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ·	who will repay each according to his works;
[26] ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσσῃ, οὐχ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομὴν λογισθήσεται;	Therefore, if 'the uncircumcision' observes the law's just requirements, won't then his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?
[27] καὶ κρινεῖ ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα σὲ τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου.	And 'the law-fulfilling circumcision' will judge you, who lives through the letter and circumcision, to be a transgressor of the law.
[28] οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν οὐδὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή,	For there is no 'Jew in externality' and no 'circumcision in the externality of the flesh,'
[29] ἀλλ᾽ ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος, καὶ περιτομὴ καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.	but rather there is the secret Jew, and there is a circumcision of the heart, in the spirit, not by the letter, whose praise is not from humans but from God.

[1:16-2:29] I retain much of Paul's repetition of the enclitic particle γὰρ ('for'), despite it not being totally necessary in English, in order to preserve the potential emphasis on logical flow and philosophical tone. Translation of important Pauline words and phrases is in line with trends in recent apocalyptic interpretation of Paul, such as translating words from the πίστ- stem along lines of fidelity/faithfulness. It is tempting to translate Ἰουδαῖος as 'Judean,' as do Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch in *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*

(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), in order to communicate the lack of clear distinction between these concepts at the time of writing; but it would be misleading to imply that the discussion in Romans is strictly about national identity to the exclusion of racial and religious identity. Possible allusions to Stoic thought have been translated as such. ἀσύνετος is translated differently in 1:21 and 31, in order to preserve the alliteration in 31, which is part of Paul's caricature of the Teacher.

[2:1-29] Some phrases are translated in quotation marks in order to communicate that they function as terms in themselves, such as 'the Jew in externality' or 'the uncircumcision.' See Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 233-234, where he muses that perhaps it should be translated as 'foreskin,' as a derogatory term for gentiles, citing Joel Marcus, 'The Circumcision and the Uncircumcision in Rome,' *New Testament Studies*, 35 [1989], 67-81). Similarly, τὰ τοιαῦτα seems best rendered in a hyphenated fashion as 'these-sorts-of-things,' to highlight its function as a short-hand reminder of the whole sin list of 1:28-32.

[2:1, 3] As discussed in Chapter 5, above, the vocative ὦ, required in Attic Greek but not widely used in New Testament Greek, was a marker of the diatribal style, and has been translated to convey this.

[2:1] πᾶς is difficult to translate, as it can be read with either the preceding vocative or following nominative, and its meaning hinges upon the presumed object of the diatribe. Douglas Campbell never comments on it directly in *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), but does acknowledge that 2:1 turns the argument

not just onto the Teacher, but onto 'any such judger' (548). C. E. B. Cranfield, echoing the worryingly anti-Semitic implications of the conventional reading, sees it as addressing 'the man who sets himself up to judge,' 'the typical Jew,' in *Romans 1-8*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001 [1975]), 142. So it can be read as qualifying the individual man as a universal possibility, as it is usually read; but it seems more likely that πᾶς, which is put in the predicative position when read attributively (Glenn M. Balfour, *A Step-by-Step Introduction to New Testamant Greek* [Mattersey, UK: Mattersey Hall Publications, 2005], 254), is intended to qualify the man as 'entirely-judging,' connecting him directly with 1:18-32. Thus it has been translated as 'all judging,' with 'all' qualifying the Teacher as wholly judgmental, rather than quantifying the object of his judgment as universal.

Romans 7:7-8:2

The words in italics are intended to be read in the voice of 'the Teacher.'

Greek	English
[7] Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὁ νόμος ἁμαρτία; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου· τήν τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ᾔδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν· *οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις.*	*What then shall we say? That the law is sin?* May it never be! *But I did not know sin except through law, for I would not have known excessive desire except for the law saying 'Do not desire excessively.'*
[8] ἀφορμὴν δὲ λαβοῦσα ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς κατειργάσατο ἐν ἐμοὶ πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν· χωρὶς γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία νεκρά.	*But sin, through the law, took its opportunity and worked up in me every kind of excessive desire;* for apart from the law, sin is dead.
[9] ἐγὼ δὲ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ, ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀνέζησεν,	*And I was once alive apart from the law, but when the law came sin revived,*
[10] ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπέθανον καὶ εὑρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ εἰς ζωήν, αὕτη εἰς θάνατον·	*and I died, and the law 'that leads to life' was found in me, leading to death;*

[11] ἡ γὰρ ἁμαρτία ἀφορμὴν λαβοῦσα διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἐξηπάτησέν με καὶ δι’ αὐτῆς ἀπέκτεινεν.	*for sin, taking its opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through [the commandment] killed me.*
[12] ὥστε ὁ μὲν νόμος ἅγιος καὶ ἡ ἐντολὴ ἁγία καὶ δικαία καὶ ἀγαθή.	*[But you have said] 'So on the one hand the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good…'*
[13] Τὸ οὖν ἀγαθὸν ἐμοὶ ἐγένετο θάνατος; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλ’ ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία, διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μοι κατεργαζομένη θάνατον, ἵνα γένηται καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλὸς ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς.	*Did the good, therefore, cause my death? May it never be! But sin, so that it may be made apparent as sin, through the good, worked death in me, so that sin might become inordinately sinful through the commandment.*
[14] Οἴδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐστιν, ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.	*For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, being enslaved under sin.*
[15] ὃ γὰρ κατεργάζομαι οὐ γινώσκω· οὐ γὰρ ὃ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω, ἀλλ’ ὃ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ.	*For that which I bring about I do not know; for that which I do not want is what I practice, but that which I hate I do.*
[16] εἰ δὲ ὃ οὐ θέλω τοῦτο ποιῶ, σύμφημι τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι καλός.	*But if that which I do not wish is what I do, then I agree that the law is good.*
[17] νυνὶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ ἀλλ’ ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία.	*But it is no longer I that brings it about, but sin that lives within me.*
[18] Οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, ἀγαθόν· τὸ γὰρ θέλειν παράκειταί μοι, τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὔ·	*For I know that the good does not live in me, that is, in my flesh; for the will is present within me, but to bring about the good is not.*
[19] οὐ γὰρ ὃ θέλω ποιῶ ἀγαθόν, ἀλλ’ ὃ οὐ θέλω κακὸν τοῦτο πράσσω.	*For I do not do the good I want, but the bad I do not want is what I practice.*
[20] εἰ δὲ ὃ οὐ θέλω [ἐγὼ] τοῦτο ποιῶ, οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ ἀλλ’ ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία.	*Now if that which I do not want is what I do, then it is no longer I that brings it about, but sin that dwells within me.*
[21] εὑρίσκω ἄρα τὸν νόμον, τῷ θέλοντι ἐμοὶ ποιεῖν τὸ καλόν, ὅτι ἐμοὶ τὸ κακὸν παράκειται·	*Therefore I find [it to be] a law that when I want to do the good, the bad lies close at hand.*
[22] συνήδομαι γὰρ τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον,	*For I delight in the law of God in my inmost being!*

[23] βλέπω δὲ ἕτερον νόμον ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου ἀντιστρατευόμενον τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοός μου καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντά με ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τῷ ὄντι ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου.	*But I see a different law in my members, warring with the law of my mind, capturing me in the law of sin, which exists in my members.*
[24] Ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος· τίς με ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου;	*What a miserable man am I! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*
[25] χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. Ἄρα οὖν αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοΐ δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ τῇ δὲ σαρκὶ νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας.	*Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! Therefore on the one hand I myself am I slave to the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh [a slave] to the law of sin.*
[8:1] Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.	Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
[2] ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν σε ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου.	For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

[7:7-25]   In *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, & Gentiles* (London: Yale University Press, 1994), from which I draw the basics of my reading of Rom 7, Stanley Stowers does not comment on any shifts in voice within the passage, except on p. 270 where he supposes that Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὁ νόμος ἁμαρτία; μὴ γένοιτο might still be in Paul's voice (I read only the μὴ γένοιτο as Pauline interjection, as well as in v. 13), and 282 where he reads the benediction in v. 25a as Pauline (I read it as the Teacher's, echoing his benediction in 1:25, but now, by way of concession, referring to Christ as Lord). I have also tried, where relevant, to remain consistent with the language of the Teacher in 1:18-32, with the way this passage is translated by translators of Lacan, with the way I have translated other passages above and with common translations of Stoic terms and phrases. In order to avoid debates about whether 'sin' and 'the law' should be capitalised, I have not capitalised either, even when preceded by a definite article.

[7:7-8] ἐπιθυμία, as argued in Chapter 3, is translated as 'excessive desire.'

[7:12] This sentence does not seem to flow with the argument no matter whose voice it is; I read it as Paul interjecting with a reminder of the sorts of things the Teacher has said. As Jewett notes (*Romans*, 453), this sentence is only one half of an anacoluthon, a phrase beginning 'on the one hand.' This justifies the decision to see it as a fragment of a quote.

[7:14] It is striking that with πεπραμένος Paul uses a perfect participle instead of an aorist participle. The verb refers to being sold into slavery. Had he used an aorist participle it would simply mean 'having been sold into slavery.' Instead, the perfect participle emphasises the present state as the effect of past action: not merely having been sold, but *presently being enslaved because of having been sold*. This emphasises the Teacher's anxiety and anguish at the *present* situation: he is not just lamenting at the fact of having been sold into slavery under sin, but the present state of being enslaved because of this historical transaction. The problem is not that he was born into sinful flesh, but that the flesh (unconscious desire aroused by law) enslaves him now, and has ever since he was sold to it (in a Lacanian view, the moment he entered language and *jouissance* became prohibited). For these reasons it is translated above not as though it were an aorist participle, as in most modern translations, but as a perfect participle: 'being enslaved under sin.' This emphasises the present sense of the perfect, but retains the reference to the past in the implications of the word 'enslaved.'

[7:15] Verse fifteen is strange in that the last two phrases are held in contrast, with the contrasting conjunction ἀλλὰ, but are nearly identical in meaning. I have not attempted to correct this in my translation.

Appendix C: St Paul's View of *Physis*

The following is a selection from a thesis that was submitted by the author as part of the requirements of an MA in Biblical Studies to Durham University in 2010, supervised by Prof. Francis Watson. It is included here because the arguments of chapters 4 and 5, above, expand upon it and make reference to it. While the work above is developed in such a way as to stand on its own without reference to previous work, this earlier work offers additional background, and some more detail on the use of the signifier *physis* in Paul's time. All that is included here are the sections on Stoic, Cynic and Epicurean *physis*, the section on Hellenistic Jewish *physis* and the conclusion to the first part (which originally also included sections on common and Peripatetic uses of *physis*). It has been mildly updated to keep grammar and language consistent, to correct some errors and to translate or transliterate some of the Greek so that its readership is less restricted. Throughout it the phrase 'common *physis*' refers to times when the word *physis* is used in a basic, non-philosophical or instinctive, sense, such as in 'naturally I was amazed,' or 'he is by nature difficult.' 'Local *physis*' designates uses of *physis* specifically to do with the individual nature of a person or thing, such as 'It is the nature of a rock to be heavy.' 'Universal *physis*' is when *physis* is used to refer to nature as a totalising abstract concept, as in 'It is not possible for nature to produce evil.' 'Naturalistic *physis*' refers to *physis* in the sense of the environment of earth, in 'The house has been abandoned for decades and is now completely overtaken by nature.' All un-cited references and translations are to the Loeb Classical Library editions, published in London by Harvard

University Press, whichare included in the bibliography in Appendix D. Individual works by classical authors can all be found in the collections and volumes first cited.

One criticism received about this text was that it generalises Stoicism to an excessive extent, attempting to pin concepts that widely frequented Hellenistic thought to Stoicism in particular. This is done partially consciously, in the decision to use the term 'Stoic *physis*' for Stoic, Cynic and Epicurean uses of *physis*, because their meanings are determined to be identical; but, in retrospect, the designation 'Stoic' is applied too liberally in other ways as well. This is something that the present study seeks to correct, through more careful choice of words, and more importantly through the psychoanalytic investigation of the structure of the Stoic use of *physis* in particular.

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1.3. Stoic *Physis*

Of all the Stoic, Cynic and Epicurean authors from the centuries prior to and immediately following Paul, only Lucretius, Seneca, Dio Chrysostom and Epictetus are widely extant. All of these authors except Lucretius are either exact contemporaries of Paul or wrote within a century of his lifetime. Our goal is not to establish intertextual links or potential sources for Paul, but to demonstrate the general structure of Stoic discourse as Paul would have been aware of it. Marcus Aurelius and Pseudo-Lucian are slightly too late to serve much use. We may be able to seek further understanding of 'the Stoic *physis*' from other Romans who subscribed to Stoic philosophy, such as Cicero. As we will see, the Stoics, Cynics

and Epicureans shared an identical meaning of *physis*, despite the differing conclusions they drew from it. Thus we can say 'the Stoic *physis*' referring to the way *physis* was talked about in the time period when Stoicism was the dominant philosophical power, even when looking at particularly Cynic or Epicurean sources.

Unlike his Stoic and Cynic counterparts, Lucretius's[2] view of nature is not connected to views of divine creation, divine purpose or afterlife.[3] Further, unlike the Peripatetics, Lucretius and the Epicureans did not believe in the Unmoved Mover or that everything is working toward a final *telos*, but rather that the universe, and the number of atoms in it, are infinite.

Lucretius, in typical Epicurean fashion, writes that 'all nature [*natura*] barks for is… that pain be removed from the body, and that the mind, kept away from care and fear, enjoy a feeling of delight.'[4] Just further, in the line *Ergo corpoream ad naturam pauca videmus esse opus omnino*, where *corpoream naturam* refers to 'bodily nature,' some sort of local nature of the body is in reference. This 'nature' refers to that which is necessary, which in this case we discover is that which takes away pain or causes delight. This leads to the statement that *natura ipsa* (nature herself) does not ever desire more pleasure than is necessary, followed by a list of vices that Lucretius sees as beyond what nature

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[2] Lucretius and Seneca wrote in Latin. However, because we are discussing the way Paul uses the word *physis*, not its specific definition within his language, this frees us up to look at the way *natura*, its Latin equivalent, was used in the discourses in question.

[3] The Stoics considered the existence of the afterlife irrelevant, but unlike the Epicureans, did not generally argue specifically against it.

[4] Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, trans. by W. H. D. Rouse, Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard University Press, 1975), 2.17-19.

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requires, including the use of torches for nocturnal revelry, and all forms of luxury. Lucretius's use of *natura* here is exactly the same as Seneca's Letter 122 (see below), and for both of them their appeal to *natura* is an appeal to simple physical/biological reality over 'unnatural' excess: that which is beyond what our natural bodies require to survive and be happy.

It is also important to point out that for Lucretius *natura* does *not* mean the state in which one was were born, at least as far as the social or economic situation into which one is born. In 2.37-38 he states that 'treasures profit nothing for our body, nor noble birth nor the glory of royalty.' This comes immediately after the section above, where all things in excess of nature are condemned. He sees noble birth (*nobilitas*) and the glory of royalty (*gloria regni*) as being of no value in forming our ethics, but rather as ethical negatives. This is similar to the stance Paul takes toward the *physei Ioudaioi* in Gal. 2.15, except that Lucretius sees economic and social situations gained by birth as being in excess of nature, but Paul sees them as being nature itself.

Seneca has several extended discourses regarding *natura* in his letters, along with giving us regular use of the word outside of direct discourse about it. In one of his most extensive and emotive discussions of life according to *natura*, Letter 90, he begins defending the task of philosophy to 'discover the truth about things divine and things human' by describing the ways of the 'first men and those who sprang from them.'[5] Three times he looks to Virgil's *Georgics* for his primal narrative.[6] Primal men 'followed nature, having one person as their leader

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[5] Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, trans. by Richard M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard University Press, 1925), 90.3, 4, 5. Hereafter abbreviated to *Ep. Mor.*

[6] Ibid., 90.9, 11, 37.

and their law.'[7] Seneca defends this as being the best way of doing things, as long as that person is actually chosen because he is the person with the best natural qualities for the position. Thus, we might say, it is the philosopher king who naturally rules, as 'government was under the jurisdiction of the wise.'[8] Importantly, in this 'Golden Age' under the philosopher kings 'no one had the inclination, or the excuse, to do wrong, since the ruler ruled well and the subject obeyed well, and the king could offer no greater threat against his disobedient subjects than that they should depart from the kingdom.'[9] Seneca explains that vices then entered the world, and unfortunately laws and democracies were established. Then technology began to be invented, which Seneca is quite clear was not as a result of wisdom, but human ingenuity.[10] He drives his point home with the statement that 'A thatched roof once covered free men; under marble and gold dwells slavery.'[11] From this it is clear that 'nature has laid upon us no stern and difficult law when she tells us that we can live without the marble-cutter and the engineer.'[12] 'Nature suffices for all that she asks of us.'[13] Thus, Seneca rejects the claim that one can invent new technology by observing nature, seeing technology itself as preventing us from living according to nature.[14] In this letter *natura* is used in a similar sense to how it often is today, in reference to the

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[7] Ibid., 90.4.

[8] Ibid., 90.5. Here Seneca is quoting someone else in agreement.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., 90.7-13. This is very different to *1 Enoch* 8 where the evils of technology first enter the world because of a fallen angel, Azaz'el.

[11] Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, 90.10.

[12] Ibid., 90.15.

[13] Ibid., 90.19. Translation from *Seneca: Letters from a Stoic*, trans. by Robin Campbell (London: Penguin, 2004 [1969]), 168.

[14] Ibid.

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natural world. Further, it is connected with 'simple' life and a mythological pre-technologised state. One should also note here the clear connection between *physis* and origin: one looks to one's origin for one's *physis*

In Letter 122 Seneca rails against those who act against nature. The chief act he condemns is living at night and sleeping during the day. He goes on to condemn a whole host of acts and effects that he connects with this one initial flaw: unnatural people abandon the proper order of things by drinking without having eaten and thus eating while drunk, drinking in naked groups in the bath-house, 'exchanging one's clothes for women's,' desiring flowers out of season, growing trees on tops of mansions, and desiring hot baths built sunken into the ocean.[15] He concludes that 'We therefore… should keep to the path which nature has mapped out for us and never diverge from it. For those who follow nature everything is easy and straightforward, whereas for those who fight against her life is just like rowing against the stream.'[16] So, once again *natura* is connected with the natural world and the order inherent in it. In this letter Seneca again quotes Virgil's *Georgics*.[17]

An important dimension to these *physis*-ethics comes into light in Letter 47. Rather than simply seeing order and hierarchy as elements of *physis* as one might expect from an Aristotelian perspective, Seneca instead tells Lucilius that 'he whom you call your slave sprang from the same stock, is smiled upon by the same skies, and on equal terms with yourself breathes, lives, and dies.'[18] Then,

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[15] Ibid., 122.5-14. Translation from *Seneca*, trans. by Campbell, 222.

[16] Ibid., 122.19. Translation from *Seneca*, trans. by Campbell, 226.

[17] Ibid., 122.4.

[18] Ibid., 47.10.

after commending him to treat his slaves as he would like his master to treat him, he demonstrates that everyone is a slave to something.[19] For Seneca *physis* does not lead to statements about social hierarchy and order as much as it does to statements about equality before nature. A similar attitude is apparent in Cicero, who states that 'For a man to take something from his neighbour and to profit by his neighbour's loss is more contrary to Nature than is death or poverty or pain or anything else that can affect either our person or our property.'[20] And later, 'Loftiness, greatness of spirit, and courtesy, justice, and generosity are much more in harmony with nature than are the selfish pleasure, riches, and life itself.'[21] We can see in the Stoics a firm sense of social justice arising out of the desire to live in accordance with nature, which seems more related to notions of simple 'natural' life than to notions of social order.

There are many more Letters with relevant discussion, but only a few more points need to be gleaned from Seneca.[22] Firstly, on at least eight occasions Seneca makes positive mention of Epicurus, all regarding *physis*-ethics![23] For example, he concludes Letter 27 with the quote from Epicurus, 'Poverty brought into accord with the law of nature is wealth.' Epictetus also (though more rarely) positively quotes Epicurus.[24] While the Stoics did not draw the same ethics from nature as the Epicureans, their conclusions did frequently overlap, and the way

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[19] Ibid., 47.11-17.

[20] Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. by Walter Miller, Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard University Press, 1966), 3.5.21.

[21] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 3.5.24.

[22] Some of the best examples are letters 11, 41, 48, 63, 65, 78 and 91.

[23] Letters 2, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 18 and 27.

[24] Epictetus, *Disc*. 1.23.1.

they used *physis* to produce ethics was quite similar.

Dio Chrysostom is important because he was taught by Gaius Musonius Rufus, who was teaching in Rome at the time of Paul's letter, and also because he was an admirer and follower not only of Stoic philosophy, but also of Cynic philosophy.[25] His work mostly survives in the form of eighty discourses.[26] Most of his uses of *physis* are in discourses 1-4, 7, 12, 31, and 32. Nearly half of his discourses never use the word at all, and only twelve use it more than four times.

In his first discourse he uses *physis* in no unremarkable way. In fact, it would better be called the common use than the Stoic use: every reference is to a local *physis*; many of them have connotations of 'that which one is because of one's origin' and there is no hint of *physis* leading to ethics, or of *physis* as 'the natural world.' It is also worth noting that within this common use he uses the dative case once, the accusative four times, and genitive five times, all of which have a simple local sense. The lack of any in the nominative case makes sense because he never makes statements about *physis* where it is the subject of the sentence (there are no appeals to universal or naturalistic *physis*). The single use of the dative in the sentence 'He is by nature so inclined' (v. 20) does not appear to be any different from the meaning of *physis* in the accusative in the later phrase 'though naturally covetous of honour' (v. 27). When employing the common use of *physis* different cases are not used to designate different meanings of *physis*, but depend entirely upon grammatical context. In the following three discourses

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[25] Robert Browning, 'Dio (I) Cocceianus,' in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, eds. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 345.

[26] Two of these, numbers 37 and 64, are now known not to be his. Neither of them contains any references to *physis*.

(2-4) he continues to talk about what should be the nature of a king, and his uses of *physis* continue on in the common or local sense.

In Discourse 7 Chrysostom harshly condemns the use of slaves, even barbarian slaves, for sex, demanding that all brothels be closed (v. 133). In 7.135-152 he twice condemns homoeroticism, first in v. 135 where 'normal [κατὰ φύσιν] intercourse and union' is between a male and female, and again in vv. 149-152 where the transgression is clearly put in terms of excess, and men seek out other men because they disregard the 'clear and sufficient limit... set by nature,'[27] and are comparable to drunk men who get bored of unmixed wine and go on to create 'unnatural thirsts by the stimulus of sweatings, salted foods, and condiments.'[28] The emphasis is not only that same-sex love is against biological nature, but that seeking to go beyond biological nature is unnatural because it is a frivolous excess.

In his twelfth discourse he maintains his common use of *physis*, but suddenly begins to sound very Stoic whilst railing against the Epicureans. He begins by saying that knowledge of the nature of God arises in all people naturally, κατὰ φύσιν (v. 27). He expands on all the ways that everyone is aware of God, and then launches into his attack:

> How, then, could they have remained ignorant and conceived no inkling of him
> who had sowed and planted and was now preserving and nourishing them,
> when on every side they were filled with the divine nature [θείας φύσεως]
> through both sight and hearing, and in fact through every sense? They dwelt
> upon the earth, they beheld the light of heaven, they had nourishment in

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[27] Dio Chrysostom, *Dio Chrysostom*, trans. by J. W. Cohoon, Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard University Press, 1939), discourse 7.149.

[28] Ibid., discourse 7.152.

abundance, for god, their ancestor, had lavishly provided and prepared it to their hand.[29]

Here, in a very Stoic fashion, the chief wrongdoing of those in question is that they have denied the God who has been revealed to them and resides inside them, as he is revealed in and dwells within nature. The revelation that should have taken place is through *physis,* the natural world.

The uses of *physis* in Discourse 31 are all common. In Discourse 32.46 a wild partying life is referred to as 'outside of the harmony prescribed by nature' (ἔξω τῆς ἁρμονίας τῆς κατὰ φύσιν γιγνόμενοι).

Epictetus is important not only because of his prominence among Stoic writers and close proximity to Paul, but also because he is another student of Rufus.[30] The driving theme of his thought is that we should only seek to affect that which is under our control, and should not take pride in or try to control that which is not under our control (things 'external', φαντασία). This is how Epictetus enacts the Stoic quest to discover *physis,* and Epictetus would not see a distinction between these two quests. His first saying in the *Encheiridion* is 'Some things are under our control, while others are not under our control… the things that are under our control are by nature free [φύσει ἐλεύθερα], while the things not under our control are weak, servile, subject to hindrance, and not our own.' By only seeking to possess that which is truly yours, no harm can touch you. Thus, we should say to all φαντασία, 'you are external, and not at all what

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[29] Ibid.*,* discourse 12.29-30.

[30] Kurt von Fritz, 'Epictetus (2),' in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, eds. N. G. L. Hammong and H. H. Scullard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 390.

you appear to be.'[31]

As expected, *physis* is used in a universal-naturalistic sense, and local senses are all connected to this. So, at the beginning of his twenty-third fragment, *physis* is 'wonderful' and 'fond of her creatures.' He uses the widest possible local sense, the 'nature of the universe' (κόσμου φύσις).[32] *Ench.* 30 refers to being a father φύσει, meaning that *physis* has given one to be a father. There is no distinction made as to whether this means 'the universal *physis* has given him to be a father' or 'his local *physis* is that of "fatherhood".' However, these are the same thing, especially in a philosophy as determinist as the Stoic one, where to discover something's local *physis* is to discover what was given it by *physis*,[33] and where everything that happens is in accordance with providence and reason when examined closely.[34] Because of this, advantage can be gained from everything, even φαντασία, when examined with reason.[35]

In Epictetus, as in the other Stoics, *physis* is far more the centre of ethics than it could ever be claimed that it is in Paul. For example, *Ench.* 27: 'nothing that is natural in the universe arises out of evil.'[36] Epictetus asks, 'What is it I want? To learn nature and to follow her.'[37] When Epictetus is asked why 'there

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[31] Epictetus, *Ench.*1.5. This is also the theme of *Ench.* 8-14.

[32] Epictetus, *Frag.* 8.1.

[33] Epictetus, *Frag.* 3. Also, *Ench.* 29.4-7, where *physis* gives one natural abilities and talents, that are one's *physis*. Even more strongly, in *Disc.* 2.20.15, where ἡ φύσις ἕλκουσα ἐπι τὸ αὐτῆς βούλημα.

[34] Epictetus, *Disc.* 3.17.1.

[35] Epictetus, *Disc.* 3.20.1-15.

[36] Author's translation.

[37] Epictetus, *Ench.* 49.

was more progress made in former times,'[38] he responds that it is because in those times more effort was expended on 'maintaining the governing principle in a state in accord with nature' (κατὰ φύσιν).[39]

Some key observations we can make about the Stoic *physis* are that (1) the Stoics do not differentiate between a strictly common use of *physis* (referring to a local *physis* without overt reference to universal *physis*) and an ethical use or a universal-naturalistic use by grammatical form, but seem to use different grammatical forms freely and interchangeably; (2) the strongly deterministic nature of their philosophy means that 'local' uses generally infer a connection to the universal-naturalistic *physis*; (3) despite the differences between them, the Stoics, Epicureans and Cynics all used the word *physis* in the same way, and generally meant the same thing by it; (4) *physis*-ethics were not merely a part of Stoic ethics, but *were* Stoic ethics, to a similar extent that interpreting the *Torah* was Jewish ethics; (5) unlike Peripatetic *physis*, it does not necessarily refer to a sense of order and hierarchy, but only does so inasmuch as order and hierarchy may be observed to be a part of nature; (6) there is occasionally a sense in which *physis* refers to that which one is *because of one's origin*, though this sense is nowhere near as strong as in Aristotle; (7) often *physis* is personified and given a will of its own, to the point where in Epictetus, *Disc*. 3.20.16 it is even given speech and (8) generally, the sense is not of order but of egalitarianism, as all humans are subject equally to Fate.

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[38] Epictetus, *Disc*. 3.6.1.

[39] Epictetus, *Disc*. 3.6.3.

1.4. Hellenistic Jewish *Physis*

In Paul's contemporary Jewish authors we find a repository of *physis* quotes that scholars often like to use as an appropriate context of Paul's own words.[40] How exactly do these sources talk about *physis* and what is their relationship to their contemporary philosophers, and to Paul?

From the outset of *De Opificio Mundi* Philo[41] sounds like the perfect combination of Judaism and Stoicism: 'The law corresponds to the world and the world to the law, and… a man who is obedient to the law, being by so doing, a citizen of the world, arranges his actions with reference to the intention of nature [τὸ βούλημα τῆς φύσεως],[42] in harmony with which the whole universe is regulated.'[43] However, as he goes on, he specifically counters the Epicureans in a way that the Stoics would not have pushed so far:

> For some men, admiring the world itself rather than the Creator of the world, have represented it as existing without any maker, and eternal; and as impiously as falsely have represented God as existing in a state of complete inactivity, while it would have been right on the other hand to marvel at the might of God as the creator and father of all, and to admire the world in a degree not exceeding the bounds of moderation.[44]

This direct refutation of Epicurean theology and cosmology goes much further than Seneca is willing in his Letter 41, where 'God is near you, he is with you, he

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[40] [This foonote referred back to an earlier part of the essay, not included here, as evidence.]

[41] All English translations are from *The Works of Philo*, trans. C. D. Yonge (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993), and the Greek is from Philo, *Philo*, trans. by F. H. Colson, Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard University Press, 1962).

[42] Cf. Epictetus, *Disc*. 2.20.15-16.

[43] 1.3. This is Philo summarising Moses.

[44] 2.7. Cf. Dio Chrysostom, discourse 12.29-30, quoted above.

is within you.'[45]   While Stoics disagree with Epicurean atheism, they see questions of God as less relevant than Philo does, because to them God is in nature and in us, and accessed via nature.[46]   So, to be precise, Stoics access God via nature, and Epicureans look to nature for ethics in the same way as the Stoics but disregard [the] God[s], but for Philo (in chapter 8) one learns 'from the oracles of God … the principles of nature.'

In *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* 1.3 Philo infers that he is one who has 'studied philosophy in a genuine spirit'. His work alludes to the fact that he has personally studied philosophy, and he himself specifically states it. Having seen that he had knowledge of Stoic and Epicurean thought, and presumably other philosophical schools,[47] the way he uses *physis* is a part of the same discourse. What stands as unique is his specific subordination of *physis* to God, and his use of the Genesis account of Creation, rather than a Greek or Roman primal narrative, as the original descriptor of *physis*.

The extent of the Stoic influence on Philo comes out clearly in his commentary on the Sodom narrative, found in *De Abrahamo* 133-141. He skillfully combines a biblical view, where the sin of Sodom is 'arrogance' and 'not supporting the poor and need' (Ezek 16:49 cf. Isa 1:9-10, 17) with a Stoic ethic where sexual sin is a case of unnatural excess. Thus the men of Sodom 'discard the laws of nature, pursuing a great and intemperate indulgence of gluttony; for not only did they go mad after women, and defile the marriage bed

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[45] Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, 41.1.

[46] Epictetus speaks less often of 'God in us,' but for him the will of God is whatever nature is (*Disc.* 1.1.17). Thus he speaks more frequently of nature than the will of God, but they are to some extent synonymous.

[47] He speaks of the Pythagoreans in *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* 1.2.

of others, but also those who were men lusted after one another.'[48]

The main point to take from Philo is that he has not invented a new use of *physis*. He has only attempted to show that the Stoic use of *physis* is shown even clearer through *Torah*, and that *Torah* actually teaches *physis*. He proudly appropriates Stoic thought, and his narratives are not *either* Jewish *or* Stoic, but always a combination of both.

Josephus's use of *physis* does not appear to be heavily influenced by philosophical discourse, but sticks tightly to the common use, or to a simple universal *physis*.[49] In *De Bello Judaico* 1.13.3 a collective of people can have an innate character: φύσει γὰρ ἀπίστους εἶναι τοὺς βαρβάρους. In Josephus *physis* does not act as a source of ethics. Where it does act as an independent force, i.e., as 'the natural world,' this is in reference the facts of nature and not to a source of ethical imperatives. For example, in *De Bello Judaico* 3.8.5, Josephus says that 'those who depart out of this life according to the law of nature [κατὰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως νόμον]… enjoy eternal fame.' Even when speaking of a natural law, he is not speaking of ethics, but of facts of nature (in this case, death). Contrary to the Stoics, he sees humankind's nature as inclined to self-love and the hatred of superiors.[50] Josephus was aware of the Stoics and their doctrines,[51] and joins them in ranting against the Epicureans.[52] However, even if it can be shown that

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[48] Philo, *De Abrahamo*, 135.

[49] All English translations are from *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, trans. by William Whiston (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999), and the Greek is from Josephus, *Josephus*, trans. by H. St. J. Thackery, Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard University Press, 1927).

[50] Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 5.215; 6.59.

[51] Josephus, *Vita* 1.12.

[52] Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 10.277-281.

he was influenced by Stoic determinism, his use of *physis* does not have a Stoic mark on it. As Köster states, 'The word *physis*… is part of his own vocabulary and reflects popular usage in the first century.'[53] It is not used in dialogue with philosophical ethics at all, and thus sheds light on how the word may have been used by someone without philosophical education. Even in *Ad Apion* 2.199 and 2.273-275 where he does condemn same-sex sexual acts as against nature, possibly demonstrating some Stoic influence, his basic concern is with what is written in Lev 18:22 and 20:13, and his language is far more reflective of biblical terminology than Stoic.

The word *physis* is used in the Wisdom of Solomon three times (7:20, 13:1, 19:20). As with Philo, the author of this work is obviously proficient in philosophy.[54] The use in 7:20 obviously refers to local nature, as it is a rare case of *physis* in the plural for the 'natures of animals' (φύσεις ζῴων). However, it takes place within a wider discussion about *physis* in a Stoic universal-naturalistic sense. The speaker of chapter seven (be he the narrator or the character Solomon) receives a 'spirit of wisdom' in verse seven, which in verse seventeen turns out to be a 'knowledge of the things that exist… [and] of the world and the activity of the elements.' It is in the middle of a list of attributes that the speaker (might we call him 'the *sapiens*?') has learned about nature that we find him boasting of his knowledge of the φύσεις ζῴων. In 13:1 'all beings who are ignorant of God are

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[53] Helmut Köster, 'φύσις,' in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 6, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1968 [1959]), 269.

[54] Lester Grabbe, *Wisdom of Solomon* (London: T&T Clark, 1997), 36-37.

by nature [φύσει] foolish.'[55] This statement is embedded in 12-15, where the author launches a vehement attack on pagan idolatry often compared to Romans 1:18-32.[56] The use of *physis* in 13:1 is local, concerning those who do not who do not recognise God from his creation (universal *physis*). This sort of thought occurs elsewhere in contemporary Jewish texts, but not always intertwined with Stoic thought.[57] Lastly, in 19:20, the *physis* refers to a local nature, but is once again in the context of discussions about universal *physis*. In the Wisdom of Solomon, every use of *physis* is strictly local, though two of the three are in the context of discussing the natural world, and the other (13:1) accuses those who do not know God of foolishness. So, although the exact usage of the word itself is not perfectly congruent with the Stoic use (because there is no direct reference to universal-naturalistic *physis* and local *physis* is not directly connected to it), the author is clearly attempting to form arguments using Stoic logic, regardless of his skill at perfectly appropriating Stoic use of language.

Physis appears nine times in 3 and 4 Maccabees.[58] The only occurrence in 3 Maccabees, 3:29, perhaps fits snugly into the Stoic use, referring to 'all who are

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[55] This cannot be a reference to human nature because it is restricted to those who do not know God. This is actually slightly discontinuous with the specifically Stoic use of *physis*, which would not speak of someone having a 'negative *physis*,' (since, at least according to Epictetus, nature does not give rise to evil) or of not being naturally oriented towards the knowledge of God. Rather, it signals that we are not dealing with a purely Stoic text, but with a Jewish author using Greek language and thought in an academic way, as part of an attempt to fuse Stoic logic with an assault on pagan idolatry.

[56] One example of this is Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 34-35.

[57] 2 Baruch 54:17-22 is an example of this sort of thought where it is not overtly combined with exclusively Stoic ides.

[58] 3 Macc 3:29; 4 Macc 1:20; 5:8, 9, 25; 13:27; 15:13, 25; 16:3.

by nature mortal,'[59] though it is no more explicitly Stoic than the use quoted above from *De Bello Judaico* 3.8.5. It is in humanity's local *physis* that we are mortal, but this operates also as one of the laws of the universal *physis*: that everything dies. There is no reason to suspect that the author of 3 Maccabees is unlocking philosophical discourse with his use. The whole of the first chapter of 4 Maccabees reveals the author's heavy appropriation of Stoic thought, so it is not surprising that we find here a use of *physis* parallel to that of the Stoics.[60] Specifically, in 5:8-9 a *physis*-ethic congruent with Stoic ethics is found, and in a way much akin to Philo, v. 25 concludes the section by stating that *physis*-ethics are in line with *Torah*. Only 1:20 and 16:3 refer to a local *physis* without reference to the natural world (and ethics that are in line with it), but this is consistent with Stoic use.

By Paul's time it had become commonplace for Jewish academics to adopt Stoic ways of thinking and mix them their own in order to defend *Torah* to a pagan world. Often they steeped themselves in Stoic thought so much that even the way they spoke of *physis* changed. This went alongside a complete adoption of Stoic *physis*-ethics, where the Law was seen to reveal nature, and thus those who do not follow *Torah* are not actually following nature.

1.5. Conclusions About *Physis* in Paul's Time

Firstly, we can see that *physis* is not a word that can be analysed apart

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[59] Author's translation.

[60] This leads T. Witton Davies to make the blunt statement that 'The author's philosophical standpoint is that of Stoicism,' in 'Books of Maccabees,' in *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* 2nd Edition, vol. iii, ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 1955.

from the discourses of which it was a part. Though we may be able to seek simple dictionary-definitions for some words, *physis* is a word that lies at the centre of Paul's contemporary ethical debates. The sole measure of sound practice and doctrine in Stoic, Cynic, Epicurean and Peripatetic philosophical schools was the question of whether or not an action is κατὰ φύσιν, though the application of this approach was as varied as the schools that claimed it.

Secondly, this explains the necessity of the approach taken by Paul's contemporary Jewish thinkers. In order to participate in the philosophical conversations of the time Philo and the authors of 4 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon and other contemporary Jewish works all needed to show that the *Torah* rightly reveals *physis.* These authors do not represent a unique Jewish understanding of what *physis* is and how it should be used in ethics, but rather they adopt the full Stoic use of the word, and set out to show that *physis* is actually revealed in the *Torah*. Our question cannot be whether or not Paul adopts the Hellenistic Jewish understanding of *physis* but must rather be *comparative*, asking how Paul also dialogues with Stoic philosophy. To assume *a priori* that Paul shares an understanding of *physis* with his Jewish contemporaries, whilst their understanding of it is fully bound up in nomistic ethics and observance, is surely a fatal assumption that must be tested.

Thirdly, we note that in our Stoic, Epicurean, Cynic and Jewish sources there is occasional use of a common sense of *physis* without the word being specifically tied into its philosophical purposes. However, there are often also common uses in close proximity to a universal-naturalistic use of the word, or to an ethical discourse that is about universal *physis* whether it is directly mentioned

or not. This ethical use is at times quite developed and abstract (as in the cases of Cicero or Epictetus), but at its heart is a simple quest to discover the basic realities of the natural world and a desire for harmonious life with(in) it.

Lastly, it is plain across all of the Stoic, Epicurean, Cynic and Hellenistic Jewish thinkers surveyed that there is no specific distinction implied by the varying grammatical constructions of *physis* (i.e., whether it be in the dative, accusative or genitive case), although these three uses tend to be of a different sort than uses in the nominative (and some in the accusative) case, which tend more often to refer to a universal-naturalistic sense than a local one.

Appendix D: Bibliography

The bibliography includes everything read towards writing the thesis, whether or not cited in the main text (though nearly all are cited). It does not include items read towards other projects during the same time-period, or items read before this period but only tangentially related to the project. The referencing scheme containing abbreviations is in the front pages, but some abbreviations are repeated below. Individual works cited from within the *Standard Edition* of Freud and Lacan's *Écrits* are also listed, since their titles are sometimes given in the main text.

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Abbreviations mentioned here are all listed in the Referencing Scheme, above.

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