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Ideology, Theology, and Rhetoric

THE STATE OF THE QUESTION

At the beginning of the twentieth century Adolf Deissmann published *Licht vom Osten. Das Neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt*, which was translated into English in 1910.[1] Deissmann examined what he categorized as "the non-literary texts" i.e., the archaeological discoveries that were made in the nineteenth century, in order to establish "the historical understanding of Primitive Christianity."[2] His work sought to provide greater understanding between the language, literature, and social and religious history of the New Testament. He discovered that the New Testament, written in the Roman imperial period, was the literature of the lower class,[3] and that areas of contact and contrast between the literature of this community and that of the ancient world were of invaluable importance to its study. While *Light from the Ancient East* was general in character, written from the perspective of the history of religion and culture, and not dealing extensively with any particular New Testament text but rather correlating archaeological findings with the New Testament as literature, Deissmann's work appeared not to have attracted much attention in the theological academy of the last century for reasons which are beyond the scope of this analysis. Nevertheless, Deissmann's work highlighted the tension that the language of the emerging Christ-cult would have had with existing Roman imperial ideology. This relationship received further attention from Donald L. Jones[4] and from Dominique Cuss.[5]

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1. Deissmann, *Light*.
2. Ibid., 5.
3. Ibid., 142.
4. Jones, "Christianity," *ANRW* 1023–54.
5. Cuss, *Imperial Cult*.

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It was in the last two decades of the last century that Walter Wink completed a trilogy on the language of power and domination in the New Testament.[6] He acknowledged that the investigation covered in this series was as a result of his reading Wesley Carr's *Angels and Principalities: The Background, Meaning, and Development of the Pauline Phrase hai Archai kai hai Exousiai*,[7] a book which he thought was largely in error, a conclusion with which we concur.[8] Wink examined what he considered to be the language of power, which, from his observation, pervaded the whole of the New Testament,[9] though he focused primarily on pericopes from the Pauline and Deuteropauline Epistles.[10] He concluded that these powers are not "separate heavenly or ethereal entities but . . . *the inner aspect of material or tangible manifestations of power . . .* [which are encountered] *primarily in reference to the material or "earthly" reality of which they are the innermost essence*."[11] Wink sought to demonstrate primarily that the powers were concomitant with human attitudes; his conviction having been authenticated by his experience in Latin America where he claimed to have witnessed extreme human oppression, violation of human rights, and gross depravity. Wink undoubtedly connected those conditions to the social and political realities of his experience seeking for an explanation in the New Testament. He linked the language of power in the New Testament, though without going into great detail, to the imperial context of the period and particularly to the ideology of domination and of the Roman Empire.[12] While Wink was mostly concerned to explain the present in terms of the past, his work has touched on some salient aspects of domination and imperialism. That Wink could have appealed to the Pauline corpus in order to argue his thesis would suggest that there were sufficient grounds for the analysis.

In recent times, other writers have made the connection between various texts of the New Testament and the Roman imperial order. Here we could refer to the work of Warren Carter on the Gospel of Matthew,[13] and of Marianne Palmer Bonz on the Gospel of Luke and its sequel, the Acts of the Apostles.[14] Warren Carter ably demonstrated how Matthew's Gospel is to be read from the perspective of the social networks of the first century Mediterranean world. He presumed that Rome's ideo-

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6. Wink, *Naming the Powers*; Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*; and, Wink, *Engaging the Powers*. Wink actually claims in the preface of the latter that there is another volume belonging to this 'trilogy:' Wink, *Violence* which we have not consulted.

7. Carr, *The Background*.

8. Wink, *Naming the Powers*, ix. Carr had cast the *Pax Romana* in very positive light and this presupposition derailed his conclusions.

9. *Archē , archōn, exousia, dynamis, thronos, kyriotēs, onoma*, angels, fallen angels, evil spirits, demons, and, angels of the nations—see Wink, *Naming the Powers*, 13–39.

10. 1 Cor 2:6–8, 15:24–27a; Rom 13:1–3; 8:38–39; Col 2:13–15, 1:16, 2:9–10; Eph 1:20–23, 2:1–2, 6:12, 3:10; as well as those texts in which the word "*stoicheia*" is found.

11. Wink, *Naming the Powers*, 104–5, original emphasis retained.

12. Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 16–17, 27, 89–95, 298–304. He conceded that the ideology of empires (whether Roman, British, or American) bore certain similar traits.

13. Carter, *Matthew*.

14. Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*.

logical claim of world dominance would have come into conflict with the claims of Jesus Christ. His thesis is grounded in his claim that "Matthean soteriology asserts God's sovereignty over the cosmos by ending all evil, including Rome's empire."[15] Jesus is the one who comes to end all sinfulness which is "political, economic, social, religious, and moral"[16] and that means the "destruction of repressive governing powers like imperial Rome."[17] Carter appealed to the intertextuality of Isa 7–9 in Matt 1:23 and 4:15–16, showing how the theological idea of God's use of the imperial power of Assyria is intertwined with the motif of God's wrath, and together these provide the interpretive matrix for the term "Galilee of the Gentiles,"[18] the meaning of which redounds through the Gospel. Carter then examined specific pericopes of the Gospel from the perspective of these presuppositions, showing convincingly how exegesis of this Gospel cannot be separated from the context of the milieu of Roman imperialism in which it was written.

Bonz presupposed that exegesis of Luke-Acts is best understood from within the interpretive genre of Roman epic. Luke-Acts must be considered within "its historical, literary, and ideological milieu, particularly as these elements are reflected in the Latin epics contemporary with [it] and in their famous Augustan prototype, Virgil's *Aeneid*."[19] This important epic was written "to define Rome's moral and religious values and to inspire its people with a patriotic vision of a world whose eschatological fulfillment was embodied in the Augustan identification with the return of the Golden Age."[20] Bonz presupposes that Acts 2 is the narrative and thematic centre of the Luke-Acts composition, and proceeded to show the points of convergence between Greco-Roman epic and Luke-Acts from three perspectives. What her work has highlighted is the parallel structures and overlapping thought-world of Roman and Judaeo-Christian culture. She demonstrated the invaluable connection between the legitimizing text of Roman imperialism and Luke-Acts, a connection that we will argue for in our reading of Romans.

In 1987 Dieter Georgi published a series of articles, which were the result of his involvement in three conferences held at the Reimers foundation in Bad Homburg, Germany, on the theory of religion and political theology. His conviction was that the concept of theocracy—God's absolute sovereignty—could neither be separated from the political model and demands of the people of Israel, nor from Paul's own desire to live in continuity with this great Jewish tradition that was enshrined in the *Shema* (Deut 6:4. cf. 1 Cor 8:4; Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30).[21] Georgi found that many of the terms and concepts central to Paul's discussion were to be found within the wisdom tradition, and as such were laden with political and social nuances. Georgi, like Carter

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15. Carter, *Matthew*, 75–90, citing p. 76.

16. Ibid., 79.

17. Ibid., 90.

18. Ibid., 93–107 (cf. Matt 4:15; Isa 9:1).

19. Bonz, *Past*, vii.

20. Ibid., 38.

21. Georgi, *Theocracy*, vii–viii; 1–16. Appearing in the German "Gott," in Taubes, ed., *Religionstheorie*.

above, emphasized the importance of scriptural intertextuality if Paul's citations are to be fully understood.[22] He examined Paul's letters, showing that in the historical context they would have been understood within the Gnostic movement and Jewish apocalyptic missionary theology as advocating an "alternative social utopia,"[23] which was inaugurated through the cross. With respect to Romans, he argued that Paul uses terms (*euangélion*, *pístis*, *dikaiosýnē*, and *eirēnē*) that were common to first-century Mediterranean political language, doing so in such a way that the hearer in context would have made association with Roman political theology.[24] From this perspective Paul would have challenged the underpinning assumptions of Roman imperialism. Georgi, in an important essay based on his exegesis of Paul's letter to the Romans, showed that in this letter Paul presents God's sovereignty in such a way that he [God] enters solidarity with the subjugated masses of the empire, in the one appointed as his *princeps*—Jesus Christ, and this would have been construed in context as a veiled attack on the emperor and empire.[25]

In 1995 Neil Elliott made an important contribution to Pauline studies in his monograph *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle.*[26] Elliott, in going against the grain of dominant Anglo-European-American Pauline exegesis, uncovered the deception of Anglo-European Christian political ideology which used Pauline theology in the guise of mission to enslave millions, to decimate native populations, and to subordinate women. Elliott sought in this monograph to liberate Paul's legacy from what he termed as "ideological weapon(s) of death."[27] He analyzed several of the key texts that were used to support this ideology.[28] More to the point, he looked specifically at Rom 13:1–7 and sought to set this pericope in the context of Roman imperial ideology.[29] He showed particularly how Virgil's Aeneid and the Eclogue *inter alia* were used to universalize Roman imperial propaganda that was the content of the Augustan gospel.[30] He surmised that Paul's anti-imperial ideological thrust received "the clearest expression in Romans."[31] While he did not apply the sociological categories of James C. Scott in his analysis, he nevertheless concluded that the communities that Paul was founding were communities of resistance to the empire and its demands of loyalty. These communities of resistance found solidarity with the one crucified in shame by the Roman Empire, the now resurrected Jesus Christ, to whom

22. Georgi, *Theocracy*, 28–29.

23. Ibid., 33–79, citing p. 51. Georgi examines Gal 3 & 4; 1 & 2 Cor passim; and, Phil.

24. Ibid., 82.

25. Ibid., 79–104. This essay, "God Turned Upside Down," later appeared under the same title in Horsley ed., *Paul and Empire*, 148–57.

26. Elliott, *Liberating Paul*.

27. Ibid., 9.

28. Ibid., 25–54.

29. Ibid., 181–230.

30. Ibid., 184–90.

31. Ibid., 190.

they paid loyalty.[32] From this perspective he demonstrated that Rom 13:1–7 may best be understood as a confrontation with the Roman ideology of power.[33] Elliott's work on this pericope has proven substantive to our analysis. In continuation with this ideological-historical critical methodology, Elliott has made significant contributions to the revolution in Pauline studies by way of this monograph as well as the numerous contributions that he has made to the series edited by Richard A. Horsley on Paul, politics, and the Roman imperial order, to which we now turn.[34]

The importance of highlighting the role of Roman Imperial thought in the composition of Paul's letters has been undertaken by Richard Horsley. His anthology on Paul and Roman imperialism appeared in 1997 and mainly showed how Paul's letters were to be read over against the Roman Empire rather than Judaism.[35] In this collection of essays, Horsley showed the influence of Roman imperialism on Paul's theology from the historical, sociological, mythological, political, and cultural perspectives. He divided this anthology into four sections: the first, dealing with the gospel of Augustan propaganda of the Golden Age, which was integral to the publication of Virgil's Aeneid, and permeated the empire in the exploding machinations of the imperial cult (particularly in the propaganda of the *Pax Romana*) and in the prevalence in various signs and images that communicated Roman dominance; the second, dealing with social institutions of power particularly the priesthood and patronage with the emphasis on the emperor as sitting at the pinnacle of these two institutions; the third, showing how selected Pauline texts would have been understood in the context of sections 1 and 2 to have been counter to the imperial propaganda of Rome; and the fourth section showing how Paul's assemblies (*ekklēsiai*) would have been tantamount to a call for a social order that ran counter to Roman society, and would have been based on the Hebrew Bible and the history of Israel. In many ways this volume set the stage for serious consideration of the relationship between Paul's theology and the social institutions and politics of his day.

In 2000 Richard Horsley published a *Festschrift* in honor of Krister Stendahl including some of the papers that came out of the first four years' deliberations of the Paul and Politics group of the Society of Biblical Literature.[36] The collection of essays was divided into four groups with a response from a reputable scholar coming at the end of each. The first group dealt with methodology and presuppositions, which included in particular an essay by Neil Elliott—"Paul and the Politics of Empire: Problems and Prospects"—in which he demonstrated that a political reading of Paul's letters to the Galatians and to the Romans was a viable exegetical alternative.[37] In an-

32. Ibid., 195–204.

33. Ibid., 214–26.

34. Horsley, *Paul and Empire*; Horsley, *Paul and Politics*; and, Horsley, *Paul and the Roman*.

35. Horsley, *Paul and Empire*.

36. Horsley, *Paul and Politics*. The Paul and Politics group of the SBL was actually launched by Richard A Horsley around the same time as the publication of Horsley, *Paul and Empire,* 1997. The focus of the group was to seriously consider Paul as being opposed to Roman imperialism.

37. Ibid., 17–39.

other essay—"Paul and the Politics of Interpretation"—Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argued for readings of Paul in which the voices of the marginalized were given consideration.[38] The second group of essays focused on 1 Corinthians, seeking to locate Paul's rhetoric within the context of the rhetoric of the Roman Empire, and also examining the subordination of women and of slavery; while the third group focused on Galatians, arguing for Paul's self-understanding according to Abrahamic typology as the one who establishes a new covenant-community. In this group a forceful argument was made by Mark Nanos, who proposed that Paul must be read from his own social location within God's covenant people, and that the conflict in this letter must be seen primarily as an intra- and inter-Jewish dispute.[39] Following him, N. T. Wright made the observation that Paul's opposition to the Roman imperial order and the cult of Caesar would have been the content of his proclamation of the gospel, and was as a result of his social location and theological conviction as a Jew.[40] In the final group particular attention must be given to the essay of Sze-kar Wan who examines the collection for Jerusalem from a postcolonial perspective, showing that it was Paul's intention to integrate the Gentiles into the covenant people; to fulfill Jewish messianic expectations of the flow of wealth from the Gentiles to Jerusalem; and to create an alternative to the patron-client social hierarchical relationship of the empire.[41] The result of this collection of essays was to present the various perspectives, some of which depart from the traditional historical-critical reading of Paul to include new methodologies that integrated the Roman Imperial context in one way or another with Paul's letters.

In 2004 Richard Horsley published a second collection of essays reflecting the continuing work of the Paul and Politics group of the Society of Biblical Literature.[42] The focus once more was to place Paul within the context of Roman imperialism. Robert Jewett provided an interesting reading of Rom 8:18–23, in which he proposed that Paul challenged the assumption of Roman imperialism that the paradisiacal qualities of the natural world had been restored.[43] The essence of his thesis was that the realization of the Golden Age would not be through Rome and the Augustan peace. Rather it would occur at the revealing of the children of God, whose complete redemption and liberation would be brought about through Christ. Abraham Smith offered a convincing postcolonial analysis of 1 Thessalonians, arguing that in 1 Thess 2:13–16 and 5:1–11 "Paul is criticizing the pro-Roman aristocracy in Thessalonica by way of an analogy with the pro-Roman rulers of Judea."[44] Smith, following Karl P. Donfried, saw the significance of the imperial cult in Thessalonica for an understanding of Paul's communications to that community, and argued that Paul attacked the imperial slogan "peace and security," showing that it is God who will one day manifest

38. Ibid., 40–57.

39. Mark Nanos, "The Inter- and Intra-Jewish," in ibid., 146–59.

40. Wright, "Paul's Gospel" in ibid., 160–83.

41. Wan, "Collection," in ibid., 191–215.

42. Horsley, *Paul and the Roman*.

43. Jewett, "The Corruption," in ibid., 25–46.

44. Smith, "'Unmasking the Powers'" in ibid., 47–66, citing p. 60.

his sovereignty as "the God of peace" (cf. 1 Thess 5:23).[45] Neil Elliott argued that the weaknesses, afflictions, and humiliation that the apostle suffers mimic the crucifixion in that it is in this locus that the power of God is made manifest. The public proclamation of the Lord's death is a symbol of resistance and defiance against the public exhibition of the crucified Lord, who is now resurrected and is the exalted Lord of all creation; and that indeed includes the very Roman Empire that engineered his death.[46] Rollin A. Ramasaran was next to show how Paul was critical of those within the church of Corinth who sought to use the methods of the Roman Imperial culture in order to gain power and influence in the church.[47] He argued convincingly that it is through the resurrection of the dead and the parousia that the glorious kingdom of the new age will be inaugurated; activities in history that will prove the propaganda of Rome null and void. Efrain Agosto continued the social critique by proposing in his analysis of 1 Thess 5:12–13, 1 Cor 16:15–18, Phil 2:25–30; 4:2–3, and Rom 16:1–2, that Paul inverted the Roman system of patronage and commendation, which had as its motive concern for the self and personal advancement of the client and patron, proposing in its place the individual's sacrifice and labor for the communities of the Christ-movement.[48] Erik M. Heen examined Phil 2:6–11 and showed that this hymn may have been sung of Jesus who had been granted honorific status as a result of his life of service to God and humanity.[49] As a result of this Jesus was granted the honorific title *isa theō*, which was usually ascribed to emperors; an act of adoration that would have been viewed as resistive and subversive. Finally, Jennifer Wright Knust demonstrated how Paul was critical of the morality of the Greco-Roman world and particularly of the emperor and empire.[50] Using Romans chapter 6, Knust showed that for Paul, apart from complete submission to the lordship of Christ, history has demonstrated that people are incapable of ruling themselves. Like its predecessor, this volume made significant strides in analyzing the important connection between the contents of Paul's letters and the Roman imperial context in which he lived.

From the above, we see that reading Paul in the context of the Roman imperial order offers a viable, and in our opinion, a more realistic hermeneutic of his letters. The foregoing has also demonstrated that the methodological approach while taking into account the historical-critical method is free to take on board other methodologies such as feminist, liberationist, and postcolonial critique. We have seen how Paul's letters reflected in various ways his concern with the social, cultural, and political institutions of his day, embraced his heritage and convictions as a Jew, and offered the communities committed to loyalty to the lordship of Christ a veiled form of resistance to Roman hegemony. The degree to which these readings that we have briefly exam-

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45. See Donfried, "The Imperial Cults" in Horsley, *Paul and Empire*, 215–23, and Donfried, "The Cults" in Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica*, 21–48.

46. Elliott, "The Apostle Paul's," in Horsley, *Paul and the Roman*, 67–88.

47. Ramsaran, "Resisting Imperial," in ibid., 89–102.

48. Agosto, "Patronage and Commendation," in ibid., 103–24.

49. Heen, "Phil 2:6–11 and Resistance," in ibid., 125–54.

50. Knust, "Paul and the Politics," in ibid., 155–73.

ined may be defined as postmodern or ideological is beyond the scope of this study; nevertheless, it is with this in mind, that we now seek to clearly define our methodologies, before we turn to our analysis of Paul's letter to the Romans.

TOWARDS AN IDEOLOGY OF THE TEXT

Definitions of Ideology

The definition of ideology that we propose to work with may, in the broadest sense, be stated as ideas that impact on our lives in powerful and consequential ways, enabling the lived-reality of the individual and the community, giving meaning to life, and creating and sustaining identity. In other words they are "ideas and other 'products of consciousness' [that] are rooted in the material conditions of social life."[51] These ideas are so rooted in the psyche of people that it is difficult to part with them. So, James Barr notes: "Ideology is a world-view or set of ideas that is so intensely held that factual realities and practical considerations have no power to alter or affect it."[52] Terry Eagleton's volume on ideology lists six definitions that we have conflated to some extent and adapted as our model.[53] Ideology is "politically and epistemologically neutral."[54] By this, ideology is a function of culture "the general material process of production of ideas, beliefs and values in social life" and denotes "the whole complex of signifying practices and symbolic processes in a particular society."[55] From this we seek to understand how individuals live their social practices, and to engage with the political processes and power, and the signs,[56] meanings, and values involved in these practices. These practices are uniquely reflected in the ideas and beliefs of each significant social and cultural group or class, however defined. The veracity of these beliefs and values is likewise linked to the value system within the specific group, and therefore raises the question of ethics. They are perpetuated by the worldview, conditions, and life-experiences of the group or class.

For us, therefore, ideology arises from the relationship between socially significant groups or classes as they seek to promote and legitimize their interests between one another, particularly if they share similar goals. Ideology thus defined is the "dis-

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51. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory*, 1. For a study on the original intent of ideology as a science see Kennedy, *Destutt de Tracy*.

52. Barr, *History and Ideology*, 102.

53. Eagleton, *Ideology*, 1–31. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory* examines contemporary contributions to the study of ideology. Further summary reading on ideology and religion may be found in Grimes, "Ideology," in *The Form of Ideology*, 22–37. Note that in the writings of Michel Foucault, the term "ideology" is interchanged with "discourse." See Eagleton, *Introduction*, 8. For Roland Barthes, ideology is strongly connected to, if not the same as myth. Barthes, *Mythologies*; Eagleton, *Ideology*, 199–200, and Thompson, *Studies*, 136.

54. Eagleton, *Ideology*, 28.

55. Ibid., 28.

56. Ibid., 193, 195 "the term 'ideology' is just a convenient way of categorizing under a single heading a whole lot of different things we do with signs," and the practice of ideology as the way in which computing social groups struggle at the level of signs over their use.

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cursive field in which self-promoting social powers conflict and collide over questions central to the reproduction of social power as a whole."[57] Here, ideology has to do with persuasion to act at the expense of rationality and justice; it is the preservation of the interest of one group at the expense of the other. When one social group promotes and legitimizes its interest in such a way, then ideology leads to the practice of domination. Ideology is linked to the activities of the dominant social power, but the subordinate social group will also have a counter-ideology. However, a dominant group or class that imposes its ideology, irrespective of its truth, on a subordinate social group or class, will distort and dissimulate its symbolic processes and signifying practices for the sake of maintaining control.[58]

The counter-ideology of the subordinate group is therefore either suppressed, controlled, or totally excluded. This group, out of its survival needs, will generate an ideological discourse that is specifically rooted in its social conditions of life. This ideological discourse is oppositional, and promotes and seeks to legitimize the interests of the subordinate group or class by such devices as the naturalizing, universalizing, and masking of its interests. In this way, dominant and subordinate groups have their oppositional discourse, and ideology is the sum total of the ideas and beliefs which help to legitimize the interests of the material structure of society as a whole.[59] Ideology assumes a neutral position, the holding of an idea, and moves to a critical position, the linking of the idea to systems that are an integral part of a social group. The former position is descriptive one, in that it speaks of systems of thought and of belief, and of symbolic practices which pertain to social action or political projects.[60] Conversely, the latter term is pejorative in that it "preserves the negative connotation which has been conveyed by the term throughout most of its history, and . . . binds the analysis of ideology to the question of critique."[61] Our presupposition is that the

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57. Power is not confined to the military or to governments. Eagleton adequately summarises Michel Foucault's idea of power as an "intangible network of force which weaves itself into our slightest gestures and our most intimate utterances." See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*. Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism*, 52, supports this neutral definition (whether true or false), except that he adds that the system "reflects the needs and interests of a group or class at a particular time in history."

58. This definition resonates with James Barr's view that ideology can be used as a determinant (sometimes unconsciously) to stress one's species, gender, status, background, race, etc. So to speak of a "third-world theologian" carries with it certain nuances, even deprecation. Barr, *History*, 104. It is not uncommon for one theologian to discredit the work of another by defining it as ideological, ibid., 111–12ff; 139. "Writers who are opposed to theology call things 'ideology' in order to discredit them as theological sources. Writers who like theology use 'ideology' as the term for what they consider bad theology." As Geertz, *The Interpretation*, 194 notes: "I have a social philosophy; you have political opinions; he has an ideology." Geertz recognizes that the term ideology has become 'ideologized' in itself (ibid., 193). Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 19–24 for a discussion on ideology as it applies to the Roman Empire.

59. Eagleton, *Ideology*, 30.

60. To have an idea is insufficient. Ideas must be linked to systems and that system must be validated by an identifiable part (or whole) of society. Barr, *History and Ideology*, 2000, 105.

61. Thompson, *Studies*, 3–4, notes that the term "ideology" is used as a word in contemporary thought in "two fundamentally differing ways." It is used as a neutral term to describe any system of thought or belief, and as a critical term to define "the process of sustaining asymmetrical relations of power—that is to the process of maintaining domination . . . To study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of domination." See also ibid., 126–47 *passim*, esp. 130–31,

ideologies of dominant Rome and subordinate Israel—of which the Christ-cult is an integral part—function within the combined framework outlined above, appealing to and utilizing certain strategies to perpetuate themselves. This presupposition is supported by the fact that Christianity started off as an oppositional political rhetoric in the Roman Empire.[62]

Strategies of Ideology

The ideology of social groups, whether dominant or subordinate, are best understood with reference to the strategies by which they present their ideologies to the world.[63] The first, the strategy of *unification*, presents the group as coherent and homogenous in spite of any internal conflicts which may exist or arise from time to time. It is this that gives a particular social group a sense of identity through the neutral sharing of ideas, beliefs, and values. The second strategy of a social group thus defined, is to present its ideology not as speculative theory, but as practical and applying to everyday life. In this regard the ideology is said to be *action-oriented*, that is, it is performative (capable of being exercised) and transformative (capable of changing the lives of the particular social group and in some cases the community as a whole). The third strategy is that by which a social group provides logical reasoning for its acceptance within the community. The process of *rationalization* seeks to provide possible explanations and justification for social behavior, and helps to promote the common interests of the group. Eagleton quoting J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis notes that rationalization is the "procedure whereby the subject attempts to present an explanation that is either logically consistent or ethically acceptable for attitudes, ideas, feelings, etc., whose true motives are not perceived."[64] This definition takes into account the pejorative description of ideology, but it equally applies to the descriptive as well.

The fourth strategy, *legitimation*, is closely linked with rationalization, but in the wider sense, is the process by which one group establishes its interests as broadly acceptable. According to the pejorative description of ideology it is more precisely "the process by which a ruling power comes to secure from its subjects an at least tacit consent to its authority." In this regard it may be regarded as the rule of law imposed

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134, 141, and 146. See also Giddens, *Central Problems*, 6, 191, 193–96; and, Horrell, *The Social Ethos*, 39–59, for a discussion on social reality as a human construction. The pejorative meaning of ideology came through its use by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels as a reaction to the prevailing German culture and philosophy. Marx and Engels maintained that ideology was an inversion of the real world, as seen in the image of the *camera obscura*. See Arthur, ed., *The German Ideology* for a concise treatment of Marx and Engels. The pejorative Marxist meaning is still attested in some social groups. For example, as in the definition of Bhaskar, "Ideology" in Harré and Lamb, *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 292: "Ideology. Any false, and categorically mistaken, ensemble of ideas, whose falsity is explicable, wholly or in part, in terms of the role or function they, normally unwittingly serve." See Barr, *History*, 105.

62. See Malina, "How Jesus," in Malina, *The New Testament*, 198–220; esp. the chart on pp. 218–19.

63. These strategies are taken from Eagleton, *Ideology*, 5–6, 33–61 *passim*. See also Thompson, *Studies*, 4–6.

64. Eagleton, *Ideology*, 51.

by the dominant class.[65] The fifth strategy is the device used by an ideology to achieve legitimacy. When an ideology presupposes that values and interests which are "specific to a certain place and time"[66] are "the values and interest of all humanity,"[67] the ideology is said to be *universalizing* itself. An ideology that universalizes itself is "driven by global ambitions"[68] and "suppresses the historical relativity of their own doctrines."[69] This particular view, though obvious to those on the outside, is not so obvious to those on the inside of the ideology. Seen from inside, such an ideology is restricted neither by time nor space nor history.

The final strategy of presentation of an ideology is called *naturalization*, and is closely linked to the strategy of universalization. An ideology that offers "[its] beliefs as natural and self-evident [and as identifiable] with the common sense of a society," is naturalizing itself. Naturalization narrows the gap between ideology and social reality, with the latter being constantly redefined by the ideology itself. In this way, the ideology and social reality mutually confirm themselves. Like universalization, naturalization also denies "that ideas and beliefs are specific to a particular time, place, and social group."[70]

Ideological Transcripts

In addition to the six strategies an ideology may employ in presenting, preserving, and securing its worldview, a subordinate ideology may employ other techniques. In analyzing power relationships between dominant and subordinate groups, James C. Scott differentiates between the *public transcript* and the *hidden transcript*.[71] The

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65. Scott, *Domination*, 11. Scott states that the legitimacy of domination derives from "the ideas behind their (the dominant) rule, [and] the kind of claims they make," and notes in particular the claims of Nero. When Paul speaks in Rom 2:17 of the difference between the claims and performance of the Jew, it could possibly be interpreted as the practices of the elite that differ significantly from their stated claims to the right to power; dissonance exists between what is said and what is done. In this regard compare Josephus, *Ant*. 2.207 ("Let none blaspheme the gods which other cities revere, nor rob foreign temples, nor take treasure that has been dedicated in the name of any god") with Rom 2:17–24. This is accounted for by the difference between the *public* and *hidden transcript* of the dominant group.

66. Eagleton, *Ideology*, 56.

67. Ibid., 56.

68. Ibid., 57–58.

69. Ibid., 58.

70. See ibid., 5, 45–61.

71. Scott's work was the result of his research on class relations in a Malay village; see Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*. Scott's premise in transferring salient principles of his research from the "close, textual, contingent, and historically grounded analysis . . . of the Malay village" to a global scene is that "structurally similar forms of domination will bear a family resemblance to one another." This resemblance occurs especially under forms of domination in which "an institutionalized arrangement for appropriating deliverer, goods, and services from a subordinate population . . . assumptions about inferiority and superiority . . . and an element of personal terror" exist. These conditions were well attested in Roman imperialism." For a further discussion on use of violence and force to intimidate Roman subjects see Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy*, 115–22, Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 3–4; and Wheeler, "Mythological Limits," 35–36. These premises capture for the most part the relationship of the dominant Roman Imperial power to its subordinated social and ethnic groups. Quotations are taken from Scott, *Domination*, x–xi. See also Scott, *Domination*, 10, 21–23 for more discussion on this. There are two other categories

public transcript describes "the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate." It is an "indifferent guide to the opinion of subordinates, . . . a performance . . . of deference and consent. In ideological terms [it] will typically, by its accommodationist tone, provide convincing evidence for the hegemony of dominant values, for the hegemony of dominant discourse."[72] Conversely, the hidden transcript is created by "the practice of domination [and is] a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant . . . beyond direct observation by power-holders." It is the "privilege site for non-hegemonic, contrapuntal, dissident, subversive discourse;"[73] it is the strategy of survival, for the practical preservation of identity.[74]

For this reason, Scott argues that power relations between the dominant and subordinate are usually observed where the public transcripts of these groups encounter each other.[75] Sometimes, however, allusions are made in the public transcript that can help us understand what is occurring behind the scenes, that is, in the hidden transcript.[76] Of course, much of the hidden transcript takes place within the oral tradition of the community, and remains outside the realms of discourse, historical, or rhetorical analysis. The major forms by which the subordinate group disguises or conceals its message are by way of anonymity, euphemisms, grumbling, its representations of culture (whether it be oral culture or written folktales), symbolic inversion (which makes use but inverts popular trends of the dominant culture), and ritual reversal.[77] Additionally, the content of the public transcript of a subordinate group may be legally controlled by the dominant class, with the laws being implemented to curtail speech (treason or *lèse-majesté*) and association or gatherings.

Ideology, Language and Praxis

For Thompson, to "study ideology is . . . to study language in the social world . . . It is to study the ways in which the multifarious uses of language intersect with power, nourishing it, sustaining it, enacting it."[78] The interaction between language and ideology allows for the analysis of "the ways in which expressions serve as a means of

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of subordinate discourse. The third is the folk story, trickster-tale or open cultural activities of the community which function as a public transcript, and within which the "hidden transcript" is encoded. The fourth is the discourse of open rebellion.

72. Scott, *Domination*, 2–4. "In this respect, subordinate groups are complicitous in contributing to a sanitized official transcript, for that is one way they cover their tracks." Ibid., 87.

73. Ibid., 27, xii, 4, and 25. Scott argues that the further away a person is from the direct influence of domination in the community the more open the transcript will be and vice versa.

74. Ibid., 33. Citing Khare, *The Untouchable*, 130. "We must also tactfully disguise and hide, as necessary, our true aims and intentions from our social adversaries. To recommend it is not to encourage falsehood but only to be tactical in order to survive."

75. Ibid., 13.

76. Scott informs us that it has a "politics of disguise and anonymity that takes place in the public view but is designed to have a double meaning." (ibid., 15, 18–19). The official transcript may therefore help us in a limited way to uncover some of the hidden resistance of the subordinate to hegemony.

77. See ibid., 136–82.

78. Thompson, *Studies*, 2. See also Simpson, *Language,* for a methodological, analytical, systematic introduction that explores the way language is shaped by ideology. See also Eagelton, *Ideology*, 22–24.

action and interaction, a medium through which history is produced and society re-produced." In this understanding language is seen as "a social-historical phenomenon which is embroiled in human conflict."[79] Because "ideology operates through language and language is a medium of social action," an analysis of language, coupled with an understanding of the social context in which the text or discourse was produced, can help us to recover to some extent, the ideological intentions of the author.

Eagleton, following the work of V. N. Voloshinov, sees the struggle between the "contending ideological positions" of social groups being reflected in the way language is used: "a particular social sign is pulled this way and that by competing social interests, inscribed from within a multiplicity of ideological 'accents'; and it is in this way that it sustains its dynamism and vitality."[80] It is this struggle that is actively involved in the struggle of meaning, a struggle between power and knowledge, which may be analyzed by correlating the events of history with the ideological content, whether implicit or explicit, within a text. Elizabeth Castelli defines three dimensions of this struggle. First, "it reveals the tensive relation between the production of meaning and language; [second,] it highlights the multiple discourses operating within the text; [and third,] it lays bare the complex nature of power relations that produce texts, construct the institutional contexts of those texts and their reception, and affect readers of those texts in their particular social locations."[81]

In a similar vein, "[i]deology . . . represents the point where power impacts upon certain utterances and inscribes itself tacitly within them."[82] Castelli, following Catherine Belsey, likewise notes that ideology is the sum of the ways in which people live and represent to themselves their relationship to the conditions of their existence. Ideology is *inscribed in signifying practices*—in discourses, myths, presentations, and re-presentations of the way 'things' are—and to this extent it is inscribed in language . . . While ideology cannot be reduced to language and, more important, language certainly cannot be reduced to ideology, the signifying system can have an important role in naturalizing the way things are.[83]

Castelli draws on Eagleton to further note that "ideology pre-exists the text; but the ideology of the text defines, operates and constitutes that ideology in ways unpre-meditated, so to speak, by ideology itself."

In other words, for Eagleton as for Castelli, ideology may be seen as "a language-based phenomenon that bears in a special way on the literature of a society."[84] This means that the text of a community can represent ideology at four distinct levels; the

79. Thompson, *Studies*, 2. Thompson advocates turning away from the "analysis of well-formed sentences or systems of signs," a methodology (and here must be added the stress placed on etymological analysis as well) that has greatly influenced biblical hermeneutics in this regard.

80. Eagleton, *Ideology*, 195. One aspect of Pauline study that is now being explored is how the linguistic codes of power found in the dominant discourse are inverted, alluded to, reconfigured, and recited by Paul.

81. Castelli *et al*, "Ideological" in Castelli *et al*, *The Postmodern*, 272–308, citing p. 273.

82. Eagleton, *Ideology*, 223.

83. Castelli, "Ideological," 275–76. Citing Belsey, *Critical Practice*, 42.

84. Castelli, "Ideological," 273.

ideology of the community, its historical actions and interactions as represented either implicitly or explicitly by the text; the ideology of the author of the text; the ideology of power as reflected in the contending ideological positions of the text; and the ideology disclosed by an analysis of the way in which social signs struggle within the text. Within each of these categories consideration would then have to be given to the strategies by which the ideology is representing itself in the text given the constraints which we have mentioned above. The presupposition here therefore, is that the ancient letter is text, the language of a community, and this further implies that, in addition to lending itself for analysis according to the categories of rhetoric, whether ancient or modern, the ancient Pauline letter, which was a substitute for speech and communication, offers itself as a potential candidate for ideological analysis.[85]

IDEOLOGY AT WORK

Ideas are value-sensitive, having an ethical content that regulates life within the given framework of the group.[86] The way a people feel, what values they hold, how they perceive reality, what they believe, how social order and power are produced and maintained in that community, and the interaction with other communities of differing ideologies with these same inherent defining characteristics, are all part of the ideology of that people. In a real sense, ideas are the lived myths and traditions of a community, giving rise to and shaping experience or history, with that experience or history further giving rise to new ideas and nurturing or transforming old ideas.[87] This happens in two ways. When external disruptive elements (perhaps from communities of differing ideological constructs) invade and challenge our ideology, we are forced to change, transform, reproduce and restate our ideology in such a way that either accommodates, transforms, or rejects the disruptive element. We seek, based on our cultural strength, to either legitimize or rationalize[88] those disruptive elements.

Of course, not all intrusions into our ideology are to be defined as disruptive, that is, based on conflict. In fact there are times when internal (or external for that matter) reactive or provocative elements will enter our sacred space, and when this happens, we seek to adjust our ideologies, again either through legitimization or rationalization. When we speak of sacred space, we recognize that ideologies create boundaries for the individual and the community, and acceptance or rejection within that community will depend primarily on our acceptance of the terms and conditions laid down for inclusion in that space. The creation of these boundaries is the function of law, and every community defines for itself a set of laws that not only define their sacred

85. Rayner, "The Uses," in Manning ed., *The Form of Ideology*, 90–112, esp. 103, 111. Rayner concentrates on the political use of ideological language.

86. Castelli, "Ideological," 272, quoting Michèle Barrett "Ideology is a generic term for the processes by which meaning is produced, challenged, reproduced, transformed."

87. Ibid., 273. For Louis Althusser, "ideology is to be understood as the system of representations located in the everyday practices (especially the rituals) of a society."

88. See Eagleton, *Ideology*, 52, 54–56

space, but also suggest that the members of that community are better off than their neighbors. Ideologies are therefore not static; they take on a life of their own and are in constant flux; they create the dynamism of life and give rise to growth and development; they are inseparable from history, never ahistorical, flow from experience, and are critical for the rationalizing power of the human mind; they are born in particular contexts and die in others. In other words, ideology is not just talking about ideas, but ideology itself is a discourse that gives rise to discourse, to narrative.[89] Likewise, ideology as seen above is never separate from people however impractical or abstract they may seem; people are always inextricably bound up with ideology and ideology with people. So Catherine Besley writes: "It is the role of ideology to construct people as subjects."[90]

Drawing on Louis Althusser, Terry Eagleton saw ideology as "a system of representations located in the everyday practices (especially the rituals) of a society."[91] Eagelton called this system the "text," and differentiated between the signifier or the text (the system of representations) and the signified (the material practices or history itself).[92] Castelli recognizes that for Eagleton, "ideology lies at the very heart of the signification process."[93] For Eagleton ideology "pre-exists the text; but the ideology of the text defines, operates and constitutes that ideology in ways unpremeditated, so to speak, by ideology itself."[94] In other words, Eagleton supports what has been stated, that the ideology may be seen as "a language-based phenomenon that bears in a special way on the literature of a society."[95]

The literature of the society or community, or of an individual within that community, is therefore a representation of the lived reality of the community, the history of that community, and not necessarily an abstract universalizing representation or metanarrative of truth or reality, even if the individual or community dared to make that claim. So that Castelli claims: the "totalizing universal and essentialist claims about the text are regarded with suspicion: ideological criticism problematizes, undermines, and ultimately subverts such claims."[96] Eagleton's understanding of the thing signified, i.e., history, may be quoted here from Castelli *et al*. Castelli cites Eagleton accordingly: "history . . . serves as the *ultimate* signifier of literature, and as the ultimate signified. For what else in the end could be the source and object of any signifying practice but the real social formation which provides its material matrix?"[97] Castelli summarizes

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89. Wright, *The New Testament*, chapters 2 and 5, (citing p. 405) though not using the word ideology, sees in Paul's letters, and particularly in Romans and Galatians, a "larger implicit narrative" or "overall story-world" with an accompanying "symbolic universe" functioning behind and necessary for the understanding of "the more limited narrative worlds of the different worlds of the different letters."

90. Castelli, "Ideological," 279. Citing Belsey, *Critical*, 58.

91. Castelli, "Ideological," 273.

92. Ibid., 273; Eagleton, *Ideology*, 1.

93. Castelli, "Ideological," 273.

94. Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, as cited by Castelli, "Ideological," 273.

95. Castelli, "Ideological," 273–74, esp. 273.

96. Ibid., 278.

97. Ibid., 273, citing Eagleton, *Criticism*, 72; original emphasis retained.

Eagleton and affirms that "ideology is the connection between discourse and power, politics and literature."[98]

This discourse of power may be demonstrated by the life of Paul. Paul had an ideology of Judaism that, according to his affirmation, fitted into the paradigm, the construct of a particular worldview of Judaism. He was circumcised; he affirmed his image as belonging to the tribe of Benjamin; he refers to himself as an intellectual elite of the social group called Hebrews; he was a Pharisee, holding on to certain myths about life, death, and incorporeal existence; his existence was shaped by a particular understanding of the Torah (Phil 3:4–6). As a Pharisee he would have been loyal to Mosaic Law and tradition, rejecting any oaths of loyalty required by the Herodians.[99] Likewise, he would have embraced a position, either of active resistance or acquiescence, with respect to Roman rule. Such an ideology gave rise to his action, to history, in that he sought to deal with the disruptive element of Christianity that entered his ideological space. His first action was to deal violently with it, so he talks about his persecution of the church. Eventually, through experience, and/or perhaps through the counsel and example of his relatives (that is if we take συγγενεῖς in Rom 16:7 to mean "relative" according to the rendition of the NRSV and NIV) he was able to reshape his ideology; he was able to rationalize and legitimize the Christ-event within his ideological discourse, and that paradigm shift gave rise to new events, new experience, new history. The traditions that he appealed to before did not change. What changed was Paul's reasoning of those traditions in light of the Christ-event. But the rationalization and the legitimization did not remain static. It changed as his ideological centre, giving rise to a new ideological construct—his discourse of reality—was able to legitimize and rationalize other disruptive elements (his suffering and beatings) and other provocative elements within his sphere of experience. The Christ-believers became a new construct of his ideology. It is important therefore to note this change in Paul's ideology, for without due consideration, he may be accused of being inconsistent and contradictory. Likewise it is important to recognize that the writings of Paul reflect his ideology and speak of the lived-reality, the historical discourse of power of his day.

Ideology and Texts

Furthermore, we must, having used the word text, define exactly what we mean, for there is a distinct difference between the text of a community and historical facts. A text is the ideological construct by a specific author of a historical fact, and different authors of differing ideological backgrounds will create different texts on the same historical event.[100] Hacking, summarizing Foucault, Derrida, Barthes and Hayden

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98. Ibid., 273–74, citing Eagleton, *Criticism*, 89.

99. Josephus, *Ant.*, 17.42.

100. Castelli, "Ideological," 305. "Among biblical critics engaged in ideological criticism today, the relation to historical approaches remains a concern. Meir Steinberg and others who have succeeded in finding a singular cohesive 'ideology of the text' link that to an authorial intent. To say that a text has been overlayed with ideology or that ideology is buried in the text (and that a dig into the deep structures will bring it to the surface) is to point to the presence of an author with an ideology . . . In

White, indicates that ideological purity requires us to speak of texts (discourse) rather than facts.[101] In other words we are bound to talk about the interpretation of a given community rather than "facts." Castelli *et al* note that: "In the same way that people are implicated in the working of social order, literature [texts] play[s] an important role in the ideological operations of a culture, whether it is for just or unjust (or some combination of both) reasons." Naturally, the correlation and dependency of a text at the time of its creation on historical fact will determine the degree of accuracy with which reconstruction of the historical context may be possible. As Castelli *et al.* put it, "the text is implicated both in the representation and reproduction of ideology,"[102] and, as we have seen, each ideology will take a particular slant on an event. According to Edward W. Said, "texts are tied to circumstances and to politics large and small, and these require attention and criticism . . . we cannot deal with the literature of the peripheries without also attending to the literature of the metropolitan centres."[103]

In other words, if we are to consider the ideology found in Paul's letter to the Romans, a community that for all intents and purposes existed at the periphery, consideration must also be given to the ideology expounded by the Roman imperial house, the controlling centre of the Roman Empire. This is critical for us in this study, since we have to ask, and to some extent conjecture, the association between the text (which is in our case Paul's letter to the Romans) and the historical events surrounding the community, recognizing that there is a degree of dissonance between text and event. Critical therefore is how Paul's letter not only represented historical reality for the Christian community, but rather how it provided the ideology that helped the community in their context to withstand the onslaught of the pervasive Roman imperial ideology.

Ideology and Identity

We have already said at the beginning of this introduction that ideas impact on our lives in powerful and consequential ways; ideas enable the lived reality of an individual and the community; giving meaning to life, and creating and sustaining identity. But talk about an identity without an established history is insufficient to give meaning to existence. An identity without a historical context is meaningless, and an ideology without a historical base is groundless. Identity must have a history that is capable of development, and with which the social political and religious reality of the community can engage. History therefore gives rise to the perpetuation of ideology and ideology gives rise to the perpetuation of history. The suppression of the history of a culture, a ploy that seems to be effective for imperialist powers, is one sure way of destroying a people's ideology. Conversely, any significant paradigm shift in ideology of a

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engaging ethical readings, the method of ideological criticism is contextual: whether history or History is intended or the play of signifiers is the central focus. As Paul De Man understands it, 'literature is condemned to being the truly political mode of discourse.'"

101. Hoy, *Foucault*, 27–30.

102. Castelli, "Ideological," 275.

103. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 318 cited as an epigraph in Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 1.

community especially during its liminal stage, must seek rationalization and legitimization by being grounded in history, even if that history is mythological. The interaction between an emerging identity, the mytho-historical assumptions, and literature of the community militates against the universalizing of the text of that community.

The story of the Bible is a story of the powerplay between the dominant and the dominated, between the imperial power and colonized subjects. The literature that arises from these power relationships is legitimized or rationalized within the ideological and theological framework of the community, depending on what side of the fence that community sits at the time of the composition of the literature. This is true whether the dominant power is Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, or Rome, and it is equally true if it is Israel and/or Judah at the pinnacle of their power. To go beyond this primary methodological and exegetical principle to claim universalism of a text is to become a literary imperialist. Each community has to be given the ability and facility to engage with the literature as meet their needs, in the same way that the community of the text drew up and engaged social, cultural, political, religious, and literary resources to shape the text in its original setting.[104]

Ideology and Ethics

This brings us to consider the extent to which a text modifies the behavior and responses of a community. The interplay of ideology and text is lived out in the real flesh and blood existence of a community. The community will define certain modes of behavior, call it ethics, that define the relationship between members within the community, but also helps cope outside the community. As Castelli *et al* recognize, "to say that all readings of a text are ideological is to insist that the act of reading is fundamentally ethical." Castelli goes on to accept Althusser's definition of the ethics of a text as the "material practice . . . that is the 'lived' relation between [people] and their world . . . [It] is meant to expose and underscore the differences and conflicts of these human relations as systemic and corporate realities, that is, something more than the individual person's actions and desires."[105] Though not mentioned, consideration of the confining reality on the ethical practice of a community must also be considered. By confining reality, we mean those ideological norms and standards of the dominant culture that are imposed on other cultures by reason of the latter's geographical and political location within the realm of the dominant culture.[106]

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104. Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity*, 4, speaks of abstract resources (e.g., ideas, ideologies, values) [which] are easier to manipulate and often function as strategically mobilized resources in conflicts over other kinds of resources." In contrast, Zetterholm also identifies "concrete cultural resources (e.g., church architecture, symbolic practices, liturgical forms) [which] are more likely to be the object of contention." Such a differentiation may be fictive. The relationship between these two, while determined by availability to a respective group, is virtually inseparable.

105. Castelli, "Ideological," 275.

106. An example of this would be the Mormon position of polygamy in Utah, USA. Though within the boundaries of their community some Mormons think polygamy to be ethically and morally acceptable, they fall within the geographical and political boundaries of the USA, which prohibits such practice.

Another response of the subordinated community to the ethics of the dominant one may also be seen in the way the former define their ethics in opposition to the norms and standards of those of the latter, thus creating a binary opposing ethical response; such as, they are "x" but we are "y." Not only so, but the subordinated community may defer to their unique source for justice, if the reality of the lived-relations means that they have no influence over the corporate administration of justice in the dominant culture. Questions of justice and ethics are therefore inextricably tied up with the responses of that lived-relationship, that material practice in the text.[107]

Ideology and Theology

The discussion thus far has invoked terms such as society, social groups and class, culture, politics, domination and subordination, and relations of power. But where do we place religion and religious belief, or rather religion and theology?[108] Can these be considered as integral parts of the ideology of a particular social group or class? Or do they stand outside of ideology?[109] According to Scott the theological interpretation

107. Castelli, "Ideological," 303–4, cites four categories of relationships that Iris Young sees existing within a dominant class structure. Exploitation is maintained through class distinctions, dominance and unequal distribution. Marginalisation is the way the system inhibits social mobility. Powerlessness is a characteristic of people who cannot change their social situation or impact on the unjust system in which they are suffering. Cultural imperialism is the subordination of others by the dominant culture. To these must be added the reality of violence, which is experienced by members of the oppressed and inflicted by members of the dominant group.

108. Grimes, "Ideology," in Manning, *The Form*, 22–37. Grimes differentiates between religion and ideology on the grounds of the "differences between both [their] form and content" and that "theology is not a ground for Christianity, as history or science are claimed to be a ground for Marxism, and that the eternal (as understood by Christians) is a category that has no equivalent in ideological writings" (ibid., 34). Grimes, also notes that the ideological location of a person determines what is and isn't ideology. For example, a Marxist recognises religion to be ideological, while Marxism is scientific. Marx, Feuerbach, and Freud shared these views on the classification of religion. For Grimes, "the study of the Old Testament prophets . . . should be enough to show that human actions and relationships are not to be understood as being independent of religious faith, but rather as the occasion or context for an expression of that faith" (ibid., 23). Conversely, Eagleton sees a possible connection between myth and ideology. "Both myth and ideology are worlds of symbolic meaning with social functions and effects . . . Myths may not legitimate political power as directly as ideologies, but . . . they can be seen as naturalizing and universalizing a particular social structure, rendering any alternative to it unthinkable." Eagleton, *Introduction*, 188. The type of Hegelian social divisions that Eagleton envisaged were not part of the first century social construct, where religious, military, and political power were inseparable. Batson, Beker, and Clark, *Commitment without Ideology*, 12–13, 184–89, have a negative view of the relationship between theology and ideology, their fear being the former becoming the latter. "Our thesis is that not only [the possibility of speaking of] commitment without adopting an ideology . . . exists, but that the Christian Gospel is open to precisely such commitment: commitment without ideology" (ibid., 12).

109. For discussion on Christianity as an ideology see Corbett, *Ideologies*, and MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images*. See also the treatment by Grimes in "Ideology," 27–29. See also Barr, *History*, 2000, 108–18 who discusses the distinction made by scholars between theology and ideology. One of the major scholars that Barr engages here is Childs, *Biblical Theology*. The basic and fundamental point of differentiation is taking theology as the result of divine revelation while ideology is to be based on human experience and reason (ibid., 109, but see the scholars and the relevant bibliography engaged by Barr in the discussion, *passim*). Hodgson and King, *Systematic Theology*, see the formative factors of theology as scripture, tradition, reason and experience. Scripture itself is reducible to reason and experience within a given tradition, that is, the idea of God's revelation to mankind which is accepted in faith.

of life is affected by the practice of subordination, what may be called the apocalyptic interpretation. Scott writes: "a powerful and suppressed desire for relief from the burdens of subordination seems not only to infuse the autonomous religious life of the oppressed but also to strongly color their interpretations of events."[110] Timothy Fitzgerald in carrying out a study on the categorization of religious study, albeit in communities where the secular and sacred divide are extremely pronounced, posits that religion should be studied not "as though it were some objective feature of societies" but rather as "an ideological category, an aspect of modern western ideology, with a specific location in history," even if allowance may be made for the categorization of religion in a wider context as part of the "social history of ideas." [111]

The reluctance to categorize religion as an ideology has been sustained, Fitzgerald argues, "by claiming that religion is a natural and/or supernatural reality in the nature of things that all human individuals have a capacity for, regardless of their cultural context."[112] The ideological assumption at the base of this claim demonstrates the reasonableness of categorizing religion as an ideology. Fitzgerald writes: "This attempt to disguise the theological essence of the category and to present it as though it were a unique human reality irreducible to either theology or sociology suggests that it possesses some ideological function within the western 'configuration of values' (to borrow the expression of Louis Dumont) is not fully acknowledged."[113] For Fitzgerald, "the construction of 'religion' and 'religions' is . . . part of a historical ideological process."[114] We propose that theology may then be seen as the signs, thoughts, beliefs, and value

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110. Scott, *Domination*, 147

111. Fitzgerald, *The Ideology*, 4. Barr, *History*, 125, citing Sternberg, *The Poetics*, 35–36: "The question is how rather than whether the literary coexists with the social, the doctrinal, the philosophical. In ancient times, the two were so closely related as to become indistinguishable." The separation between politics and religion in the texts of the New Testament era is mainly a Western ideological location that seeks to perpetuate itself. A recent example of how the ideological position of an exegete can prevent the opening up and consideration of new nuances of a text is seen demonstrated by Bloomquist, "Paul's Inclusive Language." Bloomquist saw the connections between the Wisdom of Solomon and Romans, speaks of Paul's "intertextual reconfiguration of material found in the Wisdom of Solomon," (ibid., 182) but by paying insufficient attention to the ideology implicit in Wisdom, a document that itself is constructed as a bulwark against Roman imperialism, and the notions of dominance and subordination, of power relationships, he fails to see how and why Paul may have been attracted to that composition. It is not surprising that the conclusions Bloomquist reaches are consistent with traditional Protestant views modified for his ideological position on human sexuality/homosexuality as currently taking place in the Anglican Church of Canada. What is further curious is that throughout his article, Bloomquist fails to consult one work on the Wisdom of Solomon, though he regularly engages Fitzmyer (Roman Catholic scholar notwithstanding the position on homosexuality taken by that Christian denomination) on Romans. Note also Bloomquist's conclusion that the analysis of the ideological texture of Rom 1 yields no further insights into the letter than are already known from existing methodologies would suggest that that methodology has nothing more to offer as applied to Romans. This is hardly the case.

112. Ibid., 5.

113. Ibid., 5.

114. Ibid., 8, see also p. 27. Grimes, "Ideology," 31–32 in this regard shows that "religion and ideology both offer a 'world view' . . . which helps a person to work towards a goal." Religion is a place where believers "claim to see the real significance of the events; to have gone beyond mere appearances."

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systems through which history is interpreted in light of the ideas of the divine and accepted on the basis of faith.[115]

Critical to this interpretation is the role of revelation, in which either individuals or groups are authorized to articulate the divine symbols within the community and to interpret the course of history according to these ideas.[116] Scripture can be regarded as a transcript of the pervasive ideas by which a community's history is interpreted and recorded by a person or persons within the said community, and claiming to have the gift of understanding and interpreting those scriptures. It not only interprets and records the transcript of past and present interactions of social groups in and with the wider community, but also serves in the resolution of conflicts, as a justification for a particular course of action, to preserve social identity, and to project the ideas and aspirations of a community into the future.[117] Theology is an effort to make meaning of existence in this world, and Scripture becomes the locus of the interpretation of facts pertaining to this existence. The ideas of biblical theology are not located within one aspect of life.[118] Indeed biblical theology asserts that the idea of God permeates the entire creation and history, the ordering of social life (slavery in Egypt), the structure of society (the monarchy of Israel), military activity (the conquest of Canaan, and the military activity of Assyria and Babylon), economic and commercial activities (the prophets Amos, Micah, Hosea, and Isaiah), even to the point of coping with life under extremely difficult conditions (Daniel and the concept of resurrection).[119] So Yairah Amit correctly states: "only a few stories in the bible lack a historical setting" and even

115. The relationship between faith and ideology, and implicitly faith and Scripture, has been adequately stated by Segundo, *The Liberation*, 1985, 110: "Faith, when properly understood, can never dissociate itself from the ideologies in which it is embodied—both in the Bible and in subsequent history. It certainly can, and should, dissociate itself as much as possible from the 'ideological' tendencies that wrongly subordinate it to a specific brand of historical oppression. But it makes no sense at all to ask what faith is when any and all ideology has been stripped from it. Faith without works is dead. Faith without ideologies is equally dead. Faith incarnated in successive ideologies constitutes an ongoing educational process in which man learns how to learn under God's guidance."

116. One of the fallacies of a modern reading of the Bible is to assume that the covenants were made with individuals; rather these arrangements were made with communities of people in particular social, historical, and political environments. The experience of the individual in biblical texts takes place within the context of these communities with particular traditions. Then again, such readings are oftentimes ideological in themselves. See also Grimes, "Ideology," 24.

117. Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity*, 178–230, but especially 212, demonstrates, with reference to the gospel of Matthew, how a scriptural text can be used as an ideological resource, what he calls an abstract cultural resource, in social conflict between communities, in his analysis between the community of Ignatius and the Jesus-believing Jews, and to challenge authority.

118. Barr, *History*, 2000, 124, "ideology is the main factor that brings *system* into the Bible" (original emphasis maintained).

119. For a recognition of the role of ideology in the Old Testament see Miller, "Faith and Ideology," in Cross, Lemke, and Miller, *Magnalia Dei*, 464–79, cf. Barr, *History*, 117–19. Miller recognized that the "line between faith and ideology is never drawn completely, but in the early period of Israel's history the two are less clearly differentiated than at later stages" (ibid., 469). "[R]eligion in Israel was a legitimating agency . . . The very institutions . . . which religion legitimated *sub specie aeternitatis*, religion could also relativize, 'de-mystify,' *sub specie aeternitatis* by declaring them in the face of God's righteousness to be devoid of inherent sanctity or divinely willed permanence" (Nicholson, *God and His People*, 205).

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then the author seeks to establish the setting of the story within a specific historical reference.[120]

The Judaeo-Christian Bible moves God from the realm of myth and places him in the lived-realities of people.[121] That theology may be seen to be void of ideological content, is the result of a reading and interpretation that strips Scripture of its connection to the everyday practices of life with all their signifying and symbolic practices, and treats it predominantly as the spiritualizing of the world.[122] But such a reading itself is based within an ideological framework, the reasons for which may very well have a political bias. In fact, it is through a consolidation of the spectrum of definitions of ideological thought given above, that the hermeneutics of particular present-day social groups, particularly liberationists and feminists, have been developed. Conversely, the concepts of ideology may also be applied as an exegetical tool to the text in its historical context. Theology therefore, may be said to function across the gamut of definitions stated above, in that it particularly deals with ideas and beliefs that structure society as a whole. It is this interrelatedness between religion and history, between culture and politics, between dominant and subordinate social groups, between ideas of the divine that permeate the whole created order and human response to and interpretation of them, that allows for an ideological reading of biblical texts.[123]

120. Amit, *History and Ideology*, 12, citing Job 1:1 as a parable that is given an historical reference "the land of Uz."

121. According to Grimes, "Ideology," in Manning, *The Form*, 23 "the study of the old Testament prophets . . . should be enough to show that human actions and relationships are not be understood as being independent of religious faith, but rather as the occasion or context for an expression of that faith." The same is true for the human actions and relationships within the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Amit, *History*, 1999, 19, cf. 33, 115ff recognizes that "when biblical literature harks back to the past it is apparently to the historical rather than the mythical past; to the time when, in the words of Yerushalmi, 'the great and critical moments of Israel's history were fulfilled. Far from attempting a flight from history, biblical religion allows itself to be saturated in it, and is inconceivable apart from it' . . . [T]he beginning of historiography in Israel . . . was a reaction of Judaean society to the destruction wreaked upon the region by Assyria at the end of the eighth century BCE." Amit shows that "biblical historiography . . . represented various ideologies associated with the periods of writing . . . [Writers of the Bible] while reflecting their various ideological schools, were also crafts-men, able to turn history into an account which is often replete with fiction and literary devices, but is so organized as to reveal to the reader the meaning of history." See ibid., 11–33, and 99–115. Likewise see the chapter entitled "Ideology," in Barr, *History*, 102–40, esp. p. 108.

122. This has been the main thrust in Pauline exegesis, to present Paul as a universal spiritual religion. The political has no place in consideration of the content of Paul's letters, which are seen as religious theological treatises, even if situational. The renowned E. P. Sanders crucial *chreia* "In short, this is what Paul finds wrong with Judaism: it is not Christianity" though epoch making in Pauline exegesis, still maintained a religious perspective. Stendahl, *Paul among Jews*, broke the ice on Pauline exegesis when he suggested that Paul left neither Judaism nor Israel. Paul brought the Gospel of the Christ of Israel to the Gentiles, and it is the struggle between these two groups that Paul seeks to iron out in Rom 1–11. The continued marginalisation of Paul politics has received some critique. See Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 55–92, and Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, ch. 2. Neil Elliott speaks of the "new approach" to Pauline exegesis and breaking away from the "Babylonian captivity of the letter to the Romans" as a way of marginalizing Paul's politics to allow for the use the letter to serve the interests of the dominant.

123. Barr, *History*, 2000, 108, draws attention to the dilemma in scholarship to ascribe Scripture to ideological analysis by citing Barstad, *The Myth*, 35–36 n.18 who, "while mentioning that 'all "history writing"' contains elements of "ideology"' . . . goes on to add . . . 'The very word "ideology," also a

Paul's letter to the Romans was written at a time when Rome ruled the world, and the presupposition of this study is that Scripture, theology, and religious belief cannot be emptied of their political and ideological content, since they function somewhere between the neutral and critical concepts of ideological critique as stated above.[124] Paul's letter is addressed to a subordinate group within the Roman Empire, and the primary presupposition here is that this group is not unaffected by the ideas and beliefs of the dominant power.[125] This presupposition of an ideological reading of Scripture has already been touched upon in our mention of the relationship between ideology and language. Having examined what ideology entails, we may now with greater clarity seek to understand what we will undertake as our goal of ideological-critical analysis.

SYNTHESIS OF IDEOLOGICAL CRITICISM

Ideology and Postmodernism

First, we may note that ideological criticism belongs to that genre of biblical criticism that has been defined as postmodern. By this we embrace the definition of Lyotard, which states simply that postmodernism is "an incredulity to metanarratives."[126] In other words, ideological criticism sees the text as signifying a concrete historical event and not seeking to impose a universal theology. It seeks the real context of discourse within the historical political religious framework of the setting of the text and the era. It seeks to find issues in real flesh and blood existence. It is at the same time demythologizing and detotalizing. Ideological criticism therefore, may in the first instance be seen to represent the changing ideology of biblical interpretation in itself, and may be summed up in this way:

> By sweeping away secure notions of meaning, by radically calling into question the apparently stable foundations of meaning on which traditional interpretation is situated, by raising doubts about the capacity to achieve ultimate clarity about the meaning of a text, postmodern readings lay bare the contingent and constructed character of meaning itself. Moreover, by challenging traditional interpretations that claim universality, completeness, and supremacy over other

creation of the intellectuals of the modern, western, European world, is equally [as] problematic as the word "history." It is, therefore, only with the greatest impreciseness that we can use such anachronistic conceptual apparatus on biblical narratives at all. The distinction between 'history' on the one side and 'ideology' on the other is equally problematic."

124. Schweizer, *A Theological Introduction*, 282–83: "Paul was actively engaged in the subversion of much contemporary practice . . . his career is an example of that outlook which, when translated into reality, tends to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time."

125. The Augustinian/Lutheran anti-Jewish exegetical polemic of Romans was long ago challenged by Ferdinand Christian Baur even though Protestant theology continues to determine the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. (For an overview of the impact of Protestant theology on Pauline exegesis see Meeks, "Judaism, Hellenism, " and Martin, "Paul and the Judaism" in Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul Beyond*.)

126. Lyotard, *The Postmodern*, xxiii–xxv citing xxiv.

interpretations, postmodern readings demonstrate that traditional interpretations are themselves enactments of domination or, in simpler terms, power plays.[127]

Ideology as a Process of Meaning

Second, as we have seen, ideology recognizes the text as a signifier of history, the signified. History is the political, cultural, and social life of the community at a given point in time. So then ideological criticism may be defined as seeking to explain, critique, and theorize "those processes of meaning" that produce history and give rise to the text.[128] In other words, ideological criticism is involved in the process of meaning, not only in the community in which the text or discourse arises, but also in the context of the community in which the exegete exists. As we have already seen, ideologies are never static; they are dynamic and flexible. The consequence of this is being able to decide which ideological constructs present in or giving rise to a particular text at a given point in history are no longer ethical within our own contexts. This approach has seen itself most active in the fields of liberation, feminist, and African exegeses, which are bold enough to dispense with disruptive elements in the text as no longer construable, rather than to find ways in which to accommodate them in order to maintain the sacrosanctity of biblical texts. This allows for the quest for meaning of existence to be on one hand freed from, and yet on the other, bound to tradition. As Elisabeth Shüssler Fiorenza puts it: "If scriptural texts have served not only noble causes but also to legitimate war, to nurture anti-Judaism and misogynism, to justify the exploitation of slavery, and to promote colonial dehumanization . . . then the responsibility of the biblical scholar cannot be restricted to giving the readers of our time clear access to the original intentions of the biblical writers. It must also include the elucidation of the ethical consequences and political functions of biblical texts in their historical as well as in their contemporary socio-political contexts."[129] In other words it must take into account the ideology of the communities involved, whether directly or indirectly in the text.

Ideology as Frank Engagement

The interplay of ideology and language has already been outlined. What remains to be observed is that ideology may be present explicitly in a text (what the text says) or implicitly in a text (what a text implies or alludes to); what can be said clearly without fear of incrimination, and what by necessity must be said by way of metaphor out of that same fear; what may be said boldly[130] and what must be said apologetically. This relationship has been defined in another way by Hacking who sees the conventional

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127. Castelli *et al.*, *The Postmodern*, 3.

128. Castelli, "Ideological," 272.

129. Elisabeth Shüssler Fiorenza as cited by Castelli *et al.*, *The Postmodern,* 15.

130. Rom 15:15 "But on some points I have written to you *very boldly* by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God."

understanding of relationships between power and knowledge as such that "knowledge provides an instrument that those in power can wield for their own ends"[131] and "a new body of knowledge brings into being a new class of people or institutions that can exercise a new kind of power."[132] Furthermore "a ruling class generates an ideology that suits its own interests; and . . . a new ideology, with new values, creates a niche for a new ruling class."[133] Thus ideological criticism holds no commitment to any particular school of scholarship; it holds no commitment to any doctrinal standard.

Ideology and Power

Fourth, and going back to Elisabeth Shüssler Fiorenza's statement, if we perceive ideologies as actively involved in the social and political power plays of conflicting communities to the benefit of each respective community; if ideology is involved in how social order and power are produced and maintained in various communities; and since all ideologies only allow us to engage with texts and not entirely with facts; "ideological criticism has as its primary purpose the task of exposing and charting the structure and dynamics of these power relations as they come to expression in language, in conflicting ideologies operating in the discourse [text], and in the flesh and blood readers of the text in their concrete social locations and relationships."[134] In other words several questions relating to power relationships must be asked of the text. Some of the questions one may ask are: Who holds power in the text explicitly? Who holds power implicitly? In what ways are these power systems in conflict? In what ways are they sympathetic to each other? Who appears to be displaced in the text? By whom are they displaced? How do they restructure their ideology in order to accommodate this displacement? How practical is the emerging ideology to deal with this displacement? These are but a few of the questions that would arise in the real day to day life of a subordinated community that finds itself at a variance with a dominant culture.

Ideology and Ethics

Fifth, as we have seen that ideological readings are ethical, ideological criticism must therefore examine and respond to questions of ethics and justice in the text.[135] How does a particular text do justice? And whose system of justice is appealed to? How are the multiple systems of justice differentiated in the text? How does the text raise the critical consciousness of the just and unjust in the relationships, whether explicit or implicit, in the text? And how does the prescriptive ideological ethic remedy those

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131. Hoy, ed., *Foucault*, 27–30, citing p. 27.

132. Ibid., 27.

133. Ibid., 27.

134. Castelli, "Ideological," 274.

135. Barr, *History*, 137, "The role of ideology can be properly assessed and understood only when it is balanced by a concept of truth that is not defined by racial, ethnic, or other identity. And, within religion, the role of ideology within the Bible and within its interpretation can be properly assessed only by a theology that has truth as its primary canon and standard."

imbalances? Are the prescriptive ideological ethics just? Are they practical? And by whose standards? And if so, who is to say which ideology's ethical norms and practices should be established as the defining one? Furthermore, the ideological critic will be forced to investigate the ways in which the text challenges the implied audience to accept political responsibility for themselves and the world in which they live.

This means that ideological criticism is a decisive way of reading. It moves away from readings that claim to be all-inclusive, totalizing, universalizing, and embracing all truths for all time, recognizing that such readings are indeed shaped by their own dominant and imperial ideological construct.[136] In fact grasping the ideology of the contemporary reading is part of the effort of ideological criticism. It is a form of reading therefore that dismisses any "totalizing, universal and essentialist claims about the text . . . ideological criticism problematizes, undermines, and ultimately subverts such claims."[137] No doubt that Castelli earlier described ideological criticism as "a deliberate effort to read against the grain—of texts, of disciplinary norms, of traditions, of cultures. It is a disturbing way to read because ideological criticism demands a high level of self-consciousness and makes an explicit, unabashed appeal to justice."[138] It seeks to find in a text the ways in which ideologies are presented, re-presented, produced, and re-produced, it seeks to see how cultural systems of power proposed to shape the lives of the implied audience in their material lived relationships, ways in which suffering, poverty, injustice, oppression, subjugation, and violence imposed by one community on the other reshapes the ideology of that latter group as they seek to rationalize and legitimize that experience.

As Fredric Jameson so aptly puts it: "Ideological commitment is not first and foremost a matter of moral choice but of taking sides in a struggle between embattled groups."[139] It is from this perspective that ideological criticism shares in the perspectives of the ancient as well as the contemporary world where such factors as just outlined remain an agonizing constant. Consequently, if the ideology signified in a text sought to transform, to alter conditions for the better, or conversely to reinforce the present lived relations of the historical audience, the ideological critic is hard pressed to find ways in which to show how the claims of the text were attained, their hopes realized, and the lessons contemporary communities may gain from these texts.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS AS AN AID TO IDEOLOGICAL CRITICISM

Ambiguities of Rhetorical Criticism

The application of rhetorical tools and analysis to the study of the New Testament has greatly assisted in discovering new meanings in the texts but this has not been without

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136. Castelli, "Ideological," 277.

137. Ibid., 278.

138. Ibid., 275.

139. Ibid., 277, citing Jameson *Postmodernism*, 290.

some major concern.[140] To begin with, rhetorical criticism has been critically assessed, as the product of North American biblical exegesis, and, along with other exegetical methods, as "reified commodities for use by dominant systems of interpretation,"[141] and which has resulted in a form of "absolutism and religious superiority."[142] Against the danger of reification, Castelli notes that "the value of rhetorical criticism for biblical exegesis will ultimately depend on the interpreter's knowledge, experience, taste, and sensitivity in his or her given rhetorical situation."[143] But these pitfalls may be avoided if, not only the rhetorical situation of the exegete, but also that of the author, is taken into consideration.

When rhetorical interpretation is examined through the lenses of ideological analysis, the issues of domination and subordination, which have been raised earlier, have to be considered and the major question of any rhetorical strategy is whether it can adequately deal with the hidden transcript within the particular texts.[144] Rhetorical theory developed in the context of the court setting and public oration and within the atmosphere of dominant society and culture, and while provision was made to address difficult rhetorical problems using a style called an *insinuatio*,[145] it is still important to

140. For a survey of the major studies justifying the application of rhetorical analysis to the New Testament, see Porter "The Theoretical Justification," in Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric and the New*, 100–22 and note particularly 101 n. 4; Watson and Hauser, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 101–15 and 120–25 for the New Testament and Paul, history; 126–42 for classical rhetoric by topic; 178–201 for Paul. See also Watson, *The New Testament*, 465–72, esp. 470–72 for a bibliography on the rhetorical structure of Romans. For the influence of Hellenistic rhetoric on Paul see Reid, "A Rhetorical Analysis," in *Perspectives*, 255–72; Jewett, "Following the Argument," *Word and World*, 382–89; Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician," in Hammerton-Kelly and Scroggs, *Jews, Greeks*, 271–99; Stowers, *The Diatribe*; Stowers, "Paul's Dialogue"; Stowers, *Letter Writing* particularly 52ff. for whether ancient letter-writing depended on rhetoric. Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric," sees Romans as argumentative rhetoric and divides the letter as follows: the *exordium*, which includes the epistolary prescript and thanksgiving, and projects Paul's ethos, 1:1–15; the *transitus*, 1:16–17; the *confirmatio* or central argument, 1:18–15:13, which may be subdivided between general argumentation, 1:18–11:36 and the *probatio*, 12:1—15:13; and the *peroratio* or conclusion, 15:14—16:23. Wuellner further identifies specific arguments in the *probatio* viz.: various *topoi*, 12:1—13:14; and emphasis on unity, 14:1–23; a personal *exemplum* 15:1–6; and an appeal to unity, 15:7–13. Likewise, the *peroratio* consists of a recapitalisation of the thesis, 15:14–15; a review of themes 15:16–29; and the *pathos* or emotional appeal, 15:30—16:23. The *pathos* may be further subdivided into an intercessory prayer, 15:30–33; the recommendation of Phoebe, 16:1–2; greetings, 16:3–16; a warning, 16:17–18; a summary conclusion 16:19–20; and a *sungeneis*, which speaks of the character of those present with Paul, 16:21–23. Elliott, *The Rhetoric*, 70–86 treats 1:1–17 and 15:14–32 as the *exordium* and *peroratio* respectively. Earl, "Prologue-form," recognizes that in antiquity, the introductory thematic statements were intended to provide a brief overview or sketch of the major themes within a rhetorical composition. Some commentators differentiate argument and rhetoric, even though the two terms are used interchangeably or even combined *ala* Eriksson, Olbricht, and Übelacker, *Rhetorical Argumentation*, *passim* for both positions.

141. Castelli, "Rhetorical," citing 183, but note the conclusions on 183–84 accordingly.

142. Ibid., 184.

143. Ibid., 184.

144. Käsemann, *Commentary*, 3, notes that the very fact that Paul is writing to the Christians in the imperial capital would have been sufficient to influence Paul's style. But what would have been these influences?

145. *Rhet. ad Her*. 1.9–11: "the problem may color the treatment throughout the speech, and sometimes the speaker is best advised to lay a foundation for understanding on the part of the audience before

establish how the impact of dominant control on the subordinate affected the content of speech of the latter, given the sanctions that would have seen offensive acts of speech condemned as treasonable offences. James Scott has shown that in the public transcript of the subordinate group there is the hidden layer of communicable code that is embedded within a text, or alternatively there are certain aspects of communication known to the inner circle of the subordinate group, some of which are absent from or repressed in texts. The critical question therefore is the extent to which rhetorical theory by itself is capable of uncovering the deeper meaning, the embedded power relations and discourse within a text.

More recently, the challenge has been made as to whether Paul and his secretary would have employed rhetorical categories in his letters.[146] The immensity of Paul's intelligence and ability coupled with his extensive travel throughout the Roman Empire, particularly Greek-speaking Asia Minor, and his desire to spread his gospel even within the arena of philosophical debate of his day would have brought him into contact with the extant rhetorical conventions. Paul undoubtedly would have been influenced by these conventions, which were part of the cultural and intellectual milieu. In his visit to Athens (Acts 17:16–33, esp., 17:18 cf. 1 Thess 3:1), the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers derogatorily refer to Paul as "someone who picks up scraps of information" (σπερμολόγος) and his message of Jesus' resurrection is rejected by some, implying perhaps the ineffective rhetorical persuasiveness of Paul's speech. Paul himself admits that his speech (λόγος) and his proclamation (κήρυγμα) are not persuasive or skilful (πειθός) wisdom (σοφία), but rather a demonstration or proof (ἀπόδειξις) of the Spirit and of power (1 Cor 2:4). Paul was not interested so much in form as he was in substance. It would appear in this context that Paul was enforcing the significance of divine revelation over and above skilful rhetorical technique, but more particularly Paul's rhetoric could be defined as an act of linguistic defiance against the dominant imperial house and cult.[147]

In a recent article Carol Poster, suggests that the extent of "rhetorical [or] epistolary formulae in letters, depends on the specific training of the letter-writer, and the use of secretaries."[148] She concludes that: "The appropriate comparanda, therefore, for

bringing up the central problem." Similarly Quintilian 4.1.42 in which the insinuatio is a method for securing good will within the exordium.

146. For a recent thorough treatment of Paul's use of rhetorical categories and epistolograhic techniques see Thiselton "Argument and Rhetoric?" in *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 41–52 but particularly 41–44. In relationship to 1 Corinthians, Thistleton chooses to balance the two, but recognizes that Paul does not allow them to stifle his creativity. He also recognizes that "too close a rhetorical analysis throughout may become speculative and at times even perhaps alien to Paul's strategy," ibid., 49.

147. See Scott, *Domination*, 30–32, 36, 53. A subordinate group can engage in the negation of the ideology of the dominant (ibid., 115–18) by their use of the language and rhetorical style of the dominant. This is the conclusion reached by Horsley, "Rhetoric and Empire" in Horsley, *Paul and Politics*, 72–102, esp., 101: "Paul's own arguments display a composite rhetoric. He used the standard forms and devices of Greco-Roman rhetoric. Yet he used these forms that were ordinarily deployed in reinforcing the cohesion of the Greek cities as part of the overall Roman imperial order to try to reinforce the solidarity of a movement that stood over against the dominant imperial order."

148. Poster, "The Economy," in Eriksson, Olbricht, and Übelacker *Rhetorical Argumentation*, 112–26.

the Pauline letters, are not the works of the Graeco-Roman elite, but rather works by other subelite writers from the Greek East, perhaps Epictetus or authors of subliterary or documentary papyri."[149] Martin Hengel notes that Paul would have had a "basic knowledge of a Jewish-Greek rhetoric aimed at synagogue preaching which was essentially different from the literary style of the Greek schools."[150] W. D. Davies notes that: "As in Galatians, so in Romans, Paul, while he also exploits Hellenistic forms and literary genres, takes seriously the scriptures of his people and seeks to deal with the problem in their terms-employing rabbinical and other methods to do justice both to this new emergence, the Christian Community, and its matrix, the Jewish people."[151] On the other hand, R. Dean Anderson argues more positively for Paul's use of conventional Greco-Roman rhetorical categories and strategies in his letters.[152]

Furthermore, to be factored into the equation, is whether Paul was trained in another form of rhetoric to which insufficient attention has been paid thus far, namely a Hebrew or biblical rhetoric.[153] Roland Meynet has demonstrated that a genre identifiable as biblical rhetoric, which is separate from Greek and Roman Rhetoric, contributed to the composition of the Old and New Testaments.[154] This style of composition was found in Semitic compositions, including Ugaritic, Akkadian and Islamic texts.[155] Operating alongside and behind this biblical rhetoric is an oral rhetoric found in biblical as well as several poetic traditions of oral civilizations, the influence of which has been observed in Greek tradition, especially the Homeric poems.[156] The two major styles apparent in this rhetoric were parallelism and concentrism.[157] Meynet offers precise definition of these two styles. Parallelism is a "figure of composition where the elements in relations two by two are disposed in a parallel fashion: A B C D E /x/ A' B' C' D' E.' When two parallel units frame a unique element, parallelism . . . designate[s] the symmetry between those two units, but the whole will be considered (the superior unit) as concentric."[158] Concentrism, the major feature of biblical rhetoric, is a "figure

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For those who support the application of rhetorical theory in Paul see Carol Poster 112 notes 1 & 2 and bibliography there. For the use of secretaries in Paul see ibid.

149. Poster, "The Economy," 123–24.

150. Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, 54–62, esp. p. 61. This position is also taken by A. Du Toit, "Persuasion," esp. p. 194.

151. Davies. "Paul and the People," in Davies, *Jewish and Pauline*, 132.

152. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical*, 249–57. cf. Donfried, "False Presuppositions."

153. Rabinowitz, *Pre-Modern Jewish*, 137–44.

154. See Meynet, *Rhetorical Analysis*, 172–77; 351–59 for a summary of his argument. For the historical development of and contributors to the identification of biblical rhetoric, see ibid., 44–166. See also Meynet, "The Question at the Center," in Eriksson, Olbricht, and Übelacker, *Rhetorical Argumentation*, 200–14.

155. Meynet, *Rhetorical*, 354–59, and the bibliography there. For the presupposition of the orderly composition of the texts according to the "laws of a specific, semitic and not western, rhetoric" with their "own internal logic" see ibid., 169–72, 180, citing p. 180.

156. Ibid., 355–56. This common thread may be due to kinship, orality, or geographic proximity (ibid., 356).

157. Ibid., 355.

158. Ibid., 197, 376; citing p. 376, where /x/ is the central element.

of composition where the elements, at least five, are disposed in a concentric fashion around a central element (which can be a unit of any level of textual organisation): A B C D E /x/ E' D' C' B' A.'"[159] The critical purpose of parallelisms and concentrisms was in the fact that the focal point of the text was established in the critical question or statement that occupied the centre of these constructions; what Meynet calls "the center as a key."[160]

For Meynet, concentrism and parallelism are not to be confused with a chiasm, which he defines as a "figure of composition where four elements in relation two by two respond to one another in an alternate way: A B / B' A.' The chiasm is distinct from 'concentrism' by the absence of a central element."[161] The biblical rhetorical approach is to examine the "segmentation of the text . . . at the different levels of its organization"[162] and critically examine its composition, either "from the extremities and go towards the centre, or reversely."[163] Critical to this analysis is the relationship between the "linguistic elements" of the passage or pericope. These linguistic elements have a rhetorical function as marks of composition by the figures that they form in the text.[164] Their function may be observed in either relationships of identity or relationships of opposition at three distinct respective levels: the lexical level,[165] the morphological level,[166] and the syntactical level.[167] In addition they may operate at the level of rhythm and the level of discourse in the relationship of identity.[168] Interpretation, the "culmination of rhetorical analysis" depends on the "personality of its author" as well as the "anterior stages of analysis."[169] In addition, Meynet considers the importance of implicit or explicit references to other biblical texts especially since the "text of reference belongs indeed to the context of the text studied."[170] In other words, the points of contact be-

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159. Ibid., 197–99, 221ff.; 376; citing p. 376, where /x/ is the central element.

160. Meynet, "Question," 200, 202–4, 214; Meynet, *Biblical*, 41, 143–44.

161. Meynet, *Biblical*, 376; citing p. 376. But Thompson, *Chiasmus*, 14–18, and esp. 17 notes that chiasmus, though present "in the many literary studies of the Old Testament and other Semitic texts that are flourishing at the present time" rejects the view of Nils W. Lund that the "chiasmus in the New Testament emerged from the blend of Semitic and Greek cultures" and is "difficult to substantiate." Thompson does not differentiate between concentrism and chiasm, but his conclusion of ethnic, cultural, and social sterility of Ancient Near Eastern cultures is not supported by the biblical texts, where there is constant interplay and exchanges between different ethnic groups. Meynet however, accepts (with some modification) the theories of Lund (Thompson, *Chiasmus*, 41, 142–148). Thompson goes for the classical Hellenistic background. For references to Lund's work see Lund, *Chiasmus*.

162. Ibid., 201–308; 309, *passim,* citing p. 309.

163. Ibid., 314.

164. Ibid., 182–98, 315.

165. Ibid., 183–86, and 192–93 respectively.

166. Ibid., 187–88, and 194–95 respectively.

167. Ibid, 188–90, and 196–98 respectively.

168. Ibid., 190–91.

169. Ibid., 315. "Formal analysis does not immediately give the meaning of the text; if it precedes it, a great deal of thinking remains nevertheless to be done in order to express the content of the text and its message."

170. Ibid., 315.

tween ideological, theological and socio-political perspectives of the respective texts must be taken into consideration.

Further complications arise when, according to Aristotle and Cicero, their rhetorical methodologies applied more to legislative proposal and adversarial speech in the law-courts than to private exhortation and conversation.[171] This creates some conflict and contradiction in approach. If the assumption is made that Paul's letters were constructed according to Greco-Roman rhetorical styles, the exegete will go to the letter looking specifically for the divisions in the text, and then look for particular stylistic patterns within that division. As we will see below, the exordium was considered to have a distinctive purpose in the opening of a rhetorical text, and by and large that purpose is set within an adversarial framework. So the definition of the exordium that states that it functions "to obtain the attention of the audience and goodwill or sympathy towards the speaker" will naturally assume that the speaker stands in contempt and derision of the audience, even if that is not so. This risk of allowing the definitions of the respective category to determine the exegetical focus of a specific rhetorical unit has the effect of imposing filters on that unit and restricting the exploration of the text. This does not mean that rhetorical strategies have not been employed by the author in composing the text, or that rhetorical tools cannot be utilized in assisting in the exegesis of the text. Rather, it points to the need to exercise considerable caution in a *carte blanche* application of epistolary and rhetorical Hellenistic conventions in New Testament analysis, given that the author may have resorted to a combination of these along with other Semitic conventions to achieve the desired result. To the extent that it is objectively possible, the task of allowing the text to lie bare as received, without any preconceived structures or notions of style, even if in the process of analysis, such structures and styles make themselves apparent, must be the primary focus of the exegetical undertaking.

Some Positive Insights

Be that as it may, the detailed examination undertaken by F. D. Francis and J. P. Sampley on the thanksgiving clauses of the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline letters, has shown that they share similar structures paramount of which was the inclusion of an intercessory prayer.[172] This similarity of structure in the opening of Pauline letters has led scholars to believe that there is an element of Greco-Roman rhetorical strategy present. It is this understanding that has led scholars to determine the function and extent of the exordium as a rhetorical unit of Pauline letters. George A. Kennedy has noted that:

171. For reference to this see Aristotle, *Ars Rhet.*, 1358b, *Rhet. ad Alex.*, 1421b, 1422a, 1423a. See also Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2.64 and *De Officiis*, 1.37. See also Parks, *The Roman Rhetorical*, 213–22. The LOEB translation of Cicero (Hubbell, trans., *Cicero: De Inventione,*) on p. ix states: "An ancient Rhetoric trained men for speaking, and almost exclusively for speaking in the law court. It is a doctrine of controversy and debate . . . It is concerned with matter and style."

172. Francis and Sampley, *Pauline Parallels*. The analysis was conducted on the thanksgivings of Rom 1:8–13; 1 Cor 1:4–9; Phil 1:3–11; 1 Thess 1:2–10; Phlm 4–7; Col 1:3–14; and 2 Thess 1:3–12. For the function of intercessory prayers in Paul's letters see Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory*, 22–107 esp. 97–101. Likewise, Schubert, *Form and Function*, 24–27, 39–94.

"the *proem* or *exordium* . . . seeks to obtain the attention of the audience and goodwill or sympathy towards the speaker."[173] For Kennedy, the exordium is an integral part of the arrangement of the composition and presupposes that the attention or goodwill sought by the speaker is fomented within an atmosphere of negativity by the audience. So Kennedy advises that the audience may be prejudiced against the writer and ill-disposed to listen; or the audience may not perceive the writer to have the authority to make the claims being presented; or conversely either what the writer has to say may be complicated and difficult to follow, or what the writer has to say may be totally different from what the audience expects to hear. In such an event the audience may not easily perceive the truth value of what is being said.[174] It is not therefore difficult to see that without taking into consideration power relationships within a community, and between a dominant and subordinate community, and without giving sufficient weight to the constraints of language particularly when language represents communication from the subordinated, how rhetorical theory could lead to a predominantly negative assessment and disposition of Paul and of his addresses.

The Exordium

According to rhetorical theory, the function of the exordium varied with the concern type or *genus* of rhetoric. Kennedy, following the classical rhetorical handbooks, presents these as judicial, deliberative, and epideictic rhetoric.[175] Judicial rhetoric involved the question of truth and justice, of defense and accusation, and was therefore found within the circles of the law courts. It dealt particularly with past actions. The deliberative rhetoric involved the question of self-interest and future benefits, and sought to argue, with the hope of either persuading or dissuading, how present actions of a group or political body would affect the future. On the other hand, epideictic rhetoric was concerned with the question of changing the attitude of a person or with deepening values such as the honorable and the good, to either establish praise or blame for present things. For this reason Kennedy maintained that epideictic rhetoric was of particular importance within the Christian context which sought to establish belief and faith.[176] The division of rhetoric varied with school, within a school, and within some schools depended on *genus*.[177]

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173. Kennedy, *New Testament*, 23–24. cf. Brandt, *The Rhetoric of Argumentation*, 51–57: the exordium "will be rhetorical in the fullest sense of the word because introductions necessarily attempt to create the persuasive relationships." See also Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 71.

174. Kennedy, *New Testament*, 36.

175. According to Aristotle, *Ars Rhetorica*, the three genera of rhetoric are judicial (1.3.3); epideictic (1.3.4); and deliberative (1.6.1, 1.8.7).

176. Kennedy, *New Testament*, 20. The discussion on the type of rhetoric is not conclusive, and it could be thus as a result of Paul's deliberate mixing of rhetorical styles to suit his purpose. So Horsley, "Rhetoric and Empire" in *Paul and Politics*, 83 writes: "[Paul] has mixed and significantly adapted the basic rhetorical forms in composing his letters, therefore we should attend less to the formal types of rhetoric than to the rhetorical situation. In Paul's letters form is subsumed to function in the act of communication and persuasion."

177. Aristotle, *Ars Rhetorica*, 3.14.1 suggests four divisions for epideictic and deliberative rhetoric:

Despite disagreement on division among the rhetorical schools, the exordium or *proemium* received general agreement, not only as the first category of division but also in terms of definition.[178] According to Aristotle, the exordium was "the beginning of a speech."[179] In epideictic rhetoric the function of the exordium was derived from topics of praise and blame.[180] In judicial rhetoric, the exordium provided "a sample of the subject, in order that the hearers may know beforehand what it is about . . . so then he who puts the beginning, so to say, into the hearer's hand enables him, if he holds fast to it, to follow the story . . . So then the most essential and special function of the exordium is to make clear what is the end or purpose of the speech."[181] In addition the exordium can also remedy the weaknesses of the audience; "the object of the appeal to the hearer is to make him well disposed or to arouse his indignation, and sometimes to engage his attention or the opposite . . . to find friendship or compassion."[182]

In deliberative rhetoric however, it was assumed that hearers were familiar with the subject, and therefore, the exordium was uncommon. If it was present, it was based on the definition of judicial rhetoric. According to Cicero: "an exordium is a passage which brings the mind of the auditor into a proper condition to receive the rest of the speech. This will be accomplished if he becomes well-disposed, attentive, and receptive."[183] For Quintilian, the exordium; "is designed as an introduction to the

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the *exordium*, the statement of facts or *prothesis*, the proof or *pistis*, and the conclusion or *epilogos*, with the possibility of a fifth, narrative or *diegesis* for judicial rhetoric. Cicero, *De Inventione*, 1.9 suggests six parts: the *exordium*, the *narratio*, the *partitio*, the *confirmatio*, the *reprehensio*, and the *conclusio*; whereas in *De Partitione Oratoria*, 2.7 there are four parts: the *exordium*, the *narratio*, the *partitio*, a combined *confirmatio* and *reprehensio*, and the *peroratio*. In Quintillian, division was dependent on genera. Quintillian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 3.9.1 proposed five parts for judicial rhetoric: the *prooimion*, the *narratio*, the *partitio*, the *confirmatio*, the *reprehensio*, and the *conclusio/peroratio*; and in deliberative rhetoric the *prooimion* may be excluded, but there could be six parts: the *prooimion*, the *narratio*, the *propositio*, the *partitio*, the *confirmatio*, and the *peroration* (conclusion) Quintillian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 4–6 passim.

178. There was also a connection between the exordium and the *peroratio* or *conclusio*. For Aristotle, it was the end of a discourse, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1.4, the final of four parts, *Ars Rhetorica*, 3.13.4, and one of its four functions was to recapitulate the proofs in summary form, *Ars Rhetorica*, 3.19.1; summing up what has been stated, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 2.47. For Cicero, *De Inventione*, 1.98 it was "the conclusion of the whole speech" and one of its three functions was the *enumeratio* or summing up of what was said. For Quintillian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 6.1.1, 11, it was the "repetition and grouping of the facts." This fact allowed Chae, *Paul as Apostle*, 23 to make the connection between Romans 15:14–21, and the opening and body of the letter, even though he does not resort to rhetorical categories. Following Wuellner, he recognizes that in Rom 15:15–16 "Paul offers the recapitulation, the full statement of the thesis [of Romans]."

179. *Ars Rhetorica*, 3.14.1.

180. *Ars Rhetorica*, 3.14.2.

181. *Ars Rhetorica*, 3.14.6.

182. *Ars Rhetorica*, 3.14.11. In the exordium appeal was made to ethos, the persuasive appeal of one's authority and character, especially how this character is established by means of the speech or discourse. Aristotle claimed that one needs to appear both knowledgeable about one's subject and benevolent. (There are three modes of persuasion in rhetorical discourse *ethos* or authority and character; *logos* or inductive and deductive argument; and *pathos* emotional appeal.)

183. *De inventione,* 1.20. 1.20–21 contains instructions on how to make the audience well-disposed. For Cicero the initial portion of a speech in classical oratory (its exordium or introduction) was the place to establish one's credibility with the audience.

subject on which the orator has to speak . . . [It seeks] to prepare our audience in such a way that they will be disposed to lend a ready ear to the rest of the speech."[184] From the above, the exordium is generally accepted as the first division of a rhetorical composition, and has the important function of introducing the rest of the composition, and it is from this perspective and taking into consideration that Paul was speaking from the position of the subordinate, that this study will proceed. There is that definable rhetorical unit, viz., Rom 1:1–17, that lends itself to analysis of the rest of the body and conclusion of the letter.[185]

Synthesis

The recognition of a rhetorical strategy within a text enables an analysis of the form of what is stated, but in a situation of dominance, the voice of the subordinate is to be heard not only in what is stated explicitly, but what is implicitly affirmed. To hold up one particular view point in a particular context of contending views is to tacitly deny others, and when those being denied are the views of the dominant culture, closer attention to what is not said is also of rhetorical importance. It is from this point of view that rhetorical analysis, whether biblical or Greco-Roman, contributes by way of form what ideological analysis contributes by way of substance. The substance here can only refer to the power relationships that are evident within a particular context and give rise to and interplay with the content of the text.[186] Ideological analysis therefore places the political, social, and cultural historical context (the contingent backdrop that is the substance) at the centre of the literary text (the rhetorical form) under scrutiny. Historical contingency can be fraught with many problems, but where rhetorical structure suddenly takes on a form unlike any other of a given writer, then the contingent becomes the critical basis for the exploration of the meaning of the text. The examination of the ideological structures opens the way through rhetorical and argumentative analysis to recreate with some degree of plausibility the *Sitz-im-Leben*.

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184. *Institutio Oratoria,* 4.1.1 & 4.1.5 respectively.

185. Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 70–86, 87, who also argues for Rom 1:1–17 as the exordium.

186. "According to principles of rhetorical analysis, the persuasive work that a speech or letter does is inextricable from its particular historical circumstances. Indeed, the communication or persuasion that takes place is a function of the contingent local people party to the communication and their background, circumstances, and interests. One of the principal reasons that rhetorical criticism is so attractive is that it "can place a writing at the juncture of social history and read it as a record of some moment of exchange that may have contributed to the social formations we seek better to understand." However, "the social circumstances of the early Christian movements do not correspond to the traditional occasions for every type of speech." Horsley, *Paul and Politics*, 83. The secondary quotation is from Mack, *Rhetoric*, 17, 35, 37.