# Truth to Power:

# The Politics of Theological Free Speech in the Cappadocian Fathers and Augustine of Hippo

by

Jennifer Lynn Benedict

Graduate Program in Religion
Duke University

Date:_______________________
Approved:

___________________________
James Smith, Supervisor

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Stanley Hauerwas

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Meredith Riedel

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C. Kavin Rowe

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Graduate Program
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2018

# ABSTRACT

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# Abstract

This dissertation investigates the political grammars of truth-telling employed by two sets of early Christian authors, the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa), who wrote in Greek, and Augustine of Hippo, who wrote in Latin. My aim is to describe the rules that these thinkers take to order relations implicated in the Christian's acts of *parrhêsia* and *confessio* before other human persons and before the LORD. To this end, I employ methodology derived from ordinary language philosophy (OLP), which understands the meaning of a word to be constituted by its use within the form of life of a particular community.

In so doing, I argue against the conclusions of Michel Foucault on the politics of truth-telling in the early Christian tradition. Foucault depicts *parrhêsia* as an act of individual self-expression that belongs to an order of familiar, and fearless relations between the speaker and a God who holds no standards of judgment that the Christian does not always already meet. By contrast, he characterizes *confessio* as a form of cringing and self-doubting submission in fear that belongs to a hierarchical politics of discipline and punishment in which unnecessary distance is introduced to relations between the Christian and the LORD through the mediation of human authorities.

A far different picture emerges when we look at the grammars of *parrhêsia* and *confessio* as these terms were used by the Cappadocians and Augustine within their historical and cultural contexts – the forms of life of their linguistic communities – rather than interpreting them through the lens of our own post-Enlightenment languages and politics. The conceptual grammar of *parrhêsia* employed by both pagans and Christians required the speaker to calculate her ability to justify and demonstrate the acceptability of herself and her speech on criteria held by listeners, and to use non-verbal means of assuring that what she displayed and disclosed in speaking could meet these criteria. The grammar of *confessio*, as Augustine presents it, allows speech to serve as a medium through which the speaker can be made righteous and brought into right relationship with the LORD by dispositions of faith, humility, and ecstatic self-dispossession in the act of speaking.

*Matri meae, cuius fides in me et in fidelitatem Domini Dei numquam fefellit,*

*Et Paulo, amico caro, qui cum dona dederit veritatem gratiae didici.*

*Sed super omnes Domino, sine quo nihil.*

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# Introduction. The Builders at Babel: A Fable

> Now the whole earth had one language and few words. And as men migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” So the LORD scattered them from there over the face of all the earth, and left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth, and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:1-9 RSV, Catholic ed.)

The account of the human attempt to build a tower at Babel is surprisingly elliptical and leaves the reader with a number of questions. What exactly is the problem with the aims and intentions of the men at Shinar? What does the LORD have against the idea of a city? Is the problem that the men want not to be “scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” and that the LORD precisely wants them to be so “scattered”? Is it the desire to “make a name for” themselves to which the LORD objects? Or is the issue only the “tower with its top in the heavens,” as our traditional understanding of the story as that of the “Tower of Babel” suggests, and a humbler city – one closer to the ground without such a lofty skyline -- would not have been a problem? Or, as the text itself seems to say, is the problem really that men are somehow “too capable”? Was it really the case that “nothing [would have been] impossible for them” had the LORD not intervened?

As elliptical as the account is, there is one question the reader does not have. We are not told how or why the confusion of language works to end the building of the city and to scatter the men, nor do we need to be told this. We already understand the sorts of problems that differences in language can cause and how these would bring something like a grand construction project to a screeching halt. It is telling that the hypothetical situation Ludwig Wittgenstein uses to illustrate the minimal basic requirements and features of shared language is precisely a construction project:

> Let us imagine a language … [that] is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs, and beams. B has to pass him the stones and to do so in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they make use of a language consisting of the words “block,” “pillar,” “slab,” “beam.” A calls them out; B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call. --- Conceive of this as a complete primitive language.[1]

Reflection on Wittgenstein’s account of the primitive builders’ language could prompt us to ask a few more questions about the account of the tower of Babel. Typically, we continue to ponder the reason or reasons why the LORD wanted to thwart the city-building project and scatter the men from Shinar (the text tells us this but leaves us to fill in a lot of gaps), and we don’t wonder how the confusion of their language accomplished this thwarting and scattering (we already know this because we're able to fill in the gaps), but we neither ask nor know exactly how the confusion of language happened, how that worked, or what it looked like. Was it that each person at Shinar woke up one day speaking a different language than he had the day before? If so, did he realize he was speaking a different language, but had forgotten the old one? Or did he not recognize that there had been a change because he still made sense to himself and it seemed only that everyone else had suddenly stopped making sense to him, that they were the ones speaking new and different languages? Did each person then wander about the plain of Shinar until he found others who spoke the same language he did or were the new languages localized such that all the people in a household or neighborhood spoke the same language but once someone went a bit too far from home no one spoke his language anymore? Did anyone retain the original language or was it lost altogether?

---

[1] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*. Tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte.(Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.) §2.

Perhaps these questions seem too fanciful or too tedious to bother pondering. Explaining how language works or how it can become confused hardly seems to have much to do with the point of the Babel account in Scripture, after all. But it has quite a lot to do with the point of the present work. Therefore, as a thought experiment, let us briefly imagine that we are Wittgenstein's builders and that we are members of the populace at Shinar when the LORD comes down and confuses our language.

On the day before Shinar becomes Babel, we have between us a common language consisting of the words “block,” “pillar,” “slab,” and “beam,” and we have a whole mess of cut stones. You are the builder and I the apprentice: when you need to place a slab, you call out “slab,” and I retrieve one of the slabs from the mess of stones and bring it to you and you put it in its place; so too for the beams and pillars and blocks. It’ll be a long and sweaty process, but eventually we’ll have a fine city with a really tall tower.

But one day, out of the blue, something goes wrong. What, exactly?

Perhaps suddenly you aren’t calling out “block,” “pillar,” “slab,” and “beam” but rather “Würfel,” “Säule,” “Platte,” and “Balken.” Understandably, this is upsetting to me: yesterday everything was fine, but now I have no idea what you want or what to do; you don’t seem reasonable. You call out “Würfel” and I ignore it because you’re making nonsense sounds. You grab my arm to get my attention and say, “Würfel!” Maybe something is wrong with your mouth. I try to decipher which of our four words you might be mispronouncing and say, “Pillar?” You respond – more emphatically – “Würfel!” I take a guess and bring you a slab. You start getting frustrated and upset: yesterday everything was fine, but now I’ve suddenly become stupid or uncooperative; you can’t seem to get through to me. We’d scarcely begun our building project, but now both of us sorely need a vacation.

Still, after the initial shock wears off, this difference in language between us is one that we could figure out and handle relatively quickly and easily, because of how much we still have in common. We still share an understanding that there are four types of stone, that there are four distinct linguistic acts available in our language (your calling for a stone of each particular type), and that there are four acceptable responses to each linguistic act (my bringing a stone of the type called for.) There are now eight words between us instead of only four, but there are four pairs of words that mean exactly the same thing. “Würfel” means exactly the same thing as “block,” “Säule” means exactly the same thing as “pillar,” and so forth.

Imagine how we might solve this. You call out “Würfel!” and I bring you a pillar;  you make a face and send me back: “Würfel!” I bring a beam, and the same thing happens – until I bring you a block. Soon enough, I figure out that your saying “Würfel!” means the same thing as “Block!,” and I bring you what I would call a “block” when I hear “Würfel” and likewise for the others. Perhaps after a while I forget about “block” and “pillar” and think only in terms of “Würfel” and “Säule,” because it doesn’t make much difference; I have to give up hearing you say what I’m thinking, but we’re still getting our fine city with its really tall tower built. Or perhaps I talk back and “correct” you; you say “Würfel!” and I bring you a block and say “Block!” When you say “Säule!” I bring a pillar and say “Pillar!” Eventually, you might start saying “Block!” and “Pillar!” and give up “Würfel” and “Säule.” It doesn’t make much difference because, after all, we’re still getting our fine city with its really tall tower built. But neither of us really needs to give up anything for the other in this case; we can keep all eight words – my four for me and your four for you -- and still get on alright. This sort of confusion of language isn't a very deep one and would cause only a hiccup in the progress of our building project rather than bringing it utterly to a halt.

But suppose instead that the confusion of our language isn't like that. Instead, you continue to say "block," "pillar," "slab," and "beam" but I have suddenly and completely ceased to see any distinction between pillars, slabs, and beams. All I can see among our mess of stones are "blocks" – the chunky, cube-shaped ones – and "skinny flattish ones." If we're to resolve this problem, then I don't need simply to learn which of your words is calling for which type of stone, I need to learn to distinguish between three types of stone (pillars, slabs, and beams) in cases where at present I only see one type (something that isn't a block.) I still understand your words to be calling for me to hand you a stone, but you seem to me to be using three words to refer to one and the same type of stone – and yet in about two thirds of these cases I'm not giving the response that you're seeking or expecting, for reasons I can't understand.

There's still some hope for us in this case, though. We both still understand that you're calling for stones by their shape, and we both share "block," and trial and error would give us a vague sense of the difference: your language makes more distinctions than mine; in a sense, my language is a more limited version of yours.

There are two ways we might go on with building our city despite these differences. One would require me to learn to see the distinctions between pillars, slabs, and beams that you see, which would allow me to make the appropriate response to each of these three calls. This would take time and patience for both of us, and a fair bit of effort and submission on my part. After all, I can't see anything inadequate in my distinctions between stone-types; rather, your requirements for distinctions seem excessive and needlessly complicated. All I can see is that you seem to have become very difficult to please, that most of the time you aren't satisfied with my response to your call. Remember: I cannot discern any significant difference between slabs, beams, and pillars; it seems to me that any non-block will do the work of a non-block just as well as any other non-block.

The other way for us to go on in this situation would require you to give up a bit more in order to accommodate to my relatively more limited understanding of stone-types: narrow the field of non-block stones to only one type so that I will necessarily bring the right one in response to your call. To do this, you'd have to take the city building schematic back to the drawing board and rework it to consist entirely of, say, blocks and beams, then send all the pillars and slabs back to Shinar Stone Supply and hope they'll give us a refund. We could probably still get a city built, but it wouldn't be the city you wanted – the one with beams and slabs and pillars.

But suppose the confusion goes even deeper than this. After the LORD comes down and interferes with our language, you call “block,” “pillar,” “slab,” and “beam,” but what I see in our mess of stones are not four distinct shapes but four distinct colors: “white,” “brown,” “grey,” and “black.” Now we are really speaking different languages, despite the similarities. We both still want to build a city and we both understand language to be comprised of four linguistic acts, each of which calls for one of four types of building stones, but in this case there is no overlap or equivalent in my language for any term in yours or vice versa. It’s not that I cannot see the different shapes of the stones; it’s rather that this does not register with me as a meaningful distinction between them – a way of classing or typing them. That is because it simply would never occur to me that shape would be determinative of the sequence in which a reasonable human being asked for stones to build a city. Likewise, it’s not that you cannot see the different colors of the stones, only that it would never occur to you that any reasonable human being would ask for stones to build a city in a sequence based on their color. This difference in our language means that each of us is, in fact, envisioning a very different sort of city – either one in which the shape of the parts is the organizing principle of their arrangement or one in which the color of the parts is the basis of the composition of the whole.

Going on together with our building project is now far more difficult. It might just be possible that, given a great deal of patient and careful study of the other in the midst of our own attempts to communicate and keep the building project going by sheer trial and error, one of us could discern a pattern and diagnose the problem accurately: those responses of mine that do satisfy your various calls all actually do have some logical correlation – by shape, but not by color; my attempts to respond to your calls all actually *do* have a logical correlation – by color, but not by shape. And yet, even if we manage this, we might find ourselves wondering if it is really worth trying to build a city and share a life together with someone who would categorize things in such a strange way – or if we even *want* to do so.

# Chapter 1. Language, Politics, and *Parrhêsia*

This dissertation focuses on the grammar of *parrhêsia* in the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa) and the grammar of *confessio* in the writings of Augustine of Hippo. My aim is to show how each of these two speech-related concepts fits within and illuminate these authors' visions of the politics of the life lived by Christians both with other human persons in the saeculum and especially with the LORD. Although my intention is to contrast *parrhêsia* and *confessio,* both of these terms are foreign to speakers of modern English. Accordingly, before they can fruitfully be compared and contrasted with one another, each of the terms must be defined and elucidated by comparison and contrast with a concept already familiar to readers.

There are a number of reasons to recommend first explaining and defining *parrhêsia* with reference to concepts familiar to modern English-speaking readers and then introducing *confessio* by comparison and contrast to *parrhêsia*. The first of these is that this order of presentation reflects the historical order: the Greek *parrhêsia* was in use and conceptually well-developed centuries before the Latin *confessio* appears in the textual record. While my purpose is not to make an argument that a specific grammar of *parrhêsia* in the Cappadocians or in other Greek literature, pagan or Christian, exerted any particular influence on the formation of Augustine's grammar of *confessio*, it is demonstrably the case that, by the second century, A.D., educated Latin-speaking Romans had a basic second-hand familiarity with the Greek concept of *parrhêsia*. So Augustine might well have drawn on his knowledge of *parrhêsia* in working out his thoughts about *confessio*, but it is highly unlikely that the Cappadocians drew on any Latin conceptual grammars of *confessio* in formulating their understanding of *parrhêsia*. I will show that, regardless of influence or authorial intent, Augustine's idea of *confessio* does in fact provide potential solutions for Christian theological problems that inhere within the Cappadocians' grammar of *parrhêsia*.

The second reason for examining *parrhêsia* before *confessio* is that the seminal investigations on this subject known to many scholarly readers of early Christian texts, those performed by Michel Foucault in *Fearless Speech* and *The Courage of Truth, inter al.*, proceed in this order. Foucault presents the replacement within the Christian tradition of a Greek discourse of *parrhêsia* (that had roots in the pagan philosophical tradition) by a discourse of confession -- especially within the Latin-speaking West – as a narrative of decline. On his understanding, the discourse of confession consisted in an abandonment of the presumption of an intimate confidence and freedom of the Christian in relation to the LORD based upon the inherent acceptability of the individual that (he argues) was the essence of the discourse of *parrhêsia*. Free and fearless speech was replaced by the speaker's cringing fear of the LORD and doubt of the self, which Foucault argues provided the foundations for the modern disciplinary state. The present study takes Foucault as a primary contemporary conversation partner, arguing against his characterizations of the grammars of *parrhêsia* in both the pagan and Christian Greek traditions and *confessio* in the Western Latin Christian tradition and challenging his identifications of the differences between the two.

In order to make such arguments about the meanings and grammars of terms, it is necessary first to consider the nature of the task and determine a methodology suited to it. That is to say, before one can make an intellectually responsible argument about what a word means, one must provide an account of what it is to know and say "what a word means." This is even more the case given that I am arguing against the post-structuralist Michel Foucault, who represents a specific theoretical outlook on questions of the meanings of language and the deployment of discourse. And, in light of the fact that the words under consideration here are foreign words, what is required also is attention to problems of translation – *viz*., of determining and communicating meaning across languages.

## *1.1 Language: Translations and Definitions*

> "What's in a name? That which we call 'a rose'
> By any other name would smell as sweet."
> -- William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* II.ii.47-8

By a conservative estimate, the word *parrhêsia* and its cognates appear hundreds of times in the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers.[1] More than this, a good number of these are not “stray mentions” of the word; instead, we find multiple incidents of the word’s use within the same texts and in close textual proximity to one another. Finally, the Cappadocians – even when using the word only once in a text or passage – do so reflectively. That is, they do not merely say the word *parrhêsia* but they *talk about parrhêsia*. They claim to have it and express concerns that they might lose it; they say that they are using it in saying what they are saying; they assert that others are using it in saying whatever they are saying; they make judgments about who should and who should not use it; and so forth. Furthermore, this talk about *parrhêsia* in the writings of the Cappadocians occurs in connection with what scholars investigating this period and reading these texts take to be significant topics of study for the field of Early Christianity: the socio-political as well as theological struggle to define orthodoxy, the relations of the institutional Church to the empire and pagan culture, social and economic practices, martyrdom, asceticism, understandings of gender and the body, theological reflections on Christ and his work in the economy of salvation, theological anthropology, ethics, epistemology, eschatology. On the basis of the evidence, then, nothing is lacking that would prompt us to give serious attention to what the Cappadocians say about *parrhêsia*: it is clear that Basil and the

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[1] That is, in texts in which there is no question of attribution.

Gregories considered *parrhêsia* to be fairly important, and it is connected to things that scholars take to be fairly important.

This state of affairs, however, tells us very little about what *parrhêsia* is – what the word means or, at least, what the Cappadocians take it to mean. Nor is scholarship within Early Christianity especially illuminating on this question of the word's meaning. There is a relative paucity of direct and sustained scholarly attention to *parrhêsia* in early Christian texts in general and in the texts of the Cappadocians in particular. When *parrhêsia* is mentioned or addressed, definitions are rarely given – or multiple and competing definitional understandings are used interchangeably by the same author within a study. We might talk a bit about *parrhêsia*, since the Cappadocians do, but our talk about it makes it clear that we do not really know what the word means. How would we go about finding out and saying what this word means, or what any word means?

In proffering formal definitions, we typically turn to dictionaries and lexica, but my contention is that the entry *s.v.* παρρησία in the standard Greek lexicon used by English-speaking academics is misleading at best and incorrect at worst. The primary renderings suggested by the *Liddell-Scott Jones Greek-English Lexicon* are "outspokenness," "frankness," and "freedom of speech." The first two of these are imprecise and can easily conduce to misunderstanding; what we modern English speakers mean by "outspokenness" or "frankness" might sometimes be what ancient Greek speakers meant by "*parrhêsia*," but "freedom of speech" deeply and unavoidably misleads English-speakers about the meaning of *parrhêsia*. It was almost certainly misleading when the lexicon was published in England in 1843, but it is even more so now because the conceptual understanding of "freedom of speech" prevalent in the modern English-speaking West has grown (and seems likely to continue to grow) ever more distant to the meaning of *parrhêsia*.[2]

One of the main contributions of this dissertation to scholarship on *parrhêsia*, *confessio*, and the politics of speech in early Christian texts is its novel (or, at least, newly rigorous) methodological approach to the task of definition. This methodology is born of empirical observations made during extensive philological training and work in classical-language pedagogy and lexicography, and of reflection upon those practices – what methods work, how they work, what it means for them to "work." The result of my years of experimentation and reflection in that area are a set of convictions about the nature of language and, consequently, about what definitions are, whence they come, and by what sort of process they should be formulated. As it happens, these are almost identical to the tenets of Ordinary Language Philosophy (OLP). Section 1.1.3 contains a fuller explication of these methodological foundations as presented within OLP in a more abstract and theoretical register. Here, however, I will proceed much as OLP itself would recommend. That is, I will not identify key principles a priori by making appeals to theoretical formulations or scholarly speculations but will allow them to be seen by induction from illustrative examples from what we might call “ordinary life” (if such a thing exists for academics) in which they are operative.

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[2] As Josiah Ober warns us: "Much modern scholarship on ancient democracy has been marred by a tendency to overstress the similarities [to modern democratic principles and practice]." Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989) 8-9. A number of scholars in the fields of Classical Studies and Political Theory are now working intentionally to disavow and avoid precisely this understanding of *parrhêsia* as "freedom of speech," as will be mentioned in Chapter 2.

### 1.1.1. Definitions, Meaning, Understanding

We would say that asking what a word means amounts to asking for a definition. If required to give a definition of a word, most of us (especially if we are doing academic work) will turn to a dictionary or lexicon and offer whatever we find there. This is likely the case even if we feel confident that we already in fact know what the word means without needing to look it up. In that situation, we could reflect upon what we know (the meaning of the word) and try and say that, put that into words. Ordinarily, however, there is no compelling reason for us to expend our time and effort on that task when others – those we consider “professionals” or “experts” at the task -- have already done so and when the products of their work are easily accessible and widely regarded as correct and authoritative.

But if we are not entirely certain -- or simply haven’t a clue -- what the word in question means, then we are definitely in need of the dictionary. On our own, we could not by any expenditure of time and effort compose a definition of a word we do not know simply by *thinking* about it. What this means is that turning to the dictionary and looking up a word sometimes gives us more than a formal definition which we can quote and pass along: it gives us knowledge that we previously lacked about the meaning of the word in question. And yet, sometimes it does not do this at all. Probably all of us have had the experience of consulting a dictionary and coming away with a formal definition that we can quote and repeat but little or no more understanding of what the word means than we had before looking it up. How is this so? What, specifically, allows us to acquire an understanding of the meaning of a word from a dictionary entry and what prevents our doing so?

A reader can learn the meaning of an unknown word from a dictionary entry only if the unknown word is indexed and related to words that the reader *does* know. For example, if I encounter the English word "madoqua," which I have never seen or heard used before, recourse to *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* that sits on the bookstand beside my desk tells me that madoqua is "[a] dik-dik." I still do not know what a madoqua is, because I don't know what a dik-dik is; I would have to look up "dik-dik" and hope the entry says something other than "a madoqua." But if I come across the word "gambier" and look it up, the definition is far more useful because it is composed of words I do know: "[a]n astringent extract used in tanning, obtained from a tropical Asiatic climbing shrub, *Uncaria gambieri*, of the madder family. Also, the plant itself." This definition has hardly made me an expert on gambier: if I encountered the plant or the extract I would not be able to recognize it and say “that’s gambier,” nor would I know exactly how to form the extract or use it to tan a hide into leather. But I now have enough understanding not to be frustrated or “stuck” -- unable to make sense of a conversation or text including the word “gambier.” We would not say that I “know all about gambier” but we would say that I “know what gambier is.”

The case is rather different if I encounter the word “dikaryon.” Turning to my dictionary tells me that this is “[a] pair of unfused haploid nuclei of opposite mating type in a cell or spore which divide simultaneously when the cell divides; a dikaryotic cell, mycelium, etc.” But this definition does relatively little to increase my understanding of a “dikaryon,” despite the fact that I understand almost every word that comprises the definition.[3] So it would seem that the reader’s understanding each word that comprises a definition is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the reader’s understanding the keyword from the definition. What is missing in this case that was present in the case of “gambier” and its definition?

It is an understanding not only of the individual words comprising the definition but also of the relations between them, or an understanding of them insofar as they relate to one another. In the case of “gambier,” I not only know what “climbing” is and what a “shrub” is, but what a “climbing shrub” is. It is not simply that I know what “extract” means, but I know about extracts from plants.

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[3] Except “mycelium” and “dikaryotic,” which latter seems cognate with the lemma “dikaryon” itself.

Not only do I know what "astringent" and "tanning" and "madder" are, but I can infer that gambier is astringent because, like its relative madder, it contains high amounts of tannin, and this is why it is used in tanning animal skins into leather -- *viz*., because tannin is a compound that bonds with the proteins in the hide and renders it durable and insoluble.

In the case of "dikaryon," however, I am sorely lacking in this knowledge of relations. I know that a cell is the smallest structural unit of an organism, that cells have nuclei, and that cells divide in a process that produces more cells. I know that "haploid" should mean single, or simple in form; and yet I have no idea what it means for the nucleus of a cell to be single, especially since the definition of "dikaryon" tells me that there must be a pair of these single nuclei in a cell. Even if "fused" is a word with which I'm familiar, I cannot imagine what it means for a *nucleus* to be either fused or unfused. I can understand "opposite mating type" in a general way, but I have no idea what it means for a cell nucleus to have a mating type.

What I have gleaned from this definition, then, is insufficient to qualify as understanding. I could certainly parrot back this definition if required to do so, but the only knowledge I have gained of "dikaryon" from this dictionary entry is something like: "'dikaryon' is a term from biology that names a certain sort of cell-nucleus situation."[4] But this does not allow me to go on or engage fully with a conversation or text featuring the term, only to ignore or bracket it as "talk about things that I do not understand."

What my dictionary gives is likely as not a perfectly adequate definition of "dikaryon," even if it does not provide me with an adequate understanding of the term. I myself might be too ignorant of the basics of biological science to follow this, but there presumably are a fair number of English speakers who are familiar enough with the terms of this definition to understand what is being described. I could theoretically learn what I need to know in order to make sense of this definition. Presumably other readers of the dictionary (those who, unlike me, have taken an introductory course in biology) have learned enough to be able to make sense of this definition. The fact that an English-language definition exists indicates that there are others in my linguistic community that know about cells and nuclei who could teach me these things. But in order to understand dikaryons and cells and haploid nuclei and opposite mating types, I will need to put the dictionary aside because I require thicker definitions and more explanation than a lexical entry provides.

From consideration of these cases, we can draw a several conclusions about definitions, meaning, and understanding. First and foremost, what we call the

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[4] That is nevertheless *something.* For all I knew before looking the word up, "dikaryon" might have named an animal, a plant, a type of plastic, an article of clothing, or any number of other things.

"definition" of a word consists of other words. In order to gain an understanding of the unknown word, the reader must already understand all the words that constitute the definition, as well as the relations that obtain between them. Entailed by this is the fact that the lexicon of a language (the words that comprise it and their meanings) cannot be learned solely, initially, or primarily from a lexicon or dictionary (a list of verbal definitions of these words.) Rather, our first knowledge of words must come to us from our life outside dictionaries and must be mediated by things other than words.

And yet, it cannot be the case that the understanding we gain of words from our life outside dictionaries is of a sort radically different to the understanding we gain from the verbal definitions that dictionaries contain. If that were so, then we would not be able to gain understanding of a previously unfamiliar word from reading the definition given by a dictionary, nor would we be able to formulate a verbal definition of a word we understand without ever having seen a verbal definition of that same word; we are able to do both of these things. With respect to the latter, we can ourselves compose definitions of words we understand by saying *when* or in what case we would use the word in question. For instance, if we try and compose a definition of the word "cat," we think of all the different things that we would ordinarily call a "cat" – seeing or considering them, we would say "cat" of them. And then we would analyse and identify what all of those things have in common with one another, what is always the case when and if we say "cat," what are the necessary conditions for our saying "cat."[5]

The definition of a word that we give or that a dictionary gives, then, is nothing other than a verbal account of the criteria that must be satisfied and the conditions that must be met in order for that word to be used or applied in some real-life situation. So, for instance, if I cannot say that a thing is a tropical Asiatic climbing shrub of the madder family or else an extract of said plant, then I cannot say "that's gambier."[6] And, accordingly, the meaning of a word is simply the set of necessary criteria and conditions that govern and shape its use – that which a definition puts in explicit verbal form.

Understanding what a word *means*, then, amounts to knowing the criteria and conditions for its use, whether one knows these implicitly (which is ordinarily the case) or also explicitly (in verbal form of the sort that could be given as a definition.) What is critical here is that knowing the criteria and conditions of a word's use amounts to knowing "life outside dictionaries." Knowing the meaning of terms that comprise a word's definition insofar as they relate to one another is to be able to recognize -- or at least imagine -- a lived situation in which the criteria and conditions for the word’s use are met, in which we would use that word.

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[5] This is not an easy thing – nor might it even be possible. In composing definitions, even as a thought experiment, we very quickly come to limit cases: we think of "cat" as "having fur" – but we would still call a hairless cat a "cat;" we think of "cat" as "quadruped" – but we would still call a three-legged cat a "cat;" and so forth.

[6] It may be the case that these are not sufficient criteria for correctly saying "that's gambier" – *viz.*, there might be other tropical Asiatic climbing shrubs of the madder family that are relatives of gambier but not themselves gambier – but they are necessary ones.

To relate this back to the question of *parrhêsia*, we could say the following. Knowing what *parrhêsia* means is knowing how the word is used by speakers of the language, knowing and being able to envision lived situations in which one would or might use the word, knowing what particular conditions regulate the use of that word. Saying what *parrhêsia* means – defining *parrhêsia* -- is identifying those conditions.

### 1.1.2. – Translation vs. Definition

The task of considering proposed definitions of *parrhêsia* is complicated by the fact that I and my readers are speakers of English, and *parrhêsia* is not an English word, nor even a word used by a community of living speakers of another language.[7] In the case of lexica of “dead” languages like Ancient Greek, there is data about word-use for lexicographers to examine, but no living speakers who can contest the accuracy of the definitions that result from the process of the lexicographers’ reflection. Critical review of definitions can only come from other non-native speakers who are engaging in the very same task of examination of the very same data as the lexicographers.[8]

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[7] There is basically only one class of living persons who *do* use the word -- scholars of texts produced by people who used the word as part of their ordinary language -- and they use the word only in discussing these texts.

What is more, almost all students of dead languages have no choice but to learn these languages by way of lexica. This is in stark contrast to the paedagogical camp that propounds the teaching of living languages by way of student "immersion" in the target language without any reference to first-language lexica, phrasebooks, grammars, or similar aids.[9] In immersion, the aim is to eliminate translation to and from the student's first language so that she begins to "think in" the target language. That is, target-language utterances are not to be indexed to first-language utterances but rather to experiential and practical cues (the recognition of non-verbal criteria governing the use of words as described above) in the same fashion that first-language utterances are.

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[8] It is true that "new" texts are discovered and published (whether by finally being noticed in a library of manuscripts or unearthed in archaeological excavations), and it is also true that there are texts which existed in a single manuscript (prior to print publication or methods of digital recording) which have been 'lost' when that manuscript was destroyed in fires, bombings, and so forth. But there is a much higher degree of stability and finitude in the body of data available to Classicists than in the data used by analysts of living languages.

[9] Immersion works to teach the new language to the extent that its words and phrases and sentences can be related to what the student already knows: not the words, phrases, and sentences of his native language, but the objects and people with whom he is presently interacting and with which he must interact in order to get along and live life. Depending on the target language and whether he goes abroad to learn it, there may be some novelty in the objects he encounters or the types of interactions he must have with them in order to live life, but many of the objects and interactions will be indiscriminable from the ones he had and knew in using his first language – especially in the case of an English-speaking student who decides to learn a language spoken in another developed and technologically advanced nation. There do exist immersion programs of a sort for Ancient Greek and Latin, but there are marked differences between these and immersion programs for modern foreign languages. For one thing, a modern foreign language is indexed to the life of a particular people in a particular place in the present time; the student can go to this place and live among these people. An immersion program for an ancient language would have to artificially recreate the material context of the target language (e.g. remove everything "modern" from the environment) or, what is more common with programs that attempt to teach these languages by immersion, update the ancient language by creating words for modern things and ideas that did not exist in the time of the texts. Finally, there is no continuity of learning ancient languages by immersion, and "immersion" programs in these languages are typically geared to advanced students in the languages. This means that both teachers and students in said programs begin their learning of the languages by using lexica.

The idea is that, in traditional language instruction, an English-speaking student learning German will engage in a process that consists in the following steps: a) becoming aware of a particular set of physiological cues from his body, b) realizing that these cues indicate he needs to ask someone “Where is the restroom?” c) thinking of how to say “Where is the restroom?” in German, and then d) asking aloud “Bitte, wo ist die Toilette?” In a language immersion program, the idea is that the step of translation is eliminated such that the English-speaking student’s process looks like this: a) becoming aware of a particular set of physiological cues from his body, b) realizing that these cues indicate he needs to ask someone “Wo ist die Toilette?” and c) asking aloud “Bitte, wo ist die Toilette?” Whether inward translation or first-language reflexes are in fact eliminated by the paedagogical techniques of immersion is a separate question that I will not address here. What matters for our purposes is the distinction being made between the cognitive acts of translating from one language to another and “thinking in” only one language.

When it comes to modern communities that study ancient languages, no attempt is made to eliminate or avoid the cognitive act of translating as part of the process of learning the language. It would be difficult to imagine how translation could be done away with in this context. A student whose only language is English could not understand the meaning (criteria for use) of any ancient Greek word without recourse to English. A definition of the word in ancient Greek would be of no help because she would have no way of knowing what any of the terms of that definition mean without getting an English definition of each them. If she asks others in her community (i.e. other English-speaking teachers or more advanced students of ancient Greek) about the meaning of the word in question, they will either repeat to her a gloss from a lexicon or else tell her to go get a lexicon and look the word up for herself. The danger, then, is that students of ancient languages might find themselves with nothing to say about the meaning of words other than or in addition to the English-language "definitions" that they have learned from lexica. Because we require lexica to make a beginning in a language, we must treat them as authoritative.

There are two issues raised by this state of affairs with "dead" languages. First, if there are no living native speakers of a language and non-native speakers' knowledge of that language's lexicon is entirely dependent upon the definitions we find in prepared lexica, then it would seem we have no basis external to those lexica from which to challenge the accuracy of the definitions they offer; they would stand as the ultimate authority on the meanings of words in the target language, a limit of knowledge beyond which we cannot go. Second, what these lexica offer are not really modern-language definitions of ancient-language words but translations: possible living-language renderings of or substitutes for the dead-language word. The typical ancient-language lexicon is thus more of a translingual thesaurus (offering synonyms that might be used instead of that particular word) than a dictionary (offering definitions with criteria and conditions for use of that particular word.) The sort of knowledge that the provision of a synonym or verbal substitute gives would seem to be different to the sort of knowledge offered by a definition. The conditions under which a definition effectively give knowledge of a word's meaning were discussed above. If it is truly is the case (as I have stated) that a learner's knowledge of a dead language must initially be derived entirely from lexica and lexica consist not of definitions but of translations, then what is necessary in order for us to learn the meaning of words through translations of them?

I will treat the second of the above issues first. A gloss (the translation or rendering of a headword given in a translingual lexicon) aims to let us understand the meaning of a word in the target language by equating it with a word in our native language whose meaning we already know, and it does this without giving a definition (that is, without giving a verbal account of the criteria and conditions for the use of either word.) If we know the meaning of the native-language word used as a gloss (i.e. if we can recognize in practice the satisfaction of the criteria and conditions that govern the use of that word), then we instantly know the target-language word (i.e. we could recognize in practice the satisfaction of the criteria and conditions that govern its use) because they are the same. All we need to do is to remember the equation of the two words, that these particular two words are interchangeable: e.g. *canis* (Lat.) = dog (Eng.) and, reflexively, dog (Eng.) = *canis* (Lat.) The learner does precisely what immersion paedagogy wants to avoid: she indexes *canis* to the word in her lexicon ("dog") which is indexed to recognizable criteria and conditions; "dog" mediates the connection of *canis* to its meaning/use. Given sufficient practice with *canis*, the need for the mediating word "dog" would obsolesce. Repeated mental association between *canis* and the conditions of use for the word "dog" would make thinking "dog" unnecessary; one could read or hear *canis* and think nothing other than what one thinks when one reads or hears "dog." The two words thus become cognitively identical.[10]

It is important to note here that the habits of communities who study ancient languages do not especially encourage the unmediated equation of ancient-language words directly with meanings but rather privilege the verbal equation of an ancient word with its modern-language gloss. A great deal of the business of those who learn, know, and teach ancient Greek and Latin consists entirely in translating into a modern language. We produce translations of texts for readers who do not know the original languages; we evaluate the students' comprehension of these languages by testing their ability to translate out of them from our native language;[11] and, especially in recent years, we do not produce any scholarship or commentary in the ancient languages themselves.[12]

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[10] That is, except for the understanding that "dog" belongs to English (and should be used in English contexts) and that *canis* belongs to Latin (and should be used only in Latin contexts.) Inadvertent code-switching (i.e. accidentally using a word that belongs to one language in the midst of a conversation in another) is made possible by the equivalence of the two on all other measures.

My point is not that the reliance of fields that study Greek and Latin text on translation-based materials is a problem that must be corrected, only that our overwhelming focus on the task of translation shapes our habits of thought about what words in these languages mean and, if we are not careful, will actually work against our efforts to understand those words and produce definitions of them. This is because the task of translation always aims at *replacing* the ancient language with the modern, at allowing the modern community to get on in our use of the ancient language's texts rather than (in essence) reflecting on the ancient community's use of language in a way that would allow us to get on with them, if such a thing were a lively option. In other words, we have a great deal of incentive to avoid asking certain questions and to avoid doing certain cognitive tasks – and even to argue vehemently against the intellectual propriety of asking these questions and doing these tasks. But these are the questions and tasks that, I contend, must be asked and done if we are to come to an understanding of the word *parrhêsia* as it is used by ancient authors that is both correct and profitable.

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[11] Composition in or translation of modern language texts into ancient Greek and Latin used to be a more common component of ancient language paedagogy than it presently is.

[12] Latin was for a long time taken as a common language among philologists, and until the twenty-first century it was usual for the introductions to critical editions of ancient texts to be written in Latin (although this was increasingly seen as less-than-welcome challenge by scholars in the latter part of the twentieth century.) The past few decades have seen the demise of this practice – e.g., the Oxford Classical Texts series now routinely has editors write introductions in English.

First and foremost, we must abandon the gloss as our goal and instead privilege meaning – i.e. the ability to imagine and recognize in practice the criteria and conditions that must be satisfied and met for the use of the word *parrhêsia*. We cannot learn this by immersion because we cannot join the community of the speakers who produced the texts under investigation to learn their criteria and conditions for use of the word *parrhêsia* through practice – all we have are their texts. There are then two options of a "penultimate step" to our goal of knowing the meaning of this word: 1) we could have an equivalent gloss in English whose meaning we know (i.e. a word with the same criteria and conditions for use as *parrhêsia* whose criteria and conditions for use we can recognize in practice), or 2) we could have an English-language definition of *parrhêsia* that gives a verbal account, in terms whose meanings and relations we already know, of the criteria and conditions for the use of *parrhêsia*. The possibility raised by the fact that there are two options is that an equivalent gloss (an English word with the same set of criteria and conditions for use as *parrhêsia*) is not necessary for our learning the meaning of *parrhêsia*, provided that our arrival at the English-language definition does not require us to have one. In other words, not only is an equivalent gloss not the destination, but it may not even be required for the journey.

This is a very good thing, because a great many words in other languages simply do not have equivalent glosses in English, and the lexica themselves demonstrate this.[13] As I said previously, a lexicon is formally more like a translingual thesaurus than a dictionary: just as the entry in a thesaurus lists not merely one synonym for the headword but a whole litany of them, the entry for a headword in a foreign-language lexicon quite often contains not a single gloss but a multitude of English renderings. And, quite often, these English renderings are not synonyms interchangeable with one another in English. That is to say: if the criteria and conditions for use of one rendering are different to the criteria and conditions for use of another, that calls into question and complicates the identity and equivalence between the criteria and conditions for use of the ancient-language headword and those of the lexicon's glosses on it.

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[13] In lexicographical terms, the incommensurability between languages (structurally and semantically) is referred to as anisomorphism. Lev Ščerba argued in 1940 that, accordingly, monodirectional translingual lexica, also called $L_1$-$L_2$ or SL-TL (foreign source language to the target language of the user) lexica, ought to be replaced by explanatory dictionaries on the model of single-language lexica – with TL definitions given for SL headwords. This idea has met with widespread theoretical approval within the academic lexicographical community but (with very few exceptions) has not been adopted in practice. To be sure, Samuel Johnson's definitions all rely on principles of intralingual synonymic substitutability, and provision of synonyms is obviously still a tactic (if one of many) used in lexical definitions today. Familiarity and resistance to change is understandable, and can take time to overcome. Ščerba's article was published in 1940 ("Opyt obščej teorii leksikografii," *Izvestija Akademii Nauk SSSR* 3, 89-117) after his completion in 1936 of a Russian-French dictionary, but it was not translated into other languages for several decades. A German translation appeared in 1982, "Versuch einer allgemeinen Theorie der Lexikographie" in Werner Wolski, ed. *Aspekte der sowjetrussicschen Lexikographie: Übersetzungen, Abstrakts, bibliographische Angaben*. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1982) 17-62; and the article appeared in English translation as "Towards a general theory of lexicography," *International Journal of Lexicography* 8:4 (1995), 315-350; see especially 340-342 for his discussion of the limited usefulness of translating dictionaries. See also Arleta Adamska-Sałaciak, "Explaining Meaning in Bilingual Dictionaries" in *The Oxford Handbook of Lexicography*, ed. Philip Durkin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 144-162 on lexicographical reception. However, experiments were made in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to employ Ščerba's theory to the creation of a translingual lexicon; the prevailing opinion seems to have been that users found them too difficult and preferred dictionaries that offered equivalents. See the report of Walter Duda, "Ein 'actives' russisch-deutsches Wörterbuch für deutschsprachige Benutzer?" in *Beiträge zur Lexikographie slawischer Sprachen*, ed. Erika Günther. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1986) 9-15. The predominant critic of Ščerba's position today is Sven Tarp, see e.g., *Lexicography in the Borderland between Knowledge and Non-Knowledge*. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2008), especially 17-21.

This is a problem that confronts students of these languages very early on. For example, "drive, lead, do, act" are the four glosses given when the common verb *ago* is introduced in *Wheelock's Latin*.[14] We do not use these words interchangeably in English. The student (whose task is to produce an English translation) must figure out which of these four English renderings "makes the most sense" as a translation of *ago* in the context of a particular sentence. If that cannot be determined (e.g., if we read "*pastor oves agit*" do we want to say the shepherd "drives" his sheep or "leads" them?), then one needs more context – a paragraph or an entire text in order to decide. If the student goes on long enough in the study of the language, he will encounter a situation in which none of these four renderings of *ago* seems to fit the context: using none of them produces an English sentence that anyone would ever say.[15] So he gets a bigger lexicon that offers more possible renderings and, if that does not provide a suitable rendering, he gets an even bigger lexicon until he has all of the largest and most authoritative lexica and access to all the suggested renderings. The student whose aim is to produce a smooth and cogent English translation of a Latin text continues to practice this sort of context-based discernment among renderings offered by the lexica and, eventually, is able to cope with the 44 separate "meanings" (each comprised of a constellation of English renderings) that the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* offers *s.v. ago* – and hopefully one of those will fit the bill.

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[14] Frederic M. Wheelock, *Wheelock's Latin.* 6th ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 2005) 52.

[15] In the case of *ago*, an example might be something like "*Feriae per novem dies aguntur*." "The holiday is ____ for nine days." Here, the best rendering of *ago* is probably "celebrated."

But a philological reflex is what prompts one to leave aside the task of producing translations and instead begin to wonder about meanings and glosses. One may then notice the differences in meaning among the multitude of English words proffered as "equivalents" to this one Latin word and wonder about how Latin speakers might have understood it as having a single meaning across all its contexts. What did all the contexts in which that word was used have in common? Was there some unifying element in all of them? Or could the contexts for use be arranged into fewer categories, each of which was semantically unified?[16] In such a case, it would seem that the meaning of the Latin word was much broader than the meaning of any one of the English renderings, the criteria and conditions for its use were satisfied by more real-life situations than those of any of the English glosses. Therefore, a lexicon may gesture towards the meaning of the Latin word by accretion: none of the English renderings are semantically "big" enough to be a real equivalent for *ago*; each of them is too “specialized” in its use; all of the English renderings taken together might give one a sense of the full range of situations that would satisfy the criteria and conditions for use of the Latin word.

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[16] Certainly, Latin might contain homonyms the same as English does and think of radically different uses of the same sequence of sounds as being "different words" and not semantically related (e.g. the bark of a dog vs. the bark of a tree), but it is difficult to imagine a language containing nearly as many of these as the lexica seem to suggest, and the fact that so many of the English renderings given for multiple "meanings" of an ancient-language headword do seem to have some degree of semantic commonality with one another argues against this. For *ago*, I would argue that the English definition is "to go or make to go on, on about, on with, or forward, in space or in time." This is not an equivalent gloss because, in English, much of the time when the conditions of our "going on or making to go on, on about, on with or forward, in space or in time" are met, we use another more specialized word. When we make a play go on, we say we "stage a play" or "produce a play." When we go on with our life, we say we are "spending our life." When we go on about a subject, we say we are "treating" that subject or "discussing" it. When we make festivities or a holiday go on, we say we are "holding festivities" or "celebrating a holiday." When we make an animal or flock of animals or a vehicle go forward, we say we are "driving" it. When something makes liquid or gas go forward, we say it "emits" or "exudes" or "flows with" that substance. In all these cases, Latin uses *ago*.

In other cases, one might notice the inverse: the meaning of the word in its ancient-language contexts seems “narrower” or more specialized than that of any of the English glosses. For example, the Liddell-Scott-Jones *Greek-English Lexicon* gives “tunny” or “tunny-fish” as the English equivalent for 13 distinct Greek words. It is possible that speakers of ancient Greek would have used all of these interchangeably of exactly the same fish, but it seems more likely that the ancient Greeks made distinctions between situations in which they would say *thunnus* and those in which they would say *chelidonias* and those in which they would say *prêmnas*, and so forth. So the lexicon might roughly sketch or encompass the meaning of the ancient-language within its glosses, conveying the basic criteria for the word’s use but not subtler or finer ones that would enable one to know when to use *that* particular word as opposed to another.

These are all observations one can make by considering lexical entries themselves. As one goes on reading a greater number and variety of ancient-language texts, becoming more familiar with the language and its use – especially if one is using lexical glosses as a shortcut to meaning rather than for the telos of translation – one begins to notice ancient language words for which *none* of the English glosses suggested by the lexicon *ever* seems able to substitute in *any* context without an unwanted gain or loss in meaning. It is semantic gain or "baggage" when, e.g., the English gloss word is always said under condition x, and using that word conveys to English readers that condition x is being met, but condition x is completely irrelevant to use of the Greek word or is never being met when the Greek word is being used or is a prohibitive condition for the use of the Greek word (i.e. a condition for use of the Greek word is that x *not* be the case or that not-x be the case.) It is "loss" when, e.g., there is no English gloss word that is always said under condition x, the use of which in translation would convey to an English reader that condition x is being met, but the Greek word that needs translating is always and only said when condition x is being met – condition x is an essential part of what the Greek word means.

When a Greek word has no equivalent English gloss, then what one must do in order to know its meaning or to tell others about it is to give an English definition of the word, not a gloss or rendering. As we noted, what a definition needs to communicate is the way the word is used; it must lay out the rules (conditions and criteria) for its use and perhaps present a picture of situations in which the word might be used. The more fully and accurately we know the rules, the more vivid our pictures; the more situations we can imagine in which the word might be used, the better we know the word's meaning.

And this is precisely where we find ourselves in the case of the word *parrhêsia*: it has no English equivalent. To know what it means we need a definition – a thick description of its use and grammar. More than this, we have fallen into a habit of thinking that we do know what it means – that the English words we give as if they were equivalents are functionally identical to *parrhêsia*. What is needed then, in addition to a grammar and thick description, is also a clearing away of excess semantic "baggage" and a recovery of what has been lost.

### 1.1.3. Wittgenstein, Grammar, and Forms of Life

As I have said, what is laid out above is my working understanding of language and translation based on twenty years' worth of observations in working in philology and classical language paedagogy and reflection upon these. But this understanding has deep sympathies with a Wittgensteinian view of language and represents the extension and application of the methods of ordinary language philosophy (OLP) to problems particular to work with foreign-language (and especially "dead-language") texts. The *Philosophical Investigations* is the seminal text for OLP, published in 1953, two years after Ludwig Wittgenstein's death. In it, Wittgenstein challenges a "metaphysical" view of language as a representative system wherein words simply name objects.[17] Rather, he argues, in the vast majority of cases, a word's "meaning" is its use within a language.[18]

The medium of language use on the micro-level, in Wittgensteinian terminology, is the language-game. These are perhaps not what we might call

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[17] Wittgenstein, *PI* §1.
[18] *Ibid.*, §43.

"games" but can be such things as "making a guess" or "describing an event."[19] As he says: "the word 'language-*game*' is used here to emphasize the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life."[20] More than this, language-games are constituted by a particular set of rules for the use of words within them; the ability to speak a language amounts to the ability to follow the rules and "go on" in the language-games that comprise it.[21] Because the meaning of language is its use, languages and meaning are indexed to a form of life, which is always one shared by a community. There can therefore be no "private language" because language can only function when there is the possibility of adjudication for whether words are being used correctly or not, which requires a common understanding of rules. Lastly, Wittgenstein uses the term "grammar" to denote the logic of a language: the set of rules not only for morphology and syntax but for use of language, hence, for the meaning of words.

I follow Stanley Cavell, who is a philosopher of language working in the Wittgensteinian tradition, in adopting a particular view of "criteria." These are the essentially the elements that comprise the rules for use of a language: they are the conditions that must be met for a word to be used sensibly and correctly. Criteria are not only the instruments of communal judgment about language use but are also negotiable objects of judgment by speakers belonging to a linguistic community. That is to say, judgments are made about language use according to shared criteria, but arguments can also be had about which criteria are in fact shared or should be shared by the community.

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[19] Wittgenstein *PI.*, § 23.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] See *Ibid* §§185-243

My methodology in attending to the question of the definition or grammar – not translation or rendering – of *parrhêsia* and *confessio* within this dissertation is drawn from OLP, although there is a difficulty here. What OLP largely imagines are intralinguistic situations: members of a community who share a single language reflecting on, discussing, and even arguing about ordinary use of that language -- "what we say" or "what we would say." I would argue that the methods of OLP can be applied in translingual situations – reflecting upon, discussing, and arguing about the ordinary use of words one language (e.g., Ancient Greek), but doing so as native speakers of a different language (e.g., English.)

What is required for this is truly learning the target language – and learning it *as if one were* intending to be a member of that linguistic community. This requires increasingly taking the target language and its users rather than our language and its users as our grammatical and lexical authorities. It requires us to refrain from making the sorts of judgments we ordinarily make as adult members of our native-language communities about what we *should* say, and instead accepting the language on *its* terms, the terms of the grammar by which it says what it *does* say. It requires learning the rules that govern the use of words within that language until that use becomes "ordinary" and one is able to "go on" in that language oneself. And it also requires learning the politics of the language and of the form of life to which that language is indexed. What it means to do that last is the topic of the next section.

## *1.2 Politics*

The word "politics" comes from the Greek *ta politika* – *viz*., things having to do with the *polis* (city-state.) It was a category term that included frameworks, theories, modes, and methods of governance. Although nation-states have replaced city-states as the modern era's normative political entities, we have also grown accustomed to using "politics" and cognate terms within other contexts and with other referents. Thus, it is quite common for us to speak of the "politics" of a corporation, a hospital, a university, or some other sort of workplace. We speak of "politics" even with reference to looser associations or groups of persons that lack codified organization, official roles, and explicit rules. For example, academic sociologists and psychologists, counseling professionals, and even concerned teachers and bewildered parents might all speak of the "politics" of the set of teenaged girls at a particular high school.

While we can speak of politics in a variety of different contexts and with a surprising degree of mutual understanding, difficulties arise when we attempt to define the term either explicitly or implicitly (e.g., by giving an account of how something is "political" or of what we think makes a particular politics a "politics.")

This is because we – especially we academics – are familiar with and espouse a wide variety of political theories, which have a Procrustean effect upon our definitions and accounts. I use the word "theory" here not only to apply to the conceptual hypotheses of academics but also in a broader and more etymological sense to refer to conceptual "pictures" of various sorts. Defining "politics" on the basis of how we actually use the word would give us a "lowest common denominator" definition that, because its criteria are minimalistic, would be relatively open and admit of many referents. Instead, when we set about the task of speaking reflectively or analytically about how things are political, we often use the narrower specificity of our theories about politics (how things are or how things should be) as a pattern or template according to which we construct our accounts.

On its face, speaking reflectively or analytically about "politics" while bracketing all political theories may seem an impossible task. Some might even be convinced that we need to have and use theories in order to think and speak reflectively and analytically – that "thinking and speaking reflectively and analytically" just is "thinking with theories." Or, perhaps, we may be so thoroughly habituated to our theories that we hardly recognize them as theories, nor can we imagine thinking without them. What I am calling "theories," then, would seem simply to be part and parcel of our language. Speaking while mentally "bracketing" these would feel rather like learning to speak a foreign tongue, or perhaps like becoming a child again and having to relearn one's own language.

I would suggest that this last has long been the case when it comes to "politics." Even my own expansion on the definition of the Greek *ta politika* given at the beginning of this section partook of a theory in its use of the term "governance." We hardly recognize "politics-as-governance" as a theory, in part because the word "governance" entered English (from Greek, via Latin) as already a political term. In ancient Greek, a *kubernêtês* (helmsman, one who steered a ship) had little or nothing to do with *ta politika* (things having to do with the city-state) – at least, not until after Plato.

In Book VI of the *Republic* (487e-488d), the character of Socrates gives an extended simile comparing the *polis* to a ship. Those on board include the ship's owner (presumably the general citizenry), who is bigger and stronger than all the others, but hard of hearing, short-sighted, and completely useless when it comes to navigation and seafaring. The sailors (demagogues) also lack instruction in navigation, but all want to be the *kubernêtês* and steer the ship. Each of the sailors attempts to persuade, dupe, or drug the ship's owner so that he can occupy the position at the helm, executing or throwing overboard any other sailors that have managed to win the shipowner's favour and gain the coveted captaincy ahead of him. Finally, there are the few (the philosophers) who have the requisite skills at navigation -- looking to the stars, seasons, weather, winds, and so forth -- for being a good *kubernêtês*, but the ignorant others all mock them as useless babblers and stargazers.

Because of the enormous influence of Plato, the "ship of state" metaphor – or, put another way, the theory of the state-as-ship – has had a long run in Western culture. The Latin word *gubernator* (cognate with Greek *kubernêtês*) literally referred to the helmsmen of ships but was being used by the time of Cicero in the late Roman Republic also to describe the administrators of cities and provinces. However, *gubernator* was not an official term for these "political" positions or their occupants (that term was *rector*) the way that its English derivative "governor" is.

The "ship of state" metaphor might well be winsome in various contexts, but the state-as-ship theory hardly suffices to yield a general definition of "politics." In light of our actual use of the word, the theory is over-determined and too narrow. We are certainly in the habit of speaking of certain entities (nation-states, cities, organizations, corporations, etc.) as vehicles that are moved along different vectors by different decisions and actions. So it is that we talk of "taking the company in a different direction" or "guiding the country into the 21st century" or "navigating the storms of the global market" and the like. But we need not speak in such terms; we might do otherwise. The proof of this is that people – particularly those who don't have the long legacy of "ship-of-state" talk and "state-as-ship" theorizing that Westerners have – *do* speak otherwise. We might also think of contexts in which we would readily speak of "politics" (say, within a family) but in which we would not ordinarily or reflexively use nautical metaphors.

And yet, if we were captivated by the theory of state-as-ship and politics-as-governance and we then set about trying to give a more analytical account of the "politics" of a particular family, we would likely use precisely such extraordinary and awkward concepts and metaphors. The children might seem to be staging a mutiny when they ought instead to be swabbing the decks, and the parents might be described as arguing with each other over which of them is the "captain" and which is the "first mate." In our analysis, we might well ask and suggest answers to questions about where this family is headed, who is "steering" the family and how well, what "storms" they might need to weather on their way, how strong their "hull" is, and how good a job each member of the crew does at "pulling together" and "battening down the hatches" in rough times. But one could easily imagine how a completely different account of the very same family would be produced by someone captivated by a different political theory – perhaps "politics-as-gardening."

These examples might seem rather stark, but other political-theoretical lenses are more familiar to us and, accordingly, more difficult for us to discern and recognize. We are, for instance, rather in the habit of thinking of politics as "optics," or as a "game," or – specifically and more brutally – as a zero-sum game ordered by the will to power. These theoretical "pictures" may well be cognitively necessary metaphors; that is, perhaps without a metaphor or analogy by which to organize concepts (even at the risk of cognitive over-simplification, oversight, or errors that arise through their use) we would never be able to gain sufficient noetic traction with abstract complexities to have a hope of understanding them.[22] But, even if we are not to do away with these "metaphors we live by" altogether, I would suggest that recognizing that they are in play and tracing out their particular grammars would serve to free us somewhat from their grip.[23] At that point, we might notice ways in which our reflexive explanatory and hermeneutic metaphors do not quite fit – accommodate or fully account for – what we see in practice, and decide either to look at other metaphors and "try them on for size" or to move into an abstract-conceptual register of explication.

The more minimalistic and abstract (rather than analogical) definition of "politics" that I propose – one that accommodates all the various ways that we actually and ordinarily use the term – is as follows: politics is an order of relations.

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[22] The work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson is of particular relevance here. In brief, their argument is that the conditions of human embodiment (especially physical extension in time and space) inevitably lead us to think of non-material abstractions in terms of "primary" or "complex" metaphors – e.g., "life is a journey." This transference of understanding from our practical experience of some things to our cognitive inquiry into others, they argue, not to be viewed as a "problem" but simply as part and parcel of what it is to be human. See especially their *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) and *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999.)

[23] Noticing where and when such "pictures" or metaphorical templates are in use is of particular relevance to the study of texts by Early Christian writers in that they quite often use material analogies to describe theological principles. My examination of Augustine and the Cappadocians' deployment of agonistic metaphors as well as Nyssen's use of the ransom model of atonement in Chapter 4 of this dissertation consists fundamentally in naming the metaphors operative in those accounts, explication of the metaphorical grammars (translation into an abstract-conceptual register, identification of points of internal incoherence in the accounts that point to the inadequacy of the metaphor (where the author cannot seem to make the metaphor "fit" and seems to contradict himself), and then pointing out the rules and relations that prevent analogical adequacy.

To parse this, it is necessary to define the rather difficult term “relation.” I take a relation essentially to be a simultaneous distinction and connection made between two things on the basis or through the medium of at least one “third thing.”

For example, in saying that “New York is north of Miami” we are naming a relation. New York is distinguished from Miami – not only by the difference in names but by the fact that the former is different to the latter by being “north” of it. And yet, this relation also indicates a connection or sharing between the two: they are similar insofar as they can be meaningfully compared on the measure of northerliness. We could not, for instance, say that “New York is north of the number two.” New York and Miami are both located in space-time; both are located upon the earth. We could then speak of this relation as participating within a larger politics (an order of such relations) of geographical location. The order of these relations is determined by which particular relations serve as “rules” that condition others. So, in “geographical location,” these might be spatial measures of distance, the designation of a point upon the earth as the “North Pole,” and then the distance of any other point upon the earth from that pole.

To give another example: we name a relation of kinship in saying “Mary is John’s mother.” This distinguishes Mary from John, but also connects them by way of something else. This might be DNA, an act of sexual intercourse by which John was conceived, the knitting together of John in Mary’s womb (even if the embryo which became John was implanted there and has no DNA from Mary), an act of adoption, or a set of nurturing actions that can be named as “mothering,” or so forth. Significant here is that the “third things” mediating relations can – and very often are – actions rather than objects.

To describe a politics, then, means identifying the sorts of relations that are recognized and admitted of within that ordering, what things are recognized as entities that participate in relations, what sorts of actions are taken to establish relations, and the like. One would also say how those relations are ordered, which sorts of relations to what entities act as rules or conditions for which others. We can speak of politics both descriptively and prescriptively – saying either what order of relations we think does obtain or what order we think should obtain or be adopted.

Aside from the more general merit it has through being capacious enough to accommodate and describe how we in fact use the word, this definition is especially useful for the present investigation. That is because it allows us to consider politics – which is essentially the same as Wittgenstein’s “forms of life” – dynamically and on the same terms as we do language. Language is used and created or changed through use and negotiations about use. So, too, a politics is enacted or practiced, but can also be altered and changed through actions and through negotiations (in language) about relations and their orderings: how we should understand them, embody them, and live them out.

We can therefore look at what words mean and how words are used – the conditions, criteria, and rules for the use of that particular word as opposed to some other – and see something of a speaker's form of life, the order of relations (politics) that he thinks does or should obtain among himself, his listeners, and whatever else he is talking about. There is accordingly an inevitable overlap between grammar and politics: how we use words is also a function of how we take relations to be ordered. Wittgenstein suggested (in his typically elusive fashion) that grammar might be understood as theology. Whether we agree with this or not, it is certainly true when speech and language are being used of or with the LORD. And this is the case with Early Christian authors generally, because it is about the LORD and human relations to the LORD that they are most frequently speaking and writing. But grammar is even more intensely theological in the case of the objects of the present study, given that *parrhêsia* and *confessio* are words used about speech and ways of speaking, and because Augustine and the Cappadocian Fathers are particularly interested in speech to and about the LORD.

This dissertation, then, addresses two topics of interest to scholars in Early Christianity: politics and theology. And these are foci that, to a large extent, have pulled members of the field in different methodological directions and have created disjunctions in our conversations with one another. What I am proposing here is a methodology and a focus on language that could potentially bridge this divide.

## *1.3.* **Parrhêsia *and Early Christianity:* Status Quaestionum**

My contention, noted at the beginning of this chapter, is that the meaning of *parrhêsia* as the term was used by ancient Greek authors has not been understood accurately by scholars working in the field of Early Christianity. More than this, I would argue that the field has no shared understanding (accurate or not) of the word's meaning, nor do scholars tend to offer a definition of the term when they encounter or interpret it within early Christians' writings. The result of this is that we miss seeing and misinterpret late ancient authors' understandings of not only *parrhêsia* but also the broader politics that they envision and in which they take *parrhêsia* to participate. What this dissertation does is to show what political and theological understandings of these authors come to light when we examine their statements about *parrhêsia* (and truth-telling speech more broadly) while having a more accurate understanding of the grammar of that word as it was ordinarily used and as that use developed within the history of their broader linguistic community.

Part of the challenge here is that there is no real conversation or debate about *parrhêsia* in this field. Rather, those scholars who do talk about *parrhêsia* (or, more commonly, who draw conclusions based on implicit understandings of what it means) all end up "talking past" one another. I believe that this is due in large part to methodological divisions within the discipline. In this section, then, I will discuss both scholarly work on *parrhêsia* (especially as it is used by the Cappadocians) produced by those working in the field of Early Christianity and the state of the field itself. A view of both of these will clarify the contribution that the methodology I propose and use – as well as the results of my investigation using those methods – might make to the discipline more broadly.

### 1.3.1. Patristic Theology, Early Christianity, and Philology

Elizabeth Clark's magisterial study *History, Theory, Text* offers a description of the genealogy of the field of Early Christianity or Early Christian Studies, as well as a prescription for how the field might take (with greater intentionality and energy) the "linguistic turn," as other historical disciplines have already done. In the beginning, there was no such thing as "Early Christian Studies" -- only Patristics or Patrology. The desire to study the texts produced by early Christian writers grew out of the scholars' confessional and ecclesial commitments (both Catholic and Protestant.) Accordingly, the texts of these late ancient writers were often viewed as "authoritative" in some way.[24] At the same time, scholars' contemporary dogmatic understandings exerted a teleological influence on the questions they asked of texts and (often) a potentially eisegetical influence on their readings.[25] They focused largely on major controversies and were interested in the development of doctrines presently held by their particular traditions and denominations. Particularly within the English-speaking academy, the question asked of texts was very often: "How did we get here from there?"

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[24] That is, they are considered "Fathers" of the Church, hence the moniker "Patristics."

[25] See Elizabeth Clark, "From Patristics to Early Christian Studies" 8-41 in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, edd. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) and *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University

As Clark notes, the narrowness of this focus leaves quite a lot in the texts unexamined. Because of a host of social factors between the end of the Second World War and the 1970s and 1980s, those interested in history -- rather than in the history of the Church, specifically -- began to take an interest in the writings of late ancient authors, bringing with them a very different set of questions and methods.[26] Putatively, these represented an objective and detached perspective on the past and a more rigorous and disinterested examination of the evidence. Of course, as Clark rightly notes, the discipline of history itself was during this time beginning to question the possibility and propriety of this positivist quest to discover "how it really was" back then ("wie es eigentlich gewesen" in the famous words of Leopold von Ranke.)[27] This challenge to epistemological positivism coöperated and coincided with the rise of what we might broadly term "critical theory." Of particular note here are post-structural theories that began to examine how socio-political aims govern and condition the production of discourses and

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Press, 2004.) 158-163. For a disciplinary genealogy of the practice of Patristics in Protestant America specifically, see Clark's *Founding the Fathers: Early Church History and Protestant Professors in Ninetheenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.)

[26] Clark notes also that the decline of the field as well as the nature of the academy itself left room for younger scholars to pursue more self-directed studies based in their own interests – which were often not those of the previous generation of patrologists; see "From Patristics to Early Christian Studies" 15.

[27] Clark, *History, Theory, Text*, 9-28.

texts, and, accordingly, to turn more attention to the nature of texts themselves – to consider their "textiness" or "textuality."

Because of this influence – and largely through the urging of Elizabeth Clark herself -- the questions that academics working in the field of Early Christianity began asking of texts were not those of Patristics or Church History ("how did we get *here* from there?") nor those of Rankean historiography ("how were things *then*?") but rather those of critical theory: "what is this text *doing* or trying to *do*?" That is, we ask what sorts of political orders (and especially what political advantages for what groups) authors might be reflecting, sustaining, or trying to enact through their texts, how texts function as discourses that regulate people and effect socio-political outcomes.[28] We might also ask how the very textiness of the text might subversively "betray" these purposes, elude the author's control, and "let something slip."[29]

Clark assures scholars with confessional commitments that they, too, can take the "linguistic turn" and employ the methods of critical theory in focusing upon theological themes. But, while theologically-minded academics are hardly epistemologically retrograde positivists utterly blind to such things as social context, there nevertheless remains a significant resistance among the majority of these to a full embrace of Clark's recommended program. Certainly, we see fewer of the old "development of doctrine" handbooks, but there are still palpable differences in focus and method between those in the field who still (if perhaps only in whispers) lament the loss of Patristics and those who welcome the "linguistic turn" with open arms and great rejoicing.[30] The reflex of those who might, in bygone days, have been patrologists seems to be to produce intellectual biographies, studies of theological controversies (still), or explications of particular authors' theological positions in various debates lively within their (rather than our own) ecclesial contexts.[31] Rather than considerations of grand-scale development of doctrine, we see attempts to trace development within the thought of a particular late ancient author or from one author or tradition to another.

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[28] Examples of such studies abound. One thinks especially here of Averil Cameron's *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), which deploys Foucauldian ways of viewing rhetoric and power to narrate how Christianity developed into a "totalizing discourse" with the right and capacity to interpret and explain everything else.

[29] The fundamentally Althusserian assumptions of this investigative stance – *viz*., that ideologically constructed subjects are never fully unified or sealed but are rather fragmented and "leaky" – have prompted Clark, *inter al*,. to search for ways in which Early Christian presentations of women fall into self-contradiction and expose patriarchal ideologies; see Clark, *History*, *Theory*, *Text* 174-181

What often seems lacking amidst all of these approaches and questions is some point of sharing and contact that could provide common ground and a greater degree of mutual intelligibility. As Elizabeth Clark claims, the unity of the field of Early Christianity consists in its common object of study: regardless of our various interests, methods, and commitments, we all read the same set of texts.[32] But I would argue that we do not necessarily all read those same texts – we read translations of them.

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[30] There was debate in the early 1990s over whether the name of the North American Patristic Society should be changed, sparked by the mournful presidential address given in 1990 by Charles Kannengiesser entitled "Bye, Bye Patristics."

[31] As examples, we might think of John A. McGuckin *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001) and *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Christopher A. Beeley *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God: In Your Light We Shall See Light*. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.)

This is not, of course, to say that scholars in this field cannot or never do read Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and so forth. It is rather that we do not really expect each other to make a regular habit of reading primarily in the original languages or to attain to anything approaching "mastery" of them.[33] And, as one might expect, mastery depends upon the extensive practice provided by "a regular habit." A great number of books and articles in this field – including many of those produced by renowned and respected luminaries -- have all the marks of being written as if the authors *consulted* the original-language texts but *read* translations of those texts.[34] The state of publications shows that there is little demand for original language editions of our texts; there are no series of paperback "scholastic" editions with commentaries or notes, and critical editions tend to be small print-run productions and therefore expensive, often available as non-circulating library copies. By contrast, translations of texts are far more readily (and more cheaply) available.[35] Part of the problem with this is that published translations can be wrong: they are scholarly productions every bit as much as are monographs, conference papers, and journal articles. The difference is that we argue the merits of the arguments of books, talks, and articles with one another; we feel ourselves in a position to make judgments and we make them. So presses have less incentive to ensure rigorous review for translations when the field that reads these texts has no common practice of challenging, correcting, or arguing about translations of them.[36] The oddity of this state of affairs becomes clearer if we compare Early Christianity to other fields like Classical Literature or Biblical Studies, disciplines that are also unified by having a shared set of "dead-language" texts as their primary object of study.

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[32] Clark, *History, Theory, Text* 159.

[33] One cannot properly speak of "fluency" here, given that these are not living languages. But there is a significant difference between being merely "competent" to make sense of a language (slowly, with difficulty, and not without the aid of lexica and similar tools) and being able to do so with ease and without such aids.

[34] Not only can one recognize *that* a translation is being read and relied upon in these cases but it is often possible to see exactly *which* translation is being read and relied upon. The fact that in Early Christianity there are, relative to the situation in Classics, a far smaller number of different translations per text in circulation makes it even easier to see the vestiges of a particular translation (the translator's particular style, quirks of diction, errors and oddities) in an author's interpretation of the text or his slightly-modified quotation of someone else's translation as if it were his own rendering of a passage.

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[35] For example, Catholic University of America's Fathers of the Church series, Paulist Press's Ancient Christian Writers series, and St. Vladimir's Popular Patristics series are all relatively inexpensive and easy to obtain, as are the (now quite outmoded) Ante-Nicene Fathers and Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers series edited by Schaff and White.

[36] As an example, the Popular Patristics Series translation of Athanasius's *De Incarnatione* – Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*. Tr. A Religious of C.S.M.V. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996; originally London: Centenary Press, 1944) -- contains a number of unmistakable errors in translation of passages in which both diction and syntax are clear and straightforward and where the errors make a significant theological difference:

> But since the will of man could turn either way, God ***secured this grace that He had given by making it conditional from the first upon two things – namely, a law and a place*** (προλαβὼν ἠσφαλίσατο νόμῳ καὶ τόπῳ τὴν δοθεῖσαν αὐτοῖς χάριν.) He set them in His own paradise and ***laid upon them a single prohibition*** (ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς νόμον). ***If they guarded the grace and retained the loveliness of their original innocence*** (εἰ μὲν φυλάξαιεν τὴν χάριν καὶ μένοιεν καλοὶ), then the life of paradise should be theirs, without sorrow, pain or care, and, ***after it*** (πρός τῷ καὶ)**,** the assurance of immortality in heaven. But if they went astray and became vile, throwing away their birthright of beauty, then ***they would come under the natural law of death*** (γινώσκοιεν ἑαυτοὺς τὴν ἐν θανάτῳ κατὰ φύσιν φθορὰν ὑπομένειν) and live no longer in paradise, but dying outside of it, continue in death and in corruption.

In place of the erroneous phrases in bold and italics above, one should read the following: "took a preventative measure and secured [or fastened] the grace He had given to them with [or to] a law and a place (προλαβὼν ἠσφαλίσατο νόμῳ καὶ τόπῳ τὴν δοθεῖσαν αὐτοῖς χάριν); gave them a law (ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς νόμον); if they safeguarded the grace and remained noble/beautiful (εἰ μὲν φυλάξαιεν τὴν χάριν καὶ μένοιεν καλοὶ); in addition to it (πρός τῷ καὶ); then they would know/recognize that they were enduring/abiding in the corruption that accorded with their nature in death (γινώσκοιεν ἑαυτοὺς τὴν ἐν θανάτῳ κατὰ φύσιν φθορὰν ὑπομένειν.) Thankfully, a new and more correct translation of the *De Incarnatione* was done by John Behr and published by the series in 2011.

None of this is intended to malign the field or those working within it. As Elizabeth Clark notes, the field of Early Christianity as such had rather an odd genesis, with the result that a fair bit was overlooked or missed out in what she calls the "rapid passage" from Patristics to Early Christianity. That is to say, what one might expect to see present in our disciplinary practice – sets of skills and an up-to-date awareness of theories and approaches that are in currency within disciplines similar to ours – are lacking in this field.[37] My sense is that Clark is right in requesting that scholars in other fields be understanding of and patient with us while we are at an "awkward age" (disciplinarily speaking), and so I would hardly suggest that scholars within the field itself adopt an air of impatience and indulge in fault-finding.

Instead, my aim is to point out something that has been largely dismissed or overlooked in reflections of those within the field of Early Christianity on our own disciplinary identity and practice, and that represents a potentially great opportunity for growth – *viz.*, the need for linguistic rigor and philological attention in our study of these texts. While Clark associates philology with the old patrological model of confessional and theological investigation – something from which the "race for social science provided an escape" – it is hardly the case that knowledge of original languages forecloses the use of critical-theoretical approaches to texts.[38] That this is the case can be seen clearly from a comparison with the field of Classical Studies, where Foucauldian, post-colonial, and other critical approaches have been lively and sitting quite easily with high-level philological standards since at least the 1990s. Apart from this, there is also the obvious fact that post-structuralists and other theorists who work with texts in their own native languages *actually know those languages*. If anything, a deeper and broader knowledge of these texts' original languages could only aid those interested in social realities or socio-political discourses insofar as languages are indexed to politics and webs of relations; the more one knows of one, the more one sees of the other.[39]

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[37] Clark, *History, Theory, Text* 158. To be sure, Clark takes the most valuable object missed out in the rush to incorporate social science to be post-structuralist and other theoretical approaches to texts, and decidedly not philological or linguistic attention to them. As she writes: "If scholars in other premodern disciplines find the situation of late ancient Christian studies puzzling, I ask their forbearance."

For those interested in the theologies of these authors and texts, one might suggest that the particularities of their *logoi* are relevant to and revelatory of their theologies – in fact, their *logoi* about God precisely *are* their theologies. We already acknowledge this to be so in the case of particular words implicated in large theological debates and controversies. That is, we recognize that having a robust knowledge of what the words *hypostasis* and *ousia* ordinarily meant in their use prior to and outside of Trinitarian and Christological controversies is crucial for understanding what is being said about the LORD and the Incarnate Word in those debates. But when it comes to theologically "laden" words (thus, ideas and concepts) that do not render well into English that are not implicated in controversies over major dogmatic and creedal formulations, scholars today typically continue to investigate those identified and remarked upon by earlier patrologists – e.g., *apokatastasis*. It seems we are no longer in the business of noticing and pointing out such words ourselves. This, I would argue, is the "linguistic turn" that the field really needs to take.

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[38] Clark, *History, Theory, Text* 158. What Clark understands by "philology" is not entirely clear from what she writes here. She seems to be identifying philology per se both with literary approaches focused on "authorial intention" as well as with the particular commitments about what language is and how it works that were lively in the 1960s and previously – i.e., strict referential or nominal views of language. But philology clearly does not require or depend upon these understandings of language, because it getting on just fine without them in any number of fields. Wittgenstein himself was reacting against this referential view of language in proposing that linguistic meaning was simply use rather than any "metaphysical" relation that obtained between words and things.

[39] This is not in any way to deny the presence of ideological constructs in language, only to say that we can understand the ideologies of those constructs – and perhaps even see more instances of their "leaking" – far better if and when we know the languages to which their *logoi* belong.

In the event – and somewhat ironically – taking the "linguistic turn" that Clark recommends and focusing on texts *qua* texts is eclipsing our view of texts as language. The result of this in academic practice – particularly within Early Christianity -- is that a monotonous nominalism characterizes many of our readings of texts. That is, we take words to "mean" only what the author (or the text, or discourse itself) aims to do with them, whatever they need to "mean" in order to effect some socio-political outcome or ideological goal.[40] And, in our readings and investigations, these end up being exactly the same types of goals and outcomes every time. Scholars seem always to conclude that the texts and discourses they have examined are aimed at the subjugation, oppression, regulation, or "othering" of some group for the sake of stabilizing the advantage and shoring up the power of the author and his group. This is simply because zero-sum competition, domination, and the will to power is what post-structuralist theory teaches us to think politics consists in. Since these particular relations and orderings just *are* "politics," what other "political" aims or effects could a text or discourse possibly have? As I suggested previously, when it comes to politics, theory obstructs vision.[41]

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[40] An example of this is Richard Lim's treatment of the Gregories' indictment of Aetius and Eunomius as "sophists" in their orations *Contra Eunomium* and elsewhere. He argues that, "because the term 'sophist' was mostly used as a slight devoid of specific content… we should proceed with caution" and, ultimately, read the term as a denigration of lower-class autodidacts by educated elites born to privilege; *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993)

What my methodological proposal has in common with the (relatively) new mode of approach to Early Christian Studies is agreement in looking at texts as "games" (in the Wittgensteinian sense), which does permit texts to be read also – just not *primarily* -- as ideologically driven mechanisms of socio-political power.

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124-5. And yet, contrary to Lim's assertion, "sophist" is not an empty term. Its definition has a certain fluidity with regard to "specific content" depending on who is using it, but an examination of how a speaker defines his opponent as a "sophist" in agonistic contexts is often the best information we have as to how the speaker locates himself within the philosophical tradition and what he takes philosophy to be. Even if all of that is "merely discourse" – a mechanism for maintaining the power and advantage of some group or ideology – then the particularities of that discourse and of its operations will be shaped, coloured, flavoured, and regulated by the particularities of its ideology and, hence, by *logoi* and their deployment/use.

[41] Certainly it is possible that disagreement with the tenets that this is simply what politics is and that this is simply what texts and discourses are always doing. So my suggestion that there might be other sorts of relations, other orderings, other politics might be taken as a sort of pre-critical naïveté. But it is hardly that. Instead, in the final analysis, I would make something rather like the intellectual equivalent to Puddleglum's argument in C.S. Lewis' *The Silver Chair*: even if these discourses are at the level of their words absolutely meaningless – mere kaleidoscopic pictures meant to dazzle and distract us from the darker realities working through them – describing the pattern of the kaleidoscope's turn still seems to me a thing worth doing, if for no other reasons than that the work of doing so remains lively and challenging, while endless identification and reidentification of the same set of darker realities quickly becomes tediously boring.

What both of these share is an acknowledgement of language as a mode of regulation; the point of divergence is on the question of whether texts are themselves regulated by rules of language or by rules of power. Post-structuralist commitments tempt us to think that these are identical ("it's all discourse, so language just is power"), but this view is untenable.

As I would argue, the reason that language can be used ideologically to accomplish the sorts of regulation of socio-political life that Foucault describes depends upon a shared understanding that what we might call "truth-telling" is the default mode of language. That is to say, language itself has rules; these rules may be broken, negotiated, and changed, but there must be a consistency and, so, an integrity of language through this process. Even if some rules are open to interpretation and negotiation, there must be other rules that are simultaneously being treated as fixed and stable at any given time, and these must be followed (by most speakers most of the time and to some degree) in order for language to function as such. If there were no regularity to language and no regulation of an individual speaker's use of language by the language as it is used by others – if language use were radically idiosyncratic, voluntaristic, and arbitrary, depending solely or primarily upon the outcomes a speaker wanted to effect by speaking – then the sort of ideological and deceptive power that post-structuralists take to inhere in “discourse” would never be possible.[42] If you knew that the rule ultimately conditioning my every use of language was my will to regulate you (and everything else) – to get you to do what I wanted, for my advantage, even against your will or at your expense – you could never be deceived by me, because you would never trust or believe me.[43]

The view that we can prevent being deceived by knowing or assuming that the will-to-power (whether of an individual or an ideology) has priority in regulating language use is what constitutes the so-called “hermeneutic of suspicion.” And it certainly works: if we take uses of language in the texts we read to be inherently untrustworthy and do not trust it, then language can never deceive or overmaster us. But if this is how language is, then it could never do anything else either – which includes giving us a way to identify and unmask discourse as such and to share our insights on that with others. If we really believed that language (and texts) were ultimately regulated by the will-to-power and invariably like this, then our own academic practices of discussion and textual production would quickly become untenable or else we would have to acknowledge that what we are doing under the rubrics of “scholarship” and

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[42] The placement of the quotation marks here point to the fact that my practice in this dissertation will be to use the word “discourse” with a more ordinary meaning – that is, not in the Foucauldian sense or as a technical term.

[43] This, as we shall see in Chapter 6, is very much the sort of picture of language that emerges from Augustine’s reflections on truth-telling, mendacity, and authority.

"academic inquiry" is nothing other than producing or sustaining ideological discourses, and agree consciously and intentionally to continue doing exactly that.

I would argue instead that a hermeneutic of the *beneficium dubii* – of giving the benefit of the doubt rather than suspicion – or perhaps a sort of "second naïveté" is a necessary condition for academic practice.[44] What such an interpretive disposition entails is willingness to treat instances of language use as instances of truth-telling unless or until we are forced (or have very good reason) to do otherwise. In other words, we must engage with language (including verbal texts) on its own terms, which requires of us a submission (if only partially and playfully) to its rules. Without such assents to the rules of languages and language-games, we cannot learn what those rules in fact are, and, accordingly, we will not be able to go on in that language or with those texts. In other words, our challenge as scholars of texts (knowing what we do about "discourse" and its evils) is to risk the possibility that we might be deceived. We must risk getting it wrong about the texts we are studying and what they are doing, risk being "taken in" and overmastered by them.

What I share with those in the field who consider their approaches and foci of study to be more accurately designated "Historical Theology" than "Early Christianity" are firmly held creedal and ecclesial commitments along with a deep interest in theological questions both speculative and dogmatic. Certainly, the themes, accounts, narratives and questions associated with *parrhêsia* and *confessio* in the texts of the Cappadocians and Augustine that I examine and discuss in this dissertation have quite a lot to do with the LORD. Nonetheless, my purpose in exploring them is far more philological than theological. The concerns motivating this dissertation have to do with large and long-standing issues of academic theory and practice that are especially current and relevant to the discipline of Early Christianity. And these are reflected in and by the history of scholarly investigation of *parrhêsia* in early Christian texts as compared to the present state of the question within the field.

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[44] Again, one might compare Augustine's discussion of the "benefit of the doubt" in *De utilitate credendi*, discussed in Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

### 1.3.2. A Review of the Literature on *Parrhêsia*

Before addressing contemporary mentions and investigations of *parrhêsia*, we should consider the history of scholarship on this topic when "Early Christianity" was still "Patristics." While today we see more books and articles and other sustained treatments of *parrhêsia* being produced by scholars working within the fields of Classical Studies and New Testament, it is worth noting that the first seminal scholarly work on *parrhêsia* during the modern era was produced by readers of Early Christian texts.[45]

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[45] There exist one sermon and three treatises on *parrhêsia* (one philosophical, two theological) written after the word fell out of ordinary non-liturgical use in Greek and before 1929. The philosophical treatise was Johann C. Dürr's *Dissertatio philosophica de parresia, seu libertate sermonis* (Altdorf, 1668.) The sermon was delivered on December 27, 1651 at St. George's Church in Schmalkalden, Turingia (where Martin

The first of these was a brief essay in a 1929 Festschrift by Erik Peterson, a theologian and historian. He was born in Hamburg to a Swedish Lutheran father and a Huguenot mother and was educated in theology at Strasbourg, Bonn, Göttingen, and Berlin. His dissertation considered epigraphical, papyrological, and archaeological evidence for the expression "one God" in early Christianity, which he construed as a juridical and existential statement rather than a conceptual explication of creedal content and thus related it to Jewish sacred law. Soon after an appointment to the faculty at Göttingen, where he was a colleague of Karl Barth, he left Lutheranism and was received into the Roman Catholic Church. Notably, he was also involved in a heated debate on the nature and possibility of "political theology" with Carl Schmitt. The article promised a later monograph expanding treatment of the subject, but the production of this was interrupted when Peterson's opposition to fascism led to his eviction from his academic position. He lived in poverty until 1947 when he was offered an appointment at the Papal Institute for Christian Archaeology, at which point he had dropped the question of *parrhêsia* and turned to other interests. Peterson made much of the juridical valence of the term and notably construed "freedom of action" as falling

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Luther had preached) by a "Prediger, Pfarrer, und Superintendent" publishing under the name Hieronymus Praetorius; in it, he glosses *parrhêsia* with the German "Hertzen-Frewdigkeit," -- "joyfulness of heart." One of the theological treatises is by Lutheran theologian Christian Friedrich Boerner *Dissertatio Theologica De Parresia Fidelivm In Die Ivdicii Ad I Iohan. II 28 Et IV 1* (Leipzig, 1724). The other was written by philologist, theologian and scientist Johannes Ernestus Immanual Walch, *Dissertatio De Parresia Apostolorvm Idiotarvm : Act. IIII. 13* (Jena, 1755) and considered the term as it used in specific passages of the New Testament.

under the Greek conceptual category of *parrhêsia*.[46] Perhaps most significant is the fact that Peterson's field of enquiry encompassed both pagan/classical and Christian sources and that his training was such as to allow him to treat both in depth and with considerable acumen.

The next significant publication on *parrhêsia* does not appear for another two decades and is also the work of a scholar displaced by fascism. Arnaldo Momigliano began as an ancient historian at Turin but was fired for being of Jewish descent and went to the U.K. where he had a celebrated career as a classicist, working first at Oxford and then at University College, London. In 1953, he delivered a paper, "*Parrhesia* and *isegoria*: Two Aspects of Freedom of Speech in the Greek World."[47] Here he argued that liberty in speech was an invention of the democracy of Classical Athens, and a unique (if not a "regular") feature of Athenian politics rather than a right. While in 1953 he presented Athenian democracy as a fragile balancing act between liberty and equality, in an essay published twenty years later, he conflates the two, identifies freedom of speech as a "right," and asserts that "*parrhêsia* represented democracy from the point of view of equality of rights."[48]

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[46] Erik Peterson, "Zur Bedeutungsgeschichte von παρρησία," *Zur Theoris des Christentums. Reinhold-Seeberg-Festscrift*. W. von Koepp, ed. (Leipzig: Deichert, 1929), 283–297; see especially 285, 288.

[47] Arnaldo Momigliano, "Parrhesia and Isegoria: Two Aspects of Freedom of Speech in the Greek World." Summary published in: *Proceedings of the Classical Association* 50 (1953) 18.

[48] Arnaldo Momigliano, "Freedom of Speech in Antiquity," in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Philip Wiener (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973) II.252-63.

Scholarship on *parrhêsia* within the field of Classics in the following few decades largely represented attempts to explore the themes brought to light by Momigliano. The conflict of interpretations among these reflected the tension that obtained between Momigliano's own earlier and later formulations about *parrhêsia* and its relation to Athenian democracy. At present, the prevailing opinion seems to be that *parrhêsia* was not anything like a "right," but more of a socio-politically risky exercise of license.[49] In the 1990s, after Michel Foucault's work on the subject of *parrhêsia* (which will be discussed in the next subsection) entered into academic circulation, and, with interest in later Greek prose on the rise within the field, investigative approaches and foci of study shifted. In the Hellenic diaspora after Alexander, *parrhêsia* belonged to public performance of cultural identity through speech but also to the more "private" discourses of politically advantageous patron-client relationships, personal friendships, and the voluntary philosophical communities that we refer often refer to as "schools." Accordingly, scholars within Classics began to focus more on *parrhêsia* in relation to philosophical and rhetorical texts and contexts.[50]

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[49] See, *inter al.*, D.M. Carter, "Citizen Attribute, Negative Right: A Conceptual Difference Between Ancient and Modern Ideas of Freedom of Speech," *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*. Ineke Sluiter, and Ralph M. Rosen, edd. (Leiden: Brill, 2004) 197-220; David Konstan, "The Two Faces of Parrhêsia: Free Speech and Self-Expression in Ancient Greece," *Antichthon* 46 (2012) 1-13; Elizabeth Markovits, *The Politics of Sincerity: Plato, Frank Speech, and Democratic Judgment.* (University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008); and S. Sara Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements: Athenian Politics and the Practice of Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[50] See, for example, David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); participation by Classicists in writing essays on *parrhêsia* in Hellenistic philosophical traditions for *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament*

Interest in *parrhêsia* surged within Patristics in the 1960s to 1980s as well, but not because of influence from Momigliano's study. Rather, the end of the Second World War and the project of *ressourcement* of pre-scholastic resources of the tradition that flowed as a current into and out of the Second Vatican Council prompted a boom in continental Catholic theological and philological investigation of patristic texts. Scholars in this category who examined *parrhêsia* worked in two primary "groups" from the 1960s to the 1980s. The first of those was a loose consortium of Dutch scholars, centered around the "Nijmegen school" of Christine Mohrmann but extending beyond that institution. Mohrmann was a Church historian and philologist who wrote on liturgical Latin. It does not seem that she herself treated *parrhêsia* in any of her published works, but a number of essays contributed to Festschrifts in her honour did. These include Leiden professor Willem Cornelis van Unnik's "Parresia in the 'Catechetical homilies' of Theodore of Mopsuestia,"[51] and Groeningen professor Lodewijk Jozef Engel's "Fiducia dans la Vulgate : le problème de traduction Parrēsia-fiducia."[52] Another name to be associated with the Nijmegen school is Mohrmann's student and the

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*World,* John T. Fitzgerald, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1996); *Paideia: The World of the Second Sophistic,* Barbara E. Borg, ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004); *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy*, R. Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé edd. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); R. Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence: Lucian and the Comedy of Traditions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Graham Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1993.)

[51] W. C. van Unnik, "Parresia in the 'Catechetical homilies' of Theodore of Mopsuestia,"in *Mélanges offerts à Mademoiselle Christine Mohrmann,* (Utrecht/Anvers : Spectrum Editeurs, 1963), 12-22. He had previously published *De Semitische achtergrond van Parresia in het Nieuwe Testament.* (Amsterdam : Noord-Holl. Uitg.Maatsch, 1962.) Van Unnik was, notably, not Catholic but a Quaker.

[52] Lodewijk Jozef Engel, "Fiducia dans la Vulgate : le problème de traduction Parrēsia-fiducia," *Festschrift Christine Mohrmann zum 60 Geburtstag,* (Nijmegen : Dekker & van de Vogt, 1964), 97-141.

successor to her post, Gerhardus Johannes Marinus Bartelink, who coauthored with Engel an essay entitled "Quelques observations sur 'parrêsia' dans la littérature paléochrétienne: influence de l'emploi juridique sur l'usage commun et paléo-chrétien,"[53] before going on to produce a single-authored article on "*Parrhesia*" in *Graecitas et Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva*,[54] as well as several papers on the use of the term in John Chrysostom.[55]

The second camp centers around Giuseppe Scarpat. He was educated in Bible (both Catholic and Protestant tracks) at Tübingen before taking a post as a professor of Latin literature in his native Italy. Scarpat taught briefly at the University of Genoa and the Catholic University of Milan before settling at the University of Parma and founding the Paideia press at Brescia. He himself has written a monograph on *parrhêsia*,[56] but his press has been an outlet for the publication of other works concerning the topic, especially through its journal *Parola e spirito*.

The work of these scholars manifests an exuberant willingness to treat antiquity (its language and intellectual world) as a whole, and to avail themselves of the full range of the historical archive. While retaining a primary *interest* in early Christian texts, acknowledging their belief in the uniqueness and truth of the Gospel, and making no apologies for their theological interests, they do not establish arbitrary or artificial limits upon what might count as primary evidence. In other words, these scholars read a lot, and they read broadly and extensively: Greek texts and Latin, ancient and late ancient texts, the writings of pagans and Jews as well as those of Christians, and texts belonging to the full gamut of genres – prayers, homilies, letters, treatises, panegyrics, martyrologies, monastic rules, dialogues, law codes, poetry, comedies and tragedies, satires, philosophy, oratory, and so forth. What we see is an interest in identifying both connections and distinctions among the uses and meanings of the term across these varying contexts. They often acknowledge a debt to the precedent of Erik Peterson, although this is not an uncritical one. For example, van Unnik explicitly challenges the emphasis on juridical associations found in Peterson's study, as well as the work of Hasso Jaeger, who adopts them.[57] But notably, there seem to be little or nothing in the way of *a priori* exclusions of texts from consideration on the basis of assumptions about their likely relevance or utility.

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[53] In *L'Eglise à la conquête de sa liberté : recherches philologiques dans le sacramentaire de Vérone* , ed. Antonius Adrianus Robertus Bastiaensen. (Nijmegen : Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1970.)

[54] G. M. Bartelink, "*Parrhesia*" in *Graecitas et Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva*, (Suppl. 3, Dekker and van de Vegt: Nijmegen, 1970)

[55] "Parrēsia dans les oeuvres de Jean Chrysostome." *Studia patristica* Vol 16.2 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985) 441-448, and "Die Parrhesia des Menschen vor Gott bei Johannes Chrysostomus." *Vigiliae Christianae*, 51.3 [Ag] 1997, 261-272.

[56] Giuseppe Scarpat, *Parrhesia: storia del termine e delle sue traduzioni in latino* (Brescia : Paideia, 1964) republished as *Parrhesia greca, parrhesia cristiana*. (Brescia: Paideia, 2001),

The feature of these studies that might strike us as odd or outmoded today is their inclination towards *Bedeutungsgeschichte* – and their working on this in an experimental rather than an authoritative fashion. The works of Bartelink and Scarpat are loose "word studies," with the bulk of both texts being comprised of examples of instances of the word *parrhêsia* as it appears *in situ*, organized into what seem rather arbitrary categories. In Scarpat's *Parrhesia*, the Epicurean tradition, martyrologies, Gregory of Nyssa, the Apostolic Fathers, pagan Latin, and a single passage from Clement of Alexandria -- all of these stand as categories or "chapters" and are of roughly equal length: quite short. Scarpat provides short summaries of how various use and understand the word. However, the work does not aim at being a concordance or "scholarly reference tool," and Scarpat does not pretend to provide a comprehensive description of all the various uses nor any identification of the predominant meaning(s) or use(s) of *parrhêsia* within particular textual corpora.[58] Instead, he is making a very sweeping definitional claim: for ancient Christian writers, *parrhêsia* did not mean mere "openness" or honesty in speech but rather a "frankness" that was conceptually founded upon the idea of a relationship of trust and trustworthiness (*fiducia*) between Christians and the LORD, grounded in divine *agapê*. The claim is not "argued" so much as it is simply asserted; examples are presented and expected to "speak for themselves," with little commentary and nothing that we would likely term "close reading." Scarpat says what he thinks it all means, and you either see it or you don't. [59]

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[57] Hasso Jaeger, *"Parresía" et fiducia :étude spirituelle des mots*. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957.)

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[58] For example, his section on Gregory of Nyssa, who used the word about 50 times just within what we might deem his "major" works, takes about a single page's worth of text, addresses only *parrhêsia* towards the LORD, and makes only one real claim – *viz*., that Nyssen presents human persons as being less able to exercise *parrhêsia* towards the LORD after the fall than before it.

[59] Scarpat's text is quite short – about 160 pages in a smaller-than-trade paperback edition – and roughly one-third to one-half of the text is comprised of quotations.

Bartelink, writing after Scarpat, aims to take a more comprehensive view of the evidence than his predecessor– that is, he incorporates into the discussion a greater number and variety of authors, texts, genres, and so forth. His major contributions to the definitional question are his recognition of a distinction between a "*sens favorable*" and a "*sens péjoratif*" in use of the word *parrhêsia,* as well as his decision to adopt a linguistic-pragmatic framework in categorizing and presenting examples of uses under each of those two headings. That is to say, Bartelink's categories depend upon the contextual conditions of use: who is being addressed in the parrhêsiastic speech (the LORD or human persons), who is speaking with *parrhêsia* (humans, Christians, Old Testament figures, the Virgin Mary, martyrs, demons), what is being spoken of parrhêsiastically &/or what sort of language-game the parrhêsiastic speaker is playing (criticizing and correcting, debating, praying for a miracle, confessing Christ, and so forth.) Bartelink does not make many or robust arguments about whether there do or do not exist context-dependent variations in the meaning of *parrhêsia* across these categories, but he does begin to consider how the relations that obtain between speaker, listener, subject, and language-game work together to determine whether the author naming the speech *parrhêsia* judges that speech to be good (using the term "*parrhêsia*" *au sens favorable*) or bad (*au sens pejoratif.*)

As recounted by Elizabeth Clark, Patristic studies within the Anglophone academy (and especially in the U.S.) experienced a period of stagnation in the decades following the Second World War. Conversation about *parrhêsia* in early Christian texts therefore remained a continental (and quite Catholic) phenomenon.[60] The blossoming of critical theory in post-war Europe with the formation of the Tel Quel in Paris in 1960, the reinvigoration and global "evangelism" of the Frankfurt School with Jürgen Habermas from 1970 onward, the emergence of semiotics in Italy in the mid-1970s, and so forth was accompanied by an increasing distrust for the institutional Church. This naturally had an effect on the Patristic academy. At the same time, the lack of disciplinary insularity in continental academic practice ensured that classical Christian texts continued to be read and studied by post-Christian academics – especially those in traditionally Catholic countries like France and Italy -- as part of their larger cultural inheritance.[61] As a result, the next major continental study of *parrhêsia* in early

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[60] During the 1960s and 1970s, there was attention paid to uses of the word *parrhêsia* within the New Testament by scholars working in Biblical Studies in America and elsewhere. See, e.g., Abraham Malherbe, "Gentle as a nurse : the Cynic background to 1 Thess 2." *Novum testamentum*, 12.2 (1970), pp. 203-217. Despite a bit of flat-footedness in his use of the term "Cynic," Malherbe is willing to admit the possibility of pagan influence on Christian concepts, consults primary texts by non-Christians and engages them at depth and with diligence and academic integrity. Wilhelm Stählin, "Parousia und Parrhesia" in *Wahrheit und Verkündigung* (München : Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1967), 229-235.; Eric Francis Fox Bishop. "The unreserved frankness of privilege." *Bible Translator* 18.4 (1967) 175-178; and Willem S. Vorster, "The meaning of parrēsia in the Epistle to the Hebrews" in *Ad Hebraeos* (Pretoria : Die Nuwe-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap van Suid-Afrika, 1971) 51-59. There were also, between 1960 and 1980, a good number of American theses and dissertations produced within the United States that treated *parrhêsia* in books of the New Testament, a fair indication of continued academic awareness of and conversation about the topic absent dedicated investigations by publishing scholars.

[61] Consider Umberto Eco's work on the aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas, the deeply theological work of Giorgio Agamben, Marcel Detienne's deeply post-structuralist reading of metals, plants, and spices in Greek mythology *The Gardens of Adonis: Spices in Greek Mythology*, tr. Janet Lloyd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), originally published in 1972. This last was "about the account of the Nativity" – specifically, the Magi's gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh -- according to statements made by the author in a private conversation. (No mention of Jesus or the Nativity appears anywhere in the text.)

Christian texts was not the work of a scholar of Patristics, but of a post-structuralist: Michel Foucault.

### 1.3.3. Michel Foucault on *Parrhêsia* and *Confessio* in the Christian Tradition

Most of us in the modern (or postmodern) academy today are quite familiar with the major themes of Michel Foucault's work: the relation between knowledge and power, ideological discourse analysis, sexuality and "technologies of the self," and the genealogy of the modern disciplinary state. What is ironically often overlooked by students of early Christian texts who borrow theoretical outlooks and methods from Foucault is the fact that the logic and narrative of his entire intellectual project was directly and intimately connected to Early Christianity. That is, he took the rise of Christianity to be the critical factor that transmogrified certain trends and practices of pagan antiquity into significantly different (if not radically novel) discourses of power, leading directly to the modern disciplinary state as such.[62]

Essential to these shifts was the reliance of Christianity on what Foucault termed "pastoral power." He describes the character of this as follows:

> The Christian pastoral, or the Christian Church insofar as it deployed an activity that was precisely and specifically pastoral, developed this idea—unique, I believe, and completely foreign to ancient culture—that every

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[62] The most succinct statements on this are probably to be found in Michel Foucault, "The subject and power. *Critical Inquiry, 8*.4 (1982) 777-795, but see also *On the Government of the Living; Lectures at the Collège de France 1979–1980*, tr. Graham Burchell, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

> individual, whatever his age or his status, from the beginning to the end of his life and down to the very details of his actions, ought to be governed and ought to let himself be governed, that is to say, be directed toward his salvation, by someone to whom he is bound in a total, and at the same time meticulous and detailed, relation of obedience.[63]

For Foucault, the new "pastoral power" discourse introduced by Christianity is novel in terms of its politics, the order of relations it envisions, chiefly in viewing the human person as involved without remainder in relations of obeying and being-governed.

Critical here is the distinction Foucault is making between this Christian politics or political grammar that is ordered by "obeying and being-governed" and an ancient (Greco-Roman and pagan) politics and grammar of the individual. In Foucault's other work, especially the quest for an "aesthetics of existence" that he describes in the *History of Sexuality*, two points of distinction emerge. The first, implicit in the passage quoted above, is Foucault's view that the politics of pagan antiquity permitted the autonomy and self-sufficiency of the human person to a great degree; the politics of Christianity mandated his being-governed and obedience to governance.

Second, Foucault characterized the relation of the subject to herself in a pagan politics as what we might term "meletic" – mediated by the acts of attending and caring; the subject-self relation within a Christian politics, by contrast, he took to be a noetic one – mediated by acts of knowing and inquiring.[64] As Foucault argues in "Technologies of the Self," in building upon pagan traditions, Christianity overemphasized the Delphic oracle's admonition *gnôthi seauton* ("know thyself") to the exclusion of the more philosophical injunction *epimelêsthai seauton* ("attend to oneself") and practices that, in Latin, were collectively known as *cura sui* ("care of the self.")[65] These latter, Foucault says, were (what I would term) higher ordering principles within Greco-Roman politics and discourses.[66] The paradoxical move of Christianity was to make a *type* of attention to self – noetic attention – the instrument for self-renunciation and renunciation of attentive care-for-self.[67]

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[63] Michel Foucault, "What is Critique?" in *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth Century Answers and Twentieth Century Questions*, Ed. James Schmidt, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 382.

In Foucault's mind, the first and second points are connected. The self's relations of caring attention to the self presume and maintain a politics of "aesthetic autonomy" among individuals. On the other hand, the sort of subject-self relation promoted and required by a politics of dominative governance is precisely ascetic and noetic introspection or, we might say, "introscrutiny." And it is here that Foucault's opposition of *parrhêsia* to confession comes into play. As he tells it, *parrhêsia* was first and foremost a "truth-telling" game:

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[64] As an example, the French title of the first volume of the *History of Sexuality* was *La Volunté de Savoir* ("The Will to Know") When it came to sex, Foucault writes, the knowledge aimed at by a Christian politics of noetic relations was "a science made up of evasions since, given its inability or refusal to speak of sex itself, it concerned itself primarily with aberrations, perversions, exceptional oddities, pathological abatements, and morbid aggravations." Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction,* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 53.

[65] Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self" in L. Martin, H. Gutman & P. Hutton, edd., *Technologies of the self*. (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Press, 1988.) 18-22. In this, it should be noted, he follows and expands significantly upon Nietzsche's line in *The Genealogy of Morals*.

[66] *Ibid*.

[67] *Ibid*., 22. Interesting here is the fact that Foucault's critique of Christianity is a unremittingly *moral* one.

> … *parrhesia* is a kind of verbal activity where the speaker has a specific relation to truth through frankness, a certain relationship to his own life through danger, a certain type of relation to himself or other people through criticism … and a specific relation to moral law through freedom and duty. More precisely, *parrhesia* is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In *parrhesia*, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy.[68]

He tends, on the whole, to view *parrhêsia* positively, even as the discourse of *parrhêsia* within the pagan context moves away from public deliberative contexts and towards one-on-one interactions in which the truth a speaker tells another consists not in criticism of that other but in an account given of the self. The giving of an account of the self might seem to us to be rather a "confessional" activity. But for Foucault there is, again, a significant distinction to be made between the two.

While a variety of pagan philosophical traditions adopted practices of "giving an account of the self" that bear a marked resemblance to those lively within Christianity, Foucault insists that these were primarily aimed at remembering the truth of the self, making a few adjustments, and then quickly moving on rather than inquiring in order to know the truth of the self and continue disclosing it. The act of disclosure in pagan practices was incidental, transitory, and fleeting, while Christianity was a "government by the truth" in which the process of self-scrutiny and self-disclosure was endless and obligatory.[69] As Foucault tells it, the politics of Christian confession requires everyone

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[68] Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech* ed. Joseph Pearson. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001) 19-20. (One commonly sees references in Foucauldian studies to "Discourse and Truth," which was a series of lectures Foucault gave at the University of California at Berkeley in fall of 1983. Various transcriptions of those lectures are in circulation in addition to this published and edited text.)

> to acknowledge faults, to recognise temptations, to locate desires, and everyone is obliged to disclose these things either to God or to others…The truth-obligations of faith and self are linked together. This link permits a purification of the soul impossible without self-knowledge.[70]

As Foucault saw it, the Christian practice of confession was fundamental to the rise of modern medical practices, the Panopticon, Freudian psychoanalysis – in short, the whole politics of the modern state – inasmuch as it prompted the relocation of practices of domination (discipline and punishment) into the individual himself. The subject takes over the master's responsibility for performing the tasks that constitute his own subjugation precisely because it seems to him that he is no longer autonomously able to care for himself but that responsibility for his well-being or "salvation" resides with another – the one with "pastoral power."

Turning then to his discussions of the Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian traditions, we see that Foucault wants to identify a degree of continuity with the pagan tradition of truth-telling as *parrhêsia* while also establishing (at some point) a decisive paradigm shift to the new confessional-political model. He notes – quite rightly – that affirmation of the possibility of human relations to the LORD requires a multi-dimensional grammar of *parrhêsia*. That is, not only does truth-telling operate horizontally through the speaker's bold speech towards other human persons, but it also operates on a vertical access with the LORD. In reading Philo, Foucault puts it this way:

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[69] Foucault, *On the Government of the Living; Lectures at the Collège de France 1979–1980,* Tr. Graham Burchell, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014) 11, 84, 101.

[70] Foucault, "Technologies of the Self" 40.

> At this point *parrhêsia* no longer simply designates the courage of the individual who, as it were, facing others on his own, has to tell them the truth and what must be done. This other *parrhêsia* we see emerging is defined as a sort of full and positive modality of the relation to God. It involves something like openness of heart, full transparency of the soul which offers itself to God's sight.[71]

While the earlier (pagan) type of *parrhêsia* was concerned with telling the truth to those who, unlike the speaker, were mistaken and in error, this early Judaeo-Christian *parrhêsia* towards the LORD, in Foucault's view, lacks these elements of mistakenness and criticism, replacing them with "an immediate relation of contact, delight, and enjoyment … bliss … pleasure."[72] In Judaeo-Hellenistic texts, Foucault also finds that the LORD – as much as the human person – engages in this sort of *parrhêsia* of self-disclosure or self-manifestation.

In examining the New Testament and early Christian texts in the Greek tradition, Foucault finds much the same sort of thing. The one additional element he notes is that *parrhêsia* towards God -- the confidence to self-disclose in expectation of bliss – is predicated upon particular beliefs about how things will go for the parrhêsiast on the Day of Judgment – *viz*., that God's love for him will be manifest on that day, that there will be no disagreement found between the two, that the human person (in effect) will not "come under divine judgment."[73] It is important to note that Foucault does not identify this as a "negative" development. He terms the openness, pleasure and "face-to-face" nature of the relationship envisioned between the Christian and the LORD a "positive core" of the early Christian grammar of *parrhêsia*.[74]

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[71] Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: The Government of Self and Others II. Lectures at the Collège de France 1983-1984*, Tr. Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 328.
[72] *Ibid.*, 329.

But things soon take a turn for the worse. Foucault identifies the cause as an increasing emphasis on obedience that undermines "this relationship of confidence, in which *parrhêsia* consists, of man in himself … in salvation, in being heard by God, in being close to God." What occurs then, he says, is that confidence is replaced by

> The principle of a trembling obedience, in which the Christian will have to fear God and recognize the necessity of submitting to His will, and to the will of those who represent Him. We will see the development of the theme of mistrust of oneself ….[75]

For Foucault, this is the result of a Christian denial of human autonomy, of the independent capacity of the human person to be perfect on his or her own terms. This, then, is what makes the difference between *parrhêsia* and confession, between the speaker's confidence in self-disclosure *coram Deo*, her familiarity and license with the LORD, and her fear, trembling, and deference in relation to the LORD and her "attentive, scrupulous, and suspicious vigilance" of herself.[76]

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[73] Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 330.

[74] *Ibid.*, 332. In this context and as an example of this, he quotes from Gregory of Nyssa's *De Virginitate* a passage we will examine more closely in Chapter 4.

[75] *Ibid.*, 333.

Foucault dates this rather fuzzily, but names the fourth century, A.D. as the time at which the shift occurred, identifying it with the rise of ecclesial-institutional structures and the consolidation of the pastorate.[77] The logic of this progression (or, perhaps, "degression") hinges entirely upon the understanding of the human person's autonomy and independence – which, in Foucault's view, is absolutely necessary for equal (and positive) relations with the LORD. He explains it as follows:

> [Obedience is concomitant with] the idea that the individual is unable to bring about his salvation by himself, that he is not capable of finding by himself that vis-à-vis, that face-to-face encounter with God which characterized man's first existence. And if he cannot have that relation to God on his own, through the impulse of his soul and the openness of his heart … then this is in fact the sign that he must mistrust himself.[78]

Foucault identifies this as the logical sequence that replaces confidence with confession and *parrhêsia* with penitence. In *The Courage of Truth*, he does treat some later (fifth- and sixth-century) texts that he takes to belong to this "anti-parrhesiastic" pole of Christianity – chiefly to make the case that it is not simply "confessional" but explicitly anti-*parrhêsia* -- but by and large he identifies it with the Western Latin Christian tradition (and especially Augustine) with which he and his readers are more familiar.[79]

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[76] Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 334.
[77] *Ibid.*, 333.
[78] *Ibid.*, 334.

Worth noticing here is the fact that Foucault stands in a relation of continuity with previous Patristic studies of *parrhêsia*. It is not clear if he read the works of Scarpat or those in the Nijmegen school, as he does not specifically mention or cite them. But many of his works on the topic of *parrhêsia* are published transcripts of his course lectures, enhanced by consultation of his lecture notes, so the absence of citations is unsurprising. Certainly much of what he says about *parrhêsia* in the early Christian tradition accords with the opinions of Patristics scholars (e.g., the fiduciary and relational foundations for Christian *parrhêsia* towards the LORD.) At the least, he was reading the same texts that Bartelink, Engel, et al. were reading, and noticing similar things within those texts. His attention to the texts may not have been philological, but it certainly shared with earlier studies an interest in the conceptual-grammatical and also the pragmatic-political aspects of *parrhêsia*. That is to say, their work remained intelligible to him, and his work would have been quite intelligible – even if highly objectionable with respect to its conclusions – to them. When we consider the contemporary state of early Christian scholarship on *parrhêsia*, however, the situation is rather different.

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[79] Foucault, *The Courage of Truth.*, 334-6. In this text, Foucault's point is that *parrhêsia* itself came to be condemned and preached against within the Christian tradition; because the word is Greek, only Greek authors will be mentioning *parrhêsia* by name in their condemnation of the dispositions and acts that Foucault takes to constitute *parrhêsia*. For association of Augustine in particular with this transition from *parrhêsia* to self-scrutinizing confession, see, e.g., Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject. Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*, Tr. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2005) 362.

### 1.3.4. Contemporary Conversations and the Contribution of the Dissertation

After Foucault's late work was published, it took some time for his influence to spread to other disciplines in the American academy. Early Christianity seems to be arriving comparatively late to the post-structuralist party, for the reasons noted by Elizabeth Clark.[80] Even today, while increasing numbers of scholars and students in the field are taking the "linguistic turn" and engaging with Foucault's ideas in a general way, interaction with his work has focused primarily on *The History of Sexuality* and its relevance for scholarly investigations of women, gender, and bodily practices in early Christian texts. Almost certainly that is because those topics have been of interest to Clark herself. She was, after all, the first to introduce Foucault formally to the nascent field of Early Christianity, and that was through the publication of a lengthy critical review of *The History of Sexuality*.[81] It is nonetheless remarkable that no one in the field seems to have engaged Foucault's work on *parrhêsia,* given that these are the texts (sc. besides the *History of Sexuality*) in which he addresses – directly, specifically, and at greater length -- early Christianity, its texts, and practices.[82]

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[80] Dissemination across disciplines (as well as continents and languages) does take time. Foucault sent several publications to press scant weeks before he died in 1984. Engaging Foucault was controversial or "avant-garde" in Classical Studies in the late 1980's, "on-trend" by the mid-1990s, and *de rigeur* by 2005. Elizabeth Clark's clarion call to the field to "take the linguistic turn" was published in 2009, and during doctoral coursework in Early Christianity in 2010, I was somewhat surprised to find Foucault's ideas being presented and received as if they were new and exciting things that had just hit the scene.

[81] Elizabeth A. Clark, "Foucault, the Fathers, and Sex," *JAAR* 5 (1988) 619-41. See also Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991) and "Interpretations of Power in 1 Corinthians." *Semeia* 54 (1991) 197-222, both of which employ Foucauldian

Treatments of *parrhêsia* in Early Christian texts generally, and in those of the Cappadocians specifically, are largely "passing mentions" rather than focused investigations of the topic. Surprisingly few of these academic authors seem aware of Foucault's writings on *parrhêsia*. By and large, when scholars do touch upon *parrhêsia* in these texts, attention to the task of definition is sorely lacking. Explicit definitions of the term are only rarely given, leaving the reader to decipher what a scholar takes it to mean by how he or she uses it. There seem to be three such "meanings" generally in currency:

> 1. *Parrhêsia* is the speaker's right to speak freely, specifically his right to be granted an audience when speaking whatever is on his mind. This right is a function of the political position he holds. For example, he may be citizen of Classical Athens, a *polis* that recognized such a right as "constitutional" or constitutive of its democracy;[83] or he may be the client of a patron who has granted him the right on a more personal or private basis. [84]

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discourse analysis to Paul, the latter with a particularly feminist approach to show how competing discourses are mapped onto a gendered body.

[82] *The History of Sexuality* exists in three volumes. Brief mention of early Christian practices are made in the third of these –a few pages' worth of text and then a five-page conclusion looking forward to the next volume of the series. Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self. The History of Sexuality*, vol. 3 Tr. Robert Hurley. (New York: Random House, 1986) 143-4, 235-240. This fourth volume, *Les aveux de la chair* ("The Confessions of the Flesh"), has not been considered in this dissertation because it was only just published in France by Gallimard in early February of this year and will not be released until August.

[83] So Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996) 8.

[84] *Ibid.*, 61-70.

> 2. *Parrhêsia* is a duty to speak the truth boldly to important people – particularly "part of the job description" of a bishop.[85]
>
> 3. *Parrhêsia* is "boldness of speech" or, rather, "boldness about speaking": the confidence or lack of fear that a speaker feels in undertaking to speak the truth to others. This confidence is a function of the speaker's knowing that others recognize his right to speak freely, or is the result of a supernatural "infusion" of courage from the LORD. [86]

Various scholars use different of these definitional understandings in treating *parrhêsia*, but seem not to notice in citing or engaging with others' texts that there *is* a difference between their conceptual understandings of the term. As a result, there never seems to be a proper debate or conversation about *parrhêsia* or about other issues on which scholars form opinions on the basis of what they consider *parrhêsia* or the late ancient author's understanding of it to be.

Some of the scholars who do mention *parrhêsia* provide dutiful citations of all the major studies in Classical Studies, New Testament, and Early Christianity published during the 20th century that treated the topic, without seeming to note that these represent different (often mutually exclusive) definitional understandings and without engaging directly or explicitly with any of the cited sources – and, it often seems, without even having read them. For instance, in writing Gregory of Nazianzus' use of the term *parrhêsia* in his poetry, Suzanne Abrams Rebillard writes:

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[85] So John McGuckin uses "episcopal *parrhêsia*" almost as if it were a technical term. He makes no argument for understanding it this way but refers to several lines from Nazianzen's Carmen 2.1.12 *De seipso et de episcopis* vv. 762-775 in which Gregory mentions *parrhêsia* but says absolutely nothing to connect it to episcopal office. *Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography*. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001) 141 n.146 (the reference to the *Carmen de seipso*). See also 192:

> The office of bishop was supposed to call forth two supreme charisms from the candidate so elevated …. the second was *parrhêsia*, or boldness of speech, where the new bishop would have to speak up on behalf of his congregation and city in the face of the powerful without fear of the consequences. Gregory wittily applies this principle of episcopal *parrhêsia* in his first episcopal sermon ….

No evidence is given nor any argument made for this idea of *parrhêsia* as episcopal "charism" or principle. Again on 206: "The new bishop had begun from day one with the fearless *parrhesia* expected of his office"; 213 "The appeal to the Governor is another example of episcopal *parrhesia*: the appeal to the powerful on behalf of the needy."

[86] Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004) 187, and (perhaps) McGuckin's idea of *parrhêsia* as a "charism" of the episcopacy, *supra*.

> Scholars have identified [the word's] usage in the Classical Athenian world as political, the democratic right of each citizen to bold public speech.[87] By the Hellenistic period, it carries more personal and private associations .... In the New Testament ... it is generally seen to encompass the openness of men's relationship with God. It is the boldness of speech necessary for Christian teaching and the direct access to God that is granted to men through Christ's sacrifice. Gregory's usage in the context of the autobiographical poems interweaves elements of all these conceptions of the term ...."[88]

The "interweaving" of all these conceptions that the author imagines ends instead being rather a tangle.[89] Abrams Rebillard's introduction told us to expect *parrhêsia* to mean "a democratic right," a "personal and private" (right?), the "openness" of human relations to the LORD, "boldness of speech necessary for Christian teaching," and "direct access to God" granted through Christ's sacrifice. But only slightly later, we read:

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[87] Suzanne Abrams Rebillard, "The Poetic *Parrhesia* of Gregory of Nazianzus." *Studia Patristica* 41 (2003) 273-278. Abrams Rebillard cites as proponents of this view S. Sara Monoson, "Frank Speech, Democracy, and Philosophy: Plato's Debt to a Democratic Strategy of Civic Discourse," in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*, J. Peter Euben, John R. Wallach, and Josiah Ober, edd. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994) 172-97. And yet, as mentioned previously, Monoson takes care to distance *parrhêsia* from the "right," referring to it consistently as a "practice" and stating: "It is important to recognize that the celebration of *parrhesia* in democratic politics did not carry any demand for a notion of 'protected speech.' Quite the contrary was the case." 177. The other example Abrams Rebillard offers for the view of *parrhêsia* as "democratic right" is Yokio Nakatagawa, "Isegoria and Parrhesia," *JCS* (Kyoto) 37 (1989) 1-11. The article in question is written in Japanese, which perhaps Abrams Rebillard reads. However, the English abstract available from the *Journal of Classical Studies*, gives no suggestion whatsoever that Nakategawa took *parrhêsia* to be a "democratic right." In fact, his argument (with which I would not agree) seems instead to be that *parrhêsia* represents a shift away from a more democratic and egalitarian policy of *isêgoria*.

[88] Abrams Rebillard, "The Poetic *Parrhesia* of Gregory of Nazianzus, 273-4.

[89] To be fair, Abrams Rebillard does recognize what I take to be a critical point about the grammar of *parrhêsia* – *viz.*, that it is "not inherently positive, but dependent upon the character" of the speaker. And this point is regularly overlooked by other readers of these texts.

> *Parrhesia* is the result of Christ's suffering and death, in accordance with its New Testament usage. Because the rhetorical question about the divine sacrifice ["Was the Forerunner not the sacrifice for parrhesia?"] follows directly after Paul and Peter, teachers about the Trinity, *parrhesia* in this context seems to refer to Christian teaching.[90]

It is not entirely clear whether Abrams Rebillard thinks that the term *parrhêsia* names "Christian teaching," or that it names a "right" or "boldness" of a particular type of speech (that which refers to Christian teaching), or what. But later she does seem to use it to name "teaching" when she writes: "[Gregory] makes an implicit claim to know … which is the very knowledge that justifies and demands his exercise of *parrhêsia*, or theological preaching and instruction." Then again, it might be the exercise rather than the *parrhêsia* that is being glossed as "theological preaching or instruction."[91] Next she seems to identify *parrhêsia* with the *act* of "free speech" itself.[92] Finally, though, Abrams Rebillard defines *parrhêsia* explicitly as "confidence" in one sentence, and then "moral instruction" in the next.[93] The result of this is that it is very difficult to follow not only her understanding of the term but also, and consequently, the logic of her interpretation.

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[90] Abrams Rebillard, "The Poetic *Parrhesia* of Gregory of Nazianzus." 277.

[91] Again, Abrams Rebillard is to be appreciated for her astute observation that there is some act of justifying occurring in connection with this *parrhêsia*; as I will argue, judgments and justifications are essential elements in the grammar and politics of *parrhêsia*.

[92] *Ibid.*, 278.

[93] *Ibid.*

This is only one example (if rather an extreme one) of the state of contemporary scholarship on *parrhêsia* in the texts of the Cappadocians and of other early Christian authors, particularly those active in the fourth century.[94] It is characterized by semantic slippage and sometimes by a resistance to definition of the type we see in Abrams Rebillard's vague claim that the textual use of the word "interweaves elements" of various conceptual definitions together. But this lack of willingness on the part of scholars to attend or commit to defining terms so as to allow *parrhêsia* to mean everything that any given scholar or ancient author might want it to mean results in studies and discussions in which it actually means little or nothing at all.

It must, of course, be acknowledged that *parrhêsia* is rather a difficult and slippery term and concept to understand and define. This is in large part because Greek words of multiple parts of speech share this same root and appear in varying constructions. A rudimentary inventory includes the following:

1. *parrhêsia* – a noun, often appearing in the following constructions:
    a. to have *parrhêsia*
    b. to speak with *parrhêsia*
    c. to use *parrhêsia*
2. *parrhêsiazomai* – a verb.
3. *parrhêsiastikos, -ê, -on* – an adjective, and
4. *parrhêstikôs* – an adjective, often modifying verbs of speaking

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[94] Articles published in *Studia Patristica* receive minimal peer review.

5. *parrêsiastês* – an agential noun, often used of speakers

Noticing and identifying these – which form of the word is being used in a particular passage, in what sort of construction – would require reading texts in their original languages, rather than in translations. When rendered into English 1(b), 1(c), 2, and 4 (with a verb of speaking) might all be identical.

What complicates the question further is the fact that *rhêsis* ("speech") is part of the root of this word, and yet the word is also used in combination with verbs of speaking. That, along with the fact that the noun appears as the object of the verb "have," seems to indicate that *parrhêsia* cannot be a *nomen actionis* (an abstract noun naming an act, in this case, an act of speech.) In addition to this, in spite of its etymology and strong associations with speaking, one encounters rare instances – but rather frequent in the writings of the Cappadocians -- in which the word *parrhêsia* is also used of silent and nonverbal situations, ones in which visibility rather than audibility seems to be the issue.[95] This quirk of use would have to be accounted for in a definition, which would require one to determine what is common to both the verbal and non-verbal situations in which the term is being used – the family resemblances between these.

The problem with the three implicit definitional understandings of *parrhêsia* in currency in Early Christian scholarship is simply that all of them (even

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[95] For instance, Gregory of Nazianzus writes that "the moon (sc. night and darkness) gives wild animals *parrhêsia*, but the sun rouses human persons to work." Or. 28 (= Th. Or. 2) 30.

*parrhêsia*-as-confidence) are construed in terms of a particular set of relations. Those are relations that belong to the right -- the obligating of a listener through recognizing the speaker's right, and the obligation of the speaker to the listener through the exercise of that right as a duty, the confidence a speaker has in the safety afforded him by the existence of these relations, and especially by the listener's recognition of his right to speak freely. But this assumption that the grammar and politics of *parrhêsia* are fundamentally conditioned by the grammar and politics of the right is highly contestable if not completely unfounded. While there have been and still are scholars in Classics who argue this with respect to *parrhêsia* as it operated in classical Athenian democracy, prevailing opinion has shifted and those holding such a view are few and far between. Furthermore, there is almost complete unanimity that, even if *parrhêsia* had been a right previously, it certainly was not construed as one within the philosophical tradition and in the Hellenistic and imperial periods. Earlier scholarly readers of these texts working in Patristics were clear that *parrhêsia* depended on the speaker's relations, but none of them took these to be the relations of the right. Finally, Michel Foucault did at times speak of *parrhêsia* as the speaker's "duty" but does not seem ever to have identified this "courage of truth" as the speaker's right.

My resistance to naming *parrhêsia* a "right" might seem to the reader to be an instance of semantic hair-splitting. "Well," one might say, "perhaps *parrhêsia* is not a 'right' exactly, but surely it is a very similar sort of thing." But this proves my point that we – I and (presumably) most of my readers, speakers of English living in the 21st century as citizens of modern liberal-democratic nation-states – are inclined to take the "right" as a paradigm and a norm for all "free" and beneficial political relations. Insofar as we can recognize a relation as being both good and political, we tend to liken it to the right and to interpret it on the grammar of rights. What we overlook in doing this is the fact that there may well be other types of possible political relations belonging to other types of politics that are yet not those of tyranny and oppression (which we consider the opposite number to "rights"), other forms of life that include these relations – in short: other languages.

In the next chapter, then, I will offer a more detailed account of the grammar of *parrhêsia*, but at this point, I proffer the following definition:

> *Parrhêsia* is evidenced in or by an act of self-disclosure (typically through speech) and names the agent's disposition of readiness to disclose himself plainly and openly, a readiness based in his confidence that he is justified in doing so in spite of the fact that the situation meets or seems to meet conditions for the operation of communal rules that prescribe hiding (typically through keeping silent.)

A proffering is not a proof, however; the validity of the definition must be tested. On the basis of the explanation of definitions and meaning laid out at the beginning of this chapter, I suggest that the mode of testing a definition is – as Wittgenstein would have it -- to "look and see" if the verbal account of the word's use comports with its actual use. That is to say: if one considers the examples of the Cappadocians' (and others') use of the word *parrhêsia* that are included here, along with any other examples of the word's use that one can find or think of, does this definition name the similarities between them, their "family resemblances?"[96] Again, with respect to the grammatical account I offer, do the rules as I have stated them seem in fact to "play out" in practice? The remainder of the dissertation offers and discusses examples that will prove – or not – the accuracy and sufficiency of the definition and grammatical account of *parrhêsia* advanced here at the beginning.

In addition to providing evidence by which my suggested definition and grammatical account of *parrhêsia* might be judged, this dissertation does a number of other things simultaneously. First, it is an explication of what the texts of the Cappadocian Fathers and Augustine of Hippo in particular present as the politics of truth-telling – *viz.*, the orders of relations that condition and regulate saying what one has it in mind to say in a particular situation (i.e. saying x about y to z.) More specifically, it focuses on their understandings of truth-telling speech that is about, to, or contingent upon relations with the LORD. I have selected this topic primarily because I am deeply interested in these questions, and these authors have been selected primarily because they were deeply interested in them as well. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Cappadocians did not simply use the word *parrhêsia* in talking about other things but they talked about *parrhêsia* itself – and particularly in relation to speech about and to the LORD. Augustine was attentive to these same questions of truth-telling, of how to speak about the LORD and speak the self to the LORD. In addition, he was expressly interested in what we might term "political philosophy," which meant that he (even more than the Cappadocians) reflected upon and wrote about the sorts of relations and orders that grounded acts of truth-telling.

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[96] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *PI* §§66-67. Wittgenstein claims that "family resemblances" among things belonging to a single class (e.g., "games") form a "complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing." The extension of a concept via the variable affinities between things given the same category-name is like the spinning of multiple fibres into a single thread: "the strength of the thread resides not in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres." In a sense, then, the definitional task consists in a quest to identify all the various fibres of affinity between discrete items sharing the same name (e.g., all the things ancient Greek authors call "parrhêsia") and twist these together in such a way as to form a strong, taut, and continuous connection between them. If – on looking – it seems to us that the definitional thread does indeed connect to each and every one of the word's ordinary and accepted uses, and if it does not fray or break, then the definition is a sound one.

These are interesting questions, so investigating and comparing these authors' treatment of these topics is worth doing just for that reason alone. At present, however, the topics of *parrhêsia* and *confessio* in these or any other early Christian texts are receiving little focus attention and do not reside at the center of any hot debates. And yet, we shall see that they are discursively related to a host of themes that *are* subjects of great interest within the field, both to late ancient historians and to historical theologians: socio-economic relations; clothing, bodily display, and the gaze; the influence of pagan philosophy and Greco-Roman *paideia* on early Christian theology and praxis; martyrs; and theories of the atonement. Those who find these other subjects more interesting than those of truth-telling and the politics of speech might therefore find in the present study connections that provide new angles of approach to and vistas of insight upon their own topics of study.

In investigating *parrhêsia* specifically, I am making a retrieval of topics of study that were lively in the field of Patristics before it became Early Christianity. In a sense, I am picking up where Bartelink and Scarpat left off by looking particularly at the relational foundations and pragmatic conditions that condition the meaning of *parrhêsia*. In bringing OLP to bear upon the question, I am refurbishing and updating what might otherwise strike us as methodologically antiquated or less-than-rigorous approaches.

At the same time, by providing a minimal definition of "politics" that is capacious enough to accommodate our actual uses of the word, I am identifying ways of talking about the connections between conceptual grammars and forms of life. In this way, philological investigations can be robustly historicized and the context-dependence of language brought explicitly to the fore. That is to say, this study is essentially bringing the inheritance from Early Christianity's past life as Patristics into conversation with questions and approaches lively in our field at present and with trajectories recommended for the future of the discipline. This is accomplished particularly by direct engagement with Michel Foucault's characterization of *parrhêsia* and confession. In doing this, the dissertation serves as a sort of "test-case" for my claim that increased linguistic and philological attention to the texts that unify Early Christianity as a discipline might provide much-needed opportunities for rapprochement among those in the field with differing theoretical, confessional, and methodological commitments, as well between our discipline and others.

The remainder of the dissertation proceeds as follows:

Chapter Two opens with an exposition of the grammar of the modern post-Enlightenment concept of freedom of speech so that distinctions may be drawn between it and the ancient Greek grammar of *parrhêsia*. I then offer an account of the politics and grammar of *parrhêsia*, identifying the rules for when speech could be named parrhêsiastic and the criteria by which those speech-acts were judged positively and had persuasive power. The remainder of that chapter considers the development of the conceptual grammar of *parrhêsia* in varying political contexts through pagan Greek antiquity from the imagined Homeric age, through the rise and fall of Classical Athenian democracy, and into the Hellenistic period and the Second Sophistic. This overview provides a picture of how the more abstract grammatical account proffered operated in practice, as well as what problems arose in and through its use. What emerge here are political relations and dilemmas (e.g., relations of debt and debt-bondage, representative agonism) as well as philosophical questions and projects (e.g., the imagination of a political utopia, the ordering of the soul, and the problem of rhetorical deceptions) that will resurface in the Cappadocians' use of *parrhêsia* in a late ancient Christian context.

Chapter Three considers the Cappadocians' views on how Nicene Christians could speak with *parrhêsia* in the secular world to non-Nicenes and pagans. First I examine the responses of Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus to the emperor Julian's edict on education in light of the requirement of common criteria for potentially successful parrhêsiastic truth-telling. The two Cappadocians argue that it is necessary both for Christian youths to receive Hellenic cultural education (*paideia*) and for them to have Christians as their teachers. To explain how an education riddled through with pagan vice is nonetheless useful for teaching Christians virtue, Basil and Nazianzen present a vision of Christianity as a culture-transcending cosmopolitanism – as a citizenship in the LORD's *politeia* that is the source of all that is truly good in particular cultures. The remainder of the chapter attends to how reference to citizenship in the kingdom of heaven is used as the simultaneous claim of and warrant for Christian *parrhêsia* in the saeculum. Here we examine first the two Gregories' accounts of Basil's confrontation with the emperor Valens, and then the Cappadocians' accounts of Christian martyrs. In the latter case, examination of metaphors of athletic and military agonism enrich our understanding of the Cappadocians' contention that the martyrs' exercise of *parrhêsia* in confessing their relations to the LORD is grounded upon their ability to display virtues recognizable as such to pagans as a result of their formation in and by the heavenly *politeia*.

In Chapter Four, I turn to the question of Christian *parrhêsia* towards the LORD (*pros ton Theon*), focusing especially on texts of Gregory of Nyssa. Contra Foucault, the exercise of frank familiarity towards the LORD appears in Nyssen's understanding to be a hard-won prize rather than an ordinary or universally acceptable practice for Christians. The chapter shows how Gregory claims the obstacles to *parrhêsia pros ton Theon* are to be overcome -- first and foremost by Christ's salvific work upon the cross. Here I examine Nyssen's deployment of the ransom model of the atonement in light of the politics of debt, and address the question of the LORD's "deception of the devil." What comes to light is Gregory's use of a paradox of veiling and disclosing as modes of truth-telling. From there, I proceed to look at Nyssen's warning to his congregation against exercising unjustified *parrhêsia* in claiming filial relations to the LORD that they do not, in fact, bear by praying "Our Father …." His recommendations for the mode by which such relations can be established are, notably, non-verbal practices of contemplation and bodily ascetic renunciations. Finally, we consider issues of kinship and the (un)covering of the body at play in Gregory's narrative of the death and burial of his sister Macrina. The conclusion is that, in Gregory's telling, full Christian *parrhêsia* towards the LORD is ordinarily an eschatological – and non-verbal – actuality made possible only by the resurrection of the body.

In Chapter Five we shift our attention from the Greek Christian tradition to the Latin. I describe the reception of *parrhêsia* by Romans both pagan and

Christian, and explain the decision to focus on *confessio* as a Latin comparandum. After laying out an account of the grammar of *confessio*, I introduce Augustine and explain the warrants for choosing his texts as a focus, identifying the scope and nature of my engagement with them.

Chapter Six begins with a consideration of Augustine's understanding of truth-telling through an analysis of his treatise *De mendacio*. I expand on previous scholarly treatments of this text to consider what Augustine takes to be the socio-political ramifications of duplicity in speech. The bishop of Hippo's belief in the priority of truth-telling for ecclesial unity and for the Church's shared task of seeking to know the truth is explicated through a reading of his agonistic correspondence with Jerome. From that point we proceed to examine the Christological foundations of what Augustine takes to be the politics of confessional truth-telling – the LORD's *iustitia* – and its superiority to the devil's politics of *potentia*. Here we see that the bishop of Hippo presents Jesus as the exemplar of the confessional disposition of humility and, so, able to resolve the diabolical "doubleness" of sin and deceit into harmony. Turning then to Augustine's *Ad Simplicianum*, I explore the contrast Augustine draws between *confessio* and boasting, showing how he takes the former to be a receptivity to grace through the speaker's dispossession of his speech and the ecstasy of the self.

Finally, in Chapter Seven, I summarize the findings of this investigation, drawing distinctions between the politics of truth-telling speech lively in the texts of the Cappadocians and those in evidence in the writings of Augustine. These conclusions are shown to pose serious challenges to the characterizations of Christian discourses of *parrhêsia* and *confessio* advanced by Foucault.

# Chapter 2. The Pagan Grammar of *Parrhêsia*

## *2.1. Freedom of Speech*

In this chapter, I aim to elucidate the general grammar of *parrhêsia* in its development through the pagan traditions of ancient Greece. To aid in making clear its particular rules and conceptual foundations, I will begin by tracing out the grammar of the more familiar modern concept of freedom of speech and making a series of critical distinctions between it and the ancient concept of *parrhêsia*. As I have asserted, the modern Western concept of "freedom of speech" is politically and grammatically different to that of *parrhêsia*. If we are to avoid reflexively and inadvertently reading our modern understandings into ancient texts, then these points of difference and contrast between the politics and conceptual grammars of the two must be brought to light and made explicit.[1]

The grammar of "free speech" currently prevalent in the modern West (and elsewhere) views freedom of speech as a universal human right. There are a number of layers in the multiplex concept of the universal human right to free speech, and I will treat each of them in turn. First and foremost is the idea of a

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[1] Here I am largely in agreement with Arlene Saxonhouse's arguments in *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) about the need to disentangle *parrhêsia* conceptually from the contemporary liberalism that understands free speech and democracy both in terms of individual rights and protections. Her view is that liberalism requires and consists in amnesia and a perpetual search for novelty, (15, 52) while I argue that it requires and consists in relations of debt and ownership. She also – quite rightly – notes that the truth-telling aspect of *parrhêsia* consisted not so much in the "earnestness" or sincerity of the speaker (his willingness to take the risk of speech out of the "courage of his convictions") but in his "unveiling" of his mind to others. (88)

*right* (as opposed to, say, a duty or a privilege.) Citizens of modern liberal-democratic nation-states are thoroughly habituated to speaking of “rights,” but most of us do so reflexively, without giving much (if any) attention to the grammar of the “right.” If we stop and do so, we begin to see that rights are rather strange things.

### 2.1.1. Freedom of Speech as a Universal Human *Right*

A right consists in a double claim.[2] The first is the subject’s claim to possession and use of something. But not every such claim constitutes a right. What constitutes the right is a second claim -- not upon the object but upon all others who could potentially make a claim to possession and use of that same object. The object of this second claim upon these others is their recognition of and submission to the first claim. Essentially, “recognition” and “submission” amount to their not attempting to possess or use the claimed object themselves (recognizing the subject’s “right”), and it might also entail their stepping in to prevent anyone other than the claimant from possessing or using the object in question (defending the subject’s “right.”)

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[2] The “double claim” I am describing here corresponds to the “privilege” and “claim” named within the system of rights-analysis developed by the legal theorist Wesley Hohfeld in *Fundamental Legal Conceptions*, ed. W. Cook (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919). These are named taken up and named as the “primary rules” constituting “first-order rights” by H.L.A. Hart in *The Concept of Law*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961). The Hohfeldian system remains the standard for analysis of rights within legal theory and legal philosophy today.

As an example, we might consider the practice (common especially in families with multiple children) of “calling shotgun” – making a claim upon the object of sitting in the front passenger seat during a car trip. A passenger might not make a claim at all but instead make a request for the desired seat either of the driver or owner of the vehicle or of the other passengers. This is the opposite number of declaring one’s “right” because it assumes that the object in question belongs to another. If one does make a claim and then regards and urges this claim as a “right,” one typically does so by appealing to shared criteria or principles and attempting to secure the agreement of the others who might make their own claims upon the same object. Perhaps I say it is my right to sit in front because our custom is that whoever speaks first gets “dibs” on that seat. Or maybe I make a case that it’s my turn to sit in front, appealing to our presumed agreement on a principle of fairness by alternation. Or I might argue it as my right because I experience motion sickness if seated in the back, appealing to our presumed agreement on a principle of privileging those with physical hardships.

If I attempt a claim without such appeals (explicit or implicit), then I am not claiming a “right,” merely making an attempt and waiting to see if it goes uncontested. In practice, it sometimes does, although rarely in families with multiple children. It may be that none of the other passengers has any particular preference as to where they sit. It may be that the claimant offers the others something else in exchange for their not contesting his claim. Or it may be that the others all know from experience that the claimant will, if denied, fuss about it and make everyone else miserable for the duration of the trip. These last two cases are notable because in neither is the claim, *stricto sensu*, a “right.” In both, the operative principle securing the claim is exchange rather than agreement to its validity. The first does not necessarily assume (as a request more frequently does) that the object of the claim belongs to others to bestow as they will; it only acknowledges and trades for the exercise of the ability of others to contest claims. The second is essentially the working out of a “might makes right” principle; it does not constitute a “right” and is not funded by agreement. It issues instead in a response of “no contest” to the claim and is grounded in a sort of cost-benefit analysis: either contesting the claim is unlikely to issue in any actual gains -- one cannot “win” -- or the losses will be such as to constitute that “win” as a Pyrrhic victory. The principle of “might makes right” could be grounds enough for rights in the proper sense of the term, but only if it is agreed upon as a sufficient principle to constitute claims as rights (as it often is in the case of the right to claim victory in certain contests of strength or in games with rules of the “no holds barred” variety.)

Rights are not a mere matter of holding or possession, therefore, but of ownership. We see this distinction reflected in legal language; for example, one might be charged with “possession of illegal substances” but not “owning illegal substances.” Because the objects in question are conceived to be against or outside the law, they cannot be owned under the law; there is no agreement to recognize as valid the claim of any person upon them and therefore no one can be said to have a "right" to those objects. The claims that certain animals stake upon territory are, again, distinct from rights or ownership because they are not grounded in a consensus. When in its nocturnal perambulations a cat wanders into a new area and scents that it has been marked as another animal's territory, he does not turn aside because of agreement to the reasons funding the other's ownership of that bit of the landscape. The turning-aside is the result of an instinctual calculation of cost and benefit. Depending on what sort of other animal has marked the territory, the tom will get a message (with some degree of intensity or other) that says "it will not go well if I stay here." If, however, the tom has a decent sense of his own physical capacities and well-being at that point in time and another instinctual message is strong – say, if food must be procured or a mate must be won, if this territory seems too enticing to resist -- the instinct to avoid danger may be outweighed and possession of the territory will come down to the question of who is able to hold and defend it. Among non-human animals, possession is not nine-tenths of the law; it is the law in its entirety.

Significant here is the fact that ownership is a personal and an exclusive affair. It would seem to us nonsensical to speak of "owning" the air we breathe – although we could say we have a right to breathe air and we could certainly claim ownership of a tank of oxygen. The difficulty here is that atmospheric oxygen is impossible to stake a claim upon except in and by the act of breathing. How would I specify or designate to others which specific bits of air are those to which I have a right and on what grounds could I secure the agreement of others to the validity of my claim? Leaving aside the question of air pollution (which does not change the atoms of particular elements but only introduces additional noxious or less desirable ones into the mix), all molecules of oxygen are the same. What could make the difference between those molecules to which I have a right and all other identical ones?

If, however, some part of that air is sequestered in the tank of oxygen mentioned previously, the situation is rather different. Those molecules already have been separated from all the others such that a claim can effectively be staked upon them and others could potentially be bound by that claim. That is to say, those molecules can be distinguished from all the others: they are the ones in the tank. Accordingly, some agreement could be reached about those particular molecules and my relation to them. But if I have a right to them – if they are mine – then they are precisely not yours. If others acknowledge my claim as valid (*viz.*, as a right) and agree to be bound by it, they cannot make the same claim themselves, cannot have to the oxygen in the tank the same relation as I have. Situations of joint ownership make little difference to the effect of this rule of exclusion. If a number of people own the tank of oxygen, they must decide among themselves a principle by which each has a right to some part or all of the oxygen in the tank (distribution by volume or duration for use; first come, first served; according to greatest need; &c.) All that joint ownership does is to establish multiple levels on which rights are claimed or to divide objects to which ownership is asserted.

Finally, ownership is essentially dominion. Linguistic development of the word is illuminative of its character. The modern English word "own" developed from a proto-Indo-European root (**aik*-) meaning "to possess, be master of." It is not the same root whence more common words for "have" derive. In Sanskrit the root yielded the noun *īśa*, meaning "supreme master, ruler, controller, powerful one, lord," often used as an epithet or name of gods in the Vedas and elsewhere. From the same Old English verb (*āgan*) whence "own" derives we also have "owe" and "ought." Owning an object means not only having and holding it, but having control over it, being its master, doing with it as I will whenever I will, having it at my disposal – even to the point of disposing of it. And just as no man can serve two masters, no object can have two owners. To the extent that you have something at your disposal, it is not at mine. Ownership as the manifestation of a right binds the owned to the owner but also binds all others in consequence, excludes them not only from a relation of ownership with the object owned but also from any use of it at all save by permission of its owner, requires them to make space for the owner's dominion by the limitation of their own. In practice, of course, we might feel that our ownership is hardly this sort of absolute mastery. It seems the things we purportedly own often make as many or even more claims upon us as we do upon them. Anyone who owns a house can understand this given that, if a homeowner tries to call the landlord to fix a problem, the line is always busy. But the fact that we are frustrated by these states of affairs (or accept them with self-mocking resignation, as the case may be) only demonstrates that they represent a compromised or corrupted form of ownership. We never sense our ownership so keenly as when we hoard an object, removing it from relations of use or possession by others, or as when we make away with it altogether, removing it permanently from all relations. Ownership is dominion, and the nature of the latter is to be absolute and sole dominion.

### 2.1.2. *Freedom of Speech* as a Universal Human Right

A sufficiently compelling case might be made that human persons have a right to speech. The object could be identified as the faculties or physical capacities that permit an individual to use language, and a good majority of human persons have these and can deploy them at will. One can isolate and identify discrete material requirements for speech: fully developed and relatively undamaged parts of the brain responsible for language, lung function, a throat and set of vocal cords in good repair, the presence of palate, teeth, lips, and tongue and sufficient motor control over these. If we expand the definition of “speech” beyond vocal utterances or substitute “expression” for “speech,” one can lack a number of these and still possess the object in question: without a voice, one can still write; there are numerous types of sign language; there are a host of other means of expression available to us (facial expressions, movements of the body, artistic productions, etc.)

And the other grammatical elements of the right are fairly easy to identify as well. The obligation of others to respect my right to speech consists in their not depriving me of my possession of it. They should, for instance, refrain from cutting out my tongue and chopping off my hands as was done to Maximus the Confessor to keep him from speaking or writing; they should not remove or damage the parts of my brain necessary for language use or speech production, and so forth. Again, expanding the definition of "speech" to mean more than mere utterance and requiring the conditions of its potentiality to communicate, respect of my right means that others do not physically confine me in a sound-proofed room away from anyone who might hear my speech. And respect of the right excludes the sorts of attempts of others to usurp ownership of my speech that might be found in works of science fiction: "hacking in" to my brain and controlling my vocal productions from a remote "terminal," *vel sim*.

Finding grounds of agreement to fund a claim to speech as a right might seem more difficult considering the degree of uncertainty and scientific debate about the origins of the human faculty for language. But agreement on origin or cause is not what is required of the reasons grounding the right. Nor do those reasons have to be demonstrably correct. All that is required is that there be an agreement on some principle as the one that grounds the right, that there be a set of shared criteria which, if met, constitute a case of ownership. Here the implicit grounds would seem to be something along the following lines: a person is the owner of herself -- of her body, all its faculties, and all its productions.

In the event, the grammar of "free speech" does not understand the object of the right to be speech itself, but its freedom. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression" and the U.S. Constitution says "Congress shall make no law … abridging the freedom of speech." The Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen, composed in 1789 and still in effect today as part of the preamble to the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, reads as follows: "La libre communication des pensées et des opinions est un des droits les plus précieux de l'Homme: tout Citoyen peut donc parler, écrire, imprimer librement." But whether the object of the right is taken as "speech (that is free)" or "speaking (freely)" or "freedom (of speech)," this is something other than "speech" *simpliciter*.

The foregoing consideration of what a right to speech would mean demonstrates the oddity of claiming a right to its freedom. If an individual has a right to speech based in his or her natural and biological control of its production, how is speech not already free? Except by subjecting a person to bodily confinement (e.g., mouth gags, the sound-proofed room) or by inflicting serious physical damage of a more permanent variety, no one can effectively deprive another of speech.

A consideration of historical and political context helps us to understand how “freedom” is being understood within the grammar of “freedom of speech.” The concern of the drafters of the documents that identify freedom of speech as a right was for putting an end to situations of political tyranny, whether the particular instance of tyranny was identified with the person of a monarch (King George III of England in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, still very much in mind during the drafting of the Constitution), with an oligarchy (the French aristocracy for the Déclaration des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen), or with any number of oppressive regimes, fascist states, and political dictatorships (the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights.) What tyrannical regimes seek to eliminate is not speech itself, but those particular acts of speech whose substantive content challenges and threatens the claims of possession or dominative ownership that constitute the tyrannical regime itself.

Although bodily confinement or forcible modification to prevent speech are not unknown under such regimes, a far easier and more common tactic for stifling dissent aims not primarily at preventing speech but at punishing it after the fact. Of course, this is often an effective preventative measure; one may stop and think twice before saying something if the consequences for saying it are sufficiently likely and unpleasant. But it is important to note that this is only a secondary effect and not by any means guaranteed to be effective. Despite the institution of such measures, there nevertheless remain those who will and do give voice to dissent, accepting the risk and suffering imprisonment, exile, persecution, torture, or death for the crime of speaking.

Punishment works on the logic of exchange mentioned previously in conjunction with the rationale of "might makes right." In the case of penalties, exchange functions not in lieu of but within the logic of rights. A right institutes situations of property (for the one who owns the object of the right) and debt (for all who owe respect to this relation of another's ownership in their own acts and relations.) If an individual's right is infringed upon – if he is deprived entirely or in part of that which he owns and is owed – then the right itself is grounds for penalizing the offender, for exacting a substitute for what was owed and not rendered. Not all reprisals, then, can be said to constitute "punishment" because not all are bound within the logic of rights, just as not all cases of possession constitute cases of ownership.

Recognition of freedom of speech as the object of a fundamental and universal human right is a point at which two semantic valances of the word "free" converge. First, such discourse asserts that speech should be "free" in that it should not be *constrained*; second, speech should be "free" in that it should have no *cost*. According to the first sense, a right to freedom of speech means there should be no external limits or conditions constraining what an individual says (i.e., expressing disagreement or displeasing others with one's speech is a lively option), nor should there be any constraints upon the physical act that constitutes her saying it (i.e., no outside interference with the bodily organs responsible for the production of speech.) According to the second sense, the affirmation of a right to freedom of speech equates to an assertion that no reprisals for speech will be taken to constitute a *just* penalty – that is, the rights of a speaker trump the rights of those whose claims of ownership may be threatened by the content of speech – and, moreover, the very threat of any such penalty constitutes a "constraint" upon speech sufficient to abrogate its freedom.

In practice, of course, no state recognizes a human right to *absolute* freedom of speech.[3] Limitations are placed upon the ownership rights of individuals to their speech in cases where there is a conflict with the ownership rights of other individuals or groups. The most common example of this occurs when one individual is within the bounds of the property of another. The owner of the property has the right to decide who may enter his domain, as well as how long and on what conditions they might remain there. So nothing prevents a property owner from making the particularities of the speech of his guests (e.g., whether he finds its volume, tone, or substance agreeable) a condition of their continued presence on his property.

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[3] It is here that we see a major incoherence internal to the logic of "freedom of speech" as a universal human right. If I were to have a right to freedom of speech (on the definition of "freedom" implicit in the grammar of rights), then the obligation of all others would be to submit to my speech, lest their doing otherwise constrain or create a cost for my speech and curtail its freedom. And if we take having rights as part and parcel of personhood, then respecting the right of one to freedom of speech would obligate all others not to do anything that might constrain or create cost for the speaker (destroying his freedom) -- not by their speech to attempt any ordering contrary to that put forward by the right-holder, perhaps not to speak or respond at all, not to have rights at all, not to exist as a person but only as an object at the disposal of the right-holder. In essence, the right of one to freedom of speech requires that there be no *others*. If freedom were truly to function as a right, then the person who has such freedom – who has absolute ownership – could only exist as if floating in outer space, in an environment without friction or resistance, beyond the pull of any gravity. The debt of non-existence owed by others in respect of the right would then deprive speech of its potential to be an instrument of communication. Speech would simply be swallowed up by its own freedom, given that "in space, no one can hear you scream." One might make a comparison between my critique of the "rights" grammar's concept of freedom as the absence of constraint and Slavoj Žižek's critique of the liberal paradox of tolerance of the other as an intolerance towards the proximity of the other in Žižek, "Against Human Rights," *New Left Review* 34 (2005).

U.S. laws and constitutional amendments prohibiting such things as hate speech against persons and seditious speech against the state can be understood to operate upon the logic of rights of ownership as well. The chief criterion for determining that particular utterances count as hate speech or sedition is that they pose a clear danger to the lives of human persons, including the lives that are supposedly protected by virtue of the continued existence of the state. Insofar as an individual is considered the owner of herself, a threat to her life threatens her exercise of ownership over her property.

The fundamental difference, then, between tyrannical regimes and the modern liberal-democratic state is not that the latter ceases to make attempts at sovereignty and dominion by asserting rights of ownership whose efficacy can be threatened by individuals' speech. Instead, the difference consists in the fact that modern liberal-democratic states are more secure in their potency and accordingly raise the bar for what types of speech they will consider real and serious threats to their sovereign power. The result is that many forms of critical and dissenting speech will appear mere annoyances that can be tolerated without fear or loss, not significant threats that must be neutralized in order to safeguard the ownership-claims that constitute the sovereign state or its political order. At the conceptual-grammatical level, this means that modern liberal-democratic states can present individual claims of sovereignty and ownership (individual rights) as the rule, and frame their own corporate claims of sovereignty and ownership as "special exceptions" to that rule. The crucial point here is that accounts and justificatory reasons are required not of the general rule but of the exceptions to it.

### 2.1.3 Freedom of Speech as a *Universal Human* Right

Universal human rights are taken to belong to or inhere in all individual human persons regardless of their membership in any particular community or state. This is the force of such language as "inalienable" or "fundamental" when applied to human rights. Within the grammar of universal human rights, what states are taken to be doing is recognizing the right of the human person to freedom of speech, not instituting or creating that right; the right is conceived as prior to and independent of states. And yet, a right is the concomitant and instantiation of an order of relations between persons and/or objects. Therefore, on the definition of "politics" that I have presented here, a right could not be said to be "pre-political" but would have to be belong to some politics that predates the arising of any and all particular states and perdures after their falling.[4]

The American Declaration of Independence identifies this politics with the creation and ordering wrought by God, but there are two points that must be noted here. The first is that the "Creator" envisioned is the absentee God of deism who builds and winds the watch of the cosmos and then leaves the scene. This institution of "inalienable human rights" is understood on the logic of ownership as well: because God has produced human persons, he owns them as his property. God's endowing the human person with rights to herself amounts to a permanent transfer of ownership that remains operative independent of any further human-divine relations. If we cleave to a politics founded upon rights (exclusive ownership), then what we must say is this: to whatever extent God has signed over his rights of ownership to individual human persons, to that extent God has removed himself from politics.

What follows from this is the second point: this deistic aetiology secures conceptual coherence for the grammar of human rights but makes God-talk functionally obsolete within it. That is, rights function as such when they serve to secure the individual's ownership of the object of the right, and this requires that other potential possessors of that object recognize and give space to the owner's claim upon it. But widespread assent that there are such things as inalienable human rights (or, at the least, agreement to act as if there are such things) does not require any assents about the existence of God nor any agreements to act as if God exists.[5] It certainly does not require agreement that the grounds of human rights is to be found in God's creation of the world, his ownership of it as creator, and his endowing human creatures with (i.e. transferring to them) his rights of ownership. Provided that we assent to the fact that humans have full rights to themselves – own themselves without remainder – then we can propose and debate various aetiologies for this state of affairs without jeopardizing its continuing operation. Functionally, then, the foundation of human rights is simply the human person him- or herself; the politics of the right are the politics of the sovereign individual or, rather, the politics of the individual's sovereignty.

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[4] This bears some commonality with the Hobbesian view that property (and, accordingly, human rights) cannot exist in "the state of nature" prior to the existence of a commonwealth but require that there be a "sovereign" to define them. See Hobbes, *Leviathan* II.xvii-xviii.

Within the grammar of freedom of speech as a right, what the individual exercises ownership of and sovereignty over is not only the production of speech (oral and vocal sounds, writing, and so forth) but also the substantive content of his or her utterances. This is especially the case when the individual's speech can be taken to represent an authentic expression of herself *qua* individual – when she seems to be "saying what she has in her to say." And, for what might be obvious reasons, at no other time does an individual's speech seem more to constitute an instance of authentic self-expression than when the content of his speech is contrary to the majority opinion of his particular community or when his speech is likely to displease those perceived to be in power over him. The liberal-democratic tenet of universal human equality entails that anything and everything that a human person might have it in him- or herself to say is a legitimate object of the right to freedom of speech, and all potential utterances – even sets of utterances that contradict one another – are equally legitimate objects of the right to free speech.

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[5] Hugo Grotius, it should be noted, did not take a theological argument to be requisite for the conceptual coherence of an account of rights. Rejecting the view of radical voluntarism, Grotius offered the now-famous contrafactual argument that natural law would retain its objective reality "even if we were to grant that there is no God (*etiamsi daremus non esse Deum.*)" Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, Prol. xi.

Within the older grammar of freedom of speech that may be associated with modernism, this was simply because all human persons were equal as property-owners, regardless of the relative qualities of the properties owned.[6] In other words, I have just as much right to say a stupid or repugnant thing that I happen have in mind as you have to say a brilliant and delightful thing that you happen to have in mind. A newer version grammar of freedom of speech holds that all utterances are to be viewed not simply as equally legitimate objects of human rights regardless of their particular substantive content but as equally good and valid or "true" with respect to their particular substantive content – even sets of utterances that contradict one another. What funds this conceptually is the belief in the full equality of human persons and a view of speech as self-expression. If every human person is equally real and good, then the self-expression of one person will be every bit as real and as good as the self-expression of another. Authenticity then becomes the touchstone for evaluating the goodness or "truth" of an utterance; provided that an instance of speech really expresses the particularity of the individual's "self," that instance of speech is good and true and worth speaking.

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[6] It may, of course, be objected that liberal-democrats of the modern era did not really consider all human persons to have equal rights of ownership, given the longstanding prevalence of such institutions as slavery and the subordination of women during the Post-Enlightenment West. But the typical political and conceptual reflex was not to argue that women, persons of colour, and so forth were indeed all members of the category of "human persons, all of whom are equal" but that they should nevertheless have less-than-equal rights of ownership. Rather, it was to argue that members of these group were impaired or not fully human persons, therefore inherently and essentially inferior to members of the category of "human persons, all of whom are equal" (white males) and, accordingly, lacking by nature the same rights of ownership that all fully human persons inalienably possess.

Whether or not the touchstone for truth and goodness is located in the individual human person, the location of the grounds of freedom of speech in the individual amounts to intensifying and absolutizing the exclusive and dominative qualities of the ownership. If the grounds of agreement for a right to speech could be stated as "the individual person owns himself and all his works" then the principle funding the right to freedom of speech would be as follows: "the individual person owns absolutely everything." This is because the right of one to freedom of speech (as opposed to a right to speech *simpliciter*) obliges all others not only to abstain from acts that would deprive that person of his or her capacity to speak but also to pose no resistance to speech that could qualify as a "constraint" upon it, to have or exercise no rights that could create "cost" for the individual's act of speaking. The criteria for what counts as constraint or cost can only reside with the individual right-holder: only she could tell us what would be unpleasant to her (and would thus count as a cost for her speech) or what she fears (which would amount to a constraint upon her speech.)

These, then, are the summary rules of the politics and grammar of the universal human right to freedom of speech. First, the individual is the producer-owner of the self and the self's speech, which latter can be identified as "the self-as-expressed." Second, as the rightful owner of his speech, the individual must have his speech at his sole disposal and discretion. Speaking is the default; normatively, the individual says whatever he has it in himself to say, to whomever, wherever, and whenever he chooses to speak. The choices he in fact makes in speaking are all private matters. Third, the obligation of all others to recognize and respect the individual's right of ownership over her speech entails their refraining from taking any actions that would constitute a cost for or a constraint upon the individual's saying whatever she chooses to say to whomever, wherever, and whenever she chooses to say it. Fourth, costs and constraints are either illegitimate and unacceptable, or else they constitute exceptions to the rule and require justificatory reasons to be found acceptable. Fifth, the critical external threats to the exercise of the individual's right to freedom of speech are the refusal of hearers to recognize and respect the speaker's right and their imposition of costs and constraints upon speech they find displeasing. The obstacle to speech on the side of the speaker, then, is her fear of reprisals that might issue from those who find her speech displeasing and who do not recognize and respect her right to speak freely. Sixth and finally, the usual attempt at removing the impediments to free speech is externally-directed action to persuade hearers to recognize their obligation to respect the speaker's right or, if they refuse to do so, to punish or remove them.

## *2.2. The Grammar of* **Parrhêsia** *in the Ancient Greek Pagan Tradition*

The basic rules and foundational relations that order the grammar and politics of *parrhêsia* in the ancient Greek pre-Christian tradition are, in many ways, fundamentally opposed to the rules and relations governing the modern liberal-democratic grammar and politics of freedom of speech outlined in the previous section.[7] In this section, I will give an outline and brief explanation of the grammatical fundamentals of *parrhêsia* considered synchronically. The next section will consider the development of this grammar diachronically, providing examples and explications of these fundamental rules in action and noting particular tensions and questions that arose historically within the politics of *parrhêsia*.

First, the individual speaker is not considered primarily to be an autonomous owner or producer of himself or his speech, but rather is understood to be a participant in relations with others and himself to be the "product" of one or more others. These others might be one or two individuals (e.g., parents, a teacher), but it is often – especially in the Classical Age and afterwards -- a larger community that practices a distinctive way of life and paedagogical or formational techniques. The speaker's habits of speaking as well as the particular substantive content of his speech can therefore be considered the indirect products of his particular formation and can be appraised as representative tokens of the quality of that formation and of the community that formed him.

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[7] As D. M. Carter terms par*rhêsia* an "attribute" of citizenship and takes care to distinguish it from the right in "Citizen Attribute, Negative Right: A Conceptual Difference Between Ancient and Modern Ideas of Freedom of Speech," *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*. Ineke Sluiter, and Ralph M. Rosen, edd. (Leiden: Brill, 2004) 197-220.

Second, it is assumed that some communities, some formational processes, some human persons (inherently and/or as formed), some acts of speaking, and some particular utterances are simply better -- truer, more beneficial, and/or more beautiful -- than others. The reverse is true as well, as the etymology of the term *parrhêsia* indicates: it derives from πᾶν ("all", "everything") and ῥῆσις ("speech", "utterance"), and so could perhaps be rendered "saying anything and everything." That this is a relatively rare term used only of a particular subset of acts of speaking implies that "saying anything and everything" was not a normative, ordinary, or "default" mode of speech for the ancient Greeks. Rather, the general rule was that there are a good number of things that one might have in mind to say that one simply does not and should not say. The grammar of *parrhêsia*, accordingly, stands in diametrical opposition to the grammar of freedom of speech in which giving voice to whatever one might have in mind is the normative general rule.

Consequently, the third basic principle is that acts of *parrhêsia* constitute either violations of the general rule (and are to be viewed as deplorable – if not "illegitimate" – acts of speaking) or valid exceptions to the rule (in which case they may be viewed and received positively.) There are numerous instances in both pagan and Christian texts where the term *parrhêsia* is used derisively of acts of frank-speaking that the authors consider to belong to the former category. If an act of *parrhêsia* is to be classed in the latter category, then it must be provided with a convincing justificatory account; often texts report these accounts as being given by the speakers themselves as part of their parrhêsiastic speech.

Fourth, while the particular rules governing what things ought not be said, by whom, to whom, and in what circumstances vary locally and diachronically, they can nonetheless be approximated and generalized in two rules. The first rule is that one should not say things that insult or result in harm to those towards whom one should have goodwill. The latter category includes those in both "private" and "public" relationships with the speaker -- personal friends as well as fellow citizens, allies, and so forth. The second rule is that a speaker (x) ought not say a thing (y) to a hearer (z) in cases where x is inferior in formation or character to z and/or y is critical of or disagreeable to z.

What both of these rules aim at is preventing the speaker's shame, which is essentially a socio-psychological "stop-and-hide" reflex triggered by the self's simultaneous exposure to and disconnection from others.[8] This happens chiefly and particularly when the self is made the object of other community members' negative judgments. [9] Our ordinary use of the word "shame" blurs the lines between the motive of the subject ("stop and hide") and the actual expressions of communal judgment that conduce to it.[10] More than this, a person can experience shame not only in response to the actual situation of falling under negative communal judgment but also in anticipation that this situation is possible or likely to occur. The latter "internalized" shame aims at preventing the former "external" shame.

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[8] To my knowledge, the only other person who has made a similar (and, to my mind, largely accurate) connection between *parrhêsia* and shame is Arlene Saxonhouse, *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.) Her view differs from mine primarily in that takes affective shame to be an essential requirement for – rather than a postlapsarian entailment of – a political community.

[9] Gershen Kaufman, *Shame: The Power of Caring*, (Rochester, Vermont: Shenckman Books, 1992) 11 describing his own experience of shame in high school when required to speak at a panel discussion: "I sat there just paralyzed. I couldn't move, my mind was blank, I was speechless! I could think of nothing to say. . . . But not one word came to mind. I could not think of what to say, not one word. So I sat there, dumbly looking down at the table, wishing I could sink into the floor. I felt trapped, speechless, and intolerably alone . . . Most notable are the binding effects of exposure upon the self, culminating in such utter self-consciousness that speech can become silenced." Michael Lewis in *Shame: The Exposed Self* (New York: Free Press, 1995) 20-6 discusses silence as among the behavioral responses to shame discussed in the literature; this silence is to be viewed as one of a host of ways the human person attempts to "hide" in the shame-reflex.

[10] Interior affective states – i.e., the *qualia* of "feeling" or "feelings" that we often think of under the rubric of "emotions" -- are not germane to the present investigation. Instead, the focus here is on the particular reflexive *movements* (or impulses towards such movements) that constitute emotions.

Several other aspects of shame are important to note here. First, there is a distinction to be made between "shame" and "guilt."[11] When we speak of "guilt," we mean to say that the subject herself holds to and agrees with particular criteria or standards of behavior, character, etc. which (in her judgment) she has failed or does fail to meet. On the other hand, "shame" can occur regardless of the subject's agreement with or commitment to the criteria in question, and regardless of whether she believes that she has failed to meet them. It is contingent only upon the subject's belief that there are such criteria, that they are held by others with whom she is in relationship, and that *they* might judge her to have failed to meet these standards. Secondly, it is worth noting that the reflexive action of shame ("stop and hide") itself produces a disconnection of the subject from others. What it aims at ending or preventing is the exposure of the self as an object of others' negative judgments. Third and finally, it might be fair to categorize shame as a subtype of fear, insofar as it also hinges upon a subject's judgment that something he or she will find painful or damaging is possible or likely to happen, and triggers a reflexive movement designed to prevent or escape from that outcome. Within the present investigation, however, "fear" is reserved for all outcomes the subject judges likely or possible except that designated by "shame" – *viz.*, the subject's exposure to negative communal judgment and rejection (to some degree or other) from the community on grounds of his or her inferiority.

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[11] E.R. Dodds famously argued that ancient Greek culture underwent a paradigm shift from being a "shame culture" to a "guilt culture" in *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951.)

Violations of the second of the general grammatical rules laid out above conduce to shame within the politics of *parrhêsia* in two ways. Because the speaker's formation and character is believed to shape his thoughts and opinions as well as his manner of expression, his utterances display and manifest the quality both of the man himself and of the community that formed him. If he was considered inferior to his listener to a sufficient degree, it was taken to be almost guaranteed that whatever particular opinions he might hold and voice would (immediately and truthfully) appear ugly, stupid, and base to his listener. In addition to this, if and when a speaker voluntarily displays his own baseness to his betters as if it were excellence, this is taken to show not only that the speaker is base and lacks excellence himself but that he is so poorly formed that he cannot even recognize excellence (in his listeners) or its lack (in himself) so as to feel appropriate shame and refrain from speaking. Both of these expose the speaker to other members of the community as someone who is unfit to be either a speaker (producing excellent speech) or a listener (recognizing excellence in others), which results in alienation from communal relations. Violations of the first rule often result quite directly in alienation from personal or communal relations because they are instances of malevolence or bad faith, which is a defect in character and formation and so also a cause for shame.

Fifth, the role of listeners, then, is to test, judge, and appraise speakers and their speech, as well as, in certain cases, the particular formational processes that produced those speakers and their speech. This often includes making judgments about whether an act of *parrhêsia* constitutes a rule-violation or a justifiable exception to the rule. Sometimes listeners come to a quick consensus about the quality of the speaker and his speech. In other cases, the process of judgment is longer and agonistic in form: the addressee or some other hearer offers resistance to the parrhêsiastic speaker, debates with him, exerts pressure on him, "raises the stakes" of the argument, or the like. Again, this is in striking contrast to the role of hearers within a politics of freedom of speech as a universal human right, which is precisely to refrain from offering resistance or applying pressure to speakers but instead to yield space for speech by way of respecting the speaker's right. The issue within the grammar and politics of *parrhêsia*, by contrast, is that hearers are themselves products of some tradition of formation, which conditions their ability to be good listeners, able to recognize excellence in speakers and their speech. As we shall see, the formation (abilities and limitations) of listeners must be taken into account by the parrhêsiast in his decision to say what is in him to these particular listeners as well as in his attempts to provide justificatory reasons for his speech that might prove persuasive to them.

Sixth, and finally, although fear of retaliation for saying things that displease or threaten one's listener can act to constrain or prevent speech, the chief obstacle to parrhêsiastic speaking is not fear but shame.[12] This shame is fundamentally about the failure of the speaker to meet his or her audience's criteria of "acceptability." Accordingly, while the grammar of the universal human right to freedom of speech places the onus upon the audience to recognize the right of the individual to speak and to refrain from placing cost or constraint upon this speech, the grammar of *parrhêsia* places a greater burden upon the speaker herself. She must find common ground with her audience, accommodating herself and the manner and content of her speech to some of the criteria of her listeners. Given that, on at least some measures or criteria, her speech (its content) or her act of speaking (her position or character relative to that of her audience) will be judged disagreeable, she must also make a justificatory argument in her speech for the precedence of the criteria on which she and her speech may be judged "acceptable" over those on which they would be judged "bad" or "shameful."

## *2.3. A Diachronic Study of* **Parrhêsia** *in the Ancient Greek Pagan Tradition*

The first common use of the term "*parrhêsia*" within Ancient Greece was to name certain privileges, habits, and protections for the speech of citizens in the Athenian democracy of the Classical Age. The fact that the Western democracies of today appeal to ancient Athens as the pioneer of their own form of government is partly what tempts us to equate *parrhêsia* with the modern liberal-democratic concept of "freedom of speech." Because there are real similarities between Athenian democracy and modern democracy, it can be easy even for scholars of antiquity to read our own more familiar political narratives and contexts back onto the ancient past, and to elide and overlook ways in which the democratic politics of classical Athens differed significantly from the democratic politics of, say, the United States in either 1789 or in 2018.

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[12] In face, Elizabeth Markovits suggests as a definitional condition of *parrhêsia* is that "a speech must criticize someone who has the power to somehow injure the speaker." *The Politics of Sincerity: Plato, Frank Speech, and Democratic Judgment.* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008) 66. What she is envisioning here as "injury" is not the sort of rejective judgment that would cause shame but rather the sorts of damages that would prompt fear.

As did many of the modern democratic nation-states that arose in the late 18th century, Athens had its own problems with tyrants and developed its democratic politics in response. But the problem of tyranny was conceived and framed differently in ancient Greece than in post-Enlightenment Europe and North America. Greece in the pre-classical period – that is, after the demise of the Bronze Age Minoan and then the Mycenaean civilization around 1100 B.C. until roughly the beginning of the 5th century, B.C. -- was not a nation-state but an *ethnos* politically divided into a number of cities. These were for the most part ruled by oligarchs or by "tyrants." The latter word initially lacked much of the negative connotation it has today. This was in contrast to terms like *basileus* ("king"), which was associated with what were found to be ostentatious and abusive modes of dominion prevalent in the non-Greek East (i.e., among the Persians) and which only begins to gain a positive valance after the growing acceptance of the Roman emperor (called a *basileus*) in Greek lands around the second century A.D. and into the Byzantine era.[13]

To call a ruler a "tyrant" rather than an "oligarch" meant primarily that there was only one of them at a time. Some tyrants did tend, officially or otherwise, to instate dynastic successions (e.g., the Cypselids in 6th century Corinth or the succession of Peisistratus by his son Hipparchus in Athens.) But others were elected, like Pittacus of Mytilene, whose position bore the title "*asymnetês*" but amounted to life-long rule. Still others, such as Theagenes of Megara, came to power by overthrowing the oligarchy and had significant popular support. Tyranny was often seen as a step in the right direction: that is, towards a more "populist" regime and away from the concentration of power in a small aristocracy.

The problem the Greeks had with aristocracy (literally, "rule of the best") was not the one that we would probably have today. That is, we do not find in the historical record anything resembling an ancient Greek argument that the noble and landed families were not in fact any "better" or more entitled to possessions and power than anyone else. Rather, the problem with great men is that their very greatness made them simultaneously dangerous and indispensable: you couldn't live without them and you couldn't live with them – often quite literally. The Athenian model of *parrhêsia* and *isêgoria* was seen as a necessary component of a politics that would order human excellence and the competitive drive that nurtures and accompanies it towards the greatest magnitude and widest distribution of benefit. That is to say: what Athens sought to do was to reconstruct the understanding of individual *aretê* in a way that was indexed to the common good.

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[13] See, *inter al.*, James F. McGlew, *Tyranny and Political Culture in Ancient Greece*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.) Certainly, there was always the concern that a tyrant could functionally be or become a *basileus* by his choice to exercise power arbitrarily and absolutely rather than responsibly – *viz.*, in ways that were receptive and responsive to others. One of the chief tokens of the "mildness" of a tyrant is his willingness to listen to the parrhêsiastic speech of others. See, for example, *Athenaion Politeia* 16.6 on the admirable receptivity of Peisistratus (who was technically a *tyrannos*) to the speech of the common people.

### 2.3.1. The Homeric Tradition

The Homeric epics illustrate both the nature of "human excellence" or "being the best" (*aristeia*) and the political role the ancient Greeks accorded to speech. These poems were orally composed long before the heyday of Athenian democracy and in another part of ethnically Greek territory. And yet not only did they exert more influence in shaping the collective Greek imagination than any other cultural production, but they also were also closely connected to the transition from tyranny to democracy at Athens. They received their canonical form with the incorporation of their recitation into the Panathenaic games instituted as part of a religious festival honoring the goddess Athena by the tyrant Peisistratus of Athens in 566 B.C. While Peisistratus championed the cause of the people against the aristocrats, his son Hipparchus who succeeded him as tyrant was assassinated by the lovers Harmodius and Aristogeiton. At that point, the fledgling democracy, which had been struggling under the weight of aristocratic influence under the stress of conflicts with neighboring Megara before ceding to Peisistratus' (admittedly more populist) rule, was restored and confirmed by a set of reforms to the constitution made by Cleisthenes in 508/7 B.C.

The events of the *Iliad* take place during the war of the Greek forces, comprised of kings from various territories and their contingents led by king Agamemnon of Argos as a sort of general-in-chief, against the city of Troy to recover Helen, the wife of Agamemnon's brother Menelaus (king of Sparta), who was either abducted by or willingly eloped with the Trojan prince Paris.[14] As the epic opens, Agamemnon refuses to return the woman Chryseis, given to him as a war-prize (*geras*) in a skirmish with a community outside Troy, to her father Chryses, despite the latter's offer of a sizable ransom that the rest of the Greeks are very willing to accept. Nor is he terribly nice about it, threatening the old man and vaunting his intention to take Chryseis back to Argos – far from her homeland – to do his weaving and frequent his bed. Unfortunately for the Greeks, Chryses happens to be a priest of Apollo and he petitions the god to revenge his tears upon the Greeks. Apollo obliges and, being the god of pestilence as well as healing, sends arrows of plague upon the troops encamped outside the walls of Troy. For nine days, dogs and pack-mules and men were dying left and right, the smoke from burning corpses thickening the air.

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[14] It seems clear that a war of Greek forces against the city of Troy did occur, although scholars continue to debate the precise causes and dating of this conflict. For the purposes of this investigation, the historical realities of the war at Troy matter far less than the role of its narrative retelling, chiefly through the Homeric poems, within the later Greek imagination and conceptual grammar.

After ten days of divine retribution, Achilles, the prince of Phthia, decides to call an assembly of the troops to decide what to do about the situation – with some subliminal prompting by the goddess Hera, who favors the Greeks and is getting tired of seeing them drop like flies. His proposal is that a prophet or priest or interpreter of dreams be consulted to discover what has upset Apollo and how he might be propitiated. As luck would have it, the Greeks have with them one Calchas, a prophet and reader of bird-omens, who knows all about things that were, things that are, and things which are yet to be. The reason given for the prophet's boldness in addressing the assembly is he is "well-intentioned" (ἐύφρονέων) towards the Achaean army.[15] Calchas says that he is willing enough to say what he knows, but gives the following conditions:

> I will certainly speak; but you [Achilles] promise and swear to me
> That you are ready-minded to defend me with your words and hands.
> For I think a man will be angry who holds great power
> Over all the Argives and whom the Achaeans obey.
> For a king is mightier when he is angry with an inferior man;
> Even if he swallows down his wrath on that day itself,
> He will still hold resentment in his breast thereafter
> Until he fulfils it. So you say if you will save me.[16]

Calchas here acknowledges that he is "an inferior man" relative to Agamemnon, who is not only a king but the leader of the conjoined forces of the Greeks. What he argues would prevent his speaking, however, is not shame at his inferiority to the king but rather fear of Agamemnon's anger and resentment. The reason that the prophet's inferiority-shame to Agamemnon on the measures of leadership and might is insufficient to prevent his speech is because he is equal (or even superior) to the leader of the Argive forces on other measures. These are knowledge (particularly of what is going on with the gods) and being well-intentioned towards the Achaean forces as a whole. That is to say: Calchas' act of speaking is predicated upon and funded by the existence of criteria of individual excellence that are indexed to the common good.

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[15] Homer, *Iliad* I.73.
[16] *Ibid.*, I.76-83.

Achilles promises the prophet his protection, Calchas tells all, Agamemnon is obliged to return Chryseis to her father and make a sizable sacrifice of oxen to Apollo, who then removes the plague. At this point, all would have been well except that Agamemnon decides he must replace Chryseis and takes the woman that Achilles won as *geras*, Briseis, in her stead. In response to this slight, Achilles decides to sit out from the fighting until Agamemnon should return her; without their best fighter in the mix, the Greeks start dying in droves again.

It is tempting for the modern reader to interpret this squabble as concerning the possessions themselves or offense against rights of ownership, but that is not really what is at stake here. Critical to the conflict is the identity of each of the women in question as a *geras* – the material token of others' recognition of one's excellence (*aristeia*) and the medium of honor (*timê*). It is not simply that the taking of spoils in war manifests superiority over the vanquished foe; the spoils are distributed by the victors amongst themselves. Everyone who fights on the winning side gets some share of the spoils, but the best fighters get the best spoils and the judgment on who was the best in that particular battle is conceived of as being recognized by all and acknowledged in the consensus of the fighters themselves on apportionment of what material objects have been won. This is central to the arguments made by both Agamemnon and Achilles for why they ought not be deprived of their war-prizes: the other Greeks all agreed and decided to give those particular prizes to them in recognition of the excellence the men demonstrated in the battles that won the women as spoils. The present consent of the army or any of its members to a revocation of the token of their earlier acknowledgement amounts to duplicity.

In light of this, one sees a marked difference in the responses of Agamemnon and Achilles to the deprivation. First, Agamemnon's refusal to return Chryseis amounts to a refusal to acknowledge the *aristeia* of the god Apollo through a failure to honor his priest Chryses. Secondly, his seizure of Briseis from Achilles functions simply as a retaliation for the latter's recognition of Apollo's *aristeia*, mediated through Achilles' defense of the prophet Calchas who spoke on Apollo's behalf. That is to say, Agamemnon could be viewed as operating on a logic of ownership and exchange, conceiving the recognition of his *aristeia* (and the woman who serves as its material token) as being owed him by others. Insofar as

Achilles's defense of Calchas was instrumental in effecting the loss of that token, Achilles can be seen as being in default of his debt to Agamemnon's right of ownership. Accordingly, Agamemnon can exact payment of the debt by substitution in kind; he ceases payment on his obligation to Achilles' ownership of Briseis and transfers that ownership to himself. But Achilles' response to this deprivation is significantly not the same sort of rights-based retaliation employed by Agamemnon.

Achilles certainly views the insult as a deprivation of *timê*, but he treats honor not fundamentally as the "property" of an individual in the sense of either an inherent quality of the person or a material object possessed as a token of this. Rather, as he describes it, honor is always located in the larger community's consensus about and responsive actions to the individual. When a delegation is sent from Agamemnon begging him to re-enter the fray, Achilles explains the foundational logic of his indifference to ownership: human persons are mortal, so no matter how much you win, you can't take it with you. In fact, the noblest and most excellent are the soonest to die because they do not avoid danger. After all, Achilles came with the Achaean army already having learnt from a prophecy that he would die in battle at Troy and never see the fertile fields of his homeland Phthia ever again.

What is lasting and therefore matters most, then, is not the human person or any material possession but instead his community's recognition of his excellence, which is mediated by the speech of others. The real prize that every hero of epic poetry seeks is what the epic poem itself offers: incorruptible glory. In Greek this is *kleos aphthiton*, the first word ("glory") being cognate with *kluô*, a verb meaning "to hear." To be heard of continuously over time requires that one be spoken of. Of course, one can deserve this unfading report of one's excellence, but one by definition cannot own it. It is contingent upon the speech of others and on their consistency in their speech.

Therefore, Achilles' decision to abstain from fighting is not a form of recouping the loss of what was owned/owed by taking its equivalent as a substitute payment. Rather, it is essentially an assent to the new consensus of the Greeks about his *aristeia* – *viz*., that Achilles' excellence in the fight that won Briseis is not equivalent to her relative desirability as spoils of that fight. This stands in contradiction to their earlier consensus that allotted her to him as a proportionate measure of his excellence. His refusal to participate further in the war therefore manifests the duplicity and the error of the second consensus by letting the Greeks live with Agamemnon's lie – or, more accurately, by allowing them to die because of it.

And this is exactly what happens in the epic: Achilles' absence from the battle and the resulting losses sustained by the Achaeans force Agamemnon to acknowledge the veracity of the Greeks' first consensus about Achilles – his *aristeia* is a necessary and unsubstitutable component of their own, is a requirement for their good, is indeed proportionate to the excellence of Briseis *qua* war-prize. In his endeavor to make amends, Agamemnon effectively rescinds his earlier position regarding others' speech:

> It is noble to listen to one who stands to speak, nor is it seemly
> To interrupt …
> To the son of Peleus [Achilles] I will show my mind; but you other
> Argives, consider and know well my speech, each one of you.
> Often indeed have the Achaeans spoken this word to me
> And have frequently reproached me.[17]

Of course, Agamemnon is not entirely penitent, claiming that he is not really to blame for the initial slight because the deity Atê, goddess of folly and ruination, made him do it. And he is still very much rooted within the logic of ownership, both returning Briseis and offering additional gifts to Achilles in an attempt to patch things up.

At the same time, Achilles learns a lesson after his beloved friend Patroclus is slain in the battle. His wrath over Agamemnon's avaricious and duplicitous act has not served the common cause of the Greeks but rather that of the Trojans and their chief fighter, Hector, who have gained the upper-hand in the war at the cost of many Achaean lives. Initially, he refuses Agamemnon's gifts, given that the quantum of misfortune already endured by the Greeks bids fair to satisfy his desire for *kleos*; as he says, “but I think that the Achaeans will remember for a long time the conflict between you and me.”[18]

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[17] Homer, *Iliad* XIX.79-86.

With the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles we witness the possibility of two politics that both bear the same components (recognition, competition, possession of objects, speech) but order these elements differently. As noted, Agamemnon’s logic does approximate to a rights-based grammar, but the logic of Achilles’ speech and actions is closer (if not identical) to that embraced by the Athenian democracy of the Classical Age. On the Athenian understanding, the freedom by which speech is free is not grounded in the speaker’s exclusive and private relation of dominance over some object but in an inclusive and very public relation of participation. Achilles wins the quarrel with Agamemnon precisely because his individual excellence (prowess in battle) can be recognized by the entire community and instrumentalized for – or against – the common good. In other words, in the grammar of rights the freedom of the individual is constituted as “freedom” by the obligation of all others to it; in the grammar of Athenian democracy, the freedom of the individual comes to be viewed as conceptually inextricable from that individual’s relations of recognition by and beneficence to the rest of the community.

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[18] Homer, *Iliad*, XIX.63-4.

### 2.3.2. Athenian Democracy in the Classical Age

The Athenian constitution made a clear distinction between citizens (free males over the age of 18 who were of citizen parentage and who had been registered in one of the districts of Athens called “demes”) and all others (slaves, resident aliens, visitors, women, and children). The provisions for freedom of speech were applicable only to citizens. Additionally, one could not own land or significant property within the territory belonging to the city unless one were a citizen. This reflects a denial of any “politics of the individual;” no human person was thought to have political capacities (rights of ownership, etc.) in and of himself but only by and through his participation within a community. To say, as the Athenian constitution did, that persons have no political privileges except by their membership in a given *polis* does not mean that those excluded from citizenship could not in some way order themselves and, therefore, have their own communities and politics. Athens certainly recognized the existence of other cities, kingdoms, and so forth; what its constitution did was to bracket all of those and speak only about one particular city and its politics.

What Athenian democracy offered its citizens, then, was not primarily opportunities for competitive ownership but rather certain exemptions from the economy of ownership and relations of communal participation that both allowed for and redistributed the gains of individual competition. The first was provided for through reforms to the constitution that made citizens exempt from enslavement – from being owned by others. Granted, one had to be free to become a citizen in the first place, but this regulation meant that, once one was enrolled as a citizen, one could not thereafter be enslaved except if the city were conquered and one was taken as spoils of war. This effectively created an identity between the freedom of the city and the freedom of the citizen. In the ancient Mediterranean, the children of slaves were themselves owned, but free persons became slaves in one of two ways, either by being conquered in battle or by defaulting on a debt.

A significant feature of the first Athenian written code of law produced by Draco in 622/1 B.C. as a replacement for the earlier blood-feud code based in practice and oral tradition was its regulations for chattel-slavery. The severity of these was more than sufficient to earn "Draconian" its current meaning. Inability to pay a debt required that one surrender one's land to the creditor and become a *hektemoros* or "sixth-part man" – a serf who cultivated the land and rendered one sixth of the produce to the creditor. If the amount of the debt was in excess of the value of the debtor's land and other assets, then not only would these assets be repossessed but the debtor (and his family) would become not *hektemoroi* but slaves of the creditor. Finally, one could put up one's own freedom as collateral on the debt and lose it by default of payment.

These laws were changed by Solon (elected eponymous archon of Athens in 594/3 B.C.) in the first set of constitutional reforms that helped create the democracy of the Classical period. The Solonic regulations became known under the rubric of *seisachtheia* ("a shaking-off of burdens") and amounted to a retroactive forgiveness of all debts, the return of all confiscated property, and the release of all *hektemoroi* and debt-slaves. In addition, the use of personal freedom as collateral on debts was forbidden,[19] a maximum was set on the size of property that an individual could own, regardless of the mode of its acquisition, and the custom of using boundary-stones to define plots of land was introduced.

The corollary to this freedom from being owned as a slave was the imposition of a greater burden of political obligations upon the citizen. Prominent among these obligations was a duty of military service in defense of the city. One of the developments that paved the way for democracy was the advent of hoplite warfare and, for Athens, the cultivation of a significant naval force. Whereas the cost of the armaments necessary for earlier forms of war made it impossible for all but the richest to play conspicuous and critical parts in military actions (think of the kings and princes who had starring roles in the *Iliad*), the kit of the hoplite was relatively affordable. Moreover, hoplites were not monomachists; their effectiveness depended on numbers and coordination – the ability of many to move as a single unit and of each individual to account the bodies of those stationed about him as his own. When in formation, a hoplite did not use his shield to protect only his own body but also – and often primarily – the bodies of men adjacent to him.[20]

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[19] See *Athenaion Poiliteia*. 6.1 and 9.1, as well as Plutarch, *Solon* 15.2-4.

Greater reliance on naval warfare meant an even lower buy-in for military service: all one needed to provide to be an oarsman was a cushion to sit (and perhaps slide) upon while rowing. Rowers were also paid, which made this sort of military service quite attractive to the lower classes. After the significant role played by naval engagements in Athens' victory in the Persian wars, we read the following defense of Athenian politics:

> … It is just that poor people and the common people (*dêmos*) have more sway there than do the well-born and the rich because it is the *dêmos* that rows the ships and that confers power upon the city, and the helmsmen, the boatswains, the pentecontarchs, commanders on the bow, and shipwrights – these are the ones who confer power upon the city more than do the hoplites and the well-born and the "worthies."[21]

Just as the freedom of the citizen, then, is bound up with the freedom of the city, so the power of the city is the result of the power of her citizens and redounds as power *to* those same citizens.

The other chief obligation of the citizen was contribution to executive, deliberative, and judicial processes. All media of participation are notable for the sheer number of citizens involved. The courts were served by a jury pool of 6,000 – all citizens over the age of 30 and drawn by lot for particular cases. The minimum size for a jury was 200 for private suits; public suits had at least 501 but, depending on the gravity of the case, this could be increased by increments of 500 such that juries of 1,000 or 1,500 were not unheard of. Jury duty paid at a rate of two obols a day – a relatively low wage, but enough to make such service attractive to those without other steady employment or to lower-class men in their "retirement," a state of affairs notably lampooned in Aristophanes' play *The Wasps*.

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[20] On the influence of hoplite warfare on communal spirit, see Detienne, Marcel, "La phalange: Problèmes et controverses,' 119-42 and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, "La Tradition de l'hoplite athénien," 171-82 in *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne*, ed. Jean-Pierre Vernant. (Paris: 1968.)

[21] *Ath., Pol.* 1.2.

The council or *boulê* was the governing body that had the most restrictions on membership. After the reforms of Cleisthenes in 508/7, each of the 10 demes comprising the territory of Attica (the region of Greece in which Athens is located) selected 50 men by lot to serve as councilors. This may have excluded citizens of the lowest of the four Solonic *telê* or "classes" (the *thêtes*) but definitely included those who belonged to the next-lowest class of *zeugitai* -- those who could afford a yoke of oxen.[22] The council set the agenda for meetings of the *ecclêsia*, advised generals, oversaw maintenance of the standing military, received foreign emissaries, and handled finances. Daily business was conducted by a subset of the council, chosen by lot, who served as a standing committee (*prytaneis*) for periods of thirty-six days and were housed at public expense during that time. The main deliberative body was the assembly or *ecclêsia*. This was, at different times, open to all citizens above the age of 20 who had done two years of military service or to all citizens indiscriminately. Again, attendance was compensated and regular meetings were held ten times a year, with others called as circumstances required. It would have been difficult for many living in the outer environs of Athens to attend, but nevertheless the quorum for a number of types of hearings (e.g., the ostracism of citizens) was set at 6,000.[23] These figures, impressive enough from a purely logistical standpoint, become even more so when one considers that the total number of Athenian citizens at a given time ranged somewhere between 30,000 and 50,000. That is, the constitution required that somewhere between one-eighth and one-fifth of its citizens be in attendance in order to do certain types of business.

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[22] See *Ath. Pol.* 7.4. There is no direct evidence that membership in the *boulê* did exclude the *thêtes*, and arguments have been made that they were included, e.g., P.J. Bicknell, Studies in Athenian Politics and Genealogy (Weisbaden: Franz Steiner, 1972) 5, and Philip Brook Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 195.

It is concerning speech in the *ecclêsia* that the "free-speech" provisions of *isêgoria* and *parrhêsia* especially held effect. The former literally means "equal address" and concerned the act of speaking, recognizing all members of the assembly as equally suited or permitted to address the others. The latter emphasized freedom for the content of speech, declaring no exclusion on what could be said. As noted previously, the word *parrhêsia* is a compound of *pan* ("all, every") and *rhêsis* ("speech") and accordingly can be understood to mean "saying everything" or "telling all." From the latter it has a the valance of "plainness" of speech; from the former, "boldness." The semantic layer concerning boldness and the saying of "everything and anything" depends upon contrast with what might be termed the “default assumption” that there are things that one should not say. The default assumption is that encapsulated in Calchas’ speech from the *Iliad*: on the one hand, he is ready to speak because what he has to say could benefit the Greeks; on the other, he is reticent because he knows his speech has the potential to anger Agamemnon and make the prophet himself a target for the king’s retaliation. To say that one is exercising *parrhêsia* means that such a conflict between the motivation to say a particular thing and the motivation to refrain from saying it exists for this individual, and that the conflict has in this particular case been resolved in favor of speaking.

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[23] *Ath. Pol.* 22.1-4.

In turn, it is only meaningful to say that one exercises the privilege of *isêgoria* if it would be possible to envision some basis on which the others might prevent one from speaking. There is another scene in the *Iliad* that illustrates the logic operating against address that is overcome by *isêgoria*. In Book II, after Agamemnon and Achilles had their tête-à-tête in the assembly of the troops and Agamemnon has made the required sacrifice to Apollo, returned Chryseis to her father, and seized Briseis in her place, one Thersites takes the king to task for his avarice. What he says is in fact consonant with the epic’s presentation of events: Agamemnon lacks nothing that should move him to take Achilles’ girl. As king and commander over all other kings, he has more than enough possessions of his own already, more than everyone else. What is more, his actions pursuing the cause of ownership have done damage to the troops and, as Thersites says, “it is not fitting that the one who is leading them should march the sons of the Achaeans into evils."[24]

Unfortunately, the problem with Thersites' speech is Thersites himself: he is bandy-legged, lame in one foot, hunch-backed, pointy-headed, and balding. Odysseus takes him to task for his polemic, while admitting the latter man's skill in speech and not arguing that he has spoken falsely. As he says, "get a grip on yourself and do not be minded to quarrel with kings on your own; for I say that there is no baser mortal than you among as many as came with the son of Atreus [Agamemnon] to Ilium [Troy.]"[25] Odysseus threatens to strip and shame Thersites and to drive him out of the assembly with blows if he does not comply and smacks him on the back with his scepter as proof that he means business; Thersites cowers, sheds a tear, and keeps silent; and the rest of the Achaeans all laugh at him.

The presence of this episode in what was a cultural touchstone-text for classical Athens suggests that the affirmation of citizen *isêgoria* in the assembly is not the product of a communally held belief in the fundamental equality of all human persons, or even of all citizens. Rather, it represents a communal recognition that there exists a real inequality between citizens which would otherwise prevent some from speaking because of shame (i.e., because they are on some measure inferior to others), but that this shame is neutralized or outweighed by some other consideration that argues for the fittingness of even the putatively “basest” of men to speak.

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[24] Homer, *Iliad* II.233-4.
[25] *Ibid.*, II.247-9.

That the provisions of citizen *isêgoria* and *parrhêsia* belonged to the custom and constitution at Athens meant that certain rules or reasoned concerns (implicit in the composition of the words themselves) that militated against speech were deprived of their force such that the rules or reasoned concerns that recommended speech would prevail. But neither *isêgoria* nor *parrhêsia* was the right or absolute freedom of the individual either in theory or in practice. That is, speech was never without the risk of cost or constraint -- nor was it ever intended to be. Some instances of the exercise of *isêgoria* and *parrhêsia* were opposed, resulted in the public shaming of the speaker, and what we today might consider “private” speech was never protected by law.[26]

Freedom, within this politics, was not a guarantee of personal safety – and certainly not of immunity to shame. To the contrary, the very risk of parrhêsiastic speech was intrinsic to its valuation by the community. Sara Monoson describes this beautifully:

> Speaking with parrhesia in the democratic political context retained a strong association with risk … These risks were not thought to undermine or even conflict with the right of free speech; rather, they affirmed that the speaker could be held accountable for the advice ventured. The strong

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[26] The prosecution of Socrates is an exemplary case; although *parrhêsia* typically did not result in the execution of the speaker, fines could be levied.

> association of political parrhesia with danger can, moreover, illuminate what made it so valuable an idea for the democrats. The free democratic citizen presupposed by the ethic of parrhesia was daring and responsible, self-confident and eager to enter the fray, the very antithesis of the slavish subject of a tyranny.[27]

We might expand upon this by saying that parrhesia was not simply an ethic that "presupposed" a citizen of the type Monoson describes here but was also a practice that formed such citizens – or, more precisely, that formed citizens as such.

The value accorded *parrhêsia* within the Athenian democracy guaranteed the speaker only two things. The first was that the city would not tolerate the sorts of actions Agamemnon took towards Achilles in the *Iliad* – *viz*., the retaliation of one citizen against another for public speech that the former found displeasing on *private* or individualistic grounds. The practices of *isêgoria* and *parrhêsia* aimed at restricting the populace to the use of only such criteria as were held in common by all in speaking publicly and in judging or responding to the public speech of others. The application of such common criteria could still result in someone attempting to exercise *isêgoria* being shouted down and prevented from speaking by the rest of the *ecclêsia*. One who spoke parrhêsiastically could still offend common sensibilities and be shamed by 5,999 other citizens assembled on the Pnyx and, perhaps, shouted down the next time he tried to speak up.

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[27] S. Sara Monoson, "Frank Speech, Democracy, and Philosophy" *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*, J. Peter Euben, John R. Wallach, and Josiah Ober, edd. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994) 172-197; 178.

Secondly, the discourse by which Athens prided itself for having the features of *isêgoria* and *parrhêsia* in its democratic constitution guaranteed citizens the chance to start a fight. This might not sound like a very good deal to those of us who are used to thinking of "free speech" as a guarantee that we will not have to incur the emotional scrapes and ego bruises that often result from heated debates. But the Athenians valued *parrhêsia* precisely because they valued the verbal *agôn* that such speech initiated, and the opportunity for an individual to prove his mettle within the contest and be recognized by the rest of his community for his excellence and contribution to the common good.

This love of agonism was not peculiar to the Athenians among the ancient Greeks; what was unique to Athens was the belief that their democratic politics itself ensured and required that *any and every citizen* could participate in this word-struggle. Every individual citizen was considered potentially capable of speaking in the city's interest rather than in his own private interest because individual advantage was indexed to the city's advantage such that the two were one and the same. There was no sense of the *polis* being a "state" separable from its populace: Athens simply *was* her citizens and her fate was theirs. More than this, the health of the city required that her citizens have accurate knowledge of the best action to take in a given situation, and there was often no *a priori* way of telling which citizen might be able to provide such knowledge to the rest. Put another way, every citizen was seen as being at least potentially a knower and speaker of truth about the city's common good.

In fact, one of the most frequent situations in which an individual's attempt to exercise *isêgoria* would be denied actually favored the lower classes over the upper. The Athenians realized that there were cases where acting to promote the good of the city required specialized knowledge about such things as ships, agriculture, buildings and infrastructure, and so forth, and that this was knowledge possessed by artisans, farmers, and engineers who actually worked with such things -- not the idle rich. Self-important persons who attempted to weigh in on such matters despite lacking the requisite expertise would be shouted down while common tradesmen were encouraged and allowed to speak. There still remained communal criteria according to which these "blue-collar workers" would be judged inferior to aristocrats (who were generically termed the *kaloi kai agathoi* – "noble and good people.")

The adoption of a principle of *isêgoria* also represented an advantage for the young. In the age of classical Athenian democracy, proceedings of the assembly were opened with the question "Who wants to address the assembly?" According to Aeschines, the previous custom framed the question with a restriction: "Who above the age of fifty wants to address the assembly?"[28] With respect to acts of speech concerning the *polis*, it was agreed that criteria of putative inferiority such as age and class were outweighed by and should be ignored in favour of other criteria according to which the tradesmen were at least as beneficial to the common good – if not more so – than those of the upper classes.[29] That is to say, the particular politics that constituted the Athenian democracy indexed *aristeia* to the common good of the *polis* closely enough that some types of relative inferiority could be neutralized as causes of shame that might prevent an individual's speech. Put another way, a distinguishing feature of the politics of Athens, as opposed to the politics of neighboring city-states, was the *parrhêsia* of her citizens.

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[28] Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon* 4.

Again, because of the value placed upon verbal agonism, *isêgoria* and *parrhêsia* only constituted an opportunity and invitation to compete; they were not proof against losing. But the real genius of Athenian politics (at least in its ideal form) lay in its construction of a game in which even the losers still won. As an example, a number of Athenian citizens might compete in one of the four annual Panhellenic games, of which the Olympics was and is the most famous. If one of the Athenian contestants won an event, the win belonged to Athens and, so, also to those Athenian contestants who did not win. All the citizens who did not even compete could boast of it because the win was a demonstration of the excellence of the *polis*, evidence that her politics or *politeia* was the one that formed the most excellent citizens in all of Greece.

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[29] This rule of πόλει χρηστόν ("what is useful for the city") as regulative for the principle of *isêgoria* is discussed by Yokio Nakategawa, "Isegoria and parrhesia," *JCS* (Kyoto) 37 (1989) 1-11. The article is in Japanese, but an English abstract is available from the *Journal of Classical Studies* online. Significantly, Nakategawa seems to make the case that the adoption of *parrhêsia* represented a shift away from *isêgoria* (indexed to the good of the city) and towards a freedom located in the individual; in this, she is in line with Momigliano's later position on the tension between the two.

The agonism of ancient Athenian politics differs in this way from the competition foundational to modern rights: the prize of the former is not having exclusive dominion (over material possessions, other people, etc.) but being conspicuously excellent and having that excellence acknowledged by others. Insofar as the chief desideratum of the Athenian verbal *agôn* is unremittingly social, sole dominion cannot constitute a "win" and is in fact inimical to winning. The last thing an Athenian would want would be an effectual annihilation of all other persons; there would be no one left to recognize and acknowledge him or his excellence. Nor would he want to enslave all others to his will; if he inspired such fear that no one would dare to reproach him if he warranted it, then no commendation he received could ever be trusted and, hence, valuable.

The resulting picture of freedom on the Athenian model is therefore very different from that given by the grammar of rights. One never *has* freedom of speech; rather, one's freedom is *for* speech. Only the free person (one who is not owned) can win free of the politics of ownership and private advantage to share a common cause with others. This is essentially the principle behind the routine torturing of slaves giving evidence in court cases in Greek and Roman antiquity. The assumption was that slaves would always lie to protect their masters unless they suffered sufficient pain and visceral fear of death. If all that a man was or had was the property of another private individual, then nothing of him remained outside that bond which could mediate his participation in the truth. If the slave's owner was indeed culpable for a crime against the order of the *polis*, the slave's well-being depended on the owner's private interest defeating the public interest of the city. Moreover, this concept of freedom does not reduce to the absence of constraint or cost – quite the opposite. Only the speech of the free person can be constrained and shaped by a common good and by shared criteria that are not located without remainder in the speaker himself, solely contingent upon his convictions, decisions, or desire for a personally advantageous politics. Only the free person can afford to pay the personal and private costs of speech, to risk losing the *agôn*, because only the free person can share in a "win" that is not strictly speaking his own.

On this model, speech is conceived as a doubled effort, rather than the double claim-of-ownership that it is within a grammar and politics of rights. This is, again, in contrast to the competitive balancing act of the modern democracy, which seeks to secure a good public order (the prevention of tyranny) by preventing full freedom (understood as unimpeded dominion and ownership without cost) of any one citizen by promising this same freedom to all others. By contrast, the politics of Athenian democracy seeks to maintain a beneficial ordering of the whole by effecting a balancing act within each individual and defining individual potency such that it is inseparable from sociality both originarily (as the effect of traditional and communal practices of formation) and teleologically (as being directed towards an unremittingly *common* good.) So, on the one hand, the individual wants to win the *agôn qua* individual -- to have his speech and himself as a speaker found excellent and even superior to others. But such a win depends upon the judgment and approval of the others, their affirmation that his speech expresses something they can, on the basis of communal criteria, recognize as “goodness” or “excellence.” On the other hand, the individual wants to win *qua* citizen – to have the others to decide for what is, in fact, the best course of action even if he is not the one to identify or suggest this, because his own well-being is implicated in and even identical to that of the city. The best sort of speech succeeds on both fronts, but failure on both is preferable to success at only one of the two. Missing out one conduces sooner or later to loss of the good achieved by success at the other. If an Athenian’s speech is found pleasing by the assembly but is not in fact the best policy, the effects – when noted – will result in the displeasure of the others at the one whose bad advice they followed and the withdrawal of their approval. If an Athenian’s speech does represent the best course of action but is found disagreeable and rejected by the others, then the best course will not be taken and the speaker will suffer the resulting damages along with the rest of the populace.

Fundamental to such a politics of speech are a number of tenets. First, it requires that there is something which may be called “truth” – in the case of the

Athenian assembly, that there is some ordering or course of action in each particular case which will produce maximal shareable benefit. Second, it needs to be the case that truth is knowable -- *viz*., that it could be known by at least one citizen and recognized by a majority of the others. Third, the only indubitable prerequisite for such knowing of the truth is commitment to it: a desire to know it and a willingness to speak it at risk, both of which were facilitated by membership in the *polis*, which amounted to the investment of a citizen's own interest in that of the city and its common good. To be sure, the Athenians understood that there might be a subset of citizens at any given time who would be pursuing solely private interests rather than the common good of the *polis*, but the Athenians had a degree of faith that their politics – the ordering of relations that comprised the democracy – was sufficient to prevent these bad apples spoiling the barrel. The orator Demosthenes argued for the inevitability of the Athenian democracy's discovery of the truth – the best course of action for the common good of the *polis* – precisely because its politics entailed citizen *parrhêsia*:

> Democracies have many other good and just features, to which a sensible man ought to cleave—in particular, it is impossible to turn *parrhêsia* aside from exposing the truth, since it depends on the truth. For it is not possible for those who are doing something shameful to win everyone over; the result is that one man giving a true reproach will pester them.[30]

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[30] Demosthenes, Or. 60.26.

On this score, we might compare Athenian *parrhêsia* to the "checks and balances" built into the politics of the United States.

None of the foregoing should be taken to imply that there is no concept of public interest or common good operative in modern democracies or amongst their citizens. Nor is it meant to suggest that Athenians were all unselfish communitarians or that Athens in the Classical age in every way embodied a better politics than does, say, the United States in the 21st century. As discussed above, the concept of exclusion was fundamental to the constitution of citizenship, and the particular applications of that concept supported xenophobia, the institution of slavery, and the oppression of women. Athenian democracy, in practice – like every other politics – never lived up to its own ideal; it was a dream that never quite came true and that eventually died. Historians may argue amongst themselves about the precise cause of its demise, but notable for our purposes was the culprit blamed by ancient Athenians themselves, particularly by the philosophers: rhetoric.

### 2.3.3. Politics between Rhetoric and Philosophy: The Case of Socrates

The deleterious effect of the rise of rhetoric on Athenian democracy manifests a point of confusion and weakness in the politics of speech described here. The identification of this locus of tension and the response to it within philosophical discourse had serious consequences on how *parrhêsia* was reconceptualized and deployed by the time the word was adopted for Christian use by the Greek Church Fathers. The problem was that neither the good intentions of the citizens nor their sheer numbers were sufficient to guarantee that they would, in fact, recognize the truth and approve it. In other words, Demosthenes was far too optimistic about the perspicacity of the truth; it was possible for a majority of 6,000 people dedicated to the survival of the *polis* all to be misled and go wrong together. And rhetoric was the *technê* by which a single man was trained not to give true reproaches and pester those going wrong, but to persuade and so lead the majority in whatever direction he wanted.

In the fifth and fourth centuries, the term "sophist" was used to refer to men with rhetorical and philosophical training who evidently prided themselves on their ability to "make the weaker argument the stronger" and to teach their students to do the same. At least, they were lampooned as such by Aristophanes in his play *The Clouds*, where he actually includes Socrates in the class of sophists. Most of these rhetoricians would not have agreed to this description of themselves or their business. What they did explicitly affirm, boast of, and demonstrate was their ability to win (where "winning" consisted in "gaining the acceptance and approval of a majority of hearers") while arguing either side of an issue in debate, and to teach others to do the same.

A great deal could be said for both the intellectual and the social benefits of learning to make the strongest arguments possible for and against all competing and even mutually contradictory positions on an issue. But fundamental to Athenian democracy was the idea that there is only one "right answer" in a debate – one correct verdict in a law case, one maximally good ordering of the city, one best course of action regarding interactions with other cities and kingdoms. At the time when Socrates was active, in the late fifth century, choosing wrongly had already cost Athens a great deal – including (for a brief period) democracy itself. Following the death of Pericles from a plague in 429 B.C., two years after the beginning of the Peloponnesian wars, the city elected the demagogues Cleon and Cleophon, whose poor leadership was largely blamed for Athens' loss of the war. Several aristocratic Athenians who held positions in the army stationed at Samos, along with the rake Alcibiades (who had been a follower of Socrates but was effectively exiled from Athens on pain of death for religious crimes), plotted an oligarchic takeover of Athens in 411 B.C. that resulted in the short-lived reign of the Four Hundred. They were replaced at the urging of oligarchic moderates by the Five Thousand. Democracy was restored in 410 after the Battle of Cyzicus, but when the Athenians were defeated in the Battle of Aegospotamoi in 404, a Spartan oligarchy (The Thirty) was instated to rule the city. Democracy was again restored in 403 when the Athenian general Thrasybulus stormed Athens' port at the Piraeus and killed Critias, the leader of the Thirty.[31]

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[31] It should be noted that Socrates and Plato's relationship to the oligarchs is not easy to discern. Socrates had run into trouble with the Thirty by refusing to kill Leon of Salamis, a man renowned for justice; cf. Plato, *Apology* 32a-c. At the same time, Socrates had been allowed to remain alive and gadflying about the

It was not the case that the prowess of rhetoric and sophistry raised questions about the tenet that a single truth existed and that it could be recognized and found agreeable. Rather, it prompted philosophers (*inter al.*) to ask why in many cases the truth was *not* recognized and how a falsehood could be mistaken for the truth. What could account for the fact that, although the truth regarding the city's advantage was in the best interest of all citizens, jurors and assembly-members could find speech that was not true to be agreeable and persuasive?

The answer was that some – but by no means all -- of the common criteria by which speech was judged acceptable were the wrong ones. The genius of the sophists and rhetoricians was their thorough-going knowledge of the shared values and criteria of their contemporaries such that they could gain acceptance of a false argument by coordinating an appeal to communal preferences that were not concerned with or indexed to logical validity or veracity.[32]

How, then, are we to distinguish between our various standards and criteria and use the right ones in making judgments so as not to be deceived but instead to recognize the truth and the best course of action? Answering these questions was

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city during their reign, so it is possible that his activities were associated with oligarchic rule by the democratic partisans deciding his fate in 399. Plato's mother Perictione was related to two of the Thirty, Critias and Charmides. In any case, those who supported oligarchy had seen the recent dominance of their own nemesis, the demagogue Cleon. He died in 422 while Plato was still a child, but the memory of Cleon's rhetorical appeals to the poorer classes and his reliance upon sycophants and informers to root out his enemies was kept alive in the comedies of Aristophanes and the history of Thucydides.

[32] This is part of Plato's argument in the *Phaedrus*, as will be shown at the conclusion of this subsection.

essentially Socrates' philosophical mission – one for which he was convicted by the city of Athens on charges of dishonouring the gods and corrupting the youth, and executed in 399 B.C. While there is much to be said about Socrates and his philosophy, he was responsible for two innovations with respect to the use of *parrhêsia* that are most relevant to the present investigation. The first was his proposal of "spiritual" realities as being properly the highest criteria of human judgment and able to serve as universally common (as opposed to culture-specific) criteria. The second was his use of parrhêsiastic agonism as a method by which to criticize an entire politics itself, along with its systems of citizen formation (as opposed to one particular option or proposal within a politics.) The latter move was dependent upon the former in that the aim of the criticism was the reformation of the *politeia* into one ordered on the principle of the superiority of spiritual realities and criteria to material ones. Moreover, Socrates' use of *parrhêsia* to persuade and convert others to this meta-political view depended upon the commonality of these spiritual criteria.

As Plato has it in the *Apology*, Socrates had a friend who consulted the Delphic oracle to ask if there was anyone wiser than Socrates; the answer was that no one was wiser. Doubting that this could be true, Socrates decided to go about the city of Athens consulting various people who seemed to be wise and getting into arguments with them, expecting to be put in his place and perhaps to learn a thing or two. To his surprise, he found that a question-and-answer session (or *elenchus*) inevitably ended with the other man being put out of countenance. Although everyone he talked to seemed to themselves to know a great deal about virtue and excellence, it turned out that they really did not. After a good bit of this, Socrates concluded that the oracle had spoken truly: he was the wisest man in Athens – not because he knew more than anyone else, but because he was the only one who realized that he did not know anything. Deciding that the general populace's delusion of wisdom along with their actual lack of it could not possibly be a good thing for a democracy, Socrates made it his occupation to be the gadfly of Athens, pestering and questioning others in order to "wake them up" to their ignorance so that they might remedy it. After all, the first step to recovery is admitting that you have a problem.[33]

It is difficult not to find this account a bit coy in its modesty, but notable here is Socrates' reflexive turn to verbal agonism as a way of testing the veracity of the oracle's pronouncement. The expectation was that a contest in words would show which of two men was the wiser, and in the typical Socratic dialogue, this *agôn* is explicitly about criteria. After a bit of narration to introduce the various interlocutors and to provide Socrates with an opening, the conversation gets underway when Socrates asks his interlocutor a definitional question; in the *Laches* it is "What is courage?", in the *Republic*, "What is justice?", and so forth. The interlocutor obliges by offering a definition. Then, by posing a series of questions that the interlocutor answers, Socrates demonstrates the incoherence of the definition or the insufficiency of its criteria. This is where the conversation stops in the early aporetic dialogues (e.g., the *Euthyphro*), so called because they concluded when Socrates' conversation partner ended up in *aporia* – too flummoxed to say anything further.

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[33] See Plato, *Apology* 20c-24e

In the later dialogues, like the *Republic*, the Socratic *elenchus* evolved into a method by which knowledge was pursued and in the course of which Socrates could exposit his own views – that is, his understanding of where and how to seek criteria for definitions and judgments. Taken together, the statements made by Socrates on these matters within the dialogues are known variously as Platonic idealism or the Theory of the Forms.[34] Socrates posits that there is an intelligible Form or Idea (both εἶδος and ἰδέα are used) that exists eternally in a spiritual or "heavenly" realm and that serves as the pattern for every thing in the physical and earthly realm that shares its name. For example, our four-footed companions Spot and Fido and Rover are differentiable one from another because they are material, composite, and temporal; this is what enables Rover to have a longer tail than Fido does and for Spot (one would presume) to have spots. But we can recognize all three as "dogs" because all three are patterned after and so participate in the eternal and unchangeable Form of Dog. Given that material things are demonstrably temporal, composite, and mutable whereas the Forms are not, Plato concludes that the Forms are ontologically superior to the material.[35] Accordingly, knowledge of the Forms themselves is what we need in order to make accurate judgments about which of the particular material realities participate in which Form and which of those are better (i.e. participate more fully in their Form) than others. That is, we need to know the Form of Dog itself in order to be able to say – with certitude and accuracy -- that Fido is a "good dog" and Rover is a "bad dog."

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[34] What Socrates says about the Forms is not entirely consistent from one dialogue to another.

The way that we know the Forms, according to Socrates, is because they are intelligible – that is, visible to the "eye" of the intellect. In the *Cratylus*, Socrates suggests that humans presently have access to the Forms and gives as an example the fact that we can all imagine a perfect circle, even though none exist in the material realm.[36] Elsewhere, he posits that the souls of human persons pre-exist and perdure after their incarnation in material bodies. In the "heavenly" realm where the Forms exist,[37] our eternal and non-material souls had a clear view of the Forms themselves, unimpeded by matter and its vicissitudes. Accordingly, when we know true things in the here-and-now, we do so not by discovery of them here but by *anamnêsis* (recollection) of the intelligible Forms we saw previously in the spiritual realm. This is the conclusion given in the *Meno*, where (on being questioned by Socrates) an uneducated slave is able to "recall" truths about geometry.[38]

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[35] That immutable and eternal things are better than mutable and time-bound ones is a first principle premise that one either assents to or does not; Socrates' interlocutors all assent to it.

[36] Plato, *Cratylus* 389.

[37] Sometimes Plato describes this as a "heavenly realm" either hovering above the earth (*Phaedo* 109a-111c) or "above the heavens" (*Phaedrus* 245c-253c.)

Given that, on this understanding, Plato takes knowledge of the Forms (whence true criteria of judgment) to be accessible to all human persons insofar as all have souls, it remains to give an account of why we often do not remember or use this knowledge. The reason Socrates gives for this in the *Phaedo* is our material embodiment:

> The body provides us plenty of business through its need for sustenance; more than that, diseases might come upon us and impede our pursuit of what is real. And it fills us with loves and desires and fears and all sorts of delusions and a lot of foolishness, so that one could say it really and truly makes it so that we cannot have good sense (φρονῆσαι) about anything ever. [39]

The body and its desires leave us no leisure for philosophizing and, if we do ever get some free time, we are interrupted by its needs or its senses, which are geared towards perception of material things, distracting us from the *noêsis* (intellectual activity) required for perceiving higher nonmaterial realities.

In the *Phaedrus*, however, Socrates posits that the body is not solely responsible for our failure to recognize and recall the intelligible reality of the Forms; the soul has a share of responsibility for the problem as well. He theorizes that the soul consists in three parts and uses the metaphor of a charioteer driving a two-horse chariot: the rational faculty (τὸ λογιστικόν) of the soul is the charioteer and the two horses are the lower drives of the soul.[40] One of these horses is good and loves virtue and glory; he needs no whip but is driven by command (κελεύματι) and by reason (λόγῳ.) The other horse is rather a different story -- ugly, slow, a bit deaf, hard-mouthed, insolent, and incredibly stubborn. The task of the charioteer, then, is to rein in the bad horse (which takes some doing) whenever he charges off-course after something he fancies (which is often) until he is humbled and habituated to taking direction from the rational faculty and avoiding all the things that used to catch his eye.[41]

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[38] Plato, *Meno* 82b-86b.
[39] Plato, *Phaedo* 66b-c.

The fundamental human problem, then, as Socrates (or Plato) sees it, is one of disorder.[42] This is the case not only on the micro-level (i.e., within the soul-body that comprises the individual human person) but also on the macro-level (i.e., within the aggregate of persons who form the *polis*.) Accordingly, the solutions that Socrates proposes for solving the problem at both levels involve radical reorderings. In the *Republic*, Socrates presents a plan for purging (διακαθαίροντες) the city and founding in its stead the ideal *polis.*[43] This would include restructuring of domestic relations; as regards marriage and procreation, Socrates suggests that the guiding principle be "to consider everything that belongs to friends 'common property'" (πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα κοινὰ τὰ φίλων ποιεῖσθαι.)[44] The education of children is of particular concern. As Socrates says:

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[40] These are not named in the *Phaedrus*, but seem to correspond to the θυμοειδές ("spirited faculty") and the ἐπιθυμητικόν ("appetitive faculty") in *Republic* 39d-e.

[41] Plato, *Phaedrus* 253d-254e.

[42] It should be noted that Socrates did not write texts himself; while he was certainly a real historical figure, he survives for us only as a character in the writings of Xenophon and Plato.

[43] Plato, *Republic* III 399e.

> The caretakers of the city must cleave to [education] so that it will not be corrupted without their noticing; rather, they should guard it against everything – guard as much as they are able against there being any innovation in gymnastic or musical training contrary to the ordering (παρὰ τὴν τάξιν) [we have established.][45]

Various prescriptions are made for the types of music and poetry to be permitted in this ideal *polis*; while little is said about the specifics of physical training, Socrates holds it to be of equal value to the cultivation of mental or "spiritual" sensitivity. Controlling the details of education, Socrates argues, will enable the maintenance of further codes for dress, deportment, etiquette, and the like without need of legislation; it will also produce citizens who are able to discern the good and make such laws as are required with respect to contracts and commerce.[46]

But what would have been the most shocking aspect of Socrates' ideal city to his fellow Athenians was that it was not a democracy. In his view, the attractions of a democratic state – the freedoms and equal-rule promised to all citizens – were precisely its weaknesses. Extreme freedom could not be expected to lead to anything but a change to extreme slavery, insofar as the natural inclination of embodied persons who lack proper psycho-spiritual formation (the habituation of the “bad horses” of their souls to following the lead of their rational charioteers) is to follow their baser and changeable appetites. This moral and intellectual laxity on the part of the majority of people coupled with the belief that all people possess an equal capacity to rule opens the door for tyrants, demagogues, oligarchs, and the like either to dupe the people or to wait for the people to lapse into anarchy and then seize power. Democracy is thus inherently unstable.[47]

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[44] Plato, *Republic* IV 424a.
[45] *Ibid.*, IV 424b.
[46] *Ibid.*, IV 425a-426c.

What is proposed instead is a philosophical meritocracy, with the populace divided into three (theoretically) non-hereditary classes. These correspond to what Socrates identifies as the three faculties of the soul. The appetitive (“bad horse”) class is the most populous and includes tradesman, labourers, artisans, and the like. The spirited (“good horse”) class consists of those Plato calls the “guardians” – essentially a state police whose job it is to preserve the established ordering of the city. Finally, the rational (“charioteer”) class consists of the philosophers who make all the decisions necessary to “steer the ship of state.” The justice of the city consists in the ordering of its citizens in this hierarchy of classes, as well as in the ordering of the souls of individual citizens, particularly those of the ruling philosopher class.

Each citizen -- and both males and females count as citizens in this *polis* -- is assigned to a class during childhood education. Those who are pegged to be future philosophers (belonging initially to the broader class of guardians) undergo lengthy training in music, gymnastics, and mathematics – none of which is compulsory but is instead presented as "play." The rationale for this is that, as Socrates says, nothing taught by force stays in the soul and allowing students options will make their aptitudes and proclivities clear.[48] After reaching adulthood, they are expected to do military service for several years before returning to their studies to synthesize what they learned in haphazard fashion as children – to "bring those subjects together to form a unified vision of their kinship both with one another and with the nature of that which is." Notably, Socrates advises that the future-philosophers not be exposed to dialectic or argumentation until the completion of this stage of their education when they are about thirty years of age.[49] The reason is that

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[47] See Plato, *Republic* VIII. 557a-564d for a strident critique of democracy.

> Kids, whenever they get their first taste of arguing, abuse it as a game, always going in for contradictions; imitating those who have refuted them, they themselves refute others and, like puppies, they enjoy dragging and tearing those near them with arguments… But an older person doesn't want any part of this craziness. He will imitate one who wants to engage in dialogue and look out for the truth rather than one who plays and contradicts as a game.[50]

After passing the dialectical tests designed to ascertain if they are able to put aside sensory perception so as to perceive the Forms intellectually, the future philosophers are permitted to devote themselves to the study of dialectic and argumentation for about five years before being required to assume junior posts in war or city management for a period of fifteen years so as to acquire practical experience. At this point – when they are fifty years of age – they are allowed to divide their time between philosophical contemplation, their unpleasant social obligation to use their ability to see the Good itself to order the city as just, and the task of training up the next generation of guardians and philosophers.[51] That, in brief, is Socrates' proposal for the ideal *politeia* and the formational practices its citizens would require.

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[48] Plato, *Republic* VII. 536d-e.
[49] *Ibid.*, 537d-e.
[50] *Ibid.*, 539a-c.

Three points that have bearing on the development of *parrhêsia* in the political-philosophical discourse which the Cappadocians inherit require special mention here. First, the political proposal laid out in the *Republic* reads as a philosophical thought experiment rather than as an action plan for a political coup. (All the same, Plato does have Socrates suggest how such a political takeover of Athens might be managed: send everyone over the age of ten out into the countryside, then take possession of the children and re-educate them.)[52] But philosophers of subsequent generations – beginning with Plato himself – began to take up utopian political projects, chiefly by seeking to train an established leader as a "philosopher-king" rather than by trying to found or take over a city. More will be said on this in the next section of this chapter.

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[51] *Ibid.*, 539d-540c.

[52] Plato, *Republic* VII. 540e-541a. A modern reader might well consider Plato's presentation of the ideal *polis* to contain all the necessary ingredients for cooking up a totalitarian state of the worst sort; Karl Popper rather famously made this same observation in *The Poverty of Historicism*, (Abingdon: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), blaming the influence of Plato's idea of the "philosopher-king" on Hegel and Marx for the totalitarian regimes of Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin.

Secondly, what Socrates does with the practice of *parrhêsia* in *elenchus* and dialectic is nothing short of politically revolutionary. He maintains it as a “democratic” practice even as he abstracts it from and uses it to criticize the democratic politics and cultural formation of Athens. It should be remembered that the Athenian understanding of democratic *parrhêsia* hinged upon not only the fact that all citizens were free persons who participated in the *polis* such that its advantage was their own but also the fact that all citizens were formed by the *polis* and educated in communal cultural values. Socrates’ theory of values and criteria that are universally available rather than culturally contingent provides the condition of possibility for the disembedding of parrhêsiatic speech from a particular political context, as well as the turning of parrhêsiastic speech -- with persuasive force -- against that politics.

While Socratic dialectic *parrhêsia* was certainly intended as a counter to sophistic deceptions and rhetorical hoodwinks, it could easily appear to be another verbal trick of that same ilk. What all three had in common was the understanding that Athenian cultural formation included exposure to multiple values and standards of judgment but no clear or unified instruction about how these were to be ordered.[53] But this is precisely what Athens herself could not acknowledge without admitting her inferiority and weaknesses as a *politeia* – one that needed to hold its own amongst and defend itself against neighbouring cities and kingdoms, one that required her citizens to have values and standards in common in order for the truth and best course of action to be recognized by a majority in democratic debate. In light of this, the charges brought against Socrates and on which he was convicted (by a small but not insignificant margin) become coherent. To introduce a host of invisible otherworldly Forms as the highest universal criteria for judgment just was "dishonouring the gods" whose myths and cults were fundamental to education and cultural formation in Athens. Putting respectable people to shame by besting them through *elenchus* and exposing the inadequacy (or nonexistence) of the putative common criteria necessary to the proper functioning of Athenian democracy while groups of enthusiastic young men followed you about to smirk and twitter just was "corrupting the youth." We will see an uncannily similar interplay between *parrhêsia*, politics, the gods, cultural formation, and the corruption of the youth in the conflict between the Emperor Julian and the Cappadocian Fathers over education in the next chapter.

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[53] Spartan education and cultural formation, by contrast, did seem to have exactly this sort of clear and explicit hierarchy of values and criteria, in the form of a teleological ordering towards the practice of warfare.

Third and finally, Socrates speaks with *parrhêsia* within the dialectic, to be sure. But Socrates does not have the first parrhêsiastic "move" in the *elenchus*; instead, his opening gambit is to invite his interlocutor to engage in *parrhêsia* – to speak his mind, give an account (διδόναι λόγον) of himself and his life and his criteria, to say what he takes some important virtue or excellence (courage, justice, truth, piety, etc.) to be.[54] Socrates' own frank speech is always responsive to his interlocutors, and its function is, as Michel Foucault has noted, "basanic."[55] A *basanos* or "touchstone" was a black stone that putative gold was rubbed against to test whether or not it was genuine. In the same way, Foucault argues, Socrates' role in the *elenchus* is to test by questioning the harmony between his interlocutor's *logos* (the rational account or definition he can give) and his *bios* (his way of life.) The aim of Socratic *parrhêsia,* then, in Foucault's view, is to "lead the interlocutor to the choice of that kind of life (*bios*) that will be in [harmonic] accord with logos, virtue, courage, and truth."[56]

Although Foucault's work on *parrhêsia* catalyzed interest in this phenomenon of speech within the field of Classical Studies (*inter al.*), he makes two significant errors in his investigation. First, while he does seek to answer the question of why interlocutors would choose to play this "parrhêsiastic game" *with Socrates*, he does not answer the question of why they might choose *not* to play the game at all. Fortunately, both the meaning of the word *basanos* and Socrates' interlocutors themselves do. From the noun *basanos* derives the verb *basanizô,* used in the Socratic dialogues to mean "to put to the touchstone-test." But the verb is more frequently used with human beings to mean "to interrogate under torture in order to extract a confession." And, indeed, we see a number of Socrates' interlocutors in the dialogues ending up stumped and irritated -- ashamed of their inability to provide coherent and unassailable answers to his questions and eager to get away from the interrogation.[57]

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[54] See Plato, *Laches*, 187e-188a

[55] Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, Joseph Pearson, ed. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001) 97-8; he quotes Nicias in the *Laches* describing Socrates' role as a *basanos* as well as the young Socrates in the *Gorgias* exulting to have found in Callicles such an excellent *basanos* to test the quality of his soul.

[56] *Ibid*, 101.

This discomfort is named more precisely by those who choose not to flee the *elenchus*. In the *Laches*, (which is, interestingly, a dialogue about courage) Nicias encourages Lysimachus, another participant in the conversation, to submit himself to Socratic interrogation, and says the following:

> For I delight, Lysimachus, in being near the man [Socrates], and I do not think it a bad thing to have either what we have not done well in the past or what we are not doing well in the present brought to mind. Rather, it is necessary to take forethought about one's life from hereon out, not running away from these things but desiring … and thinking it worthwhile to learn for as long as one lives, and not supposing that old age itself will provide one with understanding. So it does not seem to me unusual or unpleasant to be put to the test (βασανίζεσθαι) by Socrates ….[58]

As Nicias says, having one's past or present misdoings brought to mind is what could make the interrogation painful and shame-invoking, tempting one not to submit to questioning but to run away from it. What makes the process "not unpleasant" for some, like Nicias, is the fact that they choose to focus not upon the errors of their past or present but on the future. The desire to "do well" in the remainder of one's life is what prompts the desire and regard for learning, relativizing the discomfort of shame over getting it wrong in the past or present that is a part of the learning process.

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[57] Consider, e.g., the ending of the *Euthyphro*.

[58] Plato, *Laches* 188a-b.

Foucault, then, neglects to consider that *parrhêsia* is not only used by Socrates in the *elenchus* but also demanded of the interlocutor, that the interlocutor's shame at having his past or present mistakes brought to light militates against his *parrhêsia*, and that the ordinary meaning of *basanizô* has a connotation of torture and interrogation meant to extract such confessions of misdoings. By overlooking these, he fails to see the similarities – already present within the pagan Greek tradition – between *parrhêsia* and *confessio*. Accordingly, the picture he paints of philosophical *parrhêsia* is of the *parrhêsia* of the teacher, not the *parrhêsia* of the pupil.

Secondly, as a result of this, Foucault draws incomplete conclusions about the reasons that the interlocutors would choose to play the parrhêsiastic game with Socrates. He claims that they do so because of Socrates' own integrity: he would make "a good *basanos* for testing the relation between *logos* and *bios* in his listener's life."[59] Foucault puts it this way:

> Why, then, would two famous and older generals submit to Socrates' cross-examinations? Laches, who is not as interested in philosophical or political discussions, and who prefers deeds to words throughout the dialogue (in contrast to Nicias), gives the answer. For he says that there is a harmonic relation between what Socrates says and what he does, between his words (*logoi*) and his deeds (*erga*.) Thus not only is Socrates able to give an

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[59] Foucault, *Fearless Speech* 98. Note that Foucault describes the interlocutors as mere "listeners" – witnesses of Socrates' *parrhêsia* rather than participants in *parrhêsia* in response to his questions and invitations.

> account of his own life, such an account is already visible in his behavior since there is not the slightest discrepancy between what he says and what he does.[60]

In other words, it is because of the integrity between what Socrates gives as the rationale (*logos*) for his way of living and his actual way of life (*bios*) that the interlocutors trust him to "harmonize" them and their lives as well.

While this is not entirely wrong, it begs the Wittgensteinian question of language and criteria. That is, saying that Socrates' way of life (*bios*) does, in fact, comport with his rationale or verbal account (*logos*) requires that one have *some* idea of what those words (*logoi*) should and do look like when lived out in deeds (*erga*). The integrity or internal consistency between Socrates' words and deeds is not in itself sufficient to recommend him as a "touchstone" for others. The additional requirement is that there already exist a degree of commonality of definitional criteria between Socrates and his interlocutors; this is what enables them to see a consistency between his words and his deeds. For example, the reason that Laches is prepared to accept that Socrates might have something to teach them about courage (its *logos*, its Form, its criteria) is that Socrates had already displayed courage on *his* (i.e., Laches') criteria.[61] In other words, the interlocutors must act as the *basanos* in selecting the one who will act as a *basanos* for them.

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[60] Foucault, *Fearless Speech* 100.

[61] In his younger years – shortly before the dramatic date of the dialogue – Socrates did military service in the infantry, with Laches as his commanding general, and distinguished himself for courage at the battle of Delium by keeping his head when the Athenians were routed, cf. Plato, *Symposium* 122a-b. Laches himself avers that if the rest of the army had been like Socrates, they would not have suffered defeat that day, cf. Plato, *Laches* 181b and 189b.

The harmony between Socrates' *logos* and *bios* cannot and does not provide an independent standard by which communal criteria and definitions can be tested. Rather, that "harmony" must inevitably be evaluated on the same criteria and definitions that themselves require testing. In order to "harmonize" *logos* and *bios*, either on the micro-level of the individual soul or on the macro-level of the *polis*, Socratic philosophical *parrhêsia* needs to solve the problem exposed by rhetoric – *viz*., the disorder and inaccuracy of common criteria that permit baseness and falsehoods to seem better and truer than the good and the true. Foucault seems to think that this can be done (and that Socrates does it) entirely within the self, independently and without reference to corrupted communal criteria.

Socrates himself knows better. Philosophical dialectic must work from within the broken system of language in order to heal and harmonize it. And the *technê* that makes this possible is – of all things – rhetoric. Socrates explains this philosophical use of rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*, after giving an argument for the superiority of dialectic over writing:

> First, one should know the truth about each of the things he speaks or writes about, and become able to define them thoroughly one by one. Having defined them, he must know how to divide them by type until the point at which further division is impossible. Sussing out the same things with respect to the nature of the soul, discovering the form [of speech] that

> fits each nature, he should set and arrange his account (λόγον) accordingly.[62]

Socrates seems to have considered recollected vision of the Forms to be the grounds for knowing the truth about, defining, and categorizing the things that form the content of philosophical speech. But he realizes that knowing the truth about souls (their state, their character, their disorders, the criteria that exercise the greatest gravitational force with them) is necessary for seducing others with one's speech. It is also necessary for seducing them *into speaking*, into dialectic and dialogue, into the parrhêsiastic confessions that allow for the testing of words and ways of life. Because of these fundamental conditions, philosophical *parrhêsia* after Socrates does not seek persuasive power that is grounded solely in the internal integrity or sincerity of the philosopher. Instead, the philosophical discourse of *parrhêsia* after Socrates is consumed by the attempt to negotiate the tensions between internal integrity (ordering its criteria rightly and then meeting those criteria) and the task of evangelism *ad extra* (appealing to the poorly-ordered criteria of others in order to convert and reorder them.)

### 2.3.4. Philosophy and Empire: Friends and Flatterers

Shortly after the death of Socrates in 399 B.C., the Greek world underwent seismic political changes. Athens was able to regroup somewhat after her defeat in the Peloponnesian war to maintain her freedom and her colonies by forming successful alliances with other city-states, first with Thebes and Corinth to defeat Spartan hegemony at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 B.C., then with Sparta to defeat the Theban hegemony under Epaminondas that Athens had herself helped create at the Battle of Mantinea in 362 B.C. The wars had taken a toll on all the city-states of the Aegean such that none was able to assert hegemony over the others.[63] But this also meant that the city-states were all too weak to defend themselves against a non-Greek enemy. The result was that Athens, along with a number of allied Greek cities (including Thebes once again) was conquered by Philip II of Macedon at the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 B.C.

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[62] Plato, *Phaedrus* 277b-c.

With the loss of Athenian independence, the democratic politics that had been the originary matrix of *parrhêsia* ceased to exist. More than this, the Greek-speaking world was no longer comprised of *poleis* – independent city-states with their own particular political structures and cultures. Instead, cities became components of larger (and foreign) imperial political structures, and a more general (and cosmopolitan) "Greek" culture began to take shape. These changes, in turn, had a significant impact on how the discourse of *parrhêsia* developed over the six hundred years between Chaeronea in 338 B.C. until the time of the Cappadocian Fathers.

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[63] This had been, in a sense, the aim of the wars. Greek city-states wanted to maintain their independence, which depended in large part on a stable and roughly equal distribution of power among them. The vulnerability of this equilibrium consisted in the fact that a number of Greek city-states had founded less-powerful colonies off the Greek mainland; even when these were self-governing, the mother city had certain obligations to them, including the provision of military protection. The attack of the Persian empire on Greek colonies in Ionia catalyzed alliances among *poleis* and their colonies. Unlike Greece, the Persian empire consisted of a huge amount of territory (and, accordingly, far greater resources of manpower and sustenance for military endeavours) and had a centralized and efficient infrastructure; in order to be able to withstand Persia, the Greek poleis needed to pool resources, build up their individual militaries, and organize their individual efforts. Although the Greek forces were successful in preventing Persia from conquering the Balkans, the political alliances and military innovations that made their success possible left a clear imbalance of power among city-states while also making individual the politics and economies of individual city-states more dependent upon the making of war. The possibility of fighting a common enemy also created a role for pan-Hellenic leadership – *viz.*, the hegemony of a single city-state over the others. To generalize somewhat, the Peloponnesian Wars, Corinthian War, and Theban War that followed the Persian War all consisted in the efforts of some *poleis* to secure hegemony for themselves and/or to prevent the hegemony of another *polis* that would infringe upon their own independence.

Included in this span of time are a number of what historians treat as distinct periods or eras. The first was the Age of Alexander the Great, who reigned from 336 to his death in 323 B.C. and under whom the Macedonian empire expanded with remarkable alacrity. Because Alexander died without a clear heir, the extensive holdings of his empire were distributed among the *diadochoi* (his "successors" – Alexander's former generals, family members, and friends) through a series of wars. The result of this was the formation of a number of kingdoms, ruled more or less dynastically, the largest and strongest of which were that of the Ptolemids in Egypt, that of the Attalids (also called the kingdom of Pergamon) in Asia Minor, and that of the Seleucids in what had formerly been Persia. While the foundation of philosophical schools and libraries in Athens allowed the city to retain its role as a Greek cultural center, the cities rivaling her were not in the Balkan mainland at all but in Egypt (Alexandria) and Asia Minor (Pergamon, Rhodes, and Antioch.) It was during this time that the Greek *koinê* – based largely on the Attic dialect spoken in Athens – evolved and became the lingua franca for most of the Mediterranean world. This "Hellenistic period" characterized by the spread of Greek culture throughout what remained of Alexander's former empire lasted from his death in 323 B.C. until 31 B.C. That was the year in which Cleopatra (a member of the Ptolemaic dynasty) and her lover Mark Antony (a member of the Roman triumvirate) were defeated at the Battle of Actium by Octavian, another member of the triumvirate who became Augustus Caesar, the first "emperor" of the Roman principate.[64] The next critical period relative to the discourse of *parrhêsia*, is the Second Sophistic, which is what scholars term a resurgence of interest in ancient Greek language, culture, and philosophical traditions within the widespread holdings of the Roman Empire during the second century A.D. It is with reference to this period that scholars have begun to speak of the age of Libanius, Julian, and the Cappadocian Fathers in the fourth century A.D. as being a "Third Sophistic."[65]

There are four features in the development of the discourse of *parrhêsia* during these periods that I argue have critical significance for the Cappadocian Fathers' use of the term. First, philosophy retains a general political orientation, particularly in the survival of the Platonic project of grooming "philosopher-kings." Furthermore, at various times there was a real market among political potentates for philosophers working in the "Greek tradition." Second, the period following the death of Socrates witnessed the emergence of various philosophical schools or sects, each of which saw itself as the true inheritor of the Socratic tradition. Each of these had its own particular mode of communal formation, and the fact of their multiplicity posed challenges to those wishing to select and employ philosophers. Third, there was a general trend within philosophy towards what we might call "anti-materialism," including antinomianism and ascetic renunciations. Fourth, one-on-one individual relations – notably, those of personal friendship – replaced participation in a city-state or community as the grounds of political *parrhêsia*. These four are all interrelated, but I will attempt to treat them separately and in turn.

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[64] The Romans themselves did not accept that their Republic had, in fact, become an entirely different politics for a century or two, and preferred to speak of the Roman form of government as a "principate" – the same old republic under the leadership of a princeps ("head man") rather than a monarchy headed by a "king" or "emperor."

[65] Laurent Pernot, *La Rhétorique de l'éloge dans le Monde Gréco-romain* (Paris, 1993) was the first to speak of a "Third Sophistic" and declares the fourth century to be the beginning of the period, which he takes as lasting until the early sixth century. For further discussion of the debate over dating, see Ryan C. Fowler and Alberto J. Quiroga Puertas, "A Prolegomena to the Third Sophistic" in *Plato in the Third Sophistic*, ed. Ryan C. Fowler (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 1-31.

The demise of Athenian democracy did not pose much of a problem for philosophical parrhêsiasts, given that the ideal politics presented in the *Republic* was decidedly not a democracy. Even before the fall of Athens, Plato took himself off to Syracuse (a Greek colony) to mentor its leader, Dionysius II. While his attempts to style Dionysius as a philosopher-king proved a spectacular failure, the political ideal he had proposed continued to captivate future generations of rulers and philosophers alike. Aristotle saw the virtuous regulation of socio-political life as the *telos* of the philosophical enterprise. The Aristotelian paragon of virtue, the magnanimous man, was necessarily active in the state; he would seek political honors, although ultimately these would be of less importance to him than the exercise of his own virtue.[66] While certainly the formation of citizens in general was in view here, Aristotle himself was enlisted by Philip II of Macedon to educate the youth who would become known as Alexander the Great. It is worth noting here the disparity between the motives of the philosopher (grooming a potentate who would order politics according to philosophical ideals) and those of the worthies who employed him. Philip II was a Macedonian admirer of Greek culture; his choice of an Athenian philosopher as mentor for his son reflected only an acknowledgement of the superior culture of Athens (which he had conquered militarily) – not necessarily any deep commitment to virtue. The result of the mentorship was not a political utopia but the Hellenization of Macedon and, consequently, the spread of Hellenic culture through the territories that Alexander conquered.

This remained the case when culturally Greek lands came under the rule of the Roman empire. In a treatise exhorting fellow philosophers to make friends with powerful men, Plutarch asserts that philosophers have a public duty to educate rulers. "[H]e who removes the wicked habit of a ruler," Plutarch writes, "or orients his thought toward what is necessary, practices philosophy for the public, as it were, and properly orders the commonwealth by which everyone is governed."[67] Rather than playing the Socratic "gadfly," Plutarch advises that philosophers gain a reputation and remain "on call" for rulers who wish to consult them.[68] He furthermore gives a number of examples of potentates past who sought out sages to suggest to his contemporaries the likelihood of finding a position as "consulting philosopher" in the court of local Roman magistrates.

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[66] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.3.14-4.4.6

[67] Plutarch, *That a Philosopher Ought Especially to Converse with Men in Power*, §3 (778e-f).

Hellenism had been a part of aristocratic Roman culture since the early days of the republic, but during the Second Sophistic, the age in which Plutarch was writing, there was a resurgence of interest among Roman elites in all things Greek. Wealthier Roman statesmen often had a "kept philosopher" on the payroll to advise and correct them with *parrhêsia*, and to satisfy their desire to see the glory of Classical Greece live again.[69] And yet, this period is considered by scholars today to be a renaissance of the same relativizing culture of rhetoric and sophistry that Socrates and Plato had so vehemently opposed. If Roman men of influence in the second century A.D. hoped to find frank-speaking philosophers to advise them, in practice they often were not getting what they paid for.

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[68] Plutarch, *That a Philosopher Ought Especially to Converse with Men in Power,* §2 778a-b.

[69] On the Second Sophistic, the relation of Romans to the idealized Hellenic past, and the cultural capital of Greek *paideia,* see Graham Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1993); Glen Bowersock. *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire,* Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); Thomas Schmitz, *Bildung und Macht: Zur sozialen und politischen Funktion der zweiten Sophistik in der griechischen Welt der Kaiserzeit* (München: C. H. Beck, 1997); Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50-250* (Oxford: Clarendon 1996); and Tim Whitmarsh "'Greece is the World': exile and identity in the Second Sophistic" in *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire,* ed. Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 269-305, and *The Second Sophistic*. Greece and Rome: New Surveys in the Classics 35 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.)

One reason for this was that the multiplicity of philosophical schools and sects posed a serious challenge for potential employers.[70] After the death of Socrates, Plato had founded the Academy in Athens, perhaps in the hopes of keeping philosophical types off the streets and out of trouble. Although Aristotle had been Plato's student at the Academy, he went on to found another school, the Lyceum, where he himself lectured. After the Lyceum was destroyed when the Roman general Sulla conquered Athens in 86 B.C., philosophers in the Aristotelian tradition became known under the rubric of "Peripatetics" and formed a host of local communities. Zeno of Citium (c. 334-262 B.C.) taught in the Stoa Poikilê at Athens, for which reason his followers were known as "Stoics." Diogenes (d. 323 B.C.) founded Cynicism, and Epicurus (341-270 B.C.) founded Epicureanism. All of these sects expanded beyond Athens, gaining adherents and founding communities with their own unique doctrines and formational practices.[71] How was one on the outside of these various communities and traditions -- hoping to be taught the truth by a philosopher belonging to one or another of them -- to decide which one of them could teach him that truth?

In practice, the only criteria by which Romans wishing to employ Greek philosophers could make a selection were the visible appurtenances of Hellenic culture – but these could be affected and faked. According to the second century satirist Lucian of Samosata, most of the philosophers receiving Roman patronage were little more than sophistic rhetors hiding behind a careful cultural packaging. And this was in large part because the Romans themselves were supplying the sort of "market demand" and material rewards that appealed to counterfeit philosophers and poseurs. If imperial patrons saw beards, Greek-style tunics and cloaks, and the Attic dialect (the Greek spoken in Athens of the fifth century B.C. rather than the *koinê* in currency in their own time) as signs betokening the wisdom of the classical age, then enterprising Greeks had sufficient motivation to stop shaving, shop for "vintage" clothes, search through handbooks for choice Atticisms, and generally devote themselves to acting the part. The result, of course, was a proliferation of sham philosophers who cultivated an elaborate façade of Hellenic wisdom and learning but, in fact, lacked substance – or proved downright immoral.

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[70] This was the subject of Lucian of Samosata's dialogue the *Hermotimus*, alternately titled *Concerning Sects*.

[71] For more on the nature of these communities' practices of formation, see Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

Lucian's dialogue *The Eunuch* is a send-up of these false criteria; Bagoas has been a eunuch since birth and when he applies for a prominent official position among his sect, his fellows are scandalized. As they argue:

> It is necessary that a philosopher have both attitude and a good physical endowment . . . and above all, he should have a long beard worthy of the confidence of those who visit him wanting to be taught and befitting the thousands [sc. of coins] that he will get from the emperor."[72]

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[72] Lucian, *Eunuch* 8.

The eunuch philosopher objects, of course, that "the examination should not be physical, but there should be an investigation of the soul and the mind and the knowledge of doctrines." But such protests fall on deaf ears.

Again Lucian calls into question the old Athenian virtue supposedly signaled by Attic diction with the speech of a professor of rhetoric teaching his students how to ply their trade around the clock:

> It is first necessary to have a care for your appearance, and especially for the good form of your cloak. Then pick out fifteen—or, at any rate, not more than twenty—Attic words from somewhere and have them ready on the tip of your tongue . . . And let your mouth itself open for everything, and your tongue serve both for words and for whatever else it can . . . it can perform another service at night. [73]

One "school" of philosophers warrants special attention here for their unique tactics in attempting to overcome the problems of false criteria that could be affected by those seeking material benefits, and those were the Cynics. The Cynics (Κυνικοί from κύων, "dog") were especially known for their practice of *parrhêsia* and their name was acquired because of their "dog-like" shamelessness in exposing the errors of popular and prevalent opinion. The "founder" of the sect (which was never especially organized), Diogenes, by all accounts turned the practice of *parrhêsia* into public performance art. The Cynics engaged in scandalous behavior in order to demonstrate their philosophical claims and some of their common tactics might seem as objectionable to modern audiences as they did to people of the ancient world. They were the transgressive "shock jocks" of antiquity – men who did not hesitate to defecate or masturbate in the middle of the agora and generally to parody or subvert the most time-honored of civic traditions.[74]

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[73] Lucian, *Professor of Rhetoric* 16; 24.

One of the more famous accounts of Diogenes' practice will suffice to give a sense of the quality and character of Cynic *parrhêsia*. According to Dio of Prusa, Diogenes decided to attend the Panhellenic games at Corinth one year. Under the gaze of some of the rich and famous in attendance, Diogenes puts the coveted Isthmian crown on his own head. When the spectators become outraged and object that he could not be crowned because he had won no victory, he protested that he had bested many opponents: poverty, exile, and disrepute as well as anger, pain, fear, desire, and pleasure (i.e. the passions). After mocking the accomplishments of the official competitors in the games, who try to explain to him the function of their victories as proof of their superior physical prowess, Diogenes comes upon two horses who had broken loose from their fetters and were kicking at each other. One of the equine contestants finally became exhausted, broke away, and ran off, whereupon the Cynic crowned the other for his "victory."[75] The chief aim of such practices was to expose the emptiness of social values and customs (*nomoi*) which were founded upon *doxa*, a word which denotes both opinion as an epistemic model and the glory accorded particular people or practices that derived from mere opinion.

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[74] On Diogenes' self-satisfaction, see Dio Chrysostom Or. 6.16-20 and Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 4.145f. On public defecation, see Dio Chrysostom, Or. 8.26 and Julian, Or. 6.202c.

[75] Dio Chrysostom, Or. 9.

Diogenes, despite spending an extended time living nearly naked in a large ceramic jar (not the famed “barrel”) by a graveyard on the outskirts of Athens, managed to be on close terms with royalty. Alexander the Great had heard of the philosopher and stopped by to see Diogenes on his way to conquer Egypt and much of central Asia. The apocryphal conversations of Diogenes and Alexander proved a favorite theme in the writings of the rhetor-philosophers of the Second Sophistic and become paradigmatic for the later practice of *parrhêsia* toward the powerful. The typical structure of the parrhêsiastic exchange is as follows: the philosopher says something which is shocking, but which nevertheless has its basis in the truth of his philosophy. This is met with outrage by listeners precisely because it contravenes and hence exposes the general opinion which is based on appearances and pretense, on seeming rather than on true being. For instance, in one of Diogenes’ pedagogical run-ins with Alexander the Great, the Cynic is sitting in the sun when the Macedonian king approaches. Far from being honored by Alexander’s presence or humbled by his pomp and power, Diogenes becomes irritated and orders the emperor to move aside and quit blocking his rays. Dio of Prusa, recounting this story in Oration 4, notes that this lack of respect for Alexander’s worldly estate would seem offensive to many. But he says that Alexander appreciated Diogenes’ boldness because “to some men truth and *parrhêsia* are the sweetest of all things, but to others flattery and deceit; the latter group listen to those who speak to please, but the former listen to those who speak the truth."[76]

Since the problem facing those wishing to employ a philosopher was that poseurs seeking material benefits and political power might affect Greek culture in order to secure a post, the Cynics seemed to offer a solution. Part and parcel of Cynicism was ascetic renunciation of the material luxuries and comforts that powerful Roman employers offered and that sham philosophers wanted. However, Cynics were no less well-represented than any other sect in the endemic of pseudo-philosophers in the imperial era. In fact, those styling themselves Cynics were *particularly* suspected of selling false goods, since superficially adopting the practices of Cynicism was an especially attractive racket not for mere opportunists but for those who were even more morally depraved. Cynic asceticism had its own outward and visible tokens – general lack of good grooming, a pouch for begging -- and these could be faked even more easily than the tokens of culture refinement.

As a supposed Cynic, a base and corrupt man could indulge in the sort of shameless and scandalous activities proper to his true nature while escaping condemnation and instead earning approbation and patronage by marketing his very turpitude as parrhêsiastic philosophy. Even Dio of Prusa in the second century praised Diogenes in one sentence and railed against the immorality of contemporary Cynics in the next.[77] By the fourth century, the emperor Julian declared that the Cynic philosophers of his day were simply self-indulgent slaves of the body who felt no reverence toward their betters and were giving true Cynicism a bad name.[78]

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[76] Dio Chrysostom, Or. 4.15-16.

We should note the contrast here between the situation of the Second Sophistic and the rights-based grammar of freedom of speech as self-expression in which Foucault is working. In the second century, the self's "construction of the self" was not seen as a good to which others had an obligation of respect or protection, but was considered itself to be the problem. It was taken as a given that true philosophers were formed communally, while the poseurs were seen as "free agents" – individuals working alone to "construct" and present a self by affecting the superficial marks of true (communal) philosophical formation.

Given the extraordinary difficulty of finding and recognizing the genuine article among the counterfeits glutting the market, it is surprising that the search for true parrhêsiastic philosophers continued in such earnest. By the second half of the fourth century A.D., the period during which the Cappadocians lived, the experience of the past two hundred years seemed at last to have made rulers seeking philosophical advice more wary of trusting in superficial outward displays. Certainly the picture is shaped by what textual evidence has survived from the respective periods, but by the time of the Cappadocians, emperors, at least, seemed to have learned the lesson that Lucian – and Plato – had been trying to teach: appearances can be deceiving. So it is that the emperor Julian writes:

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[77] Dio Chrysostom, Or. 4; Or. 32.9.

[78] Julian, Or. 6.182c, 6.197d-199a.

> Therefore, whoever wants to be a Cynic should not just cherish his cloak or his pouch, his staff or his long hair, as if he were walking unshaved and illiterate in some hick town that doesn't have barbers or teachers, but let him understand that reason rather than a staff and constancy (ἔνστασις) rather than the Cynic pouch are the tokens (γνωρίσματα) of philosophy. *Parrhêsia* should be employed only by one who has first shown how much he is worth . . . .[79]

What was needed was a means of discerning the worth of philosopher-advisors at a level more essential than that of dress and speech. Anyone could speak boldly, but how was an emperor to judge whose *parrhêsia* deserved a hearing?

The first criterion for judgment was that of true friendship as opposed to mere flattery. Because of the changes in political structures, parrhêsiastic criticism tended to occur within individual relationships rather than corporate ones. These included both one-on-one interactions between socio-political equals that we might term "personal friendships" and those between potentates and their philosophical advisors.

Discourse on friendship and on the earmarks of a true friend also fell within the purview of the philosophical tradition. Aristotle had distinguished between types of friendship (*philia*) on the basis of the goal of each: friendships seeking pleasure, friendships of utility seeking advantage, or friendships seeking the best for the other.[80] This last was to be regarded as perfect *philia* and was only possible between men orientated towards virtue. Such friendships would, nevertheless, be useful and pleasurable as well, since the absolute good of virtue is both enjoyable and advantageous.[81] This view of friendship was a taxonomic regulation of the Platonic understanding held by the majority of philosophical schools in the Roman period,[82] but also among Romans themselves. Cicero had echoed this classification in his treatise *Laelius* (*De Amicitia*) and Aristotelian friendship theory remained a commonplace into the Middle Ages.[83]

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[79] Julian, Or. 6.200d-201a.

The markers of Greek cultural formation retained value in spite of the possibility that they might be counterfeited, in large part because one of the widely acknowledged characteristics of true friendship was that it was necessarily between equals. It might be tempting to read this ideal as an apologetic for classism. Certainly, it could seem that the negative evaluation of the poor was simply an aristocratic dismissal of them on the basis of lower social station. Class and relative wealth were certainly considerations, given the perceived tendency of those in need to seek material gain.[84] And yet, the shared social position of aristocrats masks a much more crucial source of ideological common ground:

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[80] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.3.1-3.
[81] *Ibid.*, 8.3.6-9.
[82] See, e.g., Plutarch's broadly Platonic characterization of the friendship of virtue as opposed to the "self-love" motivating utility and pleasure in *On How a Flatterer is Distinguished from a Friend* 49-50, and especially of the difficulty in distinguishing the pleasure derived from a friendship based in shared pursuit of virtue from the pleasure of lesser types of relationships.
[83] See, for example Aelred of Rievaulx's *On Spiritual Friendship*.
[84] Therefore Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* declares that friendships between men of different classes is generally for the sake of utility, 8.6

greater wealth afforded the opportunity for education in classical rhetoric and philosophy.

This education (*paideia*) was a process of cultural formation, aiming not merely at imparting information or skills, but at instilling Hellenic values in the youth and shaping the *pepaideumenos* (educated or "cultured" man) as a moral subject. The purpose of seeking friends who shared one's social position, therefore, was to avoid the possibility of material need motivating empty flattery and to increase the possibility of finding someone who knew and was dedicated to the values imparted by education. For the most powerful men, who had few (if any) social equals, the cultural formation of socio-political inferiors was seen as elevating their value relative to even the emperor on criteria other than sheer Macht.

Still, having received the best education money can buy was no guarantee of real attainments in philosophical virtue. It was education, after all, that allowed the rhetors of the Second Sophistic to perform a superficial *paideia* which satisfied Roman nostalgia for the classical age of Greece but which did not enable the sophists to provide the wisdom such *paideia* was thought to indicate. What was necessary, therefore, was evidence that the education one had received had "stuck," that is, that the *pepaideumenos* had actually committed himself to the values purportedly instilled by his *paideia*. If the rhetors and pseudo-philosophers of the Second Sophistic got ahead by performing the cultural appurtenances of

Hellenic *paideia*, the corrective was to evaluate potential friends and advisers based on their performance of virtue. External effects such as clothing, dress, diction, and dialect could not be trusted as sufficient signs of the essence of *paideia*.

Within this context, greater weight came to be placed upon the constancy and integrity of the parrhêsiast's speech and actions than previously. Those on the receiving end of parrhêsiastic criticism were advised to examine the "equilibrium and constancy of [the parrhêsiast's] principles (ὁμαλότητα τὴς προαιρέσεως καὶ τὸ ἐνδελεχὲς)," on the grounds that a flatterer merely imitated or anticipated the desires of others rather than acting from an "abiding place of character (ἑστίαν ἤθους)."[85] This consistency would identify a sincere friend; the character of the overall pattern would indicate the level of the friend's virtue.

Accordingly, the friendship sought and prized was less a matter of personal loyalty and more one of unswerving faithfulness to virtue itself. A person (and particularly one in a position of power) did not seek a friend to be a mere follower or partisan but to serve as an equal partner in a relationship of mutual correction, exhortation, and enjoyment of virtue. These are the terms in which Nazianzen (perhaps somewhat naïvely) characterizes his friendship with Basil during their school days in Athens:

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[85] Plutarch, *On How a Flatterer is Distinguished from a Friend* 52a.

> The one task before both of us was virtue (ἀρετή) and living for our future hopes, detaching ourselves from this place before we leave it. We directed our lives and our every action with a view toward this, acting thus in accord with the commandment and spurring each other on to virtue and, if it is not too great a thing for me to say, being for one another a plumb-line and scale by which what was right and what was not was discerned. [86]

While Aristotle, the Peripatetics, and (to some extent) the Stoics would identify virtue with habituated dispositions toward right action in the socio-political sphere, most of the more Platonic sects framed virtue as a matter of the relations of an individual to higher non-material or spiritual realities. This permitted a contrast to be made between a man's commitment to virtue (the Truth or the Good itself) and his investment in lower-level social and material relations. Personal affinity and fidelity would always remain suspect, for these could be the characteristics of a flatterer, one who likes or is faithful to a friend solely because it conduces to his own physical pleasure or material advantage. Such a false friend would avoid delivering necessary criticism for fear of giving offense and thus losing the benefits he derived from relationship with the powerful. As the second-century orator Themistius writes:

> A friend is far removed from a flatterer, and is furthest away in this: that the latter praises everything, but the former would not go along with you when you are in the wrong; the latter is minded to turn a profit or fill his belly by his occupation and has no respect for you, but only for your capital or power."[87]

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[86] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 43.20.

[87] Themistius Or. 22.276c.

The *parrhêsia* of a philosopher-friend needed always to be motivated by philosophical allegiances that transcended personal benefit.

Here we see a parallel to the fundamental conviction of Athenian democratic politics that the individual's freedom from debt- or chattel-slavery that allows for participation in the *polis* is a prerequisite for the practice of *parrhêsia*. In the period of the Second Sophistic, even one who was not owned by another human person could be understood as being enslaved to his own baser impulses, mediated through socio-political relations with other persons. This sort of slavery was understood to preclude the commitment to *aretê* that was required if one was to make a beneficial contribution of truth to the common good – not directly to a democratic *polis* but indirectly through one's relations with individual friends, particularly if one were friends with those who held positions of political power. What this understanding created was the conditions of possibility for using the parrhêsiast's willingness to jeopardize his interpersonal relationships as a test for his philosophical integrity.

The paradigm here was that of a parrhêsiast who would tell his friend what he took to be the truth on the basis of his commitments to non-material realities, regardless of the possibility that the friend might be offended or displeased by this speech and discontinue the relationship. In risking the rupture of the relationship (which would result in a degree of social alienation and the loss of whatever material benefits the friendship provided), the parrhêsiast demonstrated his commitment to virtue above all else. At the same time, this provided a basanic test of the friend's commitment to the pursuit of virtue and, accordingly, the very grounds of the relationship between the two. The friend who took offense at or retaliated against the parrhêsiast would be demonstrating that *his* greatest commitment was to the comfort of being flattered or deferred to, rather than to a search for the truth and for cultivating virtue by adapting and habituating his way of life (*bios*) to that truth (*logos*.)

If even the habit of frank criticism could be imitated by flatterers (as Plutarch says it often was), then the process for "testing" the sincerity of such speech needed to be rigorous.[88] This resulted in an increase of the potential risks for the parrhêsiastic friend of potentates beyond the normative levels for citizens within democratic Athens. The true friend of virtue (and, thus, a friend truly worthy of a ruler) would be the one to speak out frankly despite the possibility that the ruler might be displeased. The basanic test of the sincerity of a parrhêsiast's commitment to virtue therefore came to consist in "upping the ante" of the parrhêsiastic *agôn* by increasing the severity of threatened retaliations for offensive speech, up to and including capital punishment. If citizen *parrhêsia* within Athenian democracy had been embraced as rather a risky enterprise, true philosophical *parrhêsia* under the Roman empire was embraced as a downright dangerous one.

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[88] Plutarch, *On How a Flatterer is Distinguished from a Friend* 52a-b.

This, then, was the history and lively grammar of *parrhêsia* by the time of the Cappadocian Fathers. The concept retained associations with certain features of democratic politics no longer in play and was still very much concerned with the problems of identifying and ordering common criteria. But it was by this point deeply connected to the philosophical project of creating an ideal *politeia* through one-on-one dialogue with potentates and to the contest between a broadly "cultural" formation (Greek *paideia*) and formation in doctrines and communities belonging to particular philosophical schools or sects. In the next chapter, we shall see how the Cappadocians used *parrhêsia* in offering particularly Christian ways of pursuing these projects and negotiating these tensions.

# Chapter 3. Christian *Parrhêsia* in a Pagan World

This chapter considers what the Cappadocian Fathers – Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa – took to be the functions and justifications of orthodox Christian *parrhêsia* towards members of other groups. What we shall see is that these early Christian thinkers viewed *parrhêsia* as mode of entering into an *agôn* that would demonstrate the superiority of orthodox Christianity as a *politeia* over all rival polities on earth. Basil and the two Gregories had no quarrels with earthly power hierarchies *per se*; in most cases, they would recommend that Christians obey even heterodox or pagan masters and potentates. However, they believed that parrhêsiastic refusal to obey was justified – even necessary -- in cases when there existed a definite conflict between truth in speech and action as defined by orthodox Christianity and the commands for speech or action issued by earthly masters to their subordinates.

In the Cappadocians' view, certain individual Christians were more capable than others of exercising this truth-telling *parrhêsia* by virtue of how fully they participated in and had been formed by the heavenly *politeia*. Because they were such consummate citizens of the Kingdom of God, the truth was simply what they had in them to say, and there was nothing shameful in them to prevent their saying it boldly. This citizenship was furthermore the grounds on which their *parrhêsia* could be justified to others as good and proper: if the LORD's *politeia* is the best, then its members need not feel the shame of inferiority in speaking for and in agreement with the heavenly *basileus* against their betters within any inferior earthly *politeia*, up to and including the earthly *basileus* – the Roman emperor himself. According to the Cappadocians, the superiority of the politics of heaven was demonstrated by the excellence of its representative citizens in the *agôn* on measures and criteria held in common by both contending communities -- orthodox Christians on the one hand, and heretics or pagans on the other.

The function of these acts of *parrhêsia* is martyrological in the literal sense (i.e. testifying or bearing witness), and they serve as methods of evangelism and/or apologetic for Christianity. The Cappadocians report that sometimes heterodox or pagan members of the audience are converted by witnessing Christian *parrhêsia*, and sometimes the earthly potentates who issued these commands and threatened punishment for disobedience are inspired to an increased respect for and tolerance of Christians. With respect to the Christian audience to whom the Cappadocians address these texts, the expectation is that narrative retellings of Christian truth-telling will inspire the "colony" of the heavenly *politeia* here on earth to celebrate its parrhêsiastic heroes and will encourage members of the community to continue pursuing their own formation by and within that *politeia*.

This chapter is comprised of three main sections. The first of these presents a picture of the challenges that faced fourth-century Christianity in light of the developments of the grammar and politics of *parrhêsia* in the larger Greek-speaking world outlined in the previous chapter, and introduces and situates Basil and the two Gregories within this context. It then examines the Cappadocians' arguments for how Christians ought to view and relate to Hellenic *paideia* (culture and education), with particular attention being given to Nazianzen's orations against the emperor Julian and Basil's treatise *Ad Adulescentes*. Because common criteria are a prerequisite for framing such justificatory accounts of *parrhêsia* as might potentially be persuasive to one's adversaries and for the possibility of scoring a recognizable "win" in the *agôn*, of primary importance here are the matter of measures and standards of excellence taught to and shared by both Christian and non-Christian Hellenes and the account the Cappadocians give for the existence of this cultural overlap.

The second section begins by considering the Gregories' accounts of Basil's refusal to obey an order from the emperor Valens. It then illustrates how the Cappadocians presented parrhêsiastic success (i.e., a case in which the adversary agrees that the speaker is justified in speaking and concedes a "win" of sorts on the matter in question) as dependent upon the speaker's embodiment of criteria common to both sides in a disagreement. The third section then considers texts in which the Cappadocian Fathers present Christian martyrs as parrhêsiasts, illuminating the particulars of the *agôn* by which the excellence of the speaker and the superiority of the *politeia* that formed him are tested. As we shall see, because the *agôn* of Christian *parrhêsia* was seen as being a contest between competing polities, as opposed to internal to the deliberative processes of a single community (like debates of the *ecclêsia* in democratic Athens), it is often metaphorically depicted as a battle or athletic competition. Through these figurative descriptions, we begin to see elements of the particular order of relations that the Cappadocians take to comprise the heavenly *politeia*, which will be the subject of the next chapter.

## *3.1. Hellenic* **Paideia***, Christian* **Politeia***, and Common Criteria*

As we saw at the end of the previous chapter, during the Hellenistic era and afterwards when formerly Greek territories had become part of the Roman Empire, Greek cultural education came to have something of a cachet among the Mediterranean elite of all ethnicities. It was desired as productive of virtue in those who received it, but it was also productive of real material and political benefits for the ones who possessed it, the *pepaideumenoi* (literally, "those who have been educated.") Everyone knew that true philosophers were indifferent to such things as bodily pleasures, material perquisites, and sheer power. Nonetheless, the demand for education meant that a great deal of power might be garnered and a great deal of profit gained by counterfeiters – men who adopted the outward tokens of Hellenic education or a philosophical lifestyle without having been formed inwardly by Greek culture or philosophy and therefore having nothing substantive to impart to their employers and benefactors. At the same time, true adherents of a multiplicity of philosophical schools – most of which claimed to be the true representatives of the tradition of the universally revered philosopher Socrates – were keen on the project of instantiating an ideal politics based in their particular philosophy, which end required that they mentor or advise or otherwise exert formative influence over some earthly potentate. Therefore, both true philosophers and fakes were "on the job market," so to speak, and the challenge for those seeking to benefit from the goods intrinsic to Greek culture and philosophical learning was to be able to use visible tokens of culture and learning in testing the inward integrity of a particular candidate, so as to distinguish the host of poseurs from the rarer "genuine article." It was in this cultural and political milieu that the Cappadocian Fathers were born.

Gregory of Nazianzus, his friend Basil of Caesarea, and Basil's younger brother, Gregory of Nyssa, were born during the early fourth century to some of the first Christian families in the region of Cappadocia in Asia Minor. Basil and Nyssen's grandmother, Macrina the Elder, had been a confessor during the Diocletian persecution and is thought to have been converted to Christianity by Gregory Thaumaturgus (the "Wonder-worker"), the first missionary to the region. Macrina's son, Basil the Elder, and his wife were well known for their piety and charitable works. While we do not have narratives of the conversion of Nazianzen's family, we do know that Gregory's father preceded him as bishop of Nazianzus.

The families were also elite Hellenes who had the necessary resources to have all three boys educated in Greek rhetoric and philosophy. Basil and Gregory Nazianzen went to school together in Athens, where we know that Gregory studied under the rhetors Himerius and Prohaeresius. It seems that Gregory of Nyssa, being a younger brother, did not enjoy the benefit of studying abroad in the historical homeland of Greek culture. But Nyssen certainly had an excellent education closer to home; as his father had been a famous orator, so Gregory himself served as a teacher of rhetoric before becoming bishop. He is, by all accounts, the most philosophically "adventurous" of the three Cappadocian Fathers.

Given that Basil and the two Gregories were Christians who had greatly enjoyed their experience of traditional Greek *paideia*, it may seem only natural that they wanted to ensure that other upper-class Christian youth of the next generation would have the privilege of access to these same cultural pleasures. But the Cappadocian Fathers' motivation for wanting Christian boys to receive Greek education was driven by a concern for the success of Christian *parrhêsia* against non-Christians in the agonism of civic life within the empire. And their chief opponent on this score was another boy from a Christian family who had taken a similar delight in his own Hellenic cultural education – the emperor Julian.

### 3.1.1. *Paideia* and Paganism

We have far more information about Julian's youth and upbringing than we do about those of the Cappadocians. He was born in 331 or 332 to Christian parents, Julius Constantius and Basilina. His father was the half-brother of Constantine and the emperor Constantius II was his cousin, whose systematic execution of relatives that might contest his claim to the throne the young Julian narrowly escaped. Under the guardianship of the bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia, Julian was raised in Bithynia and then Constantinople in Asia Minor. From the bishop and from Mardonius, a Scythian eunuch in Eusebius' household, he learned to read and was introduced both to the Bible and the Greek poets. Mardonius in particular seems to have exerted a formative influence on Julian. He later refers to the eunuch as his *paidagogos* or *kathêgêmôn* (preceptor) and later writes: "[Mardonius] wrought in my soul and, in a sense, imprinted that which I did not then desire" such that the ingrained habits of temperance had become "second nature" to Julian.[1]

After Eusebius died in 342, Julian was exiled to the imperial estate of Macellum in Cappadocia, where he became the student of another bishop, the

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[1] Julian, *Misopogon* 352c; the emperor characterizes Mardonius as a "crotchety old man" and also claims that the eunuch called "boorishness 'austerity' (or 'holiness'—σεμνότητα), lack of feeling 'temperance' (σωφροσύνην), and not yielding to desires and thus achieving happiness he called 'fortitude' (or 'manliness'—ἀνδρείαν). This indictment, however, should not be taken at face value since it appears in his ironic apologetic (entitled "Beard-Hater") addressed to the Eastern critics who wished him to shave his beard and adopt habits which he considered foppish. Julian tells them they ought not to blame him but rather the crusty old tutor who trained him so poorly. See also Or. 8, 241c and *To the Athenians*, 274d.

Arian George, whose library of classical and Christian literature he enjoyed. When he reached the age of majority, the exile was lifted and he lived in Nicomedia and Constantinople, serving as a lector in the Church.[2] While in the Nicomedia, he seems to have studied rhetoric under Libanius before moving to Pergamon and Ephesus where he pursued Neoplatonic philosophy under Iamblichus and underwent a theurgic induction into the mysteries under the guidance of Maximus of Ephesus. Thence he proceeded to Athens, where he studied in the summer and fall of 355 and was initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries.[3]

Although his education had been cut short by political and military obligations, Julian still considered himself to be a philosopher.[4] What is more, the philosophers and rhetoricians of his day seemed to consider him a worthy correspondent on the basis of his intellectual merit.[5] As an emperor, he was eager to convert his intellectual pursuits into public policy, "to rule on the basis of philosophy" as he himself puts it.[6] Earlier rulers hired "court philosophers," and earlier philosophers sought to secure positions mentoring or advising rulers, but Julian considered himself able to rule alone as a true "philosopher-king."

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[2] Julian, Ep. 47, 434d.

[3] This induction is the subject of Cavafy's poem "ο Ιυλιανός εν τοις Μυστηρίοις" wherein Julian is overtaken by the vestiges of his childhood Christian piety and, seeing demons hovering around the initiation, crosses himself in the middle of the ceremony and threatens to spoil the pagan rites; cf. Gregory of Nazianzus Or. 4 (*Contra Julianum I*) §§55-6.

[4] Julian, *To the Athenians*, 271d.

[5] For example, Julian maintained correspondence with Libanius, Prohaeresius, and others. While this might be attributed to the desire of such men to curry favor with the emperor, Julian's thoughts do not seem those of a dilettante. He had a genuine passion for literature and philosophy; even if he did not quite achieve the level of professional philosophers, his was a competent intellect. What is more, he was obviously well-acquainted with the customs of the educated elite and his letters are replete with the very sort of recherché banter proper and self-deprecating humor common among the correspondence of the literati. Even if he was not quite their equal, public intellectuals would have had little reason to exclude him from their company even had he not been the emperor.

[6] Julian, Ep. 3, 441c.

Many of Julian's views on the purposes of *paideia* are typical of the Greek elite: the aim of education was to produce excellent, virtuous, and manly citizens.[7] As Plutarch tells it, the *logos* (rational framework) inherent in the subjects of education trains the soul or mind (ψυχή or νοῦς) and produces virtue.[8] The initial phases of education, however, merely sought to point children in the proper direction. As Julian notes, the first task of tutors is to equip boys with basic literacy and a thorough knowledge of grammar and to cultivate in them a love of literature.[9] Within the study of literature, the Muses themselves "teach souls" and allow readers "to cultivate virtue."[10] The "encyclic" education would also impart a certain level of familiarity with music, mathematics, and natural science.[11]

The true pinnacle of education, however, was the study of rhetoric and philosophy. These two disciplines did not always coexist peaceably, as shown by the critiques by Lucian and others directed against the rhetorically trained pseudo-philosophers of the Second Sophistic. The suspicions of rhetoric have their origins in the "First Sophistic," during the very Golden Age of Athens and its subsequent decline at the end of the Peloponnesian War. Plato goes so far as to class rhetoric as a subset of flattery:

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[7] See here Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Connolly, Joy. "Problems of the Past in Imperial Greek Education," in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, Ed. Yun Lee Too (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 339-72.

[8] Plutarch, *How the Young Should Read Poetry*, 24c-d; 36c-d.

[9] Julian, Or. 7.235a-d.

[10] Julian, *Against the Galileans* 235b.

[11] For a rich consideration of the primary evidence of the encyclic education (ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία) see Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education* 33-39.

> Therefore, it seems to me, Gorgias, that there is a discipline which is not technical (τεχνικὸν μὲν οὔ), but which is the province of a mind which is intuitive, bold (ἀνδρείας), and clever by nature at interacting with people. Chiefly, I call it “flattery” (κολακεία). There are many components of this discipline, one of which is preparing hors d’oeuvres. This part does seem to be a skill, but on my account, it is not a skill but only a matter of experience and practice. Another part of it is rhetoric, as well as ornamentation and sophistry.[12]

This concern, noted in the last chapter, that rhetorical training enables skilled speakers to persuade audiences of anything—good or bad—and the subsequent concern about the value of rhetorical education for the young is addressed by Plato in the *Phaedrus* and in Isocrates’ oration *Against Sophists*.[13]

Ideological tensions between these two pursuits persisted into the fourth century A.D., but in practice the line separating the purview of rhetoric from that of philosophy was blurred. The distinction generally made at this point was that rhetoric was a *technê* (“art” or “skill”) used in crafting speech to persuasive effect while philosophy dealt directly and substantively with the questions of what was true, good, beautiful, or “according to nature.” If philosophy provided knowledge of the proper ends, rhetoric provided the means of making those ends a matter of public concern. By understanding how to present and adorn ideas in speech, one could persuade fellow citizens to share one’s vision of the good or to adopt a proposed course of action as just and fitting. Even Plato comes to such a conclusion in the *Phaedrus* when he has Socrates say

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[12] Plato, *Gorgias* 463a-b.

[13] See especially Isocrates, *Against Sophists* 1-14.

> I suppose the same procedure applies to medicine as to rhetoric . . . In both it is necessary determine a nature, of a body in the one case and of a soul in the other, if it is by skill and not merely experience or practice that you intend, in the first case, to create health and strength [in the body] by providing medicine and nourishment and, in the second, to transmit virtue and whatever persuasion you wish [to the soul by providing] words and traditional practices.[14]

Within the context of the fourth century, A.D., there was a widespread agreement among the educated elite that the ignorant lower-class masses could only be expected to follow truth if it were made superficially attractive. It therefore behooved a member of the governing class to learn how to apply a certain rhetorical gilt in order to convince those too ignorant to appreciate the beauty of the unadorned lily of philosophical truth. Nevertheless, the educated elite themselves were not immune to the attraction of a well-crafted speech or an artful delivery. What is more, the very association between rhetorical training and philosophical study rendered audiences likely to dismiss a crude speech (or, rather, its speaker) outright. If a boorish orator had not learned enough rhetoric to speak in a couth and sophisticated manner, then it was unlikely that he had learned enough philosophy to merit a hearing either.[15]

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[14] Plato, *Phaedrus* 270b.

[15] See, for example, a fourth century χρεία (useful saying) attributed to Diogenes the Cynic which says, "The Muses live in the souls of the educated" (ed. F. Preisigke, *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden*. Strasbourg 1916) 5730. See also the dismissal of uneducated critics in Ps.-Heraclitus, Ep. 4 and Julian's own castigations of the Cynics' lack of education (ἀπαιδεύσις). In these contexts, "education" is clearly

As public declamation and debate had become the chief vehicles for philosophical display and, thus, advertisement for one's services as a philosopher (since not all philosophers wanted to live in barrels like Diogenes), the art of speaking well was essential to the very practice of philosophy. Even those devotees of philosophical sects that we today might class as "mystical" were often eclectic. If the tradition with which they identified did not provide a body of doctrine of "political" philosophy, it could be borrowed or cobbled together from the teachings of other sects.[16]

On a more fundamental level, philosophical understandings had to be expressed through language. In the conversations of Socrates, the dialogues of Plato, the lectures of Aristotle, or the treatises and letters produced by later sages, words were an ineluctable medium of thought. And words, stories, and texts had formative power. It is for this reason that Socrates suggests evicting the poets from his ideal *polis*:

> Don't you know that the beginning is the most important part
> of every task, particularly in the case of anything young and malleable.
> For then one is especially molded, taking on whatever impression (τύπος)
> with which you wish to mark (ἐνσημήνασθαι) each one . . . Will we, then,
> so casually permit our children to be formed by whatever myths they come

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betokened by familiarity with dialect, style of speech, and the familiarity with classical texts and themes which seasoned the conversation and oratory of the *pepaideumenoi*. See also Morgan, *Literate Education* 234-9.

[16] On this philosophical eclecticism in late antiquity, see, *inter alios*, Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993) and John M. Dillon, "'Orthodoxy' and 'Eclecticism': Middle Platonists and Neo-Pythagoreans" 103-125 in *The Question of Eclecticism: Studies in Later Greek Philosophy*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.)

> across and take into their souls opinions that are, on the whole, contrary to those we think they should have when they come of age?[17]

The core pedagogical model in the ancient world was that of "molding children;" at the beginning of a child's life, this was a very physical procedure, ranging from the swaddling of infants and the "shaping of their limbs" by massage to training given by a *paidagogus* to a school-age child as to how he should walk and where to direct his gaze.[18] The physical formation of citizens continued in the study of rhetoric as we know from Cicero and Quintilian as well as surviving handbooks describing a repertoire of set oratorical gestures.

Teachers in the classical world and in late antiquity set their pupils exercises of repetition and imitation. Boys began learning the alphabet by copying lines of Homer or traditional maxims from models written out by their teachers, and a relative degree of autonomy and self-determination was only allowed the learner at the latest stages.[19] As they were trained in rhetoric, students were set topics for debate or declamation taken from history or mythology (or even the romances popular in the Hellenistic era). Students strove to mimic the style of "canonical" orators like Demosthenes or Isocrates, and a rich corpus of such rhetorical *progymnasmata* (preliminary exercises) survives in Greek, although most readers are more likely familiar with the Latin analogues – model speeches of this sort written by the Elder Seneca in his *Suasoriae* and *Controversiae.*[20]

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[17] Plato, *Republic* 2.377a-b.

[18] On the "molding" of infants by swaddling and massage, see the first century physician Soranus of Ephesus, *Gynecology* 2.14-42; for the training of a *paidagogos*, see Julian on the instruction he received from Mardonius in *Misopogon*, 352-3.

[19] This practice was certainly current at the time of the Cappadocians, as is evident from archaeological finds; cf. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 255-61.

Constant exposure to classical themes, styles, and texts not only made the youth "culturally literate" but inculcated them with a set of culturally approved values – ones that often stood in contradiction to those predominant in the world of the fourth century, especially contemporary views informed by philosophy. This concern for the subconscious "baggage" of cultural and educational texts is apparent in the pagan allegorical tradition. Interpreters of Homer already by the Hellenistic era (Heraclitus being notable among these) were working to defend the bard against charges of immorality leveled by Plato and Epicurus by asserting that the epics were philosophical allegories.[21] Like Christians, many philosophers of the Hellenistic era and of late antiquity, particularly those in the Neoplatonic tradition were monotheists—or, rather, henotheists who were able to affirm the classical pantheon in subordination to a supreme idea of the Divine.[22] Even if ethical norms current in the time of the Cappadocians would condemn the values embodied in the myths of classical literature, these contradictions seem to have posed no serious discomfort to most pagans. They either chose to ignore the conflict between these ideologies or were able to hold both opposing views at once.[23]

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[20] Interest in the *progymnasmata* is currently on the rise with a number of critical editions, commentaries, and translations being produced in recent years; see, e.g. George Kennedy's translation entitled *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) and Craig Gibson's edition of *Libanius' Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric*. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008).

[21] Heraclitus, *Homeric Allegories* Ed. Félix Buffière (Paris: Société d'édition «Les Belles Lettres,» 1962); see also David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 23-72.

[22] Celsus, for example, the pagan critic of Christianity who wrote *On True Doctrine* around 170, seems comfortable with the idea of a single supreme deity (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 5.41) and the second-century pagan Maximus of Tyre contended that there was a universal *sensus divinus* that pointed to the existence of one "high god" under whom lesser deities ruled (Or. 11.5). See also Robert Louis Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) 105-8.

Julian, however, not only recognized but enthusiastically embraced the mythological and religious subtext of *paideia*. In the emperor's opinion, the cultural and moral-philosophical values imparted by classical education could not be divorced from pagan piety. This understanding of the essentially religious character of *paideia*—and, therefore, of Hellenic culture more broadly—was the driving force behind Julian's edict on education of June 17, 362:

> We consider correct *paideia* not to be an effected symmetry of words and speech, but the healthy disposition of the mind -- a mind having true understandings and opinions about good things and bad, excellent ones and shameful. Whoever, therefore, holds to one thing but teaches another to those attached to him, he seems to have failed in *paideia* as much as in being a decent man . . . For they purport, in addition to other things, to be not teachers of words alone, but also of ethics (or "habits;" ἠθῶν) . . .The gods directed all the *paideia* of Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates, and Lysias . . . I think it improper that those who interpret the works of these men dishonor those gods honored by them . . . If they believe those men to be wise whom they interpret, and, as it were, sit as prophets, then let them be the first among those emulating their piety towards the gods; but if they suppose that these most honored writers were in error, let them go to the church of the Galileans and interpret Matthew and Luke, whom you obey when you decree that we should stay away from the [pagan] temples.[24]

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[23] On the means by which such moral and religious "double-think" could occur, see Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths? An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) and Robert M. Ogilvie, *The Romans and Their Gods in the Age of Augustus* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970.)

[24] Julian, Ep. 36, 422a-423d.

This decree effected a ban on the employment of Christians as teachers. Nazianzus in his orations against Julian -- which were rather prudently delivered after the emperor's death -- mentions a host of prohibitions against Christian participation in assemblies, market-place meetings, festivals, and law-courts.[25] If these were official decrees, no other evidence of them survives.

And yet, what Nazianzen presents as Julian's excuse for these other bans is consonant with what the emperor himself gives as a basis for the education edict. According to Gregory, Julian says that:

> It is part of [the Christian] tradition not to defend oneself, nor go to law, nor hold any office, nor to consider anything personal property, but in every way to live in another place [i.e. heaven] and to look down on present things as if they were non-existent, not to requite evil, nor to spare the other cheek when one is struck but turn it to the smiter, and to strip off one's tunic along with the cloak.[26]

In other words, Julian argues that, because Christians have chosen "to live in another place" and to avoid participation in the ordinary relations that constitute an earthly way of life within the empire, they render themselves unfit for service in roles that require such participation. The role of a paedagogue clearly belongs to this same category, given that education was culturally specific and aimed at forming future-citizens of a particular *politeia*.

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[25] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 4 (*Contra Julianum* I) §96; PG 35, 629.

[26] *Ibid*., §97; PG 35, 632.

But the education edict did not aim merely or primarily at preventing Christians from engaging in civic life as teachers. That ban was a means to the end of preventing the success of Christian parrhêsiastic speech against pagan power in the public sphere. In other words, Julian sought to make sure that students from Christian families either did not receive the education that would have made their speech winsome on rhetorical criteria held by their pagan peers or else were "re-educated" away from Christianity and towards paganism. Without rhetorical training, Christians might say whatever they liked against pagans or paganism, but without the outward (rhetorical) tokens of an education in virtue (philosophy), non-Christian Hellenes simply would not bother to listen to them. That is to say, uneducated Christians would be manifest as inferior to pagans by their lack of rhetorical skill, and so an audience of pagan *pepaideumenoi* would always find an immediate reason to dismiss the act of Christian *parrhêsia* as the unjustified shamelessness of base men and ignore the substantive content of such speech.

It is quite possible that Julian was willing to gamble on many Christian parents keeping their children out of schools staffed entirely by pagans, and that whatever "underground" teaching Christians could provide for their own youth would prove vastly inferior to the norms of "public" education. Attempts to establish a "private" Christian *paideia* purged of pagan associations was, in fact, a historically documented response of some Christians. In response to the emperor's edict, according to the church historian Sozomen, those who had concerns about the pagan content of classical "teaching texts" had attempted to compose a new literature in classical style and, in the case of poetic texts, traditional meters, liberally sprinkled with words in archaic or Attic registers, but with Christian content and themes. Apollinaris of Laodicea and his father, Apollinaris the Elder, created what they saw as an alternative to the pagan canon: an epic on Israelite history to replace Homer, Christian comedies in the style of Menander, tragedies after Euripides, and Pindaric odes.[27] Gregory of Nazianzus himself hoped to provide a rich and respectable corpus of Christian poetry in classical style and meter for future generations. In a poem setting out the reason for his poetic compositions, he says the following:

> And third, I was convinced of this—a petty thing
> It might have been, still I'm convinced: I cannot bear
> To grant that those outside the church should have the edge
> In words—the sort, I mean, all rouged and powdered;
> For us, of course, beauty in contemplation lies.[28]

But even if Christian parents did not withdraw their students from pagan schools en masse, Julian had little doubt but that these students would eventually be converted to paganism, even despite the influence of their families. The edict specifically indicates that the Christian pupils are allowed to remain, even if the teachers must go, precisely because the emperor has high hopes for their eventual "healing":

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[27] Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.18.

[28] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmen de seipso*, 2.1.39; PG 37,1332-3

> For indeed, it would not be at all reasonable to shut out from the best way those boys who are still ignorant and do not know where to turn or to lead them by fear, even if against their will, to the [beliefs] of their fathers (τὰ πάτρια). Even though it might be just to cure them thus against their will, like one does with the insane -- except that indulgence is to be granted to all those of such disease. For I think it necessary to teach and not punish those without sense.[29]

Julian may have been forming such expectations on the basis of his own history. Not only was the emperor himself raised as a Christian, but he was, by all accounts, a budding biblical scholar. His familiarity with Christian Scripture and theology is evident in his later writings against Christians.[30] And Nazianzen presents the young Julian as an accomplished exegete and apologist, an assertion that should probably be taken at face value given how very little good Gregory has to say about the emperor and the generally rancorous and disparaging tone of his orations.[31]

It is also likely that Julian planned to work intentionally towards the conversion of pupils to paganism by a reform of education on a grand scale to make the religious aspects of *paideia* more explicit. Again, a certain caution is called for in such speculation, since the only evidence is from Nazianzen's polemical orations against the emperor. Here, Gregory describes Julian's plan for new schools:

> This is what he had in mind: he was ready to set up schools throughout the

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[29] Julian, Ep. 36, 424a.

[30] Cf., e.g. Julian's critique of Christian rejection of the Jewish Law at *Contra Galileanos* 305-6 and 320 where he appeals to Ex. 12:14-5, Deut. 4:2 and 27:26, Gen. 17:1-11, and Mt. 5:10 and 5:17.

[31] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 4 (*Contra Julianum I*), §96.

> city, podiums and tiered benches, expositions and explications of Greek teachings, those that treat of ethics and of esoterica, and a type of responsive prayer, proportionate reproach for those who sin, initiation rites and completion rites and all the other things that clearly belong to our order.[32]

Certainly, Nazianzen's point is that Julian's civic reforms are hopelessly derivative and perverse imitations of Christian institutions and practices. Indeed, Julian's own writings demonstrate that he did not balk at using Christian exemplars to direct pagan reform.[33] There is little doubt that such a school would have been a fitting embodiment of Julian's ideal of education and his devout support of public cult. Sacrifices were restored to most official proceedings under his rule, and Julian travelled with a retinue of soothsayers and theurgists. If the language of his own edict is to be believed, there is no reason to suppose his plan for a full-scale pagan revival would not have included a new educational model.

It is worth noting that many pagans might not have lent sufficient support for the emperor to accomplish his aims of imposing this sort of religious curriculum on Hellenic schools. The historian Ammianus Marcellinus, himself a pagan and a proponent of divination, denounces Julian's edict against Christian teachers and takes issue with the excess of Julian's piety, calling him a practitioner of superstition rather than a legitimate observer of holy rites (*superstitiosus magis*

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[32] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 4 (*Contra Julianum I*), §111; PG 35, 648.

[33] Note particularly his attempt to set up pagan institutions of *philanthropia* to rival Christian ones (made more effective by cutting off the grain supply to the church after establishing a rival pagan dole), Ep. 22, 430d-431a, and Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.15 on the relief fund he set up for widows.

*quam sacrorum legitimus observator*).[34] Julian's death on the Persian campaign in June 363 of wounds incurred during the Battle of Samarra—which Nazianzen for one did not view as "untimely"—cut short his reign, curtailing both the effect of his edict against Christian teachers and preventing whatever plans he had for education reform from coming to full fruition.[35] Julian was succeeded by the Anomoean Christian emperor Valens, who surely rescinded his predecessor's education edict, even if his own agenda proved troublesome to pro-Nicenes, as we shall soon see.

Because the life-span of the edict was so short, the decree's most serious challenge to the Cappadocians came less from implementation of its official stipulations than from the rationale given for its prohibitions:

> It is necessary, therefore, that all who profess to teach be suitable in manner and not hold in their souls ideas which war against those they profess in public . . . I grant them this choice: not to teach those things they do not consider of the utmost importance or, if they wish to teach, to first persuade their students that neither Homer nor Hesiod nor any of those whom they interpret and have accused of impiety, ignorance, and sin against the gods is really [as they say]. For since they are parasites upon and take their wages from what those men have written, they confess that they are shamefully greedy and would endure anything for a few drachmas.[36]

With these words, Julian is effectively marshalling against Christians the accusation of sophistry discussed in the previous chapter. Because they have not been inwardly formed by the pagan beliefs and practices recommended by the Greek classics, the emperor paints Christian educators – and potentially all educated Christians who display their learning in speech -- as con-artists out to gain power and its material perqs by merely performing the outward tokens of cultural formation while utterly lacking in both integrity and moral virtue.

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[34] Ammianus Marcellinus, 22.10.7; 25.4.17, 20.

[35] Libanius asserted that Julian had been murdered by one of his own soldiers, a Christian (Or. 18, 274), and John Malalas later comments that the hit had been ordered by Basil (*Chronographia* 333-4), but this is not corroborated by contemporary historians such as Ammianus and is highly unlikely.

[36] Julian, Ep. 36, 422c, 423a-b.

The logic of the orations against Julian written by Gregory Nazianzus is perhaps obscured by the author's excess of passionate bitterness against the emperor—as well as by a paradoxical conflict in his loyalties.[37] Nevertheless, even while born along by a torrent of resentment, Nazianzen was still able to discern the vital questions at the heart of Julian's edict: was Hellenism essentially religious? Julian's argument brought issues that had long troubled Christians themselves to a head: if *paideia* and Greek culture were essentially pagan, then how could Christians participate in good conscience? Essentially, agreement with the premise that Hellenic *paideia* was pagan created a catch-22 for Christian parrhêsiasts: to be equal to non-Christian peers and speak without shame, they needed to be formed by Hellenic *paideia* so as to craft speech that conformed to pagan rhetorical standards. And yet, if Christians participated in pagan education without being formed by its philosophy or religion but only in order to gain rhetorical skill that they could turn to their own advantage, they both undercut any claims they might make to virtue or moral authority and destroyed their particular integrity as Christians fundamentally opposed to paganism and all its trappings. The only path toward gaining the trust of pagans would seem to require giving up the identity of a Christian who dissented from pagan values. Perhaps because of this very argument against Christian integrity, the Christian rhetor Prohaeresius (who had taught Nazianzen and was offered an exception from the edict by Julian) voluntarily abdicated his post.[38] Others saw their way to continuing the profession of rhetoric with integrity by abandoning their Christian faith; the rhetorician Hecebolius and the bishop Pegasius both converted to paganism under Julian, the latter becoming a pagan priest.[39]

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[37] For this characterization of Nazianzen's orations, see Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow: Roman Rule and Greek Culture in Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) 192-9.

Nazianzen's response is simply to deny Julian's premises. Pagan *paideia* is not actually pagan, because the object of study is not a religion but a language. Addressing the emperor, Gregory writes:

> How will you show that words accrue to you? If they are yours, how can you show that we have no share in them, on the logic of your decree and your own illogic? To whom belong the very words involved in being a Hellene, and how is being a Hellene to be classified and conceived (καὶ τοῦ πῶς λεγομένου καὶ νοουμένου)? So that I might explain to you the force of the word . . , you must either say that this [being Greek] belongs to a religion (θρησκείας ) or indeed to a people (ἔθνους) and to those who first invented the meaning of the language.[40]

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[38] See Eunapius, *Vitae Sophistarum* 493, Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.16, and Sozomen, *Historia Eccelsiastica* 5.18.

[39] On Hecebolius, see Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.1, 13 and Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.18; after Julian's death, Hecebolius pragmatically converted back to Christianity, indicting his former pupil Julian as an "incompetent sophist." On the history of Pegasius, see Julian, Ep. 19.

[40] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 4 (*Contra Julianum I*) §103; PG 35, 630.

Gregory goes on to argue that unless Christians in Cappadocia are to be barred from speaking Greek, they have just as much claim to education as do their pagan counterparts. Nazianzen's understanding of language is much like the view of rhetoric prevalent at the time: it is more or less a *technê*, a skill easily transferable from any one system of value or belief to another. The culture in which a skill originates has no intrinsic claim upon it. Otherwise, the Phoenicians could begrudge the Greeks their alphabet and the Euboeans would have sole rights to the use of numbers.[41]

The reduction of Hellenic education to technical training in the use of a language abstracted from the cultural content of all texts in that language may strike the reader as a willful blindness to what *paideia* was actually like and just how much pagan material the typical curriculum included.[42] Indeed, in the orations, Nazianzen drives home his assertion of an equal Christian claim to classical learning by demonstrating (at some length) his own familiarity with Greek history, mythology, and literature. In one such litany of classical *topoi*, he alludes to myths about Pelops, Mithras, Iphigenia, Menoeceus, and Scedasus, as well as legends of pagan sages and philosophers like Solon, Pythagoras, Socrates,

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[41] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 4 (*Contra Julianum I*) §107; PG 35, 641-4.

[42] This might also be considered blindness to the true nature of language itself, which, as I argued in the first chapter, is always concomitant with a particular community sharing a particular mode of life (which will include religious practices) and cannot be abstracted from these in quite as tidy a way as Gregory seems to envision here. However, languages can be – and routinely are -- adopted and adapted by different communities or sub-communities who have significantly different ways of life than that of the originary linguistic community in what is typically an organic, lengthy, and often quite messy process.

Plato, Xenocrates, Diogenes, Epicurus, Crates, Antisthenes, Aristotle, Cleanthes, Anaxagoras, and Heraclitus, working in a few quotations of Homer along the way.[43]

Nevertheless, familiarity with this body of literature does not amount to approbation of its moral content. Nazianzen does not hesitate to showcase his *paideia* by way of a condemnation of the very stories and values that comprise it and that Julian holds so dear. While pagans may claim to esteem virtues like respect for parents and chastity, the myths of gods who rise to power by killing their fathers (as Zeus and Cronos before him) or indulge in orgies and adulterous affairs (like Zeus' seduction of the boy Ganymede or Heracles' "thirteenth labor" of bedding the fifty daughters of Thestias in a single night) legitimize the very vices that pagans themselves expect education to denounce, thus granting "*parrhêsia* to the passions."[44]

Here again, Gregory uses both his learning and his identity as a Christian to demonstrate that exposure to the classical corpus does not necessarily imply an uncritical acceptance of its contents as "true" or morally exemplary. Contra Julian, Nazianzen argues that "culture" (the object of *paideia*) is composite and not monophonic. What Christians must avoid, therefore, is not the simultaneous embrace and critique of Hellenic culture, but failure to make accurate distinctions between rhetoric and philosophy, between a language *per se* and a subset of particular utterances available within that language, between the full repertoire of possible values or criteria that a community might use in making judgments and a particular selection and ordering of those values and criteria.

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[43] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 4 (*Contra Julianum I*), §§70-72; PG 35, 592-6.

[44] *Ibid.*, §§119-21; PG 35, 657-61.

To put this in Nazianzen's terms, we might say that there is a distinction to be made between the singular overarching and unifying *logos* of education (*viz*., the rational framework that shapes both instruction itself and the "soul" formed by that instruction) on the one hand, and the plural *logoi* (*viz*., the particular words comprising a language and skill at selecting, arranging, and deploying them; the particular narratives, accounts, and texts that comprise the material content of education; and the like) on the other. The disagreement between Julian and the Cappadocians, then, is that the emperor thinks the plural *logoi* comprising Greek *paideia* cannot or should not be abstracted or expropriated from its unifying *logos* of paganism. Thus far, we have seen that Gregory argues that the pagan elements in Greek literature belong to the category of plural subordinate *logoi*; they may be present in texts under study without necessarily exerting the same formative influence on the soul of the student that the unifying *logos* of education does and is meant to do. The task of Christians speaking parrhêsiastically to pagans requires their ability to master and marshal the good *logoi* of Hellenic *paideia* in an argument for the best *logos* – the Logos himself. In order to do this, they must be able to sort the good *logoi* from the bad in their education so as to be formed by the former and to ignore the latter. In the next section, we shall see Basil's arguments on how this is to be accomplished.

### 3.1.2. Basil's Advice to Young Christians on "the Words and the Bees"

Paradigmatic for Christian sorting and selectivity regarding secular learning is Moses, who was brought up in Egypt, a land respected for its culture and learning. Beginning with Origen, the fosterage of Moses with Pharaoh's daughter is taken to indicate acquaintance with secular philosophy.[45] This identification is further reinforced by the Origenist interpretation of the Israelites' "plundering of the Egyptians" in the Exodus as the appropriation of pagan philosophy for Christian use.[46] Nyssen attributes just this sort of Mosaic sifting to his brother Basil in his encomium when he writes:

> A princess of the Egyptians adopted Moses and taught him their native doctrine, but he was not kept from the maternal breast as long as the first stage of his life required being nursed with such food. The truth bears witness to this also in the case of the teacher [Basil.] For although he was reared on wisdom from outside [the faith] he always kept to the breast of the Church and by the teachings there his soul grew and matured.[47]

But how was one to distinguish between the good and the bad? In particular, how was a young boy immersed in texts rife with pernicious values but only just learning his grammar meant to exercise the necessary discernment to avoid danger? Julian's assumption that Greek education would inevitably cause

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[45] See, e.g., Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Moses* §18.
[46] Origen, *Letter to Gregory Thaumatourgos* (*SC* 148, pp.186-94.)
[47] Gregory of Nyssa, *In Basilium Fratrem* §20.

Christian youth to renounce Christ and convert to paganism loomed as a dark fear in the mind of many Christians as well and led them to reject traditional education.

Basil's *Address to Young Men* (*Ad Adulescentes)* is ostensibly written to his younger relatives (or their parents) to convince them that it wasn't necessary for Christian children to be kept from classical literature, but rather to have a proper appreciation of Hellenic *paideia*.[48] Unlike Nazianzen, Basil does not seem to have written directly against Julian's edict.[49] His letter to his nephews, however, addresses the very concerns of the Christian community which arose in response to the imperial decree against Christian teachers, and it would be naïve to suppose that Basil was unfamiliar with the language of the edict or the rationale that lay behind the decree. It is perhaps too simplistic, moreover, to presume that the letter cannot be a response to the edict simply because it omits explicit mention of the historic legislation. In my view, the lack of reference to the rescript of 362 could be taken as a shrewd diplomatic move on Basil's part. By allowing the practical questions of what should be done by Christians in response to the law to remain in the background, Basil is free to address in a more irenic context the issues at stake in the relationships of Christians and classical culture without putting anyone on the defensive for their actual responses to the decree and leading to polarization within the community of the church. Nevertheless, the conclusions Basil reaches would surprise pagans and Christians alike.

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[48] The assumption is that these are Basil's nephews since he speaks of being as close to them as their parents (*Ad Adulescentes* 1.2). See Arthur G. Holder, "Saint Basil the Great on Secular Education and Christian Virtue." *Religious Education* 87.3 (1992) 395-415; Erich Lamberz, "Zum Verständnis von Basileios' Schrift *'Ad adolescentes.'" Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 75-95; and Ann Moffat, "The Occasion of St. Basil's *Address to Young Men*." *Antichthon* 6 (1972), 74-86. While only one brother might have had children, besides his sister Macrina (who was celibate) the family included several other daughters who were presumably married, much as Macrina was to have been before the death of her fiancé, and then had children. The addressees might also have been the children of friends. Holder, following Moffatt and Lamberz, suggests that the letter might have been intended for a "youth group" under Basil's leadership; no evidence of such institutions exists. In any case, the letter belongs to the genre of the literary epistle; the fact that it remains extant indicates that it was intended for an audience beyond its technical addressees.

[49] The period of Basil's studies in Athens (unlike that of Gregory Nazianzen) did not over-lap with Julian's. Furthermore, in none of his works does Basil seem to address the issue of the apostate emperor or his education edict directly. Nazianzen claims that the two orations against Julian (Orr. 4 and 5) are "from Gregory and Basil" (Or. 5 §). This may, however, be merely a symptom of the intensity of Nazianzen's affection for Basil, which seems not to have been practically requited in the way that Gregory would have wished. Although the letter of Julian to Basil (Ep. 39) appears to be genuine, the exchange of correspondence attributed to the two is almost certainly spurious, a later invention of communication between intellectual celebrities which, it was felt, really should have taken place, much like the fictitious correspondence of St. Paul and Seneca.

*Paideia* is meant to be formational, and yet the material of classical education must be culled to separate the good from the bad. Basil's imagery for Christian selective use of pagan texts has become famous; Christians must pluck the "roses while avoiding the thorns" or mimic the bees:

> For these [bees] neither come close to all flowers nor whatever ones they happen upon, nor try to carry off the whole flower, but they take off only as much as is suitable for their business and leave the rest well enough alone. We, too, if we are sensible, will carry off from [pagan texts] as much as is related to us and akin to the truth and pass over the remainder.[50]

And yet the apian metaphor is not original; Plutarch also claims that students are to imitate the bee in deriving the "nectar" from classical literature :

> The bee by nature in the bitterest flowers and the sharpest thorns quarries the smoothest and most useful honey; so children, if they are correctly familiarized with poetry, will learn something useful or beneficial

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[50] Basil, *Ad Adulescentes*, 4.8-9.

> in some way or other even from those texts suspected of being improper or base.[51]

Neither Basil nor Plutarch expects unschooled boys to be innately able to distinguish accurately between the good and the bad in classical texts. The *Address to Young Men* opens with an appeal that the boys follow Hesiod's advice and listen to good counsel.[52] Basil, surprisingly enough, agrees with Julian on the importance of finding a teacher of high moral fiber. Unlike the pagan emperor, however, Basil insists that such a teacher must be a Christian. In speaking of the boys' (presumably pagan) teachers, he writes:

> It is imperative that you not surrender to these men once and for all the rudders, as it were, of the ship of your minds and follow after them wherever they lead, but taking as much as is useful from them, you should know what should be overlooked. What these things are, therefore, and how we may distinguish them, this is what I will teach you from this point on.[53]

Basil promises, moreover, to continue to advise them throughout the course of their education. Only a Christian like himself, he argues, one who is thoroughly grounded in the faith and who displays personal integrity and virtue, can advise and equip boys to be able to profit from pagan learning.

What must have surprised those Christian readers who rejected Hellenic *paideia* as pagan is Basil's insistence that classical learning is potentially a source of good for Christians: "Insofar as it is through virtue that we must undertake our way of life, and as this [virtue] has been praised a great deal by poets, historians, and much more still by philosophers, we should especially apply ourselves to these sorts of writings."[54] More than this, he insists that this pagan education is an almost indispensible preliminary training (*propaideusis*) for the Christian life. The Scriptures certainly teach virtue more fully, but they do so "through mysteries" which are too deep for the boys to understand at their age. Therefore, Hellenic literature is useful as "shadows and reflections" (σκιαῖς τισι καὶ κατόπτροις), or rather "*progymnasmata* (preliminary exercises) for the eyes of the soul."[55]

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[51] Plutarch, *How the Young Should Listen to Poetry*, 32e-f.
[52] Basil, *Ad Adulescentes*, 1.3-4.
[53] *Ibid*., 1.5.

The picture of Christian education and formation that emerges, then, is one that progresses by stages and that, for its optimal functioning, requires a community comprised of persons located in different stages in the trajectory. Virtue is required for the Christian life, but a child cannot comprehend the "fully-concentrated" teachings on virtue contained in Christian Scripture. Pagan literature, even if what it offers is a corrupted and somewhat diluted picture of virtue – rather, *because* what it offers is a corrupted and therefore diluted picture – is what is appropriate for forming young minds. After their mental vision has been formed and improved by training in the dimmer light of the pagan classics, the students will be ready to advance to the study of the more luminous mysteries of Scripture. At the same time, because the picture of virtue that pagan literature offers is corrupted by vice, children require "adult (Christian) supervision" when engaging with it, lest they focus their eyes upon the darkness of vice rather than the light of virtue that together comprise the "shadows and reflections" that constitute Hellenic literature. Accordingly, there must be mature Christians on hand to teach the youth.

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[54] Basil, *Ad Adulescentes*, 5.1.
[55] *Ibid.*, 2.6.

Of course it is typical of human communities that full adult members instruct the youth in the community's culture, forming them into full adult members in turn. This is simply how communities (and, thereby, cultures) tradition and conserve themselves. What is remarkable about the model of education envisioned by Basil, and especially significant for the purposes of the present study, is the fact that the Christian community retains its character as the product of the *conversion* of out-group members even in its very self-conservation, in the methods by which it forms in-group members *as* in-group members. In Basil's view, becoming a mature Christian – or, at least, an intellectually mature Christian -- seems to require that even children born to Christian parents and baptized as infants first go through a sort of "non-Christian phase." One might even say that Christianity's continued existence requires that there continue to be non-Christians – communities of pagans who can produce "shadowy" texts suited (if potentially also dangerous) to the weaker vision of young Christian eyes. But the question raised by this is: exactly what is one converting *to* in becoming a Christian? Is Christianity itself a "culture"?

### 3.1.3. Christianity as Cosmopolitanism

Basil's identification of the best of Greek literature as mere *progymnasmata* would have been utterly scandalous to pagans. Christianity had long been associated with ignorant backwater fishermen in Judaea and the poorer, uneducated segments of Roman society. The exceptions (intelligent Christians like the Cappadocians) were not thought superior to the ignorant Christian masses because of their knowledge of Christian theology and Scripture, but because they had advanced through the classical pagan curriculum. To suggest that the best of Hellenic cultural achievements were useful merely as a stepping stone to the "higher learning" of a low-brow foreign cult would strike educated pagans like Julian as a ludicrous insult.

Basil's argument for the propaideutic role of Greek education and the necessity of Christian teaching for separating pagan dross from its gold depends upon his view of the essential nature of Greek culture, rhetoric, and philosophy. Hellenic wisdom is good—at least in part—but its very goodness must be measured by its approximation to the goodness of Christian teachings. Basil gives examples of pagans whose virtue was "akin" to that of Christians. One tale tells how the philosopher Socrates, when he was struck on the face by a drunk, did not hit back but only wrote the name of the fellow by the bruise on his forehead "and defended himself only to this extent." Basil asserts, "this precept of Socrates is the brother (ἀδελφὸν) to the one that says 'to the one who strikes your jaw, offer him the other as well.'"[56] Gregory of Nazianzus also asserts the existence of a "kinship" (οἰκειότης) between pagan and Christian values and virtues in his declaration that all true *logoi* derive from the same divine source.[57]

And yet, it is not the case that the Cappadocians viewed Christianity simply as Hellenism's "better brother" – just one more culture (albeit the best and truest one) among others. They could hardly do so, given that identifying Christianity as what we might term a "culture" was one of the chief stratagems of Julian's invective. He adopted the habit of referring to followers of Christ as "Galileans," which Nazianzen regards as a shameful appellation intended to keep Greek Christians from being accepted as embodiments of Hellenic culture by associating them with a town in the Palestinian boondocks.[58]

Following a Greek tradition of ethnography going back to Herodotus, Julian viewed different ethnic groups as having particular native characters:

> Let someone tell me the reason that the Celts and Germans are brave, Greeks and Romans are, on the whole, political and philanthropic, but also austere and bellicose, the Egyptians are more clever and good artisans, the Syrians are pacifists and given to luxury, but also clever and hot-tempered, vain and quickstudies . . . ? With few exceptions, you won't find any one of the Western peoples that have a propensity for philosophy or

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[56] Basil, *Ad Adulescentes*, 7.7-8; cf. Mt. 5:39. Slightly later in the text, Basil says he thought that Cleinias, who paid a fine he did not owe rather than swear an oath, "had heard our commandment forbidding oaths." (7.10) It is not entirely clear whether Basil thinks that the "kinship" of pagan and Christian virtue is a fluke, a result of pagan borrowing from Jews and Christians, or a natural law imparted to humanity at creation (cf. interpretations of Rom. 2:14).

[57] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 4 (*Contra Iulianum* I) §4 (*PG* 35, 533-6)

[58] See, for example Julian's oration *Against the Galileans*; other references to the Christians under the rubric "Galileans" are sprinkled throughout the emperor's writings. Nazianzen discusses this designation in Or. 4 (*Contra Julianum I*) §76; PG 35, 601.

> geometry or anything of that sort, even though the Roman empire rules to such an extent.[59]

The emperor's reason for including such ethnographic musings in his harangue of Christians becomes clear a little further on when he addresses the "Galileans" and asks: "But has God granted *you* the mastery (or "authorship"; ἀρχὴν) of any science or the teaching of any philosophy?" The answer was understood to be "no." For Julian, Greek Christians were race-traitors who had deserted to the Hebrews and then broken off into a specifically "Galilean" ghetto; their self-chosen *ethnos* was not a particularly impressive one, either. As he writes:

> What sort of thing do the Hebrews boast to have received from God, those to whom you were persuaded to desert from us? If you had at least stuck to their precepts, you would not have had such bad luck in every quarter. But even if you were worse than before, when you were with us, you would at least would have had a tolerable time of it . . . But now you have acted as leeches and drawn the worst blood from them, but left them the purer.[60]

The target of Julian's critique was hardly the "conversion" of people belonging to one ethnic group to the culture of another ethnic group per se; that was a done thing, and one which he had every reason to approve. After all, the desire of ethnic non-Greeks to participate in and benefit from Hellenic culture was probably the chief factor that led to the revival and spread of traditional Greek *paideia* throughout the Roman empire in the early centuries of the common era, the establishment of Athens as a seat of Hellenic higher education by the time of the Cappadocians, and the like. Hellenic education was widely available to those who were not ethnically Greek after Alexander's conquests and certainly after Egypt and Asian territories were subsumed into the Roman Empire. Many Greek thinkers and writers of the first centuries A.D. were not "Greek" at all. The hyper-Atticizing orator Favorinus was from Gaul, for example; Theodoret of Cyrrhus (a Hellene *par excellence*) hailed from Syria. Goths, Egyptians, Persians, Armenians—all manner of foreigners were "naturalized" through education. Cappadocia itself was considered to be "on the fringes" of the Greek world; during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, Cappadocia's dialect retained its regional features even when the *koinê* had created greater uniformity in speech.[61] The emperor's point was rather that, whereas converts were meant to be moving *up* the cultural ladder, ethnic or cultural Greeks who converted to "Galileanism" were headed in entirely the wrong direction.

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[59] Julian, *Against the Galileans* 116a; 131c-d.
[60] *Ibid*., 201e-202a.

To counter such arguments effectively, the Cappadocians would either have to argue for the cultural superiority of Jesus (or "Galileanism") over the Greeks, or to depict Christianity as something other than a "culture" – something that, in fact, transcended or was superior to cultures. They opted for the latter. It is tempting to modern scholars of late antiquity to locate Christianity in the category of "philosophical schools" lively in the Mediterranean. The problem with this is that we tend to consider philosophical traditions to be elements belonging to a larger particular culture, and philosophical communities to be subsets of larger cultural communities. This can cause us to lose sight of the fact that such communities aimed at being and took themselves to be part of something larger than and transcending – not smaller than and contained within – particular cultures.

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[61] The Cappadocian dialect, specifically, retained a number of Doric features; even today, the dialect is one of the more idiosyncratic and conservative in Modern Greek. For the reaction to Cappadocia as questionably Greek, see Petronius, *Satyricon* 69.2.

An illustration of these distinctions comes from Lucian of Samosata, himself a consummate Hellenist, but a Syrian by origin who expressed an enduring affection for his non-Greek roots in archaic Attic style. In several works he draws parallels between ideals of friendship or virtue espoused by Greek culture and those demonstrated by cultural institutions or legends from his homeland. His dialogue *Toxaris* (or, *On Friendship*) relates a competition between the Syrian for whom the text is named and a Greek, Mnesippus. The plan is that each will tell stories of famous friends from his native cultural tradition in order to judge whether "Scythians" or Hellenes are the more virtuous. At the end of the dialogue, the two decide that the contest is too close to call and are moved by the virtue lauded by the other to become friends themselves. Toxaris promises that he shall play host to Mnesippus, if the latter is ever in Scythia; the Hellene replies: "Indeed, you can bet that I wouldn't hesitate to go even farther if I were going to make such friends, Toxaris, as it is clear to me from your words that you are."[62] The conclusion is that, if the same ideals that Hellenes found laudable and identified with their own culture were also present in and valued by non-Greeks in theirs, then perhaps there was some set of ideals or virtues that were culture-transcending universals.

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[62] Lucian, *Toxaris*, 63.

What philosophical communities of the Hellenistic and later ages aimed at doing was identifying universal truths and virtues, and then cultivating a shared way of life in accord with them, essentially building a culture-transcending culture. From the last chapter, the reader might recall also that philosophers were perennially interested in opportunities to engage in projects to craft political realities that conformed to and embodied what they took to be the highest *logos*. Where the Cappadocians as Christians distinctively differed from philosophers at this time was in the fact that they had no interest in training or establishing a "philosopher-king" – or in being one themselves, as Julian intended -- for the simple reason that they already had one: the LORD himself.[63]

The LORD's *politeia*, moreover, was already "cosmopolitan" in the strictest and fullest sense of the word: it was a political ordering of relations comprising the entire cosmos. Any and all good *logoi* present in and recognized by secular polities or cultural communities had their source in and were derived from God's Logos, an idea prevalent among Christian thinkers since the time of Justin Martyr. In Basil's view, it was the citizenship and participation of Christians in the *politeia* of the Logos himself that enabled them to discern good from bad within the saeculum. As he writes:

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[63] We should keep in mind that what we today call "Constantinianism" did not really gather momentum until the reign of Theodosius I began in 379 (the year in which Basil of Caesarea died), almost fifty years after Constantine I. Even if Constantine had supported the rulings on Christian orthodoxy issued by the Council of Nicaea, the emperors who served after him in the Greek East were a mixed bag of pagans (like Julian) and anti-Nicenes (like Valens) who were seen as persecuting Christians (or just Nicene Christians.) The formation or extension of something like "Christendom" hardly seemed a lively option.

> We don't suppose this human life to be any big deal whatsoever, nor do we think or call anything "good" at all that profits us only to this [sc. temporal] extent . . . but by our hopes we press further forward and make all preparation for this other life. We say, therefore, that we must love and pursue with all our strength whatever things profit us for that [life], but whatever things do not lead us on the trail (ἐξικνούμενα) to that [life] we must overlook as being of no value.[64]

Statements like this can easily sound as if they are recommending that Christians lead an "otherworldly" sort of existence, one that is apolitical, antisocial, and perhaps only sustainable by a few strange people who can bear to be so utterly abstracted from "human life." But complete withdrawal from relations with the rest of the world is not what Basil or the Gregories envision as a universal way of life for Christians. Rather, the idea is that Christians should live thoroughly political and social lives – but ones that participate in a different politics and in a different sociality to those espoused and acclaimed by pagans. The difference being that the center of gravity and chief organizing principles for Christian socio-political life in the secular here-and-now – the highest order relations of a Christian politics -- were not the temporal and material relations that ordered the politics of the Roman empire but relations with the LORD, in heaven and in eternity. For the Cappadocians, then, it is not that Christians must be or become able to live life devoid of the sorts of political and social relations that most humans need and desire, but that relations with the LORD are real and substantive (truly political and truly social) enough to sustain a truly human life.

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[64] Basil, *Ad Adulescentes*, 2.2-3.

More than this, though, the Cappadocians' argument is that *only* the particular relations and ordering that comprise the LORD's politics is sufficient to form and sustain a truly human life – that is, a human life lived in truth and virtue. Only the participation of adult Christians as full citizens in the divine *politeia* affords the knowledge of the order of relations and, consequently, the fundamental criteria of judgment that comprise the singular overarching *logos* by which the mixed goods and ills of secular cultures can be distinguished and properly identified. This ability to identify and embody the true goods that secular culture esteems serves both to eliminate the onus of shame that would prevent parrhêsiastic speaking and also to supply "common ground" that might make such speech persuasive to non-Christian audiences. The Cappadocians believed that Christian embodiment of the types of excellence pagans also recognized and esteemed but could not themselves embody with any consistency would provide proof for the argument that this embodiment was possible only by virtue of Christian participation in the heavenly *politeia*. In that case, Christian *parrhêsia* would have the potential to convert others to "citizenship" in God's kingdom or, at the least, to garner respect and toleration that would grant Christians time and space to continue converting others and forming members of their own community into fuller citizenship in the heavenly *politeia*. This understanding of how Christian *parrhêsia* functions on the basis of common ground presented in Hellenic *paideia* is what underlies the Gregories' accounts of Basil's verbal confrontation with the representatives of the secular empire.

## *3.2. Basil Between Two Emperors*

After Basil of Caesarea died in 379, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa both delivered eulogies in praise of the departed bishop. A theme in both encomia is Basil's *parrhêsia* towards potentates with Nyssen depicting his brother as "speaking with *parrhêsia* to kings" (βασιλεῦσι παρρησιαζόμενος),[65] and Gregory of Nazianzus praising his friend's "*parrhêsia* towards rulers and the other most powerful men of the city" (παρρησία πρὸς ἄρχοντας τούς τε ἄλλους καὶ τοὺς δυνατωτάτους τῆς πόλεως.)[66] More than this, Basil's encomiasts draw comparisons between the bishop of Caesarea and biblical heroes of the faith on this point of frank-speaking. Nyssen compares Basil to John the Baptist, who was bold enough to condemn—even at peril of his own life—Herod's sin with Herodias,[67] while Nazianzen terms Basil a second Elijah, a prophet famed for his "*parrhêsia* toward tyrants."[68]

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[65] Gregory of Nyssa, *In Basilium Fratrem* §10.
[66] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 43.34.
[67] Gregory of Nyssa, *In Basilium Fratrem* §14
[68] "τὴν πρὸς τοὺς τυράννους παρρησίαν" Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 43.74

This motif of Basil as bold practioner of *parrhêsia* is often interpreted as simply a rhetorical embellishment of a socio-political fact: the office of bishop in this period was increasingly becoming a medium through which the church could lobby for its interests with the imperial government. Even before the conversion of Constantine in 312, Christian bishops had appealed to emperors to use political power to settle disputes over churches or to restore ecclesial property confiscated during periods of persecution.[69] Constantine himself was requested to help settle matters of doctrine rather than merely of rights to the use of buildings. The emperor used his authority, however, not to decide dogma but to set up official councils and serve as moderator of the proceedings to ensure that decisions were reached. He would then ratify the consensus of the bishops as binding imperial policy so as to prevent divisions within the church becoming deleterious to the peace of the empire.[70] Moreover, as Claudia Rapp has noted, under the administration of Christian emperors, bishoprics were often awarded on much the same basis as civil positions, and episcopal office began to take a place on the ever-changing *cursus honorum* of the later principate. Greater scholarly attention to the role of bishops in Late Antiquity has painted a vivid picture of bishops as powerful civic advocates.

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[69] According to Eusebius, pursuant to requests by bishops, the emperor Gallienus issued two rescripts allowing Christians to repossess churches and cemeteries taken under Valerian. Aurelian was asked to decide a question of rights to a church in Antioch which had been maintained by supporters of Paul of Samosata even after his condemnation and excommunication as a heretic in 269.

[70] This was Constantine's *modus operandi* when requested to aid the church with the Donatist controversy in North Africa, the Meletian Schism in Egypt, and the Arian controversy in the East, which culminated in the Council of Nicaea, held at Constantine's instigation in 325. See Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 262.

But most late ancient historians incorrectly take *parrhêsia* to be a privilege of episcopal office permitting the personal access to rulers required in order to lobby for the interests of the bishopric and/or something like a supernatural endowment or "infusion" of courage that enabled bishops (or "holy men" more generally) to undertake this type of speech. John McGuckin belongs in this former camp of interpretation, using the phrase "episcopal *parrhêsia*" as a technical term, as if *parrhêsia* were a privilege or duty belonging to the office of a bishop.[71] Andrea Sterk combines the two views. She takes frankness in speech to be the special characteristic of the episcopacy, pointedly reminding readers that, in stories of parrhêsiastic ascetics from Sozomen, most of the holy men were in fact *bishops*. But she defines *parrhêsia* as "a divinely endowed boldness that enabled him [the bishop] to speak forthrightly and fearlessly to anyone, including the most powerful rulers" and simultaneously defines this boldness as a form of power, saying that "[t]hese human bearers of the divine [bishops] had power that could be felt even politically, and before that power even an emperor had to bow his will."[72] Claudia Rapp's understanding of Christian *parrhêsia* towards non-Christians hinges upon the authority inspired by Christian adoption of the dress and characteristic appearance that pagans associated with ascetic philosophers.[73] As previously mentioned, this associative equation of external appurtenances with internal virtues was sometimes effective but had also long been regarded as suspect – especially among the philosophically educated.

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[71] John McGuckin, *Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography*. See the discussion of this in Chapter 1, p. 74 n. 85.

[72] Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004) 187.

Certainly, as bishop of Caesarea, Basil did engage in the sorts of "lobbying" actions that scholars of early Christianity envision. Basil sends numerous letters to officials asking for political actions to be taken that would support the material interests of his flock; in several of these he claims that he is exercising *parrhêsia*.[74] But if one is looking to find historical as well as literary evidence of the bold confrontation of imperial powers described by the Gregories, an examination of Basil's own political correspondence proves disappointing. In the contexts in which the bishop of Caesarea himself claims to employ *parrhêsia*, he appears anything but confident. The Basil of the letters seems timorous and obsequious; he most frequently mentions "*parrhêsia*" in apologizing for his exercise of such boldness.

A prime example of this rhetoric is in his epistle to the prefect Modestus:

> As great a share of honor and *parrhêsia* as you give me by enduring to condescend to my level, so great—and even greater—increase in fame do I pray you will have in all your life from our good Master. While I have desired for a long time to write and receive honor from you, shame at your superiority has held me back, careful as I am lest I should ever be thought

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[73] Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 264-7.
[74] See Basil's Epistles 74, 107, 110, and 296.

> to have employed *parrhêsia* immoderately . . . .[75]

What we see in these letters is mention of *parrhêsia* being used to beg indulgence for speech that is quite ordinary – *viz*., not parrhêsiastic at all. Strange as it may seem at first blush, this sort of move is an extremely common type of deference and politeness, both in the ancient Greek world and still today among speakers of English. In situations of unequal power (particularly on the job), we routinely speak *as if* we are doing something rather offensive – making a major imposition upon another, requesting a huge and unwonted favour – when in fact we are not doing anything extraordinary or offensive at all. Our roles as subordinates entail and even require us to make exactly these sorts of requests and "impositions," and our superiors' roles entail and even require them to tolerate these impositions and to at least consider -- often also to grant -- these requests. Familiarity with the greater corpus of correspondence between superiors and subordinates within the imperial infrastructure in both Greek and Latin shows that this was an even more pronounced habit of courteous speech in the ancient world than it is today. Basil's epistolary apologies for "*parrhêsia*" must be read and interpreted within this larger context as part and parcel of a stylized performance of courtesy.

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[75] Basil, Ep. 110. Ὅσης ἡμῖν τιμῆς καὶ παρρησίας μεταδίδως τῇ ἡμερότητι τοῦ τρόπου καταβαίνειν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀνεχόμενος, τοσαύτην σοι καὶ ἔτι πλείω ἐν παντὶ τῷ βίῳ παρὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἡμῶν Δεσπότου τὴν αὔξησιν γενέσθαι τῆς περιφανείας εὐχόμεθα. Ἐμὲ δὲ καὶ πάλαι ἐπιθυμοῦντα γράφειν καὶ ἀπολαύειν τῆς παρὰ σοῦ τιμῆς κατεῖχεν ἡ πρὸς τὸ ὑπερέχον αἰδώς, εὐλαβούμενον μήποτε νομισθῶ ἀμέτρως ἐμφορεῖσθαι τῆς παρρησίας.

The incident which both Gregories recount as an instance of Basil's *parrhêsia* towards rulers is the bishop of Caesarea's confrontation of the very same official to whom the cringing epistle above is addressed. Modestus was the praetorian prefect under the emperor Valens, who was Christian, but subscribed to the Anomoean doctrine that the Son was not of the same nature as the Father, contrary to the creed formulated by the council of Nicaea in 325 and accepted by Basil. Modestus seems to have been the prefect in the province for most of Basil's career in Caesarea and had acted (perhaps officially on behalf of Valens) to try to convert the Cappadocian to the doctrine of Eunomius.[76] Shortly before Valens visited Caesarea at Epiphany of 372, Modestus confronted Basil (Nazianzen reports one meeting; Nyssen tells of two) and attempted to strong-arm him into adopting the faith of the emperor.[77]

This may seem an essentially intra-ecclesial conflict, a standoff between Anomoeans and Pro-Nicenes that simply happens to be played out on a large scale due to the official positions of the contenders. And yet, as both Gregories tell it, the real issue at stake is not the doctrinal question of the Son's nature, but the source, grounds, and scope of authority. According to Nazianzen, when Modestus appears before him, outraged, Basil is not sure what has upset the prefect:

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[76] Modestus had strong connections with pagan military officers and had only converted to Anomoean Christianity after Valens' accession in 364. He was also a correspondent of the pagan rhetor Libanius. See *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, edd. Arnold Hugh Martin Jones, John Robert Martindale, John Morris. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. 1992. v.1: 605ff.

[77] Philip Rousseau, following Nyssen's account of two runnings-in, concludes that Valens had visited twice, once in 370 after the defeat of the Goths in 369 and again in Epiphany of 372; see his *Basil of Caesarea*, (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1994) 351-2.

> [The prefect] said, “What are you up to, mister,”—and he called him by name, for he did not yet deem him worthy to be called “bishop” —“in daring to defy such great power and to act up, you alone of all the others?” The noble [Basil] replied, “What is this craziness? And what’s it about? I cannot yet understand.” “It’s that you do not observe the religion of the emperor, although all the others have been subdued and bested.”[78]

The phrase “you do not observe the religion of the emperor” (μὴ τὰ βασιλέως θρησκεύεις) is ambiguous. Modestus probably means to say “you do not revere the things which the emperor reveres,” but one can also hear “you do not revere the things of (or having to do with) the emperor.” And Nazianzen detects this latter meaning at work behind the former.

Valens and Modestus are indeed pursuing an Anomoean agenda, but their goal is not to persuade Basil of the validity of their position on the basis of theological reasons, but to force the Caesarean prelate (he was not yet a bishop at this point, even if Nazianzen presents him as such) to comply against his own judgment out of fear of the temporal punishments they have the power to inflict. As Modestus says, “Aren’t you afraid of my authority . . . the many punishments I have in my power [to inflict] . . . confiscation, exile, torture, death.”[79]

The prefect is making a clear assertion of Valens’ *imperium*. The Roman designation “emperor” (*imperator*) was originally the title of a military commander and derived from *impero*, a verb that denotes not only issuing a command (as do a number of other verbs such as *iubeo*), but having the efficacious power to ensure also that the command is obeyed and one's will accomplished. It is precisely this ability of the emperor to secure and enforce obedience that Basil challenges. It is not the will of *his* Emperor that Basil worship a creature, so he refuses to do so. Moreover, he would gladly endure all the penalties named by the prefect:

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[78] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 43.48.
[79] *Ibid*., 49.

> I know no exile, since I am not circumscribed by any place, nor do I consider the land where I live now or any where I might be thrown to be mine, but rather God's, whose alien and sojourner I am. What can tortures take from a body that doesn't exist . . ? Death would be my benefactor, since it would send me sooner to God. For him I live, I am his citizen (ᾧ . . . πολιτεύμαι), and for him I have, for the most part, died and towards him I am speeding from far off.[80]

In the face of Basil's disdain for the earthly and temporal punishments that are the modes by which the emperor secures the efficacy of his will, Valens is effectually deprived of *imperium*.

This is significant insofar as, in the context of this particular disagreement, it is precisely the emperor's *imperium* that has been put forth as the measure on which Valens and Modestus are superior to Basil. In the context of this unequal relation, the bishop would not only be required to obey the order (out of fear of retribution for disobedience) but also should be prevented from parrhêsiastic dissenting speech *not* by fear of retribution but by an appropriate sense of shame at his relative inferiority. Basil's response does not simply *argue* that temporal power (the ability to mete out physical and material rewards and punishments) is not in this particular case a rule of a high enough order to be efficacious through either fear or shame; instead, it *demonstrates* this as fact. In this way, the very factors productive of the sort of fear that might prevent disagreeable speech are transformed into factors that neutralize the inferiority-shame that might prevent it. Since Basil is ultimately unafraid of the material power of the emperor Valens and his flunky Modestus, he has no reason to feel inferior to them or to be ashamed of voicing his disagreement.

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[80] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 43.49.

The bishop of Caesarea's lack of fear of the sorts of punishments Modestus threatens is grounded entirely in his participation in and allegiance to the *politeia* of the LORD. Exile from an earthly polity amounts to the removal of an individual from geo-political relations; for Basil, however, exile would not remove him from political relations with the LORD nor from the territory of the God who rules over all the earth as a true "*cosmopoliteia*."[81] As we saw previously from the text of *Ad Adulescentes*, Basil does not consider relations with the physical (or earthly) body or with material objects to be the primary media of relationship with the LORD, so confiscation of property, physical torture, and death are insufficient to destroy the self that is constituted by relations with the LORD as a citizen of the divine *politeia*.

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[81] This reading of Basil's response as a claim of "cosmopolitanism" is shared by Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Ceasarea*, 352 n.8.

This citizenship, in turn, equalizes the relation between Basil and Valens, given that even the emperor himself is a subject of the divine *basileus*. According to Gregory of Nyssa, when Modestus reports that Valens will become a member of the Nicene Church provided that the word *homoousios* be removed from the creed,

> the teacher [Basil] replied that it was of the greatest importance that the emperor should participate in the Church. 'For,' he said, 'it is a great matter that his soul be saved – not because it is the soul of an emperor, but because it is the soul of one who is, in the final analysis, a human person.'"[82]

And yet, the relationship between Basil and his putative imperial overlords is not truly equal, because Valens and Modestus are merely subjects of the divine King – not yet loyal and well-formed citizens of the heavenly *basileia* like the bishop of Caesarea. That Basil's *parrhêsia* has made a solid case not only that he is justified in feeling no inferiority-shame at voicing disagreement with his supposed "superiors," but that he is, in fact, superior to those he addresses is shown by their responses to his speech.

Basil is spared any of the punishments with which Modestus threatened him, and the emperor, recognizing and admiring Basil's virtue, decides to give up altogether his attempt to force the Caesarean prelate's conversion to the Anomoean camp. Certainly, the fact that Valens and Modestus consider themselves Christians and purport to share the same allegiances to God might have rendered them more willing to agree with Basil's argument. If Basil's *parrhêsia* aims to expose the discrepancy between the emperor's political tactics of using terrestrial authority and threats of temporal punishment to strong arm bishops and carve up dioceses, then the appeal to the Christian belief that God is the ultimate authority prove effective. Was this, then, simply a case of Modestus and Valens being momentarily caught up into error but finally recognizing their own beliefs about the LORD's kingship when these were expressed in the resistance offered by Basil?

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[82] Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 1.137.

A close reading of the texts indicates otherwise. While Basil's bold refusal to comply is framed in explicitly Christian terms, it is not Basil's argumentation that proves persuasive to the emperor and his prefect. Rather, their admiration is earned by Basil's fearless virtue—the very courage of his convictions. According to Nazianzen, Modestus reports to Valens that they had been bested by "a man too powerful for threats, too tenacious for words, too strong for persuasion."[83] The emperor, Gregory reports, was "conquered by the praises of the man, for even an enemy admires a man's virtue (θαυμάζει γὰρ ἀνδρὸς ἀρετῆν καὶ πολέμιος)."[84]

The "common ground" on which Basil appeals to Valens and Modestus to respect his *parrhêsia* is therefore not singularly Christian, but more "neutral" – able to appeal even to pagans. It is tempting to dismiss reports of the imperial response as panegyric hyperbole or invention on the part of Nazianzen and Nyssen. But that pagans did sometimes recognize in Christians the presence of virtues to which they themselves aspired is a documented fact. We know that the pagan emperor Julian, by his own account, considered Basil to be at least a worthy adversary and solicited his conversation and *parrhêsia*.[85] And in the second century, the pagan physician Galen had noted that even the least educated and lowest-class Christians endured martyrdom with the fortitude and dignity of philosophers:

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[83] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 43.51.
[84] *Ibid.*

> . . . [N]ow we see the people called Christians drawing their faith from parables [and miracles], and yet sometimes acting in the same way [as those who philosophize]. For their contempt of death [and of its sequel] is patent to us every day, and likewise their restraint in cohabitation. For they include not only men but also women who refrain from cohabiting all through their lives; and they also number individuals who, in self-discipline and self-control in matters of food and drink, and in their keen pursuit of justice, have attained a level not inferior to that of genuine philosophers.[86]

It is possible to understand how this more universal criterion of virtue is in play in the accounts of Nazianzen and Nyssen by considering how the Gregories might have written had they wished to show that Basil earned the respect of the emperor and the prefect through an appeal to shared Christian ideals. They might easily have said that Modestus and Valens were chastened by the remembrance of their own allegiance to a higher βασιλεύς (but that the conviction of the moment lacked staying power and they soon returned to the service of heresy.) Or they might have painted the emperor and his prefect with darker colors as servants of the Devil—certainly, this is in keeping with Nyssen's understanding of the true root of the Anomoean teaching—and have depicted them cowering like demons before the holy authority of Basil. Yet again, Nyssen and Nazianzen could have drawn an explicit comparison between Basil and Christian martyrs.  In such a scenario, Valens and Modestus might have recognized Basil as a martyr-in-waiting and, fearing the political consequences of giving the pro-Nicenes a martyr for their cause, hastily dropped their opposition.

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[85] Julian, Ep. 26 to Basil. The emperor notes that, while they reject each other's beliefs, the two men can find common ground in their devotion to philosophy and the absence of hypocrisy from their conversation.

[86] From Galen's lost summary of Plato's *Republic*; Richard Walzer has rendered the Arabic translation into the English here, *Galen on Jews and Christians.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949) 15. See also Robert Louis Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.)

But the incident is narrated in quite a different fashion. Both Nazianzen and Nyssen focus on the virtues displayed by Basil – virtues lauded within Hellenic *paideia* and admired by all cultured citizens of his day, be they Christian or pagan. In Nazianzen's narration, Valens respects Basil as a worthy opponent and therefore refuses Modestus' advice to employ violent measures. The Anomoean emperor is actually reported to have come to somewhat friendly terms with the pro-Nicene prelate.[87]

Gregory of Nyssa, however, presents a different picture of the emperor's reaction, but also attributes Basil's victory in the parrhêsiastic *agôn* to his integrity and virtue even more explicitly than does Nazianzen. In Nyssen's account, after Basil delivers a bold retort to Modestus, the prefect shifts tactics:

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[87] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 43.53.

> When [Basil] thus set himself against those threats and looked beyond the whole mass of that power as if it were nothing, then just like those changes of one mask after another on the stage, in the same way the severity of threats suddenly changed into flattery.[88]

Instead of speaking harshly and threatening physical and material punishment, the emperor's representative begins to wheedle and cajole, promising political advancement and material benefits. Basil remains unswayed.

Upon hearing of this, the emperor, exasperated and furious, dispatches Modestus and Demosthenes to incite the populace at large to join in his anger against Basil.[89] The fixity of the Caesarean prelate is then contrasted also to the fickleness of the masses who attach themselves to specious and materially advantageous positions.[90] As Nyssen writes, "[Basil] showed that he was not a reed inclined through complacency to contradictory suppositions, but that he was unmoved by all things opposed to his way of life. Poverty delighted him from the beginning and his judgment became an unshakeable rock."[91]

After this campaign of propaganda, the prefect confronts Basil with threats once again; once again Basil is unmoved. The emperor is hardly won over to the

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[88] Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I.1.136.

[89] *Ibid.*, I.1.140.

[90] Gregory of Nyssa, *In Basilium Fratrem*, §14.

[91] *Ibid.*, §12.

Nicene camp, but Nyssen claims a victory in this contest for his brother on the grounds of Basil's manifest display of virtue:

> [It was the deed] of one who displays through his deeds the strength of his soul and the fixity, courage, and nobility of his understanding. His proper action was the salvation of his whole country, peace for our church, an example of every good for those who live according to virtue, the rout of our enemies, advocacy of the faith, the security of the weaker and the confirmation of the more zealous—all the things believed to belong to the stronger side.[92]

In Nyssen's account, Valens' recognition of Basil's virtue is still the reason that the emperor decides to concede the fight. Verbal *parrhêsia* does not always persuade or convert opponents, but it can nevertheless win the *agôn* by setting philosophical virtue as the stakes. If the emperor wishes to retain for himself a semblance of respectable "cultured" or philosophical character, then he cannot simply play the tyrant and exert coercive force. Certainly, Valens had the power to dispose of Basil if he had chosen, but it would have been difficult for Demosthenes and Modestus to keep the crowds on the emperor's side against the Nicenes in the face of such an admirable display of *aretê*. This is why Nyssen claims that Basil's parrhêsiastic protection is the reason that Cappadocia alone was spared the injustices dealt out by Valens to other provinces.[93]

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[92] Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I.1.144-6.

[93] *Ibid.*, I.1.144.

## *3.3. Martyrs and the Parrhêsiastic* Agôn

The Cappadocians' writings are smattered with references to martyrs, but several encomiastic orations dedicated to particular martyrs survive. Nyssen wrote two orations on Stephen, the first martyr whose death is recounted in Acts 6-7, as well as encomia of more contemporary martyrs – the forty soldiers of Sebaste and Theodore. His brother Basil also wrote an encomium of the forty martyrs of Sebaste and a speech praising the martyr Gordius. The narrative accounts produced by both authors share tropes and features that will be significant for the present inquiry. Gregory and Basil present the calamitous advent of persecution, often depicting this as a cosmic event instigated by Satan.[94] The martyrs' confession of their faith in Christ is made before a large gathering of people, often an occasion awaited and chosen by the martyrs; their confession is presented as given spontaneously, even if it is a response to questioning.[95] As in the confrontation between Basil and Modestus, the persecutors are depicted as shifting tactics in trying to persuade the martyrs to renounce Christ, employing threats and intimidation or flattery and promised benefits in turn.[96]

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[94] Basil, *On the Martyr Gordius* PG 31, 493, *On the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste* PG 31, 512; Gregory of Nyssa, *On Theodore* 64.

[95] For Gordius this is the convocation at a civic event in a stadium (PG 31, 497); Theodore is brought before a military tribunal (64-5) but at one point interrupts and cuts short the cross-questioning with his confession (67-8); Basil has the forty coming forward one by one at a public declamation of the imperial edict against Christians (PG 31, 512).

[96] The order varies: Gordius is first threatened with torture (PG 31, 500) and then promised presents and military position (PG 31, 501); Basil has the forty martyrs of Sebaste first induced by flattery (PG 31, 513) and then threatened with torture and death (PG 31, 512-13), while Gregory only describes intimidation directly (148-9) and yet recounts the various goods and honors they might *have* attained as rewards for

In response to threats, bribes, and torture, the martyrs all are said to confess God with *parrhêsia* to be the ultimate authority and both the source and standard of all true goods. Basil and Nyssen present martyrdom as a militaristic or athletic *agôn* with secular powers that proves the superiority of the divine *basileia* over an earthly kingdom. The martyrs are able to overcome the shame that would prevent them from voicing dissent to worldly superiors through their immediately apparent *aretê* on measures and criteria also accepted by their pagan persecutors.

The rest of the *agôn* plays out with the persecutors exerting increasing pressure upon the martyrs in order to put the substantive claims of their bold speech to the test. Because the martyrs verbally attribute their courage to their identity in Christ and the superiority of the divine *politeia* and the true Emperor, their endurance becomes a test of the veracity of their claims. It is not merely a matter of discovering how far the courage of their convictions extends; rather, their very fortitude in the midst of extreme suffering and death would give credence to the content of those convictions. Contrarily, if the martyrs were to recant *in extremis*, it would be seen as proof of the inadequacy of their supposed "divine *politeia*" to form virtuous citizens and the failure of the immaterial to prove truly sufficient, truly ultimate.

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renunciation of the faith that they consciously disdain (15, 16); Theodore is first offered time to rethink his rash confession (67), then offered bribes (67-8) and finally imprisoned and tortured before being sentenced to death (69).

Actions not only speak more loudly but are more difficult to produce than words. Anyone might rave about eternal and invisible glory, but enduring a slow and painful death in the hope of such glory is a different matter. From the perspective of pagan persecutors, the odds seemed favorable that the resolve of the Christians would fail, especially if the torments were made horrific enough to imagine or slow enough to allow plenty of opportunity for a change of heart. The lingering or gruesome nature of torments inflicted on Christians also served to deter the general public from getting involved in the faith. The forty martyrs of Sebaste, for instance, were stripped naked and forced to stand outside in the snow until they died of exposure – with heated baths waiting nearby to welcome them if they should decide to recant before the end. In setting the scene for their martyrdom, Basil notes that the horrific punishments were often effective in deterring Christians from martyrdom:

> . . . [V]arious kinds of tortures were prepared; the tormentors were intractable; the fire was ready; they sharpened their swords; the cross was built; the pit, the wheel, the whips. Some fled, others gave in under pressure, others waffled. Some were terrified even before their ordeal by the mere threat of it; others, coming close to these terrors, grew dizzy; still others, embarking upon their struggles, then were unable to hold out until the end of their pains and apostatized in the midst of the difficult contest (ἀθλήσεως) like those who are caught in a storm at sea and what cargo of constancy they had is lost at sea.[97]

That such methods sometimes succeeded in forcing Christians to apostatize is clear from the historical and literary evidence. Even within the Christian tradition,

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[97] Basil, *On the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste*, PG 31, 512.

"failed martyrdoms" are recorded. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp,* for instance, tells of a prospective martyr in the previous century, one Quintus, who presented himself eagerly to be killed but could not endure and renounced Christ under torture.[98] Indeed, in the martyrdom of the forty soldiers from Sebaste recounted by both Nyssen and Basil, one of the original number capitulates in the midst of the long struggle against the elements and runs off to the baths.[99] For the persecutors, the most successful martyrdom was a failed martyrdom. The goal was not the extermination of persons who happened to be Christians but their "rehabilitation" (that is, conversion) and the elimination of a faith considered harmful to the state.

In the encomia of Basil and Nyssen all of those threatened with martyrdom endure torment and death without recanting.[100] Their ability to do this demonstrates their *aretê,* which in turn serves as proof that their lack of shame in speaking with *parrhêsia* was indeed justified, and that the claims they made for the superiority of the Kingdom of God over the polities of the world are true. The celestial *politeia* thus is ruled to have "won" the contest by dint of the fact that it has manifestly formed virtuous citizens – virtuous according to the same criteria that pagans themselves both recognize and esteem – while pagan polities fail to do so. Persecution and parrhêsiastic confession became, in effect, a contest between two emperors, two polities, and two different politics. If Christians could not support the confession of their faith by action but instead retracted their words, then the very cause they represented bore the shame and would seem inferior and false precisely because of its inability to produce worthy representatives. The Cappadocians' understanding of the interrelations of martyrs' bold words and deeds and the divine *politeia* which fosters both becomes clear through an examination of militaristic and athletic motifs that run through the encomia.

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[98] *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 4, on which see J. Warren Smith, "Martyrdom: Self-Denial or Self-Exaltation? Motives for Self- Sacrifice from Homer to Polycarp A Theological Reflection," *Modern Theology* 22.2 (2006),169-96.

[99] Basil, *On the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste*, PG 31, 520-1; Nyssen *Homily on the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste*, 154.

[100] The exception noted above – one of the forty of Sebaste – does not quite count, for reasons we shall soon see.

Traditionally, the battlefield was the primary proving grounds of virtue as well as the essential arena for contests between city-states or kingdoms. As early as the epics of Homer, we see the notion that the excellence of an individual was displayed by his prowess in combat. Even later in Greek history, after the idea of *aretê* began to take on a more internal and moral character in philosophical discourse, individual conduct relative to military service still remained a prime test of character. Personal behavior in times of peace could be scrutinized to forecast the quality of an individual's contribution to the state in war. Even a man's sexual habits were viewed as indicators of his reliability in defense of his fatherland.[101]

At the same time, we should recall that the days of monomachy had long since passed (if they ever truly existed) and had receded into the mist of epic and legendary history. Individual soldiers were subsumed into the greater organisms of the Greek phalanx and, later, the Roman legion. Wars were won not by individual men but by their cities or by the empire. While those within the regiment would certainly know who the "most valuable players" in the fight had been, the triumph for the battle itself was celebrated by the general, who in the later years of the principate was ever more likely to be (or subsequently to become) the emperor.

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[101] So, e.g., the submission of the kinaidos to penetration by another man was thought to indicate that he could not be depended upon to keep the polis safe from penetration by enemy forces. See John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece*. (New York: Routledge, 1990), especially 46-9.

With the exception of the biblical St. Stephen, the martyrs praised by Nyssen and Basil are all actually professional soldiers. What is more, they were all outstanding soldiers -- men who already boasted good records of military service or who displayed strong potential to become model soldiers. Basil reports that Gordius, for example, "after enlisting in the army, was so exemplary that he was entrusted with the command of a hundred men and was outstanding among the ranks of soldiers for the strength of his body and the manliness of his spirit."[102] Nyssen links the virtuous conduct displayed by Theodorus in battle directly to his exercise of *parrhêsia* in confessing Christ:

> . . . [H]e was no longer a green recruit with respect to his courage (ἀνδρείαν), nor was he inexperienced in war and battle, but he was noble in spirit, rendered strong to stand against dangers, not one to shrink back, not a coward, not one who speaks without *parrhêsia* (οὐ λόγον ἀπαῤῥησίαστον προβαλλόμενος).[103]

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[102] Basil, *In Gordium martyrem,* PG 31, 493.

[103] Gregory of Nyssa, *De Sancto Theodoro,* 65.

It is worth noting here that Theodorus was already in the habit of speaking parrhêsiastically even before his public and contentious confession of Christ, in large part because his record of conduct in battle had already won for him the sort of reputation for excellence that would preclude his feeling much in the way of shame before the majority of his fellows.

Nevertheless, despite their immaculate service records, the martyrs are presented as boldly defecting in the midst of battle, announcing by their confession of Christianity that they are, in effect, switching sides. In other battles, they had served the Roman emperor faithfully, but if Maximian has ranged his forces to battle God himself, they declare they will no longer fight for Rome, but against her. As the forty martyrs ask themselves: "How many of our soldiers have fallen on the front line, keeping faith with a mortal emperor? So will we not give up this life for our faith toward the true emperor?"[104] In Nyssen's account, the same forty become the soldiers of Christ, fighting against the forces of the devil—the very earthly powers they used to serve.[105]

The defection of soldiers was a significant problem for emperors of the later principate. Diocletian's establishment of the Tetrarchy had meant to secure against the military model of ascension to the imperial throne in the absence of a clear dynastic heir. The division of power, however, merely provided a more formal framework for civil war after his retirement. Constantine only emerged as sole emperor after a period of civil war and his own death again plunged the empire into internecine struggle. The defection of soldiers to "another emperor" threatened not merely the success of a campaign but the current emperor's position and his very life.

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[104] Basil, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses*, PG 31, 517.
[105] Gregory of Nyssa, *Encomium in xl martyres i*, 149

The loyalties of soldiers were often secured by bribes or "bonuses." In the Cappadocians' encomia, however, the martyrs preclude all such negotiations: nothing an earthly emperor might promise them could hope to surpass the gifts and resources of the divine *basileus*. Furthermore, Basil and Gregory of Nyssa present service to God and to the heavenly state as the true fulfillment of a soldier's vocation, the proper arena in which military virtue should be displayed. Basil mentions several precedents for "righteous soldiers" loyal to God: the centurion who confessed Jesus' Sonship at the cross, the one who confessed Jesus as "God and king of the powers" who could heal his sick servant from afar, and the centurion Cornelius, who gave alms and was granted a vision of an angel and salvation through Peter's preaching.[106]

However, the forty martyrs are also presented as reversing the shame incurred by biblical members of their profession. Whereas soldiers of Rome once stripped Jesus and divided his garments amongst themselves at Calgary, these forty soldiers at Sebaste willingly strip off their own clothes for the ordeal of their exposure to the brutal Cappadocian winter. In Basil's encomium, they say to one another:

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[106] Basil, *In Gordium martyrem,* PG 31, 504.

> Our Lord also took off his clothes. What greater thing is there for a slave than to suffer the things his Master did? Rather, we ourselves were the ones who stripped our Lord himself. For this was the brash action of soldiers: they stripped and divided his garments. Let us through our own [bold deed] wipe clean the slate of the charge registered against us.[107]

In Basil's view, then, it would seem the entire military institution had sunk into dishonor before God for its previous service against the true Emperor of all. That these soldiers now boldly enter the war as martyrs, imitating Christ and fighting for the right side, redeems their vocation as a whole.

In the midst of the battle itself, they display the virtues of endurance and self-control prized in all military men, but these qualities are directly connected to their identity as citizen-soldiers of the divine polity.[108] Even legionary tactics now express Christian unity in the faith and an orientation towards God. When one of the forty runs to the baths, God supplies a volunteer. One of the other soldiers watching the proceedings, persuaded by the virtue of the thirty-nine who did not run off to the baths, converts to Christianity and runs up to join them. Basil writes that he "imitated those on the battle line, who, when someone falls on the front shield-line, immediately fill in the rank so that the shield-sharing is not broken by the one who left."[109]

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[107] Basil, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses*, PG 31, 517.
[108] *Ibid.*

Within the conceptual framework of military imagery, the martyrs' bold confession represents their defection from the Roman empire. The martyrs' change in loyalties is far from being the act of vicious soldiers who, mad for material wealth, disdain the "Spartan" lifestyle that keeps them fit for battle. Their excellence as soldiers has previously been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the pagans who now persecute them, which permits them to speak parrhêsiastically without shame. In confession and death, they prove that their recognizable virtue is the product of their citizenship within the LORD's *politeia,* and that it is in service of the true *basileus* that their excellence finds its fullest expression.

That athletic metaphors appear alongside militaristic ones in the Cappadocians' encomia of martyrs is perhaps not surprising, given the origins and associations of the Greek games. The events in which athletes competed were less deadly demonstrations of skills useful in battle, and victory in the games established the superior readiness of winning cities for war. Warfare in practice was more of a "team sport" even by the classical age with the rise of hoplite tactics and certainly by the late Roman Republic and early empire when the infantry legions eclipsed the role of cavalry monomachists.[110] Athletic events, on the other hand, were typically individual competitions -- a fossilized version of archaic warfare, a domesticated survival of earlier battle tactics. Athletic training was still considered useful by the military as preliminary physical conditioning for citizen soldiers, even if recruits would primarily drill in combat-specific skills after enlisting, and the Gestalt of the games was thus conditioned by associations with military arts. In addition, Hellenic education of children tended to include training in running, wrestling, and the like in the gymnasium.

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[109] Basil, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses*, PG 31, 520. The "shield-sharing" (συνασπισμός) to which Basil refers is a characteristic of the close formation of the lines of a phalanx in which the shield on each man's left arm protected his neighbor.

As all good athletes know, physical performance in contests depends as much on habits of mind as on the condition of the body. Much of the ideology of the relation between body and soul in the ancient world was born of a synthesis between medical and philosophical thought that had begun as early as the fifth century B.C. in Ionia with the "Pre-Socratic" philosophers. In the Second Sophistic and Late Antiquity, the interactions of body (σῶμα) and soul (ψυχή) were even more a subject of attention for a wide array of thinkers classified as rhetors, physicians, and philosophers.[111]

While modern readers tend to interpret many broadly Platonic views of the soul-body dichotomy as strident anti-materialism, it would be more accurate to say that they were material-subordinating. The condition of the body was thought to reflect the character of the individual's soul. While Plotinus is perhaps most associated with a more properly "philosophical" articulation of the concept, this psycho-somatic dynamic was widely accepted and undergirded much of the ideology of self-presentation current among ancients who were neither Neoplatonic nor even philosophers. For instance, the second century rhetorician Polemo composed a physiognomy intended to help readers determine the (masculine) virtue of those they had to trust in daily business dealings and civic affairs on the basis of physical *habitus*.[112]

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[110] Cf. Myles Anthony McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.)

[111] See, e.g. Glen Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire*, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) 67.

As the complex systems of dietetics that began to arise in the post-classical age demonstrate, the state of the body was also believed to have an effect on the soul.[113] For this reason, Plato required athletic training as one of two branches of primary education for the guardians of his ideal *polis*. The practice of gymnastics cultivates the spirited faculty of a boy's soul or nature (τὸ θυμοειδές) thus increasing bravery and providing a balance for the "softening" effects of musical education. Music, however, is vital to nourish the love of knowledge in the soul and to prevent athletic training from over-developing the spirited faculty and making a man brutish and savage.[114] Devising such a regimen of the soul and body's *paideia*, of course, is an activity proper to the rational faculty (τὸ λογιστικόν).

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[112] Polemo, *de Phyiognomonia*; cf. Maud Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome*.

[113] This view predominates in writings of the physicians Galen and Soranus, also Aretaeus, Celsus, Oribasius (quoted in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*), and Rufus of Ephesus (fragments preserved in Aetius).

[114] Plato, *Republic* 3.410b-412c.

The ancients understood multiple dynamics between body and soul to be at work in athletic training. First, the soul must consider the body's nature and devise for it a proper practice. Secondly, the soul must direct the body's submission to this regimen; that is, dedication to a training regime which conditions the body to perform requires mental resolve and a certain strength of character which are properties of the soul. Third, the bodily practices undertaken will in turn affect the disposition of the soul. Finally, the condition and *habitus* of the body reflect the overall order and condition of the soul. This idea of the physical as a medium of psychic expression underlies Nyssen's description of the beauty of the forty martyrs of Sebaste:

> This speech is dwelling on the beauty of their youth. For it knows, just as Wisdom says, how "to reckon by analogy the beauty that is hidden from the magnitude and beauty of creatures" since even the purity of their souls shone out through what was visible and the visible man was a worthy dwelling for the invisible. How beautiful, then, was that sight for the spectators![115]

Yet the performance of athletes was never merely a matter of showcasing personal virtue or prowess. In the Greek tradition of athletic competition, individuals competed as representatives of their *polis* against the best specimens of other cities. Certainly great personal glory could accrue to victors of the games, but traditionally Greek athletes were ideologically identified with their respective cities in the contests, unlike Roman gladiators or later chariot teams with significant rival fan bases within a single city. Dedications at panhellenic shrines to celebrate victories at the games were made by cities, not individual athletes. What was tested in the games was the ability of a city – and specifically the particular *logos* of a city's process of formation and training -- to produce citizens of moral and physical excellence. In this sense, then, the victory of a representative athlete is truly the victory of the city as a whole; the winner is simply the best single product of the training and formation shared by all citizens alike. It is because of this relation between the *polis*' formative power and the prowess of the athlete produced that the athletic victory of the individual accrued also to the state or people he represented.[116]

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[115] Gregory of Nyssa, *Encomium in xl martyres i*, 148; cf. Wisdom 13: 5.

Just as the Greek athlete Mandroganes attributed his successes to his coach, so the Christian martyr's fitness for the *agôn* is due to the spiritual training he has received from God.[117] In describing the preparation of Gordius for martyrdom, Basil writes:

> This Gordius, then, fled the political throngs, the crowd of the agora, the vain magistrates, the law-courts, the informers (τοὺς συκοφάντας), the buyers and sellers, the swearers and liars, shameful speech and frivolous chatter, and all the other things that most men trail after them like baggage. Purifying his ears, purifying his eyes, and above all, being purified

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[116] See, for example, the story of Cleitomachus related by Polybius (XXVII, fr.9). In his boxing match against Aristonicus the crowd was cheering for his opponent until he reminded them that they were supporting a man who represented Egypt and not Greece, whereupon their allegiances changed.

[117] On Mandroganes, see Philostratus, *De gymnasticis* 23 and 273.

> in his heart so that he would be able to see God, he also became blessed: he saw through revelations, he was taught the mysteries, not from men nor through men, but having the Spirit as his great teacher of the truth . . . . And like an athlete, perceiving himself sufficiently trained (γυμνασθέντος) and oiled up for the contest by fasting, vigils, prayers, continuous and unceasing attention to the sayings of the Spirit, kept an eye on the day on which the whole city was holding a feast for a bellicose demon and had occupied the theatre to see the horse-race.[118]

While the motif of martyrs-as-athletes was not without precedent in earlier martyrologies, the juxtaposition with *parrhêsia* adds a further dimension of significance to the conceit. The boldness of the martyr's verbal confession of Christ is transformed into a silent and bodily "*parrhêsia*." Since the body was thought to reflect the condition of the soul, the shameless self-offering of the martyrs to have their mettle tested before an audience served as the visible proof of their prior verbal *parrhêsia*. This silent frankness is fundamentally transparency, a guileless submission of the self to be viewed and judged by others.

It is worth noting here that Greek athletes traditionally competed in the nude, shamelessly exposing bodies perfected in training to the view of judges and spectators. Martyrs were often stripped as a sign of disgrace, yet the athletic conceit transforms the shame potentially present in the forced nudity of the martyr into the proud self-exposure of a ready contestant who has no defect of body or soul of which to be ashamed. Nyssen exhorts his hearers to imitate athlete-martyrs in stripping down for the contest through confessions of their faith: “But let us run with this speech to the theatre, brothers, like a great athlete contends against the wicked adversary of human life and strips off through his confession in the stadium.”[119]

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[118] Basil, *In Gordium Martyrem,* PG 31, 496-7.

According to Basil and Nyssen, the spectators of the martyr’s endurance -- the proof of his training in virtue -- are not only jeering crowds of pagans eager for bloodshed but also angels and other spiritual beings cheering for the representatives of their celestial “state.” Basil tells that, in response to the brave display of the forty martyrs of Sebaste, “angels heard and applauded, but the devil with his demons trembled.”[120] For Nyssen, martyrdom is not a spectacle for the earthly city as the wicked emperor intended it, but for celestial powers:

> Because of such a voice, confessing Christ in *parrhêsia*, a cheer went up and praise from the holy angels, the approval of the citizens of the heavenly city who applauded at their upright action, the joy of the whole assembly in heaven. For what a spectacle of men in the world was then composed for the angels! What a coming-to-grips (συμπλοκὴν) between men and the devil did they see, these spectators of our life![121]

The praise of human beings is unimportant to the martyrs; they are interested only in the divine evaluation of their performance and in the conversion of their display of excellence to the glory of the LORD and his kingdom.[122] While angels are approving spectators, the judge of the contest, of course, is God himself, who watches to see how the athlete competing for the heavenly *politeia* will acquit himself in the struggle and to bestow fitting rewards and honors upon the victorious martyr.

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[119] Nyssen, *Encomium in sanctum Stephanum protomartyrem* i, 6.

[120] Basil, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses*, PG 31, 512.

[121] Gregory of Nyssa, *Encomium in xl martyres i*, 149-50. The word συμπλοκή that I have translated as “coming-to-grips” is a technical term for a close-hold in wrestling.

[122] Gregory of Nyssa, *Encomium in Stephanum protomartyrem i, 32.*

> Because after these [martyrs] were successful in their wrestling against enemies, the just Master of the agôn (ἀγωνοθέτης) offers crowns for the victory, and the chief general (ἀρχιστράτηγος) of the divine power prepares prizes of valor for the winners, and the Holy Spirit receives them with all manner of gifts (χαρίσμασιν). For since their faith in the Trinity was confessed, therefore also grace is measured out to them by the Trinity.[123]

However, in the *agôn* of martyrdom, the LORD does not stay on the sidelines like an athletic trainer, nor does he remain sitting as a judge in the stands, but he participates in the struggle alongside his athletes. The victory of the martyrs is therefore due to a true civic union and synergy. The reality and power of the Emperor and state they serve is made manifest not merely in the efficacy of the athletes' previous formation but in God's real activity and support during the contest.

The ability of the martyrs to exercise endurance of temporal pain, to disdain death, and to resist the allure of temporal pleasure is based upon their belief in the reality and superiority of the spiritual goods and eternal life offered by God. But in response to this belief, grace is given them in the form of visions confirming the substance of their faith and hope. This is clearly so in the case of Stephen, in Gregory of Nyssa's account:

He transcended his nature and before he left his body saw with pure

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[123] Gregory of Nyssa, *Encomium in xl martyres i*, 150-1.

> eyes the heavenly gates standing open and the inside of the holiest places (τῶν ἀδύτων) displayed, the divine glory itself and the reflection of this glory. And no one could describe the impression of the Father's glory in speech, but the reflection appeared to the athlete in a manner that can be seen by human beings, appearing thus accommodated to human nature. He went outside human nature and was transformed to angelic grace, so that he appeared as a wonder to the murderers themselves, the appearance of his face was transfigured to the dignity of angels, and he saw invisible things and proclaimed the grace that he had seen.[124]

According to Basil, Gordius sees a similar vision during his trial. "Looking with his spiritual eyes, [Gordius saw] the devil running around and moving one man to tears and helping another work out specious arguments."[125] This observation of the spiritual forces at work in his material situation verifies the content of his parrhêsiastic claims: the side he has declared himself for is, in fact, God's; the forces of this world and all their weapons of temporal pain and pleasure are allied with demons.

The benefit provided by such visions is not simply discernment of the true good that allows the martyr to grit his teeth and bear the pain or to exercise the power of "mind over matter" and endure. In the case of Theodore and the forty martyrs of Sebaste, the beatific vision of spiritual goods brings joy and delight that overshadows the pain of their torments, rendering the experience of torture pleasurable**.** In Nyssen's telling, the virtue of the forty martyrs "could not be enslaved," but rather "the magnitude of the athletes' nature contended against nature itself; for their strength was diminished little by little, weakened and exhausted by the cold, but the exertion of their souls grew greater."[126] Basil notes that because the martyrs have the option to run to the baths and save themselves, they are not "helpless, but proving stronger than necessity, enduring terrible circumstances in an abundance of joy."[127] Perhaps the most striking example is that of Theodore:

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[124] Gregory of Nyssa, *Encomium in Stephanum protomartyrem i*, 28-30.
[125] Basil, *In Gordium Martyrem,* PG 31, 504.

> They first hung his body on a stake of torment and tore it apart. But he, although the torturers were exerting themselves vehemently, was stronger and unyielding, and he sang a line of the Psalms to his tormentors: "I will praise the Lord at every opportunity, through everything his praise is in my mouth." And they tore his flesh, but he sang psalms, as if someone else were undergoing the torture.[128]

This strange enjoyment of being flayed is a significant proof of the martyr's confession for several reasons. First, it testifies to the reality of the spiritual things upon which the martyr has set his hopes. Secondly, it demonstrates the faithfulness of the God who offered such rewards to those who "take up their cross and follow" him.[129] Third, that the martyr receives these rewards shows that his conduct has been judged favorably by God. But last, and most importantly, the pleasure given by these spiritual rewards -- an enjoyment that eclipses the pain of the worst torments human persons can devise for one another -- is proof that their value and reality is superior to that of the things of this world.

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[126] Gregory of Nyssa, *Encomium in xl martyres i*, 153.
[127] Basil, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses*, PG 31, 520.
[128] Gregory of Nyssa, *De Sancto Theodoro*, 69; cf. Ps. 33:2.
[129] Mt. 10:38, 16:24; Mk. 8:34; Lk. 9:23.

In sum, the structure of martyrdom in the Cappadocians' accounts is as follows. The martyr, having been trained in virtue by participation and formation in God's kingdom, makes a parrhêsiastic declaration of his identity as a citizen of the heavenly *politeia*. He challenges the prevailing opinion of the persecuting regime by asserting the ultimacy of the divine Emperor and the spiritual things that belong to His realm. By remaining constant in his dedication to the things of God in the midst of threats and blandishments from worldly potentates, the martyr occasions the self-exposure of his opponents as fickle and inconsistent men whose words change from threats to flattery in an instant.

The martyr then submits his own body as proof of the truth of his words and of the quality of the *politeia* in which he claims citizenship. By remaining constant even unto death, he proves himself excellent on the very measures and criteria of virtue that pagans themselves recognize and respect – e.g., fortitude, integrity, prioritization of virtue over physical pain and pleasure or material deprivation and benefit. God's revelation of the prize of the martyr's calling in the midst of his physical agony confirms the reality of the citizenship that the martyr had asserted and transforms excruciating physical pain into spiritual delight. The pleasure afforded by the vision of spiritual realities supports the martyr's initial declarations of the relative inferiority of earthly powers and prizes and, by enabling the martyr to endure pain courageously, proves that God is indeed the source of virtue. Basil's similar *parrhêsia* in the argument with Modestus and

Valens is presented as having won personal respect and increased toleration for Nicene Christians within his bishopric. The martyrs, of course, hardly win tolerance for themselves. What they do win is converts to Christianity: pagans who hear parrhêsiastic claims of divine citizenship and recognize in the martyrs' self-display in the *agôn* the very virtues that the pagan tradition lauds and recommends, but which pagans (presumably) and those representatives of the emperor's *politeia* persecuting the Christians (demonstrably) cannot themselves achieve or embody.

The persecution under the emperor Maximian, during which most of the martyrs of the Cappadocians' encomia died, was short-lived, ending with the emperor's death in 310 A.D. And yet, both Gregory and Basil call their hearers not just to remember but to imitate the martyrs' deeds.[130] Both seem to feel a certain anxiety about praising the martyrs in speech. They are, in fact, careful to stress that their orations should not be considered generic encomia, which are "composed of an accumulation of words." [131] Ultimately, words prove inadequate to the greatness of the martyrs, but are useful in aiding the congregation in remembering the deeds of Christians like Theodore, Gordius, and the forty soldiers of Sebaste.[132] If these speeches call listeners to imitate the martyrs' actions, then, in the absence of persecution, which actions precisely are Christians meant to copy?

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[130] Basil, *In Gordium Martyrem*, PG 31, 492.
[131] *Ibid.*, PG 31, 492
[132] Basil, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses*, PG 31, 508.

Certainly Nyssen and Basil do not intend for their audience members to be able to mimic the literal deeds of the martyrs that they recount in the absence of a reprise of persecution. Rather, Christians of their day could live out the virtue undergirding the martyrs' glorious deeds in their own lives:

> Thus indeed let us remind those present here of the virtue (τῆς ἀρετῆς) of those men, and as if leading in a vision of them, let us incite [our listeners] toward an imitation of those who are both nobler and more akin to them as regards their purpose in life. For this is the encomium of martyrs: the exhortation of the congregation to virtue.[133]

The martyrs claim that their virtue is a result of their citizenship in the LORD's *politeia*. But if the martyrs are, in fact, "nobler" than the other Christians who comprise the audience of Basil and Nyssen's encomia, then one has to ask how and why this should be the case. Are not all Christians, in the Cappadocians' view, citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven? Or, perhaps, are not all citizens equal in this kingdom? In this chapter we have seen how the Cappadocians took *parrhêsia* to be grounded and to function in inter-political negotiations between Christians, whose ultimate allegiance was to the heavenly *basileus*, and those completely in thrall to the material and temporal power wielded by the Roman emperor. The next chapter will examine how the Cappadocians' views on Christian *parrhêsia* towards the LORD illumine their understanding of the order of relations internal to and constitutive of God's *politeia*, including the conditions for human participation in it as "citizens."

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[133] Basil, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses*, PG 31, 508-9.

# Chapter 4. *Parrhêsia* towards the LORD

In the last chapter, we saw how the Cappadocians presented orthodox Christianity to pagans and heretics as citizenship in the LORD's *politeia*, the only politics that is able to form citizens in true virtue. This claim provided the warrant for Christian *parrhêsia* ad extra towards those outside this divine politics, the veracity of which was agonistically tested and verified, often resulting in the martyrdom of the parrhêsiast. The evangelical persuasiveness of Christian *parrhêsia* – i.e., the condition of possibility for the judgment of pagans and heretics that orthodox Christian parrhêsiasts had indeed won the *agôn* – rested upon the existence of some definitional criteria of virtue that were common to those both within and without the LORD's *politeia*. The Cappadocians' explanation for the existence of these shared standards of judgment was the origin and (imperfect) participation of all the *logoi* that comprised secular culture -- including those that comprised Greek *paideia* -- in the divine Logos himself.

Considering the Cappadocians' view of the internal structure of the LORD's *politeia*, we see that *parrhêsia* still plays a significant (and even more problematic) role. That is, the *parrhêsia* of the Christian not only towards pagans and heretics but also towards the LORD himself appears as a desideratum for Basil and the Gregories. In light of the function of *parrhêsia* within human political contexts, this fact should puzzle us. In the democracy of classical Athens, the purpose of *parrhêsia* was to allow individual citizens to provide needed counsel on the truest and best course of political action, the one that would conduce to the common good of the *polis*. But an omniscient God surely would have no need of human assistance in his political or judicial deliberations. Again, in the tradition of Socrates and his successors, the philosopher's *parrhêsia* was often employed for the purposes of forming (or reforming) potentates in virtue by interrogation and correction, reorienting them towards the truth if and when they veered off-course. The God of Christian confession, however, as the eternally unchanging perfect Truth and the source of all human excellence, does not err and would never require correction – and certainly not from the human persons who seek formation in virtue from him. Why, then, would Christians need or want to exercise *parrhêsia pros ton Theon* ("towards the LORD"), as the Cappadocians assert that they should?

Close examination of the use of this phrase by Basil and the Gregories shows that *parrhêsia* towards the LORD represents that the problem of shame that would prevent the Christian from speaking truthfully about herself or nonverbally disclosing herself to the LORD has been overcome. The challenge for exercising *parrhêsia* towards pagans was finding grounds for relation (and, accordingly, persuasion) in common standards and criteria. By contrast, the obstacle to the exercise of *parrhêsia* towards the LORD is one of coming into right relations with the LORD through the conformation of the Christian to the LORD's standards and criteria. Accordingly, the Cappadocians present Christian *parrhêsia* ad extra as relatively easy to achieve. In their view, orthodox Christians are always good enough to lack valid inferiority-shame relative to pagans or heretics simply by virtue of their being orthodox Christians rather than pagans or heretics. But overcoming inferiority-shame relative to a perfect deity is an altogether different -- and a far more difficult – matter. And yet, the Cappadocians claimed that it *can* be done; more than this, they present Christian *parrhêsia* towards the LORD as the telos of the Christian life and the token of human salvation. Nevertheless, with very few possible exceptions (e.g., the martyrs), the Cappadocians depict Christian *parrhêsia pros ton Theon* as an eschatological rather than a present reality.

This chapter examines what relations and disorders the Cappadocians take to prevent human *parrhêsia* towards the LORD, what new relations and orderings they believe make *parrhêsia* possible, and how these are formed and established. This investigation will show that Foucault's optimistic characterization of the Greek Christian discourse of *parrhêsia* (especially in what he considers the more philosophical or "mystical" strains of Christian tradition, influenced by pagan Greek traditions) is untenable. So, too, is the contrast he draws between this and the character of cringing fear and self-doubt that he ascribes to the Latin discourse of *confessio*.

To provide the strongest possible counter-argument to Foucault, I take Gregory of Nyssa as my primary conversation partner for this chapter. This is because Nyssen is widely acknowledged as the most philosophical and "mystical" of the three Cappadocian Fathers. In fact, Foucault himself quotes Gregory at length as an example of everything that was right and good about the Greek Christian discourse of *parrhêsia* towards God.[1]

The first section of this chapter examines how Gregory presents sin as a relation of debt-slavery that prevents human *parrhêsia* towards the LORD, and how he views Christ's death upon the cross as functioning to solve this relational problem. In the second section, the investigation turns towards consideration of the temporal and eschatological possibilities of *parrhêsia pros ton Theon*, showing that, in Gregory's understanding, *parrhêsia* towards the divine is an act of truth-telling predicated upon a filial relation with the LORD. Nyssen views the practice of this *parrhêsia* within the realm of speech as being fraught with danger, and he envisions the truest mode of human *parrhêsia pros ton Theon* as being nonverbal displays of the body through acts of (un)covering.

## *4.1. Debt and Ransom, Slavery and Salvation*

As previously explained, what militated against the exercise of *parrhêsia* was appropriate shame on the part of the speaker based in her judgment that she or her speech would fail to meet the listener's criteria of excellence or acceptability. Parrhêsiastic speech was found acceptable or laudable only when it was able to provide a self-justifying account for why the speaker or speech did not, in fact, fall short of the standards that the listener did or should hold. Given that these rules are intrinsic to the grammar of the word "*parrhêsia*," they must be satisfied for Christian *parrhêsia* to the LORD to be deemed good. The Cappadocians assume that the LORD's criteria and judgments are perfect, and that the LORD's knowledge of these criteria is perfect. Accordingly, the justification for parrhêsiastic speech *pros ton Theon* cannot, as was the case with Christian *parrhêsia* to pagans and heretics, include arguments about or corrections of the listener's ordering or understanding of his own criteria. Nor can they include arguments about whether or not the speaker or her speech meets those criteria; the LORD is omniscient and therefore does not require convincing. What Christian *parrhêsia pros ton Theon* requires, then, is a real absence of any grounds for shame relative to the LORD on the part of the speaker and in her speech.

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[1] Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: The Government of Self and Others II*, Graham Burchell, tr. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008) 332-3.

Within Cappadocian anthropology, we find mention of two different types of human inferiority relative to the LORD. The first is the "natural" inferiority of a finite material creature to an infinite God who is spirit.[2] As Gregory of Nyssa puts it: "The entire creation is equally inferior to the highest and inaccessible in accordance with the superiority of [the latter's] nature and the universe is beneath him [sc. the LORD] in equal degree."[3] The sort of shame produced by this ontological inferiority has a positive valance; it is *aidôs* (modesty) rather than *aischynê* (shameful baseness.) The actions proper to modesty, nevertheless, are keeping silent rather than speaking out and veiling rather than disclosing the self. Therefore, this "natural" human inferiority must be overcome in some way if the human person is to exercise *parrhêsia* towards the LORD.

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[2] Like most of their quasi-Platonic contemporaries, the Cappadocians accepted a hierarchy of being that placed the eternal, nonmaterial, immutable, and simple well above the temporal, material, mutable, and composite.

But human persons are not inferior to the LORD merely because human nature is inferior to the divine nature; they are also inferior in an "unnatural" way, through sin. In other words, perfect human persons fall short of equality with the LORD by their very nature -- because they were created to be lower types of beings. Sinful human persons, on the other hand, fall short of equality with human nature as the LORD created it. If sin conduces to inferiority that prevents human *parrhêsia pros ton Theon*, then the question is: what do the Cappadocians take sin to be?

While Christianity generally holds that the incarnation, life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ solve the spiritual problem of human sin (i.e. provide salvation from sin), there is no single dogmatic answer about *how* this works. Nor is there either now or in the first centuries of Christianity a single doctrinal definition of sin. Rather than speaking of these matters in an abstract analytical register, the Church Fathers and Mothers tended to discuss sin and salvation within human grammars of metaphors derived from Scripture.[4] Sin was often likened to a disease or impairment that required healing; Christ, then, was the divine physician. Again, if sin were conceptualized as the corruption of the *imago Dei* in which humanity was created, then Jesus was presented as the archetype and exemplar of that image, and his salvific work was described as a "restamping" of the divine likeness upon Christians. If sin is equated to a trespass against divine law, then the LORD's actions are conceived as juridical and culminate in either pardon or punishment of human law-breakers. When sin is thought and spoken of as an offense against the LORD (not necessarily the same thing as a trespass against divine law), then Christ's salvific work was understood to amount to human propitiation of an affronted deity. Another metaphor, perhaps more prevalent in the theology of the early Church than today, began with the concept of salvation as a cosmic battle between the LORD (good) and evil; on this understanding, human sin amounted to membership in or allegiance to the wrong "camp" or "side" in the war.

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[3] Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica magna* §27.

Arguably, the metaphorical grammar of sin current in early Christianity that was most compatible with high conceptual abstraction equated sin with death. This was because death is a perennial object of philosophical speculation, and the Platonic tradition of philosophy that predominated in the late ancient

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[4] See the distinctions made by Gustaf Aulén between "ideas," "theories," and "doctrines" at the conclusion of his seminal work, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*. Tr. A. G. Hebe (London: SPCK, 1931) 174-5.

Mediterranean was characterized by what we might term an "abstract" focus on ontology or metaphysics. On this view, death was simply the concomitant of materiality.[5] The material order was distinguished from the higher non-material order by the fact that its members were composite beings rather than simple ones. Composition, in turn, is the condition of possibility for change, and dissolution of the particular organization of parts that constitutes a particular composite being – which amounts to the "death" or cessation of the being in question -- is one form of change.

The use of these various metaphors for sin entails the use of a grammar that is indexed to a particular way of life – *viz*., an order of relations in the material world.[6] While there are significant distinctions between them, there are also ways in which they might overlap with one another. For example, the business of curing a disease differs significantly to the juridical process of prosecuting a legal trespass. Then again, we borrow from a militaristic grammar and import it into a medical one when we speak of "fighting cancer" and the like. One must, accordingly, be careful not to read later grammars of these figurative tropes back onto earlier ones.

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[5] This view is quite congenial to a number of Christian tenets. The LORD is held to be a creator – not merely an "arranger" – of all that is. If creatures are brought into being *ex nihilo* (understood as "non-being"), then creatable nature itself entails the possibility of the creature's dissolution and reversion to nihility – an absolute death. The LORD was identified (on the basis of the disclosure of the divine name "I AM" to Moses in Exodus 3:14) by Platonic Jews and Christians alike with "Being Itself." Accordingly, being is not thought to be "bequeathed" or "imparted" to material creatures, nor does it inhere in them; rather, relations with (or "participation in") the LORD who is Being Itself sustain material creatures in being, despite their materiality.

[6] This is a point made by F.W. Dillistone: "Viewed literally these images become bizarre and repulsive but … they are taken from the commonest experiences of the contemporary world." *The Christian Understanding of Atonement*. (London: Nisbet, 1968) 97-8.

To illustrate, it would be an exegetical mistake for us to read the Cappadocians' statements on the "healing of sin" through the lens of the modern grammar of illness and medicine. The understandings of these things in the modern West include elements, relations, and orderings (e.g., pathogens, the need for sterilization, anaesthetization and procedures performed upon unconscious and inert patients, and so forth) that did not obtain in the understandings of illness and medicine in late antiquity.

There is one metaphor for sin in Scripture adopted by Gregory of Nyssa that is often overlooked or misinterpreted as a result of this mode of linguistic and hermeneutic flattening, and that is the presentation of sin as debt or bondage. The trope of sin as debt and bondage is far from being the most prevalent in Nyssen's writings, but it is significantly the one he uses in his most sustained presentation of the logic of Christ's salvific work in the *Oratio catechetica magna*. Gregory writes:

> If, therefore, the love of humanity is the special characteristic of the divine nature, you have the reasoned account (λόγον) you were seeking – you have the reason (or cause; αἰτίαν) of the presence (παρουσίας) of God among human persons. For our weakened nature needed a physician. The human person in the fall needed one to set him upright. The one who had gone astray from life needed one to make him live. The one who had fallen away from relation with (μετουσίας) the good needed one to lead him back to the good. The one who was hemmed in by darkness needed the presence (παρουσίας) of light. The prisoner sought a ransom, the one bound (δεσμώτης) sought someone to contend for his cause (συναγωνιστήν), the one restrained by the yoke of slavery sought one to set him free.[7]

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[7] Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica magna* §15.

Here Nyssen has recited a litany of metaphorical tropes for the sinful condition of humanity and the sort of salvation each requires. But the last two of these predominate in this text: human persons are shut up in darkness, and need the presence of light; human persons are bound as prisoners and slaves, and need one who can ransom them, contend for them in an *agôn*, and set them free. As we shall soon see, Gregory takes humanity's bondage and slavery to be intimately connected to and the result of debt.

What makes it difficult to read Nyssen's use of the sin-as-debt-bondage trope closely and correctly is the fact that this particular metaphor was far more popular and more robustly developed in the later Western Christian tradition.[8] As a result of our familiarity with that, we modern readers of these texts tend to over-generalize a distinction – *viz*., the Latin Fathers understood sin as debt or bondage, while the Greek Fathers did not – and so we ignore cases in which the Greek Fathers do use this trope.[9] Or, on the other hand, we might notice that the Greek Fathers are using this trope, but we conclude that they are doing so poorly, because our expectations and standards for how it *should* be used are indexed to the manner in which we use it.[10] This is especially true when the trope in question has been long- and well-developed within theological discourse, as is the case with the metaphor of sin-as-debt and sin-as-bondage. More than this, modern Western readers tend to understand freedom and debt on post-Enlightenment grammars based in the relations of owning and owing that constitute "rights." When we do this, as I have argued, we misunderstand and overlook how the Cappadocians (and other ancient and late ancient writers, both Christian and pagan) are actually using these words and what sorts of orders of relations they are envisioning.

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[8] That is, by construing Christ's life as a random paid not to Satan but to God, this line develops into the Anselmian satisfaction theory and, thence, into penal substitutionary atonement theories.

[9] A criticism akin to this is that levied by John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Theought* (Crestwood, NY, 1987), 124.

With reference to the aims of this dissertation, accurate examination of Gregory's use of the metaphor of debt and bondage is critical. The reason is that, for the Cappadocians, literal (that is, material and not spiritual) debt and bondage were relations that had significant effects upon the exercise of *parrhêsia*. Nyssen describes sin as debt and bondage and, in the *Oratio catechetica magna*, describes it as having the same preventative effect on Christian frankness and self-disclosure *pros ton Theon* as material debt and bondage have on ordinary inter-human *parrhêsia*. Accordingly, examination of the Cappadocians' working understanding of material debt and bondage can help elucidate how they take the spiritual debt and bondage of sin functionally to deprive Christians of *parrhêsia* towards the LORD. At the same time, in doing this we must exercise care not to perform an eisegetical importation of later, Latin or Western understandings of debt and bondage onto the texts of these earlier Greek thinkers. A full picture of the grammar of debt and slavery used by Nyssen (and of the ways in which both inhibit *parrhêsia*) is to be gained from attention to texts that are not directly about sin or salvation. Both Gregory of Nyssa and his brother Basil lay out an understanding of debt and debt-bondage and at length in homilies that they preached against the practices of lending and taking out of loans at interest.

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[10] See here Aulén's account of how what he terms the "Christus victor" idea of the atonement was overlooked because it had metaphorical elements (e.g., sacrifice, price, debt) in common with the (far more systematized) Latin Anselmian view; *Christus Victor* 7-9.

### 4.1.1. Neither a Borrower Nor a Lender Be

In the view of both Basil and Nyssen, one of the chief evils of loans is that they deprive the borrower of *parrhêsia*, and, ultimately, of his freedom.[11] The picture painted in these sermons is a grim one. A borrower might enjoy the influx of capital initially and engage in sumptuous expenditure: "his table is luxurious, his clothing more expensive, his servants dressed more smartly, [he has] flatterers, drinking buddies, swarms of friends at his house."[12] Sooner or later, however, his mind turns to the debt that is coming due and he realizes he does not possess the wherewithal to pay it back—particularly with the interest that has accrued. His mood changes drastically:

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[11] Basil, Sermo in Ps. 14; PG 29, 268-9 and 276.

[12] *Ibid*., PG 29, 268; cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Usurarios* 202.

> . . . [T]he nights bring him no respite; his days are not bright; the sun is not pleasant, but he bears up poorly under life. He hates the days that urge on the appointed day, he fears the months as if they were the parents of this progeny of interest (τόκων). Even if he should sleep, he sees the lender in a dream—an awful portent!—standing by his head. If he is awake, the interest is his consuming thought and anxiety.[13]

The free-born citizen is at the mercy of his lender and cannot exercise *parrhêsia* because his own substance is bound up with the will of the lender.

Here we should recall how the *parrhêsia* of Athenians within her democracy in the Classical age was contingent upon their freedom. While the conquest of the city by external forces always loomed as a potential threat to citizen freedom, the politics established by Solonian democratic reforms was necessary to remove the far more common and frequent practice of debt-slavery within the *polis*. The relation of bondage, as previously mentioned, prevented shameless speech because of how it clearly mitigates against truth-telling. If one's own life and well-being depend upon that of an "owner," then one's motivation to lie or refrain from telling certain truths (*viz*., those that would threaten or displease one's master) is high insofar as it is indexed to survival. A borrower, then, was free before taking out a loan, even if he were also poor. After taking out the loan, he is not only not any richer, but he has lost the freedom he previously possessed. As Basil writes: "The borrower is the slave of the lender, and a slave, though taking pay, who bears insufferable servitude."[14]

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[13] Basil, Sermo in Ps. 14; PG 29, 268.

When we consider how the Cappadocians often use the term "*parrhêsia*" to refer to non-verbal acts of guileless self-disclosure, especially in contexts of martyrdom and of the Christian's *parrhêsia pros ton Theon*, we see that indebtedness results in other impediments. The borrower cannot leave his house or appear in public view, lest the creditor track him down and put him to shame in front of others:

> [The lender] investigates your private affairs; he meddles in your business dealings. If you should go out from your house, he drags you with him and carries you off; if you should hide inside, he stands at the house and knocks on the door. In front of your wife he puts you to shame; in front of your friends he insults you (καθυβρίζει). In the market-place he puts the squeeze on you. He makes a festival into an "incident" and your life unlivable.[15]

The fear and shame caused by indebtedness thus alienates the borrower from his social relationships and, accordingly, from political participation in the *polis*. The previously free and shameless citizen who borrows at interest is eventually left cowering within his own house, terrified of collection day, hiding under the bed and breaking into a sweat if a dog starts barking.[16] More than this, the status of his progeny as free-born citizens is at risk, since, by the time of the Cappadocians, children could be sold into slavery to repay the debt of their parents.[17]

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[14] Basil, Sermo in Ps. 14, PG 29, 269.

[15] *Ibid.*, PG 29, 272.

[16] Basil, Sermo in Ps. 14; PG 29, 273.

[17] *Ibid.*, PG 29, 277.

In addition to more pragmatic concerns, the *parrhêsia* of borrowers is undermined on a moral level as well. The act of taking out a loan is itself vicious, since it implies a failure to live a life in harmony with one's means. As Basil notes, it is often the rich who borrow, desiring more wealth.[18] Additionally, the Cappadocians thought that a man who took a loan from a usurer manifestly showed himself to be a poor judge of character, easily swayed by flattery and deceit. For professional lenders engage in all sorts of ruses and unctuous pretenses in order to seduce prospective borrowers:

> Putting on these sorts of acts and fawning upon the wretch and enticing him with these sorts of words, he chains him with contracts and having deprived one who labors under poverty of even the very liberty of a man, he departs. For [the borrower] has stood surety for the interest, the full extent of which he does not understand, and has accepted a voluntary slavery for life.[19]

As discussed previously, because the obstacle to parrhêsiastic speech is inferiority-shame, acceptable or laudable *parrhêsia* depends upon the speaker's capacity for making accurate judgments of the "rules" that others are following. The parrhêsiast must be able to discern and identify the criteria of his addressees and audience clearly enough to see which of them he and his speech meet and which they fail to satisfy. His ability to craft persuasive justificatory arguments for his decision to speak in spite of acknowledged failures on some of his hearers' criteria depends upon his ability to do this well. Moreover, his persuasiveness as a parrhêsiast depends upon his manifest dedication to knowing and speaking truth. As was discussed in chapter 2, those who object to receiving the "cold, hard truth" about themselves from parrhêsiastic friends and who instead prefer and reward flattery and dissembling speech cannot be trusted to learn or speak the truth themselves.

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[18] *Ibid.*, PG 29, 276.
[19] *Ibid.*, PG 29, 268.

Of course, the Cappadocians recognize that even good people can end up in need. But it would be more sensible, Basil says, for one in dire financial straits to sell all one's possessions, in short, to "let everything go but your freedom."[20] If one has no assets at all, then one should beg—in the case of alms received there are at least no strings attached. And begging, although considered shameful, is less disgraceful an action than defaulting on a loan.[21] In fact, the lender's act of borrowing leads to inevitable moral degradation. An initial loan might begin a vicious cycle of borrowing from Peter to pay interest to Paul: "before he has used what [money] was received, he changes one master for another and continually binds himself to lenders; he escapes the accusation of need by a continuity of evil."[22] Furthermore, in an attempt to defer payment of the loan, the borrower stoops to all manner of immorality. Basil writes:

> Borrowing is the beginning of falsehood, the overture of ingratitude, of senselessness, of perjury. For a man says one thing when borrowing, another when payment is required. "Oh, if only I had not met you then, I

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[20] Basil, Sermo in Ps. 14; PG 29, 269.
[21] *Ibid.*, PG 29, 276.
[22] *Ibid.*, PG 29, 276-7.

> would already have found the means of getting out of my fix. Didn't you just throw the money into my hand against my will? Your gold was bronze underneath and your coin was counterfeit."[23]

The impossibility of repaying a debt when one lacks the resources conduces to self-protective lying. Just as the borrower casts suspicion upon his moral fiber (the "harmonic" moderation that would move him to live within his means) by taking out a loan in the first place, his relation of being indebted to another conduces to a further corruption of his character with respect to his prioritization of truthfulness. Since the very grammar of *parrhêsia* entails that the speaker be telling the truth – saying what she has it in herself to say – indebtedness militates against the speaker's fearless and shameless disclosure of her mind and self to others.

For the literal debtor, not only is his "substance" (that is, his material assets) at risk, but his being-as-he-is. The extent of his involvement with the lender and the character of this involvement as an unnatural dependence alienates the borrower from the relationships by which his identity as a free citizen is constructed. He is deprived of his position as sole manager of his life and estate; his prerogative as an autonomous citizen is nearly obliterated. The change in his identity is not merely a matter of relations to others, but also affects his inmost self. In the absence of equal and autonomous social relations, his character conforms to the quality of his unnatural involvement with a "master." Not only is the borrower's position that of a slave, but the fear and shame produced by his self-chosen and ineluctable connection to the usurer renders his soul slavish. His thought and values are no longer those of a free man, but the habit of servitude alters his identity.

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[23] Basil, Sermo in Ps. 14., PG 29, 269.

If this is the general texture of the Cappadocians' understanding of literal debt, then we can begin to flesh out their sense of the biblical metaphor of sin-as-debt. To begin with, debt-relations are not associated with necessity or poverty. As previously noted, the economic relations that the Cappadocians associate with the survival needs of humans who have fallen on hard times are those of charitable giving – begging and alms. Rather, debt-relations are associated with excess and avarice:

> And we see that it is not those who are in need of necessities who come for a loan, but those men borrow who have given themselves over to luxurious banquets and fruitless extravagance, those who are slaves to effeminate and pleasurable passions (ἡδυπαθείαις). He says, "Extravagent clothing and gold things for me; for my children, stylish clothing as their adornment; for my servants, florid and multi-colored things to put on; for my table, a feast."[24]

This is a rich and dense passage. It is significant that borrowers are described here as having "given themselves over to luxurious banquets and fruitless extravagance" and as being "slaves to effeminate and pleasurable passions." While the relation of slavery of borrower to lender is the result of taking out a loan, the Cappadocians understand the action of taking out a loan itself to be the result of the borrower's prior enslavement – not to another person, but to his own passions.

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[24] Basil, Sermo in Ps. 14; PG 29, 276.

As discussed in the previous chapter with reference to the relation of military service to virtue, Greeks in the ancient and late ancient world took there to be an intrinsic connection between masculine sexuality and civic *aretê* indexed to the common good of the *politeia*.[25] Passivity, an orientation towards pleasure, and the propensity to surrender the self were all associated with femininity. Accordingly, the *kinaidos* – a man who would willingly submit to sexual penetration by another– was considered effeminate and untrustworthy. He could hardly be relied upon to defend the *politeia* with his bodily actions (at the potential cost of pain and death) from invasion by foreign forces if he was so enslaved to the desire for sexual pleasure that he would give up the masculine *habitus* of action and assume a passive role in sexual intercourse, permitting his own body to be "invaded by foreign forces."[26] Historically, the Greeks stereotyped their foreign enemies (especially Eastern enemies like Persia) as being luxurious and extravagant.[27] Accordingly, a Greek partial to material pleasures was deemed more likely to "sell out" his city to enemies that could tempt him with these types of bribes.

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[25] The Romans did as well, which fact is witnessed in the etymology of the Latin term *virtus* (whence "virtue") itself; it is derived from the same root as *vir*, "man."

[26] John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece.* (New York: Routledge, 1990), especially 46-9.

[27] The idea of Easterners, especially, as *malakoi* ("soft," "effeminate") and treacherous was first recorded in the Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, Places* 23, quickly adopted by Herodotus in describing the Persians, and represented through Greek antiquity in Classical tragedies, vase paintings, and so forth. For evidence of the same associations lively in Late Antiquity see Julian, *Against the Galileans* 138b.

The Cappadocians build upon the ideological understanding of self-surrender to passion and pleasure as a sexualized lack of virtue by connecting this with imagery of procreation. Here, Basil describes the "extravagance" to which the borrower has given himself over as "fruitless." Elsewhere he says that the borrower has "yoked" himself to the usurer as to a wild beast that reproduces continually, creating more of its own ilk.[28] Behind both of these is a play on the word *tokos*, which meant "offspring" – literally, "that which is born," related to the verb *teknô* ("to give birth") and *teknon* ("child") – but it also meant "interest accrued on a debt." One of the duties of a citizen, not only historically within the Greek world but also within the Roman empire,[29] was to reproduce: to beget and bear legitimate children and thus create more citizens. If men seek after "effeminate" pleasures and luxuries, as Basil argues they do in taking out loans to spend upon their passions, then they do not beget children; the relation of indebtedness does not "bear fruit." Rather, they assume the feminine role of "bearing" the *tokos* of the debt relative to the usurer, who takes the active role of "reproducing."[30]

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[28] Basil, Sermo in Ps. 14; PG 29, 273.

[29] One should consider here the legislation of Augustus and other emperors of the early principate aimed at incentivizing marriage and reproduction among the upper classes.

[30] The ancient and late ancient understanding of sexual reproduction lacked awareness of the necessity of a female ovum and held that the male sperm was by itself the "seed" that grew into a foetus; the female womb was construed as the "field" into which the male seed was sown and a nutritive container for the developing foetus.

Like the borrower, in Paradise before the fall, humanity lacked nothing necessary for life and flourishing. The LORD himself was sufficient for the needs of human persons as he is the infinite source of all true goods. The whole bounty of the earth belonged to a generous God who was unstinting in sharing his uncreated self as well as his material creation with humanity.[31] Borrowing thus indicates an improper evaluation of the good—the best things in life are free gifts of God, not material luxuries which please the senses but come with sizeable pricetags.[32]

Humanity's sin, then, is an appetitive and epistemological error. Like the dog in Aesop's fable, humans discount what they already have (i.e. all the goods the LORD freely gives them) and drop it in an attempt to lay hold of an illusion of something more or better.

> The criterion of these things [i.e. the true telos of beauty and good] is the mind which is situated within us, in which we run the risk of chancing upon that which is truly good or being diverted from it by some deception on the level of appearances and rushing off to its opposite, like what the story from outside [the faith] says happened to the dog who looked in the water at the reflection of what he carried in his mouth and let go of the true food in gaping after the image of the food and went hungry. Therefore, since the mind has been deceived with regard to its desire for what is really good it has been diverted to that which is not [or, that which is non-existent; πρὸς τὸ μὴ ὂν] . . . .[33]

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[31] Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Usurarios* 198.

[32] *Ibid.*, 198-9.

[33] Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio Catechetica Magna* § 21. In both Christian and Platonic traditions, being was identified with goodness such that "evil" was taken to be a privation of good and, accordingly, of being. See *De hominis opificio* §20 for Nyssen's reading of original sin as humanity's turn towards desire for the "mixed goods" comprised of being and non-being.

A borrower does not judge what he has to be sufficient, and in borrowing ends up losing his substance -- the capital and status that he had before he took out the loan.[34] So too, Gregory sees sin as a deluded desire that results in the loss of the sinner's substance. That is, the epistemological error constituting sin concerns being and results in an ontological deficit.

The Cappadocians identified the image of God in humans with the rational faculty of the soul (τὸ λογιστικόν), to which Nyssen attributes a "viceroyal" character.[35] As inheritors of the Platonic tradition, the Cappadocians viewed the soul as tripartite; the rational faculty was created by the LORD to rule the humans' appetitive and spirited faculties, which are part and parcel of human material embodiment. If the rational faculty is properly ordered over the other parts of the soul so as to be able to do its job properly, then the human is able to reflect and represent God by exercising rule over non-rational creation. Sin, although freely chosen, disrupts this proper ordering of the soul internally and, accordingly, the relations of the human person to all others (the LORD, other humans, non-human creatures), enslaving the rational faculty and thus obscuring the *imago Dei*. Continuous relation to God is necessary for the maintenance of the image's clarity and moral likeness.[36] Since humans, unlike God, are not self-existent beings but belong essentially to the contingent realm of "becoming" they are in flux by default.

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[34] Basil, *Sermo in Ps. 14*; PG 29, 272.
[35] See Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio* §§4-5.
[36] *Ibid.*, §§15-16.

> Humanity was constructed as an imitation of the divine nature, preserving the likeness (ὁμοίωσιν) to the divine through other good qualities, but especially through the freedom of the will, yet being by necessity of a convertible nature (τρεπτῆς δὲ φύσεως). For one who has his beginning in existence from alteration does not admit of being entirely unsusceptible to conversion; for the progression from non-being to being is a sort of alteration since non-existence is changed into being in accordance with the exercise of divine power . . . .[37]

What we see here is that the Cappadocians have a fundamentally relational ontology. Because an "imitation of the divine nature" (or, the *imago Dei*) is simply what a human person *is*, the being of the human person is therefore dependent upon the human person's continued "imaging" of the LORD. The human person's "imaging" or "imitation" of the LORD is constituted by a set of relations ordered in a particular way. The human person fixes her contemplative gaze (*theôria*) and desire upon the LORD rather than upon creatures. Doing so is what orders the faculties of the person's soul rightly (the rational faculty ruling over the spirited and appetitive), and, accordingly, orders her relations to other human persons and to non-human creatures rightly (e.g., causing her not to lust after material goods, not to take out loans, and so forth.) While the freedom of the will is part of the human person's imaging of the LORD, it is also – when coupled with a mutable created nature – the condition of possibility for discontinuing the ordered relations that constitute the human person in being.

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[37] Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio Catechetica Magna* § 21.

In the Cappadocians' understanding, therefore, the debt-slavery of sin is, like the servitude of literal debt, not an constraint imposed upon the human person from without or by the power of another. Rather it is an existential disordering and transmogrification of the self caused by the voluntary abdication of the politics (ordered relations) that constitute one's nature and being in favor of relations to nihility and the "mixed goods" comprised of beings diminished by privation. If relational disorder and the ontological deficit of sin are spoken of as a "debt" or "bondage," then this conditions the description of salvation. Logically, the solution to sin must be the restoration of the right order of relations that constitute human persons in being, which would provide a solution to part of the problem of ontological inferiority-shame that prevents Christian *parrhêsia* towards the LORD. But in the metaphorical grammar of bondage, this political reordering must be described as a liberation of humanity -- or, as Gregory has it, their ransom.

### 4.1.2. Christ's Parrhêsiastic Deception of the Devil

Language of "ransom" used to describe Christ's work upon the cross is present in Scripture and in the works of early Christian writers without much theological elaboration. So, for instance, Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 record part of Christ's response to James and John's request to be seated at either side of him when he comes into his glory: "the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Likewise, 1 Timothy 2:5-6 states: "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time." Clement of Alexandria, writing in the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries, A.D., writes of Christ as follows: "When he is about to be poured out as an offering and giving himself as a ransom (λύτρον) he leaves for us this new testament: 'I give you my love.'"[38]

The 3rd century theologian Origen of Caesarea was the first to consider the fuller conceptual picture implied by the Scripture's naming of Christ's sacrifice as a "ransom," and to conclude that the payment was made to the devil:

> To whom did he give his soul (or life; ψυχή) as a ransom for many? For it was not to God. Therefore, was it not to the devil? For he controlled (ἐκράτει) us until the soul of Jesus was given as the ransom for us to him, when he was deceived [so as to think] himself able to be the lord (κυριεῦσαι) of it [sc. the soul of Jesus] and did not see that he could not bear the test (βάσανος) for holding it. Therefore also death, although it thought it had become his lord, no longer has lordship since [Jesus] has become free among the dead and mightier than the authority of death. And he is mightier to such a degree that all of those controlled by death who wish to follow him are able to follow him, nor does death any longer have might against them.[39]

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[38] Clement, *Quis div*. 37.

[39] Origen, *Comm. in Matt*. XVI.8.

Origen certainly exerted influence on all of the Cappadocian Fathers, but especially Gregory of Nyssa, who develops what comes to be called the "ransom theory of the atonement" in his *Oratio catechetica magna*. There has been some scholarly argument as to the precise date of this text but all conjectures place it within a decade of 380.

We can observe in this passage from Origen several elements of the ransom theory that are adopted and deployed by Nyssen. The first is the notion is the idea that the devil indeed does have human sinners in his power. Second, and accordingly, is the idea that the devil is deceived into thinking that he will, by virtue of Christ's death, become Christ's lord and so hold and possess him just as he does fallen human persons. Finally, there is the concept of Christ's passion and death functioning as a "test" or perhaps a contest (an *agôn*) that manifests the relative power and authority of Christ and the devil. On this last, it is worth noting that the word Origen uses is one we encountered previously in connection with the pagan Greek philosophical discourse of *parrhêsia* in chapter 2, βάσανος, meaning "touchstone."

Gregory's concern in the text is to demonstrate that the LORD'S redemption of humanity was done in accordance with justice rather than by arbitrary use of force, while simultaneously maintaining that God's power is not to be thought less of because he condescended to unite his divinity to a lower form of being (the human person) in the incarnation. Rather, this means of redemption manifests divine wisdom insofar as it secures both the desired effect and the satisfaction of justice. In order that the criterion of justice be satisfied, the devil's ownership of humanity had to be respected, and the terms of exchange and payment constituting the ransom had to be agreeable to both parties (i.e., Satan and the LORD.)

Ancient and medieval critiques of the "ransom theory" center on two points: first, the illegitimacy of the devil's rights over humanity,[40] and, second, the impropriety of attributing deception to God. That the second was lively can be seen from Gregory of Nyssa's own citation of it in the *Great Catechetical Oration* and from the lengths to which he goes in the text to counter that objection. If the LORD is truth itself, then it seems wrong that the central mystery of salvation should depend upon deception and falsehood.

As regards the first objection, Gregory of Nazianzus argues against the theory propounded by his fellow Cappadocian Gregory of Nyssa when he writes:

> But if the ransom comes to belong to no one other than the one who held us, I inquire to whom it was tributed and for what cause? If to the devil – oh, what an outrage! For in that case the thief receives a ransom that is not only from God but that is God himself, and a payment so exceeding his own tyranny that, on that account, it would be just for him to spare us.[41]

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[40] The idea of the devil as possessing such "rights" is also the substance of many modern objections to the ransom theory raised by John Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought.* (London: SCM, 1990), 83-4; Gerald O'Collins. *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus.* (Oxford: OUP, 1995), 199; and Thomas Weinandy, *Jesus the Christ.* (Huntingdon, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2003), 153. On the other hand, it is approved by Kathleen Ray, who argues that language of the "devil's rights" is needed to convey the extensive and systemic nature of structural sins that enslave people. *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse, and Ransom.* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 1998), 131-7.

[41] Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 45 § 22.

In the Middle Ages, Anselm of Canterbury, working in the Western Latinate tradition clarifies the "outrage" of taking this "ransom" to be tributed to the devil:

> For if the devil or the human person were his own, or belonged to someone other than God, or remained in the power of someone other than God, perhaps this [assertion] would have validity. However, since neither the devil nor the human person belongs to anyone other than God and neither stands outside God's power, to what cause was God obligated to act with, concerning, or in the case of his own property if not that he punish his slave, who had persuaded his co-slave to desert the Lord and go over to his side and had as a traitor received a runaway, as a thief received a thief simultaneously with the stolen property of his Lord? For each was a thief, since the one had stolen himself from his Lord with the other one persuading him to do it.[42]

Common to both Nazianzen and Anselm is concern with the question of ownership. Both Gregory and the bishop of Canterbury understand Satan to be a "thief" on the grounds that human persons are legitimately the LORD's property, and that Satan effectively "stole" them by persuading Adam and Eve to sin by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and, so, violating the LORD's prohibition. In Anselm's view, the human person's free choice to be persuaded by the devil to sin against the LORD constituted a second theft: not only did Satan "steal" humanity, but humanity "stole" itself. Because theft is illegitimate possession of stolen property that belongs – by right – to another, any ransom of that stolen property would also be illegitimate. Both Anselm's rejection of the ransom theory and his own satisfaction theory of the atonement depend entirely upon his view that the relationship between creation and the LORD is one of owing and owning, which he makes clear in this passage by referring to both the devil and the human person as "slaves" belonging to God. Neither Anselm nor Nazianzen (nor countless later theological interpreters of early "ransom theorists") can countenance an illegitimate ransoming of one's rightful property to the LORD's justice.

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[42] Anselm, *Cur deus homo*, I.7.

But what is critical to note here is that neither Nyssen nor Origen before him conceives of the human person as the LORD's "property." Quite to the contrary, Nyssen identifies the relation of the human person to the LORD with the human person's *freedom*. That is, the human person is not "bound" to the LORD by a relation of owing and owning but by a relation of imaging – being created in the *imago Dei*, which Nyssen equates with freedom, and manifesting that image. While both Origen and Nyssen do assert that humanity comes under the mastery of the devil, neither of them take this to constitute a transfer of ownership or possession from the LORD (the human person's legitimate master) to Satan (exerting illegitimate mastery over stolen property.) Rather, within the logic of the ransom theory, ownership and mastery of the human person that only arises as a result of sin and is illegitimate in se.

Although the ransom theory takes the relation of Satan's power over humanity to be outside the LORD's law and unjust, it nevertheless considers it to be *real*. What we tend to forget is that, in the ancient world, one became a bond-slave in one of two ways. One could be captured as spoils of war upon the defeat of one's city, and certainly valuable prisoners of war were routinely ransomed from the victors. (We might here think of Chryses' offer of a ransom for his daughter Chryseis in Homer's *Iliad*.) But this is hardly how any of the Fathers would have agreed that Satan came to exert mastery over humanity in the LORD's garden for the simple reason that Satan is no match for the LORD's forces. Instead, Nyssen takes humanity to be in bondage to Satan through their own choice to "borrow" from the devil and so enter into his "debt," not as a result of Satan's conquest over the LORD's *politeia* in which Adam and Eve participated.

This means that, to act justly and wisely, the LORD's salvation must accept the reality of humanity's bondage to the devil and engage it on its terms in order to nullify it. However, within the logic of Nyssen's grammar of sin-as-debt-bondage and salvation-as-ransom, humanity's "debt" or bondage to the devil is not a consequence of Satan's power but of humanity's own freedom. Respecting the devil's mastery is therefore not an acknowledgement of or demonstration of respect for Satan's lordship or his superior might, as later interpreters of the ransom theory fear, but of the *imago Dei* in humanity. Accordingly, justice does not require that the LORD's abrogation of the debt and debt-bondage take the form of actually *paying off* humanity's debt, and certainly not rendering this debt as owed to the devil. The putative "debt" cannot in fact be paid because, as we should recall, Nyssen takes its substance to be literally nothing. As explained previously, Gregory does not conceive of being as a substance or property but as constituted by relations. What human persons "borrowed" in sinning (disordering and damaging the relations with the LORD that constitute them as "beings" and maintain them in existence) was ontological privation – the empty glamour of material mixed goods and, so, their own corruption and reversion to the *nihil* out of which they were created.

The corollary of this is that the devil is not deceived as a result of the LORD's lying or dissembling in the incarnation. Gregory would agree with critics of the ransom theory that the God of Christian confession does not lie.[43] Certainly, it is understandable that Gregory might be read to be saying that the LORD is lying, given that Satan's acceptance of Christ as a ransom for captive humanity in Nyssen's telling depends entirely upon the devil's being deceived by the very fact of the incarnation. Because of Christ's goodness and the power displayed by his working of miracles, the devil "saw in him a greater possession by exchange than the one he held [sc. the rest of humanity]."[44] This is the reason that Satan agrees to accept the ransom as an exchange. In fact, on Gregory's reading, the devil seems not at all to realize that Christ is divine, even if it is the divine power that he sees, envies, and wishes to possess for himself:

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[43] It is on this point – particularly with respect to his use of the "fishhook" metaphor that Nyssen's deployment of the ransom model has come under heavy fire from modern readers. At times, the line between objection to the idea of the LORD's use of deception and repugnance at the particular metaphor of the fishhook blurs. It has been called "childish and immoral" by Hastings Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement* (London: Macmillan, 1925) 364; "perverted and repulsive" by J.A. MacCullough, *The Harrowing of Hell: A Comparative Study of an Early Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1930) 205; "unimportant and implausible" by Reinhold Niebuhr, *Human Destiny* (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1941) 59-60; "self-contradictory, inconclusive, and inappropriate" by George Florovsky, *The Eastern Fathers of the Fourth Century* (1933; repr., Belmont, Mass: Notable and Academic Books, 1987) 195; "a crude and distasteful trick" by Frances Young, T*he Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979) 209 and again in *From Nicaea to Chalcedon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 121. Thomas Weinandy suggests that this smacks of docetism, reducing Christ's humanity to a mere ruse. A strident modern supporter is Nicholas Constas, "The Last Temptation of Satan: Divine Deception in Greek Patristic Interpretations of the Passion Narrative," *Harvard Theological Review*, 97.2 (2004) 139-63, who excuses it as an example of the sort of paedagogical lie or therapeutic deception that was culturally acceptable in late antiquity.

> For since, as was said before, the opposing power was not by nature able to confront the presence of God and withstand his naked manifestation, so that the price-of-exchange for us might be more easily taken by the one who demanded it, divinity was hidden by the veil of our nature, so that, just as is the case with greedy fish, the hook of divinity would be caught along with bait of the flesh. And thus when life had been welcomed into the house of death and light shone out in the darkness, that which is understood to be contrary to light and to life would vanish; for it is not by nature possible either for darkness to remain in the presence of light nor for death to exist when life is active.[45]

We see that Christ's defeat of the devil is the result of a sort of contest or comparison of natures: death and darkness are not able to withstand or endure the presence of life and light. This, in Nyssen's understanding, is because of the metaphysical priority of the latter over the former. Life and light are aligned with being while death and darkness have no reality in themselves but are simply lacks – privations of the corresponding goods. The absence is "eclipsed" as it were by the presence of the real and thus cannot be said to exist, either ontologically (which it never did) nor phenomenally – it simply "vanishes." This metaphysical incompatibility between being and nihility, then, is what Gregory takes to be the "mechanism" of the resurrection and Christ's abrogation of humanity's debt of death.

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[44] Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catetchetica magna* §23.

[45] *Ibid.*, §24.

And yet, it seems that Satan must be seduced into entering into this sort of *agôn*. The power belonging to the devil's created nature is "not able to confront the presence of God and withstand his naked manifestation." And, on Gregory's telling, Satan knows this all too well – far too well to agree to meet the LORD on his terms in a "fair fight." So, it would seem, God needs to trick him into accepting the incarnate Logos as a ransom and, so, entering into this metaphysical contest-of-natures with the divine. In this passage, the LORD's actions bear all the hallmarks of an attempt to deceive. The divine intent seems to be to induce Satan to accept the ransom; this requires acts of "veiling" and "hiding" Christ's uncreated nature, covering the "hook of divinity" with the "bait of the flesh."

And yet, when read as a whole, the *Oratio catechetica magna* sets forth a paradox. There is a deception of the devil present in the offering of the incarnate Logos as a ransom for enslaved humanity, but as I will show, Nyssen also describes this ransom as an instance of the LORD's truth-telling and parrhêsiastic self-disclosure.[46] The issue here is a grammatical subtlety to do with how we speak of deception. When X does something and, consequently, Y comes to believe something false, we typically say that Y is the object of deception ("Y was deceived") and that X is the subject ("X deceived Y.") But none of that entails either that what X said or did was false, nor even X spoke or acted with the intention of making Y believe something false. That is to say: Y might bear much (if not all) of the responsibility for his false beliefs in response to X's speech or actions.

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[46] Nyssen in the *Oratio catechetica magna* §1 presents the Logos as "truth." See also the opposition of the LORD's *parrhêsia* to the privation of "shame" (*aischynê*) in §6. Effectively, for Nyssen, Christ is the divine Word, and that Word is parrhêsiastic.

In his treatise *De mendacio* ("On Lying"), which we will revisit in Chapter 6, Augustine of Hippo illustrates this with the case of a suspicious friend.[47] One can tell her the truth (that bandits are lurking down the road she means to travel and she would do well to take a detour), but she is suspicious and so will not believe you. Her suspicion consists in the fact that she thinks that you are lying to her or trying to deceive her. Even if you know that she is suspicious and that she will take your truth-telling to be a lie, that does not mean that you actually *are* lying or trying to deceive her by saying "there are bandits that way; take a different road." The effect is, of course, that she *is* deceived: she believes a falsehood (nothing to fear; no bandits this way) rather than the truth you told her (danger; bandits lurking.) Nor would it be correct to say that your intention in telling her of the true danger – even knowing that she will not believe you – is to cause her to come to harm. If she chooses not to believe the truth you are telling and does, as a result, come to harm, then what has been manifested in this is not your intent to deceive her, nor any ill-will on your part towards your suspicious friend. To the contrary, what such a sequence of events manifests is simply the fact that you and your friend are, as it were, playing by different rules: the one you are following is benevolent and truthful, while the one your friend assumes the rule governing your speech is malevolent and mendacious.

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[47] Augustine, *De mendacio* § 4.

And this is precisely the sort of situation that Gregory presents in his description of the LORD's deception of the devil. The devil is deceived by the LORD's truth-telling and self-disclosure only because the devil has already deceived himself and, so, willingly blinded himself to the truth. When Satan tempts Adam and Eve to sin in Eden, he is deceiving them with the deception by which he has deceived himself.[48] Nyssen asserts that this temptation was motivated by the devil's *phthonos*. This word is often translated into English as "envy," but there is a distinction that needs to be made here. We often think of "envy" as similar to "jealousy" – that is, wanting to possess something (perhaps something another possesses), to have it all to oneself. But *phthonos* refers not to this but to the sort of "envy" that we might equate with "spite" -- begrudging another their goods or good fortune. In this latter case, the desire of the "envy" is not to have for oneself the particular goods that the other has and enjoys, but only that the other *not* have or enjoy them. In the Greek tradition, it was often the case that the object of *phthonos* was one who was less fortunate than or inferior to the subject. So, for instance, the word often appears in Greek tragedies to describe the disposition of the gods towards mortals who have become too happy or prosperous.[49] The reflexive action of this divine *phthonos* is deception and persecution of the mortals in question to deprive them of the goods they have and enjoy. This is precisely the disposition and *modus operandi* of the devil with respect to humanity:

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[48] Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve is also presented in the same terms as his deception by the LORD: the devil "spread the phantasia of beauty over the fish hook (ἄγκιστρον) of vice like bait;" *Oratio catechetica magna* §21. Constas in "The Last Temptation of the Devil," 156, and Ludlow in *Gregory of Nyssa, Ancient and (Post)modern* both take this to be emblematic of divine justice on the logic of the quid pro quo.

> Since he [the devil] shut his eyes against what was good and unstinting (ἄφθονον), just as one in the sun shades his eyes with his eyelids and sees darkness, so also he by that very will not to know the good came to know the opposite of good. And this is *phthonos*.... When humanity had been empowered by a divine blessing (εὐλογίας) and was high in dignity – for humanity had been stationed in a rank to rule the earth and all that was on it; it was beautiful in form, for it had been created as the likeness of the archetype's beauty; it was by its nature free from suffering (ἀπαθής), for it was the copy of the one who is free from suffering; it was full of *parrhêsia*, luxuriating face-to-face in the divine revealedness (ἐμφανείας) itself – these things were the fuel of the adversary's passion towards *phthonos*.[50]

Several things are notable in this passage. The key point of contrast between the devil and fallen humanity is that we choose to look at and desire the *nihil* ("the opposite of good") because we are deceived into thinking it actually to *be* something and, therefore, to be a good; Satan knows better. The devil chooses to look at darkness rather than light because of his *phthonos*. He begrudges the very existence of the LORD'S ungrudging (*aphthonon*) generosity; he wants not to see or to know it, and so he shuts his eyes against it. The grudge itself is particularly directed against the recipient of the LORD'S gifts (*viz*. human creatures), and it centers upon the phenomenality of relations between God and humanity. That is, Satan envies the human person her orderliness and the visibility of that order: the "beautiful form" of the human person (her being in the image of God), her intra-relations (her being free by nature from internal sufferings, i.e. the passions), her interrelations with the rest of material creation (being "stationed in a rank to rule the earth and all that was on it"), and finally her face-to-face relations with the LORD (her *parrhêsia*, an ungrudging exposure of self to the LORD's view, and his ungrudging self-manifestation to her.)

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[49] See Agamemnon's fear of treading upon the purple carpets in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 946-947, Philoctetes' desire to fob off the *phthonos* associated with the bow onto Neoptolemus in Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 657ff.

[50] Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica magna* §6.

Because it is precisely the LORD's love for humanity (*philanthrôpia*) that the devil begrudges and wills not to see, it is precisely the possibility of a God-man that the devil *cannot* see. That is, Satan literally cannot countenance – face without losing face – the fact that humanity should be the locus of the LORD's extravagant self-giving at its fullest: a union of divine and human nature in the person of Jesus Christ and, even more than this, a union of the impassible and eternal LORD with corrupted and death-bound fallen humanity in Christ's passion and death upon the cross. The "veiling" of the Logos in human flesh, therefore, represents not an obfuscation or dissemblance of the philanthropic and unstinting divine nature but its truthful *parrhêsia* – the Word honestly disclosed and revealed in material phenomenality.

Nyssen describes the distinction between the LORD's deception of the devil and the devil's deception of humanity as being akin to the difference between two persons mixing a drug (*pharmakon*) into another's food; it is certainly a drug in both cases, but one intends it to poison the recipient while another intends it to serve as the antidote (*antidosis*) for a poison the recipient has already ingested from another source. The metaphor hinges upon a double meaning of *antidosis;* the word literally means "giving in return" and can mean both "antidote to a poison" and "repayment of a debt." So it is that Nyssen writes·

> For it belongs to justice (δικαίου) to measure to each according to his worth, and to wisdom not to transgress justice, nor to separate the good aim of love of humanity (φιλανθρωπίας) from the justice of a judgment (κρίσεως) but skillfully to attach the two together, repaying (ἀντιδόντα) according to worth for justice, and not departing from the aim of love of humanity for goodness.[51]

Following closely in the tradition of Origen, Gregory then asserts that the LORD's "drugging" of Satan with the repayment (*antidosis*) of humanity's debt was, in fact, provided as a salutary antidote for the benefit not only of humanity but also of Satan himself. And this was precisely because the antidote in question was the truth, aimed at "testimony of the goodness of the one who worked it."[52]

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[51] Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica magna* §26.

[52] *Ibid.*.

> For the one who previously deceived humanity by the bait of pleasure is himself deceived by the appearance of humanity. But the aim of what happened was for a change to the better. For the one [Satan] worked deception for the destruction of our nature, but he who is just and good and wise [the LORD] used the concept (or understanding; ἐπινοίᾳ) of deception for the salvation of what had been corrupted, not only working a benefit for the one who was lost through those things [the human person] but also for the very one who had worked this perdition among us. For out of the bringing together of death with life, darkness with light, corruption with incorruption, there occurs a vanishing (ἀφανισμός) of the worse and its departure into nothingness (τὸ μὴ ὂν), but a benefit for the one freed from these things …. [The LORD did these things] freeing humanity from evil and healing the very discoverer of evil himself.[53]

The concept of deception – but not lying or deceit itself – is what the LORD uses to craft a fitting repayment of humanity's debt to nihility and provide an antidote to the corruption of sin. A debt of (and to) nothingness is effectively repaid when the truth appears and shows it to *be* nothingness. This occurs when the fullness of the LORD's being (life, light, and incorruption) are brought together in an *agôn* with their privations. This manifestation of the truth of the LORD – the superiority of the divine nature over death and corruption, God's exceeding love for humankind in choosing union with a material and ontologically inferior nature – works to expose the insubstantiality of humanity's debt and so to nullify the mastery and lordship of the devil over fallen humanity. However, even if Gregory, like Origen, had high hopes for the eventual salvation of all creatures (perhaps even the devil himself), he did not take this salvation to be immediately effected by Christ's manifestation of divine truth in the passion and resurrection. Human persons might no longer be Satan's bond-slaves, but they could still choose to be his children.

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[53] Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica magna* §26.

## *4.2. Family Resemblances*

### 4.2.1. Our Father(s)

In his homilies *De oratione dominica*, Gregory rather surprisingly – and quite vehemently – asserts that his congregation ought to think twice (or more) before daring to pray the Lord's Prayer, specifically its first line: "Our Father, who art in heaven …." Nyssen explicitly names the speaking of these words an act of *parrhêsia*:

> … [T]o use such a familiar form of address and say "Father" … the one speaking has need of so much spirit, of so much *parrhêsia*, of such clear conscience …. of so much and such a type of zeal so as to come to this measure of *parrhêsia:* to dare, with elevated conscience, to say to God "Father."[54]

The problem Gregory sees is that the one saying these words might, in so doing, be both telling a lie and engaging in unjustified *parrhêsia* that would be offensive to God. The substance of the lie in question is the filial relation to the LORD claimed in the use of the appellation "Father." As we have seen, the grammatical rules of *parrhêsia* require proofs and justificatory reasons for the violation of a seeming rule based in the inferiority of speaker or speech content relative to the audience on various measures that would prohibit speech in favour of modest silence. In the case of addressing the LORD as “Father,” all of these potential inhibitors coalesce and are concentrated. That is, the content of the speech itself refers specifically to the speaker and his or her relation to the addressee. Moreover, the addressee is the most dangerous one there is, and one to whom the “default judgment” declares all human speakers to be inferior: the LORD.

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[54] Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica* II in *GNO* VII, 2; pp. 23-25.

As one might imagine, given what we know of the grammatical requirements of *parrhêsia*, Gregory spends a great deal of attention on the question of the “proofs” that this prayer requires a speaker to provide, and urges his congregation to self-examination. Modern readers (particularly Christians used to saying the Lord’s Prayer liturgically and unreflectively) might find this a strange requirement. After all, Scripture presents Jesus instructing his disciples to pray using exactly these words; indeed, that is the chief warrant for the adoption of the prayer by the Church. If Jesus tells his followers to pray these words, then why should we think that it is unsafe to do so?

Gregory acknowledges that the prayer was given as instruction, but interprets it as being given not to regulate speech through words but to regulate the Christian mode of life:

> If the LORD teaches us to say God is “Father,” it seems to me that he is doing nothing other than setting forth as a rule (νομοθετεῖν) the highest and most sublime way of life (βίον). For the Truth does not teach us to lie so as to say we are what we are not and to call ourselves by a name which we do not have by nature (πεφύκαμεν), but in calling “Father” the one who

> is incorruptible and righteous and good to prove the relation true by our way of life (ἐπαληθεύειν τῷ βίῳ τὴν ἀγχιστείαν).[55]

The word I have rendered "do not have by nature" in the passage quoted above is cognate with "nature" (φύσις). The verb is ordinarily best translated without any reference to "nature" or "natures" but simply "to be;" the predicate, however, is never a temporary state or appointment but rather an inherent and organic quality or character of the subject. Clearly, Nyssen does not think that humans have been physically born to the LORD as so as to inherit divine characteristics. However, this homily is not an argument that we ought not (ever) call the LORD "Father" because we are not divine by birth. Rather, the sermon is an exhortation that we must acquire a likeness-of-nature to the LORD so as to be able to pray "Our Father."

But it is critical to note that Gregory does not take obedient praying of the Lord's Prayer to be the telos or purpose of this transformation of human *physis*. To the contrary, he asserts that Jesus taught Christians to pray these words for the purpose of getting them to work at making changes to their natures and lifestyles. The instruction makes them realize that saying these words truthfully, safely, and with *parrhêsia* requires a transformation of our *physis* and *bios* in order to effect the relation claimed and to justify the parrhêsiastic act of claiming it by being able to prove and demonstrate its reality. So it is that he explicitly states: "This is the force of the words, through which we are taught not to pronounce certain sounds in syllables but the properly ordered understanding of ascent to God through the highest citizenship (*politeia*.)"[56]

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[55] Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica* II, p. 25

As things stand, however, Nyssen thinks most of his congregation – and we should remember that he is preaching a homily to baptized Christians – *cannot* provide the requisite "proof" of their filiation to the LORD and, accordingly, ought to shrink from praying these words and claiming such a relation. Instead, Gregory goes so far as to say that the sorts of lives his flock are leading attest to a very different spiritual paternity: their father is not the LORD but the devil. Moreover, the "sons of perdition" who pray these words falsely will effectively not be addressing the LORD but rather their true father – Satan, who is "a liar and the father of every lie, sin and the father of every sin."[57]

Fortunately, Gregory has recommendations for how Christians might go about righting their filial relations: self-scrutiny and asceticism. One must examine one's life and conscience in order to see who one's true father is. What being a Christian secures, then, is not instant "adoption" as the LORD's son or daughter but only sufficient knowledge of God to provide criteria by which spiritual paternity may be adjudicated. Nyssen says that, while we do not know what the LORD's nature is *in se*, we do know (and can use, recognize cases of) other descriptors of the divine *physis*: goodness, holiness, joy, power, glory, purity, eternity, immutability.[58] Knowledge of these (what they are and the fact that they are descriptive of the LORD) is available to Christians both through study of the Scriptures and through our own reasonings (λογισμῶν).[59] The Christian then searches herself for a family resemblance: her nature will either bear a likeness to her Father in heaven through the manifestation of these same qualities in her life, or she will be the spitting image of her father the devil through the manifestation of their opposites (privations.)

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[56] Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica* II p. 21.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Should the outcome of this spiritual "paternity test" point to diabolical parentage, then Nyssen recommends the following:

> So if someone, looking at himself, recognizes that he still lacks purification and that his wretched conscience is full of stains and nasty sores, until he has been cleansed of so many evils of this sort, he should not insinuate himself into a kin-relationship (συγγένειαν) with God and say "Father" – the unrighteous to the righteous one, the unclean to the clean. It would be hubris,s and the words would be mockeries if he should name God the father of his own wickedness.[60]

The particular acts that constitute "purifications" are clear enough from the instructions Nyssen gives for examination of one's *bios* on the criteria descriptive of the LORD's character. One must stop being fickle rather than steadfast, sinning, seeking gain, spending one's time upon the deception of life (βιωτικὴν ἀπάτην), and being made shameful (ἀσχημονούντων) through the passions. Many of these are ordinary shorthand terms for ascetic renunciations of wealth, worldly position, pleasures, and so forth. [61]

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[58] Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica* II, p. 23.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Worthy of particular notice here is Nyssen's use of the phrase "the deception of life." He does not clarify exactly what he means by this, but the idea of material and biological life as a "deception" was fundamental to the Platonic tradition of philosophical ascesis. Given that we are epistemically (dis)oriented towards material realities (as Plato claims in the *Republic* with the Allegory of the Cave),[62] the solution for the philosopher (as suggested in the *Phaedo*) is to reorient his mind away from the means of sustaining physical life and towards the really real by making a practice of death – the separation of body and soul.[63] Gregory specifically mentions abstinence from sexual intercourse, recommending it even for licitly married couples.[64]

In addition to specific bodily practices or renunciations, Nyssen also prescribes intellective "retrainings" through mystagogical contemplation. The Christian must detach her noetic attention from everything that alters and changes and instead become unswerving so as to "be made family (οἰκειώσασθαι) to the God who is unswerving and without alteration;" only then can it employ this "most familiar form of address" (οἰκειοτάτῃ προσηγορίᾳ) and call the LORD

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[61] Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica* II, p. 25.

[62] Plato, *Republic* 514a-520a.

[63] Plato, *Phaedo* – e.g., 67c: "Is it not agreed that purification is … separating as much as possible the soul from the body and habituating it to collect and gather itself together to itself from all parts of the body …?" and 67e "Those who philosophize rightly practice death, and dying is fearful to them least among all men."

[64] Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica* II, 21.

"Father."[65] Gregory makes no apology for the fact that, as he sees it, praying the Lord's Prayer requires a great deal of preparation. The conditions for our confident *parrhêsia pros ton Theon*, he says several times in the very opening of the homily, is that we have first "fulfilled our vows" to the LORD by purification of our souls and our way of life.[66]

What we see here is that Gregory does not take parrhêsiastic speech towards the LORD to be a medium of Christian purification. In fact, few if any of the renunciations and acts recommended for the purification of soul and *bios* involve words. The prayer – if it can be prayed by Christians at all – is a "late stage" spiritual achievement. Certainly in the second homily (which focuses exclusively on the words "our Father"), Nyssen gives no indication that he thinks actually praying the Lord's Prayer – saying these particular words parrhêsiastically to the LORD - serves any purpose at all. Instead, the good of the prayer resides in the fact that the prescription of these words and the grammatical requirements of the *parrhêsia* that *would* be required, *if* one were actually to say them, together comprise and function as a spiritual rule to order Christians' nonverbal practices. In a sense, the act of *parrhêsia* is here made obsolete by its grammar – its dependence upon ascertaining the criteria of a listener and making judgments of oneself based on those criteria, its requirement that the speaker be able to provide justifications for speaking and proofs of the relations that fund these justifications. Performing the necessary judgments and displaying the necessary proofs renders speech itself superfluous and unnecessary.

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[65] Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica* II, 23.
[66] *Ibid*., p. 21.

Accordingly, Gregory ends his homily on “Our Father” with a reading of the parable of the prodigal son. When he has realized his error, the wayward child “goes into himself and attends to words of repentance.”[67] When he addresses his father, it is not done “with *parrhêsia*” but is described as a “confession” – not of himself or of the relation between them, but of his father’s location “in heaven.”[68] In response to these penitent actions of the son, the father embraces and kisses him, and gives him clothing and adornments. Gregory interprets these latter figurally: the penitent receives a robe to replace the one he had put off when he ate the forbidden fruit in Eden and saw his own nakedness, a ring to symbolize his bearing of his father’s image, and sandals to protect his feet from the bite of the serpent and to mobilize him for the “upward journey.” These, Nyssen promises his congregation, are the very things that the LORD will give to the Christian if she should purify herself to the extent that she would be able to address the LORD as “Father” with *parrhêsia*.[69]

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[67] Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica* II, 27.

[68] *Ibid.* Gregory takes the words of the prodigal son, “I have sinned before heaven and before you,” to be an acknowledgement that the two are to be equated.

[69] *Ibid.*, 30.

### 4.2.2. Macrina's Cosmetics

These tropes of kinship, moral purification, bodily adornment, and parrhêsiastic exposure of the self *pros ton Theon* come together especially in Gregory's descriptions of his sister's death and burial in the *Vita Sanctae Macrinae.* Nyssen presents Macrina as his "teacher," who instructs him both in theological speculation through dialogue and in moral purification by her ascetic example. The tension here, as we saw in the examination of Nyssen's deployment of the ransom theory earlier in this chapter, is between the concealment and revelation of one's nature (*physis*.) In the case of Christ, this amounted to the simultaneous "cloaking" of eternal and impassible divinity within mutable and temporal human flesh and the revelation of the LORD's nature as ungrudgingly philanthropic through this very union. In the case of non-divine human persons, like Macrina, the tension is between the shamefulness of the sin-corrupted human body (which prompts its modest concealment) and the capacity of the morally purified human person to display the divine likeness (which prompts shameless self-disclosure.) This section will explore Gregory's use of *parrhêsia* in connection with asceticism to demonstrate the shift in the grammar of the term away from speech and verbal production and its relocation in bodily visibility.

In his treatise *De virginitate*, Nyssen presents vowed celibacy as a mode of return both to the prelapsarian life of Adam and Eve in Paradise as well as a proleptic mode of participation in the post-resurrection life of the eschaton. In characterizing Edenic life, it is perhaps surprising that what Gregory first notes is Adam's nakedness:

> . . . Let us become that which the first-formed was in the first part of his life. What was he? – Naked (γυμνός) of this covering of skins and looking upon the face of God in *parrhêsia*, not yet judging the good according to taste and sight, but only luxuriating in the Lord ….[70]

As we see, Gregory connects Adam's nakedness with his *parrhêsia* before the LORD – a face-to-face relationship utterly lacking in shame. In fact, as it is presented in the text, Adam's nudity is not only associated with this shamelessness before God, but also seems to serve as a condition of possibility for it. This is a point to which we will return later.

However, in the *Vita Sanctae Macrinae*, a good deal of the narrative revolves around the business of Gregory's attempts to clothe and cover his sister's body. The *VSM* is thought to have been written shortly after 380, the year in which Macrina died, and it contains a short summary of her early life in her family house and a longer narrative detailing Gregory's last conversations with his sister in the community of female ascetics she led, her death, and her burial. Early in the biography of his sister, Gregory impresses upon readers the fact of Macrina's beauty:

> Then [when Macrina was twelve] it is worth marveling how the beauty of the young woman (though it had not been hidden) did not escape notice. Nor did there seem to be anything so marvelous in that entire country as to compare to that beauty and shapeliness (εὐμορφίας) so that the hands of

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[70] Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginitate* § 12; PG 46, 373C

> painters could not approach its perfection but the entire mechanical art that dares the greatest of things, even to mint likenesses of the planets through imitation, was not competent to imitate accurately the excellence of her form (μορφῆς).[71]

Gregory here uses much of the same vocabulary and tropes that will be familiar to us from his description of the *imago Dei* in human persons, as well as the visibility of divinity in the Incarnate Logos. Macrina's beauty had not previously been "hidden" but now it no longer "escapes notice." Gregory speaks not simply of her beauty, but specifically of her form (*morphê*), a word with philosophical resonance.[72] As the LORD creates humanity in the *imago Dei* – which image serves as a formal cause of humanity's existence as well as for a likeness of divinity in the material realm -- so too does the perfection of Macrina's form inspire attempts to create artifactual likenesses through imitation.

However, at this point in Macrina's life, the effect of her beauty is to attract worldly – especially sexual – admirers. Gregory tells us that "a great throng of suitors for her hand in marriage surrounded her parents."[73] The young Macrina is betrothed to one of these, but he dies before the marriage can take place. Thereafter, she accounts herself as married to him and vows to live the remainder of her life as a virgin.

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[71] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae;* PG 46, 964B

[72] In Aristotelian hylomorphism, the form (*morphê*) gives shape to matter, both of these being classed as causes (formal and material, respectively) of the entity in question. In considering the human person, Aristotle says that the soul is to the body as form is to matter in the case of other beings; see *De anima* 412-414. Plotinus, seeing parallels between Aristotle's hylomorphic and the Platonic Theory of the Forms draws a parallel between a Form (*idea* or *eidos* in Greek) existing on the spiritual plane and the form (*morphê*) that gives shape to material entities in the world, particularly in his aesthetics; see, for example, *Enneads* vi. 4.12, 11.

[73] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae*, PG 46, 964B. To what extent these suitors were motivated by sexual desire for the (possibly still pre-pubescent) twelve-year-old Macrina is debatable. Certainly, it is possible that, given the young age of upper-class brides during this period, standards of beauty and sexual attraction were indexed to the looks of legally nubile but still sexually immature girls. At the same time, it is also quite possible that present sexual desire responsive to her physical beauty was less a motivator for

Nyssen's description of the feminine beauty of the young Macrina stands in stark contrast to the austerity of her bodily practices in the ascetic community where he visits his sister. When Gregory first enters her room, Macrina is reclining "not upon a couch or a mattress, but on the floor, on a board covered in a sack, yet another board supporting her head."[74] She is, at this point, already quite ill, and Gregory goes on to compare his dying sister to Job, who "was wasting away from the putrefaction of purulent wounds over his whole body."[75] While it does not seem as if Macrina was suffering from suppurating wounds or disfiguring ailments (Gregory describes her as having a fever, weakness, and laboured breathing), the comparison to Job stands in sharp relief to the previous descriptions of Macrina's shapeliness and beauty.

Nonetheless, Macrina is marked by a wound. After she has breathed her last and the body is bathed, Gregory says:

> Then it was time to cover the clean body with clothing, and the command of that great one made it necessary that I perform this ministration. She who was present at the work and sharing in this great assignment with us said, "Do not pass over unexamined [ἀνιστόρητον] the greatness of the wonders established by that Holy One." – "What is that?" I said. And she

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Macrina's suitors than the desirability of making a connection by marriage to her affluent and well-respected family.

[74] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae*, PG 46, 976D.

[75] *Ibid.*, PG 46, 977B.

> laid bare a part of the chest [τοῦ στήθους] and said, "Do you see that thin and unnoticeable mark [σημεῖον] under the neck?" It was like the mark [στίγματι] made by a thin needle.[76]

It is then related that Macrina had once had a tumor in that spot, and there seemed a danger that it would grow and the illness spread to the point of being irremediable if it were not removed. Gregory and Macrina's mother had at that time urged her daughter to "accept the care of the doctor."[77] Whether a doctor had been consulted in the original diagnosis or whether the women had considered the tumor and determined the likelihood of metastasis for themselves is not clear. In any case, one of the ascetics relates to Gregory that Macrina refused treatment on the grounds that "[s]he judged that to lay bare part of her body to the eyes of others was more grievous than the suffering [sc. of the disease]."[78] Her solution was to pray, weep, and to use the mud made from her tears falling upon the ground as a poultice. In the event, this does not seem to work and her mother again urges her to consult a physician. At this point, Gregory is told, Macrina told her mother that

> … it would suffice as a therapy for the illness if her mother would make the holy seal [or "sign" – σφραγίς – almost certainly the sign of the cross] with her own hand in the place. So her mother put her hand inside the fold of her garment to sign that part; the sign worked; the illness was no more. "But this" she said, "is the sign [σημεῖον] in brief, and was then seen instead of the frightful wound and remained until the end so as to be, I suppose, a

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[76] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae*; PG 46, 977B.
[77] *Ibid*., PG 46, 992A.
[78] *Ibid*., PG 46, 992B.

> memorial of divine oversight [ἐπισκέψεως] as a prompt and reason for unceasing thanksgiving to God."[79]

There is much at play in this brief account. First, the account assumes that the wound must at some point have been displayed to others if only to the extent necessary to prompt the concern of Macrina's mother for her daughter's health. Crucial to the narrative of the healing, however, is Macrina's refusal to expose her body to the eyes of others, as would be necessary in order to receive medical treatment.

We might be tempted to read this as a sexual modesty appropriate to one who has taken a vow of virginity, given the location of the tumor and the fact that physicians were exclusively male in this time. Certainly, a number of translations support and reinforce such a reading by locating the mark on Macrina's "breast,"[80] but the text itself militates against it. The word used of the part of the body in question is not "breast" (μαστός) but the gender-neutral term "chest" (στῆθος). Moreover, according to the account, it was not that Macrina was loath to expose *that particular* part of the body (μέρος τοῦτο) but *any* part of the body (τι τοῦ σώματος) and to expose it not simply to the eyes of men (ὀφθαλμοῖς ἀνδρῶν) but to others' eyes, or even "to foreign eyes" (ὀφθαλμοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις). In fact, even when her mother lends a hand to the healing, Macrina still does not uncover her body: her mother places her hand inside the fold of her garment to make the sign of the cross.

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[79] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae,* PG 46, 992B-C.

[80] See, e.g., the translation of Virginia Woods Callahan for the *Fathers of the Church* series, *St. Gregory, Ascetical Works*, p. 185.

Nevertheless, it is clear that there is some later point at and after which Macrina permits her body (or, at least, the part which bears the scar) to be displayed. The unnamed woman knows where to find this scar and so we should presume that she has seen it before. In addition, Nyssen's text gives no indication that this woman sees a contradiction between her act of showing the scar to Gregory and Macrina's previous refusal to expose her body for the sake of seeking treatment; she does not consider that it might be against Macrina's wishes.[81]

Within the logic of the text, therefore, Macrina's reluctance to display her body is not a permanent or unconditioned refusal. Rather, the "mark" [στίγμα] becomes a "sign" [σημεῖον] that, as we and Gregory are told, "*was seen* instead of the frightful wound" and exercises its significatory function precisely by virtue of its being the object of a gaze. Moreover, what the scar signifies is that Macrina's body *was* the object of a gaze -- that of the LORD; it is a "memorial of divine ἐπισκέψις." This word may be translated roughly as "care" or "attention" but it derives from σκόπεω ("to look, peer, or gaze at") and is rendered more literally as "oversight" or even "being looked upon." And so now the ascetics seem to feel that it is appropriate for other human persons to look at Macrina's body, because it bears the mark of having been the object of the LORD's gaze. And, so, they enjoin Gregory not to allow it to pass "unexamined" (ἀνιστόρητον) – a word that derived from the root *ιδ- ("to see") and means, literally, "not eye-witnessed."

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[81] It is not the case that Macrina's wishes are taken generally as having no bearing upon the action of the living now that she is deceased, as other incidents in the narrative (Gregory's eagerness to find someone who knows Macrina's wishes, his mention of "what Macrina would want" to the mourning virgins, &c.) indicate.

It is striking that Gregory is permitted to see Macrina's unclothed body – not only in his viewing of the scar, but in his presence at the washing and final dressing of his sister in funerary clothing. In the classical and late antique world (at least within families of upper classes), duties concerned with mourning and the practical preparation of bodies for cremation or interment were exclusively the province of women. One might assume, moreover, that a group of female ascetics in the habit of keeping their bodies hidden from male gazes would continue this practice even with one of their deceased. In the event, however, it is Gregory who seems most interested in clothing his sister's body, and there is a fair bit of discussion amongst him and the virgins on this score.

Nyssen's first inclination is to get his sister a bit "gussied up" for her final repose. He tells one of the ascetics, "Now, at least, it ought not be begrudged if we put more shining adornment [κόσμον] on the body and adorn that pure and unsullied flesh with radiant linens."[82] But Gregory is hard-pressed to find something on hand for Macrina to wear to her funeral and asks if he might be allowed to rummage through the closets. One of Macrina's fellow virgins then delivers the following impromptu sermon about sartorial renunciation:

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[82] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae* PG 46, 988D.

> "What 'closets'?" she said. "You have in your hands all her stores: her mantle, the veil for her head, the worn sandals for her feet. This is her wealth. This is her substance. There is nothing in addition to what is apparent laid up in some hidden place, secured in chests or rooms. She knew there was one repository for her wealth: the treasury in heaven. Everything is stored there; nothing is left on earth."[83]

Macrina has only one outfit – to live in, die in, and be buried in. These material "clothes" are moreover elided into a spiritual meaning in the deaconess Lampadia's telling: "The adornment (κόσμος) the holy one desired was a pure life: this was the beautification (ἐγκαλλώπισμα) of her life and the shroud of her death. This is how little she focused on any beautification (ἐγκαλλωπισμὸν) of the body."[84] We should note here the echoes of Gregory's description of the young Macrina. She was physically beautiful, but purity of life was her "beautification;" her bodily form (*morphê*) was shapely, but the ascetic life was the *kosmos* she desired.

The word *kosmos* here is significant in that it names both ornaments or adornments (whence "cosmetics") as well as ordering and, within Christian discourse, particularly the ordering of creation (whence "cosmic.") As noted, Gregory has a Platonic understanding of the soul as tripartite; the soul's form simply is the proper ordering of its faculties. More than this, Nyssen adopts for Christian use a quasi-Neoplatonic concept of *theôria*, which is most often rendered "contemplation" but is perhaps better translated as "gazing," given that it is cognate with *theomai* ("see.") It is the fixed gaze of the soul upon the LORD – and not upon material or sensual created goods -- that maintains the soul's created order and, hence, its form and participation in being. The challenge Gregory and the ascetics face in dressing Macrina is how to reflect her psychic *kosmos* in material visibility.

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[83] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae*, PG 46, 989A-B.
[84] *Ibid.*, PG 46, 989A.

Gregory is to be allowed a measure of authority over the preparation of the body, but only by virtue of his intimate involvement with the task. As Lampadia says, Macrina respected his priesthood and, "because of their kinship (διὰ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς φύσεως) did not consider what belonged to her brother 'foreign' (ἀλλότριον). Because of this, she commanded that her body be adorned (or "dressed," κοσμηθῆναι) even by your hands."[85] It is worth noting the idiosyncratic circumlocution for "kinship" in the text, which is literally "commonality of nature."[86] The standard word in Greek for "family-relationship" is συγγενεία, which emphasizes the particular role of shared genealogy (circumstances of generation and birth) in constituting "kin," not a shared φύσις ("nature," in the sense of a subsisting essence that can be characterized and categorized, e.g., "human nature.") Is it, then, because Gregory is Macrina's biological sibling that he is permitted to dress his sister for burial? Or is the sharing of some other nature – not their descent from the same parents -- the grounds of this kinship and the relations of bodily display and viewing that it entails? The rest of the text strongly indicates the latter.

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[85] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae;* PG 46, 989B.

[86] I cannot attest that the use of the phrase with such a meaning is without parallel or precedent in all of Greek literature, but if it is not a hapax it is at least very rare.

After a bit of negotiation, Gregory finally gets his wish and the corpse is dressed in "linens" (ὀθόνοις).[87] But at the last minute, Lampadia objects:

> The deaconess said that it was not fitting for her to appear in bridal array before the eyes of the virgins. "But I have," she said, "a dark cloak of your mother's set aside; I say it would be good to put that on top so that her holy beauty may not shine forth by a foreign adornment (ἐπεισάκτῳ … κόσμῳ) through clothing." That decision prevailed and the cloak was put on. [88]

The process of discerning whether or not this particular costume "fits" or "belongs to" Macrina has been a long one. At first, the garment seemed foreign because she didn't own any such clothing herself. Then it is decided that it is not, after all, "foreign" (ἀλλότριον) to Macrina because the dress belongs to Gregory (!), and the two siblings are to be construed as the same and not "other" than one another because of their shared (not congenital) nature.

Here we would do well to recall the similar concern regarding Macrina's tumor – *viz.*, that it not be exposed to "foreign" or "otherly eyes" (ὀφθαλμοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις.) The eyes of all, including one related to Macrina by biological kinship (i.e. her mother), were deemed "foreign" and not permitted to see the tumor. But the healing transformation of the tumor under the gaze and caring attention (*episkepsis*) of the LORD into a sign rendered it appropriately visible to Gregory and to the female ascetics. Therefore, it is not the dyadic relation of consanguinity between the viewed and the viewer (biological kinship) that provides sufficient grounds for bodily *parrhêsia*; rather, it is a triangulated relationship between those two and the LORD. That is, the LORD's gaze upon the body of the Christian (adopted in Christ) becomes a sign that renders the body fit to viewed by others belonging to the LORD's family. The medium of filiation to the LORD, moreover, is not blood or birth but *physis* – human nature that has been ontologically restored to its original beauty – its form (*morphê*) and order (*kosmos*) -- by contemplation and ascetic discipline. So, too, in the matter of the clothing of Macrina's corpse, the commonality of nature between Nyssen and his sister is closely associated with his priesthood.

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[87] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae*, PG 46, 989B; see his express wish to dress her in "radiant linens" (λαμπραῖς ὀθόναις) at PG 46, 988D.
[88] *Ibid*., PG 46, 992C.

Then there is a concern about the bridal style of the dress. It is not argued that Macrina simply should not be arrayed as a bride. She is already so dressed, and the nuptial attire is not removed. We should recall also that Macrina accounted herself to be pledged to her deceased fiancé, whom she maintained was not dead but living with the LORD in the hope of the resurrection. On that basis, it might well seem quite fitting for Macrina's body to be dressed in bridal attire as she went off to join her husband. But instead, the argument is that Macrina ought not appear as a bride *before the eyes of the virgins*. While the text does not explicitly give the reasons why this should be a problem, it is clear throughout that an adornment of Macrina's body that is associated with physical procreation and the social ties of the secular order would not manifest visibly and materially the *kosmos* of her soul to others who have undertaken the same ascetic renunciations that she had done.

In the end, it is decided that the apparel does not suit Macrina primarily because it *is clothing*. It is not her own beauty but something "put on" -- an import, an adornment brought in from outside (ἐπεισάκτῳ κόσμῳ.) Instead of wearing only the linen garments that belonged to Gregory, Macrina is further dressed in the "dusky cloak" that belonged to her mother. But Nyssen writes that, "even in the dusky [mantle], she shone and the divine power added such grace to the body that, just as in the vision of my dream, rays of light seemed to shine forth brightly from her beauty."[89] Paradoxically, the additional layer of (less attractive) clothing is added not in order to conceal but rather to reveal Macrina's soulish beauty. This is, of course, precisely the paradox employed in Gregory's description of how the concealment of the Logos in (material and unattractive) human flesh through the Incarnation served not to obscure but rather to manifest the philanthropic beauty of the divine nature.

But if, as noted at the beginning of this section, Gregory identifies the true *parrhêsia* of the perfected Christian with nakedness, then why is it necessary that Macrina be clothed for burial at all? After all, she is quite an advanced ascetic. She is the acknowledged leader of the community of female ascetics, and Gregory proclaims her his own moral and spiritual superior and advisor. Finally, Macrina herself (albeit humbly) expresses rather high hopes for the acceptable *parrhêsia* of her soul before the LORD with her last words: “And may I be found face-to-face with you in putting off my body, having no fault in the form (μορφῆς) of my soul. But blameless and spotless may my soul be received into your hands as an offering before your face.”[90]

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[89] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae;* PG 46, 992C-D.

The problem is that, although there may well be no cause for shame in Macrina’s soul (which has departed to be with the LORD) and despite all her ascetic efforts here on earth, there nevertheless remains something shameful about her corpse that prevents its shameless exposure to view: the fact that it *is* a corpse. As mentioned before, the relational disorders and ontological deficits of the human person caused by sin are not the only obstacles to *parrhêsia pros ton Theon*. Also impeding shameless self-disclosure is the inferiority of even sinless human nature (insofar as it is *human* nature) to the divine. Further investigation of the nature of the corporeal shame of the dead human body sheds light on how Gregory thinks this inferiority of nature is overcome. To put it another way, Gregory’s meditation on the shamefulness of the human corpse illuminates his understanding of the *physical* (i.e. *physis*-related) divinization of human persons that allows for their physical (rather than verbal) *parrhêsia pros ton Theon*.

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[90] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae;* PG 46, 985A.

### 4.2.3. Uncovering the Nakedness of Parents

When Gregory takes Macrina's body to be buried in the family tomb which held the corpses of their long-dead parents, he is overcome by an attack of scruples:

> . . . [T]he fear of the divine command not to uncover the shamelessness of father and mother came upon me. 'How,' I said, 'shall I ward off such a judgment if I look upon the common shame of human nature in the bodies of our parents, since they have surely fallen apart and disintegrated and been changed into a disgusting and disagreeable formlessness? As I was considering this, and Noe's anger against his son was rousing fear in me, the story of Noe indicated what ought to be done. . . .[91]

The "divine command" is clearly to be identified with the injunctions of Leviticus 18:7 not to uncover the nakedness of one's father and mother. The word which Callahan has translated "shamelessness" and "shame" is the Greek ἀσχημοσύνη, which is the same word which appears in Leviticus 18 in the LXX. More literal translations of the Bible into English render the Hebrew עֶרְוַת as "nakedness," but it is well known that in Hebrew גַלֵה עֶרְוַת ("to uncover the nakedness") is a frequent idiom for engaging in sexual relations.[92] However, the Greek word means "lack of σχῆμα," that is to say, dishabille, lack of appropriate dress, demeanor, form, or constitution. Certainly, a decayed body (clothed or not) lacks appropriate form and constitution, so it might seem that Gregory has simply forgotten the sexual context of the verse and is reading ἀσχημοσύνη quite literally.

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[91] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae*, PG 44.995A. The translation given here is that of Virginia Woods Callahan, *St. Gregory: Ascetical Works*. Fathers of the Church Series. (Catholic University of America Press: Washington, D.C. 1967), 188.

[92] Accordingly, more "accessible" translations of the Bible like the NIV, the Message, the CEV, and the NLT render the prohibitions in Leviticus 18 as "do not have sexual relations with" or "do not have sex with…"

And yet, Gregory explicitly connects the Levitical prohibition with the story of Noah in Genesis 9, where the word used of Noah's nakedness is not ἀσχημοσύνη, but γύμνωσις. This latter word may not have an inherent sexual connotation, but it refers more precisely than ἀσχημοσύνη to the lack of clothing of a physical body. Furthermore, the one other place in Gregory's corpus where he refers to Lev. 18:7, in his *Orationes de beatitudinibus*, the sexual element is very much present. He writes:

> What, then, is man? Do you want me to say something reverend and rather noble? Rather, the one who glorifies our state and decks out human noble birth as something to be boasted of must trace the genealogy of our nature from clay. . . If you want to speak about the continuity and connection of our birth, then – quit it! Don't say anything about that! Do not even mumble it! Do not uncover, as the commandment says, the nakedness (ἀσχημοσύνην) of your father and mother![93]

Here again, Nyssen does not construe the Hebrew idiom as a prohibition against incest, but extends the meaning to forbid too much scrutiny and regard of the act by which human beings are procreated. What is striking about this second passage is that Nyssen immediately proceeds to mention the viewing of decomposing bodies (as in the *Vita Sanctae Macrinae*) as another antidote to human pride:

Haven't you seen the mysteries of our nature in a common burial ground?

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[93] Gregory of Nyssa, *De Beatitudinibus*, Or. 1; PG 44, 1204 A.

> Haven't you seen the heaps of bones on top of each other? The skulls denuded of flesh, frightful and hideous to see with their eye sockets empty? Haven't you seen their grinning mouths and the remains of their limbs stretched out haphazardly? If you have seen these things, you have in them viewed yourself.[94]

For Gregory, it would seem, the contemplation of our sexual generation and the observation of rotting corpses lie along a continuum of meaning, bearing what we might call a "family resemblance" to one another. On the most basic level, the structural similarity between the two seems to consist in the fact that both actions are essentially a viewing (either a literal seeing with the eyes or a figurative mental viewing by contemplation) of some aspect of the bodies of progenitors and that this viewing causes or elicits shame, inhibiting *parrhêsia*. The pertinent questions which now arise, therefore, are as follows. First, how does shame operate in both these cases? Where is shame located? Who incurs the shame, the child who "views" or the parent who is viewed? Secondly, what is the relation between bodily decomposition and procreation which permits both to be spoken of by Nyssen as the parent's "nakedness"?

To answer these questions, we should return our attention to the passage from *De virginitate* in which Nyssen writes of the nakedness of our ultimate parents, Adam and Eve, in paradise:

> . . . Let us become that which the first-formed was in the first part of his life. What was he? – Naked (γυμνός) of this covering of skins and looking upon the face of God without shame (ἐν παρρησίᾳ), not yet judging the good

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[94] Gregory of Nyssa, *De Beatitudinibus*, Or. 1; PG 44, 1204 C-D.

> according to taste and sight, but only luxuriating in the Lord and for this end making use of the helpmate given him, just as the divine Scripture indicates [when it says] that he did not know her before they were debarred from paradise nor before she was sentenced to childbirth for the sin which she committed after being deceived. . . What was the sequence? -- Pleasure was engendered through deception and initiated the Fall. Next, shame and fear followed on the passion of pleasure, and then they no longer dared to be in the eyes of the Creator, but hid themselves under leaves and shadows; after this, they hid themselves in dead skins (δέρμασι νεκροῖς.) And thus they were sent as exiles to this sick and laborious region in which marriage was devised as a consolation for [or distraction from; παραμυθία] death.[95]

Why then are Adam and Eve shameless (ἐν παρρησίᾳ) in their nakedness before God? It would seem to be stating the obvious to say that their nudity is not prohibited by the Levitical injunction because neither is the parent of the other. But this is rather the point. There are no parents in paradise because, in Gregory's view, sexual generation arises only as a result of the Fall.[96] The shameful element of uncovering the nakedness of parents does not lie merely in the fact of nudity *per se*, but in the condition of the body being bared. We may thus clarify a crucial distinction between simple nudity (γύμνωσις) and shameful nakedness (ἀσχημοσύνη): the former is simply a transparence or manifest quality of the body, in whatever state it may be; the second, however, implies the disclosure of the post-lapsarian body which has lost its original σχῆμα. Therefore, no shame attaches to pre-lapsarian Edenic nudity because the body is not in a state which would make one reticent to be viewed.

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[95] Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginitate* § 12; PG 46, 373C-376 A.

[96] John Behr argues that the "angelic" mode of procreation which Nyssen identifies as God's intention for created humanity was both rational and sexual (John Behr, "The Rational Animal: A Rereading of Gregory of Nyssa's *De hominis opificio*." *JECS* 7:2 (1999) 219-47, especially 235. Warren Smith's reading of Nyssen as holding that prelapsarian and post-resurrection humanity do not engage in sexual intercourse is more congruent with the sense of Nyssen's corpus. See J. Warren Smith, "The Body of Paradise and the Body of the Resurrection: Gender and the Angelic Life in Gregory of Nyssa's *De hominis opificio*."*HTR* 92.2 (2006) 207-28, especially 218. Cf. *De Hominis Opificio* §§ 17.4 and 22.5 on the providential nature and eventual cessation of sexual procreation and see also Morwenna Ludlow, "Gregory of Nyssa and the Body: Do Recent Readings Ignore a Development in His Thought?" *Studia Patristica* 41 (2006), 369-74, especially 370-1.

After the Fall, however, the original *imago Dei* in which humanity was created has been altered or obscured so as to be no longer visible. As Nyssen writes, interpreting the parable of the lost coin:

> Then it is necessary to search for the lost drachma in your own house, that is, in yourself. Through [the example of] the drachma that is searched for he refers obliquely to the image of the king, which is not completely lost but is *hidden beneath filth*. It is necessary to understand this 'filth', I think, as the *defilement of the flesh* . . . Therefore, if this is the concern for the finding of what is sought, that is, the restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) of the image, *which is now covered with the filth of the flesh,* to its original state, let us become that which the first-formed was in the first part of his life. [97] (emphasis mine)

Nyssen is contrasting the visibility (or shameless nudity) of the *imago Dei* in humanity with its "covering." Adam is described as being "naked of this covering of skins," which we are told he acquired after sinning. Use of the demonstrative "this" indicates that Gregory believes the "covering of skins" a present reality for all human persons – the descendents of Adam. In the explication of the parable of the lost drachma, Nyssen equates the "covering of skins" with the "defilement" or "filth of the flesh."

There was heated theological debate in antiquity over what Christians should take these "coverings of skins" or the "filth of the flesh" to be. The LXX rendering of Gen. 3:21 has “skin tunics” (χιτῶνες δερμάτινοι), which Origen had taken to be material bodies themselves.[98] This would accord with what seems to have been Origen’s view on the original creation of humans not as persons (i.e. unions of soul and body) but simply as non-material spirits. Turning away from contemplation of the LORD and their fiery spiritual desire for the divine, these spirits grew cold and became “souls” (Origen here connects “soul,” ψυχή, with “grow cold,” ψύχεσθαι.)[99] This process of cooling entailed a sort of “congealment” and densification, which caused the souls to become heavy and “fall” from the spiritual realms into the material.

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[97] Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginitate*, § 12, PG 46, 373 A-C.

But Origen soon came to be seen within “mainstream” Christianity as too speculative for his own good, and perhaps even “heterodox.” A deep concern in the first few centuries of Christianity was to distinguish orthodox beliefs from Marcionite and a variety of gnostic doctrines that had in common a somewhat Platonic view of creation that ascribed the existence of material entities to the work of an “artificer” or “demiurge” who arranged pre-existing matter rather than to a creative act performed by the God who is spirit.[100] So it was that Methodius of

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[98] At least, according to Theodoret, *Quaest. in Gen*. 39.

[99] Origen, *Peri Archon* 2.6.5

[100] See Plato’s *Timaeus* for the paradigmatic instance of this. The difficulties of accommodating this view within Christianity were legion. This theory of demiurgic creation stands in tension with the Genesis account of the LORD’s creation of the earth; Marcion’s answer, one will recall, was simply to claim that this “God” of the Old Testament was not the “God” referred to in the New. Certainly, the suggestion of two quasi-divine beings is problematic, from a Christian standpoint, and typically leads to a sort of “cosmic dualism” of the sort witnessed in Zoroastrianism or Manichaeism. Even more difficult is accounting for the existence of the matter out of which the not-God demiurge forms material beings. From this perspective, Origen’s speculations on the fall of spirits are highly creative in that they give an account of how

Olympus (who lived from 250-311, A.D.) objected to what he took to be Origen's denigration of material creation as such and instead interpreted the "skin tunics" of Gen. 3:21 to be the mortality of the (fallen) human body, not the material body itself as concomitant or constitutive of the fall.[101]

It is not entirely clear where Gregory of Nyssa stood on this debate. As we have already seen regarding the question of universal salvation and "sympathy for the devil," he certainly was influenced by Origen's thinking, not least via Gregory Thaumaturgus, the missionary who converted Cappadocia. Jean Daniélou argues that Nyssen took the "skin tunics" to be not the material body itself but the fallen lower drives of the soul (*viz*., its appetitive and spirited faculties) when these have fallen towards the material and sensual, giving rise to both mortality and the passions.[102] But this view is difficult to maintain in light of the sequence of events Gregory narrates in D*e virginitate* – and Gregory is particularly interested in the *sequence*. The first event is Adam's deception, which consists in his turning away from contemplation of the LORD and "judging the good according to taste and sight" -- taking what is originarily *nihil* (the material and sensible) to be a source of criteria for adjudicating goodness. The passion of pleasure follows from deception,

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materiality was not itself the LORD's creation but was a possibility inherent in the LORD's non-material creation. Most theologians today, of course, do not have the same reflexes as Early Christians regarding materiality; we tend not to see it as clearly or inherently inferior to non-material reality and, accordingly, not to see a need to explain how or why a perfect LORD would or could have brought such a shabby thing into being in the first place.

[101] Methodius, *De resurrectione* 1.38.

[102] Jean Daniélou, *Platonisme et théolgie mystique, Essai sur la doctrine spirituelle de S. Grégoire de Nysse*. (Paris, 1944); see especially 60ff.

and this seems, for Gregory, to issue in the Fall. Presumably, the "Fall" itself is not merely the temptation – a "turning away" towards or brief distraction by inferior criteria -- but the acts of disobedience produced by the use those inferior criteria (i.e. judging that the forbidden fruit was pleasant to look at, good to eat, and useful for the getting of wisdom and, therefore, actually taking a bite.) It is only after deception, pleasure, and fall that "fear and shame" arise and prompt a human search for a "covering." And the "skin tunics" are the second covering that fallen humanity adopts, after a brief use of "leaves and shadows."

This two-stage "covering" process that Nyssen describes closely parallels Origen's description of a two-stage ontological transformation of spirits into embodied souls. In the first stage, Origen speculates that the bodies souls initially acquired were comprised of a fine, fiery, and ethereal material, but further spiritual lapse altered soul's bodies into the heavier and coarser ones we currently have. What is particularly interesting is that Gregory does not use the Scriptural "skin tunics" (χιτῶνες δερμάτινοι) but instead refers to these second-stage coverings as "dead skins" (δέρμασι νεκροῖς). This would seem to indicate that Gregory takes mortality to be inherent to the sorts of bodies that humans now have. That is to say, it is not the case that *these* bodies could be anything but mortal. What is visibly manifest in our bodies, then, is the fact that we are death-bound. In Nyssen's account, the use of these "dead skins" is portrayed as causally or logically related to the "exile" of human persons to the realm of mortality. Marriage and sexual procreation, in turn, seem to be invented in response to the problem of death and are therefore intimately connected with mortality.

To return to Nyssen's treatment of Leviticus 18:7, then, we can discover how shame is produced by the uncovering of parental ἀσχημοσύνη. In the *Orationes de beatitudinibus*, it is the contemplation of one's physical generation that amounts to uncovering the ἀσχημοσύνη of one's parents because this speculation is essentially a meditation on the fallen state of one's progenitors. Nyssen clearly views the fact that human beings were sexually procreated as an antidote to the pride that is often taken in one's noble birth or lineage (εὐγενεία). An appropriate shame (rather than pride) in this instance accrues to the child, the one doing the "uncovering" because one has not been "well born" but is materially and sexually generated as a result of human sin. And yet, this shame is incurred through generation and is, in no uncertain terms, an inherited shame. Therefore, it is primarily the shame of the parents, for it is in death that our bodies demonstrate incontrovertibly that we are not as we were created to be.[103] The decomposition of the corpse is the most visible display of the loss of our original σχῆμα, that is, of our original ordered being.

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[103] A too facile reading of Gregory would argue against this attribution of shame to the parents through the bodies from which their souls have been separated in death. It might seem impossible that the parents, as subjects or individuals, can be identified or affected by their material corpses when Nyssen makes so strong a case for the necessity of the soul's purgation from affinity with the physical body; see *De anima et resurrectione*, PG 46, 100A-C. And yet, the body and soul clearly do retain some association after death in Gregory's anthropology. This residual identity of the material body is key for Nyssen's understanding of the logistics of the bodily resurrection. The soul must retrieve the very same material which made up its body during life in order for the resurrected person to be reckoned the same as that which had died, cf. *De Anima et Resurrectione*, PG 46, 76C. This necessity of this continuity of identity between the dead and the resurrected body is discussed by John L. Drury, "Gregory of Nyssa's Dialogue with Macrina: The Compatibility of Resurrection of the Body and Immortality of the Soul." *Theology Today* 62 (2005) 210-22, esp. 218. Gregory takes the soul to have in some sense "marked" or "imprinted" the material of its body so as to be able to find it again after the dissolution of the soul-body union in death. On this, see *De anima*

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*et resurrectione*, PG 46, 76A-B. Gregory's understanding of the soul's "imprinting" of the material body and its presence to the decomposing corpse have been noted by Brian E. Daley, S.J. in both "'The Human Form Divine': Christ's Risen Body and Ours According to Gregory of Nyssa," *Studia Patris*tica 41 (2006) 301-18 (and especially 308) and *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 87. See also Drury, 212 and 216. Nyssen elaborates upon this presence of the soul to the material body after dissolution in the voice of Macrina in the *De anima et resurrectione* as follows:

> For just as the concurrence of the elements of the body makes up its substance, so it is probable that the nature (φύσις) of the members in the body is comprised from the same cause. If, therefore, the soul is present to the elements from the body when they are mixed again with the whole, it will not only recognize the full number of those [elements] which have run together into the whole mix and be in them, but it will also not fail to recognize the individual composition of each of the parts through which sorts of parts among the elements the members in us are produced. Therefore, its [sc. the soul's] being in the whole entirety of the elements and also in the elements individually is not beyond reason. And if someone thus considers the elements which by some power comprise the members of the body and supposes that the Scripture says that the finger, the eye, the tongue, and all the other parts are associated with the soul after the dissolution of the composite, he will not be off the mark. (PG 46 84D-85A; cf. *De Hominis Opficio* 27.2-3.)

Therefore, the body after death can still incur shame because the dissolved elements can still in some sense be identified with the individual and the soul remains present to the material, even after its complete loss of recognizable human form. Also, it becomes clear that the resurrection of the body functions in part to preserve the individual from the shame that might accrue through his or her fallen and corrupted corporeal parts. One should keep in mind here that much of what Nyssen says (through the voice of Macrina) about the body in *De anima et resurrectione* presents current physical functions as *provisional* – spiritually beneficial possibilities that inhere in the human body but which are only "activated" after the Fall, being unnecessary both in Eden and in the resurrection. In considering the promise of I Cor. 15:28 that in the eschaton God will be "all in all, Gregory writes:

> If the account is true (and certainly it *is* true) that does not assign participation in marriage to the ife after the resurrection, nor the sustenance of life by means of food and drink, what will be the use of those parts of the body when we no longer expect in that life those things on account of which these parts exist? . . . When these [activities] do not exist, how or for what will those [parts] exist which came into being for these [activities], as is necessary, if bodies which are superfluous with regards to that life are going to be raised and if nothing of the things which are now fulfilled by the body will exist (for life consists in other things) -- even if one would no longer call this sort of thing a resurrection if the individual parts, because of their uselessness for that life, were not raised with the body? (*De Anima et Resurrectione*; PG 46 144D-145A.)

*De Hominis Opificio* 18.9 where Gregory asserts that there will be no need for digestive function in the eschaton.

But it is also simultaneously the shame of the child witnessing the effects of sin in his parents' bodies, insofar as he has himself inherited this corrupted nature and liability to death and dissolution. The very existence of human parent-child relations (that we have parents and are the products of sexual procreation) indicates that we are death-bound and, so, ontologically inferior to the LORD. The exposure to view of our deceased and decomposing parents only serves to make our own mortal inferiority more visible and manifest.

Overcoming the ontological inferiority of humans vis-à-vis the LORD and so being able to engage in shamelessly parrhêsiastic disclosure of the self *pros ton Theon* therefore requires a complete overhaul of human *physis*, specifically of the physical body and of familial relations. That is, the divinization of the human person (and, so, the visibility of the *imago Dei* in her) requires not only the restoration of moral likeness to the divine through ascetic practices humans undertake to sever their desires and reasoning (faculties of the soul) from the passions and criteria that belong to the material and sensible realm. Gregory, in Neoplatonic fashion, does take these psychic reorderings to be visibly reflected in the *kosmos*, form (*morphê*), and hence the beauty of the physical body. This material reflection of the human person's moral and spiritual likeness to the LORD is a token of her spiritual filiation, in comparison to which inter-human relations of biological kinship resulting from sexual generation are considered to be of lesser significance and reality.

While the *parrhêsia* of an ascetically purified body is spiritually useful for seducing human viewers back to the contemplation of the LORD's beauty and to ascetical practices, this display is paradoxically accomplished by additional "cloaking" of the body rather than by its uncovering. *Parrhêsia* before the LORD, by contrast, requires more than the human person himself can accomplish and a more intense visibility than the material realm can accommodate. It can be accomplished by a soul that has been purified and separated from the physical body by death. But in the case of a full human person (one comprised of body and soul), this *parrhêsia* cannot be made possible by any actions of or upon the soul. Rather, it can be accomplished only by the LORD's action in the eschatological resurrection to "denude" the human body of its very materiality and transform it into a "spiritual body" more akin to the God who is spirit, thus removing all the grounds for shame in the face of the LORD. This is how Gregory of Nyssa interprets St. Paul's account of the resurrection body in 2 Cor. 5:1-5:

> For just as if one has on a ragged tunic and is denuded (γυμνωθείη) of his covering, he no longer would see the "nakedness" (ἀσχημοσύνην) of what he has cast off on himself, so also we, when we have taken off this dead and unsightly tunic made of the irrational skins we've put on. . . , will cast off all the things of the irrational skin from ourselves in taking off this tunic.[104]

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[104] *De Anima et Resurrectione*, PG 46, 148c.

## 4.3 Conclusions

As we have seen in this chapter, the shameless self-disclosure of the Christian towards the LORD is, for the Cappadocians, a far-off and hard-won reward. Moreover, Basil and the Gregories present this Christian *parrhêsia* as being made possible only by particular actions taken by the LORD at certain points within the temporal economy of salvation. Foucault, by contrast, claims that the patristic Greek Christian tradition presents *parrhêsia* towards the LORD as being continually possible and universally available, a lively option for human persons throughout salvation history and the faith-journey of the individual Christian. As he presents it, the conditions for *parrhêsia pros ton Theon* come down to the human person's belief that engaging in shameless truth-telling towards the LORD is a perfectly fine thing for him to do.[105] For Foucault, this belief consists in the human person's assurance of the inherent acceptability of the self he discloses to God and his lack of "fear of the LORD" – i.e., the possibility that the LORD might object to or reject that self, and perhaps then punish the human person for his lack of shame and deference.

Absent in Foucault's writings about Christian discourses of *parrhêsia* is any hint that the Greek Fathers might have acknowledged and sought to reckon with the possibility that there might exist either discrepancies between human and divine criteria of judgment or any shortcoming on the part of the human person relative to those divine criteria. In Foucault's telling, Greek Christians either did not take God to be in the business of making judgments of human persons, or they did not think that human persons could possibly be judged – not, at any rate, by true and just criteria such as the LORD must have and use – and be found wanting.[106] This, he claims, was particularly true of those strands of the tradition (such as that represented by Gregory of Nyssa) that have a more philosophical or "mystical" flavor as inheritances from pagan traditions of philosophical communities urging members to undertake *cura sui* ("care of the self.")[107]

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[105] While Foucault often speaks about "good" views of *parrhêsia* in the Christian tradition as funded by a "trust in God," he takes this to mean a belief that the LORD wants the human person simply to remember his Edenic existence and know that he can "have that relation to God on his own, through the impulse of his soul and the openness of his heart … secure his own salvation and find the way of opening to God by himself." *Courage of Truth*, 334.

As I have argued in previous chapters, the speaker's awareness of the possibility for discrepancies between his criteria and those of his listeners and of the possibility that he will be judged to fall short on the latter is fundamental to the grammar of *parrhêsia* across the board, in discourses both pagan and Christian, political and philosophical. The parrhêsiast's task – if he wants and hopes for his speech to be found acceptable – is precisely to acknowledge that those hearing him *will* judge him and that their judgments might not go in his favor, and to seek to persuade them to approve rather than to condemn and dismiss him and his speech. Accordingly, this chapter has demonstrated that the Cappadocians saw the earthly cooperation of the Christian in the process of divinization as laborious and characterized by introspective self-doubt and self-scrutiny with reference to standards of judgment located outside the self. For Gregory of Nyssa, the process of judging the self on the LORD's criteria and of becoming able to prove that one "measures up" to them through the cultivation of properly ordered relations to the LORD renders the act of speech obsolete and unnecessary. *Parrhêsia* thus becomes an act of bodily self-disclosure rather than verbal truth-telling, and its conditions of possibility are founded upon prior engagement in nonverbal contemplative and ascetic practices of self-(trans)formation through the establishment and maintenance of a particular order of relations within the soul and between the Christian and the LORD.

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[106] See *The Courage of Truth*, 330, where Foucault implies that *parrhêsia* is confidence that one will not fall short on the Day of Judgment; 333, where he names *parrhêsia* "a relationship of confidence … of man in himself;" and 336, where he presents *parrhêsia* as being in opposition to the "bad" pole of the Christian tradition's view of the necessary accommodation of the human person to the LORD's will -- a "necessity of respect [for the LORD], whose first form and essential manifestation must be obedience."

[107] See also *The Courage of Truth* 336, where Foucault describes the earlier "good" Christian tradition's view of as a form of care of self (as opposed to the later "bad" tradition's view of *parrhêsia* as self-neglect and true *cura sui* as necessitating self-scrutiny and "mistrust of self," and 338, where Foucault presents Christian asceticism as an anti-parrhêsiastic modification of older philosophical ascetic traditions.

In short, the Cappadocian picture of the prerequisites for non-verbal *parrhêsia pros ton Theon* have much the same character of self-scrutiny, self-doubt, and repentance that Foucault associates with *confessio,* and with Western models of pastoral power and ecclesially mediated relations between Christians and the LORD that began in Late Antiquity, developed into a robust penitential system in the Middle Ages, and gave rise to a host of confessional discourses current in the modern era that he identifies as disciplinary and punitive. It is to this Western tradition and the Latin Christian discourse of *confessio* that we will now turn our attention.

# Chapter 5. *Parrhêsia*, *Confessio*, and Truth-Telling

If one aims to compare the views of the Cappadocians on the politics of Christian *parrhêsia* to those of one or more Latin Fathers writing on the same subject, one again encounters the issues of definition and translation discussed in the introduction of this dissertation. As is the case in English, there is no calque of *parrhêsia* in Latin. In other words, it cannot be taken as a given that Latin authors really *are* -- in a particular case, or perhaps even ever – writing "on the same subject" (*viz.*, *parrhêsia*) as Greek authors. If and when it seems as if they are describing the same phenomenon under a different term, one must nonetheless be careful not to let similarities occlude deep-grammatical differences. That is, just as the real grammar of *parrhêsia* can so easily be overlooked because of the greater familiarity of the modern English understanding of "freedom of speech," it would be easy to miss seeing the real grammar of a Latin term because we understand Greek *parrhêsia* and are, so to speak, keen to find it wearing a toga in Rome.

My argument in this chapter, then, is that the Latin *confessio* and its grammar can be taken as a "foreign correspondent" of the Greek *parrhêsia*, and a comparison – but not an equation – can be made between the two. I will first examine the full array of Latin translations of *parrhêsia* in both pagan and Christian tradition before arguing for the benefits of a comparison with *confessio* and laying out its grammar, as was done previously for *parrhêsia*. In the light of that grammar, and with particular reference to issues of truth-telling, I will demonstrate the utility of a focus on Augustine in particular among Christian authors writing in Latin.

## *5.1. Pagan and Christian Latin Translations of* **Parrhêsia**

While, as previously noted, there is no "standard" Latin equivalent for parrhêsia, one can nevertheless identify Latin translations of the term in those texts where the Greek word is provided as a reverse gloss. Within the pagan Latin tradition, the writings in which these appear belong primarily to the genres of rhetoric and lexicography, and the usual renderings of "*parrhêsia*" into Latin are "*libertas*" ("freedom") and "*licentia*" ("license.") Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae* defines the word this way: "parrhesia est oratio libertatis et fiduciae plena" ("*parrhêsia* is speech that is full of freedom and faithfulness"), and provides an example of *parrhêsia* (the phenomenon, not the term) from Cicero's *Pro Milone* and notes further "[hac] figura caute utendum est, ut Cicero" ("This figure is to be used with caution, as Cicero [does.]")"[1]

While Isidore was a Christian writing rather late in antiquity, his definition seems accurately to reflect the earlier Roman use of the term. The major discussions of *parrhêsia* that survive are from the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (traditionally attributed either to one Cornificius or to Cicero) and

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[1] Isidore, *Etymologiae* 2.21.31.

Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, works dating respectively to the early first century B.C. and the late first century A.D. In both, *parrhêsia* is presented as at least akin to if not precisely a *figura* – not exactly what we today would call a "figure of speech" but more a "way of speaking." Quintilian clarifies:

> Some people call this "exclamation" and place it amongst the figures of speech. But whenever these are true things, they are not in the category we are now discussing; rather, it is simulated things and those composed by art that beyond any doubt are to be accounted "figures" (*schemata*.) The same is to be said of free speech (*oratione libera*) which Cornificius calls "licence" (*licentia*) and the Greeks [call] *parrhêsia*. For what is less a "figure" than true liberty?[2]

When *licentia* or *libertas/libera oratio* are presented in the context of a taxonomy of rhetorical *figurae,* the concern is to give examples and guidelines for their use. The purpose of this *figura* is given by the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (which Quintilian explicitly cites) in the form of a definition: "Licence (*licentia*) is when, among those whom we ought either to respect or to fear, we nevertheless say something by our right because we seem truthfully to be reprimanding them or those they love for some error."[3]

These Latin authors show as much awareness as their Greek counterparts of the possibility of simulated *parrhêsia*. Here, the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* is particularly helpful because, in advising his readers how to achieve "the subtler sort of *licentia*" (*quoddam genus in dicendo licentiae, quod astutiore*

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[2] Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* IX.2.27

[3] *Rhetorica ad. Herennium* 4.37

*ratione conparatur*), explains what differentiates it from the genuine article. The author of the *Rhetorica* states that we are using *parrhêsia* as a *figura* "when we reproach those who hear in the way that they themselves desire to be reproached, when we say 'I'm afraid of saying it' – about something we know they'll take well – 'but I'm moved by the truth to say it nonetheless.'"[4]

The *Rhetorica*, moreover, takes the converse of this "artificial" *licentia* to be the mitigation of true *licentia* by judicious additions of praise and flattery:

> If this sort of *licentia* seems too harsh, it can be toned down by many mitigating elements … so that what was stirred up by license is settled down by praise, so that the one part is distanced from anger and vexation and the other deterred from error. This does a lot of good in speaking, just as it does in friendship, so that both those who hear may stay away from wrong-doing and we who are speaking may seem both friends to them and to the truth.[5]

From these texts, it is clear that the Latin rhetoricians saw *licentia* as raising the same conflict of interests that the Greek writers associated with the use of *parrhêsia*: one has a duty to speak the truth in order warn or reprove a person (for his or her own good), and yet one wishes to maintain the tranquility of the relationship in question. What is strikingly different is that, while the Greek writers saw *parrhêsia* as the solution and oppose *parrhêsia* and flattery, the Roman sources see *licentia* as still a part of the problem and recommend a measure of flattery as a necessary part of the solution.

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[4] *Rhet ad Her.* 4.37

[5] *Ibid.*

Within the Christian Latin tradition, the clearest cases in which the Greek *parrhêsia* has been translated into Latin are in instances of translations of Scripture. Words with the πᾶν + ῥήσις root (*viz.*, primarily the noun παρρησία and the verb παρρησιάζομαι) appear a total of 40 times in the New Testament. The difficulty in evaluating Latin translations of Scripture results from the sheer multiplicity of these translations. While we tend to think of the Vulgate as the "standard" Latin translation, it was not produced until the late fourth century (Pope Damasus I commissioned St. Jerome to write it in 382), and, while it was widely copied and became quite popular in the centuries after its publication, it was only formally adopted as the "authorized" translation of the Western Church at the Council of Trent in the 16th century (1545-1563.) Latin translations of Scripture in use in the West prior to and roughly contemporaneous with the Vulgate are collectively known as the "Vetus Latina" and have not survived well, relatively speaking. To date, extant manuscripts are currently still in the process of being collated and transcribed, although several volumes of the Vetus have been published. Accordingly, given that ancient authors might have been quoting Scripture from Vetus manuscripts that have not survived or have not as yet been published, discovering Latin renderings of *parrhêsia* requires that searches be done not only of Latin translations of Scripture but also of the corpora of the Latin Fathers themselves. Moreover, in light of the fact that Scripture lacked regular chapter and verse numbering at the time (and the Fathers often quote Scripture by author rather than by book), and that the Latin translation of the Greek is precisely unknown, these searches cannot be run digitally on the basis of keywords and must instead be done by "brute force" (i.e. reading or skimming all an author's texts in the original languages looking for quotations of particular New Testament verses), or through the use of previously published author-specific indices of Scripture quotation. Add to this the sheer number of early Christian authors writing in Latin, the volume of their corpora, and the frequency with which they quote the Scriptures, and the task of identifying and locating Latin translations of *parrhêsia* quickly becomes unwieldy. For the present study, therefore, I was able to conduct searches in the Vulgate, the published volumes of the Vetus, and quotations of the verses in which *parrhêsia* appears in Tertullian, Cyprian, Marius Victorinus, Ambrose, Ambrosiaster, and (some works of) Augustine.[6]

The findings of this investigation show that there is no single Latin word that specializes as an equivalent for the Greek *parrhêsia*, but certain renderings are prominent. Interestingly, the renderings common in the pagan rhetorical tradition – *libertas* or *licentia* and their cognates – are minimally represented in quotations of Scripture. The latter appears not at all and the former only four times, in renderings of Eph. 3:12,[7] Col. 2:15,[8] 1 Thess. 2:2,[9] and Heb. 3:6.[10] A reading of *libertas* in the verse from Ephesians is not attested in surviving manuscripts of the Vetus, but is present in quotations by both Ambrosiaster and Marius Victorinus in their respective commentaries on that epistle.[11] A derivative of the *liber-* root in 1 Thessalonians is extant in a manuscript (Cod. Z) of the Vetus, and the noun in a slightly different rendering from Ambrosiaster.[12] The noun *libertas* in Hebrews survives in a quotation by Ambrose, presumably based on a reading of a Vetus manuscript now lost.[13]

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[6] The search of Augustine was not comprehensive; I used James W. Wiles *A Scripture Index to the Works of St. Augustine in English Translation* (Lanham: University of America Press, 1995), but this index is, by its own admission, not inclusive of all the extant works of Augustine. While Augustine is the Latin author on whom I will be focusing, his corpus is (relative to the other authors mentioned here) simply too immense to be searched.

By far, the most common rendering of *parrhêsia* and related verbs in Latin versions of the Scriptures is a class of constructions using words from the root "*fide-*" (roughly "faith.") This category includes the Latin nouns *fiducia* or *confidentia* being used to render the Greek noun *parrhêsia* and the phrases *fiducialiter agere* (to act faithfully), *cum fiducia loqui* (to speak with faith/faithfulness), and *fiduciam habēre* (to have faith) being used to render the Greek verb *parrhêsiazesthai*. The next most common category of renderings includes Latin words to do with visibility and openness, including the adverbs *aperte* ("openly"), *palam* ("in plain sight"), *manifeste* ("manifestly"), and *publice* ("publicly") as well as the verbs *ostendere* ("to show") and *publicare* ("to make public.") Words of this class appear almost exclusively in the Gospels, the notable exception being Col. 2:15. Within the Vulgate, they serve as an alternative to the more frequent *fiducia*, which appears as a rendering in every book that contains the word *parrhêsia* except for the Gospels and Colossians.[14] By far less frequent than these are Latin renderings derived from the root *constant-*, present in the Vulgate and the Vetus both.[15] Finally, there are two instances of renderings derived from the root *audē-* ("dare" or "risk") used to render forms of *parrhêsia;* these latter appear in the Vulgate,[16] but never in either the Vetus or the Fathers whose corpora were searched.

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[7] In the English of the RSV, the verse reads "in whom [Christ Jesus our Lord] we have boldness (*parrhêsia*) and confidence of access through faith in him."

[8] The context is a discussion of baptism and Christ's crucifixion: "[God] disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example (ἐδειγματίσεν ἐν παῤῥησίᾳ) of them, triumphing over them in [Christ]." (RSV)

[9] "… [W]e had courage (*parrhêsia*) in our God to declare to you the gospel in the face of great opposition." (RSV)

[10] "And we are [Christ's] house if we hold fast our confidence (*parrhêsia*) and pride in our hope." (RSV)

[11] Both Latin authors have "*habemus libertatem*" (we have freedom) while the Vulgate reads "*habemus fiduciam.*"

[12] Cod. Z reads "*libere egimus*" (we acted freely) while Ambrosiaster has "*exerta libertate usui sumus*" (we used strenuous freedom); the verse in question is part of St. Paul's report on his conduct in Philippi.

[13] Ambrose, *De Ioseph* 9.49, which reads "libertatem" (freedom) for the NT's *parrhêsian*; the Vulgate reads "fiduciam."

A few observations on this array of renderings is in order here. All of the words in these Latin semantic categories do convey aspects of *parrhêsia* that we have observed within the term's use in the Greek tradition, both pagan and Christian. The possibility of repercussions for speech (and the implicit acknowledgement that the act of speaking or the substance of what is said are likely to displease hearers) is communicated by the use of *audē-* words. Forms of *constant-* imply both resistance to speech that must be withstood by the speaker and the speaker's consistency or integrity in speaking. Words like "*palam*" and "*manifeste*" convey that the speech described (or the actions – *parrhêsia* and these Latin renderings are used in the New Testament for non-verbal acts) are a form of the subject's shameless self-disclosure. And words formed from roots in *fide-* gesture towards trust in the sorts of relations between humans and the LORD that the Cappadocians argued more explicitly were the foundation for Christian *parrhêsia*, especially in situations of persecution by or attempted conversions of pagans.

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[14] Words in the "openness" category are almost always used to refer to the mode of Jesus' presence amongst the Jews (going about openly or keeping a low profile) rather than speech, or to indicate that Jesus is employing a type of speech that stands in contrast either to the use of parables or to concealment of the "Messianic secret."

[15] All instances of these third most frequent terms "*constantia/constanter*", whose root denotes durative and integral fixity (and thus implies the presence of opposing forces which are precisely "withstood"), are to be found in Acts referring to Peter, John, Paul, and Barnabas.

[16] These are Acts 2:29 and Eph. 6:20.

Finally, nowhere in extant Latin versions of Scripture or in ancient Latin commentary thereon are forms of *confessio* used to render the Greek *parrhêsia.* It is not, therefore, immediately obvious why the two ought to be compared at all. As mentioned, however, Michel Foucault makes precisely this comparison and, while this dissertation raises objections to his characterization of both *parrhêsia* and *confessio* and to the contrasts that he draws between them, it must be said that his decision to juxtapose and compare the two was quite astute.

## *5.2. A Grammar of Confession*

The Greek word *parrhêsia* and the Latin *confessio* are comprised of similar semantic elements. The verb *confiteor* (whence the noun) is a combination of *fateor* ("say") and the prefix form of the preposition *cum* ("with"), which, in compounds, often has not only the meaning "with" but also "exhaustively" or "thoroughly."[17] So the most fundamental meanings of the verb *confiteor* are "say with" and "say thoroughly." The latter of these bears a marked similarity to the fundamental meaning of *parrhêsia* ("saying everything.") Both words have to do with a rather "special" type of speech; that is, they cannot be used as synonyms for words for "speech" or "speak, say,"[18] and, as we will see shortly, both refer to almost the very same sort of "special" speech.

In some ways, the relation between *parrhêsia* and *confessio* is the opposite of that between *parrhêsia* and "freedom of speech." That is, while "freedom of speech" is often used to translate *parrhêsia* (which has no English derivative), *confessio* (which does come into English) has never been so used by speakers of Latin. However, while the grammar of "freedom of speech" bears marked differences to that of *parrhêsia*, the grammar of the English "confession" (which is quite close to that of *confessio* in the ancient and late antique Latin traditions) is far more similar. For instance, we might call a text or speech "confessional" when it seems an instance of self-disclosure or even self-exposure. As we saw in the previous two chapters, the Cappadocians used *parrhêsia* to name Christians' very similar guileless and shameless submission of themselves to view. Indeed, the content of a "confession" always either implicitly or explicitly includes information about the speaker. So it is that we use "confess" and related words to describe the adherence of an individual to particular faiths or religious creeds, and so we talk about the "Augsburg confession," having a "confessional stance" in one's scholarship, and so forth. While the Greek verb *parrhêsiazomai* is typically intransitive, it often appears in texts by the Cappadocians paired with the verb *homologeô* (literally "say the same thing," hence "agree" and so also "confess [a belief]"), which does take an object. Some of the contexts concern the confession of belief in Christ in a general way, but a number of others – especially in the texts of Gregory of Nazianzus – concern the confession of formal creedal and dogmatic statements.[19]

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[17] One might compare the English "complete," which derives from the Latin combination of *cum* and *pleo* ("fill") and is used to mean "fill full" or "fulfill" rather than "fill with."

[18] Here we might compare the compound *profiteor*, formed from the same root, whence the English "profess" – which is often used as an only slightly more assertive synonym for "say."

The major point of difference between the two terms is that *parrhêsia* is rarely (if ever) used in contexts where the most common (Latin and English) meaning of "confess" is in play – *viz*., when someone is acknowledging that she has committed a sin, is guilty of a crime, has made an error, or the like. And yet, we use the word "confession" to indicate the speaker's negotiation of some of the same questions and tensions that the use of the word *parrhêsia* signifies the speaker is negotiating – fundamentally, the speaker's agreement and disagreement with (or disagreeability to) others. The condition of possibility for agreement and disagreement/disagreeability is the existence of criteria of judgment located outside the speaker (in the addressees or audience) to which the speaker may be subjected. As explained in Chapters 2 and 3, the Greeks used *parrhêsia* with a positive connotation to name a situation in which the speaker was aware that he, his act of speaking, and/or the substance of his speech would not "measure up" on at least some of the standards and criteria held by hearers – that is, these were not "agreeable" to hearers. In order to have a chance at being deemed a good act, parrhêsiastic speech needed to include justifications and arguments for why the speaker, the act of speaking, and/or the substance of the speech *did*, in fact, "measure up" (i.e. was agreeable) according to other standards and criteria shared (i.e. agreed upon) by both speaker and hearers. Absent such common criteria, and absent a justificatory argument appealing to them or an exhibition of the speaker's excellence according to them, acts of *parrhêsia* would be negatively appraised and the speaker's shamelessness in speaking deemed shameful. This, as we saw in the last chapter, was precisely the problem when it came to the question of Christian *parrhêsia* towards the LORD.

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[19] So frequently in the martyrologies discussed in the previous chapter; Gregory of Nazianzus Or. 25.14-15 (*PG* 35, 1217C-1220B) and Or. 23.4 (*PG* 35, 1153); Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 29.1 (*PG* 36, 73A-B); Basil claims that the bishops' parrhêsiastic confession of orthodoxy in the face of heretics protects their congregations; Ep. 250.1; and the list goes on.

In the case of *confessio*, however, the substance of the speech (which concerns the speaker) is not necessarily a disagreement with the judgment of hearers, but is expected to be disagreeable to them. So, for instance, if I "confess" to never having seen the movie *Citizen Kane*, my naming this as a "confession" only makes sense if I expect that those listening think that viewing this particular film is a good thing to do, or that viewing it is something that I really *ought* to have done. It should be noted that there is a significant distinction between these two judgments; there are many things that we might deem “good things to do” that we nonetheless do not consider obligatory “things that ought to be done” by each and every particular person. For example, many of us would probably agree that donating a million dollars to charity is “a good thing to do,” but we hardly think that everyone – perhaps not even everyone who actually has a million dollars – ought to donate that sum to charity. Nonetheless, one might use “confess” in the context of either situation, both when (the speaker thinks that) the listener deems the object of the confession merely “not-good” and when the listener deems commission or omission of a particular act to be an obligation incumbent upon the speaker. So I might “confess” to you that I have never seen *Citizen Kane* if viewing it were something you held to be a good thing for people to do; I am admitting that I have failed on some criterion of “goodness” that you hold, even if you did not really expect me to meet that criterion. But I would certainly “confess” to never have seen the film if (I knew that) you took me to be obligated to have done so – if, for example, watching *Citizen Kane* were something I had promised you I would do, an assignment you had given me as my teacher or boss, or the like.

The use of the word “confess,” then, indicates two things. First, it is an acknowledgement by the speaker that (she thinks) the listener has certain judgments about what actions are good and bad, obligatory and prohibited for the speaker. Second, it is an admission by the speaker that she has not met the requirements for the listener's positive judgment with respect to those things. Whether or not the speaker herself agrees with the listener's moral judgment (i.e. that doing x is good or bad) and/or with the listener's understandings of the speaker's obligations regarding x (to do it or not do it) is irrelevant to the use of the word "confess." One can make a confession without contrition, remorse, or repentance (e.g., "I confess that I shot the sheriff -- and I'd do it again!"), whether one agrees that the act was "bad" or not. One can also make a confession and attempt to justify the act in question as good (e.g., "I confess that I shot the sheriff – and it was the right thing to do.") Each of these examples exhibits two separate acts of speaking, the former being the confession itself and the second being something else extrinsic and additional to the confession. Stanley Cavell makes this distinction in writing the following:

> In confessing you do not explain or justify, but describe how it is with you. And confession, unlike dogma, is not to be believed but tested, and accepted or rejected. Nor is it the occasion for accusation, except of yourself, and by implication those who find themselves in you. There is exhortation ("Do not say: 'There *must* be something common … but *look* and *see* …'" (§66)) not to belief, but to self-scrutiny.[20]

Of course, I would argue, one may – and people often do – make a confession and then immediately explain, justify, accuse, and exhort others to belief. But Cavell's point stands: these other types of speaking are not part of confession proper; they are things one might do after confessing but not “in confessing.” Whether engaging in these types of speech after confessing is inconsistent with the act of confessing and so vitiates or undermines the confession to some extent is a separate question. What one cannot do without nullifying the confession altogether is to “confess” and yet deny the satisfaction of the definitional criteria in play (e.g., “I confess that I shot the sheriff – but I didn’t shoot the sheriff.”)

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[20] Cavell, Stanley. "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy" in *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 44-72; 71. The text he quotes here is Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.

As a speech-act, this guilt-admission type of “confession” amounts to an act of assent to the hearer’s linguistic criteria: I agree to use your syntax, your vocabulary, your definitions of “shoot” and “sheriff” and so forth. It is also simultaneously an instance of the application of these definitional criteria: since I am using your syntax and vocabulary and definitions, then I must acknowledge that my actions meet the definitional criteria for saying “I shot the sheriff” – and so that is what I must say. Put succinctly, a “confession” is fundamentally an act of assent to a communal language and of participation in that language by following its rules.

This might seem a tautological statement, true not only or not specifically of confession but of any utterance employing diction and syntax that are correct by the standards of the linguistic community. In order to use language – any community’s language – we must precisely give assent to its rules and criteria. And it bears noting that this is an unconditioned *assent*. That is, the rules that comprise a language do not attempt to justify themselves to us or try and persuade us that they are valid, more elegant or efficient than all possible alternative rules, or anything of the sort -- nor *could* they do so. Our input on the phonological, semantic, and morpho-syntactical rules that comprise language is neither solicited nor assured. This is the case both in first-language acquisition by infants (despite the practice of countless generations of English-speaking children, "basketti" has not yet become an acceptable equivalent to "spaghetti"),[21] and in the learning of foreign languages by those of any age (German will continue to use the dative case, whether you like it or not.) In the case of primary-language acquisition, we do not withhold assent to the rules of a language, weighing our options and waiting to see if a better linguistic alternative might come along. The reason we assent to a language has nothing to do with its rules and everything to do with its speakers: they are the people we are already in relationship with (for infants, this means caregivers) or those with whom we want to be in relationship. The motive for our originary "decision" to learn and use language is simply that we humans tend to like relating, both to other humans and to non-human creatures and objects; language facilitates these relations and permits us to have more of them and a greater variety of them.

And yet, it is not tautological to say that confession is fundamentally an act of assent to a communal language and of participation in that language by following its rules, because this is not actually true of every grammatically correct utterance in a language. As we shall see shortly, confession's opposite number is fundamentally a refusal of linguistic assent and participation and, accordingly, a refusal of particular types of relations in favor of others. Still, something additional is required to distinguish confession from the many other acts of speech that fit this description. What we might say, then, is that confession represents an instance of the speaker's assent to and participation in communal language under pressure – *viz*., when the speaker is most motivated (or, we might say, most "tempted") to refuse this assent and participation.[22]

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[21] Interestingly, the phonological reflex exhibited in the pronunciation of "spaghetti" as "bisketti" (metathesis of plosive articulation and voicing, and of sibilation) is exceedingly common; changes of exactly this sort do often become accepted in languages, especially in cases of foreign loanwords.

As in speaking with *parrhêsia*, so too is there an element of socio-political risk in making a confession. Both entail the self-disclosure (or self-exposure) of the speaker: she says who she is and how things are with her – what she thinks, what she believes, what she has and has not done. But, as we have seen, the liveliest concern of a parrhêsiast tends to be the listener's judgment of her *qua* speaker and, even more specifically, the listener's judgment about the speaker's judgment of *herself qua* speaker relative to her audience: whether she ought to say without shame what she finds it in her mind to say to these particular listeners, or whether she ought to feel ashamed before them and keep silent. For the Cappadocians, the visible (or, at least, perceptible) excellence of the speaker – his moral conduct, his skill at speaking, his physical appearance – played a significant role in conditioning the shame of the speaker relative to the audience and, accordingly, the propriety of his speaking parrhêsiastically. The grammar and politics of *parrhêsia* entail expectation of ensuing agonism, that hearers will put pressure upon the speaker after he has disclosed his mind and, so, himself. This may be rather an unpleasant experience, but it nonetheless contains the possibility of the parrhêsiast's success. The speaker's character, conduct, and speech might persuade hearers to agree to employ his ordering of common criteria (with the ones he and his claims satisfy outweighing those on which they disappoint) and so, in the end, win him the respect of his listeners – or even their conversion to his proposed politics – rather than shame.

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[22] Cavell uses this language of temptation in speaking about confession as a part of the practice of ordinary language philosophy: "It contains what serious confessions must: the full acknowledgement of temptation ('I want to say …'; 'I feel like saying…'; 'Here the urge is strong …') and a willingness to correct them and give them up ('In the everyday use …'; 'I impose a requirement which does not meet my real need.')" Cavell, Stanley. "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy" 71.

In confession, by contrast, the concern is not that the speaker will be subject to hearers' negative judgments (whence shame) for her decision to speak. Rather, it is that the speaker will be subject to negative judgment by hearers if they should hear and know what she has to say. The grammar of the term entails the speaker's assumption of the certainty (or, at least, the strong possibility) that the self she discloses to hearers *will*, in fact, fall short or be found guilty according to their criteria of judgment. And there is no expectation or assurance of a subsequent *agôn* in which she could make arguments or demonstrations to the contrary.[23] By confessing, she has already agreed to communal definitions, already acknowledged that she has indeed met the hearer's criteria for issuing a negative verdict against her. Certainly, fear of any punishments that ensue from such a verdict might militate against confession, but even absent those, the shame of bearing a negative judgment would still function as a deterrent to confessional speech.

Here a critical difference between *parrhêsia* and *confessio* emerges. A person's decision to remain silent if his decision to speak his mind would be met with negative judgment was approved and esteemed within the communal grammar and politics of the Greek *parrhêsia* used by both pagans and (as we saw in Chapter 4) Christians like the Cappadocians. Certainly, the inferiority of one person relative to others (or of her thoughts relative to those of others) was taken to be the typical reason for this "modest silence." And there was a sense that at least the inferior person had the decency to recognize her inferiority (which is to say, the superiority of her potential audience) and to act accordingly, to behave with deference and diffidence in the presence of her betters. This inward sense of shame or "modesty" (*aidôs*) on the part of a potential speaker was praised when it prompted the silence of women before men, or of Spartans before their leaders and elders.[24]

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[23] In my view, Cavell's assertion, *supra*, that confessions are to be "tested" applies more to the confessions about language use and linguistic criteria in which he is particularly interested (e.g., "I'd call that thing over there a 'duck'" might be met by "Really? I'd call it a 'goose …'") than to the types of statements we'd more ordinarily class as "confessional" or "confessions."

In general, the grammar and politics of *confessio* lacks this social "reward" for keeping silent.[25] This is in large part because confessions were and often still are given under pressure; they are more frequently requested or required than volunteered.[26] In forensic speeches from Roman antiquity, attention is called by an advocate to his opponent's silence, the implication being that the silence issues from the non-confessant's shame and guilt: being confronted with incontrovertible evidence of his misdoings prevents the confident denials or defense that an innocent person would make. So, for example, in his first Catilinarian oration, Cicero asserts that the defendant has grown silent because he dare not raise his voice to deny the charge given that Cicero has just demonstrated his familiarity with the exact details of Catiline's "secret" conspiracy.[27] Therefore, in such cases where an accusation is made and a confession demanded, if one wants to avoid being judged guilty (incurring negative judgments and shame), then one can neither confess nor remain silent: one must protest her innocence of the charge, even if she is, in fact, guilty of it. Again, in Cicero's prosecution of the Roman magistrate Verres, who governed Sicily and made rather a brazen habit of extortion and embezzlement, he mocks Verres by saying that the reason the governor is silent in the face of the accusations being made is that he does not have a lie handy with which to rebut them.[28] So while the face-saving alternative to *parrhêsia* is to keep silent, the face-saving alternative to *confessio* is to lie. Put another way: the challenge of the parrhêsiast is to *speak* the truth, while the challenge of the confessant is to speak the *truth*. And that is why this dissertation focuses on Augustine of Hippo as the Latin comparandum to the Cappadocian Fathers.

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[24] On women, see, *inter alios*, Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Women of Ancient Greece*, (Swansea: the Classical Press of Wales, 2003); for a fuller study of how silence was viewed in the ancient Greek world, see Silvia Montiglio, *Silence in the Land of Logos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); the famous "Laconic" silences of the Spartans are mentioned by Xenophon, *Lacedaemonion Politeia* 3.4-5.

[25] The disturbing exception is the silence of slaves being required to provide evidence against their masters under torture, where the slave's loyalty – if inconvenient to the purposes of the court – was approved.

[26] That Augustine precisely does volunteer – e.g., in the *Confessiones* – is worth noting.

[27] Cicero, *In Catilinam* I.7.

## *5.3. Augustine and* **Confessio**

Aurelius Augustinus was born on November 13, 354 in the town of Thagaste in the Roman province of Numidia. Like the Cappadocians, family relationships played a significant role in his spiritual life. His mother, Monica, was a devout Christian to whose faith and unceasing intercession Augustine attributes his own conversion to orthodox Christianity, but his father, Patricius, was a pagan who only converted to Christianity late in life.[29] And, like Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzen, and Gregory Nyssen, Augustine received the benefits of an excellent classical education -- but in the Roman tradition rather than the Greek.[30] As a boy, Augustine was sent to school at Madaurus, a small city in Numidia, though much larger than his hometown of Thagaste, and as a teenager went on to study rhetoric in the larger metropolis of Carthage. He taught grammar in Thagaste and rhetoric in Carthage and then (briefly) in Rome before accepting a post as rhetoric professor at the imperial court in Milan in 384 when he was about thirty years old.

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[28] Cicero, *In Verrem* 1.28

[29] One might compare Augustine's relationship with his mother Monica (also a saint in the Roman Catholic Church) to Gregory of Nyssa's relationship with his ascetic sister Macrina. [FIX – note studies that have done this.]

Unlike the Cappadocians, however, Augustine's ecclesial past was a bit checkered. Although his mother was an orthodox Christian, following a custom prevalent at the time, she did not have him baptized as a child.[31] His studies in literature and rhetoric – much as the emperor Julian would have hoped – gave him a disdain for the simplicity of the Christian Scriptures (and, it should be said, for the lack of intellectual refinement of those who, like his mother, esteemed them.) He fell in for a while with the Manichaean sect while teaching in Carthage, until he met their guru, Faustus. Augustine had been asking pointed questions of the Manichaeans for some time and had been promised that, when Faustus came around, he would be able to provide answers. In the event, Augustine was impressed by Faustus' rhetorical skill but sorely disappointed in the substance of his replies. Further reading and philosophical chats with friends in Milan opened Augustine's eyes to Platonism, which he found especially challenging and finally liberating for its teachings on non-material realities.[32] Finally, on the now-famous day in the garden in 386 when Augustine was wrestling with his internal conflict between the desire for carnal satisfaction and for continence, he heard a voice bidding "*tolle, lege*," picked up a nearby book of St. Paul's epistles, opened it at random and read Romans 13:13-14, and converted (or returned) to Christianity.[33] He gave up his career in rhetoric and was baptized by Ambrose of Milan the next year, was ordained a priest in 391 and then bishop of Hippo in 395, a post he retained until his death in 430.

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[30] Augustine did receive some instruction in Greek language and literature, but admits to weakness in this area, claiming to have "cribbed" Plato in Latin translation in *Confessiones* VIII.2. He does make fairly regular use of Greek terms within his texts (which seem generally seem to be correctly remembered and glossed) and it is clear from his correspondence with Marcellinus (Ep. 59) that he was competent enough to make a comparison between the LXX version of the Psalms and Jerome's Vulgate translation. The chief evidence for his weakness with the language is a mistranslation of Rom. 5:12 (*in quo omnes peccaverunt* rendering ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον, with the relatives referring to Adam.) The Latin rendering is Jerome's Vulgate translation, but Augustine made the assertion that all humanity was present in Adam when he sinned.

[31] There was a general lack of clarity on whether sins committed after baptism could be forgiven, so a popular sentiment was that it was better not to risk it and to delay baptism until old age or imminent death. At one point, when Augustine was seriously ill as a boy, Monica planned to have him baptized, but he recovered and the sacrament was postponed; cf. *Confessiones* I.11,17

But the reason that Augustine serves as such a fitting counterpoint to the Cappadocian Fathers within this project is not primarily because of his similarity to Basil and the Gregories with respect to classical education in rhetoric and philosophy, or early experience of Christianity within his family of origin, or his familiarity with imperial politics as both a professor of rhetoric at the court in

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[32] By contrast, Manichaeanism has a strictly materialist ontology, holding that evil is a substance. See Augustine's narration of how Platonic ontology prepared him to understand and accept the reality of the LORD in *Conf.* VII.

[33] The verses in question read: "[Let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day,] not in reveling and drunkenness, nor in debauchery and licentiousness, nor in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." See Augustine's account in *Confessiones* VIII, particularly 8,19-12,29.

Milan and, later, as a bishop. Rather, it is because Augustine is explicitly and intensely concerned with many of the same questions of truth-telling speech and its politics as were the Cappadocians. In particular, the bishop of Hippo treats what I have laid out above as some of the basic grammatical elements of *confessio*: assent to communal criteria, verbal disclosure of the self, the temptation of the lie, the question of how a speaker is to cope with the imperfection or unacceptability of the self to others. Furthermore, as we shall see, Augustine is interested in the broader politics and order regulating all these things.

Yet some of the very things that make Augustine such a good conversation partner on these particular topics are precisely those that make him challenging to read and study. Chief among these is the fact that he liked language, and used it quite a lot. That is to say, he produced so prodigious a number of texts that Isidore of Seville later quipped that anyone who claimed to have read all of them was a liar.[34] I will hardly pretend to have read all of his works myself. More than this, the sheer extent of his corpus has cooperated with the authority and respect accorded Augustine within Western ecclesial traditions over the past sixteen centuries to catalyze the creation of an equally vast body of commentary and scholarship on his texts. I will not pretend to have read all of that either. Accordingly, any scholar working on Augustine must, from the outset, find a way to narrow the focus of the investigation.

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[34] Isidore, *Carmen* IV; PL 83.1109. The saying is abstracted from a verse written addressing Augustine: “He lies who says he has read you in your entirety. What reader could even have all your works? For you, Augustine, shine forth in thousands of volumes.”

Perhaps ironically, given that Augustine "wrote the book" on confession, there has not been a great deal of scholarship produced on Augustine's understanding of *confessio*, apart from studies that treat the *Confessiones* itself. Most of these, in turn, address the question of the relation between "confessions" as a title and the genre and themes of that particular text.[35] That is, they ask what sort of "confessing" Augustine is doing in the *Confessiones*, how and why he thinks it right to give the text that name. My interest, instead, is in what Augustine writes about confessing more generally and analytically, and not as much in what he says about himself in particular as the subject-object of his own acts of *confessio*. So while I will refer occasionally to that text, I suggest that other of Augustine's writings (ironically) have far more to tell us about *confessio* itself than do the *Confessiones*.

The second wonderful and difficult thing about Augustine is the fact that he is not a very consistent thinker – nor does he pretend to be. In fact, it could be argued that the most consistent thing about him is his willingness to be inconsistent. The concomitant or consequence of his particular understanding of truth and how one comes to know it is a commitment to remaining available to and for intellectual conversion and *metanoia* – changing one's mind. Augustine changes his mind with surprising ease, even within a single text,[36] and at the end of his life, he wrote a text that amounted to a litany of his changes of mind about previous texts he had written. We might note here, too, that the *Confessiones* is (among other things) an account of many of Augustine's changes of mind, both small and seismic.

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[35] Many of these are rather similar in their approaches as well as in their findings. As creative and original exceptions to the general rule, I would especially commend to the reader Jean-François Lyotard, *The Confession of Augustine*, Tr. Richard Beardsworth (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), and Jean-Luc Marion, *Au lieu de soi. L'approche de Saint Augustin*. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008) available now in English translation as *In the Self's Place: The Approach of Saint Augustine*, Tr. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012.)

As a result of this, any attempt made by scholarly readers of the bishop of Hippo to assemble and present from multiple texts a full and coherent picture of Augustine's views on a given topic will invariably and inevitably be a constructive rather than a "purely" exegetical project. One must decide upon and apply principles of selection and weighting, which means dismissing as anomalous those of Augustine's thoughts that contradict or do not cohere with a particular picture. I have tried to avoid this as far as possible by concentrating primarily on texts written at roughly the same period in Augustine's life: the earlier part of his bishopric, roughly between 395 and 405.[37] In so doing, I hope to evade the "gravitational pull" that various doctrinal and ecclesial controversies tend to exert upon even speculative theological texts.

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[36] Augustine, *Ad Simplicianum* I, which will be treated in the next chapter.

[37] The chief exception here might appear to be the *De trinitate*, which was completed in about 417; but it was likely begun in 399, although François Glorié "Augustinus, *De Trinitate*," *Sacris Erudiri* 16 (1965) 203-55 suggests 397. E. Hendrickx in « La date de composition du *De Trinitate* », *L'année théologique augustinienne* 11 (1952) 305-16 believes that a first draft had been completed by 406.

Finally, I am making no arguments about “what Augustine believed” about these matters, only what he wrote about them.[38] Part of what this means is that I will not be considering accounts of Augustine’s own dispositions, behaviours, or actions as “evidence” of his views on truth-telling and its politics. The focus will be instead on the pictures of these presented in his texts, not on whether the bishop of Hippo himself “practiced what he preached.” The one exception to this rule is where I note a congruency between Augustine’s demonstrated intellectual-textual habits and practice (i.e. how the texts he has written show him to be acting as a writer and as a thinker-in-writing) and what he recommends as good practice for thinking and speaking/writing. By and large, however, the concern here will be for an analysis and thick description of the grammar and politics that obtain within the picture of confessional truth-telling that Augustine’s writings present.

This study of Augustine, then, may not at first appear to be an especially “historical” one in that it does not seek primarily to make connections between what Augustine writes and his socio-political context, nor to draw conclusions about “how things really were” (“wie es eigentlich gewesen”) in that context on the basis of his texts. Nor is my chief aim to demonstrate any sort of trans-temporal influences or developments within Augustine’s thought or writing. A few moves in either category are made along the way, but the fundamental historical question considered here is the genealogical one that Foucault proposed. That is, I am considering an internally coherent and time-bound “snapshot” of Augustine’s thought about confessional truth-telling in order to compare an example from a later Latin stage of what Foucault proposes as the development of this grammar and politics within the nascent Christian tradition with an example from an earlier Greek stage (i.e., the writings of the Cappadocians.) This comparison will give us insight on the questions of whether and to what extent Foucault’s narrative of the degeneration of *parrhêsia* into *confessio* within the rise of Christianity is historically and conceptually tenable.

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[38] One does tend to speak this way by a conventions of scholarship (“the author thinks, considers, believes, understands, etc.”) but this no more means that a scholar is interested in or making claims about the author’s intent than our saying “the sun is rising” or “the sun is setting” is making the claim for a geocentric solar system.

# Chapter 6. Augustine and the Ecstasy of Truth

In his consideration of the grammar and politics that regulate and constitute Christian truth-telling (particularly about the self and particularly towards the LORD), Augustine seems to take precisely the position that Michel Foucault sets forth as foundational to the rise of confession as a disciplinary practice. That is, Augustine accepts the contingency and imperfection of the confessant while recommending that Christians continue to engage in truth-telling speech about that imperfect and contingent self – even and especially to the LORD. More than this, as I shall show, he seems to think that this type of speech is a fitting response to the very facts of the contingency and imperfections of the human person, and that the practice of confessional truth-telling is of some sort of benefit with respect to the relation between the Christian and the LORD.

Augustine's position, then, already stands in contrast to that of the Cappadocians who, as we saw in Chapter 4, asserted – quite vehemently – that the proper response to the problem of the Christian speaker's failure on the moral criteria of the LORD was to stop talking and focus on (nonverbal) ways of fixing the problem of the moral imperfection of the self that a speaker might disclose. Augustine, however, finds grounds for the Christian to keep talking, presenting the subject's adoption of particular dispositions in speaking about the self to the LORD as being themselves modes of moral purification and participation in right relationship with the LORD. This, however, is exactly what Foucault identifies as the problem with confession: the adoption of a discourse that recommends the subject's presentation and disclosure of the self as sinful as a strategy for being/appearing less sinful. The result is a rule of practice whereby the sinner paradoxically appears/becomes less loathsome and less sinful the more fully and frequently she names herself a sinner and the more intense and sincere her self-loathing – a loathing of her sinful self -- she exhibits.[1]

The question, then, is how and why Augustine takes the imperfect subject's continued self-disclosure in confessional truth-telling to be appropriate and "theo-politically" beneficial (i.e. beneficial for the subject's relations to and with reference to the LORD.) In other words, does the politics of such speech that Augustine presents actually resemble the one that Foucault presents as necessary consequences of certain conceptual moves that Augustine does, in fact, make? In other words, do we see in Augustine's descriptions of confession what Foucault presents as its characteristic elements (or, at least, the conditions of possibility for their later development)? From Chapter 1, we recall that these are: first, an endless self-scrutinizing quest to ferret out and disclose the self's secrets; and, second, the adoption of *metanoia* or obedience "as a state," a constant struggle to submit the self's unruly will to a totalizing "regime of truth" – to being-governed without remainder by the will of the LORD.[2]

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[1] Michel Foucault, *On the Government of the Living; Lectures at the Collège de France 1979–1980*, tr. Graham Burchell, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014) 215; as Foucault puts it, the Christian's rule of practice is something like: "I am all the less a sinner as I affirm that I am a sinner," which he compares to the liar's paradox.

[2] *Ibid.*, 268: "Obedience is not a transitional period, it is a state."

With a view towards answering these questions, this chapter proceeds as follows. First, we consider what Augustine takes truth-telling to mean, how he understands words to serve as a medium of the speaker's self-disclosure, what he presents as the relational orderings of the truth-teller both ad intra and ad extra (i.e., her dispositions, aims, and interactions with other) and how he says these regulate and produce – and are produced by – truth-telling speech. This examination is done through consideration of texts wherein Augustine treats truth-telling's opposite number, mendacity. Those works provide explicit accounts of all of the foregoing as they relate to lying and, accordingly, comparisons and distinctions made between the grammar and politics of verbal duplicity and those of verbal integrity.

In the second section, we turn to examination of Augustine's correspondence with Jerome on issues of mendacity. Here I expand upon previous scholarly treatment of Augustine on lying to develop a broader view of the bishop of Hippo's understanding of the politics of truth as these play out beyond the terrain of the individual soul of the speaker and his or her relations to the LORD. Here we see that Augustine takes truth-telling to be deeply implicated in social and ecclesial relations and orderings – especially regarding the issues of disagreement, unity, and authority – between the individual speaker and other human persons.

Next, I consider Augustine's presentation of Christ as a paradigm for the disposition of humility that grounds and funds confessional truth-telling. Through focused attention and close reading of Book IV of the *De trinitate*, we discover how Augustine understands truth-telling to fit within a larger cosmopolitics – the *ordo* of creation. Here we see the bishop of Hippo presenting the LORD's politics as distinguishable from rival orderings in its taking *iustitia* (a gratuitous excess of relationity mediated by the *donum*) rather than *potentia* (a move towards possession and privatization mediated by the *debitum*) as its ordering principle.

In section four, a look at the first letter *Ad Simplicianum* helps us to gain an understanding of how Augustine locates the subject-self in the act of confessional truth-telling. Here we observe Augustine's interest in distinguishing confession from another type of verbal arrogation – not that of the lie but that of boasting. Through examination of what Augustine presents as a unique feature of verbal predication in the case of the Trinity, we can gain an understanding of how the bishop of Hippo identifies a human speaker's confession of himself as an act of praise of the LORD. Finally, then, this chapter concludes by comparing the resulting conceptual picture of Augustine's view of the politics of *confessio* with that advanced by Michel Foucault.

## *6.1. Duplicity and the Lie*

Augustine wrote two treatises on lying. The first, *De mendacio* (*On Lying*) was composed in 394 or 395, shortly before Augustine's ordination as bishop coadjutor of Hippo. It is a short text and unapologetically analytical in style, lacking Augustine's typical rhetorical flourishes. In the *Retractationes*, he tells readers:

> I had decided to remove it from among my works, because it seemed to me obscure and intricate and altogether annoying, which is why I had not published it. Then later, when I had written another [book] whose title is *Contra mendacium* [*Against Lying*], I was even more decided that this one not exist and gave the order – but that did not happen.[3]

Finding it still in existence, he decided to leave it, on the grounds that – even if it required effort to be understood – it was nonetheless useful for exercising the mind. Moreover, it contained some important things that were lacking in the later treatise, given that *Contra mendacium* is an extended treatise *against* lying, while *De mendacio* discusses the definition of a lie and arguments both pro and con.

This second treatise, *Contra mendacium*, was composed in 420 or 421, relatively late in Augustine's life. It is a response to a letter (*ep*. 11) from one Consentius, who was possibly a monk but most likely a layman living on Minorca in the Balearic Isles. He had been writing Augustine "theological fan mail" beginning around 410,[4] but now wanted the bishop of Hippo's thoughts on a plan he had cooked up to deal with groups of Priscillianists active in his area. These were a quasi-Christian gnostic sect that held to a cosmic dualism between the Kingdom of Light (championed by the twelve patriarchs, heavenly spirits who fail to save humanity) and the Kingdom of Darkness (represented by the twelve signs of the Zodiac, evil spirits fighting to keep humanity imprisoned in material bodies.) More to the point, they taught that lies were religiously necessary for the preservation of their sect and the conversion of others to it, on the grounds that their doctrines – if disclosed truthfully -- were too esoteric to be understood and tolerated. It seems that Consentius had been toying with the idea of "fighting fire with fire": going undercover (which would involve telling lies) to infiltrate the sect so as to identify and ferret out its members. As is clear from the title of the treatise Augustine sent him in response, the bishop of Hippo did not give approval to Consentius' interreligious espionage scheme.

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[3] Augustine, *Retractationes* I.27

[4] He wanted to discuss the relations of the persons of the Trinity (*epp*. 119-120) and of the two natures of Christ (*ep*. 205.) In *ep*. 12, he mentions that he had bought a copy of Augustine's latest release – the Confessiones – but gave up reading only two or three pages in because he didn't like the "modern" style, preferring the more Ciceronian flavour of Lactantius.

These two texts have received little attention from scholars working within the field of Early Christian Studies, which might be surprising given that they are hardly works of pure speculation written in an historical vacuum.[5] As noted, *Contra mendacium* is prompted (if indirectly) by the conflict with Priscillianism. *De mendacio*, on the other hand, is written shortly after Augustine produces a commentary on St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians and becomes exercised by his disagreement with interpretations advanced by Jerome in his commentary on the same text. This gives rise to a protracted epistolary exchange between the two on the topics of mendacity, authority, and criticism which is (from a socio-historical view) rather fascinating.[6] We shall consider these epistles in the next section and begin by considering Augustine's treatment of lying in the two treatises. Of these, *pace* the author's own estimation of their utility, *De mendacio* is the more apt for our purposes precisely because of the rigor of the analysis it offers.

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[5] There seems to be very little work on these texts within the discipline proper other than a conference paper published last year: Roger D. Ray, "Christian Conscience and Pagan Rhetoric: Augustine's Treatises on Lying," *Studia Patristica* (2017) 321-5. Other than that, academic attention to the texts has been paid by scholars in other disciplines. Alan Brinton, working in ancient and late ancient philosophy, wrote "St. Augustine and the Problem of Deception in Religious Persuasion," *Religious Studies* 19.4 (1983) 437-450. Consideration is given to the question of lying and Augustine's position on it by ethicists like Matthew W. Puffer, "Retracing Augustine's Ethics: Lying, Necessity, and the Image of God." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 44.4 (2016) 685-720. And theologian Paul J. Griffiths has engaged extensively with Augustine on this question in "The Gift and the Lie: Augustine on Lying," *Communio* 26 (1999) 3-30, and *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004). Outside disciplines affiliated with religion and the study of antiquity, the texts have chiefly been considered by philosophers. This includes those working within continental philosophy and critical theory, like Remo Gramigna, "Augustine on Lying: A Theoretical Framework for the Study of Types of Falsehood," *Sign Systems Studies* 41.4 (2013) 446-487. Especially (and perhaps surprisingly) illuminative is the work of Hans van Ditmarsch, who uses Augustine's definitions of the lie as a basis for constructing a dynamic model of modal and doxastic logic that helps describe the effects of deception by falsehoods on social logics and interactions. See Hans van Ditmarsch (et al.), "On the Logic of Lying," *Games, Actions, and Social Software: Multidisciplinary Aspects*, Edd. Jan van Eijck and L.C. Verbrugge (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2012) 41-72.

Augustine takes a lie to be anything that a person says *contra mentem* – contrary to his or her mind -- in language games for which truth-telling is the rule. Early on in *De mendacio*, Augustine is careful to exempt from discussion certain language-games like joke-telling. The reason that jokes are not to be accounted lies, he writes, is that "by tone of voice and the affect of the joker they contain quite evident signification of a spirit that is no way deceiving (*fallentis*), even if it is not uttering true things."[7] While Augustine expresses misgivings about whether these language games are ones in which Christians ought to participate, he is nonetheless clear about the fact that he does not think untruths told within and as part of them should be counted as lies. We might also note – although Augustine himself does not – that these games are often recognized not only or not primarily on the basis of non-verbal markers but also from the verbal forms particular to them. For example, if we hear or read “There once was a man from Nantucket …” we will not respond by wondering or asking “What was his name?” -- but a child who has already attained fluency in a language (or even an adult who has never heard a limerick) might do exactly that.[8] What this shows us is that these sorts of language games might be part of a language but are not necessary to it; they stand as variations upon a “default” language game for which truth-telling is the rule.

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[6] See Aug., *epp*. 28, 40, 67-68, 71-73, 75, and 81-82. From these letters, it is clear that Jerome had written a response to *ep*. 28 that has not survived to us.

[7] Augustine, *De mendacio* 2.

After specifying the exemption of particular language games, Augustine then makes a distinction between lying and uttering falsehoods. This will be discussed in greater detail later, but at this juncture it suffices to say that Augustine does not deem one who utters a falsehood to be lying provided that she believes the falsehood to be true.[9] For example, millions of people who lived prior to the circumnavigation of the globe might have said (falsely, in my view) “the earth is flat” and they would not have been lying, only getting it wrong. By contrast, I would be lying if I said “the earth is flat,” because I believe it to be an oblate spheroid.[10] Put another way, a false utterance is not a lie if it is what the speaker has it in his mind to say, because it is not an utterance *contra mentem*; in such a case, the mind is what is false and not the speech.

At this point, Augustine offers a definition of the lie:

> Therefore, that man lies who has one thing in his mind and utters another with his words or by whatever sort of significations. On this basis it is also

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[8] This is probably not a joke that one should tell to children. Whether or not it is a joke that Christians should tell is, as Augustine has said, an entirely different question.
[9] Augustine, *De mendacio* 3.
[10] I might in certain (perhaps most) contexts say “the earth is round,” in which case I would not be lying – just being imprecise in a very ordinary way.

> said that the liar has a double heart (*duplex cor*), that is, a double thinking (*duplex cogitatio*): one is of the thing that he either knows or thinks to be true, and does not put forth (*profert*); the other is of the thing that he puts forth instead of it, knowing or thinking it to be false.[11]

This "doubleness" or duplicity, in Augustine's view, is the necessary and sufficient condition of the lie. He does entertain the question of whether deception – intended and/or effected – is a condition of the lie, and decides against both. It is rather easy for us to agree that an utterance made by a speaker *contra mentem* should still be considered a lie even if no one believes it and, therefore, no deception is actually effected by it. Children's first lies often have exactly this character: "Yes, I cleaned my room – just don't look under the bed!" But, as Augustine says, the question of the speaker's intention to deceive is "very subtle."[12]

He proposes, as a test case, a situation in which the speaker says something *contra mentem* with the intention that the listener *not* be deceived by the utterance but in fact believe what the speaker believes to be true. As an example, one might think of the dilemma of the rebellious teenager and the parental temptation to use "reverse psychology." We know that the rebellious teenager believes that anyone over forty is utterly clueless about how things really are in the world, and so he will dismiss as false whatever we say. Since we want him to believe what we think is true (and, so, avoid injuring both himself and others), we might tell him we believe the opposite, knowing he will then dismiss *that* as false and believe what is true.[13] While Augustine acknowledges that the speaker's intention to deceive the listener or to cause harm to a listener by means of the lie is a sin, he maintains that these intentions are extrinsic to the act of lying.

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[11] Augustine, *De mendacio* 3.

[12] *Ibid.*, 4.

We should be wary of concluding too quickly that Augustine thinks that the lie does not *entail* the speaker's intention to deceive the listener; it is rather that Augustine does not think that the speaker's intention to deceive is a required condition (i.e. a definitional criterion) for judging an utterance to be a lie.[14] What "the speaker's intention to deceive" means as Augustine has been using it in §§ 3-5 of *De mendacio* is this: the speaker's aim at effecting by her false utterance the listener's belief that a certain state of affairs -- a state of affairs that the speaker herself takes to be false, the state of affairs that is the content of the false utterance and the substance of the lie -- is true. Of course, when we want rebellious teenagers and suspicious friends to believe something other than the content of our speech, this intention to deceive is not present. But another intention to deceive very much *is*.

In lying, the speaker always wants to effect by her false utterance the listener's belief in at least one particular state of affairs: not necessarily that the content of the speaker's speech is true but *that the speaker believes it to be true*.[15] In other words, in lying, I may or may not want you to believe what I am saying about some third thing – that the earth is flat, that bandits are not lurking down the road you mean to travel, or whatever the substance of the lie happens to be. I may or may not want you to adopt a particular cognitive relation to the state of affairs I am presenting to you in my speech such that you believe the earth to be flat or the road to be free of bandits. But, when I am lying, I always want you to believe something about me and my intellective relation to this third thing: that *I believe* that the earth is flat, that *I think* there are no bandits lurking along that road, and so forth. I want you to see and accept something other than and contrary to my true cognitive relations to a third thing (something I am saying *contra mentem*) as if it were my mind.

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[13] Augustine, *De mendacio* 4, where he uses the example of a suspicious friend, a road on which the speaker knows bandits to be lurking, and the speaker's intention of effecting the suspicious friend's avoidance of that road.

[14] Paul Griffiths seems to miss this distinction between entailment and definition in concluding that "The question of the intention to deceive is sometimes present and sometimes absent in [Augustine's] definitions and discussions, but it is not required for a properly Augustinian understanding of the lie."-- *Lying*, 30. I will be arguing that, while not required as a definitional criterion of the lie, the speaker's intention to deceive as ordinarily entailed by the required definitional criteria needs to be taken into account for a full Augustinian understanding of the lie.

What makes this point "very subtle" and easy to overlook in a reading of Augustine is the fact that, in many cases, the grammatical "third things" about which a speaker lies are not "third things" at all. I might lie to you explicitly about myself or about my relation to you. Indeed, we often gravitate towards precisely these sorts of self-referential statements in our attempts to provide examples of lies.[16] The reason these sorts of self-referential lies come so immediately to mind, I would argue, is that they are the purest concentration of the lie; in them, the utterance constituting the lie makes explicit the deceptive intent entailed in all lies. But the use of these examples obfuscates the distinction between the speaker's intention that the listener believe "x" (the mendacious utterance) to be true and the intention that the listener believe "the speaker believes x" to be true. Ordinarily, if you believe that *I believe* my statement "I have read *Finnegan's Wake*," you will not take me to be mistaken or deluded in my belief that I have done so. Instead, you take me to be the "expert" on my cognitive relations: I am the one with direct access to them, so I am the one who can tell you what they are. Accordingly, you will also believe that I have, in fact, read *Finnegan's Wake*.

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[15] I would go so far as to argue that, if ever this intentionality is absent, what is happening is not "lying" but a language-game of a similar type to joke-telling – one where X does not intend Y to believe that X believes what X is saying – which have already been exempted as possible contexts for the lie. The most likely exception to this rule would be the case of those we term "pathological" liars.

[16] This may well be part of the reason that Griffiths overlooks this point in his definitional analysis of the lie; the vast majority of his examples of lies are self-referential statements – e.g., "I have read James Joyce's novel *Finnegan's Wake*," "I left my checkbook at home," "I weigh 150 lbs." cf. *Lying*, 32-37.

Augustine does, in fact, acknowledge this "intention to deceive" that the lie always entails in concluding his definitional analysis of the lie with an appeal to the Decalogue: "… it is written: 'Do not speak false testimony.' And every lie is embraced by this category: for whoever utters something bears witness to his spirit (or mind; *animo*)."[17] Implicit in this acknowledgement is a statement on the universal purpose of speech. If the lie (as "extraordinary" speech that must be distinguished from "speech" as a general rule) always entails the speaker's intent to deceive hearers about her cognitive relations, then truthful speech (the ordinary "default") always entails the disclosure of the speaker's mind (*mens*, *cor*, *animus*) to hearers. For Augustine, then, this disclosure of the speaker's mind – her cognitive relations – to others is the ordinary purpose and function of language.

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[17] Augustine, *De mendacio* 6.

It is worth considering how it is that language accomplishes this manifestation of the speaker's mind. Certainly, this question is at the heart of discussions of skepticism and the "problem of other minds" that have been addressed in novel ways within ordinary language philosophy.[18] Given that I have no access to another's experience (the phenomenality), including that of his cognitive relations, how can I know his "mind"? That is, how can I know if, when he says "I am feeling pain," he is experiencing the same sort of thing as what I am experiencing when I say "I am feeling pain" or whether he is noticing in himself the same intellective relation that I notice in myself when both of us say "I know that my Redeemer liveth"? The solution that OLP provides consists in the fact that, while access to one's own "mind" (one's "experience," the phenomenality of cognitive relations) is private and inaccessible to all others, language is essentially communal, its use being governed by widely accessible rules. Learning a language is, therefore, a process of identifying "private experiences" or cognitive phenomena as the conditions for the deployment of communal rules about "what we should say" as well as a process of learning the phonological and syntactical rules for constructing utterances.

As an example, I was taught to say "The Battle of Hastings was fought in 1066." Being taught this and other similar utterances ("The Magna Carta was signed in 1215" or "In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue") taught me the rule of my linguistic community: how to go on in similar situations. That is, I will not need to be taught the specific utterance "The Battle of Waterloo was fought in 1815" in order to generate it if I come across this thing called "the Battle of Waterloo" and am able to connect the fighting of it with the year 1815. Having learned the rule, I can identify that utterance as "what we should say" about the date of the Battle of Waterloo. My learning of the rule has two parts: the first is the grammar of the utterance – how to form such an utterance with different particular elements; the second part is to learn the conditions under which to deploy this utterance – what cognitive phenomena call for such an utterance and what external and social circumstances require this sort of utterance as a response (e.g., someone asks a question about the Battle of Waterloo and I am either expected or allowed to answer.)[19] Learning this second amounts to indexing the communally intelligible utterance to my private experience, to what things seem like to me mentally or "internally" when that type of utterance is the one required (i.e., what we might call my knowing or thinking that the Battle of Waterloo was fought in 1815.) It is the "internal" type of the second of these that makes utterances I form by this rule not only "what *we* should say" in my linguistic community but also "what *I* would say."

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[18] See Wittgenstein *PI* § 293, for the well-known "beetle in the box" illustration.

For Augustine, lying amounts to a severing of this connection between communal utterance and the speaker's private "mind," what we today might prefer to call "experience" or "cognitive phenomenality." To tell a lie, one must know and continue to use the communal rules of lexicon and syntax that enable the production of grammatically correct utterances; if it is to be intelligible to other speakers of the language, the lie must always be in the repertoire of “things one *might* say” within that language. But, at the same time, the liar refuses to follow the communal rules that index that particular utterance to a particular set of phenomenal conditions. In lying, a speaker refuses to follow what he has already learned as the community’s rule for “what we should say” (the utterance that would display or communicate his mind to other speakers of his language) and substitutes something else in its place.

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[19] This is not necessarily – nor even ordinarily – an especially "robust" phenomenality. That is, it does not seem like much of anything to me to know that the Battle of Waterloo was fought in 1815. My having this cognitive relation to that battle and date produces very little in the way of *qualia* of experience; it is simply part of my mental "furniture," as it were.

Lying is therefore a refusal to accept language as a communal gift and represents instead the speaker’s choice to “hoard” and privatize language. Paul Griffiths’ work on Augustine’s theory of duplicity has focused particularly on what we (along with the bishop of Hippo) can identify as the sinfulness of this aspect of the lie – *viz*., the disruption of right relations between the speaker and the LORD constituted by the speaker’s refusal to accept a gift as a gift and his choice instead to treat the gift as a private possession. Certainly, Griffiths’ point stands that, for Augustine, this gift-refusing disposition essential to duplicity is sufficient to make lying sinful *in* and *per se*, even absent any intention on the part of the speaker to deceive others or any effectual deception. Of course Augustine would be the first to admit the possibility that speakers might choose to lie out of sheer perversity – spite, or *phthonos* – an intention to disobey the rules of grace simply because it is possible for them to do so.[20] But this tells only half the story that Augustine presents. In most if not all cases, Augustine takes the lie to entail the speaker's hope that the substitution (what he says *contra mentem*) will be accepted by listeners in the place of what is really in his mind.

Refusal to consider this intent to deceive that Augustine takes to be entailed by the speaker's refusal of the gift of language leads to an incomplete view of what the bishop of Hippo presents as the sinful politics of the lie. Augustine takes lying to disorder not only the liar's direct relations to the LORD through his adoption of a gift-refusing disposition but also his relations with other human persons and those of his relations to the LORD that are mediated through relations to other human persons. Consideration of the aims and potential effects of the lie *ad extra* shows that, for Augustine, "refusal of the gift" is also what constitutes the individual's will to power and impedes what Augustine takes to be the spiritual purpose of the Church: seeking unity in the truth. To understand this, we must compare truth-telling as an act *ad extra* – *viz*., what Augustine takes to be the function and effect upon one's relations to and with others of disclosing one's mind to others through non-mendacious (that is, ordinary) linguistic rule-following – with the *ad extra* functions and effects of the lie.

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[20] We might think here of Augustine's explication of his motives in stealing pears from a neighbor's orchard in *Confessiones* II 4, 9. The theft was not motivated by the superiority of the fruit possessed by another (the pears were not especially enticing) nor by hunger (Augustine and his mates threw most of it to the pigs rather than eating it.) Instead, Augustine writes, "we took pleasure from the deed merely because it was forbidden."

These differences can be seen in how Augustine treats his contemporaries' arguments for "ethical" lying, the discussion of which takes up about half of the treatise *De mendacio*. The arguments that Augustine here presents for and against "moral mendacity" agree on one fundamental point: the lie is an attempt on the part of the speaker to instantiate a politics that accords with his or her will in the place of one that accords with the will of other actors. Accordingly, all of the lively arguments for ethical lying are context-dependent. That is to say, Augustine does not seem aware of any Christian arguments that lying is morally indifferent *per se*, or that lying is always good or justifiable. Rather, the arguments all depend upon the comparative goodness of two competing politics and run as follows: lying is not good; but, in certain cases, the relations and orderings that the lie effects are better, more just, and more in accord with the LORD's will than the relations and orderings effected by truth-telling; therefore; in these cases, it is right for the Christian to lie. On this logic, determination of the propriety of lying in a particular case hinges upon accurate evaluation of whether the politics effected by truth-telling is evil or damaging enough to outweigh the evil inherent in or the damages that result from the act of duplicity. What is remarkable – and radical – about Augustine's arguments against lying in these cases is that he assents to the criteria of this testing of politics. Rather than arguing that lying is always wrong for some other reason or on some other measure, he argues that mendacity is universally to be refused because *lying always creates the worst possible politics*.

A fine distinction needs to be made here between the evaluation of the politics of speech (the relations and orderings invariably effected by lying or truth-telling) and "political" outcomes of the sort involved in a strict consequentialism. Augustine has, as Griffiths notes, very little interest in whether or not a lie "works" – *viz*., whether it is effective in deceiving listeners and, so, preventing or producing the particular results at which it aims. What he considers and tests is not the goodness of what (in the event) happens as a result of the lie; much like Kant, Augustine does not seem to think any speaker could know or accurately predict real-world outcomes. What Augustine thinks we can know and, so, evaluate is the goodness of the ordering that does or would result from adopting an *aim* at a particular outcome as a rule for speech.[21] In other words, Augustine engages these arguments for lying by asking if Christians should accept particular aims as exceptions to the general rule governing speech. Again, the general rule or "default aim" in language is truth-telling: the speaker discloses her mind to others by saying the statement that (she has learned) is indexed within her community to the particular cognitive experience she is having within the particular language-game in which she is participating. So Augustine is not interested in arguments about whether, for instance, lying is good in this scenario because it saves the life of a human person, whether the world is better or more just with that life being saved than with it lost. Instead, he is engaging with claims about whether the ordering of relations (of the speaker internally, of the speaker to the LORD, of the speaker to others, etc.) effected by a speaker's prioritization of a rule like "say what seems to you conducive to saving the life of a human person" over the rule "say what seems to you to constitute disclosing your mind in speech" is good.

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[21] In this, he somewhat anticipates Kant's formulation of categorical imperatives in the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, although there are notable differences.

And this is partly why Augustine does not present elaborate or detailed scenarios or examples of potential rules that might require duplicity in speech. For example, he considers the question of whether it is right to lie to prevent the death of a guest who has sought shelter with you.[22] This is perhaps the ethical "test case" for lying that is most familiar to modern readers. Kant elaborated on this scenario in his 1797 essay "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy" to suggest that a murderer comes to one's door seeking the life of the man you are sheltering and asking you to disclose what you know of his whereabouts, thus forcing the question of whether to lie or tell the truth.[23] The most common contemporary version of this has you imagine that you are living in the Third Reich and asks whether it is right or just for you to lie about the whereabouts of the Jews hiding in your attic when the Gestapo comes to the door looking to round people up to send off to Auschwitz. The modern examples take pains to emphasize the cruel injustice of the life-taking that is part of the potential liar's *status quo*. That is, what will unfold from this politics, the outcome that will result if the speaker tells the truth and does not lie – if he makes no attempt to control and reorder the political situation by withholding his mind from the view of others and substituting something *contra mentem* in its place – is disordered, damaged, and damaging. The Christian rule to love one's neighbors seemingly should motivate one to do whatever might be done (up to and including engaging in duplicitous speech) to alter this political state of affairs by preventing further damage to persons, putting things in proper order, and restoring justice.

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[22] Augustine, *De mendacio* 9.
[23] Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy" 8:425-7.

Augustine's argument here is not that one ought to love the LORD more than one's neighbor and so follow the divine command not to lie rather than sinning to save another human life. Rather, he says that lying to save another person's life fails precisely at being "love of neighbor." Because lying is a spiritually self-destructive act, loving another by lying is not love. Augustine writes:

> So how is it not incredibly perverse to say that, so one person might live bodily, another is obligated to die spiritually? For the very love of neighbor takes its limit (or end-point; *terminum*) from each person's love of himself. He says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Therefore, how does each one love "as himself" the person for whom he should lose eternal life so as to provide temporal life?[24]

It seems that Augustine is employing the same logic familiar from the Platonic tradition and in the writings of the Cappadocians that the spiritual is of greater weight and importance than the bodily. Hence, the one who fails to see the proper relation and order that obtains between the two will himself be disordered (spiritually and/or bodily.)

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[24] Augustine, *De* mendacio 9.

It is tempting to read Augustine's references to self-love as an explicit acknowledgement of the very faults that many have found in the distinction he makes in *De doctrina christiana* and elsewhere between *usus* and *fruitio* and his identification of the former with neighbor-love and the latter with love of the LORD.[25] Briefly put, Augustine says that humans ought to "enjoy" (*frui*) the LORD as a telos; as only the LORD is all-sufficient, only the LORD can be a "stopping point" where love can rest in delight rather than seeking some other end. Since human persons and other finite creatures cannot be ends in themselves, we must not treat them as such and instead must "use" (*uti*) them as part of the larger act of loving the LORD. The critique of this, levied and responded to by a host of modern scholars, holds (following Kant to some extent) that it is selfish and unloving to treat human persons as means rather than as ends in themselves.[26] On this reading, Augustine's vision of Christian love seems to concern only the self and the self's spiritual advantage (or salvation), prioritizing this above the dignity and needs of all other human persons. This statement from *De mendacio* seems to be saying quite the same thing: the Christian ought to prioritize her own individual spiritual well-being above the well-being of the neighbor and to the neglect of loving and responsible human relations.

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[25] See, e.g., *De doctrina christiana* 1.22.20, as well as *De diversis quaestionibus* 13.

[26] The initial critique was levied by Karl Holl, "Augustins Innere Entwicklung," *Gesammelte Aufsatze zur Kirchen geschichte*, III (1928), pp. 54–116. This was elaborated by Anders Nygren in *Agape and Eros*, trans. P.S. Watson, (London: S. P. C. K., 1953). Substantial and more recent responses include: Holte, Ragner. *Beatitude et sagesse: Saint Augustin et le problème de la fin d'homme dans la philosophie ancienne*. Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1962; O'Donovan, Oliver. *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); Verheijen, Luc. "Le premier livre du De doctrina Christiana d'Augustin – Un traité de 'télicologie" bibliqua," in J. den Boeft and J. van Oort, edd., *Augustiniana Traiectana,* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1987); and Gregory, Eric S. *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.)

But there is something more happening here. Augustine is arguing that failure to prioritize the spiritual over the bodily amounts to a failure to love oneself and, so, a failure to love one's neighbor because neighbor-love is (for the Christian) defined in relation to the *terminus* of self-love. And *terminus* does not seem to be functioning here as a synonym for *telos*. Augustine is quick to say that no Christian would or should hesitate to sacrifice her own temporal life for the temporal life of another. And the objection he has is not that sacrificing one's spiritual life for the neighbor's physical life impedes achievement of one's proper (spiritual) *telos*. Rather, sacrificing one's spiritual life to save a neighbor's temporal life, the bishop of Hippo writes, cannot be right or just or loving because it is grammatically incoherent. As a comparandum, he gives the act of sacrificing one's temporal life in order to save one's own temporal life. The absurdity of this latter is clear given that the object sacrificed is identical to the object one intends to save. Accordingly, it would seem that the bishop of Hippo sees an indissoluble relation between one's own spiritual integrity and one's love for others. Therefore, whatever one might be doing in attempting to save the life of a neighbor by lying, it is and must be something other than "loving the neighbor."

In his treatment of the next potential rule that might require the lie, Augustine begins to indicate what this other "something" might be. The proposition is that the aim of preventing (sexual) corruption of one's body ought to override the aim of disclosing one's mind in speech. Augustine replies:

> … [T]here is no chastity (*pudicitiam*) of the body except that which depends upon the integrity (*integritate*) of the mind; if the latter is ruptured, then it is necessary that the former fall, even if it seems to be intact …. Therefore, in no way should the mind corrupt itself by a lie for the sake of its body, which it knows remains incorrupt if incorruption does not depart from the mind itself.[27]

Again, we see Augustine arguing that the thing one might aim at by lying (love of neighbor, preservation of bodily integrity) is in fact destroyed by the lie. The lust (*libido*) of another does not "corrupt" the victim's body. By lying, however, the potential victim corrupts his own body because he is engaging in lust, which Augustine defines as "an appetite of the mind by which any temporal things at all are prioritized above eternal goods."[28] Accordingly, strange as it may sound to us, Augustine would say that the putative "love of neighbor" that would have us telling lies to save others' lives would be an instance of lust.

On some measures, this lust does not seem to be especially harmful *ad extra*. Perhaps we would agree with Augustine that the disordered priorities of the liar's desires damage her soul, but this still seems rather a solipsistic, completely self-interested, and anti-social reason for forbidding duplicity. It is true that, at least in the *De mendacio*, Augustine does not say much to give the reader the sense that the ordering of relations that is cultivated by refusing the lie is good or beneficial for anyone other than the speaker. But the points that he does make on this score are significant.

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[27] Augustine, *De mendacio* 10. Augustine is not arguing that the body incurs no damage by being violated or raped, but he takes care to distinguish this damage from "corruption."

[28] *Ibid.*

The first is made rather often throughout the text but is very easy to miss or overlook, particularly by those reading the *De mendacio* in translation. This is Augustine's identification of lying as a form of *iniquitas*, which is commonly rendered into English as "iniquity." But it could as easily be rendered "inequity," because it is the privative form of *aequitas* (equity.) Ordinarily, it is used to mean much the same as "wickedness" without any particular reference to questions of equality or its lack. In this text, however, Augustine does intend that reference, which he emphasizes by juxtaposing *iniquitas* and *aequitas*. For example, in treating the proposed rule that the aim of saving human lives should override the rule for truth-telling, he writes the following:

> Therefore, there is nothing we need to attend to in this question except this: whether the lie is *iniquitas*. Since this is asserted by the texts mentioned above, it should be seen that to ask whether one ought to lie for the sake of another's safety is the same as asking whether one ought to be wicked (or inequitable; *iniquus*) for the sake of another's safety. But if the safety of the mind, which cannot be kept safe except by equity, rejects this, and commands us to prefer it not only to the temporal safety of another but even to our own – what reason remains, they say, that we ought to doubt the fact that a lie ought never to be told by anyone?[29]

Of course, it may be argued, Augustine is here focusing upon the safety of the speaker's mind (or soul; *animus*.) Perhaps the "equity" in question is one internal to the individual – *viz*., the identity and integrity (as opposed to duplicity and fracture) that obtains in truth-telling between the speaker's mind and her speech.

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[29] Augustine, *De mendacio* 9.

But Augustine does not see this inward equity and integrity – or their lack -- as remaining "contained" within the speaker and distinct from the equity and integrity of the speaker's community. Rather, the problem with duplicitous utterances is that the internal inequity between mind and speech moves ad extra, creating socio-political inequity and damaging the integrity of the broader order. This "external" inequity of the lie consists in the speaker's refusal to participate equitably in the communal process of mutual self-disclosure of the mind through speech and, accordingly, the submission of the self (her mind, her speech) to the judgment of other members of the community. By withholding information and substituting false information in its place, the speaker attempts to control the judgments that listeners will make and, accordingly, the actions they will choose to take in response to those judgments. That is, mendacity is the liar's attempt to arrogate to himself and "repossess" the judgment and agency of others.

This is, as I have argued, what Augustine takes to be the aim of the speaker in every instance of the lie. If I lie to you, it is only because I do not want you to make the judgments that (I think) you *would* make or take the actions that (I think) you *would* take if I were to share my thoughts with you, disclose my mind to you, and tell you the truth. In other words, I want you not to think or do what *you* would think or do but, rather, what *I* would have you think and do. And Augustine claims that, even in cases where what the speaker would have the listener think and do are better and more just things than what the listener himself would think and do, the order created by the lie is always worse than that the listener is creating by and through his judgments and actions. The reason is precisely that the lie is an instance of domination and, therefore, creates inequity.

Throughout the treatise *De mendacio*, Augustine decries this usurpation of power over others through the deployment of the lie, but the sustained treatment of the question occurs in §§12-14 where he considers the claim that "the deeds (*facta*) of human persons include not only what they do (*faciunt*) but also those things that they suffer (*patiuntur*) by consent."[30] On this logic, one is guilty of committing (or, at least, of aiding and abetting) the sin of another person if she has it in her power to prevent him sinning and does not do so. Augustine's argument is not that a speaker would *not*, by lying, actually be able to prevent the listener's sinning, but that it is not, properly speaking, "in her power" to prevent it. This might seem an untenable distinction if we take "power" to denote one's ability to effect a particular outcome; if a lie would be effective in preventing sin, then the liar does "have it in her power." But Augustine is operating with a different understanding:

> If someone says to us that he is going to commit parricide, then we commit it with him if (being able to do so) we do not kill him before he can do it, when we cannot in some other way restrain or impede him. For it is possible to say, with the same words as before: "You acted (*fecisti*) with him, because he would not have done x if you had done y." I would not will either evil, but I was able to avoid only the one which was in my power (*potestate*.) I was not obligated (*non debui*) to impede by my malefaction another thing that belongs to another, which I was not able to extinguish by my advice. Therefore, he who does not sin on behalf of another does not approve the one sinning; and he is not pleased by either [sin] who does not will either to be committed: but by his power (*potestate*) he does not

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[30] Augustine, *De mendacio* 12.

> perpetrate that [sin] which pertains to him; the one that [pertains] to another, he condemns with his will alone.[31]

What we see here is that Augustine takes power (*potestas*) to be regulated not by the agent's ability to cause effects but by relations of owing and owning (*debere.*) Augustine makes no argument against the contrafactual ("he would not have done x if you had done y") but frames the question in terms of the limits of possession. Because the parricide's action belongs to him, the speaker cannot attempt to *own* the act – to make the sin his own -- by committing sin "on behalf of another." The converse of this is that the speaker does not owe his own sinful act to the sinful act of another (or to the prevention of it.) In light of this, Augustine's arguments against lying for supposedly charitable aims read less like exhortations to ignore the well-being of others and just look out for one's own salvation and spiritual self-interests. Instead, we begin to see them as vehement assertions that the desire for the well-being of others, whether physical or spiritual (that they not sin, that they not be sinned against), never justifies the inequity of an attempt to dominate and possess what belongs to the other. And since, in the case of mendacity, "what belongs to the other" is his judgment or his agency, then what the liar attempts to possess comes very close to being "the other himself."

Finally, Augustine touches on the question of how this inequity damages not only the dyadic relationship between the liar and the listener but also the community as a whole – and the Christian community in particular. The reason for this is that all communities (including the Church) use and depend upon language, and the learning of language requires that members make assents in faith. That is, we do not test and weigh and evaluate whether or not the rules of lexicon and syntax which we are being taught in learning a language seem “right” to us; we simply assent to them. If we do not assent, then we do not learn the language. But our ability to learn these rules and how to “play” by them depends upon their being deployed with some consistency by those teaching us.

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[31] Augustine, *De mendacio* 14.

In the case of the Church, the stakes are at their highest because these assents of faith are made to grammatical rules concerning the highest (spiritual) truths, ones upon which salvation depends. Augustine explains it this way:

> The doctrine of salvation consists partly in things to be believed (*credendis*) and partly in things to be understood (*intelligendis*); it is not possible to get to the things that are to be understood unless you first believe the things that are to be believed. But in what way should someone be believed who thinks one ought to lie sometimes, since he might be lying at the time when he is instructing us to believe? … For once the authority of truth is broken or even slightly diminished, everything will remain doubtful – including those things which, unless they are believed to be true, cannot be held as certain.[32]

In the next section we will turn our attention to how Augustine understands believing and understanding and other cognitive and verbal relations that constitute the particular task of the Church and the grounds of her unity and integrity.

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[32] Augustine, *De mendacio* 11; 17.

## *6.2. Truth, Unity, and Assent*

In section 8 of the treatise *De mendacio*, Augustine becomes remarkably exercised about an interpretation of the argument between Sts. Peter and Paul over Judaizing practices in Galatians 2:11-13. The reading in question is that of Jerome in his commentary on that epistle, and it presents Paul's correction of the elder Apostle as a "simulation," which Augustine decries as a form of lying. Essentially, Jerome argues that Paul was not really disagreeing with or correcting Peter but that both effectually staged the contest between them so as to displace and resolve tensions between those Jews who had turned to Christ but still esteemed the Law (who followed Peter) and Gentile converts who did not have to observe the Law (whose advocate Paul would be.) Augustine is having none of this hermeneutical line, decides to say so to Jerome (in epistle 28), and the two end up having a heated epistolary debate about the matter beginning in 394 or 395 (the same year that the treatise *De mendacio* was written) and ending in 404 or 405. A great deal of the drama in their exchange concerns problems with the ancient post. Epistle 40 from Augustine to Jerome, sent in 397, is not immediately delivered, but ends up being copied and publicized. Eventually, a copy found on an island in the Adriatic is picked up, addressed to Jerome, and delivered to him in 398. Jerome assumes that Augustine orchestrated the publication of the letter (and perhaps he did) and lambastes him for this; Augustine gets upset that Jerome either has not answered three letters that he sent (epistles 28, 40, and 67) or that the replies

Jerome sent were getting lost in the Mediterranean because Jerome will not use the deacon Cyprian as a courier. Jerome finally gets all of Augustine's last three letters simultaneously via Cyprian, becomes apoplectic in the face of the bishop's criticisms, and issues a scathing response (epistle 68). After a year or two of further acrimonious letters sent back-and-forth, both men finally agree to let bygones be bygones and "play nicely" with one another.[33]

But the letters are also rife with dramatic irony. Both men embody and enact the politics that fund their interpretations of the debate between Sts. Peter and Paul. That is to say, in their argument with one another, Jerome and Augustine are playing by different sets of rules regulating speech and truth-telling. Jerome's interpretation of Galatians is dependent upon his assumption that speech should be regulated by a rule of deference to superior authority. His argument is directed specifically against those who would think "that Paul truly resisted the apostle Peter and recklessly did an injury to one who was ahead of him in the Gospel."[34] Jerome's suggestion is that, as a "junior apostle," Paul "was not arguing a point but [acting] as if speaking against [Peter] in public so that, from the fact of Paul's resisting and arguing against him, those of the Gentiles who believed would be saved."[35] Eager to dissuade readers from concluding that the Scriptures would approve a situation in which Paul publicly and actually contradicted and corrected his senior and superior, Jerome becomes exercised and writes: “by what authority -- what utter cheek -- did he dare to find fault with Peter …?”[36] After all, Jesus tells his disciples in Luke 17:3 “If your brother sins against you, go and reprove him between you and him alone.” Taking as a rule that correction of another ought to be done in private, he concludes that Paul’s “correction” of Peter was a simulation, and that Peter was most likely in on the ruse:

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[33] As Jerome puts it in ep. 81, "let us playfully exercise on the field of the scriptures without causing injury to one another."

[34] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 2:11-13; the Latin I have rendered as "ahead of him in the Gospel" is literally "his predecessor in the Gospel," implying that Peter arrived temporally ahead of Paul and/or had made further progress than the newer apostle.

[35] Ibid.

> And how, when [Jesus] commands that this is to be done in the case of the least of the brethren, does [Paul] dare so steadfastly to point fingers at the greatest of the apostles, shamelessly and in the public eye? – Unless it pleased Peter also to be censured, and Paul did not do him this injury ….[37]

The fundamental rule Jerome takes to be operative here is of much the same sort that could prevent the exercise of *parrhêsia*: a speaker ought not “dare” to correct another in public, but especially not when the other is superior to the speaker in status. For Jerome, the rule not to correct one’s betters in public is ordered above the rule to tell the truth such that it seems to him more acceptable for an apostle to “simulate” the correction of another (to dissemble and not tell the truth) than actually to be admonishing a superior.

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[36] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 2:11-13. To further underscore this point, Jerome suggests that Paul would be a hypocrite if he were correcting Peter for permitting Judaizing amongst Christians while he himself approved the circumcision of Timothy.

[37] *Ibid.*

Finally, it should be noted that Jerome takes the aim of this dissembling to be the absorption – rather than the ending – of division within the Church. As Jerome tells it:

> Paul resisted Peter and the others according to how it appeared in the public eye so that … both peoples [Jews and Gentiles] might be made safe while those who praised circumcision followed Peter and those who did not want to be circumcised preached the freedom of Paul.[38]

In other words, both Jews and Gentiles can be included in the Church without having to come to an agreement about the issue of circumcision and other Judaizing practices precisely because each apostle undertakes to act as the representative of one of two opposing theological camps. Those who praise circumcision remain in the body because Peter remains an authority within the Church and propounds the view they hold. Those who refuse circumcision remain in the body because Paul represents their view and is also accepted as an authority within the Church.

For Jerome, then, the aim of the salvation of persons (accomplished by their remaining within the Church) is ordered above the aim of theological unity and may, in fact, be accomplished through factionalism. It is also ordered above the aim of truth-telling (disclosing one's mind in speech) and so may be accomplished through the use of duplicity and dissembling. As Jerome says, Jesus himself practiced this politics of simulation for the sake of saving souls:

> Nor is it any wonder that, although men are righteous, they nevertheless simulate on some matters for the time, on account of their own salvation

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[38] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 2:11-13.

> or that of others, since even our Lord himself did not have sin nor the flesh of sin but took up a simulation of sinful flesh that, condemning sin in his flesh, he might make us the justice of God in himself.[39]

Jerome was well-known as an ascetic and esteemed by the Pope himself as an authority on Scriptural languages and interpretation when he received the first letter from Augustine, a man younger than himself who had just barely been ordained as a bishop, reproving his interpretation of the argument between the apostles.[40] That is to say, he found himself in the position of Peter in the very situation that he had argued that Scripture would not have permitted or approved: being corrected (and that quite publicly after the loss and copying of Augustine's second letter) by a junior and an authority inferior in status to himself. From Jerome's perspective, then, Augustine is not merely criticizing an interpretation of the text in question; he is, in so doing, actively violating all of the rules that Jerome argued are of highest priority for regulating speech and should prevent exactly this type of criticism and correction.

In light of this, it is little wonder that Jerome's first reply to Augustine's letters (epistle 68) does not address at all the substance of Augustine's criticisms, only the propriety of his voicing them. Jerome sometimes says that he would welcome a disputation about the scriptures, provided it were conducted "without rancor."[41] After all, he hardly takes himself to be injured by the fact that Augustine holds a different interpretation to his own.[42] But what Jerome seems to take to constitute "rancor" and "injury" is Augustine's *voicing* of this different interpretation, and his emphasizing the point that it is, in fact, different to Jerome's.

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[39] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 2:11-13.

[40] Jerome had come to the attention of Pope Damasus I in 382 for his work in helping to resolve a schism in Antioch and was employed as a sort of "papal secretary" there for several years.

[41] Ep. 68.1.

It seems Jerome thinks that this sort of argument over interpretations is never appropriate or justifiable – or, at least, not from a young upstart like Augustine -- when he writes:

> Far be it from me to dare to attack anything of Your Beatitude's books. It is enough for me to prove my own and not to pick at those of someone else. Besides, Your Wisdom knows full well that everyone is full of his own opinion and that it belongs to childish boasting (which they used to do as teenagers) to seek fame for their own name by leveling charges at famous men.[43]

The trope of the difference in age and authority between the two men is repeated throughout Jerome's letters. He alludes to the account of the boxing match between the aged Entellus and the young Dares (in which the elder boxer beats the younger to a pulp) in Vergil's *Aeneid*.[44] The theme continues in the next letter Jerome sends (epistle 72), which also lacks any defense of his interpretation of the argument between the apostles in light of Augustine's attack upon it. Jerome accuses Augustine of "pestering an old man" and tells him to go find some "overeducated upper-class youths" to play with if he wants to get some exercise or display his learning.[45] There are plenty of these, Jerome says, hanging about in

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[42] Augustine, *ep*. 68.2.
[43] Augustine [Jerome writing], *ep*. 68.2
[44] Augustine, *ep*. 69.2; cf. Vergil, *Aen*. 5.368-484.
[45] Augustine, *ep*. 72.2,3.

Rome "who could and would dare to get in the fray with you and to come to grips with a bishop in disputation of the sacred Scriptures."[46] In other words, if Augustine wants to be an impudent whelp attacking those above his station in order to show off, then he ought to find some other impudent whelps who are in the habit of attacking those above their station (including bishops like Augustine) in order to show off.

Here again, though, Jerome seems to reject the entire idea of criticism even absent any inferiority of the critic's status relative to that of his target:

> I am not such a dullard that, if you have different opinions [to mine], I should think myself injured by you. But if you reproach my statements point by point and seek a reason for (or account of; *rationem*) my writings and would compel me to emend what I have written and to sing a palinode and to restore my sight -- in this our friendship is injured; in this the laws of the relation between us are violated.[47]

While we in the academy today might consider the acts that Jerome here rejects (making objections in fine or point by point, asking for accounts and seeking reasons, suggesting emendations) as fundamental to intellectual pursuit, it is significant to note that Jerome takes them to constitute damage of interpersonal relations. And he makes a significant distinction between these acts of disagreeing and the presence of divergent opinions or interpretations. Put another way, Jerome seems to consider mental disagreement non-threatening to relationships but vocal disagreement destructive of them.

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[46] Augustine, *ep.* 72.2,3..

[47] Augustine, *ep.* 72.4. The reference to the singing of a palinode (literally a "taking-it-back song") to restore one's sight comes from the mythological account that Homer was struck blind by the gods for maligning Helen's virtue in his epics (by implying that she went willingly with Paris away from her husband Menelaus off to Troy), but had his sight restored after composing a song in which he retracted his earlier view and lauded Helen's wifely virtue.

In this retort to Augustine, therefore, Jerome is playing by the same rule that he took to be regulating the exchange between Peter and Paul for the telos of the stability of the Church and the salvation of her members. The diversity of opinions held intellectually by different groups or individuals does no harm or damage to anyone, so long as they are not voiced or brought to light. Accordingly, it is perfectly fine if there are factions holding different theological views and practices within the Church – so long as they are all able to remain *within* the Church. What makes for ecclesial unity, therefore, is not intellective agreement on a single common orthodoxy or orthopraxy but rather the stability of a hierarchy of authority that operates through relations of deference and personal agreeability amongst authorities as well as an immutable consistency on the part of each (i.e., no one in authority is ever to be seen to be changing his mind) as a sort of visible infallibility. What is required in situations where real disagreements are held mentally is not contradiction and challenge aiming at establishing through competitive contest which of multiple views is the correct one. Rather, the proper response to disagreements will be silence or simulation aimed at maintaining the structure of authority, the agreeability of persons in authority to one another in speech and action, and the visible constancy of the views of individuals to those in authority under them.

For his part, Augustine seems not to realize that Jerome actually practices what he preaches – that the elder ascetic believes and himself abides by the very rules of propriety for speech that conditioned his interpretation of the argument between Sts. Peter and Paul. As a result, he and Jerome are continuously talking past one another in their epistolary exchange. While Jerome takes offense when another dares to voice disagreement with his views, Augustine almost begs Jerome to disagree and argue with him, even in attempting to smooth his correspondent's ruffled feathers:

> But if by chance there are some things found in some of my writings in which I am found to hold another opinion in another way than you do, it was not said against you, but I think you ought to know that what seemed right to me was what was written by me; or if you cannot know it, then believe it. Therefore, I would of course say this: that, if something in my writings disturbs you, I am not only readier than ever to accept in a brotherly fashion what you opine to the contrary – delighted either by my being corrected or by your being benevolent – but I also entreat and beg this from you.[48]

Augustine seems unable to see or believe that Jerome does not feel the same openness to or eagerness for "correction" that he himself does. It might be difficult for readers not to take this – as Jerome does – as a challenge, a false humility or deliberate goading of the target of criticism. In fact, Jerome quotes this very statement Augustine made in his reply and categorizes it as "goading" and "boasting of learning."[49] His retort is that he cannot offer criticism of anything in Augustine's writings because he has never bothered to take the time to read anything Augustine has written. But, Jerome continues, if he did want to actually look at them, he would not fault them for disagreeing with his own opinions (since he is a mere nobody) but for any ways in which they might diverge from ancient (that is, traditionally authoritative) interpretations.

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[48] Augustine, *ep*. 67.2.

[49] Augustine, *ep*. 72.3,5.

Augustine's idea of what relations make for "authority" are strikingly different to Jerome's. If it were to be admitted that "useful lies" of the type that Jerome proposes were to be found in Scripture, then there would never be a way of coming communally to a true understanding of what is written:

> What statement could be proffered from those Scriptures whose weight would crush the improbity of contentious falsehood? For as soon as you proffered it, if the person contending against you has another way of thinking, he will say that what you proffered was something the writer lied about for some honest and useful purpose … Or will it seem to have been said truly in the place where what is said is what the reader thinks, but when something crops up that is contrary to the opinion of the reader, that will be classified as a useful lie?[50]

As we see, Augustine clearly thinks that the basic function of authority is to correct the erroneous opinions of others. Should readers grant that authority at any time employs a lie – that lying can be permitted by the rules governing authoritative speech -- those who need to be corrected by it would themselves act as the "rule" over it insofar as they would need to make judgments about which authoritative statements are true and which are false. And, of course, it is precisely the judgment of readers that requires correction. They are likely to classify as falsehoods any statements in Scripture that they find it difficult to adopt in behaviour (*mores*) or belief (*fides*).[51]

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[50] Augustine, *ep.* 40 3,3.

Augustine makes a distinction between divinely inspired authorities (like the Scriptures) which always tell and speak the truth and well-intentioned Christian exegetes (such as he and Jerome are) who should tell the truth but might nonetheless be saying something incorrect or erroneous. If, as Augustine argues in the *De mendacio*, telling the truth amounts to disclosing one's mind in speech, it is of course possible that what one has in mind, believes to be true, and discloses to others in speech is not actually the way things are. In other words, human persons can get it wrong. Speaking with integrity rather than duplicity does not guarantee that what we speak will contain veracity rather than error. So, then, the distinction made is between telling the truth (disclosing one's mind in speech) and speaking the truth (disclosing in one's speech that which is in the LORD's mind – the way things really are.)[52]

Augustine takes integrity to be the rule for all Christian speech but veracity to be the aim of the Church, particularly communal intellectual inquiry among Christians aided by speech. While Jerome's view was that differences of opinion on orthodoxy and orthopraxy might be contained within the Church, Augustine comes to identify the Church's unity with the truth – or, rather the Truth: Jesus

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[51] Augustine, *ep*. 28.3,3

[52] The use of the different verbs "tell" and "speak" here are mine.

Christ. Accordingly, while dissenters may exist as "tares" among the wheat, the true Church consists only of those who agree with the head of the body.[53]

That is not, of course, to say that Augustine believes one must know the truth about all things in order to be a true member of the Church. It is, instead, that he believes the LORD is the Truth above all minds and so "knows" all truths that minds could know.[54] Accordingly, human knowledge of the truth about anything is a form of intellectual intimacy with the LORD, of participation in God's knowledge. Augustine therefore holds the desire and quest for knowledge (at least potentially) to be a good thing.[55]

However, what is definitive of ecclesial unity is agreement with particular truths about the LORD. Crucially, these may – and, in Augustine's view, often must – be agreed to without being understood. This is the distinction previously discussed in reference to the *De mendacio* between *credenda* (things to be believed) and *intellegenda* (things to be understood.) As he said in that treatise, "it is not possible to get to the things that are to be understood unless you first believe the things that are to be believed."[56] Belief, for Augustine, is (cognitively speaking) an act of assent – the adoption of what another presents as a valid rule and agreement to play by it as a rule. He distinguishes this from understanding, which is a type of nonsensory perception – a cognitive "seeing" of how something truly is.[57] But arrival at pure intellective vision is (typically) the result a process of reasoning, one that involves speculation, deductions, and the weighing of evidence on the basis of faith-based assents to statements issued by authorities.[58] While poor reasoning is certainly an impediment to understanding, another is that the process of reasoning can easily be based upon assents to erroneous statements (opinions) as to assents to true ones (belief.)[59] Accordingly, the search for understanding – both of truths believed in faith and of truths on which there are no authoritative statements – is a communal and temporal process that will almost necessarily involve the correction of errors.

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[53] See Augustine, *De unitate ecclesiae* 7: "Christ is both head and body. The head is the only begotten son of God and the body is his Church, bridegroom and bride, two in one flesh. So whoever dissents from Holy Scripture concerning the head is not in the Church, even if he is found in every place where the Church is designated."

[54] Here, see Augustine, *De vera religione* §§59-64.

[55] Augustine does make a sharp distinction between studiositas (a morally good desire for knowledge that relates to oneself in some way) and curiositas (a morally bad desire for knowledge about things that are none of one's business); cf. *De utilitate credendi* 9, 22. The former is good insofar as it involves properly ordered relations, whereas the latter is disordered insofar as it seeks to attain knowledge as a possession abstracted from relations of charity, humility, responsibility, and so forth. On this see Griffiths, Paul J. *Intellectual Appetite: A Theological Grammar*. (Catholic University of America Press: Washington, D.C. 2009.)

[56] Augustine, *De mendacio* 11.

Because Augustine considers this search of the faithful for understanding to be one of the unifying tasks of the Church, he necessarily gives priority to this aim in his assessment of what ought to be the rules governing speech. Avoiding giving offense to another by openly disagreeing with or correcting her cannot be a high-order rule because it would impede the communal process of seeking the truth. To the contrary, having Christian charity for another would consist in wanting her to come to knowledge of the truth, inviting her into this search, believing that she is volitionally ordered towards it (i.e., that she is morally upright on this measure),[60] and participating in it with her as an equal – correcting her and opening oneself to her correction.

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[57] On both of these, see Augustine, *De utiliatate credendi* 12,26-13,28.
[58] See Augustine, *De utilitate credendi* 11,25.
[59] *Ibid.*

It becomes clear, therefore, that Augustine, just as Jerome, practices what he preaches. The personal offense that the bishop finally takes at Jerome's irascible responses is only upon the point of Jerome's refusal to give him the benefit of the doubt with respect to his intentions and goodwill regarding the fiasco of the missing and published letter.[61] Augustine never concedes his defense of the propriety of intellectual disagreement in the face of Jerome's chastisements for it. In fact, he says that it would constitute his "mocking" Jerome if he were to refrain from criticizing him on what he took to be erroneous interpretations.[62] While the biblical exegete argued that the voicing of disagreements (rather than holding them silently in one's mind) amounted to an attack upon friendship, Augustine argues the opposite:

> I would that all keep this rule towards me that I have kept towards you: that they do not shut away in a deceitful heart anything they think deserving of reproof in my writings, neither shutting it away in a deceitful heart nor blaming in front of others while keeping quiet to my face …. Let us teach so that they might know it is possible for one's speech to be contradicted by the others among the dearest [friends], nor that love itself is diminished nor that truth, which is owing to friendship, does not give birth to hatred. But whether what is contradicted is true, or if whatever it might be is spoken with a true heart, do not let the mind hold it back distant from the lips.[63]

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[60] Here one might consider Augustine's arguments about the goods of giving authors the "benefit of the doubt" in *De utilitate credendi* 4,10-5,11.

[61] See Augustine, *ep*. 73 1,1.

[62] Augustine, *ep*. 83 1,2-3.

[63] Augustine, *ep*. 82 3,31-4,32.

While Jerome objected to Augustine's suggestion that he compose the proverbial "palinode" retracting his interpretation of the argument between the apostles as an act of duplicitous simulation, Augustine himself wrote an entire compendium of *Retractationes* (lierally "take-backs") for his own writings. And even his "magisterial" treatise on a doctrinal topic, the *De trinitate,* is smattered with invitations to readers to find fault with his interpretations so that both might, through arguing it out, come to a knowledge of truth. "No censure can be feared by the lover of truth – it's either from friend or foe; if a foe being offensive, it can be endured; if a friend who is wrong, you can put him right; if it's a friend who is right, then you can be put right."[64]

In conclusion, from the correspondence between Jerome and Augustine, we see that the bishop of Hippo takes truth-telling to be ordered not only towards the individual's integrity, spiritual safety, and obedience to the LORD's command, but also towards an ecclesial project of coming to know and speak the truth communally. Accordingly, Augustine's view of the default posture of the truth-teller resembles more and more that of *confessio* described in the previous chapter. Disclosure of one's mind to the view of others invariably constitutes the disclosure of oneself in one's cognitive relations, particularly one's relations to the LORD via faith and understanding or to falsehood through errors. Speaking *per se* requires assents to communal rules and criteria, those that regulate and so constitute language through its use. So, too, telling the truth for the sake of speaking the truth is an act of the self's submission to being judged – and potentially reproved and corrected -- by others, whether divinely inspired authorities or equal partners in the quest for understanding. The presence of veridical multiplicity – differing opinions and interpretations about the truth that exists in the LORD's "mind" – within the Church prevents her internal unity, just as the duplicity of speech and mind in the liar prevents his internal integrity. This fractured state of affairs makes the quest to know and speak the truth a temporally distended process, as well as a potentially painful one as divisions and ruptures are brought to light through speech in order that they might be mended rather than merely contained or accommodated.

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[64] Augustine, *De trinitate* II.prol.

We have observed that the posture of truth-telling for the sake of speaking truth that Augustine describes and embodies with Jerome is characterized by several sets of particular dispositions or virtues. The first of these are patience and hope. These allow the truth-teller to "endure" and to suffer (*patior*) the pain of alienation from others (through disagreement and criticism) without despairing of the possibility of unity and greater intimacy. The second "confessional virtues" are cognitive generosity and receptivity. The former moves the truth-teller to give others (those he criticizes and those who criticize him) the benefit of the doubt regarding their orientation towards the shared end of true understanding. Through the latter, the truth-teller views correction by the other as a beneficial gift and true knowledge as the grace of sharing in the LORD rather than the production of the individual's intellectual potency. All of these together yield a picture of the disposition of *confessio* as one of humility. In the next section, we will see how Augustine fleshes out this picture of the humility of truth.

## 6.3. Christ: Humility, Harmony, and the Justice of Truth

Just as Jerome found a Christological precedent for dissembling in the coming of the Word in "the semblance of sinful flesh," so Augustine takes Jesus to be the Truth and finds in Christ the paradigmatic instance of truth-telling. Because Augustine's discussion of Christ's salvific work throughout his corpus employs key structural features of the ransom model of the atonement, this section will begin by comparing the picture presented by the bishop of Hippo to that offered in Gregory of Nyssa's *Oratio catechetica magna*. This comparison throws the distinctive features of Augustine's view of the *missio* of the Son into relief. By investigating these more closely, we will see that the bishop of Hippo understands the Incarnate Word to embody the confessional humility that orders the politics of the LORD's justice (*iustitia.*) Focusing especially on Augustine's treatise *De trinitate*, this section explicates what Augustine takes *iustitia* to be and how he presents Christ's confessional disposition of humility in the incarnation and passion as the means of the LORD's "harmonization" of humanity away from the duplicity of simulation and the lie and into the grace and unity of truth.

As we saw previously, the core of the ransom model of the atonement is the construal of human sin as a debt that allows the devil to enslave human persons and hold them captive. The corollary of this is that Christ's work in the economy of salvation is presented as a sort of "payment" that ends that situation of captivity and bondage. For instance, in the *Enchiridion*, we read that the devil "held [human persons] by the deserts (*merito*) of sin."[65] But Augustine gives a longer presentation of Christ's work as a ransom of humanity from sin-as-debt and from captivity consequent on that debt when he remembers the death of his mother Monica in Book IX of the *Confessiones*:

> She desired only to be remembered at your altar … whence she knew that the holy victim was dispensed, the one through whom the record of debt (*chirographum*) against us was destroyed, where he triumphed over the enemy who reckons our deficits (*delicta*) and looks out for a charge to lay against us, and who found nothing in him -- the one in whom we conquer. Who will repay his innocent blood? Who will refund to him the price (or ransom; *pretium*) by which he bought us, so as to carry us off from [the devil]? Your handmaiden tied her soul with the bond of faith to the sacrament of that price.[66]

Like Nyssen, Augustine also depicts the devil as being "deceived" in accepting the ransom by which he is defeated:

> Therefore we have our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ first hanging on a cross, now seated in heaven. He gave our price (*pretium nostrum dedit*) when he hung on the cross; he collects what he purchased when he sits in heaven. For when he has collected all of those whom he collects through time, he will come at the end of time and, as it written: "the manifest God will come" – not hidden (*occultus*) the way he first came, but as it is said: "manifest." For it was fitting for him to come "hidden" so that he might be judged; however, he will come manifest so that he might judge. For if he had come manifest at first, then who would have dared to judge him? Indeed, the apostle Paul says: "For if they had recognized [him], they would never have crucified the Lord of glory." But if he had not been killed, then death would not have died: the devil is conquered by [Christ's] turning the tide of battle (*trophaeo*).[67]

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[65] Augustine, *Enchiridion* 14,49.

[66] Augustine, *Confessiones* IX 13,36.

[67] Augustine, *serm*. 263.1; the word *trophaeum*, a calque of the Greek *tropaion*, comes into English as "trophy," but it derives from τρέπω ("turn"). In ancient use, it referred not merely to the memorial of a

As Gregory of Nyssa did in his *Oratio catechetica magna*, so Augustine here contrasts the "hiddenness" of God in the incarnation with divine visibility. But Augustine identifies this occultation of the Son explicitly and specifically as the means by which Christ submits himself to being judged, a point that is significant for two reasons.

First, there is a distinction to be made – if a subtle one -- between Augustine's emphasis on "hiding" as necessary for Christ's submission to judgment and Nyssen's presentation of the "cloaking" of divinity as necessary for Christ's entry into an *agôn* with the devil. The grammar of a contest certainly implies judgments and criteria – *viz*., in order that something be coherent as a "contest" it must be theoretically possible to discern a winner, to determine the superiority of one party to others on certain measures, according to certain criteria. But to "enter into an *agôn*" is to contend, to take an active role. Augustine emphasizes the passivity of Christ's submission to judgment by the juxtaposition of statements in which he is the subject of a passive and then an active verb: Christ came *occultus* so that he might be judged (*iudicaretur*); Christ will come *manifestus* so that he might judge (*iudicet.*)

Secondly, Augustine's presentation of occultation as the mode of Christ's submission to judgment makes it clear that the sort of "hiding" in which the

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victory (typically a marker on a field of battle rather than a movable object) but to the victory of which the memorial was a token; this was, moreover, a particular type of victory: the point at which an oppressed army suddenly gained the upper hand and "turned back" the forces of the enemy. Accordingly, I have rendered it here as "turning of the tide of battle."

Incarnate Son engages is not to be confused with that which makes for lies and deception. As noted in the discussion of *De mendacio*, Augustine takes the lie to consist in the hiding of one's mind from the "view" of others and the substitution of a "false picture" in its place. That is to say, the occultation of mendacity is essentially a refusal to submit oneself to be judged – precisely the opposite of what Christ is doing here. One might of course ask, given that the one submitting to judgment is "hidden," if he really *is* submitting himself to judgment – or, if he is submitting his real *self* to judgment. After all, one can only judge what (literally or figuratively) one can view. But Augustine's quotation of 1 Cor. 2:8 ("if they had recognized him, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory") shows that what is being withheld from view is not data without which an accurate judgment becomes impossible. Instead, what is "hidden" is precisely the divine glory; had this been manifest to view, Augustine says, no one would have *dared* to judge Christ. That is, they would have been too ashamed to do so; in the face of the LORD's glory, they would have known themselves to be subject to judgment.

It should furthermore be noted that Augustine indicates that the devil is the one (or, at least, one of the ones) who judged Christ, and that the judgment Satan made was an accurate one. In the passage from the *Confessiones* quoted above, Augustine writes that the devil is in the business of "reckoning accounts of deficits and looking for charges to lay against" human persons, and that he "found nothing" in Christ that would – quite literally – fit the bill. The fact that Satan made a correct judgment of Christ on this score and yet chose to act as if he had found a deficit or grounds for a charge is precisely what Augustine identifies as the devil's "injustice," a point to which we shall return later.

Augustine also speaks of the "hiddenness" of the Incarnate Word in using a metaphor that seems superficially rather similar to Nyssen's analogy of Christ's human nature as the "bait on the fishhook of divinity":

> The devil exulted when Christ died, and in that very death of Christ the devil was conquered, just as if he had taken the bait in a mousetrap. He delighted at the death as if he were in charge of death; the thing in which he delighted was thence drawn against him. The mousetrap of the devil -- the cross of the Lord; the bait by which he was captured -- the death of the Lord.[68]

Two key distinctions are to be made here between Nyssen's metaphor and Augustine's.[69] First, Nyssen takes the "bait" to be operative in the devil's decision to accept Christ's life as a ransom for captive humanity and, so, to agree to a situation in which Christ would die. Augustine, by contrast, takes the "baiting" of the devil to occur later in the narrative – "when Christ died" – after any required negotiations had already occurred. Secondly, and accordingly, for Nyssen it is Christ's human nature that is the "bait," while for Augustine it is Christ's death. Again, this is a subtle distinction insofar as "human nature" can be taken to entail mortality. Certainly Gregory of Nyssa took composite material beings created *ex nihilo* to retain an inherent potential for dissolution and reversion to nihility and, so, to be contingent upon rightly ordered relations with the LORD for their ontological sustenance. What Augustine is emphasizing in presenting Christ's death – not as a possibility but as *fait accompli* – as "bait" is the devil's lust for power: "he delighted at the death *as if he were in charge of death*." It is his own relation to death – not Christ – that the devil judges inaccurately and by which he is deceived.

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[68] Augustine, *serm*. 263.2.

[69] These two metaphors have been juxtaposed and compared – but insufficiently contrasted – by Nicholas Constas, "The Last Temptation of the Devil," 17; Paul Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1989), 127; and Peter Hodgson, *God's Wisdom: Toward a Theology of Education* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 105.

The final element of the ransom model that we see present in the writings of both Nyssen and Augustine is the participation of Christ and Satan in an *agôn*. For Gregory, this was an ontological contest of "natures"; Christ won because Satan's nature is fundamentally built on privation – an absence of being that simply vanishes in the presence of the LORD Who Is. While Nyssen seems to have believed that the devil existed -- at least, to a sufficient degree that one might hope for his eventual salvation – he nonetheless presents Satan as being self-deluded into occupation with non-being as a result of his *phthonos*.

For Augustine, by contrast, the contest between Christ and Satan is not a metaphysical *agôn* but specifically a political and cosmic one. That is to say, the bishop of Hippo explicitly presents Christ's earthly mission as constituting the LORD's action in a battle between rival orderings of relations – power (*potentia*) and righteousness (*iustitia*):

> However, the devil was not to be defeated by the power of God, but by his righteousness. For what is more powerful than the Almighty? Or what creature's power could be compared to the power of the Creator? But when the devil became, by the vice of his perversity, a lover of power, he also became the deserter and opponent of righteousness. And so humans imitate him that much more the more that, while righteousness goes neglected or is even loathed, they are eager after (*student*) power, either

> rejoicing at its acquisition or burning with lust for it. It pleased God that, for the sake of humanity's deliverance from the power of the devil, the devil be conquered not by power but by righteousness; and so too humans imitate Christ when they seek to conquer the devil by righteousness, not by power. It is not the case that power is to be eschewed as if it were something evil; *but order is to be preserved, whereby righteousness is prior*.[70] (emphasis mine.)

The first thing that needs to be noted here is that, in presenting the contest between the LORD and the devil, Augustine does not emphasize the differences between the contenders themselves so much as those that obtained between their chosen "terms of engagement." Had divine *potentia* taken on diabolical *potentia*, the victory would have been a result of which of the two contestants was superior to the other when judged on the same criteria. The LORD is obviously superior in power to any creature, and so could certainly have "beaten the devil at his own game." But that is not what in fact happened.

In the event, each of the contestants was competing by a different set of rules. Accordingly, what the contest determined was not the superiority of the LORD to the devil; in Augustine's view, God's superiority is so obvious that it hardly needs to be proved through an *agôn*. Rather, what the contest determined and demonstrated was which set of rules and relations (those constituting *potentia* or those constituting *iustitia*) has priority within the LORD's *ordo* – the cosmos or "created order." What is more, the outcome of the contest depends *entirely* upon the priority of one set of rules over the other; the relative strengths of the contestants themselves are, in Augustine's mind, irrelevant to the outcome. This is shown in his presentation of human persons as imitators of either Christ or the devil. If she plays by the *right rules* – those that constitute the LORD's *ordo,* her participation in it, her right relations to the LORD -- even a creature who is by nature "lower than the angels" can triumph over one.

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[70] Augustine, *De trinitate* XIII 13,17.

This might superficially sound like a legalistic view of salvation as based on human works of rule-following rather than on reception of the unmerited grace of God. But, as we shall see, Augustine thinks that following the rules that constitute *iustitia* simply *is* receptivity to the LORD's gifts.[71] Through a description of Satan's deceits and errors as resulting from his attempt to imitate – or, rather, to simulate – the LORD according to the rules of possession and *potentia*, Augustine presents the rules of *iustitia* as being those that order and constitute the confessional disposition that makes possible both truth-telling and truth-speaking.

## 6.3.1. *Potentia* and *Iustitia*

What, then, are *potentia* and *iustitia*, and how are they to be distinguished? The making of this distinction is more difficult than it may at first appear, insofar as the grammars of both terms (in Latin as in English) involve many of the same relations, in particular those of possession and command. In fact, "possession" is etymologically related to *potentia*; that which one possesses is effectually that which one has power over and mastery of, that of which one is the *dominus* and which one dominates. To be the master of something, in turn, is to be in the position to issue commands to it, to order and regulate it. *Potentia* is, moreover, the root of "potential" and is related also to "possibility," which is derived from the verb *possum* (which is quite often equivalent to the English "can" or "be able.") A potentiality or possibility is an imagined and hypothetical mastery (as opposed to an actual or "actualized" one) that inheres in some agent or relation.[72]

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[71] On Augustine's understanding of *iustitia* as "righteousness" or "making righteous" and the disjunction between this and the binary of "works-righteousness" vs. "imputed righteousness" that tends to accompany an understanding of *iustitia* (and the Greek *dikaiosynê*) as "justification," see Alasdair McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), (38, 47) and G. R. Evans, "Augustine on Justification," *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 26 (1987): 280-81, 84. There remain, of course, those who argue that Augustine was using iustitia with much the same meaning as "justification," e.g., Mark Ellingsen, "Augustinian Origins of the Reformation Reconsidered," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 64 (2011) 13-28.

And yet, *iustitia* seems fundamentally to be about possession and rule as well. In the ancient Mediterranean, "justice" was most commonly understood as "rendering to each his due." This phrase originated in an aphorism of the Greek lyric poet Simonides (c. 548-468 B.C.) and was offered as a definition by Polemarchus in Book I of Plato's *Republic*.[73] The act of "rendering to each his due" obviously belongs to practices of borrowing and debt -- of owning and owing, as we saw in the analysis of the modern grammar of rights in Chapter 2. This idea of "justice" effectively becomes an understanding that there can exist "debts" even absent prior acts of "borrowing." We see this clearly in the grammar of *iustitia* lively in the Roman tradition. In the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero gives the following definition: "*Iustitia virtus est, communi utilitate servata, suam cuique*

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[72] The temptation for readers of Aristotle is to take potentiality to inhere in the object of action – *viz.*, attributing to grammatically passive subjects of alteration the "power" to be other than they are rather than understanding this as a property or function of an active subject of alteration or of the relation between the two.

[73] Plato, *Republic* I.331 c-e. Cephalus begins the discussion of justice by offering a thick description of having a guilty conscience as the result of carrying unpaid debts (330d-331b) It is notable that Socrates adds "speaking the truth" alongside "repaying what is borrowed" in formulating a tentative definition of justice from this (331d).

*tribuens dignitatem*."[74] We might compare the definition given in Justinian's *Institutiones* in the 6th century: "*Iustitia est constans et perpetua voluntas suum unicuique tribuens*."[75]

In the first of these definitions, *iustitia* is a "virtue," by which Cicero likely means the sort of *hexis* (habituated posture or stable disposition) towards moderate and appropriate action that Aristotle describes in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[76] In the second, it is a "constant and perpetual will." In both of these, then, justice consists in the propensity of an agent to take particular actions. The action is the same in both definitions – *tribuens*. This is not repaying (as in the case of a debt consequent upon an act of borrowing) but "rendering" or even "paying tribute." In Justinian's *Institutiones,* justice is the agent's "rendering" to each and any person (the pronoun is an indefinite dative in both cases) what is that person's "own" (*suam*.) Cicero's "*suam … dignitatem*" includes an additional idea, that of worth or value that belongs to a person. Implicit in these understandings of justice, then, is the idea that the agent does him- or herself possess – not necessarily as a result of borrowing -- something that belongs to (and perhaps also comprises the "worth" of) others. Put another way, the condition of possibility for justice is that each of us has (or has within our power) objects or actions that are not, in fact, our own – things we owe and/or might tribute to others.

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[74] Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* II.53. This is quite possibly a Latin translation of the Greek phrase from Plato – with one significant clause added.
[75] Justinian *Institutiones* I.1
[76] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II. 1105b25-6.

From this, it appears that the primary difference between *potentia* and *iustitia* is that the latter envisions a situation in which one might in fact own things that one does not (presently) hold, possess, or have mastery over. Contrariwise, one might be possessing, holding, and be exercising mastery over things that one does not, in fact, own. What *iustitia* therefore requires is investigation into the question of who owns what, and that distinctions be made between ownership and possession. *Iustitia* is accordingly a dynamic order (judgments about particular relations of ownership must be made; actions must be performed unto others; objects must change hands) and *potentia* a static one. Lastly, *iustitia* dislocates the rule of ownership from the efficacy of an individual's actions to grasp and hold (to possess) an object to something external to the possessor – the *dignitas* of other human persons, laws (*iures*) that provide rules for determining what things in a possessor's keeping in fact belong to another, and/or communal agreements about who owns what.

The last thing worth mentioning here is the additional clause that appears in Cicero's definition: the ablative absolute *communi utilitate servata*. We might render this "with common (or 'communal') usefulness (or even 'usability') having been preserved." The presence of this phrase indicates a prerequisite for the rendering of things owned by and due to others and, so, a limit upon ownership and dues (*debita*.) What this imagines or acknowledges is that some things (objects or actions) might be required to remain outside relations of ownership in order that a communal (as opposed to an individual) interest be served: some things cannot be owned, possessed, and mastered; they must instead be shared.[77] We will soon see that Augustine agreed with Cicero in taking this limit on the priority of relations of ownership and *debita* to be in force within the LORD's *iustitia*.[78]

Turning back to Augustine's exposition of the contest between *potentia* and *iustitia* in the *De trinitate*, we can begin to see where the different rules ordering the two come into conflict. We recall that Augustine maintains that *potentia* is not evil in itself, merely subordinate to *iustitia*, and that he characterizes Satan by his *libido dominandi*, or lust for power: "But when the devil became, by the vice of his perversity, a lover of power, he also became the deserter and opponent of righteousness." At the same time, Augustine does not take Satan's fall to have constituted his *complete* desertion from *iustitia*.[79] That is, certain of the actions and relations conditioned by Satan's love of power – those he enacted by "playing by the rules of the power game," as it were – are nevertheless also the actions and relations dictated by the rules of the "justice game."[80] So it is that Augustine tells his readers:

> By a certain *iustitia* of God the human race was handed over (*traditum*) to the power (*potestas*) of the devil, by the sin of the first man passing

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[77] The mutual exclusion of relations of ownership-by-right *stricto sensu*, which is always a matter of individual possession, and those of communal sharing were explicated in Chapter 2.

[78] See also his statements on the order of human social relations in *Ad Simplicianum* and the discussion of these in section 4 of the present chapter.

[79] Part of Augustine's argument here is that, if the devil and other fallen angels do continue to exist, they must to some extent continue to participate in the LORD's goodness. Absolute privation of the good amounts to absolutely nihility, hence, non-existence. See *De trinitate* XIII 12,16.

[80] Edmund Hill translates *potentia* and *iustitia* as "the power game" and "the justice game," respectively in the passage from *De trinitate* XIII 13,17 that I quoted *supra*; Augustine. *The Trinity*. Tr. Edmund Hill, O.P. (*The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century*.) Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991.

> originarily into all who are born by the commingling of both sexes, and by the debt of the first parents obligating all their offspring …. However, the way in which the human person was handed over into the power of the devil should not therefore be understood as if God had done it or had ordered it to happen, but only that he permitted it – justly (*iuste*), nevertheless. For when he deserted the sinner, the author of sin invaded there. Now, of course God did not desert his creature in the sense that he did not manifest himself to [humanity] as its creating and life-giving God, setting forth many goods for bad people, even in the midst of bad punishments …. Therefore, if the commission of sins handed the human person over to the devil through the just ire of God, then of course the remission of sins freed the human person from the devil through the kindly reconciliation of God.[81]

Here, Augustine is addressing (with an obvious degree of discomfort) a seeming contradiction to his overall argument about the nature of the contest between Christ and the devil. If divine *iustitia* is both superior and opposed to diabolical *potentia*, and if that *iustitia* orders the liberation of human persons from the devil's dominion in Christ's work, then how and why did divine *iustitia* approve humanity's movement into Satan's possession in the first place? Put another way: how can we explain how the devil's *potentia* is accommodated within divine *iustitia* without the two being identical and without implying that God's justice was either off-the-clock or playing by different rules when humanity first fell into the devil's power? The only solution is for Augustine to say – as he does here – that the devil's possession of humanity is just. The debt incurred by human persons by their commission of sin is a legitimate one according to the logic of the divine *iustitia*. This passage does not specify exactly what Augustine thinks is owed by the human person and to whom, but it nevertheless describes what the debt does. It creates distance between the human person and the LORD by destroying the conditions required within *iustitia* for relations of *debita* between the two – *debts owed by God to humanity*.[82] After sinning, the human person no longer "owns" anything that the LORD has or possesses; the continued action of the LORD in providing good things to bad people is not in accord with rules of ownership and debit.

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[81] Augustine, *De trinitate*. XIII 12,16.

What this implies, then, is precisely that Augustine agrees with Cicero: there are relations other than ownership and debt at work within *iustitia*, other rules that might take precedence over the rule to "render to each his due."[83] Cicero named this category of non-possessive relations of justice "*communa utilitas*," but the bishop of Hippo terms it "*reconciliatio Dei benigna*" – the kindly reconciliation of God. In other words: absent any dignity or desert on the part of the fallen human person that would ground the LORD's tributing to her goods her own or as owing to her, the LORD continues to be manifest and offer her these good gifts as grounds for continued (albeit altered and diminished) relations with her out of sheer niceness. That is, the rule of *iustitia* that overrides or exceeds the rule "render to each his due" is simply this: "ground, maintain, and restore relations."

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[82] Theologically, this may make many readers as uncomfortable. But it should be remembered that, for Augustine, salvific justification entails that the human person actually be made righteous and, so, actually (if only eschatologically) merit the relations with the LORD that are a gift of grace.

[83] The objection of radical voluntarism might here be raised that to speak of the LORD "following rules" of any sort diminishes divine sovereignty, but we must say that the LORD follows rules unless we are prepared to say that the LORD cannot communicate with humans through language (no divinely inspired Scriptures, no prophetic utterances, a silent Jesus, &c.) because using language entails rule following.

With this in view, we now have what is needed to understand another passage in which Augustine describes the character of the devil's *potentia* and how it represents a real departure from and an opposition to *iustitia*.

> Thus the devil in [Christ's] death of the flesh lost the human person whom, seduced by his own consent, he had held as a possession *as if by an absolute right* (*iure integro*), and whom he had dominated (*dominabatur*) through the fragility of the mortal body as being too needy and weak, since he himself was hampered by no corruption of flesh or blood, as much the prouder as is, say, a richer and stronger person lording it over a ragged wretch.[84] (emphasis mine)

This characterization certainly bears all the marks of *potentia*-relations: the devil holds humanity as his possession, acts as its *dominus*, exults in the superiority of his own might, resources, and nature relative to those of the "needy," "weak," "fragil[e]," "hampered," and "ragged wretch" over whom he acts as lord. And yet, as we saw previously, Augustine does not think that *potentia* and possession are *in se* prohibited by or excluded from *iustitia*. That is, what we do not see in this text is any argument that the devil (or anyone else) ought *not* act as "lord" or own possessions because that would constitute a prideful affront to the LORD's lordship.

The only indication that what Satan is doing does not, in fact, belong to *iustitia* is Augustine's remark that the devil is holding humanity as a possession *tanquam iure integro* – as if by an absolute (or entire, unified and unconditioned) right. This is not attested as a term in use at the time Augustine was writing.[85] The ordinary expression for holding some possession legitimately is simply *iure* ("by right.") In light of this, the addition of the adjective seems to suggest that this is something extraordinary, that "rights" are not and should not be "absolute." In Augustine's view, then, the problem was not that the devil was possessing something to which had no property rights, but that he was possessing it *as if* property rights were unlimited.[86] Accordingly, this is the way in which Satan opposes and rejects the LORD's *iustitia*: because he does not acknowledge that its rules exceed those to do with relations of possession and ownership, that *debita*-relations are subordinate to the rule of *benigna reconciliatio*.

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[84] Augustine, *De trinitate* IV 13,17

From this we can see how Augustine thinks that the *iustitia*-politics of the LORD does truly conquer the *potentia*-politics of the devil:

> What therefore is the *iustitia* by which the devil was conquered? What else but the *iustitia* of Jesus Christ? And how was he [sc. the devil] conquered? Because even though he found in [Christ] nothing worthy (*dignum*) of death, he killed him nevertheless. And therefore it is just that the debtors whom he held be set free, believing in him whom [the devil] killed without any debt (*sine ullo debito*.) This is what it means that we are said to be made righteous (*iustificari*) in the blood of Christ. Thus, indeed, was that innocent blood shed for the remission of our sins .... For he alone died free of the debt of death.[87]

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[85] So far as I have been able to discover, *ius integer* does not appear in any extant Latin literature or inscriptions prior to Augustine, nor did it seem to be used after Augustine in any non-Christian texts. That is to say, the Romans did not have or know such a thing as a *ius integer*; it was not a term with an established meaning that Augustine borrowed from legal contexts to apply here.

[86] My reading of *tanquam* here disagrees with that of Luigi Gioia. He takes it to be functionally similar to the use of scare-quotes; it is Augustine's way of acknowledging that talk of "rights" does not really apply to the devil insofar as he is operating outside of justice in holding humanity captive. My argument is the opposite: Augustine indicates that the logic of potentia is not in se outside or opposed to justice, but that justice contains and exceeds the politics of power. See Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 84-86.

[87] Augustine, *De trinitate* XIII 14,18.

At first blush, this explication seems a bit facile and magical. Even if Augustine presents it as an obvious sequence of cause and effect, it is not especially coherent: the devil – just once -- takes more than his due and then suddenly loses everything that legitimately *was* his due.[88] But it begins to make more sense if we remember that Augustine views *iustitia* as having regulative priority within the *ordo* of creation – an order to which Satan himself belongs. That is to say, the rules of *iustitia* function as a type of "natural law," like the law of gravity. What this means is that the LORD need take no actions to enforce these laws – to punish violations of the rules. Rather, actions that violate the rules of *iustitia* create their own consequence. Humanity's original sin removed them from *debita*-based relations in which they received merited "dues" from the LORD. So Satan's refusal to abide by the rules of "rendering each his due" that are a subset of *iustitia* in its entirety removed him from *iustitia*-based relations altogether. That is, the devil ceased to enjoy the gratuitous benignity that is the chief ordering principle of divine *iustitia* by choosing to operate exclusively by the rules of *debita*-based *potentia*. In attempting to possess that which was not his due, however, he transgressed even that reduced set of rules that belong to *iustitia*, and accordingly lost even those relations to the LORD. Once outside the created *ordo* that is regulated by the LORD's *iustitia*, the devil could not function as a subject within it; accordingly he could no longer own or possess anyone or anything. The inability of the devil to hold anything by the sheer Macht of *potentia* (which is demonstrated by Christ's resurrection) unless he acts in conformity with at least *some* of the rules of the LORD's justice proves exactly what Augustine claims it does: that *iustitia* as an ordering principle has priority over *potentia*, and that, within *iustitia*, the gratuity of *benigna reconciliatio* exceeds and has regulative priority over the *debitum*.

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[88] We should not here that Augustine does not, as does Nyssen, present Christ's death as a ransom for captive humanity that was negotiated between and agreed to by both the LORD and the devil.

This, then, is how Augustine takes Christ's death to display and demonstrate the priority of *iustitia* over *potentia* within the LORD's order. But how does the bishop of Hippo think that *Christ* proves it? That is to say, how is Jesus ordered by the rules of *iustitia* so as to be its manifest representative in the contest with the devil? Put another way, in what particular actions or dispositions does Christ manifest *iustitia* to human persons such that they can believe in and imitate him and, so, give up emulation of the devil and operation by the rules of power so as to receive as grace the gifts they no longer merit and thereby reconcile and reenter relations with the LORD? The answer hinges upon the connection between *iustitia* and truth-telling, and this is located in the disposition of humility.

### 6.3.2. Manifestation and Simulation

Throughout Book IV of the *De trinitate*, Augustine presents the devil as the LORD's "double." That is, Satan and the LORD (located in space-time as the Incarnate Word Jesus Christ) are opposite numbers – zero and one, to be precise – in their acts and relations. Most frequently and fundamentally in *De trinitate* IV, Augustine names the devil a liar, a deceiver, and a false mediator; Christ, of course, is the truth. What is significant is that Augustine identifies Satan's duplicity with acts in and by which he simulates the LORD and/or Christ's mediation of mediator of human relations to the LORD.

According to the bishop of Hippo, the "airy bodies" (*aeria corpora*) of the demons permits them to do things that human persons with their heavier "earthly bodies" (*terrenis corporibus*) cannot do and find astonishing. As he writes:

> Is it any great feat for the devil and his angels to do through their airy bodies things with bodily elements (*corporeis elementis*) which the flesh marvels at (*miretur*), or by hidden inspirations for the purpose of conning (*illudendos*) human perceptions to contrive (*machinari*) apparitions of images (*phantasmata imaginum*) by which he deceives those awake or sleeping, or agitates the mentally disturbed?[89]

Augustine compares the corporeal advantages of the demons relative to human persons resulting from the former's created angelic nature to the physical advantages that circus performers have over ordinary people as a result of the modification of their bodies through skill-training and conditioning. Just as these performers "display to people such great 'miracles' in the spectacles of the theatre (*in spectaculis theatricis tanta miracula … exhibent*), so the devil simulates the LORD's miracles by means of the "spectacle" of the apparitions of images. [90]

So too, Augustine tells us, the devil's battalion of demons "listen in" on angels' communication of the LORD's truths to prophets. Satan then sends his demons to communicate with pagan *vates* (“soothsayers”) who pronounce these as their own oracles. Demonic divinations and predictions thus simulate divine prophecy.[91] What we see here is that Augustine fully acknowledges what is common in the cases of both divine prophets and demonic soothsayers: a human person gives an oracle, and the substance of the pronouncement comes to pass. This is because what both speakers are passing along to others in both cases is the LORD’s truth.

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[89] Augustine, *De trinitate* IV 11,14; *illudendos* here has the sense of mocking (*ludo* means "play, make fun") by deceiving (cf. "delude," derived from the same root.)

[90] *Ibid.* The word *miracula* need not have the meaning we typically associate with divine miracles – "things done contrary to the ordinary workings of nature" – but means simply "things that prompt wonder." But the comparison being drawn between the wonders worked by the LORD and those accomplished by demons makes this rendering apt.

The distinction between the two resides in the different relational structures funding each pronouncement. Angels receive the truth from the LORD and mediate the LORD’s word to human prophets, who pass it along to others as such (“Thus says the LORD ….”) What is more, this gift-giving is particularly directed: the LORD gives these oracles only to the prophets, and that is because they have previously been given something else – true piety.[92] The divine purpose here, Augustine says, is that the coming-to-pass of the oracles that the prophets utter will result in their “making faith through facts (*factis fidem facientes*),” and thus deservedly having credible authority.[93] By contrast, the devil’s angels are “eavesdroppers” on these conversations not designated recipients of the gift. Satan’s soothsayers pass along the LORD’s word as if the truth about the future were a diabolical possession and product, creating an economy of speech and authority in competition with that of the LORD.

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[91] Augustine, *De trinitate* IV 17, 22-3.
[92] *Ibid.*
[93] *Ibid.*, IV 17, 23. Augustine adopts from Cicero a definition of fides (“faith”) based on an (erroneous) etymology: “It is called *fides* because what is said is what happens (*fit quod dicitur*.)” Augustine, *ep.* 82.22; cf. Cicero *De republica* 4.21.

Finally, the devil mimics the rites of purification provided to humans by the LORD in order to deceive those who are "curious" about magic:

> Thus [the devil] holds as his subject the human person puffed up by lofty thinking (*per elationis typhum*), more desirous of power than of justice, either inflating (*inflans*) him through false philosophy or tangling him up through unrighteous rites (*sacra sacrilega*), in which especially prideful (*superbiores*) souls curious about magical trickery are deceived and conned, hurling them down headlong (*praecipitans*.)[94]

We see Augustine bringing together a number of tropes here. The devil works with his own "airy" nature to deceive humanity, "inflating" the human person into a "puffed up thing," seemingly lifting up those souls that want to be "higher" (*superbiores*), but actually hurling them downward. What is more, these souls are *curiosiores* – *viz*., especially given to *curiositas*, which we will remember Augustine defines as a person's noetic interest in things that are none of her business, that bear no relation to her.

The deception and fall of the human person mirror in this the fall of Lucifer, which Augustine takes as consisting in the devil's *superbia* – the desire and attempt to be "higher" than he was and was created to be. To make sense of this, we need to remember that Augustine believed in a modified Platonic or Neoplatonic hierarchy of being.[95] And the modification was a significant one.

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[94] Augustine *De trinitate* IV 10,13.

[95] Evidence of this is present through Augustine's corpus, but perhaps most succinctly stated in *De civitate Dei* 11.16, where Augustine contrasts a hierarchy of creaturely being (where the "value" of beings at each level is rationally determined on the basis of their number of degree of relations to the LORD) with a

Plotinus would posit a four-fold hierarchy with the One (the simple and eternal source whence all else in existence emanated) at the summit, followed by Mind, Soul, and Bodies. But Augustine does not locate the LORD (the Christian analogue to the One) on the hierarchy of being at all.[96] That is, he does not consider the LORD a being among beings, so his hierarchy is one of *creaturely* being.[97] As a result, angels are (for all intents and purposes) at the top, and Satan's *superbia* – the attempt to rise above his ontological station – becomes incoherent: for those already at the top, there is no "above."[98]

An angelic attempt at advancement or "self-exaltation," then, amounts to an attempt to occupy the LORD's transcendent position "outside" creaturely being by substitution – *viz.*, to occupy the LORD's place not with but in place of the LORD. This essentially means a refusal to participate in the relations that are unique to the LORD (i.e. those proper to an *ordo* of *iustitia*) and to replace these without remainder with relations based in *potentia* (possession and ownership.) This, then, is how Augustine describes such *superbia*:

> The soul, loving its own power, slips away from the common all-that-is (*communi universo*) to a private part (*ad privatam partem*), and by that apostatic pride (*apostatica … superbia*), which is called "the beginning of sin" … seeking something more than all-that-is and striving to govern it by its own law (*sua lege gubernare molita*.) Because there is nothing more than

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hierarchy of utility (where the value of beings at each level is precisely use-value with relation to ends determined by the will of the human user instrumentalizing them towards some end.)

[96] On this, one might (with caution) see Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 24-26 and 55-57.

[97] Or, one might argue, for Augustine being is creaturely.

[98] Strictly speaking, ideas in the mind of the LORD ought to be at the top, but this does not seem to play out in Augustine's thinking, as he becomes far more interested in making categorical distinctions among the bodies that occupy the lowest level – e.g., human persons consisting of soul and body, sensate bodies (animals), and so forth.

> all-that-is, it is thrust into a concern of partiality (*in curam partilem*) and it is thus diminished by its lusting after (*concupiscendo*) something more .... Absolutely everything that it strives to do as its own thing (*aliquid proprium*) -- against the laws by which all-that-is is served and supported -- it does through its own body (*per corpus proprium*), which it possesses in a mode of partiality.[99]

There is much to be said about this passage. First, we see Augustine presenting *superbia* as fundamentally linked to the idea of property and possession. This, in turn, is simultaneously a move towards multiplicity (vs. the unity of beings) and nihility (vs. the unity of being.) To desire something more than all-that-is quite simply is to desire nothing, given that there is nothing more than all-that-is. Augustine identifies this movement as precisely an apostasy – the subject's attempt to stand apart from and outside of being.[100] And yet, as Augustine describes it, the manifestation of this motive towards self-annihilation manifests within being as schism: division of all-that-is into parts separated from the whole to the degree that they can be privatized as property and controlled as one's own (*proprium*.)

Secondly, then, this arrogation and privatization is intimate with the fact of bodies (*corpora*.) The critique of Platonisms both pagan and Christian as unduly suspicious and disparaging of materiality and the body has become an increasingly done thing within scholarly and religious discourse, particularly over the past few decades. This preference for non-materiality over corporeality is often portrayed as fundamentally anti-social and anti-human, complicit in – if not causally responsible for -- hierarchical systems of socio-political inequality and oppression. But it is worth noting that at least part of the Platonic reflex we see demonstrated in what Augustine writes here is the result of acknowledgement of the exact problems driving the (post)modern critique of Platonism. That is: the fact of materiality provides the conditions of possibility for inequality, privatization, alienation, and domination. Only because beings have extension in space-time can they be spatially and temporally delimited, bounded, and treated as discrete (hence controllable and disposable) objects – that is: as *possessions*.

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[99] Augustine, *De trinitate* XII 9, 14.

[100] The noun is derived from the Greek prepositional prefix ἀπο-, meaning "apart from, away from" and the noun στάσις, "standing, stance, state."

With respect to this, it is worth recalling that, in the passages of the *De trinitate* quoted above, Augustine does not present the demons (fallen angels) as modern readers might expect – *viz*., as "spiritual" (that is, nonmaterial and incorporeal) beings. Rather, in this text he strongly insists that the demons do have bodies. As he tells it, the deception of humanity by the simulations of the LORD produced by demons depends entirely upon their having bodies – specifically, on the ontological superiority of angelic/demonic bodies relative to human ones. Being corporeally "airy and light" while humans are "earthly and heavy" is what enables Satan's minions to simulate the non-materiality of the God who is Spirit in ways that nonetheless remain perceptible to human senses adequated to material apperception.

Next, there is a striking contrast between Augustine's characterization of the two competing modes of regulation described here. With respect to the *ordo* or the cosmos (all-that-is as the LORD created it), the regulating laws are not named as belonging to the LORD. Of course, the reader might well conclude that these laws (i.e. the ones against which the soul motivated by *superbia* strives) are the LORD's – who else could they belong to? But this is to miss Augustine's point in this passage. The use of law-as-*proprium* (i.e. as the property of a ruling agent, as one's "own") is a defining feature of *superbia*. The laws the LORD gives, by contrast, are here associated not with the LORD as author or originator of these laws, nor as a ruling agent making use of them, nor even as their locus. Instead, they are named by their relation to all-that-is (the universe.) By contrast, the soul motivated by *superbia* is the one Augustine presents as a *possessor* of laws, one who holds laws within himself and with himself apart from the whole; this is the soul that is striving (*molita, nititur*) to do "its own thing" (*aliquid proprium*) and to use "its own law" (*sua lege*.)

The different characters of the orders of regulation established by the LORD and by the proud soul that "loves its own power" are emphasized further through Augustine's use of different verbs in describing the "rule" of each. We read that the "*universitas administratur*" by the laws against which the prideful soul strives. While we today might be tempted to hear in this verb all the actions we associate with "administration," in Latin one hears "is ministered to" – that is, "is helped, aided, supported, sustained, given succour." These connotations are even more present for communities of Christian Latin speakers, because of the use of this verb to describe Christ's mien and actions as servant. We might recall passages in which Christ describes himself this way in order to make an explicit contrast between divine and secular models of leadership as rule:

> "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them (*dominantur eorum*): and those who have power over them are called beneficent. But not so with you; rather, let the one who is greater among you become as if he were lesser, and the one who is a leader, as if he were a servant (*ministrator*.) For who is greater: the one who reclines at table or the one who serves (*ministrat*)? Isn't it the one who reclines? However, I am in your midst as one who serves (*ministrat*)."[101]

Likewise, Augustine contrasts the ministration of divine laws to the sustenance-in-being of the universe with the self-willed attempts of the prideful instead to govern (*gubernare*; "steer, direct") the universe as a whole, or the more than all-there-is that it delusionally seeks, or whatever part of the universe it can manage to section off and put under its own dominion.

Finally, it is critical to note that what Augustine describes here as the larger political movements of the soul given over to *superbia* are exactly those that, within the arena of speech and words, produce the lie. We will recall that lying, for Augustine, is essentially the speaker's privatization of his heart or mind. Because our cognitive relations are known "inwardly" to us and are not in or by themselves manifest to others, they *can* be privatized and hoarded. The disclosure of our minds to others depends upon our acts of speaking. But this communication of ourselves to others depends also upon the commonality of rules – those of language – knowledge of which we receive from outside ourselves and to which we must simply assent. We must, in the first place, accept the particularities of our communal language as facts of life, as givens, as *faits accomplis*, much the same as we accept the existence and operation of the law of gravity.

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[101] Luke 22:25-7 (Vulgate.)

Furthermore, just as he presented mendacity as a form of *iniquitas* (iniquity/inequity) whereby the liar reserved to himself an advantage over others by privatizing his thoughts and offering a verbal counterfeit or simulacrum in its stead, so, too, does Augustine present the devil's *superbia* as resulting in a lack of *aequitas*. Throughout Book IV of the *De trinitate*, Augustine repeatedly notes that humans die a "double death" of soul and body as a result of the sin consequent upon their deception by the devil. Satan himself, by contrast, only dies a "single" death. Augustine certainly admits that the singleness of the devil's death is a function of his ontological nature. Satan is not the sort of creature who can die a corporeal death; he simply does not have the right sort of body for it. And yet, Augustine often seems to speak as if the devil *could*, in fact, have done so, but chose *not* to do so, in order to maintain his superior advantage over humans:

> Because he did not go all the way to the point where he himself had led [humanity] -- indeed he bore the death of the spirit in his impiety, but he did not undergo the death of the flesh because he did not clothe himself [in flesh] (*nec indumentum susceperat*) – he seemed to humanity a great emperor (*princeps*) in the legion of demons, through whom he exercised his reign of deceits.[102]

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[102] Augustine, *De trinitate* IV 10,13.

The language used here of the devil's not "clothing himself" is quite similar to the manner in which many early Christian writers speak of Christ's incarnation as the Word's "putting on" a body or "clothing himself in flesh."[103]

Of course, the point he is making is that the LORD did exactly what the devil did not do and would not have done: take on a fleshly body in order to share with humanity in their corporeal death. Augustine makes much of the fact that the death that Christ dies is a single one – only that of the physical body – and that this "single death" (unlike the devil's single spiritual death) resolves the doubleness of humanity's death.[104] That is to say, it restores *aequitas* to relations in the created order not through the provision of a legal quid-pro-quo or an ontological equivalency,[105] but through a ratio that reorients the human person into "singlemindedness." Augustine speaks of this of application of Christ's single death to humanity's double death as a "harmonization" (*coaptatio*),[106] and he describes it as being effected through Christ's disposition of humility, which serves as a model for human persons to imitate. As Augustine writes:

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[103] So Augustine does here in *De trinitate* IV 3,6.

[104] See *De trinitate* IV 2,4; 3,6; and so forth.

[105] That is, human persons do not suddenly become ontologically "equal" to either the LORD or the devil, nor (it should be noted) does Augustine claim that all human persons cease to die corporeal deaths (he emphasizes that all of us will die bodily; *De trinitate* IV 12,15) nor even spiritual deaths (he says that those who continue to follow the devil *will* share in his spiritual death; *De trinitate* IV 14,18.)

[106] Augustine *De trinitate* IV 2,4. Augustine himself gives the Greek word ἁρμονία as an equivalent for *coaptatio*. It is important to note that "harmony" in Greek had a broader and more physical sense than it does for us, referring not only to musical tunings based on ratios obtaining between the length of strings but also to what we would term "joinery" in the realm of woodworking and construction. See Jean-Michel Fontanier, *La Beauté selon Saint Augustin* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1998) 145-60; Sarah Stewart-Kroeker, *Pilgrimage as Moral and Aesthetic Formation in Augustine's Thought*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 78-84; and Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016) 144-8.

> First we needed to be persuaded how much God loves us lest, through despair, we should not dare to reach out to him. However, it was appropriate that it be demonstrated what sort of [creatures we were that] he loved, lest we, taking too much pride in our merit should recoil from him and fail even more in our own strength. And so he dealt with us such that we would advance instead through his strength and thus the virtue of charity would be made perfect in the weakness of humility.[107]

The problem Augustine identifies in the reliance of human persons on their own strength is not the one we might expect. That is, in this text, Augustine claims that humans do have the power and capacity – by faith (*per fidem*) -- to avoid spiritual death. Instead of doing that, however, when we begin to rely upon our capacities, we misjudge them and, rather than avoiding sin, we are persuaded by fear of physical death to try and avoid that instead. This, Augustine says, is where we are getting it wrong: "because of the human condition, death cannot be avoided."[108] It is with respect to this insufficiency that Christ takes on a weakness not his own in order to teach us our own weakness and, through the resurrection, to remove our fears of death.

In sum, then, the humility the LORD takes on in the incarnation amounts to the LORD's refusal to do as the devil does and "apostasize" – stand apart from – the created *ordo* to try and exert control over it, destroying relations by arrogating and sequestering parts of the whole as "private property" (*proprium*.) Instead, Christ's kenotic humility is the mode by which the LORD seeks after relations, moving into the created order ecstatically by standing "outside himself" as a locus of regulation. The Incarnate Word empties himself, giving gratuitously beyond what is owed without remainder or reserve, but also simultaneously receiving from humans what we have to give and share – flesh and passibility, *debitum* and death. As Augustine puts it: "The Son of God deemed it worth it to become a friend to us in the companionship of death."[109] In the next section we will see how the humility modeled by Christ in the incarnation is presented by Augustine as the disposition through which humans receive grace and renounce possession of their speech, transforming *confessio* into praise.

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[107] Augustine, *De trinitate* IV 1,2.
[108] *Ibid*., IV 12, 15.

## 6.4. Boasting, Praise, and Predication

While the first of Augustine's two letters to Simplician is often classed with his anti-Pelagian writings, the texts predate the bishop of Hippo's entry into that particular controversy by nearly twenty years.[110] Written in 396, the year after Augustine was ordained bishop coadjutor of Hippo,[111] these texts are responses to questions on theological interpretation of several passages from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans and the Old Testament books of Kings put to Augustine in a letter (now lost) from Simplician.[112] The older man had known Augustine in Milan, where he had been instrumental in the conversion of both Augustine and his friend Alypius, as he had been in that of the Roman philosopher Marius Victorinus before them. In the year after this correspondence, Simplician succeeded Ambrose as bishop of Milan, as Augustine mentions in his treatment of these texts in the *Retractationes*.[113]

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[109] Augustine, *De trinitate* IV 13,17.

[110] While Pelagius, born c. 354 in Britain, had arrived in Rome around the year 380, his teachings did not gain a large following and reach Carthage until later. Augustine writes his first text arguing against the teachings of Pelagius, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione*, affirming the doctrine of original sin and the necessity of infant baptism, in 412.

[111] They are, in fact, the first major texts (i.e. not letters or sermons) that Augustine wrote during his episcopacy.

[112] Although often referred to as the "Letter(s) to Simplician," the texts were not themselves letters but treatises or essays sent with a letter (Epistle 37.) The Latin title for the work is *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianus Libri Duo*, or "Two Books to Simplicianus on Various Questions."

What Augustine, rather oddly, does not mention in the *Retractationes* is the fact that, in the course of writing the first letter (the one treating the passages from Romans), he changes his mind and utterly reverses his stated theological position on the subject of whether the faith through which an individual is saved is the result of human free will or grace given in accord with a predestinating decision made by the LORD.[114] The first part of *Ad Simplicianum I* addresses the question of how to reconcile the seemingly divergent pictures of the law given in Rom. 7:6-25 (i.e. St. Paul says explicitly that the law is not sin, but it seems to be a cause or occasion of sin.) Here Augustine gives what was at the time his usual line on the role of human free will in faith: "For this is what is left to free choice (*libero arbitrio*) in this mortal life – not that a person can fulfill righteousness (*iustitiam*) when he wants to, but that he can turn himself (*se convertat*) with suppliant piety to the one by whose gift he is able to fulfill it."[115]

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[113] Augustine, *Retractationes*. II.1.1

[114] This is the sort of thing that leaves scholars a bit bemused. Why did Augustine not go back and revise the first part of the letter somewhat after he changed his position? Or, at the least, when he realized he had taken up a different position than he had previously been arguing, why did he not acknowledge that in some way within the letter? Again, I would argue that this is a "confessional" reflex quite typical of Augustine: in very few of his works does he seem at all interested in giving readers a harmonized, static, or "presentable" picture of *his thought*; rather, he often seems not only willing but eager to disclose to them the moment-by-moment (often messy and sometimes self-reversing) *process of thinking* and to invite them to participate in it.

When he proceeds to the second question, however, Augustine ends up dismissing human free choice and agency from this same business of "turning oneself" to the LORD. The question that Simplician posed concerned the interpretation of Rom. 9:10-29 and does not seem to have been so much a question about particulars as a request for a comprehensive exposition of the passage, based on what Augustine writes: "But now I think it is time to go on to the other question that you posed – that this entire text be discussed …."[116] Augustine's first move is to identify what he himself takes to be the central issue of the text:

> And first off, I will take up the aim of the Apostle, which is prominent throughout the entire epistle, so as to consider it. That is this: that no one should boast (*glorietur*) of the merits of works. The Israelites dared to boast about these on the grounds that they had observed the law that had been given to them, and that they received the grace of the Gospel as if it were owed for their merits because of the fact that they had observed the law …. For they did not understand that, insofar as it is grace, the grace of the Gospel is not owed for works; "otherwise, grace is no longer grace."[117]

It is with this in mind as the thesis of the text that Augustine turns to interpretation of the Scripture, which concerns the LORD's election of Jacob rather than Esau. The verses on which he focuses particularly are Rom. 9:11-13:

> [T]hough they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that it should remain according to God's purposed election, not

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[115] Augustine, *Ad Simplicianum* I 1,14.

[116] *Ibid.*, I 2,1.

[117] *Ibid.*, I 2,2, quoting Rom. 11:6 at the end. It should be noted that the putative "aim of the Apostle" in this passage from Romans 9 is actually to be found in Eph. 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God – not because of works, lest any man should boast." (RSV.)

> because of works but because of his call, [Rebekah] was told, "the elder shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."[118]

Augustine puzzles over the question of how the LORD might make a choice for Jacob rather than Esau at a time when it seems no real distinction between the two can be made: the twins have not even been born and have not exercised any agency.[119] He quickly rules out the possibility that God's election of Jacob in the womb depended upon divine foreknowledge of the good works he would do after he was born; foreknown merit still functions as merit and could be a grounds for boasting.[120] More importantly, though, Augustine decides that Jacob could not have been chosen on the basis of divine foreknowledge of his faith, the reason being that faith as grounds of election would be indistinguishable from works as grounds of election. In other words, if one said that the LORD elected Jacob on the basis of divine foreknowledge that Jacob would have faith, one could not prove that the LORD had not, in fact, elected Jacob on the basis of divine foreknowledge that Jacob would do good works. This interpretation of the Scripture would mean that the text did not accomplish St. Paul's aim in writing it – *viz.*, that the conditions of possibility for human boasting be eliminated.[121]

At this point, Augustine concludes that faith (at least so far as election is concerned) is functionally indistinguishable from good works, and that "God's purpose does not abide in accordance with election, but his election is a result of his purpose."[122] In other words, what is going on in God's choice of Jacob is not a choice of *Jacob* according to the ordinary grammar of "choosing," one in which choice is a judgment regulated by criteria and accordingly dependent upon the existence of distinctions in the objects of the choice. Furthermore, asserting that "no one believes who is not called," Augustine identifies the LORD's love and election of Jacob with the act of calling. But it could not have been the case that God called both Jacob and Esau in equally inspirational ways, and that Jacob chose to believe in response to the call while Esau did not. If that were the case -- i.e. if Jacob's having faith while Esau did not were the result of an act of Jacob's willing – then Jacob would have grounds for boasting, and the narrative would not be effective in accomplishing St. Paul's purpose of removing all conditions of possibility for human boasting.[123] So, then, the human person's response of faith to the LORD's call must be not an act of her will but the effect of the particular sort of call (sc. a faith-effecting one) that the LORD issues to her. Moreover, it is clear that the LORD does not issue these efficacious calls to all because some (like Esau) do not respond in faith and go on to perform good works.[124] The remainder of *Ad Simplicianum* I deals with the question of the LORD's justice in calling some in an efficacious way (enabling them to have faith, perform good works, be made righteous, and be saved) but not others. Augustine argues that the LORD cannot be deemed “unjust” for failing to extend grace towards some but not others, because it is precisely *grace* – an unmerited gift given and not an obligation rendered as anyone’s due.[125]

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[118] I have translated the verses of Scripture as they are found in Augustine's Latin, first quoted in *Ad Simplicianum* I 2,3-4 and repeated throughout the remainder of the text.

[119] Augustine, *Ad Simplicianum* I 2,4: "For how is election just – or of any quality whatsoever – where there is no distinction [to be made]?"

[120] *Ibid.*

[121] *Ibid.*, I 2,5.

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[122] Augustine, *Ad Simplicianum.* I 2.6.

[123] *Ibid.*, I 2,10.

[124] *Ibid.*, I 2,10 and 13.

While there is much one might say about the exegetical and theological logic in this argument, what is significant relative to the aims of the present inquiry is the fact that the teleological criterion that drives and shapes Augustine’s thinking here relates almost entirely to the prevention of a particular modality of human speech: boasting. Nowhere in *Ad Simplicianum* do we see the sorts of concerns about preserving the LORD’s sovereignty and unregulated freedom of choice that are the standard fare in arguments for what one might (somewhat anachronistically) term doctrines of “limited election” or “irresistible grace.” In fact, Augustine seems at times to be desperately searching for some criterion that could be regulatory for the LORD’s election because, in his mind, that is simply what the use of the word “choice” entails and requires. To judge from the text, he seems to reach the conclusion he eventually does (*viz*., that the LORD’s election of persons is conditioned solely by the LORD’s inscrutable purpose) only because he is unable to find any other criterion to condition divine choice that would not also provide conditions of possibility for human boasting. Because Augustine takes conversion to faith (which is expressed verbally through confession) to be the human response to the call of the LORD’s election, boasting thus appears to be a second opposite number to *confessio*, alongside the lie. It is therefore useful to consider the rules, relations, and conditions that Augustine takes to regulate boasting, making this sort of speech possible and desirable. And *Ad Simplicianum* gives us a rather clear picture on this, given that Augustine is explicitly using the possibility of human boasting as a criterion for his interpretation of Rom. 9:10-29 – if an interpretation of the passage would still provide conditions under which human persons might boast, then it is the wrong interpretation of the passage.

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[125] Augustine, *Ad Simplicianum* I 2,16.

In addition to Ephesians 2:8-9, mentioned previously, Augustine's repeated appeal to three verses of Scripture, one within the passage from Romans that he is interpreting for Simplician and two external to it, elucidate what he takes to be the requirements for a "boast." These are Romans 9:16 ("It is not a matter of [human] willing or running but of God being compassionate."),[126] Philippians 2:12-13 ("Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work for the sake of good will."),[127] and 1 Corinthians 4:7 ("What do you have that you have not received? But, if you have received, then why do you boast (*gloriaris*) as if you have not received?")[128] These together supply a rule: one can boast only of what one has not received as a gift but has rather produced by one's own willing and working; when it comes to human salvation, boasting is excluded because all is received as a gift and is not the product of human willing and working. This is what Augustine gives as the reason for concluding that Jacob's response of faith in the LORD absolutely could not have been an act of his will: "If, therefore, Jacob believed because he willed to, then God did not give him faith but [Jacob] himself produced (*praestitit*) faith for himself by willing, and *thus had something that he had not received*."[129] Given that St. Paul (in Augustine's view) is providing this account of Jacob and Esau in Romans 9 with a view to the prevention of boasting, and given that the conditions of possibility for Jacob's boasting would have been met had he not received faith as a gift but instead produced it in and for himself by an act of will, then Jacob's response of faith could not have been (understood by St. Paul to be) an act of his willing; Q.E.D.

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[126] All these verses of Scripture are given in translation of the Latin versions Augustine quotes within *Ad Simplicianum* I.

[127] See, for example, *Ad Simplicianum* I 2,12.

[128] See, for example, *Ad Simplicianum* I 2,9.

The grammar of boasting used by Augustine here in *Ad Simplicianum* should remind us of the grammar and politics of freedom of speech as a universal human right presented earlier, because fundamental to both are relations of property and ownership. Within the logic of rights, human persons fundamentally have rights of ownership to themselves and all their productions – whatever results from their willing and working. Given that utterances are physically produced by human willing and working (producing a series of mouth positions with lips, jaws, teeth, and tongue; pushing air from the lungs through the throat; vibrating the vocal cords) and that the semantic content of such utterances is produced by human willing and working (one forms thoughts within the self and then expresses that self *ad extra*), then speech – *qua* human production – is clearly the object of a human right of ownership. And Augustine agrees with something very like this rule: if a human person has produced something by her willing and working, then she has grounds for boasting about it. The point of serious disagreement between Augustine and the politics and grammar of the "right" concerns two questions: first, whether gifts given and received are taken up into the politics of ownership or remain separate from it, and second, whether relations between human persons and the LORD are or can be mediated by anything *except* gifts.

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[129] Augustine, *Ad Simplicianum* I 2,10, emphasis mine.

As we recall, the early Enlightenment-age account of "inalienable human rights" holds them to be originary gifts (or "endowments") that human persons receive from a "Creator." These gifts are conceived of as being owned by the Creator and then "transferred" – along with full rights of ownership over them – to their human recipients. That is to say, what makes a politics of rights is the fact that the relations mediated by "gifts" and "giving" are subsumed within, ordered under, and have their grammar conditioned and regulated by the higher-ordered relations and rules that constitute ownership. While scholars have argued that the modern discourse of rights has its origins in the thought of Augustine, there are nonetheless marked differences to be noted, and those are particularly in evidence in the bishop of Hippo's discussions of the politics of human speech about and to the LORD.

In discussing the question of theodicy in the LORD's election to give a faith-effecting call to Jacob and not also to Esau, Augustine writes the following, which is here worth quoting at length:

> And thus this very thing– i.e., that God has compassion on whom he wills and hardens whom he wills, which is to say that he has compassion on whom he wills and does not have compassion on whom he does not will --

> should be most tenaciously and firmly believed to belong to a certain equity hidden from the sort that is searchable by the ordinary human way of doing things (*humano modulo*) and which must be attended to in human and earthly contractual agreements (*contractibus*.) But if even in these we do not hold on to certain footprints and traces of the higher heavenly righteousness (*supernae iustitiae*), the intentionality of our weakness would never be on the lookout for or pant after the holiest and most chaste inner bedchamber of spiritual precepts ... Therefore, unless, as it were, the finest mist of justice (*iustitiae*) were sprinkled down from above, we would wither and dry up in this parched environment of our life and mortal condition even faster than we grow thirsty. On account of this, *since it is by giving and receiving that the society of human persons is connected within itself, and the things given and received are either those owed (debita) or those not owed*, who would not see that no one who exacts what is owed to him can be argued to be acting with inequity -- and certainly not one who has willed to give (*donare*) that which is owed to him -- and that his doing this lies not in the choice of those who owe a debt, but in that of the one to whom the debt is owed? This image or, as I said above, footprint of the highest summit of justice has been impressed upon the business dealings (*negotiis*) of human persons.[130]

To explicate this, we notice that Augustine first makes a distinction between the equity that belongs to and comprises the higher heavenly *iustitia* and the sort that regulates ordinary human affairs; the former is “hidden” and not easily intelligible on the logic of the latter. Augustine indexes the ordinary human way of doing things to *negotia* (business and busyness) and *contracta* (quid pro quo arrangements.) This distinction is confirmed in his likening of the LORD’s mode of equity and *iustitia* to *otium* – leisure and rest – of which, within Latin, *negotium* is a privation, with the metaphor of the inward bedchamber. This *otium*-based modality of divine *iustitia*, however, has left footprints or traces (*vestigia imprinta*) of itself upon human affairs, which simultaneously inspire human persons to long for something better and give us the ability to endure the “dryness” of contract-based *negotia*.

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[130] Augustine, *Ad Simplicianum* I 2,16, emphasis mine.

The “imprint” of divine justice upon human affairs, in Augustine’s view, is precisely this: that human sociality is founded upon and funded by giving and receiving (*dando et accipiendo.*) That is, giving and receiving gifts are the acts that mediate human relations on the highest level: owing and owning (the relations of *debita*) are ordered below giving and receiving, as a subset of them. This is conveyed in Augustine’s claim that, of those things given and received that constitute relations among humans, some are owed while others are not. Nonetheless, implicit in Augustine’s argument is the assumption that humans are more familiar or comfortable with the logic of debt; the gifts given and received that are not owed (*non debita*) are purer and more recognizable traces of the divine economy, even if the exchange of things owed and owned among humans mimics (reflecting by refracting) the divine *iustitia* that is based in gratuitous donation. Accordingly, Augustine tries to explain the LORD’s equity in giving mercy (or not) with reference to what is more familiar to humans: the logic of ownership. Even if we conduct our ordinary relations primarily within the logic of *debita* (things owed or owned), we nevertheless understand donation (pure gift) as both real and unconditioned by owing and owning. This, then, is the reason that, even if we were to frame the human need for salvation in terms of a debt owed by us to the LORD, none of us could coherently accuse the LORD of injustice in *giving* the means to pay the debt to some but not to others.

Again and again throughout *Ad Simplicianum*, Augustine asserts that the LORD might speak to humans in terms of but does not himself participate in relations of owing and ownership. We see this in the bishop of Hippo's exegesis of 2 Tim. 4:7-8: "I have contested in the good contest (*certamen*), I have finished the race, I have preserved the faith; as to the rest, there remains for me the crown of righteousness (*iustitiae*), which the Lord as just judge (*iustus iudex*) will render (*reddet*) to me on that day." Augustine quibbles over the meaning of "will render" and writes:

> For perhaps because he said 'will render' (*reddet*) it could seem to be from owing (*ex debito*.) But when he ascended on high and took captivity captive, he did not 'render' but gave (*dedit*) gifts to human persons. For on what grounds could the Apostle himself presume that something was rendered (*rediddit*) to him as if owed (*tamquam debitum*), unless he had first perceived an unowed gift of grace (*indebitam gratiam*) by which he was made righteous and contended in the good *agôn* (*bonum, agonem certaret*)?[131] For he was injurious, a blasphemer and a persecutor, but he followed after and obtained mercy, as he himself testifies, believing in the one who makes righteous (*iustificat*) not the pious man but the impious, so that he can by righteous-making *make* him pious.

In other words, for Augustine, the LORD cannot be said to "render" anything to humans as a *debitum*. What this means is that the relations of gift (donation and reception) are of a higher order – because they are those which obtain with the LORD -- than those of owing and owning. Grace (*viz*., giving and receiving) is the ordering that comprises the LORD's politics and which is reflected vestigially

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[131] One might here notice the reference to an "*agôn*" – even though Augustine is quoting a Latin version of Scripture that initially translates the Greek word into Latin as *certamen* (which I rendered "contest.")

(through the introduction of owing and owning as subordinate logics of giving and receiving) within human and earthly politics.

In this light, then, we can make a clearer comparison of why, on Augustine's understanding, lying and boasting both stand as opposite numbers to *confessio*. Both are essentially attempts to override or overrule the logic of gift that Augustine takes to be the highest-ordered rule of divine *iustitia* with the lower-ordered rule of property and ownership. Boasting does so by denial of the very fact of the gift by acting as if that which an individual has is the product of her own willing and working and, hence, her "rightful possession" to which others (including the LORD) have debts of obligation. The boast overtly asserts the speaker as owner and producer of the objects of the boast. Lying, on the other hand, does not expressly deny the originary fact of the gift but seeks to arrogate the gift itself (that is, the object given) to the self and to hoard it as a private possession of the individual, removing it from the communal economy of the gift – the social connections between human persons (and, even more importantly, between human persons and the LORD) that are mediated and constituted by giving and receiving. The lie aims at imposing the speaker's desired politics upon the world, ordering relations between herself and others in accordance with her will and to her advantage. Accordingly, its methods are duplicitous, creating a "doubling" of the speaker. Overtly, he acts as if (pretends that) he is the recipient of the gift of common language, using the rules of speech that he has accepted from and been trained in by his linguistic community. Covertly, however, he acts as if (behaves as though) he were the owner and producer of language, producing utterances that are conditioned and shaped not by the communally received rules on "what we should say" but that are instead ordered teleologically towards the political outcomes he privately desires. While lying is the seductive alternative to a confession that would include the speaker's failures to meet the listener's criteria, boasting is the seductive alternative to a confession that would include acknowledgement that the speaker does meet these criteria – just not as a result of his own willing or working but only by virtue of his reception of a gift. As Augustine would have it, what boasting and lying have in common is the speaker's self-alienation from the LORD's *iustitia* – an order of relations ultimately constituted and regulated by the giving and receiving of *non debita*, things that are not owed and that, accordingly, cannot be abstracted from the economy of grace so as to be owned.

Just as Augustine interprets the LORD's election as being a sort of "choosing" that operates upon a higher grammar than the usual human sort of "choosing" which requires and depends upon distinctions between the objects of the choice, so he suggests that a higher-grammar type of human "boasting" might be possible as well. And so he draws his disquisition on Romans 9:10-29 to a close by writing: "Therefore, no other aim was held by the Apostle and all of those who have been made righteous, through whom the logic of grace has been shown to us, except that 'whoever boasts, let him boast in the Lord.'"[132] This act of "boasting in the Lord" could not entail any claims by a speaker to ownership or production of what are, in fact, gifts of divine grace that she has received, but would nonetheless have to include an assertion of the speaker's belief in the LORD. That is to say, "boasting in the Lord" would precisely be *confessio*.

This is due, in part, to a quirk of predication that obtains in the case of the LORD. In Book V of the *De trinitate*, Augustine divides predication into three categories: substantial, accidental, and relational.[133] Substantial predication in the case of the LORD is apophatically impossible, because we cannot name the LORD's "being." Accidental predication in the case of the LORD is logically impossible; because the LORD is simple, eternal, and immutable, there are simply no accidents to be named. What is left, then, is relational predication, and this is of two types. The first regards relations of the Trinity the LORD is *ad intra* (i.e. the relations between the persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.) But the second type of relations that the LORD bears are those *ad extra* (i.e. towards everything that is not the LORD – *viz*., the created order.) The LORD is "king," for instance, or "lord," or "friend" or so forth.

The problem Augustine identifies here is that, if the LORD is eternal and immutable, all of these predications should be able to be made eternally and immutably. Nonetheless, relations have two "poles," as it were. Until time is created, is the LORD not “lord”? Or, if a human person begins and ceases to participate in friendship with God, is the LORD sometimes to be called that person’s “friend” and sometimes not? Augustine’s answer to this is to take all of the LORD’s *ad extra* relational predicates simultaneously to name an aspect of the LORD’s eternal and immutable substance (i.e. God is always “friendly”) and a change in act or disposition on the part of the creature involved (i.e. we can *become* the LORD’s friends.)[134]

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[132] Aug., *Ad Simplicianum*. I 2,21, quoting 2 Cor. 10:17.
[133] Augustine, *De trinitate* V 2,3.

All of this may seem to be taking us off into the abstract conceptual ether, but it explains how Augustine takes a human speaker’s confession of his or her self simultaneously – and even primarily – to constitute praise of the LORD. That is, if I were to say “The LORD is my shepherd,” I am predicating some mutable good acts or dispositions of myself (e.g, “I trust and follow the LORD”) at the same that I am predicating an immutable posture of relationality of the LORD (e.g., “The LORD is eternally *in se* what within creation is named by words like ‘trustworthy, caring, protective, guiding, etc.’”) This becomes even more important when what I am predicating of myself is not a good. When I say “I have sinned in such-and-such a way,” I am implicitly naming and affirming the LORD’s goodness (whatever I failed to embody in my sinning) by distinction. More than this, the act of my affirming the goodness of the LORD is simultaneously an act of faith: it implies that the LORD will accept and not reject the act of speech whereby I assent to divine righteousness by naming as “sin” that which is not it.

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[134] Augustine, *De trinitate* V 16,17.

This is the logic that funds Augustine's exuberant offerings of his confessional speech as acts of praise in the *Confessiones*. So, for instance, we read:

> For no one who confesses to you teaches you what is going on inside him, because a closed heart does not close you out, nor does human hardness-of-heart push away your hand. But you dissolve it whenever you wish, either pitying or vindicating, and there is no one who can hide himself away from your warmth. But let my soul praise you, so that it might love you; and let it confess to you your compassions, so that it might praise you.[135]

For Augustine, then, the value of confessional speech to the LORD does not reside in what the speaker communicates through it about the self, but by the sort of relations that the speaker enters into with the LORD and others through the act of speaking. To confess is, in itself, a refusal of a politics of *potentia* and privatization that are enacted through mendacity and boasting in favour of a disposition of humility accommodated to the order of the LORD's *iustitia*. In confessing the self to the LORD, in particular, the speaker enters into right relation through faith (assent to who the LORD is and to the LORD's criteria) and, thus, praise.

In conclusion, then, we can note the major points of difference between the grammar and politics of truth-telling speech presented in the texts of the Cappadocians and those described by Augustine of Hippo. While Basil and the Gregories approve Christian *parrhêsia* towards others only in cases where the speaker thinks he or she could potentially "win" the *agôn* – justify herself on criteria intelligible to listeners and, thus, make her own position persuasive -- Augustine's view of the purpose of speech is such that he is prepared to call even a defeat a “win.” That is, in his understanding, a speaker may criticize and correct another boldly with full acceptance of the possibility that she might, in fact, be wrong, and have her error demonstrated beyond doubt. Insofar as she is interested in coming to know the truth, the clear demonstration of her error – and, accordingly, the opportunity for *metanoia* – are for her own benefit and so constitute a “win” for her. The sort of equity with respect to a communal quest to learn the truth that Augustine seems to envision here is reminiscent of the ideals of ancient Athenian democracy, in which the defeat of one speaker’s position in the verbal *agôn* was nevertheless a “win” for him if it led to the best course of action being adopted by the *polis*. For Augustine, then, we might say that truth constitutes the common good.

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[135] Augustine, *Confessiones* V. 1,1.

As we saw in Chapter 4, the Cappadocians recommended that Christians maintain a modest silence before the LORD – and certainly that they not dare to claim or exercise undue familiarity with perfection while they were sullied by sin. For Augustine, however, the imperfection of the speaker is not only accommodated by confessional speech but is also healed through it, precisely because the humility of *confessio* is the disposition of faith in God and receptivity to the LORD’s grace by which the soul may be purified. It is faith, first of all, because such speech represents assent to the criteria of the common rules of language itself or to doctrines of faith given by the LORD for belief and mediated through ecclesial authorities. In this way, *confessio* is fully a “speaking-with” the LORD, the Church, and the neighbor. And confession as a humble disclosure of the self in its imperfections also constitutes the speaker's participation in the LORD's *iustitia* – a politics of gratuitous unmerited relationship.

Finally, the shame that the Cappadocians took to attend the speaker disclosing an imperfect self before the perfect LORD evaporates in Augustine's understanding of confessional speech, precisely because it has nowhere to find purchase and ground itself. In refusing lying and boasting – the verbal versions of the habits of "grounding" the self as a subject and attempting to extract and sequester parts of the common whole as private possessions that are proper to a politics of *potentia* – confessional truth-telling amounts to the speaker's ecstasy and self-dispossession. All her words are referred to the LORD as praise and glory, and there is no place left for shame.

## Conclusions

In speaking about *parrhêsia* and confession, Foucault is certainly describing a real distinction. That is, based on how he characterizes the two in different discursive conditions and at various stages of development, we can recognize each of the pictures that he presents. We know the sort of bold – perhaps even brash – self-assurance of those who speak out without fear to correct others. We have seen the blissful familiarity and self-disclosure of those who have no fear of being judged, found wanting, and punished. And we can recognize the cringing and abject self-scrutiny of those who try and make a virtue of their acknowledgement of their own guilt and insufficiency. But, in the final analysis, it is difficult to recognize any of these pictures as fully and simply descriptive of the grammars of truth-telling that belong to the texts, times, and traditions with which Foucault wants to identify them.

With respect to pagan *parrhêsia* as it comes into the Christian tradition, what Foucault overlooks is the process of silent calculation that must ordinarily precede parrhêsiastic speech. Because of its exceptional quality – *viz*., the fact that Greek names instances of such speech as exceptions or seeming exceptions to a rule that would command silence – the reasons not to speak were always far more obvious than the justifications for verbal boldness. To give such justifications, as we have seen, required the speaker to take a measure of himself on the criteria held by others. This could well have been as inwardly agonizing and self-doubting a process as Foucault takes Christian *confessio* to be. However, since it was conducted in silence, it remains hidden from us – we only hear about the cases in which the speaker deemed the self that she would display in speech to have passed muster for disclosure.

With Gregory of Nyssa's consideration of Christian *parrhêsia* towards the LORD, we do see accounts of the sort of uninhibited self-disclosure that Foucault mentions with approval as the lingering remnants of pagan and Hellenistic-Jewish discourses within the nascent Christian tradition. But, upon closer inspection, we see that Nyssen thinks these are all Edenic, eschatological, or quite extraordinary cases. In the usual order of things, Gregory recommends precisely the sort of self-doubting fear and shame that Foucault associates with *confessio* – even as the bishop of Nyssa also lauds and recommends Christian *parrhêsia* towards pagans and heretics.

What Foucault seems to be missing, then, is the thoroughly relative character of the grammar and politics of *parrhêsia*, in both its pagan and Christian contexts. It was never, as he wants so much to suggest, an assurance of perfection (nor even "perfectibility") located within an autonomous subject. Rather, it is the result of a speaker's calculation of the demonstrable merit and acceptability of the self that she will manifest with and through her speech relative to the merits of others, both on the addressee's standards and on those of anyone else listening.

Because those others (addressee and audience) can change, so the *parrhêsia* of the speaker – his confidence in speaking out – is never a stable thing; it can and does come and go depending on context and circumstances.

When it comes to Augustine, on the other hand, we see a presentation of *confessio* that seemingly exhibits more of the qualities of carefree bliss that Michel Foucault assigns to *parrhêsia* even as it also incorporates the very conceptual commitments that he argues are causally responsible for the qualities of neurotic inwardness and verbal wallowing in guilt that belong to *confessio*. First, Foucault suggests that the subject's doubt of her moral sufficiency and capacity to be autonomously perfect leads to a inward preoccupation with the task of dredging up and disclosing the soul's secrets.

But Augustine argues absolutely against the sort of "autonomy" and moral sufficiency of the subject that Foucault wants to claim. And yet, he would hardly expect there to be any need for a process of neurotic self-scrutiny in order for imperfect and contingent persons to make confessions – precisely because he acknowledges that human persons *are* imperfect and contingent. Because knowing definitional criteria means knowing how to use a word, this entails also the confessant's ability to recognize whether or not she and her acts are "sins" or not. For example, if you know what "murder" means, that means exactly that you will be able to recognize whether you have murdered someone or not. If you cannot tell whether or not you have murdered someone, that ordinarily indicates that you are not wondering anything about yourself but about what “murder” really means.

In such cases, then, as the speaker does not know the definitions of particular sins or is mistaken in her understanding, Augustine would certainly view that as part and parcel of the temporal and communal process of coming to know the truth. What is critical here is that, for Augustine, the quest for such definitional truths will not be conducted internally by rooting around within the self’s secrets but communally and externally, the same way that one investigates concepts or learns language. On this point, then, it seems that Foucault might be confusing the subject’s doubt of her autonomous moral capacities with a distrust of language.

Secondly, Foucault takes admission of the insufficiency of the speaker as an autonomous moral subject to lead to “obedience as a state,” implying a permanent struggle to submit one’s own will to the will of another and, concomitantly, a need to be governed at all times and in all particulars without remainder. In these texts of Augustine, however, we see him talking very little about the will, and far more about knowledge and love. In the *De trinitate*, the LORD’s willing is spoken of primarily as a desire directed towards relations of familiarity and sharing – even in death – with human persons, as opposed to a purposive intention in accordance with which the LORD wants to order the human person as a means to some other end. As we saw, too, Augustine draws a sharp contrast between divine *iustitia*, gratuitous generosity, and Christ's humility and the punishing, indebting, privatizing and dominative motions of pride. To become the self-possessed and autonomous subject that Foucault sees as lamentably lost in the "fear and trembling" of the modern disciplinary state would require what Augustine terms apostasy – an attempt to stand outside of the politics of the LORD's gratuity. What Augustine's reading of truth-telling as a communal and relational project suggests instead is that human persons will experience the bliss of fearless and shameless self-disclosure only through the ecstatic dispossession of our speech and, so, our selves.

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Žižek, Slavoj. "Against Human Rights," *New Left Review* 34 (2005).

# Biography

Jennifer Lynn Benedict was born on 9 February in Washington, DC. She was received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church at Easter Vigil, 2012.

Her first academic career was in the field of Classics. She received a Bachelor of Arts (with Highest Honors) in Classical Studies with a concentration in Greek from the College of William and Mary, a Master of Arts in Greek from the University of Virginia. After working within and then outside of academia, she changed fields and returned to the university, earning a Master of Theological Studies (*summa cum laude*) from Duke Divinity School in 2011. She has been the recipient of the James B. Duke Fellowship, a University Scholars Fellowship, a Kearns Summer Research Fellowship at Duke University during her tenure in the doctoral program; a Graduating Senior Highest GPA Prize (4.0) and a Roy C. Petrie Scholarship from Duke Divinity School during her tenure in the M.T.S. program; the John J. Winkler Memorial Prize (2003); a Basil L. Gildersleeve Fellowship at the University of Virginia; and the Hogan Prize for Classical Studies Graduate from the College of William and Mary. She is the translator/author of more than 4,800 lexicographical entries for the Suda On Line (published from 1999 to the present.)