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The Subject of the New Creation:
Transformation & Selfhood in Paul's Letters

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Abstract

The Subject of the New Creation: Transformation & Selfhood in Paul's Letters By Frederick David Carr

In this study, I argue that Paul, like others in his milieu, employs “transformation discourse” to offer models of selfhood to audiences who are in new and changing circumstances. Specifically, I argue that, for those who understand themselves as integrated into the context of Christ's body, Paul presents transformation—or *becoming*—as a defining characteristic of Christian selfhood. This study's methodological approach is analytical, comparative, and synthetic. It is analytical in that I first examine Paul's diverse references to human transformation in conversation with modern and postmodern theories of subjectivity (chs. 2–4). The study is comparative in that I contextualize Paul's discourse among a variety of ancient writings, including classical mythology, Greco-Roman moral philosophy, the OT/LXX, texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Jewish writings from the Mediterranean Diaspora (chs. 5–6). Finally, it is synthetic in that I return to Paul in light of my findings in order to consider how he presents models of subjectivity to early Christians who found themselves in new and changing circumstances (ch. 7). With its multi-dimensional approach, this work provides a conceptual map of human transformation in Paul's epistles, locates Pauline notions of selfhood in the landscape of ancient perspectives, and offers a distinct understanding of selfhood to ongoing debates in Pauline anthropology.

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Chapter 1

The Subject of the New Creation

*“The question of change is, of course, the other side of the question of identity.”*¹

Paul discusses transformation throughout his epistles, and he does so with diverse expressions. In some cases, for example, he uses explicit, morphic terminology (e.g. μεταμορφώω in 2 Cor 3:18; Rom 12:2) or references the “new creation” (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17).² Elsewhere, he constructs vivid depictions of death and renewal (e.g. Gal 2:19–20; Rom 6:1–11) or states plainly, “We all will be changed” (1 Cor 15:51).³ These changes occur at different points in time: past transformation that grounds present and/or future realities (e.g. Gal 2:19–20; Rom 6:1–11; 7:4–6; 2 Cor 5:14–15), present, ongoing change (2 Cor 3:18; 4:16; Rom 12:1–2), and eschatological transformation (1 Cor 15:35–57; Phil 3:20–21). These diverse references weave through the larger fabric of the Pauline corpus, and I refer to them in this study as *transformation discourse*.⁴

In this dissertation, I examine instances of transformation discourse in Paul’s undisputed letters in order to answer two questions. First, according to Paul, what does it mean for a person to be transformed? Second, what understandings of the human underlie Paul’s transformation discourse? The first query concerns the nuts and bolts of human change: what happens when a

¹ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001).

² In my reading, Paul’s use of καὶνὴ κτίσις has anthropological dimensions in both Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17 (see chs. 2–3). For discussion, see T. Ryan Jackson, *New Creation in Paul’s Letters: A Study of the Historical and Social Setting of a Pauline Concept*, WUNT 272 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

³ I use the terms “transformation” and “change” interchangeably. For my purposes, they provide general descriptors, under which particular types or categories of transformation can be grouped (see section IV below). I avoid the term metamorphosis as a general descriptor because, as will be shown (ch. 5), it often describes a certain type of change in the ancient world.

⁴ Cf. the use of the term “Verwandlungstexten” in Frances Back, *Verwandlung durch Offenbarung bei Paulus: Eine religionsgeschichtlich-exegetische Untersuchung zu 2 Kor 2,14-4,6*, WUNT 2.153 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

person is transformed and why were the changes necessary or desired? What factors contribute to these changes, and how are experiences of transformation interpreted and, thus, meaningful for Paul and his audiences? The second is a matter of selfhood, of the fundamental convictions about the human that are disclosed by Paul's transformation discourse.⁵

Each of these fundamental questions targets an aspect of Pauline anthropology—the phenomenon of human transformation on one hand, and Paul's view(s) of selfhood on the other. Each has received attention in its own right. Yet I link the two in order not only to explicate the topic of human transformation or “the self” in Paul, but also to establish how the former sheds light onto the latter. Put simply, this study presupposes that transformation discourse provides a site for the discovery of convictions and assumptions about the person.⁶ It therefore intersects naturally with intellectual challenges to understanding the human self amidst varieties of change, challenges that have preoccupied thinkers from antiquity to the present.⁷

⁵ See discussion in “II. Paul, the Self, & Selfhood” below.

⁶ For a contemporary work that views and investigates discourses of human (self-)transformation as sites for uncovering assumptions about the self, see Cressida J. Heyes, *Self-Transformations: Foucault, Ethics, and Normalized Bodies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). A feminist philosopher, Heyes analyzes cultural discourse on different types of bodily transformation, such as gender alterations, weight loss, and cosmetic surgery. She aims in part to understand what this language of transformation discloses about cultural understandings of the self. She concludes that such discourse assumes and reinforces a type of dualism—the presupposition of an *essential* self, to which one's body must conform. Heyes' work provides a model for my study. Like Heyes, I analyze references to transformation in Paul's letters, in their historical context, to account for models of the self that at work in such language. For examples of works that use a similar approach for studying Pauline anthropology, see Jorunn Økland, “Genealogies of the Self: Materiality, Personal Identity, and the Body in Paul's Letters to the Corinthians,” in *Metamorphoses Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, eds., Seim and Økland, eds. Turid Karlsen Seim, Ekstasis (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 83-107; Tyson Lee Putthoff, “Human mutability and Mystical Change: Explorations in Ancient Jewish Ontoanthropology” (PhD diss., University of Durham [United Kingdom], 2013). On the interrelationship of change and selfhood, with a specific focus on transformations in religious experience, see “Introduction,” in *Self and Self-Transformation in the History of Religions*, eds., David Shulman and Guy G. Stroumsa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1–16.

⁷ Raymond Martin and John Baressi (*The Rise and Fall of the Soul and Self: an Intellectual History of Personal Identity* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2006]) describe these challenges as “the philosophical problem of personal identity,” with theories of personal identity defined as “theories of personal identity *over time*, that is theories that explain why a person, or self, at one time is

1.1 Paul & Human Transformation

Finding answers to this study's two fundamental questions about transformation and selfhood requires close analysis of Paul's transformation discourse. My exegesis, moreover, must proceed with an acute focus on the aims at hand. I thus use three additional queries to guide my analyses of Paul's transformation discourse:

1. Necessity of change: why is transformation necessary and/or desired, and what does it accomplish?
2. Categories of change: what types of transformation occur?
3. Factors in change: who or what is the agent of transformation, and what are the relationships of human change to pertinent circumstances, related concepts, and accompanying images?

1.1.1 Necessity for Change

This query moves us closer to the meaning(s) of transformation and Paul's underlying assumptions about selfhood. Regarding the latter, it is noteworthy that Paul thinks that people need transformation at all. Some ancient writings show little or no concern for the kinds of changes that he discusses.⁸ Alternatively, writings like Ezekiel from the Hebrew Bible and *Barkit Naphshi* (4Q434-38) from the Dead Sea Scrolls describe in vivid detail the replacement of the

or is not the same person or self as someone at some other time" (2). See also Walker, *Metamorphosis and Identity*; Heyes, *Self-Transformations*; Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2002);

⁸ Parmenides exemplifies this view. See. ch. 5. As discussed in ch. 6, some ancient Jewish writings, as well, show little to no concern for human transformation, say, to gain moral agency needed to obey God. A Deuteronomistic perspective, e.g., presumes that the human already has the requisite agency for obedience. Some Second Temple literature and rabbinic texts attribute the source of human sin to demonic influence; the goal for them is not to be transformed in their own makeup but to dispel demons. For discussion, see Miriam T. Brand, *Evil Within and Without: The Source of Sin and Its Nature as Portrayed in Second Temple Literature*, *Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements* 9 (Göttingen: Bandenhoeck & Ruprecht: 2013), 109–207. On the demonic and moral agency in rabbinic writings, see Ishay Rosen-Zvi, *Demonic Desires* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

heart or other “moral organs” in order to (re)gain moral agency.⁹ Yet, even among ancient texts that do feature transformation discourse, their conceptions of selfhood differ, ranging, for example, from views that envisage a stable personal identity through change to others that argue for the death of a person with each change.¹⁰ Such comparisons illustrate the point that instances of transformation discourse sometime assume different views of the self. Each reference to human transformation in Paul, therefore, requires investigation into the question of why change is needed in order to identify the model(s) of the self at work in it.

1.1.2 Categories of Change

Paul uses diverse metaphors to describe transformation, such as the death of the person,¹¹ new creation,¹² and the “clothing over” of the human.¹³ These varied expressions raise questions about the types of transformation described in each case.¹⁴ For example, what changes? Does transformation involve the alteration or replacement of “moral organs,” such as the heart, mind, or flesh?¹⁵ Does it feature changes of appearance¹⁶ or of a “self?”¹⁷ What, moreover, is the nature

⁹ See, e.g., Ezek 11:19-21; 36:26-32; Cf. Jer 31:33. See discussion in ch. 6. Jacqueline E. Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live? The Problem of the Moral Self in the Book of Ezekiel*, BZAW 301 (New York; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000); cf. Paul M. Joyce, “Ezekiel and Moral Transformation,” in *Transforming Visions: Transformation of Texts, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel*, eds. William A. Tooman and Michael A. Lyons, PTMS (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 139–58.

¹⁰ See, for example, the differences between the views of Greco-Roman philosophical writings and ancient mythological narratives discussed in ch. 5.

¹¹ Gal 2:19–21; 5:24; 6:14–15; 2 Cor 5:14–15; Rom 6:3–4, 6:11–13; 7:4, 6, 9–13; 8:10–15.

¹² Gal 6:14–15; 2 Cor 5:17.

¹³ Gal 3:23–29; 2 Cor 5:1–5; Rom 13:14

¹⁴ As shown below, however, exegetes often acknowledge the discourse of human change in Paul’s letters without attention to the distinctive nuances of the transformation(s) in each instance.

¹⁵ E.g. the transformation by the renewal of the mind (νοῦς) in Rom 12:2; cf. 1 Cor 2:16; Phil 2:5; Eph 4:23. Paul also envisages some sort of transformation that centers on the heart (καρδία) in 2 Cor 3:1–3; 4:6, and he refers to the crucifixion of the flesh (σάρξ) in Gal 5:24; cf. Col 2:11. One might also consider the renewal of the “inner person” (ὁ ἑσώ) in 2 Cor 4:16 as loosely related to this category, since the inner self constitutes one dimension of the larger being.

¹⁶ 2 Cor 11:12–15; cf. Ex. 34:29–35; LAB 61:8–9; Ovid, *Metam.* II.833–75.

of the transformation? Are the changes primarily epistemic and/or moral?¹⁸ Are they bodily?¹⁹ If they are epistemic and/or moral, are they necessarily somatic in some way as well?²⁰

Equally important is the question of what does *not* change. For example, in some contexts Paul envisages some form of continuity in personal identity amidst bodily and ontological transformations (e.g. Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:35–57; 2 Cor 5:1–5) and experiences that he describes metaphorically as crucifixion (e.g. Gal 2:19–20; Rom 6:1–11). Such descriptions raise the question of what aspect of the human persists through these various types of changes.

An adequate analysis must also account for the temporal dimensions of human change. Is Paul speaking of transformation as an event of the past, present, or future? Does it occur in the past, but grounds present realities?²¹ Or is the change present and ongoing, but proleptic of eschatological change?²² Once identified, what are the relationships between different temporal elements in Paul's transformation discourse, and do certain types of transformation correspond with particular temporal emphases?

1.1.3 Factors in change

Paul does not discuss transformation under the assumption that a person is an autonomous being that experiences change in isolation from external forces. Rather, Paul's rhetoric reveals convictions about the work of God in Christ's death and resurrection and the

¹⁷ By "self" in this statement, I refer to Paul's depictions changes to the "I" or the ἄνθρωπος of the discourse. See, e.g., Gal 2:19–21; cf. 2 Cor 4:16. See further discussion below.

¹⁸ See, e.g. Gal 2:19–20; Rom 6:1–11; 7:4–6.

¹⁹ See, e.g., 1 Cor 15:42–55; 2 Cor 5:1–5; Phil 3:21.

²⁰ See Romans 12:1–2. Although the call is to present bodies (τὰ σώματα) as a living sacrifice, Paul urges the audience to be transformed by the renewal of their minds (v. 2).

²¹ E.g., 2 Cor 3:1–3; 5:14–19; Gal 2:19–20; Rom 6:3–4; 7:4, 6; 8:1–2.

²² The (personal) eschatological focus of 2 Cor 5:1–5 indicates that one could read 2 Cor 4:16–18 as such.

reorientation that these bring not only to people but also to the entire cosmos.²³ As this study shows, Paul conceptualizes humanity as embedded within a cosmic context that involves competing spheres of power with which people participate.²⁴ Thus, a Pauline view of human existence is inseparably related to powerful realities that govern humans. These realities include but are not limited to the “world” or the order of creation,²⁵ the present age,²⁶ the risen Christ,²⁷ and the spirit.²⁸

This cosmic embeddedness of humans entails a *relational* understanding of the human: a human that is shaped by—perhaps even constituted by—relationships to various realities (power spheres, human communities, and so forth).²⁹ Prudent interpreters will therefore examine Paul’s transformation discourse with attention to this relationality and consider the pertinent factors of

²³ Indispensable for this point are those who emphasize the apocalyptic character of Paul’s thought and the inseparable relationship between Paul’s anthropology and his christology. See, e.g., Ernst Käsemann, “On Paul’s Anthropology” in *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 1–31; idem, *New Testament Questions for Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969); J.C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); J. Louis Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (London: T&T Clark, 1997s), 89–156.

²⁴ Even Rudolf Bultmann, who stresses a highly individualistic reading of the human being in Pauline anthropology, famously asserts that there is an inseparable relationship between Paul’s anthropology and his christology (*Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols. [Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007], 2:191. Repr. of *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols; trans. Kendrick Grobel [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951–55]. This relationship between anthropology and christology opens the possibility of viewing believers less in autonomous and individual terms and more in embedded and participationist terms. Along these lines, the christological dimension of Bultmann’s arguments are critiqued, expanded, and developed in Ernst Käsemann, “On Paul’s Anthropology,” J.A.T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology*, SBT (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1957), 50–52; 79–80; see also Johnson, “The Body in Question: the Social Complexities of Resurrection in 1 Corinthians” in, *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament: Collected Essays*, NovTSup 146 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 295–315.

²⁵ E.g. Gal 6:14; Rom 8:18–25; 2 Cor 5:16–21.

²⁶ Rom 12:2; Gal 1:4.

²⁷ E.g. Phil 3:21.

²⁸ E.g. 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 3:1–18; 5:1–5. Though Paul does not always distinguish between Christ and the spirit as separate entities. See, e.g., 1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 3:17–18; Phil 1:19; Rom 8:9.

²⁹ For more on this see “II: Paul, the Self, and Selfhood” below. Cf. the statement by Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham’s God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1998]: “In Paul’s mind, persona and corporate identity cannot be defined apart from the relation both to God and to others. In contrast to the rampant individualism of our day, Paul understands personhood to be fundamentally relational” (186). Although Longenecker here speaks specifically of social relationships, his claim holds true for my purposes as well.

change in each instance. One must ask, for example, whether the agent of change is divine, human, or some combination of each.³⁰ Moreover, one must be attentive to constellations of concepts and images, such as Paul's references to δόξα,³¹ κόσμος,³² νόμος,³³ and ἁμαρτία,³⁴ as well as to the relationship of human transformation to cosmic transformation³⁵ and, in some cases, Christ's own transformation.³⁶ In short, to account for human change in Paul, one must account for the relationships that exist between the human being, the phenomenon of transformation, and related factors in change.

1.1.4 Summary

To understand transformation in the Pauline epistles, we need a phenomenology of human change that takes seriously each reference in its literary context. The task of accounting for the varieties of transformation in Paul is a first step to reaching this study's goal of understanding how his transformation discourse illuminates his views of the human person. In order to maintain and limit the focus of this foundational aim, the three categories that I refer to as necessity for, categories of, and factors in change will guide my exegesis of Paul in chs. 2–4.

³⁰ Even a cursory look at the texts reveals diversity in Paul's discourse. In eschatological transformation, e.g., the agency seems to be completely divine (e.g. 1 Cor 15:35–57; Phil 3:21), but in the present, there appears to be evidence for human agency (Rom 12:2), divine agency (2 Cor 3:18), or an unclear combination of each (Gal 2:19–20). For specific attention to moral agency in Paul and his milieu, see John M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, eds., *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* (London: T&T Clark, 2006); Kyle Wells, *Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism Interpreting the Transformation of the Heart*, NovTSup (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

³¹ E.g. Rom 6:5–6; 1 Cor 15:40–43; 2 Cor 3:7–18; 4:16–17; Phil 3:21.

³² 2 Cor 5:17–19; Gal 6:14–16.

³³ E.g. Gal 3: 23–29; 4:1–11; Rom 7:1–12.

³⁴ E.g. Rom 6:6–7, 10, 12–14; 7:7–11; 8:10; 2 Cor 5:21.

³⁵ See the coincidence of both human and cosmic transformation in 1 Cor 15: 12–54; Rom 8:12–25. For a book-length treatment of this topic, see John Thomas Koenig, "The Motif of Transformation in the Pauline Epistles: A History-of-Religions/Exegetical Study" (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary of New York, 1970).

³⁶ See, e.g., Gal 3:13; Phil 2:7; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21 cf. Rom 15:8.

1.2 Paul, Selfhood, and the Self

Discussions of selfhood have a long and complex history, and thinkers have conceptualized what is commonly referred to as the human self or “subject” in diverse ways.³⁷ One could, for example, understand the self as the essential and unified ground of human consciousness, rationality, and action, perhaps according to ancient Platonic views of the soul or Enlightenment understandings of an autonomous self.³⁸ Alternatively, one could conceive of the subject as “decentered,” in that the self, whether it is conceived of as an actual entity or “thing” or not, is constituted by powers or forces that originate from outside itself—through discourses and political powers,³⁹ experiences of encounter with other human subjects,⁴⁰ or some combination of each.⁴¹ Recently, some have even argued for what Thomas Metzinger terms the “no-self” viewpoint. In this view, the self is a useful fiction that arises not from the existence of an actual human subject but from evolutionary and biological processes that we interpret as a

³⁷ For some overviews of Western conceptions of the self that span various historical ranges, see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard, 1999); Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway* (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 2000); Donald E. Hall, *Subjectivity* (London: Routledge, 2004); Kim Atkins, ed., *Self and Subjectivity*, Blackwell Readings in Continental Philosophy 8 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005); Raymond Martin and John Baressi, *Rise and Fall*; Jerrold Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); cf. Linda Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*, Studies in Feminist Philosophy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 47–83. See also Shaun Gallagher and J Shear, eds., *Models of the Self* (Thorverton, UK: Imprint Academic, 1999); Gallagher, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Self*, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³⁸ Enlightenment views on selfhood emerge, above all, from the writings of René Descartes. See especially his *Discourse on the Method* in, *Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings*, eds. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 20–56.

³⁹ See, e.g., Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968); Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*; trans. Alan Sheridan; (New York: Vintage, 1977); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Thinking Gender (New York: Routledge, 1990).

⁴⁰ E.g., Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). For discussions views of the subject as emerging through interactions with other subjects in Freud and subsequent psychoanalytic traditions, see Mansfield, *Subjectivity*, 25–50; Alcoff, *Visible Identities*, 62–69.

⁴¹ E.g., Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge: Polity; Malden, MA, 2002).

“thing” by “hypostatizing a phenomenal individual where there is only an intermittent chain of events.”⁴² Thus, from antiquity to the present—with views of the subject ranging from a substantive soul to the self as a fiction—satisfactory accounts of selfhood remain elusive.

For my purposes, it is unnecessary to argue for the correctness of a particular theory of self. Instead, I seek to gain insights into Paul’s understandings of selfhood. The significance of those understandings for constructive theological and philosophical claims may be developed from this work, but they are not my focus. But, to begin, what do I mean by terms like self and selfhood with respect to Paul?

First, I use the terms *selfhood* and *subjectivity* interchangeably to refer broadly to “the culturally specific ways in which the meaning of one’s self is produced, experienced, and articulated.”⁴³ This description recognizes several salient components of selfhood. It notes, for example, that subjectivities are constructed in particular, historical contexts. Although some features of self-understanding may be present in more than one cultural context, selfhood is, “by and large...culturally specific. Every culture pictures the self within their own narratives and worldviews.”⁴⁴ This is true, in part, because subjectivities emerge from lived experiences.⁴⁵ Of

⁴² Thomas Metzinger, “The No-Self Alternative” in Shaun Gallagher, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 280–96. See also Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Shear, “Editor’s Introduction,” in *Models of the Self*, x–xi. The idea of the self as fiction goes back at least to David Hume (*A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Model of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*, edited by D.G.C. Macnabb [Glasgow: Fontana Collins, 1970], 300–12]) who claimed that what people interpret as a self is “nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in perpetual flux and movement.” Personal identity is, therefore, an illusion of the “theatre” of the mind, where “perceptions successively make their appearance.” For commentary on Hume’s discussion of personal identity that is both informative and terse, see Atkins, *Self and Subjectivity*, 33–36.

⁴³ This is the succinct definition of subjectivity in Carol A. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 192. Although some use the terms subjectivity and identity interchangeably, I prefer selfhood and subjectivity because they hint more the *experiential* aspects of self-understanding that are germane to this study.

⁴⁴ Tyson L. Putthoff, *Ontological Aspects of Early Jewish Anthropology: The Malleable Self and the Presence of God*, BRLA 53 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 7.

⁴⁵ See Alcoff, *Visible Identities*, 8–9.

special significance for this work, moreover, is that, when people find themselves in changing historical or cultural situations, the new contexts may demand reconfigurations of selfhood in order for self-understandings to make sense within their current realities.⁴⁶ In this study, I propose that the realities of becoming Christ-followers in Paul's churches created such significant changes to believers' worldviews, social relations, and imaginations that Paul needed to provide for them new models of (Christian) selfhood in order to help them understand who they have become and are becoming "in Christ."

Additionally, my use of these terms presumes concepts that are inherent in the word "subjectivity," understood as

an abstract or general principle that defies our separation into distinct selves and that encourages us to imagine that...our interior lives inevitably seem to involve other people, either as objects of need, desire and interest or as necessary sharers of common experience. In this way, the subject is always linked to something outside of it—an idea or principle or the society of other subjects. It is this linkage that the word 'subject' insists upon...One is always subject *to* or *of* something.⁴⁷

In this view, terms selfhood and subjectivity assume some form of relationality as integral to producing, understanding, and experiencing the self.⁴⁸ In this dissertation, I therefore adopt a set of lenses for the study of Paul that has similarities with postmodern perspectives of a relational or decentered subject, in which a self is not an autonomous entity but is in some way constituted by powers that originate from outside of it.⁴⁹ My decision to begin with relational

⁴⁶ Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 12–15. In Paul's case, new contexts offer new possibilities, and, as Bynum (*Metamorphosis and Identity*) argues, "New choices and new awareness of choices produce self-definition, always achieved partly by the exclusion of other possible selves" (77).

⁴⁷ Mansfield, *Subjectivity*, 3. Emphasis original. See also Braidotti's (*Metamorphoses*) claim that as embedded in a mutually-shaping relationship with a larger society, "The subject is enmeshed in [a] network of interrelated and discursive effects" (144).

⁴⁸ For a recent synthesis of accounts from the fields of neuroscience and developmental psychology that argue for the self as relationally-constituted in these ways, see Susan Grove Eastman, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul's Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 63–84.

⁴⁹ Here, I use the term "relational" broadly and not in a strict sense that accords with a specific subset of philosophical theories. For a concise summary of relational theories of selfhood, as well as

lenses for interpreting selfhood does not draw conclusions about Pauline anthropology from the outset.⁵⁰ Nor do I presume that Paul's views of the person fit neatly with postmodern theories of the human subject. My decision does, however, presuppose that Paul does not assume an autonomous, "disengaged" self associated with the Enlightenment, and I work to avoid the limits and distortions that result from interpreting Paul with the Cartesian lenses that have dominated Western thought since the 17th century.⁵¹ Some NT scholars already have demonstrated convincingly that readings of Paul from Cartesian, non-relational assumptions close off our imaginative possibilities for Pauline anthropology.⁵² Instead, I presume that "subjectivity is entirely relational,"⁵³ and I seek to shed light on how this is so for Paul.

Second, as a corollary, I also use the terms *self* and *subject* interchangeably. To be sure, I do not assume that Paul thought of people as individual "selves," or that he believed in some essential feature with which the "true person" could be identified. We cannot presume, for example, that he affirmed a Platonic understanding of a soul or that he held to a concept of "a self" in anything like a modern or postmodern sense. Yet, in several of my discussions, I find it necessary to use the language of "the self" or "a self" when discussing Paul's convictions about the human person. The use of such terms in this study is nearly unavoidable, even if these words

postmodern philosophical accounts of intersubjectivity, see Alcoff, *Visible Identities*, 59–67. See also the important contributions of Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish; The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage, 1985). For similar, social-scientific accounts, see Dorothy Holland, et al., *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998); Kenneth J. Gergen, *Relational Being: Beyond Self and Community* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Brent D. Slife, "Taking Practice Seriously: Toward a Relational Ontology," *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 24 (2004): 157–78.

⁵⁰ Though my starting point finds support in the recent work of Eastman, *Paul and the Person*.

⁵¹ On the disengaged, modern self, see Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 143–58; Dalia Judovitz, *The Culture of the Body: Genealogies of Modernity*, The Body, In Theory (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

⁵² See, e.g., the arguments in Stanley Stowers, "Paul as a Hero of Subjectivity" in *Paul and the Philosophers*, eds., Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries (Fordham University Press, 2013), 159–74; Johnson, "The Body in Question," 296–300; Eastman, *Paul the Person*.

⁵³ Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 52.

seem to presume more than we can show about Paul's understandings of a person. What, then do I mean by these terms in this work?

I borrow a definition from anthropologist Naomi Quinn and use "self" to refer to "the totality of what an organism is physically, biologically, psychologically, socially, and culturally."⁵⁴ Quinn's definition is useful in that it holds together the corporeal and psychological aspects of the human with the relational. In one sense, the self is the "who" expressed in or constituted by the "I" of speech.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Quinn's references to the physical and biological indicate that the self is embodied, implying that the body functions as part of the self's determining "structure."⁵⁶ Yet the cultural and social features of Quinn's description also mark the relationally-embedded aspects of the self. The self in this view, like subjectivity more broadly, is not "a separated and isolated entity," like a Cartesian "thinking thing," but, rather, something "that operates at the intersection of general truths and shared principles."⁵⁷ With this holistic understanding, I do not, therefore, use the terms "self" or "subject" to describe a single dimension—the physical, biological, psychological, social, or cultural—of the person. Rather, I presume that a self or subject is somehow produced and sustained by these multiple components, but that it is not reducible to any of them.

My approach therefore remains open to the possibility that, just as there are numerous factors in human transformation, there are also numerous factors that can serve as structures of the self. Moreover, just as the factors of transformation may be external to a person, so too, I do

⁵⁴ Naomi Quinn, "The Self," *AT* 6 (2006): 362.

⁵⁵ On the constitution of the subject through the enactment of discourse, see , 223–27; see also Silverman, *Subject of Semiotics*, 192–236.

⁵⁶ On the "bodily structure of subjectivity," see Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 20–22.

⁵⁷ Mansfield, *Subjectivity*, 3; cf. 185. Cf. Newsom's (*Self as Symbolic Space*) claim that "The term 'subject' is meant to convey a dual sense, that the individual is an aware participant (the active sense of subject) but also is one who is subjected to a particular "system of meaning."

not preclude the possibility that, for Paul, the self's components may exist or originate from outside of the human.

In sum, to use a contemporary analogy, feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti argues that, in addition to “internal structures” of the human subject, discursive and political powers function as external structures of the self.⁵⁸ She argues that the rise of postmodernity demanded new forms of expressions and representations of the self and that, as a result, new possibilities have emerged for conceiving of human subjectivity.⁵⁹ Although Paul is no more a postmodern thinker than he is a modern one, I find Braidotti's description to be useful for Pauline anthropology. For Paul, the revelation of Christ demanded a wholesale reinterpretation of the cosmos and its history. Since Paul viewed humans in relation to this larger framework, the transformation of the framework likewise pressed Paul to imagine new possibilities for what it means to be human. Thus, one could, with Braidotti, view the new framework's constitutive parts (e.g. Christ, spirit, and the church) as structures of the self in Paul's theological worldview. This is not a denial of what one may describe as the self's internal structures (e.g. καρδιά and νοῦς). Yet I take into consideration these external structures as parts of the factors of change (see above) that are critical for understanding selfhood in Paul's transformation discourse.

1.3 Transformation Discourse in Paul's Letters

Even within the limits of the undisputed Pauline letters, human change is a broad category. One therefore needs specific criteria to narrow the scope and to establish which passages qualify as transformation discourse. Thus, although Colossians and Ephesians contain

⁵⁸ Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 14.

⁵⁹ Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 13–15.

relevant language, I limit my study to the undisputed letters of Paul.⁶⁰ And I employ two criteria for the selection of passages from the undisputed letters that anchor my analysis (a text need only meet one of the two to qualify for consideration). Although my exegesis examines the “anchor texts” in relation to other relevant Pauline materials, specific selections serve as the dissertation’s center of gravity. The criteria are:

1. The presence of explicit transformation terminology—which includes terms like μεταμορφώω, μορφώω, μετασχηματίζω, and συμμορφίζω—used in reference to human change.⁶¹

or

2. Depictions or descriptions of human change that disrupts personal identity—the seeming continuity of the self over time and amidst various changes—and, thus, results in two embodiments of the self or, perhaps, two selves—a former self and a new self.⁶²

⁶⁰ See especially Col 2:8–15; 3:1–4, 9–11; Eph 2:1–10; 4:11–16, 20–24; 5:7–10. My decision to limit the scope to the undisputed Pauline letters is a pragmatic one. Since of selection of texts to be examined as transformation discourse from the undisputed letters alone is substantial (see Table 3 below), additional materials from the disputed letters would prove unmanageable for a study of this size.

⁶¹ I have identified what I here call “transformation terminology” with the aid of J.P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*; 2 vols; 2nd ed. (New York: UBS, 1989). The final selection of texts requires a number of difficult, critical decisions. One must, for example, consider whether to use the term ἁγιοσμός in 1 Thess 4:3, 7. Yet, within the pericope (4:1–8), Paul’s references to sanctification do not denote human transformation but a mode of moral conduct. For others who have used transformation terminology as the criterion for examining human transformation in Paul’s letters, see John Thomas Koenig, “The Motif of Transformation in the Pauline Epistles : A History-of-Religions/Exegetical Study” (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary of New York, 1970); Eliezer Gonzalez, “Paul’s Use of Metamorphosis in Its Graeco-Roman and Jewish Contexts,” *DavarLogos* 13 (2014): 57–76.

⁶² This second criterion is similar that that of Engberg-Pederson, “Complete and Incomplete Transformation,” 124. As with criterion 1, final decisions require a number of critical decisions. For example, some passages in the undisputed letters refer to human change, but not in the sense that there is a distinction between a former self and a new self (see e.g. 1 Thess 1:6–7, 9; 2:14). Similarly, as Frederick S. Tappenden (*Resurrection in Paul: Cognition, Metaphor, and Transformation*, ECL [Atlanta: SBL, 2016]) acknowledges, texts like 1 Thess 4:13–17 likely assume some type of postmortem transformation (85). Yet, for this study, it is necessary to delimit the passage selection according to at least one of these two criteria, and 1 Thess 4:13–17 neither contains explicit transformation terminology nor envisages possible disruptions to personal identity.

I do not claim that the texts meeting these two criteria are comprehensive for all that may qualify as Pauline transformation discourse. Yet, as shown below, these criteria yield a more thorough set of data for the study of transformation in Paul than previous studies have used.

The passages that qualify under criterion 1 include those that share the root μορφ. Paul twice uses the verb μεταμορφώω, once in 2 Cor 3:18 and once in Rom 12:2.⁶³ In Galatians 4:19, he uses the verb μορφώω—its only occurrence in the NT—to write that he suffers birth pangs “until Christ is formed (μορφωθῇ Χριστὸς) in you.” In Phil 3:10, he uses the verb συμμορφίζω (used only once in the NT) and the noun form, σύμμορφος, in Phil 3:21, as well as in Rom 8:29. This clustering of μορφ root terms in Phil 3, along with Paul’s use of μετασχηματίζω in Phil 3:21, make it a noteworthy selection for my examination.⁶⁴ To be sure, it is not necessarily the case that each of these terms is equally revealing of insights into Paul’s understanding of human transformation. Yet each requires at least some attention.⁶⁵

Paul also uses a number of other terms within the semantic range of “change” to describe human transformation. For instance, he uses μετασχηματίζω in 2 Cor 11:13–15 and, as noted above, in Phil 3:21.⁶⁶ In 1 Cor 15:51–52, Paul uses the verb ἀλλασσω to signify eschatological human transformation.⁶⁷ Since the larger context of 1 Cor 15:35–57 portrays change that seemingly disrupts personal identity (see esp. 15:44, 50, 54), this selection qualifies according to

⁶³ The only other occurrences of μεταμορφώω in the NT are in Mark and Matthew’s accounts of the transfiguration (Mark 9:2; Matt 17:2).

⁶⁴ Note as well that in Phil 2, Paul twice uses the noun μορφή to describe Jesus’ existence in the “form of God” (2:6) and his subsequent self-emptying, in which he takes “the form of a slave” (2:7).

⁶⁵ Paul does feature terms from the μορφ root in ways that do not refer to human change. E.g. he uses the noun μόρφωσις in Rom 2:20, in which he refers to the “embodiment” or the “form of the knowledge and of the truth in the law.” Cf. 2 Tim 3:5, which refers to a “form of piety” (μόρφωσιν εὐσεβείας).

⁶⁶ Paul also uses μετασχηματίζω in 1 Cor 4:6. Yet in this context, the verb means “apply to,” rather than to transform (Phil 3:21) or to change outward form or disguise (2 Cor 11:13–15). See BDAG, s.v. μετασχηματίζω. Thus, the use of μετασχηματίζω in 1 Cor 4:6 is not included in this study.

⁶⁷ Paul uses ἀλλασσω in two other passages. In Rom 1:23, he uses it in the sense of “exchange,” and in Gal 4:20, he uses it to refer to change, but not in the sense of human transformation.

both criteria (more below). In 2 Cor 4:16, Paul describes a dual process of change in which “outer person” (ἐξω ἄνθρωπος) is being “destroyed” (διαφθείρω) while the “inner person” (ἔσω ἄνθρωπος) is “being renewed” (ἀνακαινώνω).

The most common term for consideration is γίνομαι.⁶⁸ The Pauline corpus (including the disputed epistles) use γίνομαι 139x, and a number of occurrences refer to human change. In Rom 6:5, for instance, he writes, “If we have become united (σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν) with him in the likeness of his death, we certainly also will be (in the likeness) of his resurrection.”⁶⁹ Here, Paul describes past conformity to Christ’s death and the anticipation of conformity to his resurrection. Paul also uses γίνομαι to describe human change in 1 Cor 13:11: “While I was a child, I was speaking as a child, thinking as a child, and reasoning as a child. But when I became a man (γέγονα ἄνηρ), I did away with (κατήργηκα) the things of a child.” In the context of 1 Cor 13:8–13, this statement illustrates the distinction between the temporally fixed and incomplete nature

⁶⁸ Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1:154.

⁶⁹ Another use of γίνομαι in discourse on human change is in Rom 7:3–4, in which Paul compares believers’ relationship to the law with a widow who remarries. The audience has, “through Christ’s body” died to the law, “in order that they might be (εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι) with” Christ (v. 4). It is not clear that the term itself qualifies these statements for consideration as transformation discourse. Yet the decision is clinched by the language of self-death in v. 4, which qualifies this passage according to criterion 2.

Another example is Paul’s use of γίνομαι in 1 Cor 9:20–22. He writes, “And I became (γίνομαι) as a Jew (ὡς Ἰουδαῖος) to the Jews so that I might win Jews; to those under the law (I became) as under the law (ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον)—although not being myself under the law—so that I might gain those under the law” (v. 20). Paul parallels this grammatical structure to claim that he also became as without law (ὡς ἄνομος) to win those who are without law (v. 21), and weak (ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν ἀσθενής) to gain the weak (v. 22a). He closes his statements with, “I have become (γέγονα) all things to all people, so that I might by all means save some” (v. 22b). Although Paul uses γίνομαι to describe his becoming as/like” (ὡς) rather than an actual metamorphosis, these statements may qualify as transformation discourse, since Paul elsewhere uses transformation terminology to reference what this study calls the *transformation of appearances* (see Paul’s use of μετασχηματίζω in 2 Cor 11:13–15). Yet, in this case, Paul’s use of γίνομαι refers not to the alteration of the human being, but, rather, uses the language of change to refer to adjustments of his conduct in relation to his audience. For a comprehensive study of Pauline transformation discourse, this passage may require attention, but for this study, it is peripheral. A somewhat similar example is in 2 Cor 12:11, in which Paul writes, “I have become (γέγονα) a fool,” in reference to the “Fool’s Speech.” Here, as with comments on his change of moral conduct, Paul does not seem to refer to actual human change, but, rather, an alteration of his persona for rhetorical purposes. Cf. Gal 4:12; 5:26; Phil 2:15; 3:17; 1 Cor 3:18; 1 Cor 4:13, 16; 7:21, 23; 10:7; 11:1; 14:20; 15:58.

both of spiritual gifts and knowledge (vv. 8–9) with the coming fullness (τέλειος in v. 10), in which the partial will be put to an end (v. 10: ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται). In this latter event, the dim vision of human understanding will cease and, according to Paul, “I will know as I have been known” (v. 12). The use of γίνομαι in 13:11, which seemingly refers to the natural changes that come with age, thus directs readers to a larger phenomenon of human transformation that is epistemic in nature.⁷⁰

Additionally, γίνομαι appears a number of times in 1 Cor 15:35–57 (vv. 37, 45, 54). As noted above, this section of 1 Cor 15 qualifies as transformation discourse according to both criteria. Further discussion is therefore unnecessary here.

Paul also twice uses γίνομαι in 2 Cor 5 in relation to human change. In 5:17, a passage already included for consideration due to its use of the term καινὴ κτίσις, Paul writes, “The new has come about,” or, as the NRSV renders it, “Everything has become (γέγονεν) new!” In 5:21, Paul relates God’s transformation of Christ with human transformation. He writes, “God made the one who did know sin to be sin for our sake, so that we might become (γενώμεθα) the righteousness of God in him.” In this statement, Christ’s being made into sin serves as a “factor of change” (see above) for the human *becoming* the righteousness of God. Thus, 2 Cor 5:17 should be taken into consideration as discourse of human transformation, in conversation with the whole of 5:16–21.

In sum, therefore, specific verses and larger passages that qualify according to criterion 1 are as follows: Gal 4:19; 1 Cor 13:8–13; 15: 37, 45, 51–52, 54; 2 Cor 3:18; 5:16–21; 11:13–15, Phil 3:2–21; and Rom 6:5; 12:1–2.

⁷⁰ Note especially the emphases on knowledge in vv. 8, 9, 11, 12.

Epistle	Passage(s)
Galatians	4:19
1 Corinthians	13:8–12 15: 37, 45, 51–52, 54
2 Corinthians	3:18 5:16–17 11:13–15
Philippians	3:2–21
Romans	6:5 12:1–2

Table 2:
Transformation Discourse According to Criterion 1

For criterion 2, Paul uses mixed expressions and representations of changes that seem to rupture the self's continuity. He describes, for example, the death and/or resurrection of himself or others in ways that envisage a former self and a current self (Gal 2:19–21; 5:24; 2 Cor 5:14–15; Rom 6:1–11; 7:4, 6, 9–13; 8:10–15), and the term “new creation” (καινή κτίσις) for human change or, perhaps, cosmic change that includes human change (Gal 6:14–15; 2 Cor 5:17).⁷¹ Elsewhere, Paul uses the metaphors of clothing (ἐνδύω, lit. “to put on”) or “swallowing” (καταπίνω) to represent human transformation (1 Cor 15:53–54; 2 Cor 5:1–5; Gal 3:23–29; Rom 13:14).⁷²

From the expressions and texts that meet at least one of the two criteria, I have identified the following passages and sections as transformation discourse for this dissertation's consideration:

⁷¹ See n. 2 above.

⁷² Cf. Eph 4:24; Col 3:10. In some of these same passages, Paul also declares that certain changes alter identity and/or social status (Gal 3:23–29; 4:1–11 Rom 6:16–18, 19; 8:1–2, 10–15), and such changes are discussed in relation to the transformations that fit my two criteria. .

Epistle	Passage(s)
Galatians	2:19–20 3:23–29 4:1–11 5:24 6:14–15
1 Corinthians	15:53–54
2 Corinthians	5:1–5, 14–15, 17
Romans	6:3–4, 11–13, 16–18, 19 7:4, 6, 9–13; 8: 1–2; 10–15 13:14

Table 2:
Transformation Discourse According to Criterion 2

Combining the two lists, splitting some clusters of references into individual units, and expanding others to include their larger pericopae, yields the following passages for analysis:

Epistle	Passage(s)
Galatians	2:18–20 3:23–29 4:1–11 4:19 5:24 6:14–15
Philippians	3:10–11 3:21
1 Corinthians	13:8–12 15:35–57
2 Corinthians	3:18 4:16–18 5:1–5 5:14–15 5:17 11:13–15
Romans	6:1–11 7:1–13 12:1–2

Table 3:
Transformation Discourse for Consideration in this Study

I do not suggest that this is a comprehensive list of passages that contain transformation discourse in the undisputed Pauline epistles. Yet my uses of these two criteria incorporate sufficient passages to accomplish my efforts to map Paul's diverse transformation discourse. Moreover, as the following overview of the history of research shows, these two criteria allow for a more robust range of passages than recent similar efforts have included.⁷³

1.4 Transformation Discourse in Pauline Scholarship

The topic of human of human transformation in Pauline studies is, paradoxically, both pervasive and rarely addressed. Although scholars commonly refer to transformation, devote significant attention to a handful of challenging passages (e.g. 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 3:18, 4:16–18; 5:1–5), or discuss one or two categories of change, they rarely give devoted and in-depth attention to the theme across the breadth of Paul's letters. I organize the following review of pertinent research in two sections. First, I consider a number of works that do not examine human transformation as a primary topic but that emphasize human change through their discussions of participation in Christ. In the second section, I discuss works that do treat human transformation in Paul as their central subject matter.⁷⁴

⁷³ E.g., Koenig, "Motif of Transformation" restricts the focus to texts that meet my first criterion, and Engberg-Pederson, "Complete and Incomplete Transformation" examines three passages, each of which qualifies according to my second criterion. Note also that, for considerations of space, I do not treat in totality the selections that I represent as ranges of chapters in the chart. For example, although the entirety of Rom 6-8 needs attention, as a section of Romans, I restrict the most in-depth exegetical analysis to sections that portray ruptures to the self's continuity (e.g. Rom 6:3–4, 6:11–13; 7:4, 6, 9–13; 8:10–15).

⁷⁴ Cf. Putthoff's ("Human Mutability and Mystical Change") literature review, which contains significant overlap in material but is organized differently, according to views on whether authors understand present change in Paul to describe either ethical/moral change or ontological change (12–48).

1.4.1 Participation in Christ

Scholarly focus on participation in Christ gained prominence in 20th century debates about pauline soteriology. Such debates focus heavily on justification in the Pauline epistles—whether Paul indicates that a believer is “reckoned righteous” in a legal sense or undergoes some form of transformation through participation in Christ. Or, as E.P. Sanders states, since both “juristic and participationist terminology” appears in Paul, do both occur and if so, which is more central to Paul’s thought?⁷⁵ The works of those who prioritize participation are particularly relevant to this study and two foundational figures in this realm of thought include William Wrede and Albert Schweitzer.

1.4.1.1 William Wrede

William Wrede’s small book *Paul* (orig. *Paulus*) influenced Albert Schweitzer’s monumental work on Paul, and it anticipated central aspects of debates within pauline scholarship that persist to the present.⁷⁶ According to Wrede, Paul understands the human predicament as existence under the power of sin, “an active agent” that resembles other supernatural beings.⁷⁷ As a result, humanity in its “earthly and bodily existence, is made subject to the power of sin” and can do nothing to free itself.⁷⁸ What humanity needs, therefore, is the liberation and transformation the Christ event brings:

Man must go forth from this fleshly, earthly existence into a spiritual, immaterial existence, out of the sphere of sin into that of righteousness, out of the reach of the Law into the region of freedom, out of death into eternal life, out of the

⁷⁵ See E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977), 520.

⁷⁶ William Wrede, *Paul*, trans. Edward Lummis (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1908). Wrede’s view on Paul’s doctrine of redemption is most pertinent to the present work.

⁷⁷ Wrede, *Paul*, 93. Specifically, Paul believes that humans are “under the sway of mighty spirits, demons, and angelic powers” (95).

⁷⁸ Wrede, *Paul*, 94–95.

dominion of spirits into the dominion of God. However central the thought of sin is, in Paul's mind, still—we reiterate—the redemption is *more* than liberation from sin. Man must be freed from the bonds of the body and the earthly world, that is, he must die. Die and become!⁷⁹

Although he does not explore the mechanics of the self-death that liberates a person, Wrede argues that this event is not metaphorical. For Paul, death and transformation are actual and literal.⁸⁰ Those who have experienced redemption are “free from the bodily and material” and “share in the spiritual nature of God.”⁸¹ The spirit “brings about substantial change in man,” and the human will undergo complete transformation in the “future life.”⁸² A person therefore undergoes change that alters one's nature and mode of existence.⁸³

Furthermore, for Wrede, Paul's doctrine of redemption is primary, and justification by faith is secondary. On justification, Wrede is worth quoting in full.

The best known of Paul's ideas, the so-called doctrine of justification by faith has not yet been mentioned. Our silence in itself implies a judgment. The Reformation has accustomed us to look upon this as a central point of Pauline doctrine: but it is not so. In fact the whole Pauline religion can be expounded without a word being said about this doctrine, unless it be in the part devoted to the law. It would be extraordinary if what was intended to be the chief doctrine were referred to only in a minority of the epistles. That is the case with the doctrine: it only appears where Paul is dealing with the strife against Judaism. And this fact indicates the real significance of the doctrine. It is the *polemical doctrine* of Paul, is only made intelligible by the struggle of his life, his controversy with Judaism and Jewish Christianity, and is only intended for this.⁸⁴

Paul develops a doctrine of justification only as a practical means of dealing with the problems of Jew-Gentile relations in his churches.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Wrede, *Paul*, 97.

⁸⁰ Wrede, *Paul*, 103.

⁸¹ Wrede, *Paul*, 106.

⁸² Wrede, *Paul*, 107–108, 117.

⁸³ See summary in Wrede, *Paul*, 109–22.

⁸⁴ Wrede, *Paul*, 123.

⁸⁵ Wrede, *Paul*, 127–28.

By distinguishing sharply between Paul's doctrine of redemption and his doctrine of justification, Wrede affirms the former as primary and the latter not only as secondary, but as a mere tool for argumentation. Since the doctrine of redemption includes the substantial changes to a person, he argues that participatory transformation is central to Paul's theology. To reach his conclusions, however, Wrede draws from multiple epistles at once, and he portrays human transformation as a uniform phenomenon in Paul's letters. As a result, the so-called doctrine of redemption and the transformation that it entails develops as a systematized abstraction from particular and diverse statements in Paul. Despite the merits of Wrede's contribution, it does not account for the diversity of Paul's transformation references or provide detailed interrogation into such references within their epistolary or historical contexts. Moreover, because he focuses on Pauline theology more broadly, Wrede's is unconcerned with the challenges that Paul's transformation references pose to understanding Paul's views on selfhood.

1.4.1.2 Albert Schweitzer

A few decades later, Albert Schweitzer developed his work on Paul within the same trajectory as Wrede. Schweitzer's *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*⁸⁶ is foundational for its attention to the Pauline theme of being "in Christ."⁸⁷ Although he acknowledges that Hermann Lüdemann and Otto Pfleiderer "first described the train of thought connected with 'being-in-

⁸⁶ Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (New York: Holt and Company, 1931).

⁸⁷ Indispensable background for Schweitzer's—indeed, all present discussion—of "in Christ" as a Pauline theme is Adolf Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu"* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1892). Deissmann argues that being "in Christ" is not merely a figurative expression, but, rather, involves participation in Christ's spirit: Christ's spirit inhabits the person and the person inhabits Christ's spirit (88. See also Deissmann, *Paul*, 142). Although I do not engage deeply in debates on whether Paul understand spirit as material, my view largely aligns with Deissmann's, especially in his understanding of human participation in Christ in Paul's letters.

Christ' in its full peculiarity and significance," and that Wrede built on their work, Schweitzer remains unsatisfied with the state of the conversation.⁸⁸ He begins by asserting that Paul in no way bore the influence of Hellenism. Rather, given the choice between "either a purely eschatological or a purely Hellenistic explanation of his teaching," Schweitzer chooses the former and leads his study with the claim that the Hellenized Christianity begins not with Paul, but after him.⁸⁹ His work is pertinent to this study for two reasons.

First, Schweitzer highlights Paul's "Christ-mysticism," which he distinguishes from "God-mysticism." Although Paul envisages humans being "in God" at the eschaton (1 Cor 15:26-28), Schweitzer argues that Paul's understanding of Christian existence, pre-parousia, is dominated by the idea of being in Christ, that is, Christ-mysticism.⁹⁰ Particularly germane is his description of Christ-mysticism: "One thing which surprises us in the pauline Christ-mysticism is its extraordinarily realistic character. The being-in-Christ is not conceived as a static partaking in the spiritual being of Christ, but as a real co-experiencing of His dying and rising again."⁹¹ Like Wrede, he argues that Paul's vision of the believer's mystical being-in-Christ is no metaphor but involves a "quasi-physical" union with Christ established at baptism.⁹² Through the transformation that results from believers' assimilation into Christ, "dying and rising again have already begun, although outward seeming of their natural existence remains unchanged." They are, therefore, "already supernatural beings" that will be fully transformed at the parousia "by

⁸⁸ Specifically, he refers to Hermann Lüdemann, *Die Anthropologie des Apostels Paulus: Paulus und ihre Stellung innerhalb seiner Heilslehre. Nach den vier Hauptbriefen dargestellt* (Kiel: C.F. Mohr, 1872); Otto Pfleiderer, *Paulinism: A Contribution to the History of Primitive Christian Theology*, trans. Edward Peters, 2 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1891); trans. of *Der Paulinismus: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der urchristlichen Theologie* (Leipzig: O.R. Reisland, 1890); Wrede, *Paul*.

⁸⁹ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, viii.

⁹⁰ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 12–13.

⁹¹ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 12–13. He later argues from 2 Cor 4:16 that this view of internal transformation despite outward appearances "is summed up in the statement "though our outer man perishes, yet our inward man is renewed from day to day" (119).

⁹² Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 15, 110. Cf. pp.127, 130–31. Cf. Deissman, *in Christo*, 91; *Paul*, 142

sloughing off the natural existence which clings to them as a sort of outer covering.”⁹³ Related to my “factors of change” above is that Jesus’ resurrection also inaugurated the transformation of the world, along with the transformation of humanity—on the whole, a transformation “from the natural into the supernatural.”⁹⁴

Second, Schweitzer, like Wrede, argues that being in Christ is central to Paul’s thought and that the doctrine of justification is secondary. He argues that law and eschatology are incompatible and that the advent of Christ’s kingdom marks the termination of the law.⁹⁵ Thus, those who are in Christ are no longer under the law.⁹⁶ Moreover, freedom from the law is an entry point into Paul’s “mystical doctrine of redemption,” in which a person’s existence is conditioned by being in Christ. Although Paul does also have a “juridical doctrine of justification,” it is a secondary doctrine that rests on the foundation of the central reality of the mystical doctrine of being in Christ.⁹⁷ “The doctrine of righteousness by faith is therefore a subsidiary crater, which has formed within the rim of the main crater—the mystical doctrine of redemption through the being-in-Christ.”⁹⁸

In sum, Schweitzer views human transformation as an aspect of Christ mysticism, which he understands as central to Paul’s thought. Like Wrede, Schweitzer also sees Paul’s references to transformative participation in Christ not as figurative, but, rather, as both experiential and even “quasi-physical.” Yet, beyond his claims that a person undergoes internal, spiritual change into “resurrection existence” in anticipation of full transformation at the final resurrection, he

⁹³ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 110–11.

⁹⁴ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 113.

⁹⁵ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 188–89.

⁹⁶ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 190–92.

⁹⁷ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 205–209, 221. For an excellent summary, see Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 112–15.

⁹⁸ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 225.

does not examine in detail what occurs in human transformation or address the problem of the seeming persistence of personal identity amidst change.⁹⁹ Neither does he consider the possibility of multiple categories for human transformation in Paul.

To be sure, as with Wrede, such pursuits lie beyond the scope of Schweitzer's aims. Yet their developments were seminal and initiated scholarly trajectories that continue to the present and in which the present study situates itself. Principal among their contributions was their split between Paul's doctrine of redemption and his doctrine of justification. From this split emerged the 20th century debates over juridical and participationist theories of pauline soteriology. It is the participationist side of these discussions that receive the most attention to human transformation, and some key figures and perspectives are worth discussing.

1.4.1.3 E. P. Sanders

In his groundbreaking work *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, E. P. Sanders largely aligns with Wrede and Schweitzer and argues that participation in Christ is the center of Paul's theology.¹⁰⁰ Although Paul holds together both juristic and participatory categories, the latter is "the heart of his soteriology and christology."¹⁰¹ When a person enters into this participatory relationship, one begins to undergo a process of transformation. Sanders argues that Paul

⁹⁹ The closest he comes is to claim that for one who has undergone spiritual transformation, "every manifestation of life of the baptized man is conditioned by his being in Christ. Grafted into the corporeity of Christ, he loses his creatively individual existence and his natural personality. Henceforth he is only a form of manifestation of the personality of Jesus Christ, which dominates his corporeity. Paul says this with trenchant clearness when he writes, in the Epistle to the Galatians, 'I am crucified with Christ, so I live no longer as I myself; rather it is Christ who lives in me'" (Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 125). Here, Schweitzer either misses or does not acknowledge the problem of how to account for personal continuity amidst transformation. Within his context, such concerns were potentially within the realm of his intellectual horizons, since they had been discussed by such prominent figures as John Locke, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant. See Atkins, *Self and Subjectivity*, 23–59.

¹⁰⁰ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 447–523, esp. pp. 453, 459–60, 462–63, 487, 495, 501. In Sanders' view, participation in Christ is that which constitutes the "transfer"—for him, the dominant theme of Paul's soteriology—to Christ's lordship (468).

¹⁰¹ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 453, 502–508.

portrays the believer's renewal as "change in progress" that will come to completion at the eschaton, and he argues that human change is concurrent with a change of aeons and the passing away of the world's present form.¹⁰² Yet he admits that he lacks a category to describe the "reality" with which believers undergo change through participation in Christ. He can only state, "Christians really are one body and Spirit with Christ, the form of the present world really is passing away, Christians really are being changed from one stage of glory to another, the end really will come and those who are in Christ will really be transformed."¹⁰³ Thus, like Wrede and Schweitzer, Sanders touches on human transformation in Paul, and he recognizes that it has both present and eschatological dimensions and that it is "real" in some way. But he stops short of working out in detail the nature of the transformation by addressing what changes and what does not, the theological-anthropological implications of human transformation in Paul's letters, and so on.

1.4.1.4 Participation and *Theosis*

Since the publication of *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, numerous studies on pauline soteriology have emerged, studies that emphasize participation in Christ and acknowledge the importance of human transformation to Pauline thought.¹⁰⁴ Some such studies reach beyond the claims of Wrede, Schweitzer, and Sanders who subordinate justification by faith under the "participationist model" and argue that Paul's juridical and participatory language shows two

¹⁰² Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 468–69, 498.

¹⁰³ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 522.

¹⁰⁴ For a history of the recent research, see M. David Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Paul's Soteriology*, BZNW 187 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 13–27. See also the overview and references in Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 40–48. Cf. Udo Schnelle, "Transformation Und Partizipation Als Grundgedanken Paulinischer Theologie," *NTS* 47 (January 2001): 58–75.

ways of expressing a single model¹⁰⁵ or that the participatory model should displace justification by faith altogether.¹⁰⁶ Especially noteworthy are those who argue that Paul's letters envisage notions of *theosis*. Increasingly prominent among such scholars are the contributions of Stephen Finlan, Michael Gorman, and David Litwa.¹⁰⁷ Despite the centrality of human transformation in these perspectives, however, such works tend not to isolate transformation as a topic for detailed analysis and do not pursue the possibilities of multiple categories of human transformation in the Pauline epistles.¹⁰⁸ Thus, although works on participation in Christ run up against the theme of human transformation in Paul and discuss it to some degree, they open the door to subject matter that needs further examination and development.

1.4.2 Transformation as a Theme in the Pauline Corpus

1.4.2.1 John Koenig

A small number of scholars have put Pauline transformation discourse at the center of their investigations. One example is John Koenig's dissertation, "The Motif of Transformation in the Pauline Epistles." The work addresses both human transformation and cosmic transformation, and it examines each in its own section.

¹⁰⁵ E.g. Gorman, *Cruciform God*.

¹⁰⁶ Douglas A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London: T&T Clark, 2005).

¹⁰⁷ See, e.g., Stephen Finlan, "Can We Speak of *Theosis* in Paul?," in eds. Michael J. Christensen and Jefferey A. Wittung, *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 68-80; Gorman, *Cruciform God*; Litwa, *Being Transformed*; Gorman, *Cruciform God*; Litwa, *We are Being Transformed*.

¹⁰⁸ Gorman's (*Cruciform God*) summary of Finlan's ("Can We Speak of *Theosis*," 73) delineation of human transformation in Paul is illustrative: "It consists of (1) dying to sin, (2) moral transformation, and (3) eschatological transformation" (6). As shown below, this too is the general perspective of Engberg-Pederson, "Complete and Incomplete Transformation." Although helpful, I submit that such overviews cover over as much as they reveal because they provide a broad account of human transformation without considering the possible varieties or the nuts and bolts of what occurs when a person is transformed. Although Finland distinguishes between "conformation" and transformation ("Can We Speak of *Theosis*," 72-75) and Gorman identifies moral transformation as a constitutive of pre-resurrection transformation, such claims only hint at areas of thought that need more development.

Koenig discusses two types of human transformation in Paul—eschatological and “pre-parousia”—and focuses on what he calls the “present progressive” (i.e. pre-parousia) type of human change.¹⁰⁹ His criterion for passage selection is that in each text “some verbal form of the noun *μορφή* is used to describe an event in the pre-parousia life of the believer.”¹¹⁰ The passages that qualify for exegetical consideration are Gal 4:19; 2 Cor 3:18; Rom 12:2; and Phil 3:10.

After examining each passage, he provides some synthetic conclusions about human transformation in Paul. First, “transformation functions as the ‘mechanism’, the process through which believers are repeatedly confirmed in their maturity” (in contrast to the immature who are not undergoing transformation [e.g. 1 Cor 2:6–3:2]).¹¹¹ Transformation is not gradual progress but “daily correction” and a regular “refitting” to Christ’s image in order to avoid falling into immaturity, boasting, and self-trust. Moreover, based on 2 Cor 4:16 and Rom 12:2, the “inner dynamics” of transformation involve both suffering and renewal.¹¹² Paul’s concept of transformation as “continuous correction of maturity” is both of divine origin and preparatory for the full transformation that the believer will experience in the life to come (1 Cor 15:51–55; 2 Cor 5:1–5).¹¹³

His exploration of cosmic transformation in Paul considers 1 Cor 7:31 and Rom 8:18–23. He concludes that Paul’s view of ongoing cosmic events do not fit with evolutionary concepts, as if there is a natural progression towards the new creation. Instead, although the possibility for spiritual renewal is present, the world is still under the domination of evil powers. Until the parousia, there will be a “welter of processes and counter-process” that cannot properly be called

¹⁰⁹ Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 1–5.

¹¹⁰ Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 112; cf.

¹¹¹ Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 199.

¹¹² Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 200.

¹¹³ Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 201.

cosmic “transformation.”¹¹⁴

In sum, Koenig provides a useful overview of one strand of transformation discourse in Paul’s letters. Yet for a study that addresses human transformation in the Pauline epistles, his scope is considerably limited. By restricting his investigation not only to passages that contain transformation terminology, but also to texts that include a specific type of transformation terminology (verbs that derive from *μορφή*), he excludes numerous passages that portray pre-parousia human change from consideration. As noted above, Paul uses numerous words that do not derive from *μορφή* but that fall within the semantic range of “change” to reference human transformation.¹¹⁵ He also describes human change in various contexts without using explicit transformation terms.¹¹⁶ Moreover, Koenig treats human change and cosmic change independently of one another, and he does not explore the relationship(s) of human change to cosmic realities. My study, in contrast, maintains that for Paul cosmic realities are part of humanity’s “external structures” and that cosmic and human transformations should be examined together and in relation to one another. Koenig’s study is, therefore, an important contribution to understandings of human transformation in Paul, but it leaves room for further investigation.

1.4.2.2 Troels Engberg-Pederson

Troels Engberg-Pederson joined an international group of scholars who studied the topic of *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Taxonomies and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity* at the Centre for Advanced Study at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters

¹¹⁴ Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 223–27.

¹¹⁵ See, e.g., the use of *μετασχηματίζω* in Phil 3:21; 2 Cor 11:13–15, *ἀλλάσσω* in 1 Cor 15:51–52, and *γίνομαι* in 1 Cor 13:8–13; 2 Cor 5:17, 31. For the full range of texts examined in this study because they include transformation terminology in reference to human change, see Table 1 above.

¹¹⁶ E.g. Gal 2:19–21; Rom 6:1–11.

in Oslo.¹¹⁷ Within this collective research effort, he developed an essay on the theme of human transformation in Paul. Engberg-Pederson's contribution is distinctive within the larger history of interpretation of human change in Paul because he establishes an explicit and nuanced criterion for what he includes as transformation. He examines what he calls "complete transformation," which he describes as follows:

When people have been transformed in this sense, both they themselves and onlookers will say that they have changed *completely*. Such a change need not, of course, cover everything there is to be said about them. In almost all cases there will be some aspects in respect to which they have not changed. Thus transformation will always be relative to some framework that defines the relevant aspect in respect to which the change has occurred.¹¹⁸

He further explicates what he means by complete change: "where the person previously was such and such (say, A), he or she now is something else (B, C, D or...) that implies the contradictory of A."¹¹⁹

He also addresses the extent to which Paul speaks of incomplete transformation—changes that occur to a person throughout a lifetime. And finally, he describes subcategories of complete and incomplete transformation: "whether cognitive, physical (that is, ontological), moral, social, or something else."¹²⁰ For the present study and its aim to account for the diversity of transformation types in Paul, Engberg-Pederson's delineations are welcome proposals. Yet, as the following summary demonstrates, he ultimately identifies less diversity in Paul's metamorphosis discourse than his suggested categories and subcategories imply.

The scope of Engberg-Pederson's exegetical analysis includes a brief look at 1 Cor 15:35-49 and closer examinations of Phil 3:2-21; 2 Cor 2:14-5:10; and Rom 8:9-13. From his

¹¹⁷ See the full collection of works produced in Seim and Økland, eds., *Metamorphoses*.

¹¹⁸ Engberg-Pederson, "Complete and Incomplete Transformation," 123-24. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁹ Engberg-Pederson, "Complete and Incomplete Transformation," 124. This criterion fits well with my criterion 2 above.

¹²⁰ Engberg-Pederson, "Complete and Incomplete Transformation," 124.

reading of these selections, he argues for a “pattern of ideas in Paul” on the topic of human transformation. He claims that this pattern “constitutes a fairly coherent and basic idea in Paul’s thought world.”¹²¹ The basic pattern is as follows: Paul describes himself and other believers as undergoing *complete* cognitive transformation. That is, a believer undergoes a total change in one’s theological understanding. Although this change is complete, Paul indicates that it will be “deepened” at the eschaton. Coinciding with the cognitive change is an *incomplete* physical change: when a person receives the (material) spirit, she begins a process of gradual, physical change that will culminate in total “substantive” change at the resurrection.¹²² For Engberg-Pederson, then, Paul’s perspective is in line with the materialist perspectives of Stoics and equally as systematic.

The strength of Engberg-Pederson’s work lies in its effort to account for the diversity in Paul’s transformation discourse. Yet his systematic synthesis of limited parts of Paul’s transformation discourse asserts what should be demonstrated, and risks blurring the very diversity of Paul’s expressions that the synthesis seeks to explain. What Engberg-Pederson concludes may generally be true of the passages that he examines. But his essay-length work can incorporate only a limited range of texts, which has the unavoidable but unfortunate consequence of neglecting entirely the transformation discourse in Galatians.¹²³

In addition to textual limitations, Engberg-Pederson’s synthesis limits the possible range of transformation categories to two: complete cognitive and incomplete physical (on the way to complete physical). As I will demonstrate, additional categories like moral transformation and status and/or identity transformation often intersect with the categories of somatic and

¹²¹ Engberg-Pederson, “Complete and Incomplete Transformation,” 130.

¹²² See summary in Engberg-Pederson, “Complete and Incomplete Transformation,” 145–46.

¹²³ See Table 3 above.

“cognitive” change in Paul.¹²⁴ Despite his fairly nuanced criteria and transformation categories, Engberg-Pederson’s conclusions risk covering over as much as they reveal.¹²⁵ A need remains, therefore, for an exegetical analysis of the particular instances of Paul’s transformation discourse that allows for greater levels of differentiation and nuance.

1.4.2.3 Udo Schnelle

Another notable piece is an essay by Udo Schnelle titled “Transformation Und Partizipation Als Grundgedanken Paulinischer Theologie.” Schnelle’s work is especially noteworthy because it examines some of the “factors of transformation” in Paul: he argues that God’s transformation of Christ enables the transformative participation of believers in this same divine reality.¹²⁶ With the terms used in this dissertation, Schnelle implies that God’s transformation of Christ grounds the possibility of human participation in the divine and serves as the key “structure” for human existence.

Schnelle begins with an argument from Phil 2:6-11. There, Paul portrays Christ not as returning to a previous state, but experiencing a transformation into a completely new state.

“Gott hat den gekreuzigten und gestorbenen Jesus von Nazareth in ein neues Sein überführt.”¹²⁷

Next, Schnelle works from the larger undisputed Pauline corpus (esp. 1-2 Corinthians) and argues that Paul viewed the cross and resurrection as a unity, and, as a result, that the cross is the

¹²⁴ Also, perhaps due to conviction that Paul’s cosmology and anthropology are Stoic and, thus, materialist, Engberg-Pederson blurs the categories of physical/somatic and ontological (idem, “Complete and Incomplete Transformation,” 124). The following chapters of this work, however, maintain that such conflation in Paul’s thought cannot necessarily be taken for granted.

¹²⁵ This is especially true in what I view as his strained exegesis of Phil 3:2–21. He identifies in this chapter a description of Paul’s reception of the spirit that initiates somatic change that will endure until he experiences full somatic transformation at the eschaton. Although the somatic, eschatological transformation is present in the letter (Phil 3:21), I do not find in the epistle the same ongoing process of bodily transformation that Engberg-Pederson describes.

¹²⁶ Schnelle, “Transformation Und Partizipation,” 60–75.

¹²⁷ Schnelle, “Transformation Und Partizipation,” 60–75.

true place of transformation.¹²⁸ Thus, the “word of the cross” is for Paul a message that names the “fundamental process of transformation” and indicates the center of Paul’s thought.¹²⁹ With Schweitzer, he argues that the reality of Christ’s transformation invites the transformative participation of believers, which will culminate in the final transformation when “God will be all in all” (1 Cor 15:28).¹³⁰

Schnelle then turns to the transformation of believers. From Gal 2 and Rom 6, he argues that in baptism Paul portrays the believer as undergoing a “real” transformation through participation in Christ. “In der Taufe wird der Glaubende in das somatische Geschick Jesu Christi miteinbezogen.”¹³¹ This change through participation brings the believer into the field of God’s justice and the sphere of the spirit of Christ, in which the believer now exists.¹³² Being “in Christ,” is, therefore, a “space” in which the believer undergoes transformation that Schnelle describes as ontological: “Somit erscheint ἐν Χριστῷ als der Raum, in dem sich seinshafte Veränderungen vollziehen und gelebt werden.”¹³³ He argues as well that this transformation involves not only humans but all of creation and that these fundamental concepts forms the basis of the arguments in all of Paul’s letters.¹³⁴

Schnelle aligns with Wrede and Schweitzer in his argument that transformation and participation are the foundational convictions of Paul’s theology. He forms a coherent and systematic picture from his reading of the undisputed letters, and he rightly interprets Paul’s

¹²⁸ “Transformation Und Partizipation,” 61–62. Engberg-Pederson, “Complete and Incomplete Transformation,” 124.

¹²⁹ “Das Wort vom Kreuz benennt den grundlegenden Transformationsprozeß im Christusgeschehen, und es führt direkt in das Zentrum des paulinischen Denkens” (Schnelle, “Transformation Und Partizipation,” (63).

¹³⁰ Schnelle, “Transformation Und Partizipation,” 63–63.

¹³¹ Schnelle, “Transformation Und Partizipation,” 65.

¹³² Schnelle, “Transformation Und Partizipation,” 65–68.

¹³³ Schnelle, “Transformation Und Partizipation,” 69.

¹³⁴ Schnelle, “Transformation Und Partizipation,” 71.

transformation discourse in light of the Christ-event. What Schnelle does not attempt, however, is to account for the diversity of expressions of human change in Paul's letters. Beyond a reference to human transformation as ontological, he does not describe the types of transformation that occur in the letters. Moreover, although he views human change through participation in Christ as central to Paul's anthropology, he does not consider the implications of human change for Paul's understanding of the human person. In the end, Schnelle's account for human transformation in Paul is synthetic and as systematic as Engberg-Pederson's, and it likewise risks ironing out the diversity of Paul's expressions.

1.4.2.4 Volker Rabens

In *The Holy spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life*, Volker Rabens examines the topic of transformation in relation to human moral capacity.¹³⁵ His work is germane to my study for two reasons. First, he gives a thorough and insightful overview of perspectives on transformation for the empowerment of a moral life in Paul's letters, from the mid 19th century to the present. He calls the predominant view the "infusion-transformation" perspective. This view rests on the claim that Paul understood *pneuma* to be a material substance, and, in general, proponents of it argue that Paul envisioned moral enablement "by means of the ontologically transforming effect of [the Spirit's] *physical nature*."¹³⁶ Second, Rabens argues against this view and proposes an alternative perspective,

¹³⁵ Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life*; WUNT 283 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

¹³⁶ Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 126 (emphasis original). With Rabens, I am not convinced of the claims that Paul presupposes a material *pneuma* that produces ontic transformation as a basis of morality. Although belief in a material *pneuma* was true of Hellenistic thinkers in Paul's context, I have not yet found a convincing argument that this was indeed Paul's belief. For representatives of an "infusion-transformation view" (Rabens' term) in one form or another, and other proponents of the materialist spirit viewpoint. For an impressive history of research that support materialist views, see

which he calls the “relational model.”¹³⁷ His model rejects the materiality of *pneuma* in Pauline thought and argues that Paul envisages moral transformation through the believer’s transference into the sphere of the spirit’s influence, and this shift establishes new relationships with a host of realities and figures, such as spirit, flesh, Christ, God, and other believers. These spirit-created, relational changes establish and empower the moral transformation needed for an ethical life.¹³⁸

In my view, Raben’s relational-pneumatic emphases make an important corrective to discussions of moral transformation in Paul, not least because they point in some promising directions concerning the relationship of transformation and selfhood, the latter being partly defined by relationality (see above). Yet three aspects of his monograph studies indicate the need for additional work. First, Rabens only works exegetically with 2 Cor 3:18 and Rom 8:12–17, and, second, as a work in Pauline ethics, he only considers the issue of moral transformation in each passage. Thus, due to his specific objectives, Rabens’ scope and his focus on transformation are narrow. To be sure, much, if not all, of Paul’s transformation discourse has moral dimensions. This study shows, however, that many instances exist in which Paul’s talk of human transformation emphasizes other categories much more than the moral. Third, Rabens argues extensively that Paul does not view the spirit as material, and he does so to argue against “infusion-transformation” theories, which argue that Paul describes ontological transformation in his letters. Rabens, in contrast, argues for moral transformation that is empowered by human relationship with the spirit. Yet, as Tyson Lee Putthoff argues, Rabens “speaks of ontological as if it were interchangeable with material,” which suggests that “an ontological transformation is

Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 2–15, 253–306. See also, Putthoff, “Human Mutability and Mystical Change,” 35–48.

¹³⁷ Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 123–242.

¹³⁸ See Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 126–45.

by default a material one, and vice versa.”¹³⁹ Yet, ontological and material are not necessarily synonymous in Paul, and I submit that rejection of a material spirit in Paul does not preclude the possibility of transformation through participation in Christ’s spirit in a sense that is more “real” and “mystical” than Rabens’ image of new morality that emerges from new relationships.¹⁴⁰ In sum, therefore, Raben’s work is a valuable contribution, but, like others considered here, it points to aspects of transformation in Paul that require further investigation and clarification.

1.4.2.5 Sarah Harding

A final work to consider here is Sarah Harding’s *Paul’s Eschatological Anthropology: The Dynamics of Human Transformation*.¹⁴¹ Her thesis is as follows: “Paul’s anthropological utterances are embedded within an eschatological dynamic, which accounts for the varied valuations accorded any anthropological ‘part’ or ‘aspect’ mentioned in the letters.”¹⁴² By “parts,” Harding refers to parts of the human (e.g. *voûς*), and she argues that her argument “arises from a single observation, namely, that Paul attaches different values to the same anthropological part or aspect; that is, expressed negatively, he appears to ascribe no inherent value to any of these parts or aspects.”¹⁴³ She adds that “an extrinsic condition or possibility” ultimately “determines his evaluation of any part or aspect constituent of humans,” and this “extrinsic

¹³⁹ Putthoff, “Human Mutability and Mystical Change,” 27–28.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Putthoff, “Human Mutability and Mystical Change,” 27–28. Yet Putthoff’s criticisms work in service of his arguments that believers experience ontological transformation prior to the resurrection. In my reading of Paul, I reserve the descriptor “ontological” for eschatological transformations, and, instead, I use the term “existential” transformation to describe present changes through real participation in Christ in the sense that both Deissmann (*in Christo*, 88, 91) and Schweitzer (Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 12–13, 15, 110) describe.

¹⁴¹ Sarah Harding, *Paul’s Eschatological Anthropology: The Dynamics of Human Transformation*, Emerging Scholars (Fortress Press, 2016).

¹⁴² Harding, *Eschatological Anthropology*, 41–42.

¹⁴³ Harding, *Eschatological Anthropology*, 42.

condition or possibility” is Paul’s eschatology, which “is *dynamic*, and not *static*.”¹⁴⁴

Eschatology is dynamic, in part, because it is always forward facing, progressing towards its final *telos*.¹⁴⁵ Put simply, one should understand a given reference in Paul to a body part or to the body as a whole not as a freestanding concept, but, rather, in relation to the aeon (previous/old, present/overlap, or future) in which it is conceptualized. Paul’s anthropological references should, therefore, not be understood not as concepts locked into a particular moment in time, but, instead, as part of larger temporal landscape that is progressing from one aeon to another.

In addition to envisaging eschatology as the predominant context in which to understand Pauline anthropology, Harding also emphasizes that humans always live under the governance of cosmic powers.¹⁴⁶ In her terms, “humans are determined by transcendent powers.”¹⁴⁷ Taken together with the temporal frame, in her view, the eschatological and cosmic frameworks function together as vertical and horizontal aspects of a single reality. Thus, in her terms, Paul’s anthropology is “a function of eschatology,” and “Paul’s anthropological utterances are always contextualized within a disabling or renewing trajectory that relates them cosmological powers.”¹⁴⁸ She ultimately provides a nuanced, exegetical analysis of Paul in order to offer an account of Pauline anthropology that locates his anthropological themes within the larger context of Paul’s eschatological perspective and the cosmic powers that rule over and determine humanity. Harding’s arguments are intricate and need not be recounted in full here. Rather, I address some features of her work—her methodology and claims about transformation—that are pertinent to this study.

First, Harding’s approach is completely synthetic and systematic. Rather than home in

¹⁴⁴ Harding, *Eschatological Anthropology*, 42 (emphasis original).

¹⁴⁵ Harding, *Eschatological Anthropology*, 168.

¹⁴⁶ See esp. Harding, *Eschatological Anthropology*, 73–86.

¹⁴⁷ Harding, *Eschatological Anthropology*, 83.

¹⁴⁸ Harding, *Eschatological Anthropology*, 412–14.

on particular passages, the bulk of her study is organized thematically (e.g. ch. 4 “Anthropology in the Old Aeon,” ch. 5 “Anthropology in the Overlap of Aeons,” and so on). Within each theme, she predominantly gives synthetic readings of Paul’s letters that provide systematized portrayals of believers as progressing through larger temporal developments on the way to the “new aeon” (ch. 7).¹⁴⁹ The challenge of her systematic approach is that she risks arguing for an eschatology and an anthropology that Paul supposedly presumes everywhere, yet states nowhere. Moreover, like other works discussed here, she largely does not analyze specific instances of Paul’s transformation discourse within the literary context of each occurrence. She also does not provide any comparison with Paul and ancient thinkers in order to illuminate his letters.

Second, Harding portrays anthropological transformation in Paul as a seemingly neat, linear progression that culminates at the eschaton. She writes, for example, “Those who respond to the gospel and come under the Holy Spirit’s influence begin a process of anthropological *transformation* (see for example, 1 Cor. 3:1; 2 Cor. 6:13; Phil. 1:25; 1 Thess. 4:1) that continues until the new aeon. The future resurrection body arises from the transformation of the body of the old aeon, albeit the visible portion of this body is jettisoned at death (Rom. 8:11). This explains the prevalence of morphological language in the apostle’s anthropology.”¹⁵⁰ Similarly, she concludes, with characteristic emphasis on 2 Cor 4:16, that as reflective of the “interrelationship of humans and the cosmos,” both of which are advancing toward the same *telos*, “human renewal is a *gradual* process, involving the emergence of the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος from the ἔξω ἄνθρωπος.”¹⁵¹ Although her emphasis on human embeddedness in the cosmos shares much in common with my arguments, I do not find in Paul’s letters a neat, systematic, and linear

¹⁴⁹ For some notable exceptions to the synthetic approach, see, e.g., 223–32; 332–61, 361–403.

¹⁵⁰ Harding, *Eschatological Anthropology*, 70.

¹⁵¹ Harding, *Eschatological Anthropology*, 415 (emphasis original). She again describes transformation as “this gradual process of transformation” that “involves a transaction between the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος from the ἔξω ἄνθρωπος” (416).

“progression” that reflects what Harding describes. I will argue, instead, for less determined and unpredictable forms of change in Paul that anticipate eschatological transformation.

1.4.2.6 Transformation of a Single Type or within a Single Letter

In addition to these monographs and essays that centralize the theme of transformation as their subject matter, a number of other works also identify specific types of human change in Paul, usually with a focus on specific epistle. Because they contain either explicit transformation terminology or depictions of human change, the epistles that receive the most attention are 1–2 Corinthians,¹⁵² Romans,¹⁵³ Galatians,¹⁵⁴ and Philippians.¹⁵⁵ In the research for this dissertation, I

¹⁵² E.g., Jefferery R. Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, HUT 42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); Alexandra R. Brown, *The Cross and Human Transformation: Paul's Apocalyptic Word in 1 Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Eckhard J. Schnabel, “The Objectives of Change, Factors of Transformation, and the Causes of Results: the Evidence of Paul's Corinthian Correspondence,” *TJ* 26 (2005): 179–204; Jorunn Økland, “Genealogies of the Self: Materiality, Personal Identity, and the Body in Paul's Letters to the Corinthians,” 83–107; Songe-Møller, “With What Kind of Body Will They Come?,” Johnson, “Life-Giving Spirit: The Ontological Implications of Resurrection in 1 Corinthians,” in Johnson, *Contested Issues*, 277–93; Joshua Jipp, “Death and the Human Predicament: Salvation as Transformation, and Bodily Practices in 1 Corinthians and *The Gospel of Thomas*” in *Paul and the Gospels: Christologies, Conflicts and Convergences*, eds. Michael F. Bird and Joel Willitts, LNTS 411 (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 242–66; E. Gaugler, “Die Verwandlung Des Menschen Und Der Welt, Ein Grundgedanke Der Paulinischen Theologie,” *IKZ* 20 (1930): 1–23; Jan Lambrecht, “Transformation in 2 Cor 3:18,” *Bib* 64 (1983): 243–54; Judith H. Newman, “Covenant Restoration and Transformation: The Growth of Scripture in the Performance of the Hodayot and 2 Corinthians” in *Jesus, Paulus, und die Texte von Qumran*, eds. Jörg Frey and Enno Edzard Popkes, eds., WUNT II (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015); Litwa, “Transformation Through a Mirror: Moses in 2 Cor 3.18,” *JSNT* 34 (2012): 286–97; John Gillman, “Transformation in 1 Cor 15:50–53,” *ETL* 58 (1982): 309–333.

¹⁵³ E.g. Robert Griffith Jones, “Keep up your Transformation within the Renewal of Your Mind”: Romans as a Therapeutic Letter” in *Experientia, Volume 2: Linking Text and Experience*; ed. Colleen Shantz and Rodney Alan Werline (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012); Ekkehard W. Stegemann, “Exploring Theologizing, Politics, and Identity in Romans: Coexistence and Transformation: Reading the Politics of Identity in Romans in an Imperial Context” in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation: essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, ed. Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker; LNTS 428 (London: T&T Clark, 2008); A. Vlachos, “The Catalytic Operations of the Law and Moral Transformation in Romans 6–7” in *Studies in the Pauline Epistles: Essays in Honor of Douglas J. Moo*, ed. Matthew S. Harmon and Jay E. Smith (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014); Johnson, “Transformation of the Mind and Moral Discernment” 255–75.

¹⁵⁴ E.g., Mark D. Owens, *As it was in the Beginning: an Intertextual Analysis of New Creation in Galatians, 2 Corinthians, and Ephesians* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2015); Jackson, *New Creation*, 83–114; cf.

have located among these works references to the following types of transformation: ontological, moral, and epistemic.¹⁵⁶

One such example is Luke Timothy Johnson's essay "Life-Giving Spirit: The Ontological Implications of Resurrection in 1 Corinthians." He argues that the eschatological transformation of 1 Cor 15 is related to the pre-resurrection transformation that is already taking place in the Corinthian church.¹⁵⁷ In doing so, Johnson shows not only that 1 Cor 15 depicts *ontological* change, but that the ontological transformation is inextricably linked with the ongoing *moral* transformation that the community experiences in "this mortal, empirical existence that humans share."¹⁵⁸ Given his scope, however, he does not provide comparison with other types of transformation in other Pauline epistles. And as noted above, others have also identified either ontological (Schnelle, Finlan) or moral (Rabens) transformation in Paul.¹⁵⁹ Johnson, however, identifies both moral and ontological dimensions of transformation within the same discourse, and he recognizes that these dimension are mutually informative. Although his scope is limited to a single composition, his essay provides a more fine-grained and nuanced discussion of human

Peggy A. Vining, "Galatians and First Century Ethical Theory" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America," 2008).

¹⁵⁵ E.g., Peter Doble, "'Vile bodies' or Transformed Persons? Philippians 3.21 in Context," *JSNT* 86 (2002): 5–9; cf. Engberg-Pederson, "Complete and Incomplete Transformation," 130–37.

¹⁵⁶ Not all works, however, use the same terminology. The descriptors ontological, moral, and epistemic are my own summary terms.

¹⁵⁷ Johnson, "Life-Giving Spirit," 280–87.

¹⁵⁸ Johnson, "Life-Giving Spirit," 287. Finlan ("Can We Speak of *Theosis*," 69–71) argues explicitly against the view of N.T. Wright, which holds that 1 Cor 15 does not depict ontological transformation but a new mode of existence in which the Spirit is the body's "animating principle" (N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, COQG, 5 vols. [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003], 344–46). Jipp ("Death and the Human Predicament," 254–68) also follows Wright's reading of 1 Cor 15—at least, inasmuch as Wright eschews the possibility of Paul contrasting spirit with material/physicality—but maintains that Paul portrays eschatological salvation as transformation in 1 Cor 15, transformation that believers partially experience in their mortal lives. It is not therefore clear whether one should qualify Wright's descriptions as transformation—certainly not ontological transformation—and although Jipp rightly identifies that some sort of transformation occurs, it is beyond his scope to analyze it in detail.

¹⁵⁹ See also Johnson, "Transformation of the Mind and Moral Discernment," somewhat related is Vlachos, "Catalytic Operation," 255–75.

transformation than most of the works discussed in this history of interpretation.

Another often-observed category of transformation is what Engberg-Pederson calls cognitive transformation. In noting Paul's changed perspective after his conversion or language related to a renewed mind (e.g. Rom 12:1–2; 1 Cor 2:16), some have described these strands of Paul's transformation discourse as “epistemological transformation”¹⁶⁰ or “transformed perception.”¹⁶¹ Although these works acknowledge what I here refer to as epistemic transformation in Paul, they do so, however, in relation to some other thematic focus. That is, the concern is not with transformation *qua* transformation or as a subcategory of human change more broadly, and this naturally limits their findings. Moreover, because their primary attention is elsewhere, such studies do not engage in comparative analysis of epistemic transformation language with other types of transformation discourse in Paul. As with references to ontological and moral transformation, identifications of epistemic transformation point to subject matter that is relevant to this dissertation, but that needs further exploration.

1.4.2.7 Summary

In relation to human transformation as a theme in Paul's letters, the state of the conversation manifests two predominant tendencies. First, works that address the theme often do so with little or no attention to the types of transformation (e.g. moral, ontological, etc.) at work in the letters. Second, some studies do consider the diverse types of transformation, but they do so with systematizing tendencies, only within the confines of a single composition, or as an observation that is related to other, primary concerns. As a result, such works produce useful

¹⁶⁰ E.g. Jackson, *New Creation*, 128–36.

¹⁶¹ Nijay K. Gupta, *Worship that Makes Sense to Paul: A New Approach to the Theology and Ethics of Paul's Cultic Metaphors*, BZNW 175 (Göttingen: De Gruyter, 2010), 191–204.

insights, but, in relation to the theme of human transformation, the results are in a fragmented state and in need both of further development and synthetic analysis. Another characteristic of the scholarship discussed is that it generally does not study Paul's transformation discourse with a concern for the implications that this language has for Pauline anthropology. Specifically, scholars do not study human change as a way of gaining insights into Paul's fundamental convictions about the human self.¹⁶² In short, I am aware of no single study that makes Paul's references to human transformation the central focus of its work, examines a large, representative range of Paul's references to human transformation from across multiple letters, and that analyzes each reference in its own context, as well as in conversation with other historical writings (see 5.1 below).

1.5. Methodology and Thesis

1.5.1 Methodology

To conduct a sufficient examination of Paul's transformation discourse and to consider its implications for his views of human selfhood, this dissertation needs a methodological approach that is analytic, comparative, synthetic, and theoretical. My approach is analytic in that it engages each of the qualifying passages (see Table 3 above) with focused exegetical scrutiny. It is comparative in that it puts Paul's transformation discourse into conversation with an array of ancient writings. It is synthetic in that it compares a range of pertinent passages from the undisputed Pauline letters. It is theoretical in that it draws on contemporary theoretical works on human selfhood for concepts that aid in the interpretation of Pauline and other historical texts. The dissertation's theoretical aspects are present throughout and are utilized to assist with

¹⁶² A notable exception is Økland, "Genealogies of the Self."

exegetical analysis as needed. The analytic, comparative, and synthetic dimensions, however, shape the study's structure.

1.5.1.1 Analytic Task: Transformation Discourse in Paul

In the first part of my study (chs. 2–4), I develop a conceptual map of Paul's transformation discourse. This map cannot be comprehensive, but provides an overview that is sufficient to serve as a trustworthy lay of the land. I “map” Paul's varied references to human change through exegetical analysis of each instance of transformation discourse, within the literary context of the epistle in which it appears.

The scope of the introductory exegetical analysis is established in Part 3 above and includes the passages from Table 3, which I reproduce here:

Epistle	Passage(s)
Galatians	2:18–20 3:23–29 4:1–11 4:19 5:24 6:14–15
Philippians	3:10–11 3:21
1 Corinthians	13:8–12 15:35–57
2 Corinthians	3:18 4:16–18 5:1–5 5:14–15 5:17 11:13–15
Romans	6:1–11 7:1–13 12:1–2

Table 3:
Transformation Discourse for Consideration in this Study

These texts serve as the study's anchor points. The three reference points developed in Section I—necessities, categories, and factors—guide the exegetical analysis, which reveals the diversity of Paul's transformation expressions and concepts.

1.5.1.2 Comparative Task: Transformation Discourse in Antiquity

The purpose of the comparative aspect is to contextualize Paul's discourse of human change, as well as to illuminate his writings through comparison with references to transformation in other ancient writings. I am not to argue for particular influences on Paul's thought. Rather, I seek to identify a range of transformation expressions and types from antiquity in order to interpret Paul's language against that larger landscape. I explore both Jewish and Greco-Roman texts that include narrative, philosophical, prayer, and prophetic writings from diverse contexts and perspectives. The juxtaposition of Paul's discourse on human change with these texts reveals facets of Paul's transformation references that one would not gain from reading Paul alone. To return to the cartographical metaphor, this study's correlation of our initial map of the Pauline "transformation landscape" with other landscapes yields insights into the features, patterns, and convictions of Paul's transformation discourse through comparison and differentiation.

1.5.1.3 Synthetic Task: Understanding Transformation & Selfhood in Paul

In the final stage I return to Paul for synthetic analysis in light of my conclusions from the exegetical examination of particular Pauline texts and the survey of relevant historical writings. In this final analysis, I summarize the main features of Paul's transformation discourse that my analytical and comparative work reveals. And finally, I offer some closing arguments

about what Paul's transformation discourses reveal about his fundamental convictions concerning human selfhood.

1.5.2 Thesis

With my analytical, comparative, and synthetic analyses, I provide a phenomenology of human transformation in Paul's letters, examine this transformation against the landscape of other ancient writings, and offer a summary analysis of Paul's transformation discourse. Ultimately, I argue that, in Paul, believers' subjectivity is not only relationally constituted, but it is also constituted in part by transformation. For Paul, change is not a threat to selfhood as it is for some in antiquity, but, rather, it is a constitutive element of Christian subjectivity. In the present, moreover, between initial changes at baptism or conversion and eschatological changes, Paul envisages believers as "in-between" beings who exist in a state of *becoming* in Christ.¹⁶³ This becoming exists within a web of relationships that Paul calls "the body of Christ," and, as guided by Christ's spirit, believers are determined by their subjection to Christ's governing power. For believers, therefore, ongoing transformation in Christ's body is not merely an aspect of who they are; it is a defining feature of their selfhood.

¹⁶³ The only scholar of whom I am aware that argues this for Paul is Jorunn Økland, "Genealogies of the Self: Materiality, Personal Identity, and the Body in Paul's Letters to the Corinthians," in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, eds. Seim and Økland, *Metamorphoses*, 82–107, esp. pp. 106–107. As Økland's title suggests, she only works with 1 Corinthians, and only a couple of passages therein. Thus, one could view my work as confirmation of and expansion upon her basic claims.

Chapter 2

Mapping Transformation Discourse in Galatians & Philippians

I begin with a conceptual map of human change in the undisputed Pauline letters, working specifically with the passages that I have identified as containing transformation discourse. I do not address the range of critical issues for each composition or pericope. Instead, I provide a brief overview of each pericope and then focus on the issues pertinent to Paul's discourse on human transformation, employing the diagnostic guides that I suggested in chapter one, namely, (1) the necessity for, (2) the categories of, and (3) the factors in human change.

I organize my investigation by epistle. In this chapter, I begin with Galatians and then proceed to Philippians. In the next chapter, I consider 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, and I discuss Romans in ch. 4. By investigating the contents of each epistle on its own, and with focused attention to the rhetorical situation of each, I hope to avoid preliminarily giving primacy to any one epistle, group of epistles, or themes that different epistles seem to share. My approach here is, therefore, particular and analytical. The analysis of each selection begins with an exegetical examination that focuses on the nature of the transformation(s) described. Following the exegetical overview, I relate my findings to my three diagnostic categories, discuss some of the implications of each passage for Paul's views on human selfhood, and conclude with a summary of my findings.

1 Human Transformation in Galatians

“Only if there is a new world is the individual in a position to exist in a new way.”¹

1.1 Galatians 2:18–20

Galatians 2:18–20 qualifies as transformation discourse according to my second criterion—a description of change that seemingly disrupts the self’s continuity. Paul writes, “For through the law, I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live, I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me” (vv. 19–20).² In these statements, Paul describes an experience of change with the language of death, specifically, of crucifixion with Christ. This death has established a new form of existence in which both Paul and Christ are somehow present in the makeup of Paul’s personhood.

1.1.1. Overview of Pericope

Paul’s larger concern in 2:15–22 is to argue that Christ-faith, not law-works (2:15–16) is the means by which all humanity (Jew and Gentile) is made righteous.³ Here, being “made

¹ Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006; repr., WUNT 32; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967), 71.

² Unless noted otherwise, all New Testament translations are my own.

³ Paul’s use of the generic term ἄνθρωπος in v. 16a and his absolute claim that *no flesh* is made righteous (οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ) by law-works solidifies the universal reach of justification via Christ-faith. See Martyn, “God’s Way of Making Right What is Wrong,” in Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham’s God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 141, 149. On the tension in universalism and ethnic particularity in Paul’s understanding of salvation, see William S. Campbell, *The Nations in the Divine Economy: Paul’s Covenantal Hermeneutics and Participation in Christ* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), esp. pp. 92–94. Although the debate continues, I am persuaded that Χριστοῦ in πίστεως Χριστοῦ is a subjective genitive, as my translation “Christ-faith” suggests. For the translation of the subjunctive genitive as Christ-faith, see Sam K Williams, “Again Pistis Christou,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 47; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, SP 9 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 94. For arguments on the function of the subjective genitive in Galatians, see Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed; BRS (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 270–71; Martyn, “Making

righteous” (δικαιώω) is shorthand for the making right of humanity’s relationship with God.⁴ In v. 17, Paul anticipates a question: if those who seek righteousness through Christ are found to be sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? He rejects the possibility (μὴ γένοιτο), and his transformation discourse explains (γάρ) why. He cannot rebuild that which he has previously torn down (v. 18), since he has been crucified with Christ and no longer continues in his former way of life, which was characterized by persecution of the church and zeal for the traditions of Judaism (1:13–14).⁵ Instead his new life is oriented toward God (ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω in v. 19; cf. Rom 6:10; 14:7–9).

Paul’s new life after co-crucifixion implies that he has, in some sense, experienced resurrection—a theme that is both ubiquitous elsewhere and rarely seen in Galatians. Paul’s typical resurrection language is almost absent in Galatians, and he only makes one explicit reference to Christ’s being raised from the dead in the entire epistle (1:1).⁶ Yet, throughout the letter, Paul presumes the resurrection in his references to the presence of the *living* Christ (1:3,

Things Right,” 150–51; Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham’s God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 95–107. As it parallels ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ my translation “law-works” takes ἔξ ἔργων νόμου as a subjective genitive. Cf. the similar translation “legal works” in Matera, *Galatians*, 94.

⁴ See Longenecker, *Triumph of Abraham’s God*, 98–107; Martyn, *Galatians*, 249–50, 263–75; “Making Things Right;” cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 295. I also understand righteousness in Paul to have both dynamic (in that it involves an act of God’s power to *make* a person righteous) and forensic dimensions. Foundational for this viewpoint is Ernst Käsemann, “The Righteousness of God in Paul” in Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, trans. W.J. Montague (London: S.C.M., 1969), 168–82. Martyn (“Making Things Right”) rightly argues that Käsemann’s thesis holds true for Galatians, despite the absence of the term δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (152 n. 19). See full discussion in Martyn, “Making Things Right,” 151–54; see also Boaryin, *Radical Jew*, 117; Matera, *Galatians*, 92–93.

⁵ The perfect tense of συσταυρώω suggests that Paul’s co-crucifixion was a past event that affects the present. Yet he does not specify precisely when this occurred—whether it was at his conversion, his baptism (cf. 3:27; Rom 6:11), some other moment, or did not occur at a specific instant at all, but is instead a more general description of his past changes that shape his current experience.

⁶ E.g., the words ἀναστασις (Rom 1:4; 6:5; 1 Cor 15:12 [2x], 21, 42; Phil 3:10; Cf. 2 Tim 2:18), ἀννίστημι (1 Thess 4:14, 16 cf. Eph 5:14), ἀναζάω (Rom 7:9), ἀνίστημι (1 Thess 4:16; Eph 5:14), ἐξανάστασις (Phil 3:11), ἐξεγείρω (1 Cor 6:14) do not appear in Galatians. Cf. the absence of ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναγαγεῖν (Rom 10:7); ἐκ νεκρῶν (Rom 11:15); συνεγείρω (Eph 2:6; Col 2:12); συζωοποιέω (Eph 2:5; Col 2:13). He uses verb ἐγείρω only once (1:1).

10, 12; 2:20; 3:27–29; 4:6; 5:2–6, 16–25 6:18; cf. 3:5; 4:19). Moreover, as discussed in more detail below, although he does not refer to resurrection explicitly, his descriptions of co-crucifixion in Gal 2:18–20 assume a conceptual “death-resurrection schema” for their intelligibility.⁷

1.1.2 Transformation in Gal 2:18–20: Necessity for, Categories of, and Factors in Change

Necessity for Change

Paul’s death to the law by co-crucifixion establishes a new life that is oriented toward God: ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω (v. 19b). Since this ἵνα is purposive, it is necessary to fill out more fully what “life to God” entails in the context of Galatians in order to identify the underlying need for transformation in this passage.

The verb ζάω in v. 19 has a double valence. First, it has an existential dimension in that Paul has died to one mode of existence and now lives to another.⁸ In v. 20, he writes, “I no longer live, but Christ lives within me.” This is more than a figurative claim that Christ inspires Paul. It fits with other descriptions in Galatians that refer to an experience, in which the Spirit of Christ enters into people (4:6, 19; cf. 3:27). This experience entails a transfer into the sphere of Christ from the sphere of law—or *liberation* from the law’s custodianship (3:23–4:11)—because, according to 3:22, the law is unable to “give life” (ζωοποιέω). There, Paul also links this need for a “life-giving” power with righteousness: if the law could give life, then, “indeed, righteousness

⁷ For a full discussion of the “death-resurrection schema” in Paul, see Frederick S. Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul: Cognition, Metaphor, and Transformation*, First edition (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 43–86.

⁸ Paul uses ζάω in this manner in Gal 5:25: “If we *live* by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” As Matera (*Galatians*) states, living by the Spirit “indicates that the believer lives by means of the Spirit, by the power of the Spirit” (204). That is, the Spirit energizes one’s existence, and, on the basis of this spirit-empowered existence, Paul urges the Galatians to order their morality according to the Spirit. Cf. Gal 3:21.

would be from the law.” Similarly, in 2:19, life oriented toward God restates the concept of being “made righteous” (2:16–17). Righteousness and God-oriented life thus refer to the same reality: new moral existence that establishes the condition for the possibility of righteous conduct.⁹ The imperative in Gal 5:5 captures this grounding function of the new life: “If we live (ζάω) by the spirit, let us also walk by the spirit.” In part, therefore, the death by co-crucifixion in 2:19–20 is needed to bring about a new, life-giving existence that the law could not produce.

Second, ζάω in Galatians intimates morality; it refers to a “way of life” or a “way of living.”¹⁰ Paul uses the verb in this way in the preceding pericope. In recounting his confrontation of Cephas, he writes, “If you, being a Jew, live (ζάω) as a Gentile and not as a Jew, how are you compelling the Gentiles to live as Jews?” (2:14). Here, ζάω refers to a mode of moral conduct; specifically, it refers to Cephas’ table fellowship decisions (2:11–13). To “live” in Galatians can thus signify the adoption of certain moral practices.

The verb ζάω in 2:19 embraces both the existential and moral dimensions in a way similar to its occurrence in 3:11–12 where Paul quotes Hab 2:4—“the righteous one will *live* by faith”—and Lev 18:5—“the one who does these things will *live* by them.” There, it is impossible to separate the existential from the moral.¹¹ Moreover, in the larger world of Galatians, it is impossible to detach one’s existence, whether in the sphere of law and/or cosmic elements (4:3, 9) or of Christ, from morality. In this world, all existence is moral existence.¹²

In short, the problem that Gal 2:19 addresses is that people cannot gain righteousness—

⁹ By “righteous conduct,” I mean moral praxis that is in accordance with the righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) in which believers have been established. This is the life in the Spirit that Paul describes in 5:5, 16–26, which he later refers to as “new creation” (6:15).

¹⁰ The verb ζάω appears 5x in 2:19–20 and elsewhere in Galatians (2:14; 3:11–12) to mean, “to conduct oneself in a pattern of behavior” (BDAG, s.v. ζάω).

¹¹ Note that 3:6–9 seems to emphasize the foundational and existential sense of being made righteous, but 3:10, which is concerned with *doing* (ποιέω) the works of the law, leads into vv. 11–12.

¹² As a corollary, all selfhood is necessarily *moral* selfhood.

which Paul can conceptualize as “life” (3:21)—from the law (2:16, 21). In order to be made righteous, one must undergo a change like Christ’s. One must die to one sphere in order (ἵνα in v. 19) to enter into the new reality that both grounds one’s existence and empowers a new mode of moral conduct (cf. 5:16–26). To gain a new and life-giving existence, humanity must undergo a change that gives life from a living source, namely, the spirit of Christ (2:20; 3:1–5; 4:6, 19).¹³

Categories of Change

In Gal 2:19–20, Paul describes a past event (co-crucifixion) that produced his present existence (ὃ δὲ νῦν ζῶ in v. 20b). Regarding what does or does not change in this process, Paul writes in v. 19, “I (ἐγώ) died,” and the first person singular pronoun is implied in the first person singular of the verb σύσταυρόω. What does Paul’s use of the “I” here convey? Theoretical debates persist over how best to understand what people express with the first person singular pronoun, from a Kantian “I” that grounds human knowledge, to notions of the “I” as a construct created by knowledge and power, to perspectives that view the “I” as an illusion produced by mental and/or biological process, and more.¹⁴ In this study, however, I aim neither to impose a

¹³ It is significant that Paul does not stay with the metaphor of tearing down and building up that he uses in v. 18. Instead, he switches to this metaphor of death and resurrection in order to communicate a change from one moral-existential sphere to another. Paul cannot simply “tear down” a sphere of moral existence; the self related to that sphere must die and be resurrected into another sphere. What Paul tore down was his previous life in Judaism, and where he now lives is in the realm of Christ-faith.

¹⁴ On the “I” as the ground of human knowledge, see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan & Co., 1965), 333–44. See discussion in Atkins, *Self and Subjectivity*, 47–50. With my description of a subject as constructed by power and knowledge, I refer to the work of Michel Foucault. See especially, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage, 1977); *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990). For an example of the self as an illusion, see Thomas Metzinger, “The No-Self Alternative” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Self*, ed. Shaun Gallagher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 280–96; cf. discussion in Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Shear, “Editor’s Introduction,” in Gallagher and Shear, *Models of the Self* (Thorverton, UK: Imprint Academic, 1999), x–xi. Conceptions of the self as a fiction have a long history in Western Philosophy. The earliest expression of which I am aware is David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Model of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*, ed. D.G.C. Macnabb (Glasgow: Fontana Collins, 1970), 300–12; see also Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 267–72.

particular understanding of the “self” onto Paul’s rhetoric nor to account fully for the “I” in Galatians.¹⁵ Rather, I work as much as possible from within Paul’s discourse to gain insights into his convictions about selfhood. From the passage itself, several observations are available.

First, although the ἐγώ of the moral life (ζάω) in 2:19 is self-referential, it does not assume that Paul is ever an autonomous subject and the source of his own moral agency. Galatians is ambiguous on the issue of moral agency for non-believers. Paul does not explicate the degree to which people are in control of their actions. He does, however, portray the pre-converted state of all humanity as *enslaved* to cosmic elements (4:3, 9), and Jews as under the law’s custodianship (3:22–25; 4:1–5). Although these forces have the power to enslave, they do not have the power to give life (3:21). At the very least, Paul conceives of them as power spheres that structure human existence—here specifically, the Pauline ἐγώ—and that empower human morality (cf. 5:1). After the transformation, the claim, “Christ lives in me” (v. 20) conveys that Christ now empowers Paul’s moral existence.¹⁶

Second, the “I” dies through co-crucifixion in 2:19–20a, and Paul writes, “I no longer live.” Yet the “I” returns by way of the first person singular of ζάω in 2:20b: “The life that *I* now live (ζῶ) in the flesh, *I* live (ζῶ) by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.”¹⁷ Paul thus portrays an “I” before co-crucifixion and an “I” that persists afterwards. That he can refer to himself with the first person pronoun before and after this death makes some

¹⁵ As stated in ch. 1, we cannot presume that Paul had a conception of a “self” as moderns would understand it. I, therefore, use the term “self” broadly and in a holistic sense to refer to what one might call “the person” in Pauline thought. My use of the language of the self here resembles Naomi Quinn’s definition of the self as “the totality of what an organism is physically, biologically, psychologically, socially, and culturally” (“The Self,” *Anthropological Theory* 6.3 [2006]: 362)

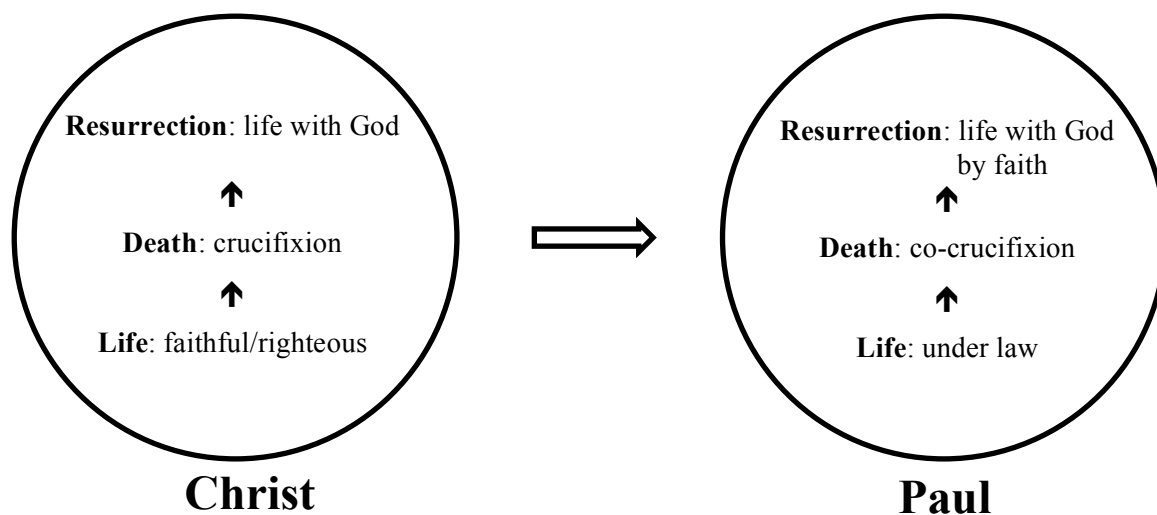
¹⁶ Paul’s rhetoric assumes that existential forces empower human morality (see arguments below). This theme is especially pronounced in 4:1–11, as well as in 5:1–6 where Paul warns the Galatians not to be subject again to “a yoke of slavery” now that they been set free in Christ (5:1). If the Galatians return to the sphere of the law by being circumcised, they will be cut off from Christ as their moral power source.

¹⁷ Here, I read σάρξ as metonymy for the physical structures of human existence.

sense within a death-resurrection schema, even if that which provides continuity is unclear: as Christ exhibits continuity through death and resurrection, so too can Paul.

Although invoking resurrection does not smooth over the problems of personal identity in this passage, it locates the discourse of the self's death within the appropriate interpretive frame. Moreover, that Paul refers to this experience not simply as death but as *co-crucifixion* makes clear that Christ provides the paradigm according to which Paul interprets and presents this transformation. He maps the basic structure of Christ's life (by implication), his crucifixion, and his resurrection onto his own experience of change: Christ lived faithfully (2:16; 3:22, 26), was crucified (1:4, 2:20b, 21; 3:1, 13–14; 6:12, 14), and was resurrected (1:1); Paul lived under the law (1:13–14; 3:23–29; 4:1–7), and has experienced a death of self by co-crucifixion (2:19–20; 6:14; cf. 5:24), and now *lives* to God by faith (2:19–20), a tacit assumption of the moral self's resurrection.¹⁸ Discussed in more detail below, I illustrate this schema as follows:

¹⁸ Two points here should be noted. First, I find little reason to doubt that Paul here describes an actual religious experience of some sort. As discussed in more detail below, my framework for understanding religious experience(s) as bringing about the loss of a (moral) self and the emergence of a new (moral) self draws on Patrick McNamara, *The Neuroscience of Religious Experience* (Cambridge University Press, 2014). Second, I make no metaphysical claims about the specifics of Paul's particular experience(s), and I acknowledge that this presentation via a death/resurrection schema may not have been Paul's default interpretation of his experience(s). My concern here is to note that in Gal 2:18–20 Paul interprets and presents his own transformation for the Galatian audience by mapping Christ's death and resurrection onto it, as part of the larger "mapping" with which this chapter is concerned. For this reading, I draw on the examination of Rom 6–8 in Tappenden, *Death and Resurrection in Paul*, 43–86.



Third, a stable personal identity is more comprehensible within the framework of competing power spheres described above. Inasmuch as a self dies and a new self emerges when one experiences a transfer from one controlling power to another, there is a disruption of the self's continuity. Yet Paul does not indicate that he understands himself as *completely* discontinuous with the pre-transformation Paul.¹⁹ Inasmuch as a person (here, Paul) is structured and governed by the powers that rule over it, the "I" that was once governed by the law no longer exists; the new "I" that is governed by Christ living in him is indeed a new self. Here, the person that undergoes transformation is truly a human *subject*, in the sense that one's selfhood is determined by that power to which one is subjected. As Robert C. Tannehill states, "The individual becomes what he is through that which has power over him."²⁰

¹⁹ Paul can, e.g., continue to refer to himself with the person first person pronoun, without need for a strong distinction between the "old person" and the present person, as he does with the term ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος in Rom 6:6. See Stowers, "What is 'Pauline Participation in Christ'?", in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of E.P. Sanders*, eds. Fabian Udoh et al. (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 2008), 363–64.

²⁰ Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 72.

In terms of a general category, one should recall that “living” refers both to a mode of existence and to a moral mode of conduct. Paul’s death to an old mode of existence under the law (2:19; cf. 3:22–23) results in a new moral existence that is oriented toward God (2:19) and empowered by Christ himself (2:20). Since the moral and the existential are here inseparable, I categorize the change in Gal 2:19–20 as *existential-moral* transformation.

Factors in Change

This passage envisages a tension in divine and human agency. Paul states later in Galatians that humanity is enslaved to sin (3:22; cf. 4:3, 8), and he portrays the flesh as producing desires that can lead people into sin (5:16–26). Christ-faith makes humanity righteous, and, just as Christ is not the subject of his own crucifixion, it is hard to imagine that Paul is the agent of his crucified self. Yet, in Galatians, Christ has some agency in his own death since he *gave himself* for human sin (1:4; 2:20). Correspondingly, Paul put his trust in Christ as a response to Christ-faith in the first place (2:16). One can thus legitimately assume the same tension in his references to co-crucifixion: although Paul gives himself over to death, he is not the agent of crucifixion or of the resurrection that follows.

This tension in moral agency fits remarkably well with Patrick McNamara’s model of self-transformation through religious experiences. McNamara, drawing on research in neuroscience, argues that for genuine self-transformation to occur, one’s “self” must experience a temporary halt or displacement of agency in order for the integration of one’s former self into a new self to occur. In such experiences, “the Self is yoked up to the God image, and this has the effect of enriching the Self by enhancing the Self’s control over executive functions.”²¹ That is, one “sets aside his or her own identity to interact with or participate in the identity of the spirit or

²¹ McNamara, *Neuroscience of Religious Experience*, 205.

God” in a process of transformation, in which one self dies and a new self emerges—a self with increased moral agency.²²

Paul does not provide sufficient information to map McNamara’s model neatly onto his descriptions in Gal 2:19–20. Yet when Paul says that he has died and no longer “lives,” he expresses a displacement of moral agency as part of a process of existential-moral transformation. Furthermore, Christ living in him suggests that Christ now serves as the governing agent of his morality, which one could view as Paul’s christological interpretation of a newfound moral agency that is consistent with McNamara’s model. Additionally, the continuity of the “I” before and after the change makes more sense in a model in which the old self is not eradicated completely, but is *integrated* into a new self. Paul here portrays the eclipse of his old self by a new moral self, and, according to his rhetoric, not merely a displacement of agency but an appropriation of Christ’s agency after the death of his moral self.

Ultimately, therefore, Christ and Christ’s crucifixion are the dominant factors of transformation. When Paul writes that he was crucified with Christ and that he now lives “by faith in the son of God,” his reference to faith evokes a narrative of Christ’s death and resurrection, which he elsewhere summarizes with the shorthand πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.²³ Thus, Christ’s death and resurrection, which includes a type of transformation (3:13), grounds Paul’s transformation.

²² McNamara, *Neuroscience of Religious Experience*, 208.

²³ Here, I am in agreement with Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*.

1.1.3 Transformation & Selfhood in Galatians 2:18–20

In Gal 2:18–20, Paul envisages a process of existential-moral transformation that “achieves” or produces new moral selfhood.²⁴ He interprets this transformation—an experience he presumes the Galatians to have experienced as well (3:1–5; 4:6)—through the lens of Christ’s death and resurrection, a schema that characterizes much of his rhetoric.²⁵ What emerges from this death is a self that is “yoked up” with Christ. Paul envisages a form of subjectivity in which a believer’s personhood is not only constituted by Christ but is interwoven with the living Christ. His descriptions envisage two agents that occupy and govern the moral existence of the “I,” the subject of speech.

Two observations about this configuration are worth noting. First, it defies our instinctive constructs of internal and external. The preposition ἐν in his statement that Christ lives ἐν ἐμοί suggests that Christ has become a part of the “internal” structure that constitutes Paul’s selfhood. Christ is present within the believer via the spirit (4:6). Certainly, however, the resurrected Christ also exists externally to Paul and other people (see, e.g., 1 Cor 15:23–28). In this context, unlike others (e.g. 2 Cor 4:16), Paul does not express strong inward/outward distinctions. More importantly, the living Christ has replaced the law as the governing power of human moral existence.

Second, the conception of selfhood does not include a Platonic soul or a Cartesian “thinking thing” that grounds the human’s experiences, thoughts, and actions. For Paul, Christ is the power that grounds and empowers the person and structures moral selfhood. This new governing power makes the person into a different being, a new subject.

²⁴ On the self as an “achievement,” see McNamara, *Neuroscience of Religious Experience*, 38, 254; Newsom, “Models of the Moral Self,” 6;.

²⁵ Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 43–86.

1.2. Galatians 3:23–29

In Gal 3:27, Paul writes that those who are baptized into Christ have “clothed themselves with Christ” (Χριστὸν ἐνδύσασθε) and that this being “clothed” affects a change in which “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, and neither male nor female” (3:28). Moreover, this change makes Gentiles into the “seed of Abraham” (v. 29). That is, it brings Gentiles into Jewish lineage. Such an altered identity on the basis of baptismal experience warrants attention.

1.2.1 Overview of Galatians 3:23–29

This pericope follows from 3:22, which establishes the premise that all people are “under sin” (ὕπὸ ἁμαρτίαν), which Paul also portrays as cosmic power.²⁶ In the first section (vv. 23–25), Paul focuses on the law’s temporary nature. Its guardianship was only for a time—until the coming of the revelation of faith (v. 23).²⁷ The law was, then, a “custodian...until Christ so that

²⁶ On the law as a power, see Martyn (“Making Things Right”) who characteristically leans into the apocalyptic aspects of Galatians and describes the law as “not so much a norm which we have transgressed—although transgressions are involved (Gal 3:19)—as a tyrant, insofar as it has placed us under the power of its curse. And by his death, Christ is not said to have accomplished our forgiveness, but rather our redemption from slavery. With the apocalyptic shift to a scene in which there are real powers arrayed against God, rectification acquires, then, a new synonym, *exagorazō*, ‘to redeem by delivering from slavery’ (Gal 3:13; 4:5). And one of the powers from whose tyranny Christ has delivered us is the Law in its role as the pronouncer of a curse on the whole of humanity” (153). See also Martyn, *Galatians*, 370–73; cf. Williams (“*Pistis Christou*,”) who argues that νόμος, like sin, is “both a power which controls human life and a ‘domain’ in which persons exist (440); Matera, *Galatians*, 135.

²⁷ The noun πίστις appears 22x in Galatians, and Paul uses it in a variety of ways. In 1:23 and 6:10, it refers to the content of Paul’s proclamation and the object of his persecution before his conversion. That is, it refers generally to the belief and practice of Christians. In several places, Paul uses it to reference “Christ-faith,” which is shorthand for Christ’s faithfulness to God on behalf of people (2:16; 3:22). This Christ-faith also establishes πίστις as a sphere of moral existence, in which people can live by their own belief in and response to Christ-faith (2:16, 20; 3:2, 5, 7–9, 11–12, 14, 23–26; 5:5–6). In 5:22, Paul refers to πίστις seemingly as a virtue, best translated as “faithfulness.” In the passage at hand, faith refers both to a power and a sphere, a reality that brings an end to the imprisonment under the law for those who believe *in* Christ (vv. 23–26). Cf. Williams, “*Pistis Christou*,” 438.

we might be justified by faith (v. 24).²⁸ With the arrival of justification by Christ-faith, believers live no longer under the custodian (v. 25) and, implicitly, are no longer imprisoned by sin (v. 22). In the second section, Paul declares that, “through faith” the Galatians are “sons and daughters of God in Christ Jesus” (v. 26) and “heirs according to the promise” (v. 29 NRSV).²⁹ Although they were formerly enslaved to “weak and pitiful elements” (4:8–10), they become the people of God and appropriate “a title once reserved for Israel.”³⁰

This change occurred when the Galatians were clothed with Christ in the ritual context of baptism.³¹ Evidence suggests that in the early Christian rite of baptism, the baptisand would undress, be immersed in baptism, and then dress again, either with the same clothes or new clothing.³² It is possible, but far from certain, that such was the practice in the context of Paul’s ministry. We can be confident, however, that Paul links this metaphor of “being clothed” with Christ with baptism (2:28). Such provides the ritual context for the transformation discussed in this section.

²⁸ With Matera (*Galatians*), I read εἰς Χριστόν as temporal rather than telic, given the temporal emphases in the larger context of 3:23–4:11, esp. 3:23; 4:1 (136). On the role of a pedagogue or “disciplinarian” (NRSV), see Martyn, *Galatians*, 362–63.

²⁹ On the reading of 3:26, I am persuaded by Matera (*Galatians*), who argues that διὰ τῆς πίστεως is best taken with υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε instead of with ἐν Χριστῷ. In this reading, “Christ is the sphere or locale in which one is a son of God *through* “the faith” understood as an objective reality, the faith of Jesus Christ: you are sons of God in the sphere of Christ through Christ’s faith” (142).

³⁰ Matera, *Galatians*, 141.

³¹ For discussion, which engages a variety of scholarly perspectives, of baptism as the ritual context of being clothed with Christ, see Chöng-hun Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, JSNTSS 268 (London: New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 112–19; see also Wayne A. Meeks, “The Image of the Androgyne: Some uses of the Symbol in Earliest Christianity,” *HR* 13 (1974): 180–82.

³² See Kim, *Clothing Imagery*, 96–101. Kim gives evidence for possible influence on early Christian baptism from Jewish proselyte baptisms (96–98) and synthesizes dominant modern scholarly views. He also discusses a number of key ancient sources for clothing and early Christian baptism: e.g., Hippolytus, *Apost. Trad.* 21:11–12; *Gos. Phil.* 101; and Jerome, *Epistle to Fabiola*, 19. Cf. the account, which draws on research from cultural anthropology, of initiation rites, changes of clothing, and transformation in Moyer V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul’s Letters and Thought*, SNTSMS 119 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).84–85.

1.2.2 Transformation in Gal 3:23–29: Necessity, Categories, and Factors

Necessity for Change

The predicament of all things (τὰ πάντα) as under the power of sin reveals the underlying need for the transformation described in vv. 27–29, and, here, Paul intimates a binary frame with two existential-moral spheres.³³ One should read Paul’s statement that the Galatians are no longer “under a custodian” (ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν) with Matera’s observation on the phrases that ὑπό governs in ch. 3: “‘under sin’ (Rom 3:9; 7:14); ‘under a curse’ (Gal 3:10); ‘under the elements of the universe’ (Gal 4:3)” each are “phrases that denote a realm or sphere apart from God, from which humanity must be redeemed.”³⁴ The alternative sphere is one of adulthood, in which believers are no longer children and slaves, but are sons and daughters of God, “heirs according to the promise” (3:29 NRSV), a theme that Paul explicates in 4:1–11.³⁵

Within this binary frame, “clothing” is the mechanism by which a person is liberated from being “under sin” (v. 22)—in which Jews are under the law as a custodian (v. 25), and Gentiles are under the “weak and pitiful elements” of the cosmos (4:8–9)—into a new existence. Both Jews and Gentiles are sons and daughters of God through Christ-faith (v. 26) and belong to Christ (v. 29a). This change also nullifies distinctions of ethnicity, legal status (i.e. slave or free), and gender as determinant for inclusion among God’s people (v. 28).³⁶ To be sure, Paul

³³ Paul’s description of all of humanity under sin portrays a universal predicament but does not eradicate Jew/Gentile distinctions within his churches. See Caroline E. Johnson Hodge, “Apostle to the Gentiles: Constructions of Paul’s Identity,” *BibInterp* 13 (2005): 270–88; Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 43–66; Campbell, *Nations in the Divine Economy*. My use of the term “binary frame” coheres closely with what Martyn (“Apocalyptic Antinomies” in *Theological Issues*) describes as antinomies (111–23); cf. Boyarin, *Radical Jew*, 30–31.

³⁴ Matera, *Galatians*, 136.

³⁵ As noted below (1.2.3), this motif of slavery and redemption is key to understanding the models of selfhood at play in this passage.

³⁶ Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 180–83. In the sphere of the law, these particular distinctions affected whether one could undergo circumcision, the initiation rite required for God’s

presumes that such distinctions still functionally apply.³⁷ Yet, “in the case of the initiation rite that the Galatians have shared, these distinctions were irrelevant; Jews and Greeks, slaves and free, males and females have all received the Spirit in baptism.”³⁸ Bruce W. Longenecker, however, names the most fundamental aspect of this change: “For Paul, baptism represents the believer’s transfer from the domination of the power of Sin to the realm of Christ’s lordship.”³⁹

Categories of Change

The change at baptism that Paul describes as “putting on” Christ results in a new status or identity for the Galatian Gentile Christians. After the change, they are sons and daughters of God (v. 26), the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise (v. 29). Temporally, this occurred in the past and grounds present realities, and because the Galatians were clothed with the spirit of Christ, ethnic, status, and gender distinctions for inclusion in Israel’s inheritance no longer apply. On one level, this qualifies as a communal transformation of identity.⁴⁰

This new identity as God’s people, however, derives from the more fundamental change that comes from the Galatians “clothing themselves” with Christ.⁴¹ It refers to an experience that

covenant people. See Richard Manly Adams, “The Israel of God: The Narrative Rhetoric of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians” (PhD diss., Emory University, 2013), 318–19.

³⁷ Note, e.g., that he still refers to himself and Cephas as “Jews by nature” (2:15). See arguments in Hodge, “Apostle to the Gentiles,” 270–88; *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 43–66; Campbell, *Nations in the Divine Economy*, esp. pp. 105–52.

³⁸ Adams, “Israel of God,” 318.

³⁹ Longenecker, *Triumph of Abraham’s God*, 66.

⁴⁰ For a full explication of Galatians and identity, see Adams, “Israel of God.” My arguments have some resonance with the “new perspective on Paul” in that I agree that, here and elsewhere in Galatians, Paul is concerned to address ethno-religious markers of identity that signify believers’ status before God. As I argue below, however, the matter of identity and identity markers in Gal 3:27–28 are of secondary importance for Paul. Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*; BNTC (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993) 202–208. For overviews of the new perspective on Paul, see Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 178–200; James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*; rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans Pub Co, 2008).

⁴¹ The explanatory γάρ in v. 27 introduces the clothing language as an explanation for why the Galatians are now sons and daughters of God (v. 26; see Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979], 186). This

Paul interprets as a metaphysical union of the human being with Christ.⁴² Just as he describes union with Christ as an aspect of his own experience of becoming “in Christ” (2:19–20), he also assumes that the Galatians had such an experience: “God sent forth the Spirit of God’s son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (4:6).⁴³ This statement echoes his reference to the Galatians’ reception of the Spirit in 3:2, and it reveals that the spirit is the spirit of Christ.⁴⁴ Put simply, in the epistolary world of Galatians, Spirit reception creates an ontological connection with Christ.

As for the clothing metaphor, the only occurrence of the verb ἐνδύω in Galatians is here in 3:27. The verb appears twelve times elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. In several places, ἐνδύω is in the imperative, used to exhort an audience to “put on” virtues or personal qualities (e.g. faith or hope).⁴⁵ In 1 Cor 15:53–54, Paul uses ἐνδύω to describe an ontological transformation at the resurrection: that which is perishable will be clothed with imperishability.⁴⁶ In Rom 13:14, Paul uses the verb in the imperative and exhorts his audience to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Although he uses the term for radical transformation (1 Cor 15:33–54) and for putting on Christ (Rom 13:14) elsewhere, Galatians is unique in that it describes a *prior* experience of putting on

suggests that the baptismal experience is not only more fundamental than the status/identity change, but that it was the mechanism by which the new status/identity was produced. My view here is quite close to that of Richard Valantasis (“Competing Ascetic Subjectivities” in *Asceticism and the New Testament*, eds. Leif E. Vaage and Vincent L. Wimbush [New York: Routledge, 1999]): “The conflict in the Letter to the Galatians, then, does not relate primarily to Paul, or to his theology, or even to his relationship with traditional Judaism of his day, but to the right articulation of the pneumatic subjectivity among a group of people in Galatians who seem (to Paul, at least) not properly to understand it” (223).

⁴² So Kim, *Clothing Imagery*, 116–19.

⁴³ In my reading, Paul also presumes a metaphysical union of the Galatians with Christ in 4:19 (more on this below). Cf. Hubbard, *New Creation*, 125–26; Adams, “Israel of God,” 316.

⁴⁴ Cf. Rom 8:9; 2 Cor 3:15–17; Phil 1:19. See Kim, *Clothing Imagery*, 119; See also Luke Timothy Johnson, “The Body in Question” in Johnson, *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament: Collected Essays* NovTSupp 146 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 300–305.

⁴⁵ 1 Thess 5:8; Rom 13:12; Eph 6:11, 14; Col 3:12.

⁴⁶ On this change as *ontological* transformation, see Johnson, “Life-Giving Spirit: The Ontological Implications of Resurrection in 1 Corinthians” in Johnson, *Contested Issues*. Although the verb is slightly different (ἐπενδύομαι), Paul uses the language of clothing in the same way in 2 Cor 5:1–5, esp. 2, 4.

Christ at baptism.⁴⁷ Most important for my purposes, however, is that Paul uses the term either to describe or encourage human change, both at the ontological and moral levels (1 Thess 5:8; 1 Cor 15:53–54; 2 Cor 5:1–5).

In the Septuagint, the verb ἐνδύω appears frequently to refer to changes in identity or to portray metaphysical changes of some sort. Examples include: a correlation of clothing with royalty, clothing that conveys priestly identity, or clothing that accompanies a change in status.⁴⁸ Like Paul's letters, a number of Septuagintal texts use this verb to describe one being clothed with virtues, vices, or some other qualities, attributes, or realities.⁴⁹ Particularly germane to this study is that some authors also use ἐνδύω to describe a spirit from God "clothing" someone.⁵⁰

I examine such expressions in ancient literature in more detail in chapter 6. Here, it suffices to note that it is likely well within Paul's horizons to use such language to describe the human reception of πνεῦμα and for this experience to describe transformation of identity or ontological change. In this passage, just as priestly garments are part of that which establishes a person as a priest, and as the appropriation of royal attire is part of that which conveys a regal identity, so too does clothing oneself with Christ incorporate one into the sphere of Christ and establish one as a son or daughter of God.⁵¹ As suggested above, however, this transformation of identity derives from a more fundamental change. The clothing metaphor describes the union of

⁴⁷ Kim, *Clothing Imagery*, 112–19. Also noteworthy are the references to being clothed with a new thing or a new person in Col 3:10; Eph 4:24.

⁴⁸ On royalty, see Gen 41:42; 1 Macc 10:59–66; Isa 22:20–21; Dan 5:29; 6:3; cf. Jer 26:4. On priestly identity see Ex 28:41; 29:5–8; 40:13–14; Lev 6:3–4; 8:6–7, 13; 16:2–4, 23–24, 32; 21:10; Num 20:25–29; 5:12; Ezek 42:14; 44:17, 19; 1 Macc 10:18–21; Sir 45:6–13, esp. v. 13. On change in status, see 2 Sam 6:14; Judith 10:3–4; Ezek 9:2–3; 11; 10:2, 6–7; 16:8–14; 23:5–7, 12; Dan 10:4–5. Cf. Kim, *Clothing Imagery*, 21–25, 102, 118.

⁴⁹ On virtues, see Ps 131:9; Job 29:14; Wis 5:18; Sir 6:31; Sir 27:8. On vices, see Zeph 3:3–4. On other qualities or realities, see references to salvation (Ps 131:16; Isa 61:10), strength (Isa 51:9; 52:1; 59:17; Prov 31:26; Sir 17:3), and other attributes (Ps 34:26; 92:1; 103:1; 108:18, 29; 131:18; Prov 31:26; Job 8:22; 29:19; Isa 52:1; Ezek 7:27; Sir 45:8; 1 Esdr 5:40; Ps Sol 11:7; 1 Macc 1:28; Bar 5:1;).

⁵⁰ Judg 6:34; 1 Chron 12:19; 2 Chron 24:20.

⁵¹ Cf. Kim, *Clothing Imagery*, 116–18.

the human with the Spirit of Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ; 3:28), which indicates this change has ontological dimensions.⁵² Thus, with Gal 2:18–20, I categorize this change as *existential-moral* transformation.⁵³ Transposed into the discourse of selfhood, the human is no longer subjected to the powers associated with the law but is a subject within the existential-moral sphere of Christ. Under the new existential-moral power of Christ, a new moral selfhood is achieved. Richard Valantasis aptly labels this new selfhood as “Christ-subjectivity.”⁵⁴

Noteworthy is that Paul does not here envisage the production of an *individual* moral self. At 3:26, Paul shifts to second person plural address, and his communal focus is consistent through v. 29. This does not negate the possibility that community members understood and/or experienced themselves as distinctive individuals, but Paul’s concern in this passage is with a vision for *corporate* existential-moral selfhood.⁵⁵

⁵² With others, I understand the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ to refer to metaphysical participation in the Christ’s Spirit. For recent discussion and the state of the conversation on the meaning of “in Christ” in Paul’s letters, see Thate, Michael J., Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Constantine R. Campbell, eds., *“In Christ” in Paul: Explorations in Paul’s Theology of Union and Participation*, WUNT 2.384 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); see also Stowers, ““Pauline Participation in Christ”?,” 354–64.

⁵³ As discussed in more detail below, the ontological dimension of this transformation is not strong or explicit enough to categorize it more broadly as *ontological* transformation, which is the language I use for 1 Cor 15:35–57. In 1 Cor 15, Paul describes the transformation of material bodies into bodies pneumatic bodies (see, esp. 15:42–57), so that that bodies will be changed to conform completely to the Spirit that already grounds their existence (see Johnson, “Life-Giving Spirit”). In Gal 3:27–28, however, believers receive the reception of Christ who now determines and governs their earthly existence, but they do not undergo complete ontological transformation.

⁵⁴ Valantasis, “Ascetic Subjectivities,” 219.

⁵⁵ From the perspective of relationally-constituted selfhood, it is not necessarily a problem to read references to corporate subjectivity as implicating the selfhood of individuals, and vice versa. This is one of the important contributions of Susan Grove Eastman, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul’s Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), esp. p. 173. For a theoretical account of relational selfhood from the field of psychology, but that integrates resources from diverse disciplines, see Kenneth J. Gergen, *Relational Being: Beyond Self and Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), esp. pp. 135–50; see also Brent D. Slife, “Taking Practices Seriously: Toward a Relational Ontology,” *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 24 (2004): 257–78.

Factors in Change

As noted above, the changes occur at the initiation rite of baptism.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, in this context, Paul gives no description or explication of the baptism ritual itself.⁵⁷ Even so, Paul's imagery has a material and ritual basis, since baptism is clearly a foundational rite for Galatians.⁵⁸ As Valantasis states, in Gal 3:27–28, “Baptism *inaugurates* corporate Christ-subjectivity.”⁵⁹

Paul's use of ἐνδύω in the middle voice indicates that people have some degree of agency in this transformation.⁶⁰ By accepting baptism, they are active agents of “putting on” Christ as a garment. Yet the human capacity to clothe themselves with Christ is dependent upon the new reality of being made righteous, which was created by the arrival of faith (3:23–26). Thus, just as people believe in Christ on the basis of Christ-faith (2:16), they also receive baptism on the same basis. Although the act of putting on Christ seems to be an act in which humans are the agents of the “clothing,” it follows from Christ's self-giving (1:4; 2:20). Christ is, then, the ultimate source and ground of the transformation that humans in some way appropriate in baptism.

Finally, this transformation involves the abandonment of one set of determining structures and incorporation into new ones. After the baptismal change, the law no longer serves

⁵⁶ Such rites are often occasions for transformation. See Hubbard, *New Creation*, 79–90. See also the classic accounts of Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), esp. pp. 54–115; Victor Witter Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977). For an overview of the perspectives in ritual studies, with a critical summary of van Gennep and Turner and her own constructive developments, see Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, Rev. ed.. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), esp. pp 1–89, 94–101. Cf. the neuroscientific arguments in McNamara, *Neuroscience*, 212–28.

⁵⁷ As discussed below, Paul's descriptions of baptism are more explicit in Rom 6:1–11. With Betz (*Galatians*) I do not think it “advisable simply to harmonize the passages” in which Paul references baptism throughout his corpus (176).

⁵⁸ Although scholars disagree about the nature of baptism in this context, they largely agree that baptism is the ritual context of Paul's imagery. See, e.g., Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 180–82; Betz, *Galatians*, 186–89; Kim, *Clothing Imagery*, 112–19; Hubbard, *New Creation*, 84–85.

⁵⁹ Valantasis, “Ascetic Subjectivities,” 219. Emphasis added.

⁶⁰ BDAG, s.v. ἐνδύω 2

as a determining structure of the self, and, as factors that contribute to subjectivity, status, gender, and ethnicity are subordinated to the supreme importance of being “in Christ.”⁶¹ Put simply, Christ now gives shape to the the believers’ new corporate selfhood.

1.2.3 Transformation & Selfhood in Galatians 3:23–29

In Gal 3:23–29, Paul describes believers’ reception of the spirit of Christ, which produces a new reality that relativizes distinctions of status, gender, and ethnicity. Viewed through the lens of subjectivity, the reception of Christ at baptism produces a new corporate selfhood. I offer two points about this new subjectivity.

First, clothing themselves with Christ expresses the reception of Christ’s spirit with a metaphor that is frequently used for entry into a new status, role, identity, or, as is the case here, a new mode of selfhood. The metaphor describes the spirit of Christ enveloping human bodies like a garment.⁶² Paradoxically, as with 2:19–20, Christ in some way becomes part not only of human existence, but also of human bodies in a way that is easily understood in neat categories of internal and external, unified and separated.⁶³ Christ inhabits people as people inhabit Christ, and this mutual habitation, as a whole, determines Christian selfhood.

⁶¹ Cf. Hodge, “Apostle to the Gentiles,” 285–87.

⁶² Here I follow the reading of Boyarin (*Radical Jew*) who claims that Paul draws on the “topos of the body as a garment” and argues for the following reading of Gal 3:27–28: “By entering into the body of Christ in the spirit, people become one with the seed to which the promise was made and thus themselves heirs of Abraham and children of God according to the promise. The garment of shame having been put off in baptism and the spiritual body of Christ having been put on, the Galatians now propose by agreeing to circumcision, to return and put on again the garment of shame. They will thus show themselves precisely to be *outside of the covenantal promise and not within it as Paul's Jerusalem opponents would have it*” (23–28; emphasis original).

⁶³ Believers “put on” Christ, but God also sends Christ’s spirit into their hearts (4:6), just as Christ lives “in” (ἐν) Paul (2:20). Moreover, throughout the letter, Christ seems to exist independently of humans, but, when a believer receives Christ’s spirit, to put it figuratively, the event blurs the line of where the human ends and where Christ begins. This configuration also anticipates the opposition of Spirit and flesh that Paul utilizes later in the letter (5:16–26; 6:7–10).

Second, Paul rhetorically inscribes Christ's being onto baptized bodies, and he subordinates the various constitutive elements of subjectivity to being *in Christ*. In doing so, he presents the Galatians with a distinctive subjectivity to embody. According to Paul's logic, in the sphere of "law-works," ethnicity, status, and gender not only serve as markers of moral selfhood, but they also constitute boundaries for those who wish to enter into the same sphere of moral existence as Abraham's descendants. Thus, for some (i.e. gentiles), these markers determine and potentially limit the possibilities of moral existence. When people—Gentile believers in particular—clothe themselves with Christ, however, they are simultaneously liberated from the law and adopted as sons and daughters (4:5). Put into conversation with 2:19–20, this experience brings about "death" to the grammar in which such categories had force and "life" to a new symbolic universe in which these categories function no longer as primary determinants of membership among Gods' people. After baptism, therefore, Christ functions as the dominant power of believers' morality and the central source for their self-understanding.

1.3. Galatians 4:1–11

Gal 4:1–11 qualifies as transformation discourse according to my second criterion. In it, Paul develops the changes that he describes in 3:22–25. Unfortunately, the entire pericope cannot be taken into account here. Of particular importance for my study are vv. 6–7, which parallel 3:27–28 in that they describe a change of identity that derives from a more fundamental event of Christ's spirit joining with the believer's body.

1.3.1 Overview of Pericope

Galatians 4:1–11 is a literary unit with two subsections (vv. 1–7 and vv. 8–11).⁶⁴ In the first subsection, Paul discusses a prior condition of being “under the law” (v. 5): though heirs, those under the law were children (νήπιοι). As such, they were under guardians for a time and held the same status as slaves (vv. 1–2).⁶⁵ Moreover, they were slaves to the “elements of the world” (στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου), best understood as cosmic powers that govern human existence.⁶⁶ These powers enslave all—both Jews and Gentiles—who are outside the sphere of Christ-faith.⁶⁷ Yet all believers receive *adoption* (υἰοθεσία) through Christ’s redemption (v. 5).⁶⁸

⁶⁴ As stated above, Paul shifts into a new pericope at 4:1. In 4:12, Paul’s imperative γίνεσθε transitions into a new section in which he reflects on his relationship with the Galatians (vv. 12–20). The first section, vv. 1–7, is bookended with references to heirs (κληρονόμος). In the second section, (vv. 8–11), Paul shifts his focus to the Galatians and their previous existence under “weak and futile elements” (vv. 8–9).

⁶⁵ In this passage, Paul does not follow his metaphor in the direction of a status change through gradual growth from immaturity to maturity, even if such would be the natural inclination. Instead, he allows the more decisive event of God’s sending the son in the “fullness of time” to govern the metaphor, which leads him to emphasize “punctiliar liberation,” instead of “gradual maturation” (see Martyn, *Galatians*, 389).

⁶⁶ For an overview of the history of the debates about how best to understand Paul’s references to στοιχεῖα in Galatians (4:3, 9) and an argument for the viewpoint adopted in this study, see Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 252–56. Of particular interpretive significance is, as Martyn (*Galatians*) rightly notes, the “guardians and managers correspond...to the plural elements of the cosmos” (388). Thus, especially for our purposes, one should understand Paul’s references to the law, the “guardians and managers,” and the “elements of the cosmos” as referring to powers that exist outside of the sphere of Christ.

⁶⁷ Since both Jewish legal practices and the Galatians’ former religious practices included calendrical observances, Paul can refer to them both as enslavement to elements of the cosmos. Implicitly, therefore, if the Galatians turn to the sphere of the law, a sphere from which Jewish believers are redeemed (vv. 4–5), it is equivalent to retuning to their former religious practices, a situation in which they were formerly enslaved to cosmic elements (vv. 4:8–11). See de Boer, *Galatians*, 257–58.

⁶⁸ Here, as Martyn (*Galatians*) observes, Paul’s adoption terminology does not flow logically from the imagery of children under guardians and managers that he establishes in vv. 1–2 (390–91). Ultimately, “adoption” in 4:5 recalls the familial construction in vv. 1–2 to convey that, in Christ, Jewish believers have obtained that for which they were destined (de Boer, *Galatians*, 258–61). Note also the various similarities between this passage and Rom 8:12–17 (cf. 8:23), including the response, “Abba, Father” to the reception of the “Spirit of adoption” (πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας) in Rom 8:15.

In v. 6, Paul writes, “Because you are children (ἐστε υἱοί), God sent the spirit of God’s son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba, Father!’”⁶⁹ He presupposes that the Galatians have already received Christ’s spirit (3:2, 5), and the reception of the spirit in 4:6 restates the experience of putting on Christ in 3:27.⁷⁰ In 4:8–11, however, Paul is concerned that the Galatians have returned to slavery. Previously, when they did not know God, they were “enslaved to things that were not gods by nature” (ἐδουλεσύσατε τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὐσίῃ θεοῖς in v. 8). His query in v. 9 describes these non-gods as “weak and futile elements” (ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα).⁷¹ Paradoxically, these elements have the power to enslave, but Paul emphasizes their impotence: like the law, they are unable to give life (3:21).⁷²

1.3.2 Transformation in Galatians 4:1–11: Necessity, Categories, and Factors

Necessity of Change

This passage presupposes the prior and universal condition of slavery referenced in 3:22, and it builds on Paul’s arguments in 3:23–29. Thus, although the descriptions and metaphors vary, the need for change in 4:1–11 is the same as in the previous pericope (see 1.2.2 above). For those under the law (3:23–25), the time has come to transition into the role of sons and daughters

⁶⁹ Some MSS contain ὑμῶν instead of ἡμῶν in 4:6. The earliest and best MSS, however, use the first person plural, which tilts the weight of the evidence toward ἡμῶν as the best reading.

⁷⁰ The parallel structure of a reference to spirit reception embedded between discussion of new status as sons and daughters suggests that 4:6 refers to the same experience as 3:27. As discussed above, the actual transformation in 3:23–29 takes center stage in vv. 27–28, and it is a description of Christ uniting with the human bodies. The descriptions of 3:27–28 are sandwiched between discourse on the status of being sons and daughters (υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε in v. 26) and being Abraham’s seed (v. 29) and heirs (κατ’ ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι in v. 29). Likewise, the reception of Christ’s spirit in 4:6 is embedded between descriptions of being children with the status of slaves (4:1–3) and a new status of being a son or daughter (υἱός in v. 7) and an heir (κληρονόμος in v. 7).

⁷¹ On the cosmic elements, see de Boer, *Galatians*, 257–58

⁷² Martyn, *Galatians*, 411–12.

who are no longer under guardians and managers (4:2).⁷³ God inaugurated this new era (ὅτε ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα) by sending Christ, and believers realize their new status of sons and daughters by receiving Christ's spirit (v. 4–5). Whether through the law or other religious practices, both the Galatians and Jewish believers were enslaved to the cosmic elements that govern human existence. Transformation was needed for liberation from these στοιχεῖα (4:3, 9).

It is important that Christ's spirit enters human *hearts*. The only occurrence of καρδιά in Galatians occurs in 4:6. Elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, this organ has multivalent symbolic value, and Paul ascribes to it a number of functions. In various contexts it is, for example, the seat of thought, perception, and belief;⁷⁴ desires, passions, and emotions;⁷⁵ and the will, purpose, and intentions.⁷⁶ In several places, the heart functions as the locus of morality,⁷⁷ moral

⁷³ Paul uses plural pronouns to address the Galatians in vv. 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9, but he shifts to the second person singular in v. 7. My reading is close to that of Heinrich Schlier (*Der Brief an Die Galater*; KEK [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962]): “Die Folgerung ist überraschend wieder in der 2. Pers. Sing. vorgebracht und gewinnt dadurch an persönlichem Gewicht. Die Sache geht jeden Einzelnen an” (199). When one adopts a relational perspective on selfhood for reading Paul (see Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 63–105), however, the challenge of whether Paul's rhetoric applies to the churches as corporate entities or to individuals within becomes less problematic. Since a self is relationally-constituted and always embedded in and largely determined by a web of relations, Paul can speak to a community and presume that his rhetoric applies to individuals who are part of it. Here, as Schlier suggests, Paul may shift to a singular pronoun to emphasize that what he has said about the community is true of each individual within. On the relational constitution of a self and the ways that relational subjectivities complicate sharp distinctions between an individual and a community, see Gergen, *Relational Being*, 29–95. This viewpoint also fits with what Slife describes as “strong relationality,” a perspective in “[e]ach thing, including each person, is first and always a nexus of relations” (159). Thus, “the relational motto for identity has to be contextual: ‘I am who I am, in part, because of who you are’” (166).

⁷⁴ 1 Cor 2:9; 14:25; 2 Cor 3:15; 4:6; Rom 1:21; Rom 10:8; 16: 18; Eph 1:18; cf. Rom 10:6; Eph 4:18.

⁷⁵ 1 Thess 2:4; 17; 2 Cor 2:4; 7:8; 8:16; Phil 1:7; 4:7; Rom 1:14; 9:2; 10:1; Col 2:2; 3:15,16, 22; 4:8; 2 Thess 2:17; cf. 2 Cor 6:11; 7:3; Eph 6:22.

⁷⁶ 1 Thess 3:13; 1 Cor 4:5; 7:37 (2x); 2 Cor 9:7; Rom 2:5; 6:17; Eph. 4:18; 6:5; 2 Thess 3:5; cf. 1 Cor 14:25.

⁷⁷ Phil 4:7; Rom 2:15; 6:17; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 2:22.

selfhood,⁷⁸ and the location of spirit's dwelling and work.⁷⁹ Elsewhere, Paul seems to use the heart as a reference to core of the "true self" (e.g. in distinction from outward appearances).⁸⁰

Two points about Paul's use of καρδιά are especially pertinent to the underlying need for change in Gal 4:6. First, as my descriptions above suggest, the heart in Paul's letters is commonly understood as "the center of human personality."⁸¹ As such, the heart is symbolic for the "core" of human selfhood. Second, a "heart-as-container" metaphor often underlies Paul's uses of καρδιά, and he typically portrays it as a passive organ that comes under the rulership of governing powers.⁸² As Robert Jewett summarizes with respect to Gal 4:6, "The center of man is thus his heart; the heart's intentionality is determined by the power which rules it. In the case of Christian man, the direction of the heart's intentionality is determined by Christ's Spirit."⁸³ For Paul in Gal 4:1–11, therefore, humanity needs transformation *in the heart* because the heart is the core of the human self, and the human is unable, by its own power, to free itself from the governance of cosmic elements in order to come under the governance of Christ's spirit. Without the spirit of Christ crying "Abba, Father," from within the human heart, the human proclamation

⁷⁸ Rom 2:29; cf. Rom 8:27

⁷⁹ 2 Cor 1:22; 3:2–3 (2x); Rom 5:5; Eph 3:17.

⁸⁰ 2 Cor 5:12; Eph. 5:19. Cf. 1 Thess 2:17; Phil 1:7; Eph 6:22.

⁸¹ Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of their Use in Conflict Settings*, AGJU (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 323; see also Udo Schnelle, *The Human Condition: Anthropology in the Teachings of Jesus, Paul, and John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 102–103.

⁸² On conceptual metaphors that envisage the body or some aspect of the body as a container, see Tappenden, *Resurrection*, 121–22; see, e.g., 2 Cor 6:11; 7:3; Rom 5:5. On the heart as a "passive organ, Jewett (*Anthropological Terms*) argues that the heart is "passive in nature since its actual content or direction may be determined from the outside" (305). One can recognize this presumed passivity in Phil 4:7; Rom 2:5; 8:27.

⁸³ Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 323. This is not to claim that the human heart, as the core of human volition and purpose, is completely passive. But Jewett (*Anthropological Terms*) is right in his observation that the "heart has an element of directedness about it" (322).

of God's parenthood would be ineffective, incapable of accomplishing the changes necessary for the human to become a child of God.⁸⁴

Categories of Change

As in Gal 3:27–28, the changes in 4:1–11 are past events that ground present realities, and they are multilayered. On one level, the shift from being children who share status with slaves to being adopted as sons and daughters alters social status and identity. Whether gentile or Jew, believers who have received Christ's spirit are children of God and are, together (3:28), heirs among God's people (4:7). God's sending of the "spirit of God's son" initiates this change and enables the cry of "Abba, Father." The spirit that resides in those who receive it, therefore, determines the identity of the recipients: once the spirit of *God's son* enters into a human heart, that person also becomes a son or daughter of God.⁸⁵

This transformation also has existential and somatic dimensions. Just as Christ inhabits Paul in 2:20, here the spirit of Christ enters into (εἰς) human hearts. Paul does not, however, detail the effects of any changes on bodies themselves. Rather, his primary concern is that it accomplishes freedom from slavery to cosmic elements (4:3, 8) and establishes new identities.

At its core, then, this change is existential in that it involves liberation from powers. The Galatians formerly participated with these powers through religious practices (4:8–11). In doing so, they, with all of humanity, were enslaved to sin (3:22). Thus, according to Paul, subjugation and enslavement characterized the Galatians' previous existence. Their reception of Christ's spirit brought liberation from cosmic powers and from subjugation to sin, and, as a result,

⁸⁴ Luke Timothy Johnson observes in Paul and other NT writings a consistent link between statements about the Holy Spirit, the presence of Jesus, and the experience of power. On Gal 4:6 specifically, Johnson (*Writings*) notes, "The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force; it is the life-giving presence of the risen Lord" (102–105, esp. p. 103).

⁸⁵ Cf. Paul's reference to Christ as God's son in 2:20.

established new identities as children of God (vv. 6–7), As elsewhere in Galatians, I therefore also categorize this change as *existential-moral* transformation.

Factors in Change

As with 3:23–29, God and Christ are the agents of change. God sent Christ into the world and sent the Spirit of Christ into people’s hearts (4:4–6). Yet Christ, as πνεῦμα, enters into the human and cries out to the Father from within. Similar to the way that Christ *lives* in Paul (2:20), Christ here calls on God from within the person, specifically, from the heart.

If καρδιά in Pauline discourse can be a passive organ, it certainly is in 4:6.⁸⁶ Here, it neither enacts nor accomplishes anything; it is a container, a space that Christ enters and seemingly inhabits. As a moral organ that symbolizes the core of human selfhood, however, the heart is a critical factor in transformation. By portraying Christ as entering into and crying out from the heart, Paul reveals that the chief factors of this change are external to the human—i.e. the Spirit enters from *outside* of the human—but also somatic (cf. 3:27) and internal. The heart, as an internal factor of change, indicates that this transformation occurs at the nucleus of human moral selfhood.

In addition to God and Christ (and Christ’s spirit) as the agents of change (4:5), the powers from which humanity is redeemed—namely, the law (v. 5), the elements of the world (vv. 3, 9) and false gods (v. 8)—are vital factors as well. Prior to conversion, these powers energized and structured the audience’s existence as νήπιοι and as slaves (4:1–3). Paul portrays the liberation of humanity from these powers as “redemption” (ἐξαγοράζω), which recalls his use of ἐξαγοράζω in 3:13.⁸⁷ There, Christ underwent a type of change as well; at his crucifixion, he

⁸⁶ Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 305.

⁸⁷ On ἐξαγοράζω to convey redemption or manumission, see Büschel, *TDNT*, 1.126–28.

became a curse (γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα) in order to redeem people from the law's curse.⁸⁸

As Udo Schnelle argues, Paul suggests that Christ's transformation is not only a factor in change but the ground of the possibility of human transformation because it enables humans to participate "in Christ," that is, in the same sphere of reality in which God and Christ exist.⁸⁹

1.3.5 Transformation & Selfhood in Gal 4:1–11

As with the above passages, in 4:1–11 Paul portrays a transfer from one set of structuring realities (slavery law, worldly elements, false gods) to another (adoption as sons and daughters of God through Christ and heirs). Like 3:27, Paul describes the operation of Christ's spirit within believers as the catalyst of change. In 4:6, however, he describes the place of change not only as somatic, but, specifically, in the heart as the core space of transformation. This passage's turn to the body's interior reveals at least three important assumptions about selfhood in Galatians.

First, in addition to external edifices and powers, Paul presumes a "bodily structure of subjectivity" as well.⁹⁰ In order for a person truly to become a son or daughter of God (i.e. a new identity or subject position), a change is needed in the organ that symbolizes the center of human personhood. As stated above, the heart is passive, but the power that governs the human heart determines the person's moral selfhood. The heart is, therefore, a chief component of the bodily structures of subjectivity, but this aspect of interiority is not alone sufficient to structure moral

⁸⁸ Cf. Udo Schnelle, "Transformation Und Partizipation Als Grundgedanken Paulinischer Theologie," *NTS* 47 (2001): 61–62.

⁸⁹ Schnelle, "Transformation Und Partizipation," 60–75. See also the discussion of Gal 2:19–20 above.

⁹⁰ For the phrase "bodily structure of subjectivity," see Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 20. Although her concerns are quite different from Paul's (!), my attention to external *and* bodily structures reflects draws on insights from Braidotti's accounts for "nomadic" models of subjectivity" in the whole of her *Metamorphoses*.

selfhood. Rather, according to Gal 4:1–11, a distinctive moral subject is produced when καρδιά is linked up with a governing power, in this case, Christ’s spirit

Second, in Gal 4:1–11, Paul does not presuppose that the heart is a “defective” moral organ.⁹¹ Yet, in addition to its passivity, the heart—and, thus, the person—is incapable of accomplishing existential-moral transformation apart from some external power. As later chapters demonstrate, this incapacity for self-transformation locates Paul within a variety of ancient perspectives on the moral self and moral transformation.

Third, at least for contemporary Western readers of Paul, the “boundaries” of the self are ambiguous. That is, when Christ’s spirit enters into the core space of one’s selfhood and cries out to God from within, this merger of the spirit with human bodies blurs distinctions between the human person and Christ (cf. 2:19–20), as well as distinctions between individual believers and the corporate body.⁹² If interpreters of Paul presume that he envisages an autonomous self that grounds its own moral existence, then we will struggle to identify where, in Paul’s anthropology, the believer ends and Christ begins. Rather, in Gal 4:1–11, when Christ’s spirit enters the heart, it becomes part of the human makeup and people live no longer as slaves to cosmic powers. Instead, they are transformed into new beings, a new form of selfhood in which Christ’s spirit and the person, together, constitute the Christ-subject.

⁹¹ This contrasts with a number of transformation descriptions in ancient Jewish writings, which I discuss in ch. 6. For the language of “defective” moral organs, see Newsom, “Models of the Moral Self,” 9–10, 19–20.

⁹² As noted above, Paul’s language in Galatians often shifts between singular and plural pronouns (e.g. 4:1–7), but if one reads Paul through the lenses of relational selfhood, then the sharp distinctions between the individual and a community are replaced by a self that is at every point established and determined by intersubjective relationships. See Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 29–105, 151–75.

1.4. Galatians 4:19

Galatians 4:19 qualifies as transformation discourse according to my first criterion.

Paul's use of the term μορφόω requires that we consider the statement(s) in which it lies. At first blush, Christ being "formed in you (ὕμῃν)" does not necessarily convey a fundamental human change.⁹³ Yet, the following analysis shows that the description fits well with other references to human transformation in Galatians.

1.4.1 Overview of Pericope

This transformation reference occurs in a context in which Paul discusses his relationship with the Galatians. He opens the pericope with a request: "Become as I am, because I have become as you are, brothers and sisters" (v. 12a). This entreaty calls the Galatians to follow his example of dying to life under the law and living instead according to faith.⁹⁴ In 4:13–15, he recalls their warm reception of him in his bodily weakness, and in v. 16, he asks if he has become their enemy by speaking the truth. In vv. 17–18, Paul criticizes the opponents' zeal for the Galatians, and he contrasts it with his own zeal for the community. Here, Paul seems to play on the double sense of the verb ζηλόω. He asserts that his opponents "zealously court" (ζηλόω) the Galatians and "not in a good way."⁹⁵ They aim to shut the Galatians out, which has the effect of making them jealous of (ζηλόω) of the opponents (v. 17b), that is, jealous of their supposed

⁹³ This is the only occurrence of μορφόω in the NT, and it does not appear in the Septuagint.

⁹⁴ In this statement, Paul writes as a "natural Jew" who became like the Galatian "sinners from among the Gentiles" (2:16) by dying to the law (2:19). In this imperative, therefore, he urges the Galatians to become as he is at the time of writing, that is, as one not living under the law, since he fears that they are indeed returning to the sphere of law (4:11), which brings about slavery to the "elements of the cosmos" (4:3, 9). See Adams, "Israel of God," 288–90; Boyarin, *Radical Jew*, 155.

⁹⁵ This paraphrase of ζηλοῦσιν ὑμας οὐ καλῶς comes from de Boer, *Galatians*, 282.

inclusion in God's people by means of circumcision.⁹⁶ In v. 18, however, Paul argues that it is a good thing to be the object of zeal for good purposes (ζηλοῦσθαι ἐν καλῷ), which tacitly suggests that Paul has appropriate concern for them. Paul's "zeal" emerges from proper motives, coheres with his gospel (v. 13), and has their best interests at heart (cf. 2 Cor 11:2).⁹⁷ This progression leads to the statement under consideration.

In 4:19 Paul writes, "My children, for whom I suffer birth pains (ὠδίνω) again until Christ is formed (μορφωθῇ Χριστὸς) among you."⁹⁸ In the first half of v. 19, "He addresses the Galatians...as children while strikingly portraying himself as a pregnant woman and mother-to-be," but in the second half, "the Galatian congregation (or the individual members thereof) are likened to a woman in whom Christ is to be conceived."⁹⁹ Paul sandwiches this shifting metaphor between references to his absence from the Galatians.

1.4.2 Transformation in Galatians 4:19: Necessity, Categories, and Factors

Necessity for Change

In 3:23–4:7, Paul writes that the Galatians have undergone transformation that involves their liberation from being "under sin" and subordinated to the law's tutorship to freedom from enslavement to the elements of the world and redemption from the law. As a result, they became sons and daughters, as well as heirs. Yet Paul writes that he is *again* (πάλιν) in labor pains. Echoing his expressed fear of having labored in vain in 4:11, he worries that the Galatians are

⁹⁶ Paul's mention of the opponents' desire to shut the Galatians out (ἐκκλείω) here probably refers their desire for them to adopt circumcision as a means of being part of the people of God (1:7; 6:12). In Paul's view, however, those who adopt circumcision, and law practices more broadly, in this context would actually "cut themselves off" from Christ (5:1–6). See de Boer, *Galatians*, 282–83.

⁹⁷ de Boer, *Galatians*, 283–84.

⁹⁸ I read v. 19 as the conclusion to v. 18, not the beginning of a new sentence (as indicated by δέ to begin v. 20). See, Matera, *Galatians*, 161.

⁹⁹ de Boer, *Galatians*, 284. Although deBoer reads τέκνα μου as an expression of tenderness, I (with Matera, *Galatians*, 161) understand it as a term that reflects Paul's founding of the Galatian church.

returning again (ἐπιστρέφετε πάλιν) to their former way of life (4:9). Because of this perceived backsliding, Paul has to suffer on their behalf, as he had before (4:13–17), so that they can return to the transformative experience of Christ’s spirit.¹⁰⁰

Galatians 4:19 also mirrors Paul’s previous self-presentation. Despite the ambiguity of the verb μορφόω in this context, the locative use of ἐν suggests that Christ is to be “formed” *among* them. Similarly Paul writes in Gal 2:19, “Christ lives in me” (ἐν ἐμοί), and the Galatians share this experience of Christ residing in them (4:6).¹⁰¹ Taken together, Paul envisages a parallel set of experiences in which Christ enters into human beings and resides there, and he complains that he has to struggle again for this experience to be repeated for the Galatians. Thus, because they have turned back, Paul once again has to speak the truth to them (4:16) and struggle for them, so that they will return to the way of life that they embodied after they received Christ. In sum, they have turned away from the experience that Paul describes as having Christ living within him (2:20) and that they had experienced when the Christ’s spirit entered their hearts (4:6). Paul suffers birth pangs anew so that Christ might again be “formed” in them.

Categories of Change

To this point in Galatians, Paul describes the same changes occurring in himself (2:19–20) and in the Galatians (3:27; 4:6). Gal 4:19 is thus best understood in light of what precedes it.

¹⁰⁰ See Martyn, *Galatians*, 431; Matera, *Galatians*, 162; de Boer, *Galatians*, 284. Cf. John Thomas Koenig, “The Motif of Transformation in the Pauline Epistles: A History-of-Religions/Exegetical Study” (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary of New York, 1970), 114. Moreover, Paul’s descriptions of the Galatians here echoes the danger he describes in his earlier self-presentation, in which he states that he cannot again rebuild (εἰ...ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ) that which he has already destroyed, which would prove him a transgressor (2:18).

¹⁰¹ Martyn (*Galatians*) goes so far as to say that it is fitting “to see here only the image of Christ becoming the real *ego* of the Galatian communities, in the sense that he will live in them as he already lives in Paul (2:20). What will make the Galatians viable for life apart from Paul’s presence among them (4:18, 20) is the formation of Christ in their communities” (424, 430). See also Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 115, 117; Cf. Eliezer Gonzalez, “Paul’s Use of Metamorphosis in Its Graeco-Roman and Jewish Contexts,” *DavarLogos* 13 (2014): 74.

In this case, the reference to Christ being “formed in” the Galatians fits within the same category of the previous examples of human change in the letter. Specifically, Paul uses metaphors of pregnancy and childbirth to state that he *again* suffers birth pangs until they once more share in the foundational experience of Christ’s presence. Although Paul describes this change with varied metaphors, including co-crucifixion, status, and childbirth, these references point readers to the same phenomenon of *existential-moral* transformation.

Factors in Change

Besides the Galatians, Paul mentions two figures in Gal 4:19. The first is Paul himself. Throughout the epistle, he emphasizes the validity of his calling as an apostle (1:1–2, 13–24), his gospel (1:6–12; 2:2, 5, 7; 3:1; cf. 3:8), and his role in establishing the Galatian communities (1:2; 3:1–5; 4:12–16). He also presents himself as an example for the Galatians (2:18–20; 6:14). In the present context, he especially focuses on his founding of their church and the strength of their past relationship with him (4:12–16). In 4:19, however, Paul references his establishment of the community and his ongoing struggles for them with the metaphor of childbearing.

Paul seldom uses the verb ὠδίνω or the noun ὠδίν.¹⁰² As scholars often note, when ὠδίνω is transitive, it conveys both the pains of labor and the “product” of labor (i.e. a child). In this case, Paul refers specifically to his pains in “giving birth” to the Galatian church.¹⁰³ As argued above, the use of πάλιν communicates that Paul has already experienced these pains before and,

¹⁰² His only other use of the verb ὠδίνω is in Gal 4:37, within a quotation of Isa 54:1 (the only other occurrence in the NT is in Rev 12:2). He uses the noun ὠδίν in 1 Thess 5:3, with reference to the suddenness with which the destruction of the day of the Lord will come (for other uses, see Mark 13:8; Matt 24:8; Acts 2:24). Scholars frequently read Gal 4:19 alongside 1 Thess 5:3 and other NT texts that use the metaphor of birth pangs in apocalyptic contexts and interpret Paul’s statement here as one with apocalyptic overtones—i.e. to communicate that he is “laboring” to bring the Galatians from a former age to a new age. See, e.g., the discussion in Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 29–40. Although such a reading is possible (see Gal 1:4), I am not persuaded that the birth metaphor functions as an apocalyptic motif in Gal 4:19, since such themes are largely absent from the immediate context of 4:12–19.

¹⁰³ See, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 424, 26–31.

due to the potential of Galatian backsliding, he must endure them again. Although his chosen metaphor is hyperbolic—and undoubtedly a source of irritation for every mother who has read it—it should be taken seriously. Not only does Paul express pain, but he positions himself as the one who brought forth the Galatians’ experience of having Christ formed in them, which, as shown below, is an experience of transformation. Thus, Paul portrays himself as an indispensable factor in the Galatian experience of change.¹⁰⁴ Galatians 4:19 therefore includes a social-anthropological dimension of change: Paul is a human mediator of existential-moral transformation.

The second figure is Christ who is formed in the Galatians. Inconsistently, Paul endures labor pains, but Christ is formed within the Galatian community, as if within a womb.¹⁰⁵ Together, the word *πάλιν* and the locative of *ἐν* in *ἐν ὑμῖν* suggests that Christ being formed among them repeats the Galatians’ first experience of Christ’s spirit, particularly when God sent the spirit into their hearts (3:27; 4:6). That is, Paul is concerned that the community needs to be transformed once again. Here, he does not portray that change as punctiliar but as a process akin to the process of a baby being formed in a womb. Regardless, as with the previous references to transformation, Christ is the primary catalyst for change.

1.4.3 Transformation & Selfhood in Galatians 4:19

As with Gal 3:27 and 4:6, Paul makes reference to change among the Galatians in 4:19. He refers not to a transformation of the individual person, but to the community. Within the literary world of the epistle, Paul’s language again blurs the lines between individual subjectivity—which is nonetheless constituted by by networks of social of social and cosmic

¹⁰⁴ Moreover, in light of Gal 4:17–18 and his reference to them with the noun *τέκνον* (v. 19), Paul tacitly presents himself as their *true* parent, over and against his opponents.

¹⁰⁵ Matera, *Galatians*, 162.

relationships—and corporate identity. Moreover, Christ acts as the primary principle of change, but Christ’s being formed within them envisages some sense of dual personhood—in this case between the “corporate person” and Christ—with ambiguous notions of agency. What is more, Paul portrays himself as an essential agent and mediator of change. These characteristics strengthen the social dimensions of the existential-moral change in Gal 4:19 and indicate that Christ-subjectivity is not easily reducible to the terms “individual” and “corporate.”¹⁰⁶ Rather, Paul can apply this figuration of subjectivity to an individual or a group, and it does not consist of sharp boundaries between an individual and other individuals, or between individuals and cosmic powers.

By alluding to the transformations described in Gal 3:27 and 4:6 (cf. 3:1–5), Paul grounds his metaphor in an experience that he and his audience both have had. Furthermore, clothing oneself with Christ and having Christ’s spirit enter into one’s heart are *embodied* experiences. Thus, Christ’s being formed in the Galatians by Paul’s mediation heightens the relationality, corporeality, and materiality involved in this vision of selfhood.¹⁰⁷

1.5. Galatians 5:24

Galatians 5:22–26 includes transformation discourse according to my second criterion. In v. 24, Paul writes, “Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its (lit. “the”) passions and desires.” Although different from the claim that “I died,” Paul refers to a death by crucifixion that echoes 2:18–20. Here, however, he references the crucifixion of the flesh, which, as argued below, conveys the death of a significant aspect of the moral self.

¹⁰⁶ This blurring of distinctions between individual and the corporate coheres closely with Paul’s use of the term *σῶμα* in 1 Corinthians. See Johnson, “The Body in Question.”

¹⁰⁷ This is the “real” nature of the experience of the human union with Christ that Albert Schweitzer recognized and for which Sanders had no satisfactory category. See Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977), 522–23.

1.5.1 Overview of Pericope

Galatians 5:22–26 concludes a larger pericope that begins at v. 16.¹⁰⁸ This passage has three main sections. In the first (v. 16), Paul gives a thesis-like imperative to walk in the spirit and writes that, in doing so, the Galatians will not gratify the desires of the flesh. In this section, Paul explains why this is so: the flesh and the spirit have opposing desires (v. 17). Moreover, Paul again invokes the law. Just as Christ’s act redeems humanity from the law in 4:5, Paul here states that those who are led by the spirit are no longer under the law.¹⁰⁹ Rather, humans who live according to the spirit produce virtues, which Paul metaphorically lists as fruits. Those who live according to the flesh, however, produce vices. After expressing this flesh/vice, spirit/virtue binary, Paul states baldly, “And those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its desires and passions.” In vv. 25–26, he closes the pericope with a return to the theme of living and walking by the spirit (see v. 16).

1.5.2 Transformation in Galatians 5:24: Necessity, Categories, and Factors

Necessity of Change

In this slim bit of text, the need for change is found in what the change accomplishes. The subject of the verb σταυρώω is “those who are of Christ” (οἱ...τοῦ Χριστοῦ).¹¹⁰ This being “of

¹⁰⁸ At v. 16, Paul introduces a flesh/spirit binary that continues through vv. 25–26, in which he essentially restates v. 16. These thematic statements form an *inclusio*, which makes the passage a neatly self-contained unit.

¹⁰⁹ With 3:23–29 in mind, those whom the spirit leads are no longer subject to the law’s tutorship, which was needed because of sin.

¹¹⁰ Although translating τοῦ Χριστοῦ as a genitive of possession, as numerous English translations do (e.g. NRSV, NASB, NKJV, CEB, ESV), is a valid way to render the phrase, my literal translation “of Christ” aims to maintain the ambiguity of the Greek genitive. As my work on other passages from Galatians suggests, I understand many of Paul’s references to Christ in the epistle to denote not only a (resurrected) person, but also the chief power within in a larger sphere of moral existence. Thus, to be “of Christ,” is to be “of” that sphere of power, which, to be sure, signifies a type of “belonging,” but not necessarily belonging in the strict sense of possession. Cf. a similar reading in

Christ” closely resembles the genitive of Χριστός in 3:29. There, the text moves from the change that occurs at baptism “into Christ” (εἰς Χριστόν) and putting on Christ (3:27) to the consequence of change: those who are “of Christ” are thereby seeds of Abraham and heirs (v. 29). The phrase “of Christ” conveys a subjectivity that results from a fundamental transformation, a subjectivity in which a person is “of” the sphere of Christ and gains the benefits that accompany that subject position (i.e. “heirs according to the promise” in 3:29). Similarly, in 5:24, those who are of Christ have undergone a change that Paul describes as the crucifixion of the flesh with its passions and desires.¹¹¹ Although he does not explicate it fully, the crucifixion of the flesh is part of the transformative process by which one inhabits a new mode selfhood that is determined by the sphere of Christ.

Also significant is that this change involves not just the death of the flesh, but *crucifixion*. The general focus of this pericope is not on transformation, but on the moral imperative to walk by the spirit and not the flesh, since it has been crucified.¹¹² The term σὰρξ has a fairly broad semantic range in Galatians.¹¹³ Here, Paul depicts σὰρξ as the aspect of the human—a symbolic moral organ—from which sinful desires originate (5:16–17, 19, 24) and which opposes the spirit

Matera, *Galatians*: “The phrase ‘those who belong to Christ’...means more than possession. It indicates participation in the life of Christ” (204).

¹¹¹ In observing this linguistic connection, Martyn (*Galatians*) claims, “Paul’s expression ‘those who belong to Christ’ indicates that it was in their baptism that the Galatians crucified the flesh” (501). See also de Boer, *Galatians*, 367.

¹¹² This crucifixion of the flesh does not seem to preclude a person from again “resurrecting it” and walking according to it. Elsewhere, Paul hints at the possibility of returning to a pre-transformed state (see, e.g. 4:8–11, 19).

¹¹³ The word σὰρξ appears 18x in Galatians. In some places within the letter, it refers to humanity in distinction from the divine (1:16; 3:3) or to the human body or human existence (2:20; 4:13–14 cf. the wordplay in 6:12–13; see also Phil 1:22, 24). Similarly, in 2:16, Paul uses πᾶσα σὰρξ to mean all people, regardless of whether one is a Jew or Gentile. In ch. 4, Paul uses the term to distinguish between the child born according to the flesh and the child born according to the promise (4:23, 29), which places the realm of flesh in opposition to the sphere of the inheritance of the promises made to Abraham (cf. 3:14, 16–18; 4:23–28). In the passage at hand and elsewhere, Paul opposes flesh with the Spirit and/or depicts the flesh as a source of human sinful desires (3:3; 5:13, 16–17, 19, 24; 6:8).

(e.g. 5:16).¹¹⁴ It is therefore necessary for that moral organ to be put to death so that the believer can produce the fruits of the spirit.

Categories of Change

Paul's bracketing of the pericope with moral exhortations (vv. 16, 25–26), his emphasis on morality with vice and virtue lists, and his use of σάρξ as a moral organ give this pericope a moral frame. This suggests that the crucifixion of the flesh in v. 24 involves *moral transformation*. Yet, as this study has found, moral change in Galatians consistently has existential dimensions. Verse 25 solidifies that that is also the case for the passage at hand. Paul writes, “If we live (ζάω) by the spirit, let us also walk (στοιχέω) by the spirit.” As argued above (1.1.2), the verb ζάω in this epistle expresses both existential “life” and a moral “way of living.” Earlier in Galatians, Paul uses the noun στοιχέιον to refer to the cosmic powers that enslave people and determine their moral existence (4:3, 9).¹¹⁵ With the verb στοιχέω in 5:25, he expresses a mode of moral conduct that is governed by spirit, rather than the cosmic elements that formerly enslaved his audience (see also 6:16).¹¹⁶ One could thus paraphrase 5:25, “If we have our moral existence by the spirit, then let the spirit also govern our moral conduct.”

This spirit-governed moral existence in 5:25 is possible because of the change that occurs in 5:24. That is, because the Galatians have already crucified (see the aorist of σταυρώω) the flesh—i.e. the source of sinful passions—and since their moral existence is grounded in the

¹¹⁴ For the term “moral organ” and discussion of the theme in Second Temple Jewish literature, see Miriam T. Brand, *Evil Within and Without: The Source of Sin and Its Nature as Portrayed in Second Temple Literature*; Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements 9 (Göttingen: Bandenhoeck & Ruprecht: 2013), 37–72.

¹¹⁵ See discussion in 1.3 above. See also de Boer, *Galatians*, 257–58. Cf. 6:16.

¹¹⁶ As Gerhard Delling (*TDNT*, s.v. στοιχέω) shows, the verb στοιχέω here conveys a sense of being “‘in harmony with’ the Spirit.” Yet, in Galatians, the spirit is a source of power, including power for moral agency (3:1–5; 4:6; 5:16–18, 22; cf. 6:8). My use of the phrase “governed by the spirit” aims to capture the sense of being in accordance/harmony with and the sense of empowerment that the spirit provides.

spirit, they can live morally under the spirit's governance. The coupling of the verbs ζάω and στοιχέω in v. 25, therefore, suggest a transformation that is not simply about morality, but that entails existential change. As elsewhere, I categorize the crucifixion of the flesh in 5:24 as *existential-moral* transformation, occurring in the past and determining a present state.¹¹⁷

Additionally, based on Gal 4:6, one should understand mentions of the spirit in Galatians as references to Christ's spirit.¹¹⁸ Inasmuch as believers have received Christ as a union of the spirit with their bodies (Gal 3:27; 4:6; cf. 3:1) and have crucified the moral organ of the flesh in order to walk by the spirit, this change is also somatic. The believer has experienced a change in her "moral equipment," which is, at the least, conceived of as a transformation of her moral existence by way of bodily changes.¹¹⁹

Factors in Change

The most evident factors in change in this passage are the flesh and the spirit. As elsewhere in the epistle, Paul envisages a transfer from one power (flesh) that governs moral existence to another (the spirit).¹²⁰ Moreover, Paul describes those who have crucified the flesh as those who are "of Christ" (οἱ... τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ]), which parallels the reference to the spirit in v. 25 and again reveals Paul's understanding of the spirit as Christ's spirit.

Significantly, Paul conceptualizes this change not merely as death, but as *crucifixion*.¹²¹ The crucifixion metaphor in 5:24 recalls Paul's co-crucifixion in 2:20 and indicates that, for Paul in this epistle, it is important both that the Galatians understand their transformation through death to a moral-existential power in relation to his, and that they should conform to the pattern

¹¹⁷ On the temporal dimensions of the change, see Martyn, *Galatians*, 501.

¹¹⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 3:15-17; Phil 1:19; Rom 8:9. See also Martyn, *Galatians*, 501.

¹¹⁹ For the term "moral equipment," see Newsom, "Models of the Moral Self," 15.

¹²⁰ As Matera (*Galatians*) rightly notes, the powers of flesh and spirit constitute "realms" or spheres in which humans participate (205, 208).

¹²¹ The verb σταυρόω occurs in only two other verses: in 3:1 with reference to Christ being portrayed as crucified and in 6:14, which is discussed below.

of Christ's death (cf. 6:14). Christ's own transformation at his crucifixion—his *becoming* a curse on the cross (3:13)—is, therefore, the grounding reality and the governing metaphor by which the Galatians are to understand their own experience of moral-existential transformation.¹²²

Yet, unlike Paul's co-crucifixion in 2:20, believers are the subjects of the action of crucifixion in 5:24.¹²³ At least in this statement, and fitting for the paraenetic context, Paul presumes a high degree of agency in the believer's putting to death the moral organ of the flesh. As shown in the passages discussed above, Paul presumes some degree of human agency, however minimal, in this epistle's transformation discourse. Yet here, perhaps due to the moral-exhortative nature of the pericope, he assumes a model of the moral self that obtains the requisite agency to put to death the very source of sinful desires.¹²⁴

1.5.3 Transformation & Selfhood in Galatians 5:24

In terms of selfhood, at least two points are worth noting. First, that Paul describes the change as a crucifixion *of the flesh* suggests that a person, left on its own, is led into the production of vices by a moral organ. Moreover, the moral organ of the flesh is partly constitutive of a larger sphere—the sphere of law, cosmic elements, and sin—that is opposed to the sphere of Christ's spirit. The crucifixion of the flesh therefore involves active killing of a bodily link to that sphere, and transition into being “of Christ” (v. 24), which expresses moral existence in the sphere of Christ's spirit (v. 25). In this portrayal, once again, the moral self is not autonomous, but is always subject to existential-moral powers.

¹²² As noted above, each of these crucifixions assumes a resurrection to new existence (for Paul, life in faith) as well, even if the language of resurrection is largely absent in Galatians.

¹²³ This is contrary to Rom 6:6. See Martyn, *Galatians*, 500; Matera, *Galatians*, 211; de Boer, *Galatians*, 367.

¹²⁴ On the “context-dependent” nature of representations of the self, see Katherine P. Ewing, “The Illusion of Wholeness: Culture, Self, and the Experience of Inconsistency,” *Ethos* 18 (1990). Though, see as well the criticisms of Ewing's broader claims in Quinn, “The Self.”

Although the moral self in Gal 5:24 is not independent with respect to power spheres, Paul here presumes a significant degree of moral agency. The human is the subject of the action of crucifixion. Of significance as well is that the human's act of crucifying a source of sin occurs when one receives Christ's spirit or "puts on Christ" (3:27).¹²⁵ The presumed model of the moral self at work in Gal 5:24 is not one that experiences a transformation of moral agency, but one that naturally possesses the agency to participate in the process of transformation, even if that agency is ultimately grounded in Christ's crucifixion. This moral self does not, however, seem to possess the power to produce virtue or "spiritual fruits" apart from Christ's spirit. Rather, becoming "of Christ" puts to death (if not permanently) the flesh's production of sinful desires and creates new moral capacity to live a virtuous life. The change that occurs in the crucifixion of the flesh produces new moral selfhood.

1.6. Galatians 6:14–15

This pericope qualifies as transformation discourse according to both of my criteria. In 6:15, Paul uses the term "new creation," which is best understood as an anthropological term, even if it has cosmological dimensions as well.¹²⁶ Thus, the term *καὶνὴ κτίσις* is an instance of explicit transformation terminology. In v. 14, within the "triple crucifixion," Paul again refers to the death of the self. Thus, this verse also qualifies according to my second criterion.

¹²⁵ See Martyn, *Galatians*, 501; de Boer, *Galatians*, 367.

¹²⁶ See T. Ryan Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters: A Study of the Historical and Social Setting of a Pauline Concept*, WUNT 272 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

1.6.1 Overview of Pericope

Galatians 6:14–15 is within a pericope that spans 6:11–16.¹²⁷ In vv. 11–13, Paul criticizes his opponents for their hypocrisy in compelling the gentile Galatians to be circumcised while not keeping the law themselves, and he exposes what he views as their motives—that they want only to boast in the Galatians’ “flesh.” In vv. 14–15, Paul presents himself as an example by contrasting his own perspective with that of the opponents.¹²⁸ In the “triple crucifixion” verse, Paul writes, “May I never boast in anything except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world” (v. 14).¹²⁹ In v. 15, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision “is anything” (οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἄκροβυστία), but “a new creation” (καινὴ κτίσις).¹³⁰ The pericope ends with an exhortation for those who “follow this rule” (τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν).

1.6.2 Transformation in Galatians 6:14–15: Necessity, Categories, and Factors

Necessity of Change

The crucifixion of Paul and the world to one another through the cross of Christ (v. 14) describes a transformation that results in “new creation” (v. 15).¹³¹ Put simply, transformation by crucifixion of-and-to the world is necessary for the establishment of this new creation. The explanatory γάρ at v. 15a introduces the *reason* for the change that produces new creation,

¹²⁷ In v. 11, Paul begins the closing of his letter, and in v. 17, he transitions away from the remarks that follow v. 17 into the letter’s closing remark (v. 18).

¹²⁸ The use of Ἐμοὶ δέ signals Paul’s contrast of himself with his opponents. See Jackson, *New Creation*, 88.

¹²⁹ Cf. Gal 2:18–20; 6:24.

¹³⁰ Cf. 1 Cor 7:19; 2 Cor 5:17.

¹³¹ In my reading, vv. 14–16 are climactic for the arguments of Galatians, and the rule (κανὼν) that Paul references in v. 16 is that human boasting is illegitimate if it is not grounded in the cross of Christ (cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 563–64). Yet he explains that it is “through” the cross (δι’ οὗ) that the crucifixion of the world to Paul and vice versa occurs. This dual crucifixion can accomplish that which circumcision cannot, namely, the production of “a new creation.” Cf. John W. Yates, *The Spirit and Creation in Paul*, WUNT 2.251 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 121.

namely, that the initiatory rite of circumcision is not efficacious. Here, Paul contrasts one transformation with another: in a previous epoch, the transformation of the flesh through circumcision made a person part of the people of God; now, transformation that is understood as crucifixion and resurrection is required for a new creation.¹³² This claim only takes one so far without further explication of the terms “world” and “new creation.”

The word κόσμος only appears once elsewhere in Galatians, but the other occurrence is revealing. In 4:3, Paul writes that believers were formerly “enslaved by the elements of the world.” There, Paul refers to the human condition of being under sin and the law’s tutorship until the arrival of the time in which God freed them through the work of Christ. The “world” is thus the sphere in which humans are enslaved to sin, a sphere that is associated with the law and related practices, especially circumcision (Paul’s concern in 6:12–13).¹³³ To be crucified to the world and to have the world crucified to him suggests, paradoxically, that the sphere of sin and Law and Paul have died to one another.¹³⁴

Particularly important for my purposes as well is that a “world” can refer to a conceptual structure that humans produce and in which we find meaning. I submit that Paul’s use of the term κόσμος has such an inflection here.¹³⁵ It is within the world as a meaning-making structure that circumcision and uncircumcision find their significance. Yet, once that world and Paul have died to one another, Paul lives as a new person within a new structure of meaning, an anthropological-cosmological reality that he refers to as “new creation.”

¹³² Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 319–20.

¹³³ Paul’s use of the verb στοιχέω in 6:16 (cf. 5:25) strengthens the linguistic and thematic relationship to 4:3. Cf. Edward Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul’s Cosmological Language*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 221–30; Jackson, *New Creation*, 92–96.

¹³⁴ For a similar reading, see Adams, *Constructing the World*, 228–30.

¹³⁵ Here, Paul’s construal of “the world” is analogous to that found in James (esp. 4:4). In James, as Luke Timothy Johnson (*Brother of Jesus, Friend of God: Studies in the Letter of James* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 202–20) writes, the world “can be regarded as a system of meaning and values which excludes God from consideration and is hostile to God’s claim” (216).

In Galatians 6:15, the term *καὶνὴ κτίσις* is best understood as the new reality that results from Christ's faithful death (see *ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ κυρίου* in v. 14), a reality in which humans are "incorporated" into Christ and have their relationship with God made right.¹³⁶ This is the same reality or sphere that Paul references in Gal 3:28, in which distinctions of ethnicity, status, and gender are not primary, determinative structures of moral existence.¹³⁷ Similarly, in 6:15, circumcision, or lack thereof, does not decide who participates in this new reality, and the Galatians' circumcision is not something about which the opponents can rightly boast.¹³⁸ Rather, Paul contrasts the opponents' boasting about matters of the flesh (*σάρξ*) with his own unwillingness to boast about anything except "the cross of Christ," which refers to boasts about what *Christ* achieved in his crucifixion.¹³⁹ Implicitly, such boasting is only possible for those who are "in Christ" after their experiences of change through death and resurrection.¹⁴⁰ The transformation that Paul describes here is grounded in Christ's crucifixion and is the necessary means for participation in the sphere of Christ.

¹³⁶ Matera, *Galatians*, 231–32. For discussion of "new creation" as a new reality in which believers exist, see Jackson, *New Creation*, 103–14; cf. Yates, *Spirit and Creation*, 120–21; Martyn, *Galatians*, 570–74, esp. pp. 573–74. This reality has both anthropological and cosmological dimensions (Jackson, *New Creation*, esp. pp. 83–114).

¹³⁷ See Matera, *Galatians*, 226, 231–32.

¹³⁸ Martyn (*Galatians*) argues that Paul understands not simply that circumcision is "*not necessary* to their redemption" but that, through this crucifixion, he understands himself as separated "totally from the whole of the religious *cosmos*, of which a fundamental element was the pair of opposites called circumcision and uncircumcision, the Law/the Not-law" (565, emphasis original). Martyn additionally claims that this crucifixion marks the "loss of the world of religious differentiation" (571). Given that Martyn subsequently recognizes that Paul "new pairs of oppositions" that tacitly entail new religious distinctions, it would be more appropriate to say that Paul express the loss of *a* world of religious differentiation. With respect to 6:16, Paul understands as crucified—and himself as crucified to—the "world" in which circumcision and uncircumcision gain their original currency and their validity.

¹³⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, 317–19; Martyn, *Galatians*, 563–64.

¹⁴⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, 318–19.

Categories of Change

Important for categorizing this transformation is recognizing that the term “new creation” is at once an anthropological and cosmological reality. As grounded in Christ’s crucifixion, the death of Paul to the *cosmos* and vice versa portrays the death both of the human and the world. It is erroneous, however, to distinguish too strongly between the anthropological and the cosmological in this context. As T. Ryan Jackson correctly observes, the conjoining of anthropology and cosmology “is perfectly resonant with ancient cosmologies.”¹⁴¹ Like others in antiquity, Paul understands the human as part of the larger order of the *cosmos*.¹⁴²

Here, however, Paul describes the loss of one such order and the establishment of a new one in a way that echoes 2:19–20. He and the “world” of circumcision and uncircumcision have died to one another. As a result of Paul’s crucifixion and the tacit resurrection that follows, the “world” of “new creation” is possible.¹⁴³ As argued above, death-of-and-to the *cosmos* in 6:14 entails death-of-and-to the sphere in which humanity is enslaved to the “elements of the world” (4:3). This study has identified other of Paul’s references to such a “transfer” from there sphere of law and of sin and incorporation into the sphere of Christ as *existential-moral transformation*. Here as well, the same category is applicable, especially given the echo of 2:18–20, in which Paul died to the law through crucifixion and was raised to new life oriented toward God (2:19) on the basis of Christ-faith.

¹⁴¹ Jackson, *New Creation*, 113 (see also p. 96); Adams, *Constructing the World*, 66–67; See also the classic description in Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 25–26.

¹⁴² See Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 85–105.

¹⁴³ For discussion of resurrection as an assumed/implied theme in Galatians, see 1.1.1 above.

Factors in Change

In this three-part crucifixion, Christ's crucifixion is the ground of the Paul's boasting and the crucifixion of himself and the world to one another. In Galatians, the cross is a cause of offense or stumbling (σκάνδαλον) and is a reason for which some believers are persecuted (5:11; 6:14).¹⁴⁴ Paul's opponents, however, seek to avoid persecution by compelling the Galatians to be circumcised, which Paul understands as an opportunity for the opponents to boast in the flesh (6:13). He thus juxtaposes flesh/circumcision with Christ's crucifixion, and he expresses confidence in the latter as the means to humanity's moral-existential *telos*—new creation.

With Christ's crucifixion as the ground of moral-existential change, Paul then notes the dual crucifixions of the *cosmos* and himself. Christ's crucifixion is the ground of this dual crucifixion in that Paul and the *cosmos* share in Christ's death by reenacting it.¹⁴⁵ Crucifixion is, therefore, the key factor in change because it provides the basis for human transformation and the logic by which one is to understand that transformation and the reality of "new creation" that results from it.

Additionally, it is significant that Paul ties together the fate of believers and the fate of the cosmos. In one sense, as scholars often observe, the crucifixion of the cosmos parallels Paul's earlier claim that Christ "delivered us from present evil age" (1:14). That world, though still present, is dead to believers, and believers are dead to it. According to Paul's particular dualism, believers now exist in a different age or world. As mentioned above, for those who live in "new creation," it is experienced as at once cosmological and anthropological.

¹⁴⁴ A desire to avoid persecution may indeed have been the key reason that they some were trying to compel the Galatians to be circumcised. See Boyarin, *Radical Jew*, 115–16.

¹⁴⁵ This is similar to the way in which humans respond to Christ-faith with their own belief in Gal 2:16.

1.6.3 Transformation & Selfhood in Galatians 6:14–15

As argued above, the term “new creation” refers to the result of cosmological-anthropological transformation. From the participation of the human and the *cosmos* in Christ’s crucifixion emerges a new self that is inseparably linked to a new “world.” As Peter Berger states in his classic account, “The cosmos posited by religion...both transcends and includes man. The sacred cosmos is confronted by man as an immensely powerful reality other than himself. Yet this reality addresses itself to him and locates his life in an ultimately meaningful order.”¹⁴⁶ Similarly, for Paul, “new creation” is shorthand for a new moral self-in-the world.

This linking of the cosmos with the self and their mutual transformations via crucifixion cohere with this study’s argument that, in Galatians, a change in existential and meaning-making structures involve changes to selfhood. As a meaning-making structure, the new creation not only gives new meaning to the one’s present existence, but Paul also aims to give new meaning to his audiences previous existence. Only from the vantage point of the new creation can Paul, as a Jewish thinker, conceive of circumcision as having its greatest significance in a bygone era—to a world that is now dead—and as *adiaphora* for his present mode of existence. From this new vantage point, Paul aims to persuade the Galatians that practices and marks like circumcision do not function for them as structures of moral selfhood. Instead, by participating in Christ’s crucifixion, the world is made new, and, as a consequence, that crucifixion is the ground and determinative structure for human moral selfhood.

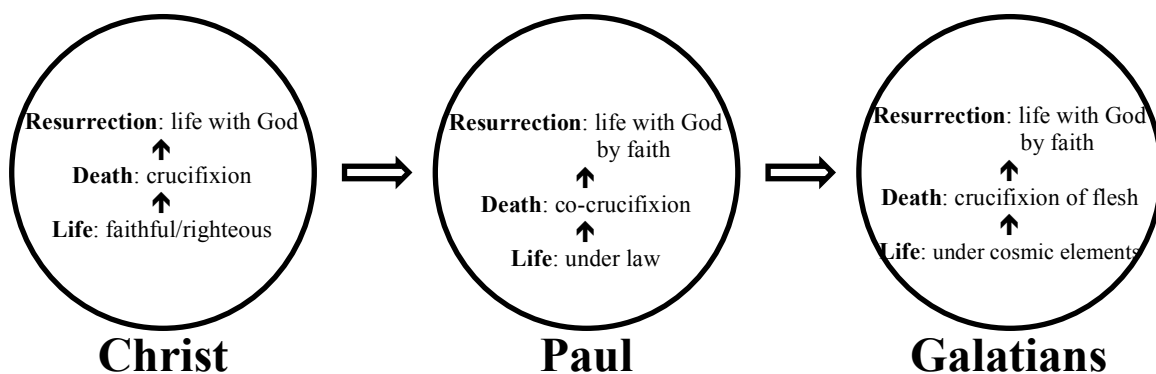
1.7 Conclusion: Transformation & Selfhood in Galatians

The fundamental challenge for Paul is that the Galatians are turning away from his gospel of Christ-faith to a distorted gospel (1:6–9). According to him, each gospel points to a sphere

¹⁴⁶ Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 26.

with governing powers, and these powers give shape to human selfhood. Since both Paul and the Galatians have transitioned from one sphere of determinative structures to another, they are in need of “alternative figurations of the self” that fit with the new horizons of Christ-faith.¹⁴⁷

To accomplish this, Paul rhetorically presents himself as a model for this transformation and the alternative subjectivity that results from it. In 2:18–20, he writes that he has died to the law through crucifixion with Christ and, tacitly, has been resurrected (2:18–19). Christ now empowers his new moral existence (2:20). In their baptism, according to Paul, the Galatians were also transformed by their reception of Christ’s Spirit (3:27–28; 4:6). They too have “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (5:24). As a result, the spirit of Christ grounds and governs their moral existence (5:16–26, esp. v. 25). The pattern of Christ’s life, death by crucifixion, and resurrection (everywhere implied) determines the logic of Paul’s own example and his articulation of the Galatians’ experience of change.



According to Paul, then, the Galatians have already been transformed. Specifically, they have undergone existential-moral transformation. His presentation of an alternative subjectivity is thus a necessary first step in the Galatian’s realization of the selfhood into which they have

¹⁴⁷ I borrow the phrase “alternative figurations of the self” from Braidott, *Metamorphoses*, 112.

been baptized. As Valentasis writes of subjectivity in general and applies to the Galatians' realization of Christ-subjectivity,

[A]s the person begins to live into the new understanding of self, society, and the world, that is, as the person begins to 'perform' that new subjectivity, the new person begins actually to come to life, to exist. The performances (intellectual, ritual, social, political, or of any nature) call that subjectivity into being, define its social dimension, and construct the symbolic universe that will legitimize and explain the new being.¹⁴⁸

The Galatians, however, are in danger of "performing" practices that are determinative of the selfhood into which they were not baptized—one that does not give (moral-existential) life (3:21).¹⁴⁹ If they abandon Paul's Gospel and turn to law-works, they will unwittingly return to slavery to cosmic elements and seemingly undo their foundational transformation (see 5:1).¹⁵⁰ They risk slipping away from their transformed existence, which is why Paul is *again* laboring until Christ is formed in them (4:19). Paul's burden, therefore, is to persuade the Galatians that through the experience of receiving Christ's spirit, they have been transformed from subjects of cosmic elements to Christ-subjects. They are now subjects of the new creation (6:15).

¹⁴⁸ Valentasis, "Ascetic Subjectivities," 223; cf. Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 204–205.

¹⁴⁹ The risk in performing such practices as circumcision, according to Paul, is that the Galatians risk making Christ of no benefit to them (5:2), cutting themselves off from Christ, and falling from grace (5:4).

¹⁵⁰ As Boyarin (*Radical Jew*) says with regard to Gal 3:1–5, "Paul is arguing here that the Galatians have partaken of exactly the same sort of transformative experience that Paul himself underwent, and now, in contrast to him, they wish to nullify it" (124).

2 Human Transformation in Philippians

From Paul's letter to the Philippians, I examine 3:10 and 3:21. With their use of explicit transformation terminology—σύμμορφίζω and μετασχηματίζω respectively—these verses qualify as transformation discourse according to my first criterion. They appear within the same section of Philippians and are conceptually related. I therefore analyze them individually and consider their relationship to one another in this section's conclusion.

2.1 Philippians 3:10–11

In Phil 3:10–11, Paul writes that he considers all things lost “in order to know [Christ] and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, while being conformed (σύμμορφιζόμενος) to his death,” so that he “might attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Paul's use of σύμμορφίζω to denote being “conformed” to Christ's death warrants attention.

2.1.1 Overview of Pericope

Paul uses the verb σύμμορφίζω in a pericope that spans 3:7–11 and contains two subsections.¹⁵¹ The first subsection is a single statement: “But whatever things were gains for me, I consider these things to be loss on account of Christ” (v. 7; cf. 1:21). As Robert Tannehill notes, Paul describes a “break” with “the realities of the old life,” which Paul “described by a number of different but related terms: flesh, righteousness from the law, the ‘whole world,’ and

¹⁵¹ The MSS evidence for the inclusion of ἀλλά as a textual marker is fairly well split. But Paul's departure from detailing his former way of life (vv. 2–6, esp. vv. 4b–6.) to reflection on his present perspective, with its framework and goals, marks a shift into a new pericope at v. 7. Cf. Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, WBC (Nashville: Nelson, 2004), 135. Verse 12 shifts to a new pericope, in which Paul begins with a clarification that he has not “already received it or become perfect” (v. 12) and goes on to reflect on his recent efforts to accomplish the aims he established in vv. 7–11 (esp. vv. 8b–11).

that which is ‘mine’ (cf. 3:2–7).¹⁵² This theme of considering things to be loss in light of gaining Christ dominates the second subsection, which is also single sentence (vv. 8–11).¹⁵³ In it, Paul elaborates the claim of v. 7.¹⁵⁴ In v. 8a he establishes that he not only views his former gains in Judaism as loss, but that he considers “all things” (τά πάντα) to be loss on account of “the surpassing worth of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.”¹⁵⁵ In vv. 8b–11, Paul describes the purpose (ἵνα in v. 8b) for which he considers all to be loss.¹⁵⁶ There, he mentions transformation through conformity to Christ’s death. It is worth illustrating the passage’s structure in order to show the location of this reference within the pericope:

- I. Claim: Paul has counted gains in former life as loss on account of Christ (v. 7)
- II. Elaboration of Claim (vv. 8–11)
 - A. Paul reckons *all things* are lost on account of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ (v. 8a) ¹⁵⁷
 - B. Result of counting all as lost (vv. 8b–11).
 - 1. To gain and be found in Christ
 - 2. To know him (v. 10a)
 - a. the power of his resurrection (v. 10b)
 - b. and participation in his sufferings (v. 10c)
 - c. and being conformed to his death (v. 10 d)
 - d. if somehow I might attain the resurrection of the dead (v. 11)

As the outline suggests, vv. 10b–10c Paul “intends to explain what is meant by knowing Christ (γινῶναι αὐτόν) thorough the entire phrase (τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως...παθημάτων

¹⁵² Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 116.

¹⁵³ So Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 313.

¹⁵⁴ So Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians*, Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 152.

¹⁵⁵ See Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, BNTC (London: A&C, 1997), 207.

¹⁵⁶ In addition to the ἵνα clause in v. 8b, see the purposive τοῦ γινῶναι in v. 10a, which continues the purposive focus the he initiated in v. 8b. See Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118; Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 313; Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 208

¹⁵⁷ Note that Paul uses the perfect tense of ἡγήομαι in v. 7 to denote a change in perspective that he *has* made, but in v. 8 the present tense of ἡγήομαι indicates that Paul *continues* to count things as loss. See Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 116–17; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 136.

αὐτοῦ),” and “each expression draws attention to separate facets of knowing him.”¹⁵⁸ Moreover, the participial phrase συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ “qualifies all of the preceding words of v. 10.” Thus, “it is by participating in those sufferings (which he experiences in the course of his apostolic labours) *and* as strengthened to do so in the power of his resurrection that [Paul] is continually being conformed to Christ’s death.”¹⁵⁹ This understanding of συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ informs the following analysis

2.1.2 Transformation in Philippians 3:10: Necessity, Categories, and Factors

Necessity for Change

As the pericope’s structure indicates, being conformed to Christ’s death is part of the *purpose* for Paul’s reckoning all things as loss (3:8). Paul has made a decision to consider all as loss for the sake of the knowledge of Christ (3:8) and so that he might “be found in him” (εὕρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ). With others, I take the phrase “in Christ” to refer to Paul’s participation in Christ.¹⁶⁰ By “participation,” I mean that the human shares in, receives empowerment from, and partners with, the spirit of the resurrected Christ.¹⁶¹ Moreover, “the knowledge of Christ” in v. 8

¹⁵⁸ Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 402–403. With other scholars, O’Brien reads καὶ ἐν τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτον καὶ... (v. 10a) as exegetical (402; see also Fee, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 328), and he argues that τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ and κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ should be taken together as a single unit. This assumes that the original text did not include articles before κοινωνίαν or παθημάτων (see O’Brien, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 382), which places τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ and κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ under the governance of the article τὴν (403). See also Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 119–20; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 144.

¹⁵⁹ O’Brien (*Epistle to the Philippians*) argues against the majority view, which reads συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ as qualifying the meaning of παθημάτων αὐτοῦ only (407).

¹⁶⁰ See, e.g., Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118; cf. Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 52–53; Stowers, “‘Pauline Participation in Christ’?,” 354–64. For recent discussion and the state of the conversation on the meaning of “in Christ” in Paul’s letters, see Michael J. Thate editor, Kevin J. Vanhoozer editor, and Constantine R. Campbell editor, *“In Christ” in Paul*.

¹⁶¹ A number of scholars argue that Paul envisages a material form of participation, an argument that rests on Paul’s belief that πνεῦμα, including Christ’s πνεῦμα, is in some sense material. See, e.g., Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 21–25, 107, 123–36;

and “knowing him” in v. 10 suggest more than mental assent. This knowledge of Christ is a relational mode of *knowing* through encounter or involvement.¹⁶² Furthermore, the “power of his resurrection” and “sharing in his sufferings” amplify what Paul means by knowing Christ: they are the *means by which* Paul “knows” Christ relationally.¹⁶³ Similarly, his conformation to Christ’s death is “the mode or circumstance in which that knowledge is attained: Paul wants to know him ‘as his form is becoming like that of Christ in his death.’”¹⁶⁴ Thus, part of the underlying need for this past change (i.e. count all things as loss) is the need for the knowledge of Christ, which is gained through participation in his death and resurrection.¹⁶⁵ But what can we say about the need for Paul’s current transformation—being “conformed” to Christ’s death? Two points are in order.

First, the necessity of transformation through conformation to Christ is seen in the relational conception of selfhood that underlies Paul’s descriptions in 3:7–8.¹⁶⁶ In this view, the

Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); “Complete and Incomplete Transformation,” 124–29. See discussion in Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 86–120. Such claims necessarily arise from etic analyses: scholars observe that ancient thinkers (especially Stoics) affirmed the materiality of πνεῦμα, locate Paul among these thinkers, and read his letters with the assumption of a material spirit. Although this claim helps to solve some (distinctly modern) problems in Pauline studies, I am unconvinced that we can have confidence that Paul understood the spirit to be material. Since not all ancients held to a material view of Spirit (see Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 25–120) such an assumption would need to arise from an emic analysis of Paul’s epistles. I am not certain that Paul gives enough evidence for us to claim that he envisages a material πνεῦμα.

¹⁶² see BDAG, s.v. γινῶσις 2; Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 318;. In my reading, Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ is an objective genitive: Christ Jesus is the object of Paul’s knowledge. Cf. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 137, 143. Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 205–206; Fowl, *Philippians*, 153. As will become clearer in the arguments below, the *knowledge* of Christ “involves participation in Christ” (Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118).

¹⁶³ O’Brien, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 402–403. As Fee (*Letter to the Philippians*) states, “[K]nowing Christ is a two-sided reality, including both suffering and resurrection” (314).

¹⁶⁴ Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 215.

¹⁶⁵ Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 216; Fowl, *Philippians*, 155. Cf. Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 179.

¹⁶⁶ For an account of Paul’s relational understanding of the self, see Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 29–105.

person is determined by its relationship to the powers that govern it.¹⁶⁷ The self therefore needs a structuring framework; it cannot exist in a void. As in Gal 2:19–20, Paul here envisages his past transformation as a transfer from one set of structuring realities and incorporation into the sphere of Christ (see “Categories of Change” below).¹⁶⁸ This is because, in light of Christ, the law and its righteousness no longer provide a “profitable” framework for selfhood (3:2–8).

Second, conformation to Christ’s death is a means by which Paul would achieve his ultimate goal of attaining resurrection from the dead (v. 11). In Philippians, when he discusses his circumstances or present state, Paul frames them with death-resurrection schema (cf. Gal 2:19–20).¹⁶⁹ He interprets his hardships (1:12–26) not merely as suffering, but as participation in Christ’s suffering and death (3:10). Just as Christ’s suffering and death led to exaltation through resurrection (2:8–11), so too will Paul attain resurrection in the future if he is conformed to Christ’s death in the present.¹⁷⁰ Thus, present change is also needed for Paul to undergo future transformation (3:21).¹⁷¹

Categories of Change

Paul describes at least two types of transformation in this pericope. The first is epistemic change.¹⁷² Paul has undergone a change in perspective: what he formerly “regarded” (ἡγέομαι)

¹⁶⁷ Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 72.

¹⁶⁸ See Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 116.

¹⁶⁹ On this schema, see Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 43–86; cf. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 130–31.

¹⁷⁰ Strengthening his hope is that the present reality of Christ’s resurrection empowers his conformity to Christ’s death (3:10a).

¹⁷¹ The anticipation of future change amidst his current “conformation” characterizes 3:12–16. In v. 12 he acknowledges that he has not yet reached the goal of his striving: Οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι, διώκω δὲ εἰ καὶ καταλάβω, ἐφ’ ᾧ καὶ κατελήμφοθην ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ]. This hope for eschatological change is discussed in my treatment of Phil 3:21 below (2.2.2).

¹⁷² Engberg-Pederson (“Complete and Incomplete Transformation”) refers to the change in Phil 3:2–11 as “complete cognitive transformation” (131–37). It is “complete” in that “where a person previously was such and such (say, A), he or she now is something else (B,C,D, or...) that implies the contradictory of A” (124). He contrasts this complete cognitive change with incomplete physical/material

as gains (cf. 1:21) he now regards as loss. In these accounting metaphors, it is not merely that some ends are more or less valued in this new “accounting system” than they were in the previous one; Paul has adopted a new system of bookkeeping altogether. According to the new (christic) system, he can, for example, refer to circumcision as “mutilation” (κατατομή in 3:2a) and to his previous “gains” not as less valuable, but as “waste” (σκόβαλον).¹⁷³ It is difficult to imagine that Paul could make such claims from within his former “system,” which was grounded on Torah observance (3:5–6, 9). Thus, an epistemological shift underlies Paul’s language of “regarding” or “reckoning,” a shift in which the conceptual system that supports valuations and goals has been reordered. The main elements and symbols of the former system (flesh, circumcision, ethnicity, righteousness, etc.) are not destroyed. Rather, they are incorporated into the sphere of Christ and find their meaning and significance within that sphere. Paul’s incorporation into this new sphere—being “in Christ”—has altered Paul’s perspective and points to an epistemic transformation.¹⁷⁴

change that occurs in believers prior to the resurrection, in which they will undergo complete physical/material change (123–46).

¹⁷³ Cf. Paul’s transformation of circumcision into the theme of “shame and ritual uncleanness of castration,” noted in William S. Kurz, S.J., “Kenotic Imitation of Paul and of Christ in Philippians 2 and 3” in *Discipleship in the New Testament*; ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 116. Also, there has been considerable discussion about whether σκόβαλον should be understood as garbage or as excrement (BDAG, s.v. σκόβαλον). I use the translation “waste” to retain the ambiguity of the Greek term. For discussion, see Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 207–208.

Furthermore, according to Paul’s old way of viewing his religious existence, “righteousness that is from the law” was Paul’s *telos* (3:9), and he seems to have successfully realized that *telos* (3:6). Yet Paul describes this former goal as his own righteousness (ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην in 3:9; cf. 3:4, 6). According to his new perspective, however, righteousness derives not from the law but *from* God, *through* the faith of Christ and *on the basis of* faith (3:9). See discussion in Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 208–209. Tannehill (*Dying and Rising*) views Paul’s descriptions in Phil 3:2–7 as a transformation that is consonant with other references to past transformation in his epistles: “It is clear that the break with these realities of the old life referred to here is the same break which we considered...in connection with dying with Christ as a past event. In the Christian’s past death with Christ has taken place the same break with the flesh (Gal 5:24), law (Rom 7:4, Gal 2:19), world (Gal 6:14), and self (2 Cor 5:14–15)” (116).

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Fee (*Letter to the Philippians*): “Paul now revises the balance sheet, reversing ‘gain’ and ‘loss’ in light of his experience of Christ” (311–12; see also pp. 316, 319). As my above arguments suggest, Fee does not go quite far enough. The entire means of accounting has been changed so that when

Furthermore, this epistemic transformation involves more than a change of perception. To be “in Christ” is to be in relationship with Christ, and, as argued above (“Necessity for Change”) “knowledge of Christ” in Phil 3:8–11 “involves participation in Christ.”¹⁷⁵ Thus, Paul’s language points to transformation that involves *relational knowledge* of Christ. In this context, relational knowing is not distinct from cognitive perception. Rather, relational knowledge is part of the epistemic change that Paul describes.

Second, Paul’s epistemic change also presumes a transformation at his conversion. He does not detail this change as he does elsewhere (e.g. Gal 2:19–20; Rom 6:1–11). He simply describes his past life (3:2–6) and alludes to a prior change that continues in the present with the perfect tense of ἡγήομαι: “Whatever were gains for me, I have considered (ἡγήομαι) loss on account of Christ” (3:7). In the past, this change involved a transfer from one form of life and the factors that shaped it (flesh, circumcision, righteousness from the law) into a new set of determining realities (Christ, faith, righteousness from God).¹⁷⁶ As Tannehill observes, Paul’s break with his past life and his conformity to Christ’s death are “not two unrelated things, but the same thing taking place on two different levels... This is shown not only by the fact that both refer to the same decisive break with flesh, law, world, and self, but also by the continuation of this passage, for the conformation to Christ’s death of which Paul speaks in vs. 10 refers to the same process working itself out in suffering, of losing everything in order to gain Christ”¹⁷⁷ Yet what does it mean to be conformed to a person’s death? Two points are worth noting.

the same factors move from one system to another, the elements themselves are transformed. See also Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 135, 137, 139. Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 204–205, 208. Engberg-Pederson, “Complete and Incomplete Transformation,” 131. On the continuation of the past change in present circumstances, see Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 116–17, 22; Fowl, *Philippians*, 151–2.

¹⁷⁵ Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118. See also Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 318; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 137, 143. Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 205–206; Fowl, *Philippians*, 153.

¹⁷⁶ So, Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 116.

¹⁷⁷ Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 117 (see also p. 120).

First, as stated above, Paul's language envisages participation in divine realities. The noun Paul uses for "sharing" or "participation" in Christ's sufferings (πάθηματα) is κοινωνία. He uses this noun twice elsewhere in Philippians. In 1:5, κοινωνία refers to the Philippians' sharing in the gospel. In 2:1, Paul makes reference to κοινωνία πνεύματος to convey that he and the Philippians both share in the same spirit.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, to share in Christ's sufferings is to share in the same reality or the same experiences of Christ, a reality marked by suffering (2:8).¹⁷⁹ Although such language can be elusive for contemporary Western readers, κοινωνίαν παθημάτων involves participation in Christ.¹⁸⁰

As noted above, conformity to Christ's death qualifies the reference to sharing in Christ's sufferings. This is the only occurrence of the verb σύμμορφίζω in the New Testament. This morphic term echoes 2:6–7 and anticipates Paul's use of the adjective σύμμορφος in Phil 3:21. In the former, Paul describes Christ's transformation from being in the form of God (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων) to taking on the form of a slave (μορφὴν δούλου λαβών). In the latter, he writes that Christ "will transform our body of humiliation into conformity with (σύμμορφος) the body of his glory." There, Paul uses morphic terminology to refer to a transformation of the present body into that which conforms with, or is characterized by, the same reality as Christ's glorious body (see 2.2.1–2 below). Thus, Paul's conformity to Christ's death in 3:10 is a change by which Paul, through his circumstances and the commitments that brought him into these circumstances,

¹⁷⁸ In Philippians, πνεῦμα can refer to the Spirit of Christ (1:19), the Spirit of God (3:3), or the collective spirit of the Philippians (4:23). Here, it seems that πνεῦμα for Paul is a reality that unites and imbues people with Christ, and people with one another. Cf. Stowers, "'Pauline Participation in Christ?'," 357–64.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 144.

¹⁸⁰ See Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 215. Also, as Bockmuehl argues, Paul's reference to the power of Christ's resurrection is also a participatory, in the sense of "[s]haring in Christ's death and resurrection by virtue of incorporation into him" (214–15). The theme of participation in Christ is prominent in Philippians and is not limited to Paul's personal experiences. Throughout the letter, he draws on the trope of friendship to envisage a community of fellowship that is joined by Christ's Spirit. See Johnson, *Writings*, 328–30.

anticipates the bodily transformation that Christ underwent and that he expects for himself. As Gerald F. Hawthorne states, “all believers are caught up into Christ and are indissolubly linked together with him to share with him in all the events of his life, including his death and resurrection.”¹⁸¹ But if conformity to Christ’s death is participatory, how does one *participate* in Christ’s *death* in the present?

This query leads to my second point: Paul does not always present Christ’s death as an event of the past; often, he portrays it as a present entity, or even as an agent. For example, in 1 Corinthians and Romans, Paul personifies death as something that has entered into the world and that must be defeated (1 Cor 15:21, 26, 54–56; Rom 5:12–21). Christ’s death is also a reality into which believers are baptized (Rom 6:1–11) and in which believers “share” (σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν in Rom 6:5). In 2 Corinthians, Christ’s death is “carried around” in the body (2 Cor 4:10) and “energized” in the apostles (2 Cor 4:11–12).¹⁸² As Steven Kraftchick states, for Paul, “death is not restricted to the single moment when life stops. Rather, death is part of life and part of human existence.”¹⁸³

In Philippians, as Kraftchick also observes, Paul envisages death as a “gate” or a “transformation point” through which a believer transitions from physical existence into a different mode of being.¹⁸⁴ This is especially clear in Phil 1:21–26, in which Paul claims that “to

¹⁸¹ Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 145. Cf. Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 190–91.

¹⁸² For a full treatment of believers’ participation in the realities of Christ’s death and resurrection in Paul’s letters, see Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*.

¹⁸³ Steven Kraftchick, “Abstracting Paul’s Theology: Extending Reflections on ‘Death’ in Philippians” in *The Impartial God: Essays in Honor of Jouette M. Bassler*, eds. Calvin J. Roetzel and Robert L. Foster, New Testament Monographs (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007), 211.

¹⁸⁴ Kraftchick, “Abstracting Paul’s Theology,” 202–205. This is one of “five ‘images of death’ that Kraftchick identifies in Philippians, all of which he neatly summarizes: death ‘(1) as release or gateway (1.21–24); (2) as humiliation (2.7–8); (3) as a form of worship (2.17); (4) as a tragedy from which we are sometimes relieved, but which we all must face (2.27); and (5) as a service to God and others (2.30)’ (208).

live is Christ and to die is gain” (1:21).¹⁸⁵ Death is “gain” (κέρδος) for Paul because to die is to “be with Christ” (σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι). In Phil 1:21–26, then, “Death does not cut Paul off from divine presence, but brings him into it. Death is not the mark of one exiled from God, but a means of being with Christ. Death is the vehicle by which incomplete existence (present physical life) is transformed into full existence (unmediated existence with Christ). Death is not exile or escape; it is ‘more.’”¹⁸⁶ Paul’s goal is radical transformation in the future (3:21), and death is the means by which both Paul and Christ enter that state (1:21–26; 2:8–11).

In 3:7–11, Paul is neither in his former state, which is characterized by elements that he now considers as “loss,” nor has he undergone eschatological transformation (3:21). Yet, by being conformed to Christ’s death, which “cannot be separated from participating in Christ himself,”¹⁸⁷ in the present, Paul experiences a transformed mode of existence that is already, albeit partially, marked by the “more” that comes with death. Just as Christ was transformed in his death, so too, Paul participates in Christ by being conformed to his death. This conformity (σύμμορφίζω) is a foretaste of wholesale eschatological transformation (3:20–21).

I categorize Paul’s conformation as *present existential* change. The present tense participle of σύμμορφίζω suggests that Paul’s being conformed to Christ’s death is an ongoing process.¹⁸⁸ The label of existential change should not, however, be understood as a change to the

¹⁸⁵ The notion that “to live is Christ” reflects the ambiguity of the divine/human agency involved in Paul’s “life,” which I discussed above in my examination of Gal 2:19–20.

¹⁸⁶ Kraftchick, “Abstracting Paul’s Theology,” 204.

¹⁸⁷ Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 120.

¹⁸⁸ O’Brien, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 408; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 143, 145; Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 205. Cf. Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 180 n. 209, 186–87. Koenig, however, claims that Phil 3:7–16 “has nothing to do with progress in the sense of achievement or advancement that can be looked back upon” (187) and that it does not involve “cumulative spiritual or moral advancement” (190). According to Koenig, although this mode of transformation is a “process,” one should view it not as a “progressive change from one level of Christian existence to another,” but rather as a repetition of suffering and empowerment (188) or a “repeated shaping of the believer” (190). Transformation here “consists of steadfast participation,” and “conformation to Christ’s death is the corrective activity through which God again and again sets believers back on the way of the cross

existence of an autonomous human being. Rather, Paul's being conformed to Christ's death is part of incorporation into Christ, the power of Christ's resurrection, Christ's sufferings, and the means by which Paul will attain resurrection from the dead.¹⁸⁹ The process of being conformed to Christ's death is, therefore, existential in the sense that Paul's participation in the realities of Christ's death and resurrection are determinative for his present existence (conformity to death) and his future existence (resurrection).¹⁹⁰ It is difficult to determine what, specifically, does and does not change in this process of being conformed to Christ's death. What can be said is that conformation involves transformation of Paul's mode of existence in the sphere of Christ.¹⁹¹

Factors in Change

Because the participle of *σύνμορφίζω* is in the passive voice, Paul is not the agent of his own change.¹⁹² In one sense, Paul's imprisonment is the ostensible reason that he experiences fellowship of Christ's sufferings and conformity to Christ's death (1:7–26). Yet his suffering is not merely circumstantial. As argued above, suffering is a means by which Paul participates in Christ, which suggests the possibility of divine agency at work in his experiences. Elsewhere in

whenever they stray from it." I am not, however, convinced by Koenig's arguments. Given that Paul speaks here of "a process," combined with Paul's anticipated *telos* of resurrection (v. 11), Paul's notion of being conformed to Christ's death is part of a trajectory that involves a more complete transformation. The change that Paul envisages here may not be a neat, linear progress without stops, regressions, or detours, but interpreters should not dismiss notions of "progress" too readily.

¹⁸⁹ Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 120–21. Cf. Rom 6:5. Engberg-Pederson ("Complete and Incomplete Transformation") goes as far to argue that Paul here speaks of bodily transformation (134–36). I do not, however, find significant support for this view in the text. Cf. Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 224–25.

¹⁹⁰ See Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118–22; Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 332; Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 207; Fowl, *Philippians*, 158; Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 175–227, esp. 175–77, 192, 224–25.

¹⁹¹ The notion of being in the sphere of Christ draws especially on Paul's language of being "in" Christ in v. 9. As Fee (*Letter to the Philippians*) states, "Paul now lives in fellowship with Christ, who is both the source of this new life and the sphere in which it is lived" (321). Cf. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118.

¹⁹² O'Brien, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 408.

Philippians, Paul's rhetoric suggests tension in divine and human agency.¹⁹³ Paul's reference to eschatological transformation in 3:20–21 is especially illuminating.¹⁹⁴ There, as argued in more detail below, Christ, for whom believers wait, is the agent of eschatological change. It seems probable, therefore, that in his hardship, Paul is *being* conformed to Christ's death by a divine agent. Although the matter of agency is ambiguous, it is likely that the Spirit of the resurrected Christ is the primary agent of Paul's being conformed to Christ's death in order that Paul will "attain the resurrection of the dead" (3:11).¹⁹⁵

Christ is also the dominant factor in change inasmuch as he is both the reality in which Paul participates and framework for interpreting his circumstances for the Philippians. For the latter, Paul rhetorically frames his circumstances vis-à-vis the example of Christ that he displays in the Christ hymn (2:5–11). The pattern of Christ's humble suffering, death, and resurrection provides a schema that Paul maps onto his present circumstances.¹⁹⁶ As a result, the Philippians are to understand his imprisonment as analogous with Christ's death, in anticipation of that which followed Christ's death—resurrection (3:11, 21).¹⁹⁷

Yet, as argued above, conformity to Christ's death is also participatory. Christ dwells in heaven (3:20), but he is also available to Paul via πνεῦμα (1:19), and Christ's resurrection is a

¹⁹³ In 1:10, for example, Paul expresses confidence in deliverance from his imprisonment "through" the Philippians' prayers and "the help of the spirit of Jesus Christ" (ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). In 2:12–13, Paul exhorts the Philippians to work out their salvation (v. 13) on the basis of God's empowerment (ἐνεργέω) of them (cf. 1:6).

¹⁹⁴ As argued above, 3:11 is linked thematically with 3:21, since conformity to Christ (3:11) anticipates future transformation (3:21). Note especially the similar (morphic) terminology: Paul uses the verb σύμμορφίζω in 3:10 and the adjectiv σύμμορφος in 3:21.

¹⁹⁵ Recall that being conformed to Christ's death is linked with "the power of his resurrection" and "the fellowship of his sufferings" as means by which Paul knows or *participates in* Christ (3:10–11). These experiences all presuppose the presence of the resurrected Christ. See Bockmuehl, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 216; Fowl, *Philippians*, 155; Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 120.

¹⁹⁶ See Kurtz, "Kenotic Imitation," 103–22; Cf. Kraftchick, "Abstracting Paul's Theology," 199–200, 206–207; Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 313–14; Fowl, *Philippians*, 154–55.

¹⁹⁷ See Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 120–21.

power that Paul knows experientially in his suffering (3:10).¹⁹⁸ In this sense, Christ is a factor of change in that he is the metaphysical reality into which Paul has been incorporated, as well as the agent of Paul's transformation.

2.1.3 Transformation & Selfhood in Philippians 3:10–11.

These observations on Phil 3:11 point to what Susan Eastman labels a “participatory identity” in Paul's writings.¹⁹⁹ On one level, Paul figuratively participates in the narrative of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection.²⁰⁰ On another metaphysical level, in Paul's conversion he leaves one system of defining realities (3:2–7) and is incorporated into a new system, in which his existence is in part determined by “being conformed to Christ's death” (3:11). This conformity involves participation in the spirit of the resurrected Christ.²⁰¹

As in Galatians, Paul's rhetoric in Philippians assumes not an autonomous and self-determining human agent, but, rather, a self that is determined by the powers to which it is subjected. The human self is not the ground of relationships; it is the product of relationships.²⁰² In this relational view of the subject, one cannot presume that what grounds the self's continuity through change is intrinsic a person apart from a larger web of relations. If what grounds and determines the human is not intrinsic to the human, then that which provides continuity amidst change is not necessarily intrinsic to the human. In Phil 3:11, it is the resurrected Christ who determines Paul's selfhood, enacts his transformation, and grounds continuity amidst change.

¹⁹⁸ Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 120. Cf. Stowers, ““Pauline Participation in Christ’?”,” 357–64.

¹⁹⁹ Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 6. With this term, Eastman refers to Paul's cosmological and social embeddedness and how the human is to a significant degree constituted by its relationship to other realities and persons. For full discussion, see Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 6–22.

²⁰⁰ So Richard B. Hays, “What is ‘Real Participation in Christ’?: A Dialogue with E.P. Sanders on Pauline Soteriology” in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities*, 345–47.

²⁰¹ Ultimately, my viewpoint is much closer to that of Stowers (““Pauline Participation in Christ’?”,” 352–71), than to that of Hays, “What is ‘Real Participation in Christ’?”

²⁰² Cf. Slife, “Taking Practices Seriously,” 159.

2.2 Philippians 3:21

In Phil 3:21 Paul writes that Christ will “transform (μετασχηματίζω) our humble body into conformity with the body of his glory, according to the power that enables him to subject all things to himself.” His use of μετασχηματίζω and the exchange of the humble body for a body of glory mark this passage for examination as transformation discourse.

2.2.1 Overview of Pericope

Philippians 3:21 ends a pericope that begins at v. 17.²⁰³ In this passage, Paul presents himself as an example and his opponents as counterexamples, a rhetorical strategy he uses throughout Philippians.²⁰⁴ In 3:17, he exhorts the Philippians explicitly to imitate him and others who live according to Christ’s example.²⁰⁵ Paul’s opponents, however, are enemies of Christ’s cross (v. 18). Their glory is in their shame (ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ αὐτῶν), and their moral reasoning is earthly (οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες). Paul and the Philippians are citizens of heaven (v. 20) and will experience the transformation of their “humble body” into “conformity with the body of [Christ’s] glory” (σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ).²⁰⁶ This claim has at least two

²⁰³ Paul shifts after v. 16 with an imperative for the community to become imitators of him. In 4:1, he again uses an imperative (to stand firm in the Lord) to shift away from vv. 17–21 and to open a new pericope (his use of ὥστε in 4:1 further strengthens this shift). Moreover Paul’s self-presentation brackets the pericope (see vv. 17, 20–21).

²⁰⁴ For discussions of Paul’s representation and self-representation in Philippians, see Kurz, “Kenotic Imitation” 103–22; Stanley Stowers, “Friends and Enemies in the Politics of Heaven: Reading Theology in Philippians,” in *Pauline Theology: Volume 1*, ed. Jouette M. Bassler (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 114–17; Julia Lambert Fogg, “Κοινωνία is Σωτηρία: Paul’s Theological Reading of Practices in His Letter to The Philippians” (PhD Diss., Emory University, 2006), 76–127. Steven J. Kraftchick, “Self-Presentation and Community Construction in Philippians” in *Scripture and Traditions: Essays on Early Judaism and Early Christianity in Honor of Carl R. Holladay*, ed. Patrick Gray and Gail R. O’Day; (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 47–59; Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 255.

²⁰⁵ As Nina E Livesey (“Paul, the Philonic Jew: [Philippians 3,5–21],” *Annali Di Storia Dell’esegesi* 27, [2010]) sates, “In imitating Paul, they are also imitating the crucified Anointed one” (43).

²⁰⁶ Cf. Phil 1:21–26.

rhetorical effects: it brings Paul's suffering within a particular interpretive frame—that of Christ's suffering and subsequent exaltation—and it disparages his opponents' conduct.²⁰⁷

2.2.2 Transformation in Philippians 3:21: Necessity, Categories, and Factors

Necessity for Change

In 3:20–21, Paul describes Christ as a savior in heaven, for whom Paul and the Philippians wait in anticipation of the transformation that Christ will accomplish. Furthermore, the change is from humble bodies into “the body of *his* [Christ's] glory” (v. 21). Here, the resurrected Christ is integral to transformation as an empowering agent (3:21b; more on this below). The larger context of Philippians—especially 2:5–11—illuminates why this is so.

The so-called Christ hymn in 2:5–11 is the hermeneutical and theological center of Philippians.²⁰⁸ The pattern of Christ's self-emptying, death, and exaltation provides the reference point by which the Philippians should interpret Paul's circumstances and theirs.²⁰⁹ Particularly germane to 3:21 is that Christ “humbled himself” (ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν; v. 8) and was obedient, even to the point of crucifixion. In response, God exalted him (vv. 9–11) for God's glory (εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός; v. 11). Similarly, in Phil 3:21 Paul writes of himself and the Philippians that “*our* humble body” (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν) will be transformed into “the likeness of the body of *his* glory” (σύμμορφον τῷ σῶματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ). As Christ's humble conduct led to exaltation for God's glory, Paul and the Philippians' bodies—which are also marked by

²⁰⁷ On this point, see Peter Doble, “‘Vile Bodies’ or Transformed Persons?: Philippians 3.21 in Context,” JSNT 24 (2002): 23–25.

²⁰⁸ Much of my analysis of Phil 3:21 and its relationship to the larger context of Philippians is draws on my Th.M. thesis “‘By Means of My Body:’ Σῶμα as a Living Metaphor for Christ in Philippians 1:20” (Emory University 2011).

²⁰⁹ This is also true for the circumstances of Timothy (2:19–24) and Epaphroditus (2:25–30). See Kurz, “Kenotic Imitation,” 113.

humility (3:21; cf. 1:12–26)—will be characterized by Christ’s glory.²¹⁰ In order for Paul and his audience to embody Christ’s pattern by “ascending” from humble existence into a state of glory, transformation is necessary.

Categories of Change

Philippians 3:21 describes *eschatological* transformation. The future tense of μετασχηματίζω and the immediate literary context suggest that this change occurs at the parousia. In 3:20, Paul writes that although believers’ “citizenship is in heaven” (in the present), they await Christ’s coming from heaven, a time which Paul refers to earlier as “the day of Christ Jesus” (1:6). It is at the eschaton that believers will experience this change.

Since Paul writes that the humble σῶμα undergoes change into conformity with the σῶμα of Christ’s glory, this transformation is also bodily. Yet this category can create more problems than it solves.²¹¹ My concern, however, is to examine Paul’s use of σῶμα within the context of Phil 3:21 in order to put a finer grain on my categorization of “bodily transformation.”

The only other use of the term σῶμα in Philippians is in 1:20. Paul writes, “Christ will be magnified by means of my body (μεγαλυνθήσεται Χριστος ἐν τῷ σώματι μου), whether through

²¹⁰ More specifically, Paul’s body is imprisoned and facing potential death (1:12–26). The Philippians, correspondingly, stand to lose their apostolic leader, and Paul implies that they face some sort of opposition as well (1:27; 3:2).

²¹¹ Recent research on Pauline anthropology illustrates this. Paul’s use of the term σῶμα has been especially debated since the landmark account of Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (Waco, TX.: Baylor University Press, 2007; repr., New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951–55), 2:192–204. For some subsequent treatments of σῶμα in Paul, many of which take Bultmann as a departure point, see J.A.T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology*; SBT (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1957); Ernst Käsemann, “On Paul’s Anthropology” in *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 1–31; Jewett, *Paul’s Anthropological Terms*, 201–27; Robert H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology: With Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 1987); James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998), 51–78, esp. 51–55; Green, *Body Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible*, STI (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008): 3–16.; Johnson, “The Body in Question, 295–315; Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 85–108.

life or through death.”²¹² In the immediate context of 1:20, he describes his imprisonment and contemplates the possibility of death. He describes life as being “in the flesh” (ἐν σαρκί), and death as departing to be with Christ (vv. 22–24). Paul’s rhetoric suggests that his use of σῶμα in 1:20 refers to his imprisoned, *physical* body as a venue for the display of Christ.²¹³ Furthermore, one could characterize Phil 1:18b–26 as having an eschatological focus: Paul’s concern is with personal eschatology, the specter of his own death. Thus, by describing a seeming departure from his body—I read σαρξ in 1:22, 24 as synecdoche²¹⁴—to be with Christ, Paul employs a “strong” dualistic model of the self.²¹⁵

In Phil 3:21, one should also read σῶμα as a reference to the physical body. This fits with Paul’s other use of σῶμα in Phil 1:20, and it coheres with the echoes of the Christ hymn in ch. 3. Although the hymn does not include the term σῶμα, Christ’s body was crucified before he was exalted (2:8–11). So too, Paul and the Philippians will experience the transformation of the body at Christ’s parousia. More specifically, they will experience an exchange of one (humble) body for another (glorious) body.²¹⁶ This exchange also presupposes a degree of anthropological dualism. There is no evidence for a break in personal identity, suggesting perhaps that a “self” of some sort persists through this somatic change. Paul thus seems to assume some distinction

²¹² I argue for this translation of Phil 1:20 in “‘By Means of My Body.’”

²¹³ Carr, “‘By Means of My Body.’”

²¹⁴ Cf. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 78.

²¹⁵ My description of Paul’s dualism as “strong” dualism draws on the discussion of folk dualism in Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 13–23. Tappenden draws on the work of Edward Slingerland and Maciej Chudek and, for Paul, argues for “a *weak* rather than a *strong* folk dualism thesis that accounts for the reality that most cultures in history do not advance a simple either/or binary of mind and body. Instead, weak folk dualism allows for shades of cultural variety whereby certain capacities (thought, emotion, personhood, physiology, etc.) tend to cluster together and gravitate toward certain poles (such as in/out, mind/body). What is at issue, then, is not the formal—or strong—dualisms of the West, but rather a more commonsensical—or weak—dualism as a characteristic aspect of human cognition across cultures” (14–15). By “strong,” I do not contest Tappenden’s view but adopt his terminology to suggest that, in Phil 1:21–26 Paul implies a stronger distinction between “self” and body than he does in other contexts (e.g. 3:21; 1 Cor 15:35–57).

²¹⁶ This reading takes seriously the sense of μετασχηματίζω as a change of “form” (σκήμα; cf. Phil 2:7). See BDAG, s.v. μετασχηματίζω 1.

between self and σῶμα. What constitutes the self and accounts for its continuity, however, is unclear.²¹⁷ Yet, unlike Phil 1:18b–26, Paul does not hint at a disembodied self in 3:21. The self changes from one form of embodiment to another but is seemingly never without a body.

Does this somatic change also entail ontological transformation? The cosmological language of Philippians suggests that it does. In Phil 3:17–21, Paul contrasts heaven and earth. In describing his opponents, who are enemies of the cross, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, Paul writes that their “mindedness” is *on earthly things* (οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες).²¹⁸ By contrast, Paul and the Philippians’ “citizenship is in heaven” (3:20). Heaven, moreover, is where Christ is and from where he will return (3:21). Christ entered heaven after twice crossing a cosmic threshold. First, when he changes from the form of God (μορφῇ θεοῦ) into the form of a slave (μορφὴν δούλου) and the likeness of a person (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος), he leaves a non-empirical realm for an embodied life. After his crucifixion, Christ exists as non-empirical spirit (2:19) who is present to empower (4:13; cf. 3:10, 21b). Thus, when Paul claims that the Philippians are citizens of heaven, he means that they conduct themselves according to the sphere of reality in which Christ resides, from which Christ empowers, and which demands a moral disposition (φρόνησις) that aligns with Christ’s pattern.²¹⁹

In 3:21, Paul does not give indisputable evidence that this somatic change includes ontological change. He does not, for example, portray the transformed body as incorporated or absorbed into the divine (cf. 1 Cor 15:28) or as “putting on” imperishability (cf. 1 Cor 15:53–54;

²¹⁷ Tappenden (*Resurrection in Paul*) may do well simply to discuss the continuity of the “somatic interior” (146, 62). Although Tappenden uses this term in relation to Rom 6–8, it is applicable here, since Paul does not clearly assume that something like a Platonic soul accounts the self’s continuity amidst change (see Songe-Møller, “With What Kind of Body Will They Come,” 112).

²¹⁸ For the translation “mindedness,” see Doble, “Vile Bodies,” 5, n. 8.

²¹⁹ On the believer’s alignment with the heavenly “commonwealth,” see Stowers, “Friends and Enemies,” 112–13.

2 Cor 5:1–5). Yet to have one’s body transformed “into conformity with the body of his glory” is to have one’s empirical body exchanged for a body that accords with the sphere of reality in which Christ exists—a body that is appropriate for the self’s full involvement in heavenly existence. Just as Paul participates in Christ through conformity to his death and as he and the Philippians live as citizens of heaven on earth, they will participate fully in Christ by being transformed into “the likeness” (σύμμορφος) of his body of glory at the eschaton (cf. 1 Cor 15:40–43). Philippians 3:21 thus portrays both somatic and ontological transformation.

Additionally, humility and glory are status markers, which adds an additional dimension to this transformation. In the hymn, Christ emptied himself and appropriated a low status by taking the “form of a slave.” He also experienced shame when he “humbled himself (ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν) to the point of death, even death on a cross.” It was only after living in a marginalized status and experiencing a shameful death that God exalted him to a supreme status: throughout the cosmos—“in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth”—all knees will bow to and all tongues will confess the “name that is over every name” (9–11). Likewise, because believers’ future transformation is a change from humility (τάπείνωσις) to glory (δόξα), the somatic and ontological transformation also includes a reversal of status.

In sum, the transformation in 3:21 cannot be captured with a single category. Paul describes the exchange of one body for another—*somatic* change. Because it occurs at the parousia, which brings full heavenly existence, the transformation is both *eschatological* and *ontological*. Finally because it results from self-humbling and brings about participation in Christ’s glory (cf. 2:11), Phil 3:21 entails a transformation of *status*.

Factors in Change

Paul identifies Christ as the one who will transform the body of shame for a body of glory, since the Lord Christ Jesus is the subject of the verb μετασχηματίζω.²²⁰ Although the one who is changed is presumably passive in the transformation itself, the believer is not without agency in the process. In 3:17, Paul urges the Philippians to follow the examples of himself and others who live according to Christ's pattern of self-emptying. In doing so, they will avoid the *telos* that awaits those who live according to different patterns (i.e. destruction; 3:21), and, instead, their *telos* will be eschatological transformation that mirrors Christ's exaltation (2:9–11).²²¹ Put simply, Paul and the Philippians must embody the appropriate moral reasoning and conduct in order to experience future transformation. Although proper moral behavior is divinely empowered in Philippians (1:6, 19; 2:13; 4:13), and even though Christ is the immediate agent of future change in 3:21, Paul presumes that humans have a substantial degree of (moral) agency with respect to their own transformation: life according to Christ's example leads to the transformation of the body.

Although Christ is the immediate agent of change, he is not the ultimate agent. Paul writes that the somatic transformation occurs according to the power (κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν) that enables Christ (τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν) to subject all things to himself" (3:21; cf. 1 Cor 15:28). With this reference Paul both alludes to the narrative of Christ's exaltation and the power by which Christ is able to transform others: just as God exalted Christ (2:9–11), Christ will transform the believer's body. Ultimately, therefore, it is God's power that energizes this change.

²²⁰ The phrase "the body of his glory" also marks Christ as the interpretive horizon for believers' future transformation: Christ's self-emptying and exaltation is the paradigm according to which the Philippians are to understand their own future transformation. Cf. Kurz, "Kenotic Imitation," 112.

²²¹ Cf. Doble, "Vile Bodies," 26–27.

Furthermore, the status markers of honor and shame are components of Phil 3:21. Paul writes this epistle from prison, perhaps facing death, in the face of opposition both to himself and his community, and all this after the Philippians had given to him financially. As Stanley Stowers writes, “In his situation of great vulnerability, Paul must first convince his friends and enemies that his misfortune is, in reality, good fortune.”²²² For this reason, Paul centralizes Christ’s example and uses it as the reference point for the Philippians to interpret his circumstances, as well as their own. Just as Christ experienced exaltation and glory after his humility and shame, so too will Paul and the Philippians experience a reversal of their humble status when they are transformed at the eschaton. Honor and shame are thus key factors in the transformation of Phil 3:21.

2.2.3 Transformation & Selfhood in Philippians 3:21

As an instance of transformation discourse, Phil 3:21 is a rich text for insights into Paul’s understandings of selfhood. It raises a number of questions about what constitutes a person, the relationship of the self to the body, the relationship of ethical praxis to eschatological transformation, and more. I cannot sufficiently address all such matters here, but I offer the following two summary points.

First, Phil 3:21 exemplifies what Eastman calls a “relational” or “participatory” self, in which subjectivity is determined by the realities with which it participates. With divine empowerment (1:6, 19; 2:13; 4:13), one appropriates Christ’s moral reasoning and embodies a moral praxis that is characterized by Christ-like humility. On this basis, a believer will undergo

²²² Stowers, “Friends and Enemies,” 114.

bodily transformation in order to inhabit a mode of being that is fit for full participation in Christ (3:21). The *telos* of morality is transformation through participation in Christ's glorious body.²²³

In Phil 3:21, the body is the means by which one participates in the realities that determine one's selfhood. The σῶμα is, in Eastman's terms, "a mode of belonging."²²⁴ One's *embodied* participation in moral and cosmic (i.e. "heavenly") realities in the present allow one to "belong" to that sphere in the present and to anticipate full incorporation in the future. More specifically, by embodying Christ's moral disposition and praxis, one appropriates a "body of humility" that will undergo both somatic and ontological transformation in order to participate fully in the sphere of Christ. Because bodily exchange is necessary for ontological change, the body in Phil 3:21 is a—but not the only—determining "structure" for selfhood. As the σῶμα is changed, subjectivity is transformed through somatic participation in cosmic realities. Although the body is part of that which structures selfhood, the self is determined not primarily by inward factors but by a power that originates from outside of the human—namely, by the spirit of Christ.

Second, the moral and ontological dimensions of selfhood are mutually informing. For both Christ and believers, appropriate moral conduct in the present leads to ontological transformation in the future. From the opposite direction, future ontological transformation demands a particular mode of moral selfhood in the present—the appropriation of the moral reasoning (φρόνησις) and conduct that Christ possessed. Despite Paul's present conformity to Christ's death (3:10), however, he does not here envisage moral change as a continual process that begins in life and culminates with complete transformation at the eschaton.²²⁵ The

²²³ See Doble, "Vile Bodies," 26–27.

²²⁴ Eastman (*Paul and the Person*) uses this description to summarize Ernst Käsemann's understanding of σῶμα in Paul's letters (104). See arguments in Käsemann, "On Paul's Anthropology," in *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 22.

²²⁵ Although Phil 3:12–16 indicates that Paul's present striving (3:12–16) is for full participation in Christ in the future (cf. 3:8–9), he does not present ongoing participation in Christ in the present as on a

transformation in 3:21 is not the *culmination* of a process, but, rather, a *reversal* of the shame and humility according to the pattern of Christ. The transformation of the body is the mechanism by which this reversal occurs, and it not only alters one's embodied existence by bringing it into conformity with Christ's, but it also alters one's status within the cosmic order.

2.3 Conclusion: Transformation & Selfhood in Philippians

Paul's references to human change in Phil 3:11 and 3:21 differ in their temporality, categorization, and "completeness."²²⁶ In 3:11, Paul describes, present existential transformation that is based on the existential and epistemic change that he experienced in his conversion (3:2–8). He does not portray this ongoing experience of "conformity" as one that will reach a particular *telos* during his life. Rather, he strives in the present (3:12–16) so that he will be resurrected in the future (3:11b, 21).

In 3:21, Paul describes eschatological transformation that is primarily somatic and ontological. This change is also dependent upon present conduct, but in 3:21, Paul focuses more on *moral* conduct than on "mystical" participation in Christ. The transformation itself, however, is no less participatory than that in 3:11. In the eschatological change of v. 21, believers will receive a body and a mode of existence that is fit for participation in the glorious, heavenly sphere that Christ inhabits.

Despite their differences these two references to human transformation are interrelated. In his participation in the presence and power of the resurrected Lord through conformity to his death, Paul hopes that he will attain resurrection in the future (3:11b). Although he does not

clear continuum of progression that will culminate in eschatological transformation. Perhaps the best one can say is that the present "conformation" *anticipates* and is the *condition for the possibility* of eschatological transformation.

²²⁶ My use of the term "completeness" draws on Engberg-Pederson, "Complete and Incomplete Transformation."

describe resurrection as a transformation in 3:11, his language in 3:21 makes clear that it is. Taken together, Paul presents to the Philippians a vision for present moral and existential change through participation in Christ that leads to somatic and ontological transformation at the eschaton. This pattern gains its intelligibility and its assurance from Christ's example of transformation and his continued empowerment of Paul and the community. There exists, therefore, a vital *continuity* between present and future transformations.

Just as important as the continuity, however, are the elements of *discontinuity* between present and future change in Philippians. In the Christ hymn, Paul shifts from the ontological, to the moral, and back to the ontological: Christ is in the "form of God" (2:6), empties himself and becomes humble (2:7–8), and then is exalted again in glory (2:9–11). So too, if Paul and the Philippians match Christ's pattern in their *morality* then they will undergo *ontological* change.²²⁷ This discontinuity of transformation types is significant because it shows that Paul, in Philippians, does not envisage present transformation that culminates in ontological transformation, as if one could reach it in one's lifetime. Rather, it is better to say that present change anticipates and ensures future change.

In terms of selfhood, Paul portrays his own transformation as a shift from one set of determining realities (law, flesh, and righteousness from the law) into a new state of existence in Christ. In the past, Paul's conversion involved an epistemic and existential change that opened up for him the possibility of eschatological transformation that is both somatic and ontological. In the present, Christ determines Paul's existence: Paul has been incorporated into Christ (3:9) and is continually transformed through participation in Christ. What is more, these transformations—past, present, and future—have the resurrected Christ their goal. In his conversion, Paul gained

²²⁷ Although I do not stress it above, the transformation of 3:11 has moral dimensions as well, since Paul has attained righteousness that is not his own "from the law but righteousness that is through the faith of Christ, from God on the basis of faith" (3:9; cf. 3:2–7).

Christ (vv. 7–8). In the future, believers will exchange their humble bodies for the body of Christ’s glory (vv. 20–21). In the present, Paul participates in Christ and is being conformed to Christ’s death. From beginning to end, Paul’s transformation discourse in Philippians points not to autonomous selves but to intersubjectivity—selfhood that is established and determined by a participatory relationship with the resurrected Lord. This vision of the self applies both to Paul and to his audience. Rhetorically, with Christ’s example and his own, Paul presents this model of selfhood to the Philippians so that they would appropriate and embody it in their community.²²⁸

²²⁸ In this letter, the connection point between the moral examples of Christ, Paul, and the Philippians is Christ’s moral disposition (φρόνησις). Christ embodied it, and Paul follows his example. Thus, the Philippians are to appropriate Christ’s moral disposition as well (2:5). In doing so, they will also embody the moral conduct that is requisite for eschatological ontological transformation.

Chapter 3

Mapping Transformation Discourse in 1–2 Corinthians

1. Human Transformation in 1 Corinthians

In 1 Corinthians two passages warrant focused attention as transformation discourse. The first is 1 Cor 13:8–13, in which Paul uses human aging as a metaphor for eschatological change. The second is Paul’s discussion of future transformation at the resurrection in 1 Cor 15:35–57.

1.1 1 Corinthians 13:8–12

In 1 Cor 13:8–12, Paul contrasts childhood with adulthood. He writes, “When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, used to reason like a child, and used to think like a child. When I became an adult, I put away the things of a child” (v. 11).¹ In this contrast, age functions as a metaphor for future change: “For now we see through a mirror dimly (δι’ ἐσόπτρου), but then we will see face to face. Now we know partially (ἐκ μέρους), but then we will know as we have been known” (v. 12). Paul does not describe this transformation in detail. Yet his rhetoric presumes a change that will create a radical difference between the pre-and-post-transformed person, which he emphasizes as change in the human capacity for knowledge.²

¹ My repeated use of “used to” attempts to convey the progressive aspect of the imperfect tense of the verbs λαλέω, φρονέω, and λογίζομαι in v. 11. Cf. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 1066.

² Cf. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 647.

1.1.1 Overview of Pericope

1 Corinthians 13:8–12 forms a single pericope.³ Paul establishes its central point in v. 10: “When the complete comes (ἐλθῇ τὸ τέλειον), the partial (τὸ ἐκ μέρους) will be done away.” The “complete” refers to an eschatological context in which people will be transformed.⁴ The new realities that result from these changes will differ from present realities as much as an adult’s speech, moral reasoning, and logic differ from those of a child (v. 11).⁵ Paul then notes specific human qualities that will undergo change. Intellectual perception (described figuratively as what one “sees”) and human knowledge will no longer be partial but full to the degree that, “we will know as we have been known” (v. 12). In this last claim, the passive “have been known” presupposes that God is the subject of knowledge. Thus, for humanity to know as they have been known suggests that, in the future, believers will know God just as God has known humanity.⁶ Thus, Paul describes a change in which limited human knowledge of God will become clear and direct like Moses’ “face to face” encounters with God (Nub 12:8; Deut 34:10).⁷

³ In vv. 4–7, Paul lists characteristics of love. In v. 8, Paul turns his attention to love’s never-ending character, in contrast to the temporal finitude of other things like prophecy, tongues, and knowledge. This focus on temporality, along with changes that will come at the eschaton, continues through v. 12. In v. 13, he gives a standalone summary statement to wrap up his focus on love. He uses an imperative at 14:1 to transition into a new pericope focused on spiritual gifts.

⁴ So Fee, *First Epistle*, 646. Cf. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1065.

⁵ As Fee (*First Epistle*) argues, Paul’s analogy of childish thinking versus adult thinking does not convey a maturing process, but, rather, “the difference between the present and the future” (646) and, more specifically, “two modes of existence” (647).

⁶ Harm W. Hollander, “Seeing God ‘in a Riddle’ or ‘Face to Face’: An Analysis of 1 Corinthians 13.12,” *JSNT* 32 (2010): 396–97.

⁷ Hollander, “Seeing God,” 398–400. Fee, *First Epistle*, 647–49; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1067–71; cf. Paul W. Gooch, *Partial Knowledge: Philosophical Studies in Paul* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press), 142–54.

1.1.2 Transformation in 1 Corinthians 13:8–12: Necessity, Categories, and Factors

Necessity for Change

Paul acknowledges in this epistle that the Corinthians have been “enriched” (πλουτίζω) in “all knowledge” (ἐν...πάσῃ γνώσει; 1:5), and he recognizes that, to various degrees, they possess knowledge as a gift.⁸ Yet he includes knowledge in a list of gifts that will one day cease (v. 8b; cf. 12:7),⁹ and, in the present, human knowledge is incomplete; believers can only prophesy and know *in part* (ἐκ μέρους in v. 9). In addition to being finite and partial, Paul also describes human knowledge as indirect (βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι’ ἐσόπτου ἐν αἰνίγματι),¹⁰ perhaps because γνώσις is neither inherent in people nor a human achievement. Instead, the divine spirit mediates human knowledge (1 Cor 2:8–16; 3:18–20).¹¹

What kind of knowledge is this, specifically? As in Phil 3:10–11, knowledge here has relational and experiential dimensions. Paul’s claim that people have been known by God may refer to the knowledge that comes with the reception of the spirit—the mind of Christ (2:8–16; 12:13).¹² It is best, then, to understand the notion of God as the object of transformed human

⁸ 1 Cor 8:1, 7, 10–11; 12:8. See also 2 Cor 2:14; 4:6; 6:6; 8:7. Cf. 1 Cor 13:2; 10:5; 11:6. Yet Paul also demonstrates the inferiority of knowledge to love: “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (8:1–2).

⁹ As Thiselton (*First Epistle*) states, “The gifts are contingent just as the cosmos is contingent; love participates in eschatological reality in a way which transcends such contingency” (1061).

¹⁰ Paul’s mirror metaphor (δι’ ἐσόπτου ἐν αἰνίγματι) probably refers to indirectness of knowledge and perception. See BDAG, s.v. αἰνίγμα 2. See the discussion of the use of mirror metaphors in Hellenistic writings to describe indirect knowledge in Norbert Hagedorn, *La Métaphore Du Miroir dans les Épîtres de saint Paul aux Corinthiens; Bibliothèque Théologique*. (Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1957), 15–37. See also Hollander, “Seeing God,” 397. For a different use of mirror metaphors in ancient moral instruction, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother of Jesus, Friend of God: Studies in the Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 168–81, esp. pp. 172–78.

¹¹ See discussion in Craig S. Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul’s Approach to Transformed Thinking* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 173–206.

¹² Paul’s discussion in 13:8–12 is consistent with two earlier discussions of human knowledge in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Cor 2:8–16, he writes that people know (οἶδα) the things of people because of the spirit (πνεῦμα) within them, and, likewise, only God’s spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ) knows the things of God, since the “spirit searches everything, even the depths of God” (2:10–11 NRSV). According to Paul, believers have received the Christ’s spirit (12:13), which points to knowing that is experiential (12:13), relational (6:12–20; 12:12–31), and sacramental (11:17–34). Cf. Johnson, “The Body in Question.”

knowledge not only as human perception of and knowledge about God, but also as relational knowing—knowing that, in the present, is only partial, indirect, and finite.

This finite knowledge and indirect perception will, however, be transformed at the eschaton (τὸ τέλειον, v. 10). After this change, believers will perceive God directly (πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον) and will “know as we have been known.”¹³ In the present, believers have genuine knowledge, but, in its partial nature, it only anticipates the direct and unmediated knowledge they will have in the future when God becomes “all things in all things” (1 Cor 15:28). As Craig Keener states, believers “can experience a foretaste of that knowledge in the present, but “full knowledge of God is eschatological (1 Cor 13:12)”¹⁴ For believers to receive “full knowledge of God,” transformation is necessary.

Categories of Change

This change is *eschatological* in that it will occur at the arrival of “the end” (ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον). It is *epistemic* in that it entails a transformation of knowledge. Paul uses two metaphors

Moreover, those who have the spirit have “the mind of Christ” (2:16) understand the gifts given by God (2:12) and are thus equipped for spiritual judgment or discernment (2:16). Those who are unspiritual (ψυχικός), however, are unable “to know” (δύναται γινῶται) the “things of the spirit” (2:14). Of concern for Paul in 2:8–16, as well, is the spiritually-enabled capacity to know and discern “the things of God” (τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ) and “the things of the spirit” (τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος). This is “spiritual knowing” in that the Spirit (πνεῦμα) enables it, and it brings knowledge of God that is otherwise inaccessible for people.

1 Corinthians 8:1–10 contains a clustering of the word γινῶσις. Perhaps quoting a Corinthian slogan, Paul writes, “Now concerning food sacrificed to idols, we know that ‘we all have knowledge’” (8:1). After suggesting that those who think they have knowledge do not yet know as they should (8:2), he returns to the matter of food sacrificed to idols. He writes, “We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and there is no God but one” (v. 4; see also v. 6). Paul further argues that not all have this knowledge (i.e. of the truth of God and idols) but that those do have it should not be a cause of stumbling for those who do not (vv. 7–10). Here, γινῶσις is knowledge and understanding of God. Like the spirit-mediated knowledge of God in 1 Cor 2:8–16, human knowledge in ch. 13 is indirect (13:12a). As with both 2:8–16 and 8:1–10, God is the object of the partial, mediated human knowledge in 13:12b. Cf. Fee, *First Epistle*, 644; Gooch, *Partial Knowledge*, 143–54.

¹³ His claim in v. 8b, that knowledge will pass away, likely indicates that the *partial* knowledge of the present will be nullified when it is eclipsed by full knowledge.

¹⁴ Keener, *Mind of the Spirit*, 195. See also the claim of Fee (*First Epistle*), “By this Paul intends to delineate the difference between the ‘knowing’ that is available through the gift of the Spirit and the final eschatological knowing that is complete” (648). Cf. Fee, *First Epistle*, 645–46; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1061, 1065–66.

to describe this eschatological, epistemic change. First, he describes his previous ways of speaking, reasoning, and thinking as those of a child (νήπιος), and he contrasts them with his current conduct, which is that of an adult (άνήρ). Here, however, Paul's primary concern is not with age or a maturation process.¹⁵ Rather, he seeks to show that the gifts that characterize present existence, including knowledge (12:8; 13:2), will cease. The present ways of knowing will be done away with (καταργέω) at the eschaton.¹⁶

Second, Paul portrays human epistemic perception as looking through a mirror: βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι (13:12). This metaphor portrays the indirect means by which humans perceive the things of God.¹⁷ Hence, the contrast: at the eschaton, believers will see "face to face" (πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον). That is, they will have no need for mediation but will perceive God directly.¹⁸

Together, these two metaphors illumine Paul's statement in v. 12: "Now I know in part, but then I will know just as I also have been known." The partial knowledge that will be put aside is limited and indirect. When believers undergo bodily and ontological transformation at the eschaton (1 Cor 15:35–57; cf. Phil 3:21), however, they will have completed and unmediated knowledge.

¹⁵ Fee, *First Epistle*, 646–47; cf. Gooch, *Partial Knowledge*, 146–47.

¹⁶ It is best to read καταργέω in vv. 8, 10 as a reference to God's eschatological abolishment of all competing realities (1 Cor 15:24–28; cf. 2:6; 6:13). For a similar reading, see Fee, *First Epistle*, 643; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1061.

¹⁷ Hollander, "Seeing God," 397; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1067–71; cf. Hugedé, *La Métaphore Du Miroir*, 15–37.

¹⁸ Fee, *First Epistle*, 647–49; Gooch, *Partial Knowledge*, 147–54.

Factors in Change

In this passage, the most explicit factor in change is eschatological expectation and Paul's distinction between the present age and the age to come.¹⁹ As argued above, limited knowledge due to mediated ways of knowing characterizes humanity in the present age, but believers will undergo epistemic change at the eschaton that will enable them to know directly. Paul neither articulates the mechanism(s) by which this change occurs nor describes the change itself. Yet his before-and-after depictions of knowledge indicate that the eschaton will bring with it epistemic transformation. Moreover, God who accomplishes eschatological events serves as the agent of transformation, and the knowledge of God is the *telos* of human knowledge.²⁰

1.1.3 Transformation & Selfhood in 1 Cor 13:8–12

In 1 Cor 13:8–12, Paul portrays human knowledge and human access to full, unmediated knowledge as fully dependent upon God. This resembles other sections of 1 Corinthians, in which Paul contrasts human wisdom with God's wisdom and characterizes humans as reliant upon the spirit's mediation of "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 1–3). At the eschaton, however, God will transform believers' epistemic capacities so that they will know God directly.²¹ Paul thus portrays the Corinthians' epistemic abilities as determined and circumscribed by the age in which they live. In the present, humanity is limited in the ability to possess knowledge and must

¹⁹ Temporal markers structure Paul's logic in order for him to claim that, unlike the gifts, love persists through even the shift from one age to the next. See, e.g., the anticipation of "when the complete comes" (ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον) in v. 10 and the repeated ἄρτι...τότε construction in v. 12.

²⁰ As Thiselton (*First Epistle*) writes, "Paul does not wish his readers to be deceived by the apparently immanent process which ἔλθῃ, comes, might be thought to imply on its own. Human persons do not simply 'progress' to *perfection* or completion, as gnostics might propose; For the eschatological act of definitive judgment which evaluates everything in the light of the the whole does away with piece-by-piece knowledge *in a cosmic act of God* (1065; emphasis original).

²¹ This is, perhaps, because humans will be transformed into Spirit at the resurrection (1 Cor 15:35–57). That is, they will become fully part of the spiritual reality upon which they presently rely.

receive even the partial knowledge as a divine gift. Yet this present, supplemented knowledge anticipates eschatological, epistemic transformation.

It seems that knowledge was a point of contention in the Corinthian community, and some of its participants may have claimed authority based on their possession of special, eschatological knowledge.²² In this context, knowledge has to some degree become an important aspect of self-definition.²³ In response, Paul implicitly presents his audience with a model of selfhood by locating human knowledge within a larger temporal frame. That is, he presents to the Corinthians a subjectivity in which present knowledge is bestowed by the spirit but is partial and mediated, in contrast to the full and unmediated knowledge that humans will receive as the result of eschatological transformation.

Moreover, rhetorically, Paul aims to produce in his audience a transformation in which some in the community adopt a new self-understanding with respect to knowledge and, as a result, a new mode conduct that is appropriate to it. As the larger context of 1 Cor 13 suggests, love that builds up the community should take priority over imperfect knowledge that “puffs up” (8:1-2). This line of reasoning may inform why Paul not only encourages the Corinthians to pursue love but especially that they would prophesy (14:1). Since love will endure beyond the temporary gifts that correspond with childhood (like speaking in tongues), it corresponds not only with Christ’s self-giving, but with the age to come. By living according to *agapē*, believers live according to the mind of Christ (2:16), which characterizes full, divine knowledge.²⁴ Thus, Paul’s descriptions of eschatological, epistemic transformation function to inform the

²² Johnson, *Writings*, 263–64.

²³ This reading is in part influenced by the writings of Michel Foucault and his notion of “power-knowledge.” See especially Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 92–102; *Discipline and Punish*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage, 1995).

²⁴ On the mind of Christ as a pattern for morality, see Johnson, “Transformation of the Mind and Moral Discernment in Paul” in *Contested Issues*.

Corinthians' present self-understanding and conduct. Paradoxically, *future* transformation provides a constitutive element of *present* selfhood: a vision of future epistemic change shapes present self-understanding and calls believers to embody its implications in their community.

1.2 1 Corinthians 15:35–57

1 Corinthians 15:35–57 is densely packed with the language of human transformation. Since this discourse spans some twenty-two verses and multiple, consecutive pericopae, I break with my standard organizational structure of applying the diagnostic categories to each pericope. Instead, what follows is an overview and analysis of 1 Cor 15:35–37 as a whole.

1.2.1 Overview of Pericope

The questions in v. 35 establish the subject matter for 15:35–57. The queries are *how* the dead will be raised and “with what kind of body they will come.”²⁵ The second question, in which Paul first introduces the term *σῶμα* into ch. 15, amplifies the first and “leading question” that Paul uses to “direct the subsequent argument in the direction he wants it to go.”²⁶ In the first subsection (vv. 35–41), Paul’s abrupt response (*ἄφρων*) suggests that the question is misguided. He then uses an agricultural metaphor to stress the difference between that which is sown and that which emerges from the soil (vv. 36–38). To be sure, continuity between what is sown and what emerges is assumed and necessary for the analogy to work. But Paul primarily

²⁵ I am pessimistic about our abilities to reconstruct the context that gave rise to 1 Corinthians 15. I am persuaded, however, that Paul’s rhetoric here is not polemical but didactic and, as a result, that preoccupation with identifying Corinthian opponents with whom Paul quarrels are misguided. Instead, it is more likely that Paul provides instructive teaching for a conflicted Corinthian community. See the overview and arguments in Jeffrey R. Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15: a Study of Metaphysics, Rhetoric, and Resurrection*, HUT 42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000). Asher’s arguments presume and build on the arguments that 1 Corinthians consists of deliberative rhetoric in Margaret Mary Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, HUT 28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991).

²⁶ Asher, *Polarity and Change*, 68–77.

emphasizes the change that occurs in the seed's becoming a plant, as indicated by the opening of his explanation that what is sown is not the body that it is to become, but only a plain seed (v. 37).²⁷ He not only stresses the difference between the sown seed and the mature plant, but he also notes that God gives different bodies to each plant and to each seed (v. 38).²⁸ This first part of Paul's response suggests that the premise of the questions of v. 15 (especially the second query) are wrong because they suppose that a bodily change will not occur at the resurrection.²⁹

Paul continues his emphasis on difference, broadening his scope with the claim that "not all flesh is the same flesh" (v. 39). Humans and other animals differ from one another in their flesh, just as earthly and heavenly entities have different bodies (vv. 39–40). Furthermore, heavenly bodies differ from one another in their glory (δόξα). Thus, from beginning to end, Paul's primary emphasis in vv. 35–41 is on difference and distinction.³⁰ The changes that occur to the bare seeds that produce mature plants anticipate Paul's later claim: "We will all be changed" (v. 51).³¹

In v. 42, Paul shifts from analogy to exposition concerning those who have died: "It is also this way with the resurrection from the dead." That which is sown is perishable, in dishonor and in weakness, is raised imperishable, in glory and in power (vv. 42–43).³² In vv. 44, Paul explicitly answers the question that his supposed interlocutors ask in v. 35: "A physical

²⁷ So Johnson, "Life-Giving Spirit: The Ontological Implications of Resurrection in 1 Corinthians," in *Contested Issues*, 284. Cf. Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 115.

²⁸ As discussed in more detail below (1.2.2), this statement also stresses God's agency in the accomplishing transformation.

²⁹ See Asher, *Polarity and Change*, 66–89.

³⁰ As Thiselton (*First Epistle*) writes, difference is one of two emphases that dominates through 15:49: "These two themes of (a) *differences between 'bodies'* and (b) *the finite resourcefulness of the sovereign God already observable in creation* run through vv. 35–49" (1259, emphasis original).

³¹ The reference to "bare grain" (γυμνὸν κόκκον) in v. 37 anticipates the "clothing over" of the resurrection in vv. 53–54 (Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1264; cf. 2 Cor 5:1–5).

³² On weakness and power, see Thiselton (*First Epistle*): "If weakness, humiliation, and decay present the paths of the dominating *decrescendo* of human morality, power, denotes not a static source of competency, but an energizing *crescendo* of equipment and capacities for splendor and perhaps unimagined tasks and service yet to come" (1275).

(ψυχικόν) body is sown, but a spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν) is raised.” He does not explain what a σῶμα πνευματικόν is. Yet, to restate the point, his primary emphasis is how it *differs* from what preceded. Specifically, the body that dies must be *transformed* into something new—into πνεῦμα—at the resurrection.

Verse 44b transitions to a new subsection (vv. 44b–49) and functions as a thesis statement for what follows: “If there is a physical body (σῶμα ψυχικόν), then there is also a spiritual one (πνευματικός).” Through v. 49, Paul contrasts the first Adam with the second Adam, the second of whom has become “life-giving spirit” (πνεῦμα ζωοποιόν). The first Adam is *psychic* (ψυχικός) and of dust, and the second is spiritual and of heaven (vv. 46–47). So too, believers are of the earthy order of the first Adam and bear the image of dust, but will undergo a change, after which they will bear the image of that which is heavenly (vv. 48–49). The first Adam’s descendants existed according to an order that is earthly and perishable until Christ came as life-giver (v. 45) and enabled existence according to the heavenly, imperishable order (cf. Phil 3:20–21).³³

In v. 50, Paul states the problem that underlies the question asked in v. 35: “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and neither can the perishable (ἡ φθορά) inherit the imperishable (ἡ ἀφθαρσία).”³⁴ This claim would understandably lead to the question of how the dead are raised and with what type of body they would enter into resurrected life (v. 35). Yet Paul views this is a foolish question (v. 36a) because it fails to recognize the emphasis to which his rhetoric has built, namely, the mystery that whether or not one dies, “we will all be changed” (ἀλλάσσω; vv. 51–52). In order for a person to transition from mortal, perishable, *psychic* (ψυχικός) existence into imperishable, *spiritual* (πνευματικός) existence at the resurrection it is

³³ Cf. Johnson, “Life-Giving Spirit,” 286; Asher, *Polarity and Change*, 93–99.

³⁴ So, Asher, *Polarity and Change*, 152–55.

necessary (δεῖ) “for the perishable to be clothed over (ἐνδύω) with imperishability and for the mortal to put on (ἐνδύω) immortality” (v. 53). In this change, victory over death is gained (vv. 54–57; cf. v. 26). This final pericope captures the point that Paul seeks to make in 15:35–57: resurrection involves radical transformation from an embodied existence that is *psychic* and perishable to an embodied existence that is imperishable and constituted by πνεῦμα.³⁵

1.2.2 Transformation in 1 Corinthians 15:35–57: Necessity, Categories, and Factors in Change *Necessity for Change*

As stated above, the claim in 15:50 that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” implies at least one reason for why someone would ask the question put forth in 15:35. It is unclear how one can be raised from the dead and with what sort of body one can be resurrected (v. 35), since “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” and since “the perishable cannot inherit imperishability” (v. 50). The language of v. 50 presupposes two difference spheres of existence that Paul’s rhetoric envisages throughout 15:35–57. One sphere is that of the ψυχικός, which is the realm of the “‘merely material’ or empirical, that is, always corruptible, subject to dishonor, and weak.”³⁶ The other sphere is that of the πνευματικός, which is characterized by “strength, incorruptibility, and radiance of the more-than-merely material, or the

³⁵ Cf. Asher, *Polarity and Change*, who argues that Paul’s antitheses in 1 Cor 15:39–49 express two different “states of being.” In saying that this new existence is constituted by πνεῦμα, I am neither fully persuaded that Paul assumes a material spirit nor that such a conviction is beyond the realm of possibility. There is evidence for material and non-material understandings of πνεῦμα in ancient writings (see Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 25–79), and I am not convinced that Paul’s letters give enough evidence for readers to be sure of his perspective. My reference to existence that is *constituted* by the spirit seeks to express that the spirit’s presence, power, and governance dominates the realm into which the believer is resurrected. Cf. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1276–81.

³⁶ Johnson, “Life-Giving Spirit,” 284–85.

supra-empirical.”³⁷ The human as physically composed of flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, which in 1 Corinthians is the active power of the resurrected Christ, mediated by Christ’s πνεῦμα.³⁸ The kingdom thus alludes to the sphere of the πνευματικός. It is necessary (cf. the δέι that follows in v. 53) for the body to undergo transformation because πνεῦμα, not flesh and blood, is what governs God’s kingdom.³⁹ Just as a planted seed differs from the plant that emerges from it, a pre-resurrection, perishable body must be changed into a resurrected, immortal and imperishable body.⁴⁰

Categories of Change

Temporally, the transformation in this passage is not only future but eschatological. The resurrection from the dead forms the subject matter for the whole of 1 Cor 15, and future transformation of the body at the eschaton is Paul’s concern in vv. 35–57 (see esp. vv. 51–52; cf. 1 Thess 4:13–5:11).⁴¹ Yet this future change has present dimensions as well, which I unpack in the following.

From the opening of this subsection (v. 35), Paul focuses on the body (σῶμα), which is the nexus of change in this context. In v. 50, “flesh and blood” is synecdoche for the whole human body.⁴² At the most basic level, the natural human body cannot inherit God’s kingdom. For this reason, it is necessary for the σῶμα ψυχικόν to be changed into a σῶμα πνευματικός. At

³⁷ Johnson, “Life-Giving Spirit,” 285; see also Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1277–79; cf. Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 108. See also Asher’s (*Polarity and change*) arguments that metaphysical “polarity” is a “metaphysical obstacle” for the Corinthians’ ability to understand how a human can be resurrected since they likely believed that “it is a metaphysically impossibility for a terrestrial body to ascend to a celestial realm (82). Thus, metaphysical polarity is “the problem; the solution is change” (88).

³⁸ Frederick David Carr, “Beginning at the End: The Kingdom of God in 1 Corinthians,” *CBQ*, forthcoming.

³⁹ Cf. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1277–78.

⁴⁰ Due to presumed metaphysical polarity, as Asher (*Polarity of Change*) states, there is in 1 Cor 15:25–57 a “metaphysical necessity of change” (89).

⁴¹ For Paul, the resurrection is both a present and a future reality, and his shift to the future dimensions of the resurrection begin at 15:19. See Johnson, “Life-Giving Spirit,” 281–82.

⁴² As Thiselton (*First Epistle*) observes, “flesh and blood” also refers to “humankind in its weakness and vulnerability,” which has moral dimensions as well (1291).

bottom, Paul describes *somatic* transformation. Furthermore, Luke Timothy Johnson has shown that Paul's rhetoric also points to *ontological* transformation.⁴³ The transformation of the σῶμα ψυχικόν into a σῶμα πνευματικός entails more than a change in the "stuff" of which the body consists. It involves incorporation into the "heavenly" in place of the sphere of "dust" (vv. 45–49) when the perishable, and moral existence is clothed over with imperishability and immortality (vv. 50–54).⁴⁴ This language describes incorporation into a pneumatic mode of being, an "eschatological-ontological" transformation.⁴⁵

Although Paul primarily emphasizes somatic and ontological transformation, this passage also has moral dimensions. As in Phil 3:20–21, the larger context of 1 Corinthians envisages virtuous moral conduct in the present as a necessary condition for future ontological transformation. One can see an example of the inseparable relationship between the moral and the ontological in Paul's claim that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 15:50). This reference to "inheriting" (κληρονομέω) the kingdom of God echoes 1 Cor 6:9–11. There, with a vice list, Paul warns that "unrighteous people" will not inherit God's kingdom. The kingdom is constituted by power (1 Cor 4:20) and belongs to the sphere of πνεῦμα.⁴⁶ Yet believers must change their moral conduct in the present to become fit for the future inheritance of God's reign (6:11).⁴⁷ Full incorporation into that sphere, therefore, requires not only future somatic and ontological transformation but also present *moral* transformation.⁴⁸

⁴³ As Johnson ("Life-Giving Spirit") observes, the question of "what kind of body" that opens this subsection (v. 35) is "an inescapably ontological query" (283).

⁴⁴ So Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 120.

⁴⁵ Johnson, "Life-Giving Spirit," 286–87.

⁴⁶ Carr, "Beginning at the End."

⁴⁷ See full discussion in Carr, "Beginning at the End;" cf. Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 119.

⁴⁸ For a more thorough discussion of the interrelationship between the moral and the ontological in 1 Corinthians, see Johnson, "Life-Giving Spirit," 286–87. The inseparability of the ontological from the moral is consistent with notions of "strong relationality," which views "each thing, including each person" as "first and always a nexus of relations" (Slife, "Taking Practices Seriously," 159). In this sense,

How can one account for the continuity of the self amidst change in 1 Cor 15:35–57? Is it an appropriate question? In Paul’s analogy of the planted seed, which again emphasizes difference and distinction between what is planted and what is “raised” (vv. 35–38), he stresses that “God gives (δίδωμι) to it [i.e. a seed] a body as God wills (θέλω)” (v. 38). With his emphasis on God’s sovereign giving and “ordering” of the body according to God’s purpose or desire, Paul implies that God’s action remains continuous amidst the seed’s change and “differentiation”⁴⁹ Similarly, for the human, the received spirit (see e.g. 12:13) is also the reality into which the believer will be incorporated (42–49). In this incorporation, the believer will be “clothed over” with imperishability (vv. 53–54). What does not change, therefore, is the divine action or the divine πνεῦμα. God is the ground of continuity amidst change. To ask what assures the self’s persistence through change is thus not an unreasonable question to ask of Paul’s rhetoric, as long as one recognizes that the source of continuity is not necessarily inherent in the human.

Factors in Change

Paul does not explain *how* the transformation occurs or who the agent of change is. Yet it is clear from the larger context of 15:35–57 that a divine agent accomplishes this transformation.⁵⁰ In Paul’s seed-sowing analogy, for example, the planted seed represents the human as that which undergoes transformation, and God has authority to determine the “body” (σῶμα) of the seed (15:38). In 15:42–44, where Paul explicitly applies his analogy to the resurrection (v. 42a), he employs the divine passive for the verbs “to sow” (σπείρω) and “to

it is not simply that the ontological and the moral are each building blocks of selfhood but that the *relationship* between the two is in part constitutive of the human self.

⁴⁹ See Vigdis Songe-Møller, “‘With What Kind of Body Will They Come?’ Metamorphosis and the Concept of Change: From Platonic Thinking to Paul’s Notion of the Resurrection of the Dead,” in *Metamorphoses Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, eds. Turid Karlsen Seim and Jorunn Økland; Ekstasis (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009). 118–19; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1265.

⁵⁰ So, Asher, *Polarity and Change*, 79–80.

raise” (ἐγείρω) throughout, which points to God as the agent of somatic and ontological transformation.⁵¹ In 15:52, Paul again uses the divine passive when he writes that “the dead will be raised” (οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται in v. 52) and that “we all will be changed.”⁵² In each instance, the divine passive points to God as the agent of human transformation.

Although God is the active agent of change, πνεῦμα—the spirit of Christ (15:45)—is an essential factor in this eschatological somatic-ontological transformation.⁵³ As stated above, Paul’s language envisages two spheres of existence that form a binary: the realm of the Adamic, which is perishable, mortal, fleshly, and *psychic* and the realm of Christ, the second Adam, which is characterized by the imperishable, immortal, and spirit.⁵⁴ The *telos* of believers in whom Christ’s spirit inhabits (1 Cor 2:10-16; 6:11, 16–20; 12:13) is ultimately to be incorporated into God who will be “all things in all things” ([τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν; 15:28; cf. 12:6).⁵⁵ For a human to be integrated into the realm of divine πνεῦμα, reception of the spirit into one’s body is insufficient; through somatic transformation, one must receive a body that is constituted by πνεῦμα (15:44b–45) in order to be integrated fully into God (15:28). The believers’ reception of the spirit in the present anticipates full incorporation into the sphere of God’s spirit at the eschaton, which makes πνεῦμα a key factor in transformation. Spirit is both the medium and goal of eschatological transformation.⁵⁶

⁵¹ In vv. 42–44, Paul uses the passive of σπείρω 4x and ἐγείρω 4x. In v. 38 he explicitly identifies God as the agent responsible for plant growth, which supports arguments in favor of the *divine* passive in his analogies and his exposition in this section.

⁵² πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα in v. 51 and ὑμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα in v. 52.

⁵³ Cf. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1274–75, which suggests that the spirit is also an agent of change.

⁵⁴ See Johnson, “Life-Giving Spirit,” 284–85.

⁵⁵ I retain the NA28’s brackets for the article in [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν for 15:28 because there is a near even split in the MSS evidence.

⁵⁶ Johnson, “Life-Giving Spirit,” 286, 292.

1.2.3 Transformation & Selfhood in 1 Corinthians 15:35–57

The mechanics and ontology of this change are seemingly beyond even Paul's ability to explicate. We can, however, posit some theses about the conceptions of selfhood assumed in this passage. First, in 1 Cor 15:35–57, Paul portrays the person as embodied, even amidst a transformation from flesh and blood into spirit. His vision of the human insists on embodiment to the extent that he describes the transformed being as a *σῶμα πνευματικός*.

Second, although a person in this context is necessarily embodied, the person or self is not reducible to a body. One cannot simply understand *σῶμα* as the “self” as Rudolf Bultmann famously did.⁵⁷ Rather, Paul presumes a self that is distinguishable from the *σῶμα* when he describes the transition from a perishable and mortal body to an imperishable and immortal one as a phenomenon of being “clothed” with imperishability and immortality (1 Cor 15:53–54; 2 Cor 5:1–5).⁵⁸ Here, Paul's descriptions assume a “body as container” metaphor, in which the body contains or “houses” (2 Cor 5:1–4) a self.⁵⁹ He thus envisages *σῶμα* as a necessary and important structure of selfhood, and the *pyschic* body must be transformed in order for the self to be incorporated in a *pneumatic* sphere. In this construal, the body is a nexus by which the self relates to spiritual spheres and those spheres, in turn, govern, empower, and determine selfhood.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ See especially Bultmann's famous claim that “man does not *have a soma*; he *is soma*” (*Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols [Waco, TX.: Baylor University Press, 2007], Repr. of *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols., trans. Kendrick Grobel [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951–55], 2:194).

⁵⁸ As Troels Engerg-Pederson (“Complete and Incomplete Transformation in Paul—a Philosophical Reading of Paul on Body and Spirit in *Metamorphoses*”) rightly argues, “If this mortal and corruptible something, which must consist of flesh and blood, is going to put on immortality and incorruption, then it must, as it were, *be* there for that operation to be successful” (128, emphasis original).

⁵⁹ Tappenden, *Resurrection*, 121–22.

⁶⁰ On the body as means of relationship, see Ernst Käsemann, “On Paul's Anthropology,” in *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 22. Cf. Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 104.

Third, just as some of the person's constitutive factors are not all necessarily intrinsic to the person (e.g. πνεῦμα), so too, the ground of the person's continuity amidst change is not intrinsic to the person. If Paul believes that something like a soul is at least part of the self's "equipment," he does not state it. What he does suggest, however, is that God is the determinative power over the self, its body, and its transformation (15:35–49).

Finally, this future transformation has implications for pre-resurrection conceptions of subjectivity in 1 Corinthians. Prior to eschatological transformation, believers experience a taste of this new dwelling for the self through reception of the spirit and life according to the spirit. The Corinthians therefore experience not only life "between the ages," but also life that is "between *beings*;" the present Christian self is in a "betwixt and between," in state of already, but not-yet.⁶¹ Thus, Christian subjects prior to the resurrection, are in a mode of *becoming* inasmuch as believers are neither fully settled into the sphere of the empirical and perishable nor fully incorporated into the ontological sphere of the spiritual and the imperishable.⁶²

In sum, according to 1 Corinthians, the spirit has initiated an ontological change (albeit incomplete) in believers, and Christ's spirit empowers them to live according to the spirit as the corporate body of Christ.⁶³ While simultaneously inhabited by the spirit and inhabiting the sphere of Christ, the present believer is determined by relationship with Christ and relationships with corporate body of Christ. The eschatological transformation in 1 Cor 15:35–57 is somatic because the body must undergo change in order to be fit for existence within the realm of spirit.

⁶¹ I borrow the phrase "betwixt and between" from the notions of liminality in Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

⁶² Cf. Jorunn Økland, "Genealogies of the Self: Materiality, Personal Identity, and the Body in Paul's Letters to the Corinthians," in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, eds. Seim and Økland, *Metamorphoses*, 82–107

⁶³ See Johnson, "Life-Giving Spirit," 187; "The Body in Question," 295–315.

This is also ontological transformation because the divine spirit becomes the sole power and structure of selfhood at the point in which God becomes “all things in all things” (15:28).

1.3 Conclusion: Transformation Discourse in 1 Corinthians

Taken together, the two passages on transformation examined here both presume a conception of pre-resurrection selfhood as not only caught in a temporal already/not yet but also between two states of existence. In 13:8–12, the person is partly determined by its knowledge. In the present, the believer receives knowledge as a gift from the spirit, but that knowledge is partial and mediated. At the eschaton, believers will undergo epistemic transformation and will know fully and directly “as we are known” (13:12). In 1 Cor 15:35–57 Paul presumes that believers are at once infused with the spirit and inhabit the sphere of Christ’s spirit as part of a communal body.⁶⁴ In the present, believers have therefore experienced ontological changes, but they are partial: although their existence is energized by the pneumatic power sphere of Christ, which is spiritual, imperishable, and immortal, they live in and are limited by the sphere of flesh, perishability, and mortality. Only at the resurrection will they undergo complete somatic transformation in order to be fully incorporated into the realm of the spirit.

Interpreting Paul’s discourse through the lens of a relational ontology is more illuminating here than a Cartesian framework, which presumes a static, autonomous and bounded self that is ontologically distinct from the body and the world to which the body belongs.⁶⁵

According to a relational ontology, “Things are not first self-contained entities and then

⁶⁴ One can perhaps see most clearly the believer’s location in the overlap between two ontological spheres in the melding of bodies and spirit that he describes in 1 Cor 6:12–20.

⁶⁵ See Slife, “Taking Practices Seriously.” As Rabens, (*Holy Spirit and Ethics*) argues, however, it is not necessary to view relational and substance-ontological perspectives as mutually exclusive in Paul’s writings. Instead, “Paul’s thinking rather encompasses both these aspects, and they are well captured by the concept of *transforming relationships*” (138–45).

interactive. Each thing, including each person, is first and always a nexus of relations.”⁶⁶ For Paul in 1 Corinthians, human knowledge and the human body are partly determinative of the self, and both exist in an ontological in-between space that is dynamic.⁶⁷ Broadly, selfhood is determined by the powers that energize the person, and this participation places believers on one of two trajectories. Through participation in the mediating power of πνεῦμα, believers are “being saved” (1:18; cf. 1:21; 3:15; 5:5; 7:16; 9:22; 10:33; 15:2; 2 Cor 2:15). Those outside of the sphere of Christ, however, are “perishing” (1:18; 2:6; 15:24; 2 Cor 2:15). In either case the subjectivity is not only relationally-constituted, but is also characterized by *becoming*.⁶⁸

In this context, transformation is not a threat to personal identity; it is, instead, partly constitutive of selfhood. The believer has undergone transformation in order to become a “Christ-subject” (6:11). The pre-resurrection “nomadic self” continues in a state of moral becoming and anticipates the full epistemic, somatic, and ontological transformation that God will accomplish at the eschaton.⁶⁹ From baptism to full incorporation into God, then, the subject in 1 Corinthians is characterized by transformation.

⁶⁶ Slife, “Taking Practices Seriously,” 159.

⁶⁷ On static vs. dynamic conception of selfhood and change in Paul, cf. Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 126–32.

⁶⁸ For a contemporary account of subjectivity as partly constituted by “becoming,” see Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 70–116. For a very recent argument for relationally-constituted selfhood in Pauline thought, see Eastman *Paul and the Person*.

⁶⁹ On nomadic subjectivity, see Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 84–86. Paul’s implied model of selfhood differs, however, from postmodern nomadic subjectivities because his notions of the self have Christ as their model and their goal. In Braidotti’s account, “the nomadic subject is flow of transformation without ultimate destination” (86).

2. Human Transformation in 2 Corinthians

Passages that qualify as transformation discourse appear in two sections of the final form of 2 Corinthians.⁷⁰ The first section is 2 Cor 3–5, in which a cluster of texts meets both of my criteria. For instance, explicit transformation terminology appears in 3:18 (μεταμορφώω), 5:1–4 (ἐπενδύομαι, cf. 1 Cor 15:43–54), and 5:17 (καινὴ κτίσις). According to my second criterion, several passages portray an apparent break in personal identity. These include descriptions in 2 Cor 5:1–5, 14–15, 17. A number of passages in chs. 3–5 describe human change that does not quite meet my two criteria but that are critical for understanding the passages that I have identified. Thus, as with 1 Cor 15:35–57, I explore the larger literary context of chs. 3–5 in order to examine how that context sheds light on the “anchor texts” that I have identified.

Another passage for examination is 2 Cor 11:13–15, which qualifies according to my first criterion. In these verses, Paul uses the term μετασχηματίζω three times (vv. 13–14). On the surface, it appears that he uses the term figuratively, in way that does not portray human change. Yet I argue that Paul does refer to a distinct category of change that requires that we include 11:13–15 with my collection of passages on transformation.

2.1 2 Corinthians 3:18

In 2 Cor 3:18 Paul writes, “But we all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are being transformed (μεταμορφώω) from glory into glory, just as from the

⁷⁰ On the composition of 2 Corinthians, I assume that 2 Cor 1–9 and 10–13 are two distinct epistles by Paul that were combined in the order in which they were written, perhaps by Paul himself. My viewpoint is close to that of Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 29–48; Cf. Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* WBC 40, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 41. For an argument on 2 Corinthians as a unity, see Thomas D. Stegman, *The Character of Jesus: The Linchpin to Paul’s Argument in 2 Corinthians*, AnBib 158 (Roma: Pontificio Instituto Biblico), 2005. For a survey of recent epistolary theories on 2 Corinthians, see B.J. Oropeza, *Exploring Second Corinthians: Death and Life, Hardship and Rivalry*, Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity (Atlanta: SBL, 2016), 2–15.

Lord, the Spirit.”⁷¹ His use of the verb μεταμορφόω to state that that “we...are being transformed” makes this verse a passage for examination.⁷²

2.1.1 Overview of Pericope

The larger context of 2 Cor 3 is indispensable for interpreting 3:18. In 3:1–3 Paul addresses what seems to be a desire or request for him to provide for the Corinthians a commendatory letter on his behalf. He writes that the Corinthians have themselves become an epistle, written on the hearts of Paul and his apostolic team (v. 2).⁷³ In Paul’s view the Corinthian community provides a sufficient verification of Paul’s apostolic credentials.⁷⁴ His language expresses interdependence and mutuality between the apostles and the Corinthians. Moreover, the Corinthians have become an “epistle of Christ,” which is written “on tablets of fleshly hearts” (ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίναίς, v. 3). The community is, therefore, not only a commendatory letter for Paul’s team but also a visible attestation to Christ (vv. 2–3). Of significance is that the spirit “inscribes” (ἐγγράφω) these epistles onto human hearts (v. 3).⁷⁵ Although these verses do

⁷¹ With Rabens (*Holy Spirit and Ethics*) I read the adverbial phrase ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ “as a dative of manner or means in relation to the beholding (κατοπτριζόμενοι)” that can be translated ‘by means of an unveiled face’ or simply “with unveiled face” (176–78, esp. 176); see also Jan Lambrecht, “From Glory to Glory (2 Corinthians 3,18): A Reply to Paul B Duff,” *ETL* 85 (2009): 145. On the translation of κατοπτρίζομαι as “beholding...as in a mirror,” see Lambrecht, “Transformation in 2 Cor 3:18,” *Biblica* 64.2 (1983): 246–51.

⁷² Paul’s only other use of μεταμορφόω is in Rom 12:2. Cf. Mark 9:2; Matt 17:2.

⁷³ I refer to the apostolic team because I take Paul’s first person plural pronouns throughout chs. 3–5 as referring to Paul and his colleagues in ministry to the Corinthians. I do, however, read the “we” as referring to the Corinthians by extension since, throughout 2 Cor 3–5, Paul links the apostolic team and their destiny with the Corinthian community. See esp. 3:1–3; 4:5, 12, 14–15; 5:16–21. Cf. Lambrecht, “Structure and Line of Thought in 2 Cor 2,14–7,4” in R Bieringer and J. Lambrecht, *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, BETL 112 (Louvain, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1994), 270–71.

⁷⁴ Note that the term ἀπόστολος does not appear in these verses or in this section of the letter (cf. 2 Cor 1:1; 8:23; 11:5, 13, 12:11). I do, however, read chs. 3–5 as, generally speaking, a defense of Paul’s apostolic ministry.

⁷⁵ Some MSS (x, 33, 1175, 1881) read ὑμῶν instead of ἡμῶν in the phrase as καρδίας ἡμῶν (NA18) in 3:2. In addition to ἡμῶν being attested in the majority of witnesses (so Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Stuttgart: United Bible Societies], 500), the change to

not qualify as transformation discourse for this dissertation, Paul here alludes to a change that the Spirit has already accomplished.⁷⁶

In vv. 4–5, Paul establishes that his apostolic team’s confidence is “through Christ toward God, and he clarifies that their sufficiency to say such things and to work as “ministers of a new covenant” comes not from themselves but from God.⁷⁷ In v. 6, he returns to the theme of the spirit in a programmatic claim that transitions into the next subsection. He writes that this new covenant is not a covenant of the text but of the spirit, and he adds that “the letter kills, but the spirit gives life (τὸ δε πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ).”⁷⁸

2 Cor 3:18 is a climactic statement that caps two subsections: vv. 7–11 and vv. 12–18.⁷⁹ Verses 7–11 follow Paul’s claim that those on his apostolic team are “ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit.”⁸⁰ This text/spirit distinction introduces a comparison between Paul’s διακονία and Moses’ through a play on the story of God’s glory showing on Moses’ face in Ex 34:29–35.⁸¹ Paul not only argues that God’s glory is present in Paul’s “ministry” just as it was with Moses, but he also portrays his ministry as exceeding that of

ὁμῶν in some MSS may function to cohere more closely with Paul’s reference to the Corinthians being enscribed as an epistle in v. 3. Thus, ἡμῶν is both more widely attested and the harder reading than ὁμῶν. Paul plays on these themes later in the chapter, especially in vv. 7–11.

⁷⁶ Paul Brooks Duff, *Moses in Corinth: The Apologetic Context of 2 Corinthians 3*, NovTSupp 159 (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

⁷⁷ Paul’s statements that God establishes their worthiness/sufficiency for ministry in 3:5–6 seems to answer the question he asks in 2:16, “Who is sufficient (ικανός) for these things?” See Lambrecht, “Structure and Line of Thought,” 263–64.

⁷⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 15:45; Gal 3:21; Rom 8:11.

⁷⁹ Cf. Duff, *Moses in Corinth*, 137–209.

⁸⁰ Cf. Lambrecht, “Structure and Line of Thought,” 271–75.

⁸¹ As Frances Back (*Verwandlung durch Offenbarung bei Paulus: Eine religionsgeschichtlich-exegetische Untersuchung zu 2 Kor 2,14–4,6*, WUNT 2.153 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002) rightly notes, the text of Ex 34:29–35 offers no self-explanation, which allows Paul to extract the details from the events at Sinai and to apply them to Christians and to employ the themes of transformation, vision/reflection, etc. (74–75).

Moses' in its glory (vv. 8–11).⁸² He thus compares two distinct ministries: a “ministry of righteousness” (v. 9) with surpassing glory (vv. 8–11), that is superior to the “ministry of death” (v. 7) and ministry of “condemnation” (διακονία τῆς κατακρίσεως in v. 9), whose glory is “perishing” (καταργέω in v. 11) like the glory on Moses' face (vv. 7, 13).⁸³

In vv. 12–18, Paul shifts the focus to Israel's inability to look at Moses' face, (cf. v. 7).⁸⁴ The “children of Israel” (vv. 7, 13) hardened their minds when they could not look upon Moses' veiled face (3:12–14). The same veil that covered Moses' face to cover the glory, according to Paul, covers the hearts of those who read the covenant in his day (vv. 14–15). The veil is only removed when one “turns to the Lord” (v. 16).⁸⁵ Here, as Duff argues, the attention turns from Moses and Paul as ministers to their respective ministerial audiences—Israel and, implicitly, the Corinthians.⁸⁶ The binary presentation of the ministry of death and condemnation and the ministry of righteousness has a corresponding, bifurcated audience: there are those who have not turned to Christ whose minds and hearts are veiled, and those for whom the veil is removed by Christ because they turned to the Lord (vv. 14–16). Furthermore, according to v. 17, the sphere of the Lord and the unveiled is the realm of the spirit (cf. 3:1–3, 6). Paul thus presents a two-part frame in 3:1–17: his apostolic ministry—i.e. himself and his followers—is a ministry of the spirit, righteousness, surpassing glory, and unveiled hearts. This ministry is distinguished from a

⁸² Paul does not, however, reject the glory of Moses' ministry as invalid. Rather, as Lambrecht argues, “Paul manages to convey his attitude regarding that glory by a thoroughly unfavorable comparison with the new glory” (268). See esp. the arguments in William S. Campbell, *The Nations in the Divine Economy: Paul's Covenantal Hermeneutics and Participation in Christ* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 153–92. Cf. Newman, “Covenant Renewal and Transformational Scripts in the Performance of the Hodayot and 2 Corinthians” in *Jesus, Paulus, und die Texte von Qumran*, eds. Jörg Frey et al. WUNT 2.390 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015); Duff, *Moses in Corinth*, 171.

⁸³ See Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 226.

⁸⁴ On this shift, see Lambrecht, “Structure and Line of Thought,” 271.

⁸⁵ On Paul's varied use of the veil imagery, see Joseph Fitzmyer, “Glory Reflected on the Face of Christ (2 Cor 3:7–4:6) and a Palestinian Jewish Motif,” *TS* 42 (1981): 637.

⁸⁶ Duff, *Moses in Corinth*, 172–209; Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 174.

ministry of death, condemnation, inferior glory, and veiled hearts. It is within this binary that Paul employs the language of transformation in 3:18.

2.1.2 Transformation in 2 Corinthians 3:18: Necessity, Categories, and Factors in Change

Necessity for Change

Attention to the theme of glory (δόξα) in 3:7–18 yields insights into the need for transformation in this passage.⁸⁷ Paul writes, “We all...are being transformed from glory into glory (ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν)” in v. 18. According to v. 16, to turn to the Lord and to have a veil removed is to leave the sphere of perishing glory and to enter into the sphere of surpassing glory. To use Paul’s terms, this is a shift “from glory” (ἀπὸ δόξης) of one covenant “to glory” (εἰς δόξαν) in another. Furthermore, this is also movement from the covenant of the text that kills and a “ministry of death” (v. 7) to the ministry of the spirit (vv. 6, 8), which “gives life” (ζωοποιέω in v. 6).⁸⁸ Transformation is necessary, therefore, for one to move from the sphere of death (v. 7), condemnation (v. 9), and perishing glory (v. 11) to the sphere of the spirit (vv. 6, 8, 17–18), of Christ (v. 14), and of surpassing glory (vv. 8–11, 18).

Yet Paul portrays not only a change when one initially turns to the Lord (v. 16) but also present, continuous change. This transformation “from glory to glory” is not a singular event of the past but an ongoing process.⁸⁹ The reference to continual transformation in v. 18 is contested, and it is beyond this work’s scope to provide a thorough interpretive analysis. Yet some exegetical observations help to identify the necessity for present transformation in 2 Cor 3:18.

⁸⁷ On the theme of glory and its connection to the act of unveiling (a connection upon which the following arguments rely), see Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 176–77.

⁸⁸ Cf. Paul’s binary language elsewhere to describe people as “perishing” (ἀπόλλυμι) or “being saved” (σωζω): e.g., 2 Cor 3–4; 1 Cor 1:18; 15:2; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3.

⁸⁹ Lambrecht, “From Glory into Glory,” 145–46; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2.285–86.

To begin, in Paul's letters the term δόξα has different meanings and emphases. For 3:18, primacy must be given to its meaning in the rhetorical context of 2 Cor 3:1–4:6.⁹⁰ Here, the word δόξα has a double sense. Paul first uses it to refer to the brightness or radiance on Moses' face that required a veil for the Israelites to look at him (3:7, 13). In the context of Ex 34, this brightness is part of a manifestation of God's presence and power.⁹¹ As argued above, however, Paul introduces this concept of glory as radiance, in order to initiate comparisons between his ministry and Moses' (vv. 7–11), the new covenant and the old (vv. 6, 14), and followers of Christ with those who do not follow Christ (vv. 12–16). Moreover, Paul tacitly argues that, as a ministry of the spirit and not the letter, and as a ministry that exceeds Moses' in glory, Paul's ministry surpasses Moses' in its manifestation of God's power and presence.

In 3:12–16, Paul shifts the image of the veil (κάλυμμα) from that of a covering over Moses' face to a (figurative) covering over the hearts of those who have not turned to the Lord in Christ (v. 16).⁹² The unbeliever's heart (καρδία) is an organ of epistemic perception (3:14–15).⁹³ When one turns to the Lord and has the veil removed, one's capacities to perceive are unlocked. In terms of the ability to perceive and understand, the believer gains a new, "unimpeded vision."⁹⁴ Paul clarifies this in 4:1–6 when he ties together the threads of δόξα and perception that he interweaves in 3:7–18. In 4:3–4, he writes that if his apostolic team's gospel is veiled (καλύπτω), "it has been veiled (καλύπτω) among those who are perishing (ἀπόλλυμι), among

⁹⁰ Although the exegetical overview above ends with 3:18, this larger section of 2 Corinthians continues through 4:6.

⁹¹ Cf. the relationship of glory with power in 1 Cor 15:43.

⁹² Cf. Fitzmyer, "Glory Reflected on the Face of Christ," 637.

⁹³ This evidenced by Paul's reference to the hardened minds (ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν in 3:14) of those who do not share in the new covenant (see also 4:3–4). The explanatory γάρ in v. 14b, which opens an exposition that continues through v. 15, indicates that the veiling is an explanation for dimmed perception or "hardened minds." Cf. Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 176.

⁹⁴ Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 313.

whom the god of this age has blinded the minds (ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα) of unbelievers so that they would not see the light (φωτισμός) of the gospel of the glory (δόξα) of Christ who is the image (εἰκόν) of God.” Setting aside the identity of the “god of this age,” Paul portrays unbelievers as blind in order to express that they are unable, epistemically, to perceive the good news of Christ, which he figuratively describes as “the *light* of the gospel of the *glory* of Christ.” In his words, their “minds are blinded.” To use a contemporary English term that plays on this double sense of light/glory and knowledge, Paul portrays unbelievers as unable to be *enlightened* because they have not “turned to the Lord” who is the spirit (3:16).⁹⁵

Paul continues in 4:6 with allusions to LXX Gen 1:3 and LXX Isa 9:1: “For God is the one who said, ‘Light (φῶς) will shine (λάμπω) out of darkness,’ who shone light (λάμπω) in our hearts (καρδία) to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God (φοτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ) in the face of Jesus Christ.”⁹⁶ Here, light is the means needed for knowledge, specifically, for knowledge of God’s glory. Only God’s act of shining light into the human heart can produce this insight, and this illumination describes, with a different metaphor, the removal of the veil from people’s hearts as they turn to the Lord (3:16).

How does all of this illuminate the need for *continual* transformation in 3:18? These observations suggest that when believers are transformed “from glory into glory” as an ongoing process, they are continually changed in order to experience greater depths or degrees of knowledge of the divine. That is, the removal of the veil in 3:16 (cf. 4:6) does not result in the believer having knowledge of God to the full degree that is possible; it is the initial event that

⁹⁵ I take “the Lord” in vv. 16–17 to refer to Christ. A growing number of scholars argue that κύριος refers to Yahweh. For an economical argument that supports my position, see M. David Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Paul’s Soteriology*; BZNW 187 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 219 n. 56. For discussions and reference to key works, albeit a different conclusion, see Harris, *Second Epistle*, 314–15; Fitzmyer, “Glory Reflected on the Face of Christ,” 638.

⁹⁶ On Paul’s use of LXX Gen 1:3 and LXX Isa 9:1 in 2 Cor 4:6, see Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989): 152–53.

enables epistemic perception, which is the condition for the possibility for continued deepening of one's knowledge of God. Moreover, as Volker Rabens argues, this knowledge is not limited to the noetic. As elsewhere in his letters (e.g. Phil 3:8), Paul's references to knowledge in 2 Cor 3–4 are both relational and participatory.⁹⁷ Ongoing transformation in 2 Cor 3:18 is needed for believers to participate more fully in the divine and to experience deeper relational knowledge of God. This is, in part, what it means to be transformed from one degree of glory to another.⁹⁸

Categories of change

In terms of temporality, as noted, Paul presumes in 2 Cor 3:1–3 that the Corinthians have already been changed. In v. 3, he writes that they are “an epistle of Christ...having been written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God (πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος), not on stone tablets but on tablets of fleshly hearts (ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις).” With this letter-writing imagery, Paul envisages some type of former change that the “spirit of the living God” accomplished. Thus, he alludes to a *past* change, which he presumes in his reference to ongoing change in 3:18.⁹⁹

How should one categorize the past transformation in 2 Cor 3:18? Paul's continued emphasis on the spirit is suggestive. In 3:4–6, he shifts his focus to the new covenant. As a “covenant of the spirit” Paul describes it as “life-giving” (v. 6). In the Corinthian correspondence, Paul uses the verb ζωοποιέω in an existential sense to claim both that Christ has been transformed into the “life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45) and to say that believers will be given life at the resurrection (1 Cor 15:22; cf. Gal 3:21; Rom 8:11). Elsewhere in 2 Corinthians Paul describes Christ's life (ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) as being manifest in the apostolic team's “mortal flesh”

⁹⁷ Rabens, *Holy Spirit & Ethics*, 181–82; cf. Litwa, *We are Being Transformed*, 216–25.

⁹⁸ See Lambrecht, “From Glory to Glory,” 144–46. Cf. C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNCT (New York: Harper & Row), 125.

⁹⁹ For discussion the past transformation referenced in 3:1–3, see Duff, *Moses in Corinth*, 120–33, 135–36, 71.

(ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκί) as they are being “handed over to death” (4:11; cf. Phil 1:20).¹⁰⁰ He writes in 5:15 that Christ “died for all so that those who live would no longer live for themselves but for the one who died and was raised for them,” and he asserts later that his team will one day live with Christ by God’s power (13:4). In each instance, Paul uses the language of life or “living” *existentially* to describe Christ and/or the Christ event as the ground and empowerment of present existence.¹⁰¹

These same existential emphases are present in 2 Cor 3. Unlike a text inscribed on stone tablets—which, according to Paul, “kills”—the life-giving spirit of God has transformed the Corinthian community into an epistle of Christ (vv. 1–3, 6). As a result, they exist not in the realm of death (v. 7) and condemnation (v. 9) but in the realm of the Lord’s life-giving spirit (vv. 6, 8, 14, 17–18). The past change presumed in 3:18 is, therefore, *existential* transformation.

The transformation described in 3:18 is, however, *present* and *continuous*, as suggested by the present tense and the continuous aspect of the verb μεταμορφόομαι.¹⁰² Moreover, as the above observations suggest, the changes in 2 Cor 3:18 are epistemic with both past and present dimensions. Those “with unveiled faces” who are being transformed in v. 18 have already experienced a foundational perceptual change: the veils upon their hearts were removed when they turned to the Lord (3:16). As a result, they can have “a proper understanding of the gospel,” which is the good news of “God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ” (4:3, 6).¹⁰³ Thus, the present

¹⁰⁰ Cf. 2 Cor 6:16, in which he describes the community as the “temple of the living God.”

¹⁰¹ Such descriptions are inherently mythical. See Luke Timothy Johnson, ““God Was in Christ”: 2 Corinthians 5:19 and Mythic Language” in *Myth and Scripture: Contemporary Perspectives on Religion, Language, and Imagination*, ed. Dexter E. Callender Jr., RBS 78 (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 201–11.

¹⁰² See the arguments in Lambrecht, “From Glory into Glory,” 145–46; cf. Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 1:285–86; Harris, *Second Epistle*, 316–17.

¹⁰³ Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 177. Rabens argues that Paul also “associates ‘unveiling’ with personal closeness and immediacy,” as indicated by Paul’s references to the unveiling of the face (177).

continuous change builds upon the foundation of a past, epistemic transformation.¹⁰⁴ This present change is thus not only continuous but also progressive: ideally, believers will continually experience greater depths of the knowledge of God.¹⁰⁵

Since this ongoing change is not only cognitive but also participatory, the transformation is relational—a description that requires explanation.¹⁰⁶ In my reading of 3:12–18 in conversation with 4:1–6, Christ is the image of God (4:4b). He both has glory (4:4a) and reflects God’s glory (4:6). Believers are able to perceive this reality via divine revelation, which Paul describes as God’s light shining into their hearts (4:6; cf. 3:16). In addition to this initial, revelatory event, 2 Cor 3:18 envisages the believer as being transformed into “the same image” (i.e. somehow being transformed “into Christ” or the reality that characterizes Christ) and as participating in divine glory through contemplation of Christ (τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπιζόμενοι).¹⁰⁷ The change refers not only to a single moment of insight but a *relational knowing* that involves an increasingly “deeper knowledge” over time.¹⁰⁸ Thus, although

¹⁰⁴ Others note the noetic dimensions of Paul’s transformation discourse as well. See, e.g., the label of “cognitive transformation” in Engberg-Pederson, “Complete and Incomplete Transformation,” 123–46, esp. pp.137–40; the term “epistemological transformation” in T. Ryan Jackson, *New Creation in Paul’s Letters: A Study of the Historical and Social Setting of a Pauline Concept*, WUNT 272 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 128–36; or the characterization of “transformed perception” in Nijay K. Gupta, *Worship that Makes Sense to Paul: A New Approach to the Theology and Ethics of Paul’s Cultic Metaphors*, BZNW 175 (Göttingen: De Gruyter, 2010), 191–204; Litwa, *We are Being Transformed*, 220–21. For related epistemic transformations in 2 Corinthians, see Johnson, ““God was in Christ,”” 205.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Harris, *Second Epistle*, 316–17.

¹⁰⁶ Rabens, *Holy Spirit & Ethics*, 181–82; cf. Litwa, *We are Being Transformed*, 216–25.

¹⁰⁷ Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:285; Some interpreters see in Paul’s language a type of *theosis*. See, e.g. Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); Litwa, *We are Being Transformed*; Stephen Finlan, “Can We Speak of *Theosis* in Paul?,” in eds. Michael J. Christensen and Jefferey A. Wittung, *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 68–80; Cf. Barrett (*Second Epistle*): “If the result of the transformation is not apotheosis...it is not far away from it.” (125).

¹⁰⁸ Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 190. On transformation as *increase* in degrees of glory, which I understand as an increase in relational knowledge, see Lambrecht, “From Glory to Glory,” 144–46; see also Fitzmyer, “Glory on the Face of Christ,” 639, 644.

epistemic transformation is a fitting category for 2 Cor 3:18, the relationality inherent in this transformation requires additional nuance: knowledge is both experiential and relational.¹⁰⁹

On a final note, in 2 Cor 3:1–4:6 the heart functions consistently as the locus of human transformation. It is the primary focal point of the spirit’s work to transform existentially (3:2–3) and epistemically (4:6).¹¹⁰ Although I do not label this change as somatic in the same sense as in 1 Cor 15:35–57 and Phil 3:21, these passages include bodily aspects of human transformation. In the past changes referenced in 2 Cor 3, the human undergoes change when the spirit changes the heart (cf. Gal 4:6).

Factors in Change

The passive voice of μεταμορφώω indicates that the believer is not the agent of transformation. Rather, the textual evidence points to Christ’s spirit as the agent of change. Paul writes that the transformation occurs καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος. As Margaret Thrall argues, “The force of ἀπό is to denote causation or agency,” which attributes the agency to κύριου πνεύματος.¹¹¹ In my view, the best translation of this phrase is “the Lord who is the spirit.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ As Lambrecht (“Transformation in 2 Corinthians 3:18”) rightly observes, Paul uses the verb (μεταμορφώω) both in 2 Cor 3:18 and in Rom 12:2, yet, in 2 Corinthians, “the ongoing process of transformation is emphasized without explicit reference to Christ’s moral responsibility” (251). I would add that there is a lack moral emphasis in 2 Cor 2:18 altogether.

¹¹⁰ So, Fitzmyer, “Glory on the Face of Christ,” 643.

¹¹¹ Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:286.

¹¹² Thrall (*Second Epistle*) lists “the Lord who is the Spirit” as one translation option but prefers “the Spirit of the Lord.” She acknowledges, however, that “there is not much to choose” between these two options, in terms of interpretation (1:287). The argument that the referent of κύριος is Christ is debated and depends on how one reads the statement “The Lord is the Spirit” in 3:17. Paul shifts the rhetorical focus to Christ in 4:14b when he writes that veil is “done away with in Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται). This opens the possibility that the referent of “Lord” in vv. 16–18 is indeed Christ and not Yahweh. The only other occurrence of κύριος in this context is in 4:5 where Paul explicitly refers to Christ Jesus as “Lord.” Thus, in my reading, the weight of the evidence tilts towards Christ as the referent of κύριος in 3:12–4:6, which indicates that κύριου πνεύματος in v. 18 refers to the spirit of Christ. See also Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 54–55; Litwa, *We are Being Transformed*, 219 n. 56.

Thus, “Paul must...think of the spirit as the major agent in the transformation of believers,” and πνεῦμα here refers to the spirit of Christ.¹¹³

The believer does, however, participate in metamorphosis by “beholding the glory of the Lord as in mirror.” What does this entail? To begin, that which is seen in the mirror—“the glory of the Lord”—is most likely Christ. As Thrall argues, “The participle κατοπτριζόμενοι contains within itself the idea of ‘mirror,’ which will at the same time suggest ‘mirror-image.’ The word εἰκών has also additional connotations, for in 4:4 it is used of Christ as the image of God, and it is Christ as the reflection of God’s glory who is seen in the mirror.”¹¹⁴ Moreover, as scholars commonly observe, Paul’s mirror language likely reflects ancient traditions of “transformation through contemplation.”¹¹⁵ Thus, by contemplating Christ, believers undergo existential and epistemic transformation.

In sum, both divine and human agency are present in this transformation. Above all, it is “in Christ” that people have their veils removed and thus undergo epistemic transformation (3:16). Also, Christ’s spirit writes on the hearts of believers to enact initial existential transformation and ongoing epistemic, existential, and relational transformation. Here, Christ is the ultimate agent of change. Yet believers undergo change when they initially turn to the Lord and as they continually behold the glory of the Lord (3:16–17). In 3:18, therefore, it is Christ’s spirit who transforms the believer, and the believer participates in this transformation by turning to the Lord and “beholding Christ as in a mirror.”

¹¹³ Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:288. Thrall does not, however, conclude that “Lord” in 3:17 refers to Christ (278–82); cf. Harris, *Second Epistle*, 314–15. See also Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 190–92.

¹¹⁴ Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 285. See also Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 125; Fitzmyer, “Glory on the Face of Christ,” 639. Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 55–56; Lambrecht, “Transformation in 2 Cor 3:18,” 244–46.

¹¹⁵ For a discussion that includes both ancient traditions and contemporary perspectives, see Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 184–90. Note that Paul’s mirror metaphor here functions differently than his metaphor in 1 Cor 13:12.

One final factor of transformation to address for 2 Cor 3:18 is the heart. As noted above, the heart is the symbolic organ upon which the spirit worked in vv. 3:3, and, in this context, it is equated with the mind as an organ of epistemic perception (3:14–16; 4:4, 6). Although he shifts from the heart to the (unveiled) face in 3:18 to use his mirror reflection metaphor, Paul’s overall point is the same: the new covenant involves freedom from the veil and its occlusion of Christ’s glory.¹¹⁶ For the believer, there is, then, an internal transformation of the epistemic “equipment.”

2.1.3 Transformation & Selfhood in 2 Corinthians 3:18

In 2 Cor 3:18, Paul presents to the Corinthians a notion of the believer as previously changed and previous being transformed into the same realities that characterize Christ.¹¹⁷ They have undergone existential and epistemic changes that are foundational for their ongoing transformation. Thus, not only have they been transferred into a new set of structuring realities—Spirit, life, new covenant, and surpassing glory—and experienced new epistemic capacities, they are continually being changed as they are incorporated into new degrees of glory (εἰς δόξαν).

In terms of selfhood, Paul presents a self that is newly established through transformation and that is characterized by an ongoing process of transformation. He thus presents not so much a human “being” that is constituted by a particular essence but, rather, a human “*becoming*” whose defining feature is change from glory into glory.¹¹⁸ As elsewhere in Paul’s epistles (e.g. 1 Cor 15:35–57), change is in part constitutive of selfhood. Moreover, “transformation into the

¹¹⁶ Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 55; Harris, *Second Epistle*, 313–14.

¹¹⁷ Paul Duff (*Moses in Corinth*) rightly observes that 2 Cor 3:18 is a tacit presentation to the Corinthians of a choice: “they are either subject to Moses’ glorious ministry of death and condemnation or his own more glorious ministry of Spirit and righteousness” (171). By asserting that both his apostolic team and the Corinthian community as indicated by the subject (ἡμεῖς...πάντες) are undergoing transformation, Paul indicates that the Corinthians are to understand themselves either as transforming from one glory into another, or still existing within a ministry of death and condemnation.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Økland, “Genealogies of the Self,” 82–107.

same image, from glory into glory,” signifies transformation “into Christ.” This does not mean that a believer literally “becomes Christ,” is functionally equivalent to Christ, or loses one’s identity in Christ’s.¹¹⁹ It is more accurate to say that the believer is becoming christic: in the present one is being changed so that the realities that characterize Christ will also characterize the believer in increasing degrees. In the language of subjectivity theories, one might regard this conception as a “subject-in-becoming.”¹²⁰ Transposed into a Pauline key, a person is not a static being but a “becoming-Christ.”¹²¹

2.2 2 Corinthians 4:16–18

In 2 Cor 4:16, Paul seemingly describes two persons or two aspects of the self—an outer person (ἔξω ἄνθρωπος) and an inner person (ἔσω ἄνθρωπος). He also describes two processes of change that occur simultaneously: “our outer person is wearing away (διαφθείρω), but our inner person is being renewed daily” (ἀνακαινῶται ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα). This renewal, along with the duality, if not a multiplicity, of the person in question qualifies this verse as transformation discourse.

¹¹⁹ See Lambrecht, “Transformation in 2 Corinthians 3:18,” 252–54; Fitzmyer, “Glory Reflected in the Face of Christ,” 644; Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 125.

¹²⁰ Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 7–116, 118.

¹²¹ The term “becoming Christ” draws on Braidotti’s (*Metamorphoses*) account of nomadic subjectivity, which is deeply influenced by the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. According to this perspective, the subject is understood not as static entity, but as a “flux of successive becomings” (70). Braidotti uses the examples of “becoming woman,” “becoming animal,” and “becoming insect” as examples of ways to break from limited and conventional conceptions of the self in order to reconfigure and embody new configurations of subjectivity.

2.2.1 Overview of Pericope

2 Corinthians 4:16–18 is a single pericope.¹²² Paul opens this unit with “Therefore, we are not discouraged (ἐγκακέω),” which refers back to the suffering and potential death that he describes in vv. 7–15.¹²³ These difficulties seem to involve persecution, and what follows from v. 16a should be understood within the context of this suffering.¹²⁴ He continues: “But if indeed our outer person is being destroyed, then certainly our inner person is being renewed daily.”¹²⁵ That is, as a result of their suffering, the apostolic team’s “outer person is being destroyed” (ὁ ἕξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος διαφθείρεται).¹²⁶ As Paul notes in v. 17, this hardship is experienced by the “outer person” inasmuch as it is external and can be seen by others (it is part of τὰ βλεπόμενα).

¹²² With the conjunction διό in v. 16, Paul shifts to a new thought unit that is based on what he said in the preceding pericope. Due to the prospects of the resurrection (v. 14) and an increase in thanksgiving for God’s glory (v. 15), the apostolic team is not discouraged (v. 16) by their suffering (vv. 7–15). At 5:1, Paul opens a new pericope that focuses on the expectation of an eschatological dwelling from heaven (5:1–10). The explanatory γάρ in 5:1 indicates that 5:1–10 unpacks some of vv. 16–18. Paul continues, for example, with the themes of bodies in their inward/outward dimensions and with references to things as seen and/or unseen (4:18; 5:7). For a similar view, see Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:347.

¹²³ As Thrall (*Second Corinthians*) states, “This passage looks both backwards and forwards” (1:347). The thematic connections between 4:16–18 and 5:1–5 are discussed below (4.3). For full discussion of Paul’s descriptions of suffering in 2 Cor 4, see John T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence*, SBLDS 99 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988), 166–84.

¹²⁴ Paul refers in v. 17 to his present θλίψις. In 2 Cor 1:8, he references the “affliction” (θλίψις) that he and his apostolic team experienced in Asia. What they underwent in Asia is not clear. In 1 Cor 15:32, he makes reference to having fought wild beasts in Ephesus. Acts includes numerous difficulties for Paul in Asia, especially in Ephesus (Acts 19:21–20:1; cf. Acts 21:27–29). Scholars have offered several possibilities for Paul’s affliction in Asia, including “depression and spiritual anguish,” sickness, and persecution—either in a mob riot or prison—(Acts 19:23–40) and more (see Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:115–17). In 4:7–12, Paul returns to the theme of affliction, and there he seems to describe suffering at the hands of others and even being “handed over to death” (v. 11). Moreover, in his list of hardships in 2 Cor 11:21b–29, Paul includes references to persecution. Although Paul and his team’s θλίψις may include circumstantial suffering, the literary context emphasizes the threat of persecution. Cf. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 179.

¹²⁵ The ἀλλά εἰ...ἀλλά construction can denote “strong alternative/additional consideration,” and the ἀλλά in the apodosis of conditional sentence can thus be translated “yet, certainly, at least” (BDAG s.v. ἀλλά). Hence my translation, “If indeed...then certainly.”

¹²⁶ This is the only occurrence of διαφθείρω in the undisputed Pauline letters (cf. 1 Tim 6:5; Luke 12:33; Rev 8:9; 11:18 [2x]). Given Paul’s references to affliction through some type of suffering or persecution related to his ministry (vv. 7–12; cf. 1:8–11), it is best here to render the passive voice of διαφθείρω as “being destroyed” (cf. Rev 8:9; Isa 49:19; Jer 13:7; 27:45; Zeph 3:7; Wis. 16:5; 18:12). Cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:350; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 81.

Here, Paul likely refers to the exterior parts of the body.¹²⁷ The “inner person,” in contrast, cannot be seen (part of τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα in v. 17), and it undergoes daily renewal (ἀνακαινόω).¹²⁸

Here, Paul envisages a form of anthropological dualism.¹²⁹ Yet the inner and outer persons do not refer to separate, unrelated, or antagonistic parts of the human.¹³⁰ As v. 17 makes clear, the inner and outer “selves” are dimensions of a unified person.¹³¹ Verse 17 offers a partial explanation of v. 16:¹³² “this momentary, insignificant affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory.”¹³³ That is, the “affliction” (θλίψις) that causes the outer person’s destruction is

¹²⁷ See Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 81. In 4:6 Paul writes of the heart, and 4:7 transitions to an interplay of outward and inward: the “treasure,” which likely refers to “the knowledge of the glory of Christ” (Hans Dieter Betz, “The Concept of the ‘Inner Human Being’ (ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος) in the Anthropology of Paul,” *NTS* 46 (2000): 131–32) is inside of clay vessels. As Lambrecht (*Second Corinthians*) notes, Paul’s phrase “in the body” in v. 10 takes up the phrase “in clay jars” of v. 7 (71). Paul again picks up the language of σῶμα in 5:6–10. Cf. Job 4:19. Cf. Thrall’s (*Second Epistle*) description of ἔσω ἄνθρωπος as “Paul’s outward persona” (1:351); Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 82.

¹²⁸ The only other occurrence of ἀνακαινόω in the NT is in Col 3:10, in which Paul writes that the Colossians have “clothed themselves with the ‘new self’ (ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον), which is being renewed (ἀνακαινόω) according to the image of the one who “created him.” The verb ἀνακαινίζω appears several times in the LXX to referral to different types of renewal (1 Mac 6:9; Psa 38:3; 102:5; 103:30; Lam. 5:21). See especially LXX Psa 102:4–5, which refers to the Lord as the one “who redeems your life from corruption (φθορά), who crowns you with mercy and compassion, who satisfies your desire with good, and your youth will be renewed (ἀνακαινίζω) like an eagle’s.”

¹²⁹ So, Jacques Dupont, *Syn Christōi: l’union avec le Christ suivant saint Paul* (Bruges: Éditions de l’Abbaye de Saint-André, 1952), 151–52; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:351; David E. Aune, “Anthropological Duality in the Eschatology of 2 Corinthians 4:6–1:10,” in *Jesus, Gospel Tradition and Paul in the Context of Jewish and Greco-Roman Antiquity: Collected Essays II*, WUNT 303 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); Steven J Kraftchick, “Bodies, Selves, and Human Identity: A Conversation between Transhumanism and the Apostle Paul,” *ThTo* 72 (2015): 63–67.

¹³⁰ So, Aune, “Anthropological Duality,” 359–62.

¹³¹ On the non-oppositional dualism in 2 Cor 4:7–18, see Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 71, 81. Betz, “Inner Human Being,” 334.

¹³² See the explanatory γάρ in v. 17a.

¹³³ The adjective ἐλαφρός means “having little weight, light,” and ἐλαφρόν τῆς θλίψεως should be rendered “insignificant affliction” (BDAG, s.v., ἐλαφρός). The only other occurrence of ἐλαφρός in the NT is in Matt 11:30, in which Jesus says, “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (cf. Ezek 18:26; Job 7:6; 9:25; 24:18; Ezek 1:7). This is the only occurrence of παραυτίκα in the NT (cf. Tob 4:14; Ps 69:4). The term, παραυτίκα can mean, “pert. to a point of time immediately subsequent to another point of time, on the spot, immediately, for the present” (BDAG, s.v., παραυτίκα). Thus, the entire phrase τὸ...παραυτίκα ἐλαφρόν τῆς θλίψεως may be translated, “momentary, insignificant affliction.” Cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:353–54.

simultaneously helping to *prepare* the inner person to to bear a future weight of glory through ongoing renewal.¹³⁴ Thus, the outer self's destruction and inner self's renewal are not unrelated but are mutually influencing and, together, are necessary for the shape of the apostolic team's current ministry (4:10–12) and their future hope (4:17; 5:1–5).¹³⁵

As this overview hints, Paul's rhetoric in vv. 16–18 establishes a set of antitheses.¹³⁶ Although they exist in relationship, the outer person and the inner person are characterized by contrasting features:

Outer Person	Inner Person
Destruction	Renewal
Temporary, insignificant affliction	Eternal weight of glory
Seen	Unseen
Temporary	Eternal

Paul contrasts concurrent, ongoing processes (decay and renewal) and the present condition (temporal, light affliction) with the future condition (eternal, weighty glory), and the visibility of outward destruction (seen) with the hidden renewal (unseen).¹³⁷ These contrasting, yet inextricably related, features inform the following analyses.

¹³⁴ Paul unpacks this notion of the inner person bearing a future weight of glory in the future in 5:1–5 with the use of clothing metaphors (cf. 1 Cor 15:53–54; Gal 3:27–28).

¹³⁵ Cf. the notion of “polarity” developed in Tappenden, *Resurrection*, 102. For Tappenden the polarity that describes Pauline anthropology is a duality “not in the sense of opposition or antitheses (e.g. ‘polar opposites’) but rather in the sense of an integrated system; it implies a unified whole wherein opposing forces exist in interdependent tensions.” These opposing parts are “inextricable within the whole” (102).

¹³⁶ On Paul's antithesis in 2 Cor 4–5 more broadly, see Aune, “Anthropological Duality,” 354.

¹³⁷ Cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:355–56; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 81–82; Aune, “Anthropological Duality,” 354, 360–61.

2.2.2 Transformation in 2 Corinthians 4:16–17: Necessity, Categories, and Factors

Necessity for Change

In 2 Cor 4:16–18, Paul indicates that the outer person’s destruction and the inner person’s renewal are both necessary. He presents his outward destruction as needed for him to fulfill his call to the Corinthians.¹³⁸ The preceding verses (4:7–15) demonstrate this. In 4:7–15, his team’s sufferings fit with the pattern of Christ’s death and resurrection, and they endure affliction on behalf of the Corinthian community. In vv. 7–8, he describes his team’s troubles, and in v. 10, he maps the pattern of Christ’s death and resurrection onto their experiences, saying, “(We are) always carrying around the death of Jesus in the body so that the life of Jesus would be manifest in our body.”¹³⁹ He adds, “For we who are living are always being handed over to death in order that the life of Jesus would be manifest in our mortal flesh” (v. 11). Here, the pattern of Christ’s death and resurrection provides the frame for understanding the apostolic team’s suffering.

Moreover, Paul anticipates the contrast of outer destruction with inner renewal by portraying death not ultimately as a threat to life but as the means by which life is manifested. Jesus’ death resulted in life (through resurrection), and the reality of Jesus’ death in the team will reveal Christ’s life (v. 10). So too, the apostolic team’s being handed over to death will show Christ’s life (v. 11), and this process of experiencing death occurs so that the Corinthians will receive the power of Christ’s life (vv. 12–15).¹⁴⁰ Read in light of vv. 7–15, then, the outer

¹³⁸ So, Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, 1:351.

¹³⁹ As Fitzgerald (*Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*) argues, “This suggests what 4:12 makes explicit, viz., that the *nekrōsis* of Jesus in his body entails his own mortification. Since death is at work in him, his own body is slowly deteriorating and decomposing. His “outer man” is being devastated (διαφθείρεται) by the affliction to which it is subjected (4:16).” Yet, all of this serves to show that the power in his ministry “must be seen as deriving from God and not from himself (4:7)” (179).

¹⁴⁰ Here, as Lambrecht (*Second Corinthians*) notes, “‘the life of Jesus’ corresponds to ‘the power of God.’” That is, the manifestation of Jesus’ life is the manifestation of God’s power (73).

person's destruction in v. 16 is necessary for the manifestation and impartation of life, and this death/life pattern is a critical aspect of apostolic ministry.¹⁴¹

As argued above, the outer self's destruction is also necessary for the inner self's preparation for its future condition. The "momentary, insignificant affliction," which occurs to the outer person, is part of that which prepares (κατεργάζομαι) the inner person for its eternal weight of glory (v. 17). Paul does not explain the mechanics of this relationship, but he does envisage outward destruction as part of the inner self's preparation for its future state.

Why must the inner self be renewed? In part, it must be renewed because the outer self is being destroyed. If there were no inner renewal, then the outer destruction would be final, and Paul's ministerial example would provide little for the Corinthians in the present (4:12–15) or in the future (4:18). Without the inner person's renewal, and the christic pattern according to which it is interpreted, the Corinthians would have only examples of suffering and hardship.¹⁴² They would also have no present basis upon which to place their hope for future glory (4:17; 5:1–10).

Second, inner renewal is needed for the person to be equipped to bear future glory (4:17). Paul states this plainly in 4:17: the team's suffering is *preparing them* (κατεργάζεται ἡμῖν) for "an eternal weight of glory." Paul, as 5:1–15 shows, is not presently fit for "heavenly" existence, which requires eschatological transformation (2 Cor 5:1–5). Preparation for future transformation and eschatological existence begins, however, in the present, through the inner self's renewal (see also 5:5). Here again, Paul does not detail how this present change is related to future change, but he does indicate that the former is indeed necessary for the latter. Thus, the daily renewal of the inner self is needed not only for the continuation of Paul's ministry to the Corinthians, but also for the believers' future transformation.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:351; Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 177–80.

¹⁴² Cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:349, 351.

In sum, the outer person's destruction and the inner person's renewal are both necessary and mutually informing. The apostolic team's hardships bring destruction to their outer person. This destructive process inversely affects the inner person and is part of the latter's renewal and preparation for its future state. Both processes are needed, ultimately, for the self to be clothed with its heavenly dwelling at the resurrection (5:1–5).

Categories of Change

These changes are present and ongoing.¹⁴³ The verbs διαφθείρω and ἀνακαινίζω are both in the present tense and have durative aspect. They describe the current sufferings—an interplay of life and death (4:11–15)—of the apostolic team on behalf of the Corinthians (4:7–15). As noted above, this present process of change anticipates and is, in part, necessary preparation for future transformation (see 2.3 below).

I further categorize this change as existential transformation. As argued above, the destruction of the outer person and the renewal of the inner person reflect the apostolic team's "being handed over to death" (4:11) while the life of Jesus (4:10–11) and the power of God (4:7–8; cf. v. 14) work within them. Their dual trajectories toward external death and internal life and glory are, for Paul, determinative of their lives as ministers. That is, destruction and renewal describe the team's present state as interlaced with the life of Christ, as well as their *telos* of heavenly life after death.¹⁴⁴ *Present existential* transformation is a fitting category.

Factors in Change

¹⁴³ So, Kraftchick, "Bodies, Selves, and Human Identity," 66.

¹⁴⁴ In this context, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that Paul envisages present, ontological transformation. As argued below (2.3), however, the present existential transformation anticipates and prepares the self for future ontological transformation (5:1–5; cf. 1 Cor 15:35–57; Phil 3:21).

The members of Paul's team are not the agents of their outward destruction or of their inward renewal. As the above analyses suggest, their sufferings are the primary cause of the external person's destruction.¹⁴⁵ Who, then, empowers the inner person's renewal?

Although Paul does not refer directly to divine agents in 4:16–17, the larger context suggests that the spirit of Christ empowers inner renewal. The inward orientation of this change recalls Paul's statements not only in 4:7–15, but also his language in 4:5–6. In v. 6, he refers to God "shining light in our hearts for the light of the knowledge of the glory of God." In v. 7, Paul uses a container metaphor to set up the inward/outward distinction that he stresses in v. 16.¹⁴⁶ In my reading, the clay jars expresses the frail, temporary, and external nature that characterize the outer person that will be replaced by a "heavenly dwelling" at the resurrection (5:1–5; cf. 1 Cor 15:35–57; Phil 3:21).¹⁴⁷ The treasure refers to the divine presence in the human interior: he associates this treasure with God's power (4:7) and Jesus' life (4:11–12).¹⁴⁸ This reading is strengthened by Paul's portrayal of the spirit as internal to the human body and to the corporate body of Christ throughout the Corinthian correspondence.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, Paul implicitly links the preparatory function of inner renewal in 4:16–17 with God's gift of the spirit as a "pledge" (ἀρραβὼν) of future transformation in 5:5.¹⁵⁰ Although he does not state it explicitly, Paul envisages the spirit of Christ (3:17) as the agent of the inner person's renewal.

¹⁴⁵ See Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, 1:350.

¹⁴⁶ On the "body is container" metaphor, see Tappenden, *Resurrection*, 121–32.

¹⁴⁷ For a similar reading, see Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 71; Tappenden, *Resurrection*, 121.

¹⁴⁸ Note, however, that Paul also describes death—Christ's death, specifically—as active within the human body (4:10–12). Yet he does not presume the presence of death alone; here, he never mentions Christ's death or the threat of death (v. 11) without also mentioning Christ's life. Thus, it is best to say that the present reality of Christ's death and resurrection, as a unified event and reality, are present within the apostolic team and their ministry to the Corinthians. Cf. Tappenden, *Resurrection*, 43–86.

¹⁴⁹ E.g. 1 Cor 2:10–14; 3:16; 12:13; 2 Cor 1:22; 3:3; 5:5; cf. Gal 4:6; Rom 5:5; 8:9–11, 15–16.

¹⁵⁰ Note Paul's use of the verb κατεργάζομαι in both 4:17 and 5:5.

In addition to Christ as the key factor and power of renewal, there is a sense in which the Corinthians are also a factor in transformation. The apostolic team's hardships result from their ministerial efforts (vv. 8–9). Paul also writes that death is “energized” (ἐνεργέω) in the apostolic team in order that life would be energized in the Corinthian community (v. 12). Indeed, according to Paul, all of their efforts are on behalf of the Corinthians (v. 15) with the expectation that God will one day resurrect both the community and the team and present them together before God (v. 14). Thus, the ministerial team's “being destroyed” is due to their commitment to the Corinthians, and this destruction helps to activate the team's inward renewal.

2.2.3 Transformation and Selfhood in 2 Corinthians 4:16–18

With the first person *plural* pronoun and the singular use of ἄνθρωπος Paul speaks of “our” (collective) inner person and outer person.¹⁵¹ This plural expression of a singular “person” resembles Paul's shift in 1 Cor 6:19 from discussing individual bodies to addressing the Corinthian community's singular body with the phrase “your [plural] body [singular].”¹⁵² There, σῶμα is not, in modern terms, an individual or autonomous entity in which the flesh is “the container or defining line between what is or is not ‘my body.’”¹⁵³ It is also more than a

¹⁵¹ As elsewhere in this section of 2 Corinthians, I take Paul's first person pronouns as referring to his apostolic team and his second person pronouns as referring to the Corinthian congregation. The immediate context supports this approach. In 4:7–11, Paul uses the first person plural to describe his team's hardships (vv. 7–9) and their carrying around the death of Christ so that Christ's life would be revealed in/by them (vv. 9–11). That his rhetoric is self-descriptive and does not include the Corinthians becomes clear when he shifts to address the Corinthians in v. 12: “So that death is activated *in us* (ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ἡμῖν), but life is activated *in you* (ἐν ὑμῖν).” This us/you distinction is reiterated in vv. 14–15a: “...knowing that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise *us* (ἡμᾶς) also with Jesus and will present us *with you* (σὺν ὑμῖν). For all things are for *your* sakes (τὰ γὰρ πάντα δι’ ὑμᾶς).”

¹⁵² The best and earliest MSS use the singular τὸ σῶμα in 1 Cor 6:19. It is also the harder reading, making it preferable to τὰ σώματα. See discussion in Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 474. Cf. 1 Cor 10:17; 12:20, 27; Rom 12:1–5; Eph 4:4, 12–16; Col 3:15.

¹⁵³ Gergen, *Relational Being*, 97.

collection of individual bodies. Instead, “Paul thinks of body...in relational terms,”¹⁵⁴ making the communal σῶμα “a mode of relationship.”¹⁵⁵ The Corinthian σῶμα is itself a relational space, in which humans are filled with Christ’s spirit (1 Cor 12:13), and which transforms human relationships into what Paul calls τὸ σῶμα Χριστοῦ, “the body of Christ.”¹⁵⁶

Paul uses ἄνθρωπος similarly in 2 Cor 4:16. He presents the apostolic team as a collective “person,” constituted by Christ’s spirit in and among them and by their relationships with one another. Thus, in this context, a “person” is a relational concept, what Kenneth Gergen calls “multi-being”—a being that is “socially embedded, fully engaged in the flow of relationship.”¹⁵⁷ This collective, relational understanding of the person does not deny the existence of individuals in the apostolic team any more than a communal body negates the reality of individual parts/members (1 Cor 6:15; 12:12–26; Rom 12:4; Eph 4:25; 5:30). Yet Paul envisages the apostolic team as *a person* (ὁ ἄνθρωπος), established by Christ’s spirit and defined by relationships.

Yet Paul’s rhetoric seemingly describes two persons—an outer person (ἔξω ἄνθρωπος) and an inner person (ἔσω ἄνθρωπος). Debates abound concerning the nature of the inner and outer persons in 2 Cor 4:16.¹⁵⁸ For my purposes it is sufficient to note that the inner person refers to a sphere of unseen human existence (4:18), the seat of cognition and emotion (4:6–7), and the

¹⁵⁴ Johnson, “Body in Question,” 306. For a contemporary account of the body as relational process and performance, see Gergen, *Relational Being*, 97–130, who argues, “In effect, what I call *my body*, I do so by virtue of my location in a tradition of relationship” (97).

¹⁵⁵ Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 104.

¹⁵⁶ See discussion in Johnson, “Body in Question,” 300–310.

¹⁵⁷ Gergen, *Relational Being*, 137. Gergen contrasts the multi-being with “the ideal of an internally integrated, harmonious, and coherent mind” (137). Cf. Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 65–76, 145.

¹⁵⁸ For overviews of scholarly perspectives, see Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 347–51; Betz, “Inner Human Being,” 317–24.

space in which Christ's Spirit dwells (3:1–3; 4:5–7).¹⁵⁹ The outer person, as observed above, is the visible, human exterior (4:7, 18), which undergoes physical hardship and suffering (4:7–9, 17). Paul, therefore, portrays an “anthropological duality.”¹⁶⁰

These “persons,” are, however, distinct but interrelated and inseparable. These are not two selves that could exist independently of one another; they are two dimensions of a “composite entity.”¹⁶¹ Together, the two persons form two aspects—interior and exterior—of the (collective) subject that Paul expresses with the first person plural pronoun.¹⁶²

The subject in 2 Cor 4:16–18 is not, therefore, reducible to either dimension but is analogous to Naomi Quinn's definition of the self as “the totality of what an organism is physically, biologically, psychologically, socially, and culturally.”¹⁶³ Especially significant are the social and cultural aspects of the “totality” in Quinn's definition, which emphasizes the relational nature of selfhood. Not only is the subject constituted by relationships with the divine and among the apostolic team, but also by the inseparable processes of change that characterize the inner person and the outer person.¹⁶⁴ Thus, ongoing transformations—the (dying) outer person and the (continually renewed) inner person—are, in part, constitutive of the subject. As

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Betz, “Inner Human Being,” 332–35. With Betz, I do not find in Paul sufficient evidence to “identify the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος with ψυχή, νοῦς, or πνεῦμα” in Paul (334).

¹⁶⁰ Aune, “Anthropological Duality,” 376–80.

¹⁶¹ Betz, “Inner Human Being,” 334. Cf. the concept of “intrasomatic polarity” as “an integrated and unified whole wherein opposing forces exist in interdependent tension” in Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 119.

¹⁶² Here, Paul's depiction of an inner and outer dimensions of the self is analogous to the viewpoint of P. F. Strawson, *Individuals: an Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, UP (London: Routledge, 1990), 101–12. Strawson argues that the term “person” predicates both states of consciousness and corporeal characteristics (101). Cf. Paul Ricoeur's accounts of the “*idem*-identity” (the “what” of the self) and the “*ipse*-identity” (or the “who” of the self) in *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 113–39.

¹⁶³ Naomi Quinn, “The Self,” *AT* 6 (2006): 362.

¹⁶⁴ As the above analyses show, the outer destruction, caused by suffering, is part of the means by which inner renewal, which Paul characterizes as preparation (v. 17), occurs. The outer destruction is not, however, the *only* cause of inner renewal, since Paul presumes that the Spirit of Christ is present to accomplish ongoing renewal (see 1.2.2).

with 2 Cor 3:18, our interrogation into Paul's discourse present, ongoing transformation reveals not a subject that is a *being* but one that is a *becoming*.

2.3 2 Corinthians 5:1–5

2 Cor 5:1–5 qualifies as transformation discourse according to both of my criteria. First, Paul uses transformation terminology with the metaphor of being “clothed” (ἐπενδύομαι) with a heavenly dwelling.¹⁶⁵ Second, he uses the metaphor to describe a change that occurs at death and that challenges notions of personal identity. That is, this transformation functions as a boundary between the present life and postmortem existence.

2.3.1 Overview of Pericope

Verse 1 is programmatic for 5:1–5. The first part of the statement refers to the possibility that the “earthly dwelling” (ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία) might be destroyed, echoing 4:7–18. In 4:7, Paul uses the metaphor of “this treasure in clay vessels” to depict his present human body as a fragile container.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, in 4:16–18 he links the somatic exterior with ongoing destruction—probably from persecution—insignificant affliction, and the temporary (see 2.2.1 above). Within this larger context, then, one should read Paul's reference to the destruction of “our earthly house” as death, the ultimate result of his suffering in ministry.¹⁶⁷ Paul's clothing

¹⁶⁵ Cf. 1 Cor 15:53–54; Gal 3:27–28; Rom 13:12–14; 1 Thess 5:8; Eph 4:24; 6:11, 14; Col 3:10, 14.

¹⁶⁶ Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 71.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 356. Paul points to the temporary nature of the “earthly house,” with the phrase ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν τοῦ σκηνῶς. Here, I take σκῆνος to be epexegetical: it explains the nature of the earthly house (see Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 82; cf. Tappenden, *Resurrection*, 122 n. 85; Aune, “Anthropological Duality,” 363–64). Paul's uses of σκῆνος in 5:1, 4 are the only occurrences of the term in the NT (σκηνή appears 20x but never in Pauline literature). In 5:1, Paul contrasts the early “tent” with the οἰκοδομὴν ἐκ θεοῦ, which is “a house made without hands, eternal in the heavens.” The term οἰκοδομή appears 15x in Pauline literature (9x in the Corinthian correspondence) and it typically

metaphor (see below) and his shift into explicit discussion of being in or away from σῶμα in 5:6–10 make clear that the destruction of the earthly dwelling describes the death of the physical body.¹⁶⁸ Paul’s point in v. 1, however, is that the destruction of the earthly house is not the end of the self’s existence, since “we have a house that is made without hands, eternal in the heavens” (5:1b).¹⁶⁹ The destruction of the earthly house, therefore, leads to the *exchange* of one body for another—a conception that Paul does not explain or seek to clarify.

In v. 2 Paul introduces the clothing metaphor: “For in this (earthly house) we groan, longing to be clothed (ἐπενδύσασθαι) with our dwelling that is from heaven.” He adds that just as a person puts clothing on a body, our earthly container exchanged for a heavenly one; “we will not be naked” (4:3).¹⁷⁰ Since Paul does not clarify what constitutes the “we” that will transition from a physical body to a heavenly dwelling—he does not, e.g., use the word “soul” or any other term—we are left merely to refer to a “self” as that which is clothed after death. Yet, he does not here depict an autonomous or “un-housed” self. Paul strengthens this idea in v. 4, in which he states that, although the present body is burdensome, “we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that the mortal might be swallowed up by life.” Paul does not portray

refers to a building or the act of “building” or “building up” (1 Cor 3:9; 14:3, 5, 12, 26; 2 Cor 5:1; 10:8; 12:19; 13:10; Rom 14:19; 15:2; Eph 2:21; 4:12, 16, 4:29). The term also appears 16x in the LXX, likewise, usually referring to a building (usually the temple) or buildings (1 Chron 26:27; 29:1; 1 Esd 4:51; 5:60, 70, 71; Tob 14:5), or building as an activity (1 Esd 6:6, 21; 1 Macc 16:23 (of walls); Sir 20:16; 40:19; Ezek 17:17; cf. Ezek 16:61; 40:2. Most likely, Paul here compares the temporary and perishable nature of the earthly dwelling with the permanent and superior nature of the heavenly dwelling.

¹⁶⁸ See Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 82; Aune, “Anthropological Duality,” 364–66. Cf. Wis 9:15; Job 4:19; Isa 38:12.

¹⁶⁹ So Kraftchick, “Bodies, Selves, and Human Identity,” 66. Paul’s use of ἔχω in the present tense in 5:1 seems to suggest that the dwelling from God is, in the present, “an existing heavenly reality that Christians will inhabit when they die” (Aune, “Anthropological Duality,” 366–67).

¹⁷⁰ The text-critical choice between ἐκδυσάμενοι and ἔνδυσάμενοι is notoriously challenging, if not intractable. For my purposes, the primary concern is Paul’s claim that “we will not be found naked” (5:3). Noteworthy is that the only other occurrence of the word γυμνός in the Pauline corpus is in 1 Cor 15:37 to refer to a “naked” kernel or seed. He uses the naked seed as an analogy to set up his description of the somatic change that believers will experience at the resurrection (15:42–46).

the self as ever “naked” or disembodied; it transitions from a temporary container to permanent, heavenly one.

2.3.2 Transformation in 2 Corinthians 5:1–5: Necessity, Categories, and Factors in Change

Necessity for Change

In 5:1–5, Paul builds on 4:16–17 where he implies that inner renewal is in part necessary because of outward destruction (see 2.2.2). He continues these thoughts in writing that they will have a heavenly house if the earthly tent is destroyed. Since his suffering and potential death raises doubts among the Corinthians about the veracity of his apostolic ministry, Paul needs to ensure them that bodily destruction is not the final word. Thus, as with 4:16–17, Paul needs to reinforce the apostolic team’s expectation of transformation in order to assure the Corinthians of his current ministry and their collective future hope (4:14).

In the verses that follow, moreover, Paul reveals needs for transformation that are anthropological, cosmological, and existential. In v. 2, he writes that in their earthly dwelling, those in the apostolic team “groan, longing to put on our building that is from heaven.” In v. 4, he repeats his point: “while we are in this tent (σκῆνος), we groan, being burdened.”¹⁷¹ His contrasts between the earthly tent (σκῆνος) and the heavenly building (οἰκοδομή) point to the temporary nature of the earthly body in relation to the permanent heavenly abode that they will receive. Here, Paul’s rhetoric eschews the possibility of a disembodied self. Whether in an earthly body or a heavenly body, the self “will not be found naked”—a claim that resists

¹⁷¹ Here, their being burdened or “weighed down” refers to their suffering. See Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 84.

understanding the postmortem self as a soul stripped of its physical body (5:3).¹⁷² Although he does not clarify for his audience what precisely he means by a heavenly dwelling—whether an individual spiritual body or a collective dwelling—Paul asserts that the believing subject will exist in every phase in some form of embodiment. In sum, therefore, this transformation is necessary for the self to continue in an embodied state after earthly tent’s destruction. To play on Paul’s clothing metaphor, the self must be “fit” for its heavenly existence, which requires that it be clothed over with a heavenly dwelling.¹⁷³

Similar to other texts addressed in this study, transformation in 2 Cor 5:1–5 strikes an existential key as well. Paul writes in v. 4 that when the temporary earthly dwelling is clothed over with the permanent heavenly dwelling, this happens “in order that the mortal would be swallowed up by life” (ἵνα καταποθῇ τὸ θνητὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς).¹⁷⁴ Paul’s reference to that which is mortal (θνητός) recalls his discussion in 4:7–15, in which that the apostolic team is “handed over to death in order that the life of Jesus would be manifest in our mortal flesh (τῇ θνητῇ σαρκί)” (v. 11). Although death is at work in the team through their suffering (4:10–12), causing the destruction of the outer self, Paul describes a future in which the mortal will be consumed by

¹⁷² Aune, “Anthropological Dualism,” 370. As Lambrecht (*Second Corinthians*) notes, “In its figurative sense, ‘naked’ points to the anthropological situation of being without a body” (83). He may, in fact, view “‘nakedness’ after death as more frightening ‘than the instinctive fear of death’” (84).

¹⁷³ Cf. Tappenden, *Paul and Resurrection*, 120. Here, although he refers not to the eschaton but to death before the resurrection (see arguments below), Paul’s cosmological assumptions are of utmost importance. He uses the adjective ἐπίγειος to describe the present body. In 1 Cor 15:40, he uses the same term twice to contrast “heavenly bodies and earthly bodies,” which sets up his contrast between the σῶμα ψυχικόν and the σῶμα πνευματικόν in 1 Cor 15:44–46. In Phil 3:19, he uses the same adjective to describe those whose moral reasoning is earthly (οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια προνοῦντες), which contrasts with those who are citizens of heaven (3:20; cf. 2:10). In these examples, Paul refers to the earthly as the sphere in which humans live (pre-death), but with which they should not locate their ongoing existential transformation (4:16), align their moral reasoning (Phil 3:19–20), or place their ultimate hope (2 Cor 5:1–5). The noun οὐρανός appears 21x in Pauline literature. Notably, in 1 Cor 15:47, Paul contrasts the first human from “earth, that is, dust” (ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός) and the second who is “from heaven.” As noted above, Paul contrasts earthly and heavenly existence in Phil 3:19–20 as well. Cf. 1 Thess 1:10.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. 1 Cor 15:54–55.

life (i.e. the life of Christ that is the power of God; 4:7, 11).¹⁷⁵ Transformation is needed, therefore, not only so that the self might be fit not only for a new cosmological sphere (heaven), but also for a new existential-temporal sphere as well (eternity).

Categories of Change

In 2 Cor 5:1–5, Paul describes a future transformation that will occur after the destruction of the earthly tent (v. 1). Paul’s reference to the body’s destruction in 5:1 picks up on the outer person’s ongoing destruction in 4:16, and he expects for the physical body to be replaced by a heavenly “dwelling” of some sort (v. 2).¹⁷⁶ Since this dwelling will replace the physical body that “clothed” the self, we can understand this as *future* and *somatic* change.

This reading also coheres with Paul’s discussion of somatic transformation at the resurrection in 1 Cor 15:53–55.¹⁷⁷ There, Paul writes, “For it is necessary for this perishable (τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι) to put on (ἐνδύω) the imperishable, and for this mortal to put on (ἐνδύω) the immortal” (v. 53). When this occurs, Paul writes, “Death is swallowed up (καταπίνω) in victory.” In 2 Cor 5:2–4, Paul uses different metaphors to refer to the same bodily changes that will occur at the resurrection. These parallels therefore strengthen the view that in 2 Cor 5:1–5 Paul describes *eschatological*, somatic transformation.

Unlike 1 Cor 15:35–57, Paul does not here refer to the pre-and-post transformation bodies as *psychic* and spiritual, but as earthly and heavenly (cf. Phil 3:19–21). Yet the implications of the metaphors in 2 Cor 5:1–5 are similar. In 1 Cor 15:44b–49, Adam corresponds with the *psychic* and the earthly (vv. 45–47), but Christ corresponds with the spiritual and the heavenly (vv. 45–47). Adam and Christ represent ontological distinctions, and the transformation

¹⁷⁵ Here, “the mortal” refers than to pre-Parousia bodies; it likely refers to the swallowing up of all that is perishable by the divine (cf. 1 Cor 15:28; 53–55). On the life of Christ as the power of God, see Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 73.

¹⁷⁶ This new state entails new existence in the presence of the Lord (2 Cor 5:6–8).

¹⁷⁷ See Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 82.

from the natural and the *earthly* into the spiritual and the *heavenly* is an ontological change.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, the swallowing up of the mortal by life in 2 Cor 5:4 recalls the imperishable's clothing over of the perishable. To be sure, Paul presumes two different contexts for these transformations: 1 Cor 15:35–57 concerns the resurrection, but 2 Cor 5:1–5 refers to changes that occur at death prior to the resurrection. Nevertheless, Paul describes in 2 Cor 5:1–5 transformations that occur when the “self” is transferred into a new, heavenly sphere after the death of its earthly body. It is best, therefore, to understand the changes in 2 Cor 5:1–5 not only as eschatological and somatic, but also as *ontological*. Through the exchange of an earthly σῶμα for a heavenly one, the self undergoes radical change so that it can be fully incorporated into a new sphere of being.

Factors in Change

Verse 5 makes clear that God is the agent not only of the eschatological, ontological transformation but also of the present transformation that anticipates future change. Paul writes, “The one who prepared (κατεργάζομαι) us for this very thing is God who gave to us the spirit as a pledge.” The verb κατεργάζομαι in 5:1 recalls Paul’s use of it in 4:17, in which he claims that the team’s present suffering *prepares* them for an eternal weight of glory. As argued above, this preparatory suffering destroys the outer person and is partly the cause of the inner person’s renewal (see 2.2.1–2.2.2 above). This preparation therefore refers to ongoing, existential transformation by the spirit of Christ (3:17) that anticipates or leads to future change.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Johnson, “Life-Giving Spirit.” This is also true of the eschatological transformation in Phil 3:20 (see ch. 2).

¹⁷⁹ Paul does not here portray the reception of the spirit as enacting transformation that begins a continual process of transformation, culminating at the resurrection. The realities of the Corinthian circumstances are far too complex to fit so nicely into a model of linear progression. It is better to view this schema as Paul portrays it here—that the spirit is a pledge (ᾠραβών) for future transformation.

Divine agency also accomplishes the final, ontological transformation. In 5:1, Paul portrays God as the “builder” of the resurrection body by describing it as a “building made without hands, eternal in the heavens” (οἰκίαν ἀχειροποίητον αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς). He also uses the divine passive to redescribe this change as the mortal *being swallowed* by life (5:4). The apostolic team does not produce their own change but only long and groan for it (5:2, 4). God not only gives the Spirit to catalyze present change/renewal, but God accomplishes the final somatic and ontological transformation in 5:1–5.

An additional key factor in this transformation is the cosmological context in which it occurs. Here, one can see the truth in Ernst Käsemann’s assertion, “Anthropology must...be cosmology, as, conversely, the cosmos is primarily viewed by Paul under an anthropological aspect.”¹⁸⁰ As argued above, in 2 Cor 5:1–5, heaven and earth are ontologically distinct spheres. Although believers can experience heavenly realities through the reception of the spirit (4:16–18; 5:5) and can even visit heaven (12:1–6), they cannot *inhabit* the divine sphere in their temporary, frail, and mortal bodies.¹⁸¹ For the believer to dwell permanently in the heavenly abode, somatic and ontological transformation is necessary.

A final factor to note is the body. Here again, Käsemann’s insights are instructive. He argues that, for Paul, corporality is the vehicle for relationality,¹⁸² the body is a “means and mode of communication and connection.”¹⁸³ The reception of the spirit allows the self to participate in the divine sphere, and life in Christ’s body enables people to participate in Christ’s spirit, even if a new body is needed for full participation.¹⁸⁴ In 2 Cor 5:1–5, transformation enables the self to

¹⁸⁰ Käsemann, “Paul’s Anthropology,” 23.

¹⁸¹ As Paul writes in 1 Cor 15:50, “Flesh and blood cannot inheriting the kingdom of God, and nether can the perishable inherit the imperishable.”

¹⁸² Käsemann, “Paul’s Anthropology,” 21–22.

¹⁸³ Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 99.

¹⁸⁴ Johnson, “Body in Question.”

be incorporated into the heavenly realm. Even if, in Paul, the self can be distinguished from the body, here he describes future change as a form of somatic transformation.¹⁸⁵

2.2.3 Transformation & Selfhood in 2 Cor 5:1–5

As scholars commonly recognize, 2 Cor 5:1–5 presumes some type of dualism or “duality.”¹⁸⁶ We likely find in these verses, in fact, the strongest anthropological dualism in Paul’s letters.¹⁸⁷ Yet Paul does not express this dualism in terms of an oppositional relationship between a body and a soul. How, then, should we understand Paul’s dualism in this passage?

To begin, Paul presumes that there is a distinction between the (inner) self and the body. This passages builds on the rhetoric of inner and outer persons in 4:16–18 (cf. 4:7), and it depicts a new body of some kind “clothing over” the self. Paul asserts, moreover, that the self will not be “found naked” (vv. 3–4). In this process of somatic and ontological transformation, he does not explain but assumes an inner self’s continuity amidst bodily change. He gives no indication of what “equipment” constitutes the self or its continuity. The terminology of *ψυχή* and *νοῦς*, for example, are entirely absent.¹⁸⁸ It must suffice simply to identify subjectivity of “we” in 5:1–5 as “selves” or a collective “self” that are transformed at the resurrection.

¹⁸⁵ As Tappenden (*Resurrection*) states, “Paul’s ideals are bodily ideals; his expectations are somatically oriented, his thinking corporally grounded” (1).

¹⁸⁶ See, e.g., Aune, “Anthropological Duality,” 362–80; Kraftchick, “Bodies, Selves, and Human Identity,” 65–67.

¹⁸⁷ So, Kraftchick’s (“Bodies, Selves, and Human Identity) claim about 2 Cor 4–5 more broadly: “although many commentators attempt to downplay Paul’s dualistic rhetoric in the passage, he is closer here to a form of Hellenistic dualism than anywhere else in his letters” (65). Although he contrasts the temporal contexts of 2 Cor 5:1–5 with 2 Cor 5:6–10, cf. Dupont, *Syn Christōi*, 153–58.

¹⁸⁸ In order to maintain my methodological emphasis for chs. 2–3, I resist the temptation to draw on Pauline texts outside of the Corinthian correspondence to theorize what might constitute the self in 2 Cor 5:1–5. Paul does make reference to *ψυχή* in his letters to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 1:23; 12:15), but these references do not give much evidence for what Paul understands *ψυχή* to be. The term may in fact function as a general way of referring to himself (1:23) or the Corinthians “themselves” (12:15). Also, the texts give no reason to connect Paul’s use of *ψυχή* in these other references with the anthropology present in 2 Cor 5:1–5.

What more can we say about the person from this passage? Here, paradoxically, despite Paul's dualistic language, one can see in this passage the extent to which the person for Paul is embedded and relational. If he viewed the self as a soul, a mind, or something else that could exist in a disembodied state, then he may have no need to develop the complex metaphor of being clothed with a house or assert that the person will not be naked.¹⁸⁹ In 2 Cor 5:1–5, however, it seems almost unimaginable for Paul to conceive of a person without a body of some type. Inherent in his rhetoric is a conviction that *σῶμα* functions as a vital structure for the human subject.

Although *σῶμα* is a necessary structure of subjectivity, *σῶμα* alone is an insufficient structure. As has been argued by others¹⁹⁰ *σῶμα* is a relational concept. Somatic participation within larger, spiritual structures determines the believer's selfhood. In 2 Cor 4:16–18, believers are composed of both inner renewal and outer destruction, and, as argued above, this ongoing process of change marks the present subject as one of becoming. As long as the subject has an earthly, "outer person," it will be in a process of becoming and not fully transformed into the heavenly. As 2 Cor 5:1–5 shows, the subject will not realize the *telos* of becoming until the time of eschatological transformation. At that time, by means of receiving a new body that is fit for the ontological sphere that an earthly body can never inhabit, the subject is incorporated into a new realm of being. Thus, the self will be transformed *fully* into a mode of heavenly existence, and this occurs by divine agency and divine power.

¹⁸⁹ For someone less committed to embodiment, for instance, it may be sufficient to claim that a self will exit the sphere of the earthly, visible, temporary, and perishable and enter into the sphere of the heavenly, unseen, eternal, imperishable.

¹⁹⁰ E.g., Käsemann, "Paul's Anthropology," 21–22; John A. T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology*, SBT5 (Chicago: Regnery, 1952). Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 85–108.

2.3 2 Corinthians 5:14–15

In 2 Corinthians 5:14–15, Paul writes, “[B]ecause one died for all, all have therefore died. And he died for all in order that those who live would live no longer to/for themselves, but to/for the one who died for them and was raised.” Although here he does not provide a clear before-and-after depiction of change, Paul envisages an interruption of the self’s continuity. He portrays a past death and the presumption that those who have experienced it are now living “not for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised.” Thus, 2 Cor 5:14–15 meet my second criterion for transformation discourse.

2.3.1 Overview of Pericope

Second Corinthians 5:11–16 is a single pericope that builds on the preceding pericope’s closing statement (5:10) and anticipates Paul’s descriptions of the new creation in vv. 16–21.¹⁹¹ He opens with the phrase, “knowing (οἶδα) the fear of the Lord.” Here, “knowing” combines a sense of “knowledge of or about” with experiential knowledge.¹⁹² The fear of Lord likely refers to the fear of Christ, which suggests that reverential fear characterizes Paul’s ministry.¹⁹³ In light of his reference to the judgment seat of Christ in v. 10, one can summarize: “In reverential awareness, then, of Christ as his judge, Paul ‘persuades’” other people.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ In my reading, “knowing the fear of the Lord” in v. 11 refers back to the anticipation of appearing before Christ’s judgment seat in v. 10. Verse 16 opens a new pericope, and vv. 11–15 form a basis for what Paul writes in vv. 16–21, as indicated by ὥστε in v. 16a. Furthermore, Paul’s continuation of the theme of knowledge, as signaled by the verb οἶδα in v. 16a, parallels his use of the verb οἶδα to begin a new pericope at v. 11a.

¹⁹² Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:401

¹⁹³ I take ὁ φόβος τοῦ κυρίου as referring to Christ, not God, because v. 11 proceeds from Paul’s reference to appearing before Christ’s judgment seat in v. 10. The noun φόβος appears 15x in Pauline literature, but he only refers to the “fear of God,” the “fear of the Lord,” or the “fear of Christ” on a small number of occasions (1 Cor 5:11; 7:1; Rom 3:18; Eph 5:21). For LXX references to the fear of the Lord and their relevance for 2 Cor 5:11, see Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:401.

¹⁹⁴ Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:402. Cf. Lambrecht, “Reconcile Yourselves...” in Bieringer and Lambrecht, *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, 375.

He continues, “And we are manifest (φανερῶ) to God. And I hope that we are manifest (φανερῶ) in your conscience (συνείδησις)” (5:11). Here, Paul aims to reassure the Corinthians of the veracity of his apostolic ministry by virtually restating 4:1–2: “We have renounced the secret things of shame, and are not going about in trickery or distorting the word of God, but in the manifestation (φανέρωσις) of truth, we are commending ourselves to every person’s conscience (συνείδησις) before God.”¹⁹⁵ With his statement in 5:11, Paul reasserts his apostolic team’s sincerity and legitimacy, as well as their aim to persuade others concerning his gospel.¹⁹⁶

In vv. 12–13, Paul reminds the Corinthians that his team is not again commending themselves (3:1–3; 4:2).¹⁹⁷ Instead, they give the community an opportunity to boast about them and to have an answer for Paul’s opponents who, according to Paul, boast in appearances (ἐν προσώπῳ) and not in the heart (ἐν καρδίᾳ), a description that fits well with his characterization of deceitful apostles in 11:12–15, 18.¹⁹⁸ He continues, “For if we are beside ourselves (ἐξέστημεν), it is to/for God; and if we are “of sound mind” (σωφρονοῦμεν), it is to/for you.”¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Cf. 2 Cor 1:12. For Paul’s use of the verb φανερῶ in the Corinthian correspondence to reinforce to describe some reality as being “made known,” “evident,” or “plain,” see 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 2:15; 3:3; 4:10–11; 11:6.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Lambrecht, “Reconcile Yourselves...,” 368–69.

¹⁹⁷ Whatever circumstances produced it, Paul’s preoccupation with commendation and self-commendation in this context is seen in the disproportionate occurrence of the verb συνίστήμι in 2 Corinthians. The verb συνίστήμι appears 14x in Pauline literature and 9x in the Corinthian correspondence (all in 2 Corinthians). See 3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 10:12, 18; 12:11. See also the noun συστατικός in 2 Cor 3:1. In the final form of 2 Corinthians, Paul indicates that his opponents are commending themselves, and he concludes that “it is not those who commend themselves who are approved, but the one whom the Lord commends” (10:18). Yet, as Fitzmyer (“Glory on the Face of Christ”) concludes, claims about the specific circumstances to which Paul responds are “at best a conjecture made today, since the facts escape us” (633).

¹⁹⁸ Cf. 2 Cor 1:14; 9:3; 11:12; Lambrecht, “Reconcile Yourselves,” 371.

¹⁹⁹ It is difficult to make sense of Paul’s use of the verb ἐξέστημεν in v. 13. As Lambrecht (“Reconcile Yourselves”) helpfully summarizes, scholars normally understand the verb to refer to madness or insanity (cf. Mark 3:20–21), an ecstatic state, or Paul’s previous “exaggerated behavior, a way of acting which therefore could easily be (mis)interpreted as self-recommendation” (372–75). Of these options, I find the third most likely because it makes the most sense in following v. 12. As Lambrecht states, “This line of understanding runs more or less as follows: ‘For if we acted somewhat beyond

In v. 14, Paul shifts, “For the love of Christ compels us, having concluded this: because one died for all, all have therefore died” (v. 14b). I take ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive: Christ’s love—as an example of self-sacrifice for others—inspires the apostolic team’s ministry.²⁰⁰ Although it is difficult to assess Paul’s statement that “because one died for all, all have therefore died” (see 2.3.2 below), his references to Christ’s death and others’ deaths continue the theme of giving life on behalf of others. The purpose of believers’ Christ-like death is that they would live “no longer for themselves but for the one who died and was raised for them.” On the whole, then, this pericope functions to legitimate the apostolic team’s ministry by portraying them as living their lives for Christ, in service to the Corinthians.

2.3.2 Transformation in 2 Corinthians 5:14–15: Necessity, Categories, and Factors in Change *Necessity for Change*

In 2 Cor 5:14–15, Paul interprets transformation through the lens of Christ’s death and resurrection. He links the death of all—presumably all believers—with Christ’s death, and he writes that they die in order that (ἵνα) they would live (ζῶω) for Christ (v. 15). The ἵνα clause in v. 15 is purposive, which suggests that believers experience this change in order to gain new life, a concept that requires some examination within the context of 2 Corinthians.²⁰¹

The verb ζῶω appears 9 times in the final form 2 Corinthians, and Paul uses it in multiple ways. He uses it, for example, in reference to the apostles’ suffering, to convey that through their hardships, they experience death even though they still live (4:11; 6:9; cf. 1;8). Twice, Paul

measure, our intentions were known to God, we were open to God; if now we are acting in a rational, controlled way, we are completely honest and open with you” (374–75).

²⁰⁰ In v. 14b, Paul turns to Christ’s death. As elsewhere in his letters, he portrays Christ’s death as a death *for* others (1 Cor 8:11; 15:3; 1 Thess 4:14; 5:10; Gal 2:20; Rom 5:6–8; 6:7–10; 14:9, 15). Thus, the evidence in this context tilts not only toward the subjective genitive but also towards understanding Christ’s love as his example of self-sacrifice. Cf. Lambrecht, “Reconcile Yourselves,” 377 n. 30.

²⁰¹ See Lambrecht, “Reconcile Yourselves...,” 378.

refers to God as the “living God,” and each instance describes God as working within people (3:3) or dwelling in or among believers (6:16). Especially noteworthy is Paul’s statement in 13:4 where, as in 5:14–15, he applies the pattern of Christ’s death and resurrection to his ministry. He writes, “For he was indeed crucified because of weakness, but he lives because of God’s power.”²⁰² For we are also weak in him, but we will live (ζῶω) with him because of God’s power in you.” In 13:4, then, Paul links Jesus’ (resurrection) life and his own “life” with God’s power. Similarly, as argued above, in 2 Cor 4 Paul also links Jesus’ life in resurrection with the power of God: the apostolic team manifests Christ’s life (ζωή) in their ministry (4:10–12).²⁰³ In the literary context of 2 Corinthians, therefore, life often relates to the power of the living God that raised Jesus from the dead and that is at work among believers (cf. 4:14; 5:15).

In 5:14–15, Paul reasons that all have died because Christ died for all, so that “those who live would live no longer for themselves (μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν) but for the one who died and was raised for them (τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι).”²⁰⁴ That is, those who have undergone change through death and resurrection now live in accordance with and on behalf of Christ’s life—the sphere of God’s power.²⁰⁵ Thus 2 Cor 5:14–15 implies that transformation is necessary for believers to obtain new life that is oriented towards and exists on behalf of the resurrected Christ who lives in the realm and power of the *living* God.

Categories of Change

The experience of death occurred in the past (“all died,” in v. 14). This death implicitly led to resurrection, since it is “those who live” (οἱ ζῶντες) in the present who are to live for

²⁰² I translate each occurrence of ἐκ in this verse as causal. See BDAG, s.v., ἐκ 3c.

²⁰³ Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 73.

²⁰⁴ The datives in this final phrase are datives of advantage, suggesting that those who live now live “for the benefit of” Christ, rather than for themselves (BDF§78). So, Harris, *Second Epistle*, 423.

²⁰⁵ This conception of life according to the sphere of the resurrected Christ anticipates v. 16, in which Paul writes that they no longer know Christ “according to the flesh” (κατὰ σάρκα). Cf. Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 169. Cf. Rom 6.

Christ and not for themselves (v. 15). Thus, in 2 Cor 5:14–15 Paul describes a past change that grounds believers’ present state.

As noted, Paul describes in 2 Cor 5:14–15 a transformation as “death” to a life lived for oneself and resurrection into new life that is oriented toward Christ and the living God. He therefore portrays believers as raised into a new form of existence that accords with and is empowered by the resurrected Christ and God’s power.²⁰⁶ I thus characterize this change primarily as *existential* transformation. This existential change also has moral dimensions. Christ’s death is not merely a biological or existential occurrence but as a moral death: he died “for all” (ὕπὲρ πάντων).²⁰⁷ In 2 Corinthians, Paul maps this example of self-giving for others onto the apostolic team’s ministry with shifts from self-presentation to explicit declarations that his ministerial efforts are on behalf of the Corinthians (e.g. 2 Cor 1:3–7; 4:5, 12, 14, 15).²⁰⁸ As Paul states in 5:14a, Christ’s love, which he unpacks as Christ’s self-giving death and resurrection (5:14b–15), “compels” their efforts. Thus, although this transformation is at its core an existential change, in the sense that Christ’s resurrection life grounds and determines a new life, it is also moral because it enables believers no longer to live for themselves, but to live for Christ and others. The change in 2 Cor 5:14–15 is, therefore, *existential-moral* transformation.

Factors in Change

Although Paul does not explicitly mention God in these verses, God and God’s power lie beneath the surface of Paul’s rhetoric. The passive participle of the verb ἐγείρω in v. 15b opens a

²⁰⁶ As argued in the “factors of change” below, Paul does not explicitly reference God or God’s power in 5:14–15, but he assumes that it is present in the continued life of the resurrected Lord. Cf. 13:4; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 73.

²⁰⁷ Cf. 1 Cor 8:11; 15:3; 1 Thess 4:14; 5:10; Gal 2:20; Rom 5:6–8; 6:7–10; 14:9, 15.

²⁰⁸ Cf. a similar pattern in Philippians—the centrality of Christ’s example in 2:5–11 and the ways in which Paul (1:12–20; 3:2–11), Timothy (2:19–24), and Epaphroditus (2:15–30) fit that example. See William S. Kurz, S.J., “Kenotic Imitation of Paul and of Christ in Philippians 2 and 3” in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 103–26.

window to see beneath that surface. Paul writes that Christ died so that others would live for Christ who not only died for them but who “was raised for them” (τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν...ἐεγερθέντι). Since Christ was raised by God’s power, the same power that will raise believers from the dead (1:9; 4:14; 13:4; 1 Cor 6:14 15:15), the life-giving power of God grounds the transformation.

More salient is Paul’s emphasis on Christ as a factor in change. Paul grounds believers’ experience of death in Christ’s death: “Because one died for all, all therefore have died” (v. 14b). Moreover, Christ’s resurrection (v. 15b) grounds believers’ present existence and their mode of moral conduct. Through the power of Christ’s resurrection, which for Paul is a present reality, believers are “compelled” (v. 14) to live no longer for their own interests but for those of Christ.

2.3.3 Transformation & Selfhood in 2 Corinthians 5:14–15

In 2 Cor 5:14–15, as elsewhere (Gal 2:19–20; 6:14–15; Phil 3:10–11; Rom 6:1–11), Paul interprets believers’ experiences of existential-moral transformation through the lens of Christ’s death and resurrection. He thus portrays transformation as the death and resurrection of the person. More specifically, we should understand this change as the death and resurrection of the *moral* self because Paul’s ethical themes draw forth the moral dimensions of selfhood.²⁰⁹ For him, believers have died because Christ died, and because of Christ’s resurrection, they live in accordance with the power of God and the resurrected Christ. This existential reality grounds the apostolic team’s moral conduct, which Paul summarizes with the statement, “The love of Christ compels us” (v. 14a).

Notably, besides Christ, Paul does not directly address the transformation of an individual. He refers to the apostolic team with the first person plural pronoun, and he references

²⁰⁹ Paul’s stress on moral selfhood in 5:14–15 is noteworthy because the transformations described in 2 Cor 3–4 have lacked the moral emphases that we find here and in other passages examined in this study. As shown below (2.4.1), Paul continues to press moral themes in 5:16–21.

believers collectively as “all” and as “those who live.” To be sure, it is an overreach to argue that the plural references in this text prove that Paul understands selfhood primarily in collective terms. But, given the emphasis on relationality in this study and recent research on Paul,²¹⁰ it is important for those who explore moral subjectivity in Paul to recognize and take seriously the predominance of communal language not only in 5:14–15 but throughout 2 Cor 3–5.

2.4 2 Corinthians 5:17

I identify Paul’s statement in 2 Cor 5:17 as transformation discourse according to my first criterion. The term “new creation” (καινή κτίσις) qualifies as explicit transformation terminology.²¹¹ Moreover, in the same pericope, Paul restates this theme by claiming that God “made Christ (to be) sin in order that we would become the righteousness of God.” I examine these two references together.

2.4.1 Overview of Pericope

2 Cor 5:16–21 is a single pericope with two subsections.²¹² Verses 16–17 comprise the first section, and both begin with ὥστε, which indicates that both statements refer back to the death and resurrection references in vv. 14–15.²¹³ In v. 16, Paul addresses the apostolic team’s knowledge of Christ: “Therefore (ὥστε), from now on we no longer know anyone according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα); even though we have known Christ according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα), we do not now know him in this way” (v. 16). It is those who have died and have been

²¹⁰ Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*; Eastman, *Paul and the Person*.

²¹¹ See also Gal 6:15 and my examination of it in ch. 2.

²¹² Paul’s use of ὥστε in v. 16 (and the parallel use in v. 17) signals a shift into reflections on the results of what he writes in vv. 11–15. In v. 21, Paul continues his thoughts from v. 20: God, whom he references in v. 20, is the subject of the verb ποιέω in v. 21. In 6:1, Paul opens a new pericope with a direct appeal to the Corinthians.

²¹³ So, Lambrecht, “Reconcile Yourselves...,” 376.

resurrected (vv. 14–15) who no longer know Christ according to the flesh. The ὥστε of v. 17 refers back to v. 16. All together, Paul’s rhetoric from vv. 14–15 to vv. 16–17 forms a progression: those who are in Christ are a new creation because they know Christ no longer according the flesh (v. 17), since they have died and been raised to new life.

The second section focuses on the apostolic team’s ministry of reconciliation, which is grounded in God’s act of reconciling the world to God through Christ (vv. 18–19). That Paul’s first person plural discourse refers to the apostolic team’s ministry of reconciliation (τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς in v. 18) becomes clear when Paul shifts to a direct appeal for the Corinthians to “be reconciled to God” (καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ) in v. 20. Verse 21 provides the ground of this appeal: “(God) made him who did not know sin (to be) sin for us in order that we would become the righteousness of God in him.”

2.4.2 Transformation in 2 Corinthians 5:17: Necessity, Categories, and Factors in Change

Necessity for Change

The entire pericope has to be considered in its rhetorical context to understand the necessity for transformation in 5:17. To begin, Paul writes that the new creation is a reality for those who are “in Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ). At the end of the pericope, he again employs the notion of being in Christ in relation to human transformation: God made Christ to be sin so that believers would become the righteousness of God “in him” (ἐν αὐτῷ). As maintained throughout this study, my working assumption is that the phrase “in Christ” denotes human participation in Christ, and I hold this to be true for each occurrence in 2 Cor 5:16–21.²¹⁴

In the first occurrence, to be in Christ and, thus, to experience new creation, is to inhabit a new reality in which “the old has things have passed away” and “new things have come about.”

²¹⁴ Cf. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 56.

Characteristic of this reality is new knowledge, in which the apostolic team knows Christ no longer “according to the flesh.” Here, knowledge κατὰ σάρκα is best understood as a reference to a form of knowing that coheres not with the sphere of the flesh, but with the sphere of Christ.²¹⁵ This realm of “the new” is the same realm that Paul has constructed rhetorically throughout chs. 3–5. It is, for example, the sphere of God and the spirit of Christ (3:3, 5–6, 7–11, 17–18; 4:3–4:13–15; 5:14–15), the new covenant (3:6–11), superior glory (3:7–11, 18; 4:4, 6, 17), new life (3:6; 5:15), transformed knowledge (3:12–18; 4:6), the internal and unseen (3:1–3; 4:6, 7, 16–18; 5:12), and eschatological hope (5:1–5).

In the second occurrence, “in Christ” is the sphere in which humanity becomes the righteousness of God (v. 21). This transformed state comes about as a result of God’s action in Christ. In this work, God reconciled the world to God through Christ’s death (5:14–15) and his becoming sin for humanity (5:21). Paul presents the apostolic team as reconciled to God and as participating in God’s work of reconciliation in the world (vv. 18–20), and he appeals to the Corinthians to become like them by becoming reconciled to God as well (v. 20).²¹⁶ In my reading, then, Paul in v. 21 extends the theme of reconciliation by presenting to the Corinthians

²¹⁵ See “categories of change” below. In the Corinthian correspondence and elsewhere in Paul’s letters, he uses the phrase κατὰ σάρκα to denote a mode of moral reasoning (1 Cor 1:26), planning/purposing (2 Cor 1:17), of living and conducting oneself (2 Cor 10:2; Rom 8:4–5; 12), and of boasting (2 Cor 11:18) that is contrary to the norms of the sphere of Christ and of God.

²¹⁶ Although the Corinthians have been transformed already (see 3:1–3), the contents of chs. 1–9 and 10–13 indicate that their relationship with Paul is strained, and that they may even be seeking a new commendatory letter on his behalf (3:1; 5:12). In my reading of chs. 1–5, Paul’s first person discourse primarily demonstrates a mode of self-presentation for apologetic purposes, and his frequent shifts to second person discourse (e.g. 1:5–7; 4:5, 12, 14–15) establish a strong mutuality between his team and the Corinthians (see esp. Paul’s emphasis on εὐλογητός in 1:3–7). As 4:14 indicates, their fates are joined together as well. Thus, implicitly, if the Corinthians reject Paul, they reject his gospel and that which it accomplishes (cf. 4:3–4; Rom 1:16). This scenario, I submit, helps to make sense of how Paul could call on the Corinthians to be reconciled to God in 5:20.

the same goal in different terms—transformation into the righteousness of God.²¹⁷ Put simply, to be reconciled to God is to experience God’s righteousness.

Based on this overview, why is transformation needed? The simplest answer is that Paul’s rhetoric envisages a “world” (v. 18) that has become alienated from God because of sin and is, therefore, in need of reconciliation. What is more, humanity and the system of the world that it inhabits are in need not only of reconciliation but also of a newly created cosmological-anthropological reality, which Paul refers to as “new creation.” The following analyses fill out these concepts in more detail.

Categories of Change

A number of literary streams coursing through 2 Cor. 3–5 converge in 5:16–21. In terms of transformation themes, I submit that the epistemic, existential, and moral currents feed into this pericope’s transformation discourse. Here, I examine each of these dimensions in light of the rhetorical context of chs. 3–5.

First is the epistemic. The first section of 2 Cor 5:16–21 begins with epistemic themes. Paul writes that the team knows neither other people nor Christ “according to the flesh.” Here, *κατὰ σάρκα* is best taken as adverbial, modifying the ways in which the team understands or *knows*.²¹⁸ Two points on this transformed knowing are in order. First, as argued above, to know *not* according to the flesh is to know in accordance with the sphere of Christ and all that this sphere encompasses (see “Necessity of Change” above).

Next, the larger rhetorical context indicates that this knowing involves relational knowledge. Paul began the previous pericope with the verb *οἶδα* to state that the team “knows the fear of the Lord” (5:11). With this clause, Paul writes both that he *knows about* the fear of the

²¹⁷ Cf. Lambrecht, “Reconcile Yourselves,” 392–93.

²¹⁸ So, Harris, *Second Epistle*, 428.

Lord and that he *knows experientially* the fear of the Lord.²¹⁹ Taken together, he knows the fear of Christ by knowing Christ relationally (cf. 1 Cor 2:2). Similarly, my above analyses find that 2 Cor 3:12–18 describes a past epistemic change and an ongoing epistemic transformation, and I argue that both of these changes involve relational knowledge (2.1.2). So too, in 5:16, Paul describes the apostolic team’s transformed relational knowledge of other people and of Christ: they now know not according to the sphere of the flesh but, implicitly, according to the sphere of Christ.²²⁰ This is not an ongoing epistemic change but a statement that they have changed and that they have, therefore, become a new creation (v. 17).

Second is the existential. Recall that vv. 16–17 follow from the existential-moral transformation that Paul describes in vv. 14–15. In the latter, believers have died to one sphere and now live in the sphere of Christ. As a result, the apostolic team’s knowledge no longer accords with the sphere of the flesh (v. 16). They are “in Christ” (v. 17), and, as Paul argues, it is those who are in Christ who participate in new creation. Paul does not here specify whether the new creation is anthropological (i.e. a believer is a new creation) or cosmological (i.e. there is a new creation in which humans exist). He simply writes, “If anyone is in Christ—a new creation.” Yet, as shown throughout this study, there is no need to distinguish sharply between the cosmological and the anthropological in Paul.²²¹ Consistently, humans are determined by the structures within which they are enmeshed and the powers in which they participate. The new creation is, thus, both cosmological and anthropological. Believers’ existence is now grounded in the world of the new creation.

²¹⁹ Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:401.

²²⁰ As Lambrecht (“Reconcile Yourselves”) writes, “That ‘knowledge’ is, of course, not just theoretical but also experiential, existential, moral” (379).

²²¹ See discussion in section 1.6.2 of ch. 2 with respect to the occurrence of “new creation” in Gal 6:15. For similar conclusions, see T. Ryan Jackson, *New Creation in Paul’s Letters: A Study of the Historical and Social Setting of a Pauline Concept*; WUNT 272 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

Moreover, Paul adds, “The old things (ἀρχαῖος) have passed away. Behold, new things (καινός) have come.” He does not frequently use this language of the new and the old.²²² His use of καινός, however, recalls his reference to the apostolic team’s call to be “ministers of a new covenant” (διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης) in 3:6.²²³ In that context, Paul describes the team’s ministry, which is the ministry of the spirit (v. 8), as one that is existentially life-giving and superior to Moses’ ministry, which involves death and condemnation (3:7–11; see 2.1.2 above). In line with 2 Cor 5:14–15, then, one understands human participation in the new as participation in the sphere of Christ’s spirit, which constitutes a new (life-giving) existential reality.

The third category is the moral. In God’s act of reconciling the world through Christ, Paul writes that God did not “count their trespasses against them (μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν)” (v. 19). He adds, “(God) made the one who did not know sin (to be) sin so that we would become the righteousness of God in him” (v. 21). Paul’s language of trespasses, sin, and righteousness invoke a moral frame for his transformation discourse.²²⁴

In this context, God’s reconciliation of humanity to God summarizes the notion of being made righteous (v. 21), which Paul often employs to describe God’s setting aright the divine-human relationship that has been damaged by sin.²²⁵ The reference to becoming God’s righteousness in 2 Cor 5:21 recalls 1 Cor 1:30, in which Paul writes that Christ became

²²² Paul’s only use of ἀρχαῖος is here in 2 Cor 5:17. The adjective καινός appears 7x in Pauline literature: 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; 2 Cor 5:17 (2x); Gal 6:15 (καινὴ κτίσις); Eph 2:15; 4:24.

²²³ Note that Paul describes the teams as “ministers” (διάκονος) of the new covenant, and he goes on to describe the “ministry” (διακονία) of the spirit and surpassing glory over and against the ministry (διακονία) of death, condemnation, and inferior glory (3:7–9). Similarly Paul describes the apostolic team’s call as the “ministry (διακονία) of reconciliation” in 5:18. These linguistic similarities not only suggest a relationship between 3:7–11 and 5:16–21, but they indicate that in both, Paul refers to the same ministry in different terms and with different emphases.

²²⁴ Cf. Rom 5:1–11; 11:15; 2 Macc 1:3, 7; 5:18–20; 8:9.

²²⁵ See, e.g., Rom 1:16–3:26, esp. 3:21–26. For discussion, see Johnson, *Writings*, 292, 295–97. See also the foundational essay, Ernst Käsemann, “The Righteousness of God in Paul” in Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, trans. W.J. Montague (London: S.C.M., 1969), 168–82.

righteousness from God (ἀπὸ θεοῦ...δικαιοσύνη). The notion that believers have become the righteousness of God *in Christ* (ἐν αὐτῷ) fits well with Paul's previous claim that Christ has become righteousness. Just as believers share in Christ's death and resurrection (5:14–15) and are being transformed into the likeness of Christ (3:18), so too, they are transformed into the same state of righteousness characterizes Christ.²²⁶ Thus, to be in Christ and to be incorporated into new creation involve transformation with moral dimensions.

To summarize, the transformation discourse in 5:16–21 has epistemic, existential, and moral dimensions. Because of the change presumed in Paul's statements, believers have a new way of knowing people and Christ (v. 16). They have new existence in Christ, which is characterized by participation in the new cosmological and anthropological reality sphere of the new creation (v. 17). And, moreover, because they have been reconciled with God through Christ, their trespasses have been dealt with, and, with Christ (1 Cor 1:30) they have become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21).²²⁷

Factors in Change

In 2 Cor 5:18a, which transitions between Paul's statements on new creation (vv. 16–17) and those on the ministry of reconciliation (vv. 18–21), he states baldly, "And all of these things are from God..." As 2.4.1 above shows, God's act of reconciling the world to God through Christ (διὰ Χριστοῦ) grounds the changes that transform believers into the righteousness of God,

²²⁶ See Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 252, who summarizes, "In this way, the points about the redemptive effect of Christ's death (5:14–15), the presence of "a new creation" (5:17), and the reality of reconciliation (5:18–19) are effectively summarized and applied to the situation of the individual believer." See also Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1:400–401.

²²⁷ Cf. the summary of Thrall (*Second Epistle*): "Old standards of judgment have been annulled, and the believer becomes a new being through incorporation into Christ. God has reconciled estranged humanity into himself and makes the act of reconciliation known through the apostolic proclamation. It was brought about through Christ's self-identification with sinful humanity which made it possible, conversely, for sinful human beings to become identified with Christ and to share his own righteous relationship with God" (1:400–401).

as well as the apostolic team's ministry of reconciliation. It is also on the basis of God's action in Christ that Paul appeals to the Corinthians to be reconciled. God grounds this transformation.

Although God is the agent of cosmic reconciliation and new creation, Christ, as God's mediator (vv. 18–19) is a more immediate factor of believers' transformation. Moreover, Paul here depicts believers' change as grounded in Christ's own experience of change. Although, according to Paul, Christ did not know sin, God “made him (to be) sin (ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν).” Presumably, since Christ here links himself with humanity in sin and death so that they can be united with him in resurrection (cf. 2 Cor 5:14–15; 1 Cor 15:17; Rom 6:1–11), Christ's being made sin refers to Christ's death.²²⁸ Implicitly, then, humanity's becoming the righteousness of God *in Christ* results from participation in Christ's resurrection. Additionally, Paul does not give much by way of cosmological description, still less a detailed cosmology, but he presumes a cosmological context that is integral to his transformation discourse. God was “in Christ reconciling *the world*” (ὁ κόσμος) to God. Here, I understand “the world” to be the sphere of human moral action (2 Cor 1:12) and a “system of meaning and values” that is opposed to God's order (cf. 2 Cor 7:10; 1 Cor 1:20–21).²²⁹ This construal indicates that, due to sin (v. 21), the world of human action had become estranged from God and was in need not only of God's act of reconciliation (vv. 18–20) but of recreation in and through Christ (v. 17).

Divine agents accomplish changes in 2 Cor 5:16–21. God works in and through Christ to reconcile the world to God, to transform believers into the righteousness of God, and to bring about the new cosmological-anthropological reality that is the new creation. Paul does, however, presume that believers have some degree of agency in these changes when he appeals to the

²²⁸ Cf. the similarities in the claim that God “made Christ (to be) sin *for us* (ὕπερ ἡμῶν)” in 2 Cor 5:21 with the claim that “Christ died *for our sins* (ὕπερ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν)” in 1 Cor 15:3.

²²⁹ My understand of “the world” here draws on the interpretation of the world in James (esp. 4:4) in Johnson, *Brother of Jesus, Friend of God*, 202–20, esp. p. 216.

Corinthians to be reconciled with God (v. 20). Yet human agency here appears to be limited to the decision to give oneself over to transformation in a way that corresponds to Christ's willingness to die on behalf of others (5:14–15, 21).

2.4.3 Transformation & Selfhood in 2 Corinthians 5:17

The new creation in 2 Cor 5:17 and related transformation discourse in 5:16–21 reveal Paul's view of the human's embeddedness within larger cosmological structures and powers. The person, in Paul's construal, is part of a sphere and a system that is alienated from God, characterized by sin (vv. 19, 21), and implicitly, reasons according to the flesh and not Christ's spirit (v. 15). One cannot reduce these realities to people, their ideas, and/or their moral systems. Yet humans are integral to and partly constitutive of the reality that Paul refers to as "the world" (v. 19). This world that is estranged from God because of sin is a cosmological-anthropological reality. The new reality that emerges from God's act of reconciliation in and through Christ—the new creation—is also a cosmological-anthropological phenomenon. By acting "in Christ" (v. 19), God created a new realm of existential-moral reconciliation and righteousness, and humans can participate in that reality by undergoing transformation that produces new existence in Christ. Consequently, as a result of transformation, the sphere of Christ structures and determines believers' selfhood.

Paul alludes to the sphere of Christ, the sphere of the new creation, with the phrase "in Christ." This is a relational sphere in which the person is linked with Christ because one has undergone transformation that is bound with Christ's own transformation (5:14–15, 21). Believers have undergone epistemic transformation and *know* Christ relationally in new ways (5:16). Their existence is now grounded in the resurrected Christ, and their sharing in God's

righteousness with Christ shapes their morality (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Cor 1:30). Thus, in its epistemic, existential, and moral dimensions, believers' selfhood is relationally-constituted in that their subjectivity is determined by participation in Christ and the new cosmological-anthropological reality that God has inaugurated through him. Thus, as he does in Gal 6:15, Paul here portrays transformed believers as subjects of the new creation.

2.5 2 Corinthians 11:13–15

In 2 Corinthians 11:13–15, Paul uses the verb μετασχηματίζω 3 times with reference to his opponents. He argues that they disguise or “transform themselves” as genuine “apostles of Christ” (v. 13) and as “ministers of righteousness,” an act that resembles Satan’s disguise/self-transformation as an angel of light (v. 14). At first blush, Paul’s use of the term μετασχηματίζω qualifies as transformation discourse according to my first criterion—explicit use of transformation terminology. Generally, μετασχηματίζω means to change or to transform.²³⁰ As discussed in Chapter 2, Paul uses the same term with reference to ontological and somatic transformation in Phil 3:21.²³¹

As multiple English translations show, and as commentators often note, μετασχηματίζω occurs in the middle voice in 2 Cor 11:13–15. Thus, one could translate it simply as “disguise” and not invoke the language of transformation at all.²³² Although “disguise” is an adequate

²³⁰ BDAG, s.v. μετασχηματίζω.

²³¹ Apart from 2 Cor 11:12–15 and Phil 3:21, Paul’s only other use of μετασχηματίζω is in 1 Cor 4:6. There, it means “apply to,” rather than to transform (see BDAG, s.v. μετασχηματίζω). It occurs only once in the LXX: in 4 Macc. 9:22, the author writes that the first of the seven tortured sons was “transformed as though by fire into incorruptibility” (ὥσπερ ἐν πυρὶ μετασχηματιζόμενος εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν).

²³² Examples of English translations that translate μετασχηματίζω as “disguise” include the RSV, NRSV, NASB, ESV, CEB, and The NIV uses the verb “masquerade” in its translation. The NKJV, however, translates the middle voice as “transforming themselves.” For discussion, see Rudolph Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 285; 178; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 494; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* 178; Thrall, *Second*

translation, I argue in the following that this English rendering conceals notions of transformation that the term conveys in this context.²³³

2.5.1 Overview of Pericope

The pericope in which Paul's uses of the verb μετασχηματίζω in vv. 13–15 are in a pericope that begins at v. 12.²³⁴ This passage follows from Paul's apologetic attempts to legitimate his apostolic authority with respect to the Corinthians and against his opponents—the “super apostles” (v. 5)—and to defend his practice of not receiving financial support from the Corinthians (11:1–11). In v. 12, Paul declares that he will continue this practice and, in doing so, he differentiates himself from his opponents. He will continue in order to “cut off the opportunity of those who desire an opportunity to be found just as we are in that which they boast.”²³⁵

With the explanatory γάρ of v. 13, Paul begins to unpack the claims he makes in v. 12. Like the serpent who deceived Eve in the garden (v. 2), the super apostles who seek opportunities to boast are in actuality “false apostles” (ψευδαπόστολοι) and deceitful workers (ἐργάται δόλοι). Of particular significance for this study is the means by which the false apostles

Epistle, 2.693–94; Harris, *Second Epistle*, 771–73; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 537. See also John T. Anderson, “The Body of Satan,” *Proceedings - Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society* 13 (1993): 103–107.

²³³ Commentators who translate μετασχηματίζω in the middle voice as disguise commonly do so with the acknowledgement that “transform themselves” is a more literal rendering. See, e.g., Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 285; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 494; Lambrecht, *Second Epistle*, 178.

²³⁴ The textual boundaries are most clearly shown by what proceeds and follows vv. 12–15. Verse 11 closes a pericope about the super apostles (beginning at v. 5) with rhetorical questions and answer that concludes Paul's discussion of financial support: “Why? Because I do not love you? God knows.” Verse 16 begins a new pericope with a shift: “Again I say to you” reintroduces the themes of foolishness from 11:1–4. In v. 12, Paul introduces the new pericope using a reference to his practice (“What I am doing, I will continue to do”) to transition into a new focus on his opponents. There, he writes that his motive (see the purposive ἵνα): “to cut off the opportunity from those who want an opportunity, so that they might be found just as we are in that which they boast.” Paul speaks of the opponents in vv. 13–15, and at v. 16, he returns to the subject matter of vv. 1–4, namely, his foolishness.

²³⁵ I understand his continued practice as differentiation from his opponents because I take the ἵνα in v. 12 as purposive. That is, the purpose for his persistence is to cut off opportunities for boasting from his opponents.

deceive the Corinthians: they “‘transform themselves’ into apostles of Christ.” Regardless of the translation choice, Paul’s metaphorical use of μετασχηματίζω envisages his opponents’ manipulation of their appearances to appear as something that they are not, namely, Christ’s apostles (v. 13) and servants of righteousness (v. 15). Moreover, Paul aligns their self-transformation with Satan who alters his form into that of an angel of light (ὁ σατανᾶς μετασχηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός). The opponents are, in fact, servants of Satan (διάκονοι αὐτοῦ in v. 15a). As a result, according to Paul, the their fates will accord with their works (v. 15b).

2.5.2 Transformation in 2 Corinthians 11:13–15: Necessity, Categories, and Factors in Change

Necessity for Change

Unlike other passages examined in this study, the transformation discourse in 2 Cor 11:13–15 does not describe the existential, moral, or epistemic change of the human by a divine agent. This particular change does not occur, then, because of some deep existential or spiritual need. Thus, rather than conceive of this this seeming change as based on a particular necessity, it is more fitting to consider the *aim* of this transformation and what it accomplishes.

As the “categories of change” analysis below shows, Paul figuratively describes his opponents as altering their appearances, and, in doing so, he implicitly casts them against a web of tradition that features the self-transformations of supernatural figures to deceive humans. In vv. 13, 15, Paul argues that by altering their appearances to pose as genuine apostles, his opponents actually mask their true identities as “servants of Satan” (v. 15) who according to some traditions, transforms himself into an angel of light.²³⁶ Thus, Paul’s claim that his opponents “transform themselves into apostles of Christ” functions figuratively to allege that

²³⁶ See Pseudo-Philo, LAB, 28.2

they are “deceptive workers” and “false apostles” (v. 13). As the following analysis clarifies, Paul’s rhetoric indicates that *deception* is the underlying aim of this particular transformation.

Categories of Change

One’s categorization of this transformation rests on how we understand Paul’s use of the verb μετασχηματίζω. As noted above, the most literal translation is that the false apostles “transform themselves.” A possible rendering is that they ‘disguise themselves.’ Two points show that the distinction between these two options is largely inconsequential.

First, whichever translation we use, Paul writes metaphorically. The opponents neither disguise themselves nor transform themselves in a literal sense. Paul’s figurative language suggest that the opponents pretend to be someone and something that they are not, namely, genuine apostles. Second, even if one translates μετασχηματίζω as “disguise,” a disguise requires a certain type of change—the alteration of one’s external appearances. Thus, while acknowledging the metaphorical nature of Paul’s descriptions, I categorize the transformation discourse in 2 Cor 11:13–15 as *the transformation of appearances*. At first blush, this label may seem banal. But one can see the significance of this transformation language in the traditions that Paul implicitly invokes.

By aligning the super apostles’ deceptive self-transformations with Satan’s transformation into an angel of light (v. 14), Paul plays on a prominent trope in ancient mythological traditions. From Zeus’s various alterations for sexual pursuits, to Dionysus’ transformation into human form to deceive and take vengeance on Cadmus in the *Bacchae*,²³⁷ to

²³⁷ At the start of the myth, for example, Euripides has Dionysus say of himself, “I have exchanged my divine form for a mortal one” (μορφήν δ’ ἀμείψας ἐκ θεοῦ βροτησίαν; *Bacch.* 4), and “I have assumed a mortal form and I have changed my form into a human appearance” (μορφήν τ’ ἐμὴν μετέβαλον εἰς ἀνδρὸς φύσιν; *Bacch.* 50). Cf. ch. 6.

the Jewish traditions of the Watchers “transforming themselves into humans,”²³⁸ to Satan’s transfiguration of himself into “the brilliance of an angel” in the Life of Adam and Eve,²³⁹ mythical stories that feature the transformation of appearances by supernatural figures for deceptive purposes are common in antiquity. When Paul uses μετασχηματίζω to portray his opponents as altering their outward form in the manner of Satan, he figuratively enacts a meaningful trope of deceptive self-transformation and maps it onto his opponents.²⁴⁰ To claim that his opponents are false apostles who “transform themselves” into genuine apostles just as Satan transforms himself into an angel of light is, therefore, to present the opponents as transforming their appearances for deceptive purposes in the manner of deceitful and dangerous supernatural figures.

Factors of Change

The voice of the participle μετασχηματιζόμενοι in v. 13 and μετασχηματίζονται in v. 15 reveal the agents of change. Both are in the middle voice, which suggests that Paul’s opponents are the agents of change to their appearances. That is, contrary to genuine apostles (3:18; 4:16–18), the opponents are not being transformed by Christ’s Spirit but are “transforming themselves” in order to appear legitimate. It is possible that Paul assumes that Satan is the underlying agent of the false apostles’ alterations. Yet the text does not provide sufficient evidence to argue such a claim; it is more accurate to say that the false apostles align themselves with Satan the deceiver, since, according to Paul, they are Satan’s servants (v. 15a). He figuratively presents his opponents as enacting the transformation of their own appearances, and Satan is a key factor in change, since these alterations are in his likeness.

²³⁸ See the similar statement μετασχηματίζοντο εἰς ἄνθρωπους in T. Reu 5.6.

²³⁹ LAB 28.2.

²⁴⁰ This is not to say that Paul here alludes to a specific mythological tradition. Rather, I simply submit that Paul’s reference to Satan’s transformation into an angel of light (v. 14) and the opponents’ imitation of it has meaning against a diverse array of transformation myths.

2.5.3 Transformation & Selfhood in 2 Corinthians 11:13–15

Although Paul's descriptions in 2 Cor 11:13–15 are metaphorical, his use of transformation discourse to disclose his opponents' "true identities" is revealing. To be sure, the use of transformation discourse is not the only way for Paul to characterize his opposition. But the fact that he does so here and throughout 2 Corinthians points to the link between transformation and selfhood in Paul that this study seeks to elucidate. Here specifically, if we compare Paul's descriptions of the super apostles with his self-presentation in chs. 3–5, then we find that Paul tacitly opposes the opponents' deceptive transformation of appearances with the genuine metamorphosis that true apostles undergo by Christ's spirit. Thus, transformation and modes of transformation communicate something about identity and selfhood.

Paradoxically, the opponents' self-transformation in 11:13–15 both masks their identity and reveals it. Like Satan's change of form into an angel of light, their alteration is an effort to hide their true identity. The *type* of change they undergo, however, *reveals* their true identity: their transformation of appearance does not embody apostolic metamorphosis but, rather, it resembles the changes that characterize Satan's servants (11:15). By contrast, in the context of 3:18 and 4:16–18, Paul's apostolic identity is characterized by metamorphosis that centers not in the realm of appearances, but in the realm of πνεῦμα and καρδιά, in the realm not of that which is seen but of that which is unseen (4:18). This comparison cannot be fully exploited here. Nor do I have more to add concerning what the discourse in 11:13–15 suggests about the self in Paul's viewpoint. More important for my purposes is the *Dass* and not the *Was* of the relationship of transformation to selfhood presupposed in this passage: this passage contributes to my larger study a clear instance in which Paul describes human transformation in order to

communicate something about identity. Pauline transformation discourse is indeed a site for the discovery of his conceptions of the self.

2.6 Conclusion: Transformation & Selfhood in 2 Corinthians

Of the epistles examined in this study, 2 Corinthians contains the most diverse range of transformation references. In the letter's final form, Paul describes transformations that are existential (3:18; 4:16–18) or existential-moral (5:14–15, 17), epistemic (3:18, 5:17), bodily and ontological (5:1–5), alterations of appearances (11:12–15), or some combination of these categories (3:18; 5:1–5, 17). The transformations in 2 Corinthians also occur in the past (5:14–15, 17), present (3:18, 4:16–18; 11:13–15), and future (5:1–5).

The transformation discourse in 2 Corinthians also features a range of “models” of selfhood. Although Paul emphasizes embodiment in 1 Cor 15:25–57, his rhetoric in 2 Cor 4:16–5:5 is likely the most anthropologically dualistic among his letters. Although he stresses that the “self” will not be “naked”—that is, without a body or “dwelling” of some sort—he still emphasizes in 2 Cor 5:1–10 that he would be with the Lord if he were to die in the present. Such descriptions differ from his discussion of the transformed body in 1 Cor 15. The differences between the two portrayals likely arise from the different rhetorical contexts. He discusses the future resurrection of believers in 1 Cor 15, but 2 Cor 5:1–10 concerns death prior to the resurrection.²⁴¹ Thus, if he is to maintain that death in the present results in being with the Lord, a dualistic view of the human emerges.²⁴²

²⁴¹ A parallel example appears in Philippians. Paul describes his possible pre-resurrection as being with Christ (1:12–26), but he describes transformation at the resurrection as bodily transformation (3:21). Thus, in a sense, Phil 1:12–26 is to Phil 3:21 as 1 Cor 15:35–57 is to 5:1–10.

²⁴² On the shifting performances of selfhood in various contexts, see K. Ewing, “The Illusion of Wholeness: Culture, Self, and the Experience of Inconsistency,” *Ethos* 18 (1990): 251–78; see also the criticisms of Ewing's work with nuanced proposes in Quinn, “The Self.”

Of significance as well is that Paul makes to references to ongoing present change in 2 Corinthians (cf. Gal 4:19; Phil 3:10–11; Rom 12:1–2).²⁴³ In these passages, Paul not only describes believers as experiencing change, but he portrays their lives as characterized by ongoing transformation that is grounded in a previous, initial transformation (3:1–5; 5:14–15, 17). Moreover, Paul employs this transformation discourse in an epistle that focuses heavily on identity, especially on questions about the veracity of his apostolic identity that have resulted from the influence of opponents. I submit that, by putting 2 Cor 11:13–15 into conversation with the self-presentations in 2 Cor 3–4, we find that he portrays genuine, ongoing transformation—rather than deceptive transformation of appearances (11:13–15)—as a mark of true apostolic ministers and, by implication, members of the Corinthian church.²⁴⁴ Put simply, Paul envisages in 2 Corinthians a conception of subjectivity that is partly constituted by continuous transformation.

²⁴³ He makes three references if we include the transformation of appearances in 11:13–15.

²⁴⁴ On transformation as a mark of Paul's call, see Frances Back, *Verwandlung durch Offenbarung bei Paulus: Eine religionsgeschichtlich-exegetische Untersuchung zu 2 Kor 2,14–4,6*, WUNT 2.153 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

Chapter 4

Mapping Transformation Discourse in Romans

1.1 Romans 6:1–11

Romans 6:1–11 qualifies as transformation discourse according to my second criterion. First, Paul writes that believers have died to sin (v. 2), have been buried with Christ Jesus in baptism (vv. 3–4), and can thus expect to share in Christ’s resurrection (v. 5). He uses the language of co-crucifixion (συσταυρόω) to describe this experience (v. 6), and the change has disrupted the self’s continuity to the extent that he refers to the pre-death self as “the old person” (ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος). He adds that the Romans are to view themselves no longer as the (collective) person who died but as “living with God in Christ Jesus” (ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Implicit in Paul’s language, then, is not only the expectation of future resurrection (v. 5), but a new person that has been produced through an experience of resurrection (vv. 4, 11). As Joseph A. Fitzmyer summarizes, “Through baptism, they are identified with Christ’s death and resurrection, and their very being or ‘self’ is transformed.”¹

1.1.1 Overview of Pericope

The pericope of Rom 6:1–11 follows from Paul’s arguments in ch. 5 and the questions that arise from his claims in 5:18–21 (cf. 3:5–8).² In 5:20, he writes that when the law entered,

¹ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*; AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 429.

² Romans 6:1–11 is a self-contained unit. Paul’s question in 6:1 marks a clear shift into answering a question that arises from his claims that grace increased when sin increased when sin increased (5:20). With an imperative based on his arguments in 6:1–11 (οὖν), he shifts into a new pericope at v. 12. Although Paul continues with the theme of sin after 6:12, his focus shifts away from the death-resurrection them in vv. 1–11. Note, e.g. that the verb ἀποθνῄσκω appears 6x in 6:1–11, but Paul does not use it again until 7:2. Paul raises the same question in 3:5–8 (So Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 430). Cf. Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*; Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 391, 394–95.

sin increased (πλεονάζω), but, when sin increased, grace increased even more (ὑπερπερισεύω). In 6:1, he anticipates a question: “Shall we continue with sin so that grace might increase?”³ Paul dismisses the question (μὴ γένοιτο; 6:2a) and responds with his own queries. He asks first, “How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” (6:2b).⁴ He continues, “Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death?”⁵ The three questions in vv. 1–3 progressively narrow in focus—from grace and sin (v. 1), to the (supposed) experience of dying to sin, to the particular ritual of baptism.⁶ Together, these queries are “leading” in that Paul uses them to introduce the arguments of vv. 4–11.⁷

In vv. 4–11, Paul writes that believers have died to the power of sin and suggests that is incomprehensible that they could live according to that which they have died.⁸ He does this first by mapping the structure of death by crucifixion and resurrection onto the Roman’s (supposed)

³ So, Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology*, BZNW 32 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock), 7–8. As Luke Timothy Johnson (*Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* [New York: Crossroad, 1996]), notes, on the bases of Paul’s reference to false accusations in 3:8, Paul here “responds to what he considers a canard, and his answer is important above all for showing how he regards sin and grace not as formal categories but as real conditions” (101). Regarding sin, I translate the dative τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ as “with sin” rather than as the locative, because throughout chs. 5–8, Paul predominantly portrays sin as a power with agency. See, e.g. Rom 5:12–13, 20–21; 6:12–14, 16–18, 20, 22–3; 7:7–9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20. See also 3:9. Similarly, death (θάνατος) functions both as a sphere and a power: Rom 5:12, 17, 21; 6:16, 21, 23; 7:13. See also 5:14; 6:9; cf. 7:5, 10; 8:6.

⁴ Although I translate the dative in 6:2a as an associative dative, I translate ἐν αὐτῇ as locative. These translations do not conflict, since, according to Paul’s reasoning, one can participate or share experiences *with* the power *in which* one exists and is governed. A believer can, for example, be crucified (v. 6) and buried (v. 4) *with* Christ and also be *in* Christ Jesus (v. 11). So Jewett, *Romans*, 395–96.

⁵ Paul most likely inherited the tradition of relating baptism to Christ’s death and resurrection. See Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 12–14; Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 102–103.

⁶ On the experiential assumptions of Paul’s rhetoric in Rom 6:1–14, see Johnson *Reading Romans*, 101–102. On the theology and function of baptism in Rom 6, see Hans Dieter Betz, “Transferring a Ritual: Paul’s Interpretation of Baptism in Romans 6” in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 84–118; Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 7–14.

⁷ For discussion of the rhetorical use of “leading questions” in Paul (1 Cor 15:35–57) and other Hellenistic literature, see Asher, *Polarity and Change*, 66–77. He notes, “This way of framing...limits the possible alternative directions that the subsequent discussion can take” (77). As Johnson (*Reading Romans*) observes, such questions are also characteristic of diatribe, which Paul employs throughout Romans (101).

⁸ Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 395.

experiences of transformation at baptism (vv. 4–5).⁹ According to Paul, believers were “buried with (συνθάπτω) Christ through (διὰ) baptism into death (εἰς θάνατον).” Paul commonly describes Christ’s death as the event by which God delivered human beings from death, and he often portrays death not merely as a biological expiration but as an a power with agency that rules over people (Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:21, 26, 54–56). In Romans, sin and death are dual powers, forming “an inseparable alliance.”¹⁰ Similarly, Paul envisages Christ’s death as not only a past event but also a present reality that humans can experience, and with which they can participate (2 Cor 4:9–12; Phil 3:10–11; cf. Gal 2:19–20).¹¹ For Paul, “death is part of life and part of human existence,”¹² and, throughout Rom 1–5, he argues that humans live under sin and death in their default mode of existence.

In 6:3–5, baptism is the means (διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος) by which believers have been buried with Christ (v. 4), experience the reality of Christ’s death (v. 3), and have “become united (σύμφυτος) with the likeness of [Christ’s] death” (v. 5).¹³ As v. 8 shows, Paul understands this

⁹ Johnson (*Reading Roman*) notes that the question, “Do you not know?” (ἀγνοεῖτε) suggests that the Romans should know this from their own experiences (102). See also Jewett, *Romans*, 396.

¹⁰ See J. Christiaan Beker, “The Relationship Between Sin and Death in Romans,” in Robert Tomson Fortna, and Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 57–58. See also Kyle Wells, *Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism Interpreting the Transformation of the Heart*, NovTSup (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 226. See Rom 5:12, 17, 21; 6:16, 21, 23; 7:13. See also 5:14; 6:9; cf. 7:5, 10; 8:6

¹¹ See discussion in ch. 2 (2.1.2).

¹² Steven Kraftchick, “Abstracting Paul’s Theology: Extending Reflections on ‘Death’ in Philippians” in *The Impartial God: Essays in Honor of Jouette M. Bassler*, eds. Calvin J. Roetzel and Robert L. Foster; NTM (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007), 211.

¹³ In Pauline literature, verb συνθάπτω appears only here and in Col 2:12 (see also θάπτω in 1 Cor 15:4). Noteworthy is that Col 2:12 also refers to being “buried with him in baptism” (συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτισμῷ). If we take ἐν in Col 2:12 as instrumental—and I believe we should—then baptism is the means by which a person experiences the reality of Christ’s death in both passages.

What does it mean to be “united with the likeness of his death” (v. 5)? The adjective σύμφυτος is a hapaxlegomenon in the NT. As an agricultural term, it can mean “to grow together” or “to be bound up, related with” (*TDNT*, s.v. σύμφυτος). Pulling together a number of sources, Jewett (*Romans*) adds that the term is also used in “biological references to knitting together the edges of a wound or the ends of broken bones, and social references to citizens clustering around their leader or sharing a particular ethos” (400). He prefers “a generic translation such as ‘joined together’ or ‘united together,’ which implies that

sharing in Christ's death as co-crucifixion (cf. Gal 2:19). It is also the means by which believers tacitly experience liberation from death through resurrection (5:12–21) and, consequently, “walk in newness of life” (v. 4). It provides the basis upon which believers expect to share in the likeness of Christ's resurrection in the future (v. 5).

The experience of co-crucifixion and co-resurrection in 6:3–5 also recalls—perhaps even restates—the experience of receiving the spirit in 5:5, in which Paul writes that the spirit was poured into believers' hearts. Similar to how Paul uses the language of co-crucifixion (Gal 2:19–20) and the reception of Christ's spirit (Gal 4:6) to describe initial transformation in Christ in Galatians, Paul uses similar rhetoric to describe foundational changes in Rom 5–6. He likely refers to the spirit of Christ in both Rom 5:5 and 6:3–5, and significant for my analysis is that both passages describe an experience of Christ's spirit linking up with the believer.

In 6:6–11, Paul returns to the issue of sin (6:1), but within the framework of death and resurrection that he develops in vv. 3–5. He refers to the self that died through co-crucifixion as the old person (ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος), and he writes that this former person was crucified so that the “body of sin” (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας) would be “rendered ineffective” (καταργέω)¹⁴

believers share an indivisible, organic unity with Christ” (4). Or as Betz (“Transforming Ritual”) states, here it refers to “the interpenetration of the human and the divine” (114). Together with ὁμοίωμα (“likeness;” see Jewett, *Romans*, 401), Paul likely refers to the ritual of baptism as *symbolic*, in the sense that the symbol “makes mythic realities present in symbolic fashion” (Betz, “Transferring a Ritual,” 115). Thus, to “be united with the likeness of his death,” means that, through baptism (not the exact same death and resurrection Christ experienced but the “likeness” of it), believers become participants in Christ (Betz, “Transferring a Ritual,” 115–16).

¹⁴ The term καταργέω can mean “to destroy,” but it can also mean “to render inactive,” “to condemn to inactivity,” “to put out of use,” or “to deprive of power” (*TDNT*, s.v. καταργέω). In the literary context of Romans, Paul uses the term (6x) to express nullification (3:3, 31; 4:14) and “release” or “discharge” (7:2, 6). Thus, the rhetorical context pulls forth the sense of a power or structure being rendered ineffective more than a sense of total destruction. Moreover, this passage contains a tension in whether the current, resurrected self is the same as the former, crucified self, and my translation of καταργέω seeks to maintain that tension. Further, as I argue below, there is a sense in which this “former self” continues to exist as integrated into the new self and as a (relational) means by which the new self makes sense of itself. For discussion of a former self as *integrated* into a new self from the field of neuroscience, see Patrick McNamara, *The Neuroscience of Religious Experience* (Cambridge University

so that that sin would no longer rule over believers. Here, one should understand “the old person” not in individual terms but as a “collective entity.”¹⁵ “When believers were in slavery to sin, they were part of the inclusive ‘old man’; their existence was bound up with his.”¹⁶ The “body of sin” refers back to the old person who was co-crucified and be conceived of as the body of the crucified person.¹⁷ Since Paul often portrays σῶμα “in relational terms,”¹⁸ I read τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας as referring to the dimensions of the human by which the “old person” related to the power of sin, that is, by which it was “enslaved (δουλεύω) to sin” (v. 6b).¹⁹

In v. 7, Paul establishes a principle that explains (γάρ) these claims: once believers have died with Christ, they are “freed (δικαιόω) from sin.”²⁰ In vv. 8–11,²¹ Paul reasserts the link

Press, 2014), 51, 208. For discussion of the present self as partly established by relationships with past events and past selves from the field of psychology, see Kenneth Gergen, *Relational Being: Beyond Self and Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), xxvi, 292–302. For similar readings, see Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 27–30; Jewett, *Romans*, 402–403. Although C. E. B. Cranfield (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols., ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975]) takes the old person individualistically to mean “the whole of our fallen human nature,” he rightly observes, “It is not implied that the old man no longer exists” (308–309). Rather, the old person “lingers on in the believer” (1.309).

¹⁵ Jewett, *Romans*, 403.

¹⁶ Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 30. Note that here, as in 2 Cor 4:16, Paul refers to “our” (plural) “person” (singular). Here, I submit, Paul conceives of the person in relational terms: although individuals do exist as distinct selves, a self is achieved by relationships. See ch. 3 (2.2.3); Gergen, *Relational Being*; Susan Eastman, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul’s Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 65–76.

¹⁷ Jewett (*Romans*) argues, “In this context the article in the expression τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας functions as a weak possessive referring back to the collective entity ‘the obsolete self,’ which leads to my translation ‘its sinful body’” (404).

¹⁸ Johnson, “Body in Question,” 306; see also Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 104.

¹⁹ Although Cranfield (*Epistle to the Romans*) understands the old person and the body of sin to be “identical,” I agree that Paul portrays “the whole man as controlled by sin” (309).

²⁰ In v. 7, δικαιόω means “to make free,” in the sense of causing “someone to be released from personal or institutional claims” (BGAD, s.v., δικαιόω 3). Here, sin is the power from which believers are freed. So, Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*; trans. Geoffrey W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 170. It is not, however, necessary to distinguish the liberative and forensic senses of the verb. In this view, as Jewett (*Romans*) summarizes, “Only death with Christ frees people from such enslavement, a framework that provides an understanding of δικαιούθαι (“to be set right”) in the technical, Pauline sense” (405). See also C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2nd ed. BNTC (London: A&C Black: 1991), 125.

²¹ As Johnson (*Reading Romans*) notes, the “argument is lined up chiasmatically in 6:7–10. Verses 7 and 10 “connect sin and death,” while vv. 8 and 9 “connect their death and life with Christ’s” (105).

between Christ's experiences of death and resurrection and believers' experiences. He writes that if they have died, then they can expect to "live with (συζάω) him" in the present.²² That is, just as believers have been crucified (v. 6) and buried (v. 4), they tacitly have been resurrected with him and now "walk in newness of life" (v. 4).²³ Paul returns the focus to Christ in v. 9: Because he was resurrected, he "no longer dies" (οὐκέτι ἀποθνῄσκει), and "death no longer rules over him" (αὐτοῦ οὐκέτι κυριεύει). Because Christ has died to the power of sin, he now lives to/with a new being, namely, God (ὁ...ζῆ, ζῆ τῷ θεῷ). Based on these claims (οὕτως), he ends with an imperative: "Consider (λογίζομαι) yourselves dead to sin and living to God in Christ Jesus." The Romans have, or at least should have, undergone the same experiences as Christ, and Paul urges them to understand themselves in this light. Thus, Paul assumes the *experience* of transformation in baptism.

1.1.2 Transformation in Romans 6:1–11: Necessity, Categories, and Factors in Change

Necessity of Change

Paul brackets 6:1–11 with the theme of sin (vv. 1, 10–11), and this reflects the human predicament that he describes throughout Rom 1–8. In the more immediate context of Rom 5–8, he portrays sin as a power (3:9; 6:6, 12–14, 16–18, 20–23; 7:7–9, 11–13, 17–20) that "increased" (πλεονάζω) because of the law (5:20–21) and that enslaves humanity (6:6, 12–14, 18, 19–23; 7:14; cf. 7:7–9, 11, 23, 25; 8:2–3). In Romans, people "participate in sin" by committing sin as an action (5:12–13; 6:1–2, 12–14). Moreover, Paul links sin inextricably with death (e.g. 8:2–3). Sin, for example, provides the means by which death entered into (5:12–13) and "reigns"

²² A small selection of MSS (C, K, P, 104, 326, 614, 1249) contain the subjunctive of συζάω, but the future indicative is the stronger reading. Although the future indicative is the preferred reading I understand Paul to speak here not of a future, eschatological context but to present existence (see arguments in 2.1.2 below). See Jewett, *Romans*, 406.

²³ Jewett, *Romans*, 406.

(βασιλεύω) in the world (5:14; cf. 6:9), and it is the *telos* of all of those who sin and who are enslaved to sin (1:32; 6:16, 21–23; 7:5, 11, 13; 8:10; cf. 8:6).

In 6:1–11, prior to their transformation, believers are “enslaved” (δουλεύω) to sin (v. 6) and, tacitly, live under the reign of death (5:14). By being crucified (vv. 2, 6–7, 11), buried (v. 4), and raised (vv. 4–5) with Christ, believers find liberation from sin (v. 6) and live no longer under death’s reign (5:12–21). Instead, according to Paul, believers have experienced resurrection. They share in the likeness of Christ’s resurrection (v. 5), live with (συζάω) Christ (v. 8), “walk in newness of life” (ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς) (v. 4), and are thereby “living to God (ζῶντας...τῷ θεῷ) in Christ Jesus” (v. 11). In Rom 6:1–11, therefore, transformation is necessary because humanity needs to be delivered from slavery to sin and death’s reign in order to live in Christ to God.

Categories of Change

Paul’s use of ἀποθνῆσκω (vv. 2, 7–8), συσταυρόω (v. 6), and συνθάπτω (v. 4) in the aorist tense signifies that this transformation occurred in the past. Verses 3–4 makes clear that the time of this change is not only in the past, but, specifically, at the believers’ baptism. In their ritual experience, they “have become (γεγόναμεν) sharers with the likeness of [Christ’s] death” (v. 5). As Robert Jewett states, “The perfect verb γεγόναμεν (“we have become”) supports the idea of a new relationship inaugurated in the past, but whose effects continue through the present.”²⁴ This “new relationship” is part of the experience of change through death and burial, which makes this aspect of the transformation a past event that grounds present realities.

Yet the timing of resurrection in this schema is less clear. Throughout 6:1–11, Paul refers to the experience of resurrection with a combination of future and present tense indicative verbs and subjunctives. The first reference to life after death with a future tense verb occurs in v. 2:

²⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, 400.

how will “we live (ζήσομεν)” in sin after having died to it?²⁵ In v. 4, Paul uses the aorist subjunctive to state that believers were buried with Christ “through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead...thus we also would walk (περπατήσωμεν) in newness of life.” In v. 5, he returns to the future indicative to say that believers “will be” (ἐσόμεθα) in the likeness of the resurrection if they have shared in the likeness of Christ’s death. He continues with the future tense in v. 8, stating that “we will live with (συζήσομεν)” Christ if we have died with him.²⁶ Paul closes the pericope with a present tense participle: the Romans are to consider themselves to be “living to God.”

Is the resurrection aspect of this transformation by death-and-resurrection in the present, the future, or both? I submit that Paul here refers to resurrection as a present experience that will continue into the future.²⁷ In my reading, Paul’s uses of the future tense and subjunctive mood result from his inability to know for certain that the Roman church understands their experience of baptism according to Paul’s account.²⁸ Paul’s rhetoric here is largely hypothetical, as if to say, “If you did not experience this, you should have.” It therefore makes sense that Paul would claim hypothetically that if believers have been buried with Christ, they *would* walk in new life (v. 4) and to say that if they have died with Christ, then they *will* (continue to) live as liberated from sin (v. 4), in accordance with the present reality of Christ’s resurrection (vv. 5, 8). Thus, I read each future tense verb as “a logical future referring to life with Christ as a current experience that is certain to continue into the future.”²⁹ This also makes sense of Paul’s imperative in v. 11: a resurrected life “to God in Christ Jesus” is how the Romans are to understand their existence *in*

²⁵ A number of MSS use the subjunctive of ζῶω, but the future indicative is more widely attested and is the harder reading, since Paul’s query is hypothetical, making the mood of possibility more natural.

²⁶ As stated above (n. 254), a small number of MSS contain the subjunctive of συζῶω, but the future indicative is the stronger reading.

²⁷ My view is quite close to that expressed by Jewett, *Romans*, 406.

²⁸ Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 396; Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 102.

²⁹ Jewett, *Romans*, 406.

the present. This does not deny a future, eschatological dimension of Paul's resurrection theme. But he indicates that resurrected existence, as the result of transformation, should characterize the lives of the Roman Christians.

The transformation described in Rom 6:1–11 has existential and moral dimensions. In 6:1–11, Paul portrays the experience of change as “change of masters,”³⁰ and these masters are cosmological powers. As argued above, Paul here describes transformation as liberation from the power of sin that serves and leads to death. Because the power of sin causes humanity to sin, this cosmic, mythic power is also the power that governs morality. When believers are transformed in baptism, they not only die and are buried with Christ but are also incorporated into the sphere of Christ through resurrection. As a result, their ongoing moral conduct, the way they “walk” (v. 4), accords with the sphere of Christ. As Katherine Grieb observes, “This ‘walking’ ... is the ethical behavior appropriate to those who are in the new family of Jesus Christ,” that is, for those who now live “in Christ.”³¹ The change in Romans 6:1–11, is, therefore, primarily a *past, existential-moral* transformation that grounds the Romans' present condition and their present morality. Yet, as becomes clearer in 2.4 below, the Paul's language of continued “walking” (v. 4) and “living” (v. 11) presumes *ongoing* existential-moral transformation as well.

Factors in Change

The issue of agency in this transformation is complex. Presumably, just as Christ did not crucify himself, believers are not the agents of their own death by co-crucifixion. Paul's use of the passive voice to write that they were co-crucified, experienced the destruction of the body of

³⁰ Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 17 (quoted in Jewett, *Romans*, 396). See also A. Katherine Grieb, *The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God's Righteousness* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 68.

³¹ Grieb, *Story of Romans*, 67. Paul regularly uses the verb περιπατέω to express moral conduct. See, e.g. Rom 8:4; 13:13; 14:15; 1 Thess 2:12; 4:1 (2x), 12; Gal 5:16; 1 Cor 3:3; 7:17; 2 Cor 4:2; 10:2–3; 12:18; Phil 3:17–18; Col 1:10; 2:6; 3:7; 4:5; Eph 2:2, 10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15. Cf. 2 Thess 3:6, 11. See Jewett, *Romans*, 399.

sin, and were buried supports this view is. Yet, since this experience occurs at baptism, believers seemingly bear responsibility for giving themselves for death and burial on the basis of Christ's faithful work (3:21–26). Likewise, Paul uses the passive voice to write that Christ “was raised” from the dead (vv. 4, 9), which implies that God's power “resurrected” believers as well. Paul's language also presumes, however, that the believer's possess moral agency in their subsequent moral existence.³² That is, they “walk” in newness of life (v. 4) and “live” in and with Christ to God (vv. 8, 11). Thus, believers have sufficient moral agency to give themselves for baptism in response to God's work in Christ and to “walk” in their new moral existence by participating in Christ (“live...in Christ Jesus,” v. 11). Yet God is the ultimate power of transformation, since God raises them to new life after they participate in Christ's death.

In Rom 6:1–11, two contexts function as vital factors in this change. The first is the *cosmic* context. With respect to this context, Paul's language is mythical in that he describes empirical beings (humans) undergoing change through participation in non-empirical, cosmic powers. As described above, Paul portrays transformation through liberation from the powers of sin and death and incorporation into the sphere of God in Christ. This liberation occurs not simply by existential-moral death and resurrection, but by baptism into *Christ's* death (v. 3) through co-crucifixion (v. 6) and resurrection through participation in Christ's life (vv. 4, 8, 11).³³ Thus, Christ and the realities of Christ's death and resurrection are key factors in change.³⁴

³² Cf. the account of transformed agency through religious ritual in McNamara, *Neuroscience of Religious Experience*, 212–28. According to McNamara, a participant in religious ritual often “put himself in the hands of the ritual,” which causes a suspension of the self's agency and identity until is “elevated” or “transfigured” through “the acquisition of divine qualities” (220).

³³ So, Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 21.

³⁴ As Tannehill (*Dying and Rising*) summarizes, “This change has taken place through dying with Christ. Dying with Christ means dying to the powers of the old aeon and entry into a new life under a new power, as the explanatory comments added in vss. 6–7 and 9–10 to the assertions of vss. 5 and 8 make clear” (21).

The second context is the *ritual* context.³⁵ Scholars from various fields observe that religious rituals in general, and rites of passage in particular, often produce transformations in the participants.³⁶ Here, baptism is the vehicle for existential-moral transformation (v. 3). It is the means by which believers participate in the Christ's death and resurrection and are "incorporated into the body of Christ" and have "some form of union with Christ."³⁷ As a result, believers emerge as a new, corporate person that is distinguishable from the old person (ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος).³⁸ Paul does not explain the mechanics of how baptism functions in this way. But it reveals the extent to which Paul understands the empirical and non-empirical planes of existence as interlaced, which means that the changes that occur in embodied practices are effected by the cosmic powers to which they relate.

³⁵ On baptism as a ritual of initiation in Rom 6, see Betz, "Transferring a Ritual," 107–17.

³⁶ For an overview of insights from cultural anthropology in relation to human transformation in Paul, see Moyer V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thought*, SNTSMS (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 79–90. On the cycle of separation, transition, and incorporation that commonly accompanies rituals of various types, see the classic work of van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, esp. pp 54–115. See also the development of van Gennep's work with special focus on the role of liminality in ritual, as well as the function rituals for the maintenance and transformation of social identity, in Victor Witter Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977). For an overview of the perspectives in ritual studies, with a critical summary of van Gennep and Turner and her own constructive developments, see Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, Rev. ed.. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2009), esp. pp 1–89, 94–101. Cf. Hemma Boneberg, "Rites of Passage" in *The Brill Dictionary of Religion*, ed. Kocku von Stuckrad, Rev. ed. (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2006). On the transformation of the self through religious ritual from a perspective from a neuroscientific perspective, see McNamara, *Neuroscience*, 212–28.

³⁷ Betz, "Transferring a Ritual," 108. As Johnson (*Reading Romans*) notes, "It is noteworthy...the role played by baptism in his argument, making it clear that, for Paul, baptism was not a mere ritual of initiation but a powerful participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus" (102).

³⁸ As Tannehill (*Dying and Rising*) summarizes, "Baptism εἰς Χριστόν must be understood in the same way. It means that through baptism the believer has come to share in Christ. Through baptism he has been included in Christ. He has entered Christ as the corporate person of the new aeon." For discussion of the "corporate person" in this text, see 2.1.3 below.

1.1.3 Transformation & Selfhood in Romans 6:1–11

In Rom 6:1–11, Paul envisages the human as determined by cosmic powers that govern (κυριεύω) human existence. Because sin leads to death, and transformation brings new life in Christ, these entities are existential powers. Yet, because participation in these powers guides human conduct, they are also *moral* powers. Thus, transformation involves a transfer from one set of powers to another through dying to one sphere and being resurrected into to another. For Paul, this is not, as Luke Timothy Johnson observes, “simply the expression of a personal mysticism but rather his sober estimate of the new creation in which Christians now participate (2 Cor 5:17).”³⁹

In this view, the selfhood is relational in that it is always structured by its relationship with cosmic forces. This relationality is multi-layered. Not only is the person shaped by participation in cosmic powers, but one is also determined by its alignment with particular figures. Paul’s claims that believers are baptized *into Christ* and, implicitly, raised with Christ, presume his arguments in ch. 5. In Rom 5:12–21, Paul makes Adam the representative of sin, and Christ the representative of righteousness and reconciliation. Christ and Adam function not merely as figures who established new existential-moral realities but each one signifies as an “inclusive person” moral existence is either “Adamic,” and thus sinful, or “Christic,” and thus righteous.⁴⁰ In this framework, moral selfhood is relationally-established.

Moreover, the “old person” that has died was not an individual but a corporate “self” that was determined by its relationship to the Adamic sphere of sin. The new person, likewise, is a corporate entity that Paul elsewhere calls the “body of Christ.” Here, selfhood is determined by people relating *to one another*, as they corporately align with dominant figures and cosmic

³⁹ Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 104.

⁴⁰ Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 24.

powers.⁴¹ This corporate selfhood does not deny the existence of individuals. Yet, Paul's vision prioritizes the corporate over the individual, and the relational over the essential. As he summarizes in Rom 12:5, "Thus, we who are many are one body in Christ, and we are individually members of one another."⁴²

The relationality of selfhood in Rom 6 has an additional layer as well—namely, the relationship between the old self and the new self.⁴³ Paul's old person/new person construct poses a problem. Should we consider these "persons" as two completely different selves, or should we understand this as two embodiments or instantiations of the same self?

As noted, Paul's language presupposes the emergence of a new self that is distinct from the old self, which was crucified with Christ by the destruction of the body of sin. More properly, this is a new *moral self*, shaped by new existential structures. Like the river in Heraclitus' famous quote, the transformation is so substantial that the person has become something new.

Yet Paul's language also presumes continuity between the old and new selves. Throughout the pericope, he uses first person plural language to say that "we died" (v. 2), "we were baptized" (v. 3), "we were buried (v. 4)," and "we have become sharers in the likeness of his death" (v. 5). That is, the same believers who died are tacitly the same "we" who experience new life in the present. How should we make sense of tension between the self's continuity and discontinuity in this text? It is best, I submit, to view the post-transformation self as a truly *new self* and to understand the old self not as completely gone, but as *integrated* into the new self.

⁴¹ Grieb (*Story of Romans*) interprets this corporate perspective in terms of social/familial identity (67).

⁴² Cf. Grieb, *Story of Romans*, 67.

⁴³ Paul does not here use the language of a "new person," but it is presumed, since there cannot be an old self without a new self.

That is, the old self is part of that which makes up the present self, part of the present self's raw materials.⁴⁴

In Paul, although the old self was crucified, it was not completely destroyed. In the same way, my translation of *καταργέω* in v. 6 as “rendered ineffective,” rather than destroyed, conveys that the “body of sin” did not disappear from existence. Indeed, the believer can still sin (6:1). More accurately, the body of sin no longer operates as a primary, determining factor for the believer, just as the sphere of existence expressed by “Adam” continues to exist when the believer has been incorporated into Christ (Rom 5). Implicitly, it is the “body of Christ” that should govern Christians, just as Christ, not “Adamic existence,” should not govern believers. Yet, this old sphere still exists, partly, as a means by which believers understand themselves in the present.

In sum, for believers, the old person has been integrated into the new person, and the current person is, in part, determined by its relationship with the past self. Likewise, Christ's death and resurrection are both past and present realities, and the new moral self is structured and empowered through incorporation into the realities of Christ. This is, in part, what it means for Paul to envisage a model of relational selfhood.

1.2 Romans 7:1–13

In Romans 7:1–13, Paul describes human transformation as an experience of death. In v. 4, he writes, “You were put to death (*θανατόω*) to the law through the body of Christ so that you might be for another (*εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἑτέρῳ*), to the one who was raised from the dead, so that we might bear fruit to God.” In v. 6, he states that believers have “died to that by which we were bound” (i.e. the law), and in vv. 9–11, that sin took “an opportunity through the

⁴⁴ Cf. my analysis of Gal 2:19–20 in ch. 2.

commandment” and killed him. Paul again refers to death at the hands of sin in v. 13. Because Paul’s rhetoric envisages the self’s continued existence after some type of death, these passages qualify as transformation discourse according to my second criterion—a break in the self’s continuity.

As discussed below, Rom 7:1–13 contains three pericopae. Yet, Paul develops consistent and interwoven arguments through these distinct units. Thus, I examine them together.

1.2.1 Overview of Pericopae

The first pericope is 7:1–6, and it addresses the relationship between believers and the law. Paul opens the unit with a question: “Or do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law rules over (κυριεύω) a person for as long as that person lives” (v. 1).⁴⁵ In vv. 2–3, he gives an analogy: as long as a husband and wife are still living, the woman is “given to the living husband by law” (τῷ ζῶντι ἀνδρὶ δέδεται νόμῳ).⁴⁶ If the wife is joined “to another man” (ἐὰν γένηται ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ) while her husband is living, then she is labeled an adulteress. But, “if the husband dies, she is free from the law [concerning her husband].”⁴⁷ In its application to the relationship of sin and the law, this analogy is “less than

⁴⁵ As is fitting for Paul’s use of diatribe in Romans, he opens a new pericope with a question that establishes the subject matter for what follows—here, believers and the law. He continues this focus in vv. 2–6, and he opens a new unit at 7:7 with another question, marking a clear end to the first pericope at v. 6. On the use of questions (often to voice an interlocutor’s likely protests) as rhetorical devices for shifting to new literary units in diatribe, including Romans, see Carl R. Holladay, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament: Interpreting the Message and Meaning of Jesus Christ* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 350; cf. Paul W. Meyer, “The Worm at the Core of the Apple: Exegetical Reflections on Romans 7,” in Fortna and Gaventa eds., *The Conversation Continues*, 71; Jewett, *Romans*, 430.

⁴⁶ On the similarities between this analogy and 1 Cor 7:9, see Jewett, *Romans*, 430–31.

⁴⁷ The insertion of τοῦ ἀνδρός in v. 3b by a small number of MSS forms a parallel with the phrase ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός in v. 2b. Because the addition of τοῦ ἀνδρός clarifies Paul’s statement in 3b, the better reading does not include it. Yet I have included “concerning her husband” in brackets because it is presumed from v. 2b.

completely successful”⁴⁸ Yet Paul’s aim is identifiable: he wants to support the principle that the law governs (κυριεύω) people while they live under it (v. 1).⁴⁹ When someone under the law dies, “death has broken [the law’s] power to condemn (the point resumed in 8:1)” just as a woman can remarry without being condemned as an adulteress after her husband dies.⁵⁰

In v. 4, Paul applies the principle to the Roman church: “You were put to death (θανατόω) to the law through the body of Christ so that you might be for another (εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἑτέρῳ), to the one who was raised from the dead, so that we might bear fruit to God.” As a husband’s death frees a woman to be given “to another man” (ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ), believers have died to the law and its mastery in order to live to and for Christ, bearing fruit to God.⁵¹ Death “through the body of Christ” seems to refer to “the crucified body of Christ, into which believers have been baptized and buried” (6:1–4).⁵² It is unwise, however, to distinguish sharply between Christ’s crucified body and the body of Christ as the community of believers in Romans.⁵³ For Paul, Christ and Christ’s death are realities that believers experience in the present, and believers

⁴⁸ Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 114. H. Dodd, (*The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, MNTC [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960]), writes, “The illustration...is confused from the outset” (100). In vv. 2–3, the husband dies, and the wife, still governed by the law, is free to marry another man. In the application of analogy (vv. 4–5), believers *themselves* die *to the law* and belong to Christ, no longer governed by the law.

⁴⁹ Also, as Johnson (*Reading Romans*) notes, “His assertion in 7:4...indicates what he is getting at,” namely that believers “belong to Christ after death to the law” (114).

⁵⁰ Meyer, “Worm at the Core of the Apple,” 72; cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 431.

⁵¹ I am increasingly persuaded that Paul wrote his epistles to gentile audiences. On Romans as a letter to gentiles, see Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 273–84. Yet, since Paul writes to gentiles about both Jews and gentiles in this view, it is possible that Paul’s arguments in 7:1–13 apply to “all believers” (Jewett, *Romans*, 432; Gaventa, “Beverly Roberts Gaventa, ‘The Shape of the ‘I’: the Psalter, the Gospel, and the Speker in Romans 7,’” in Gaventa, *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8* [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013], 88).

⁵² Jewett, *Romans*, 433–34. In Romans, Paul uses σῶμα 13x. He uses it to refer to physical bodies (1:24; 4:19; 6:12; 8:10–11 [2x], 13; 12:1, 4), the dimension of people that relates to powers like sin (6:6) and death (7:24), and a community of people (12:5).

⁵³ For discussion of debates based on this distinction, see Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 299–300.

in Rome are “one body in Christ” (12:5).⁵⁴ In 7:4, then, participation in Christ’s crucified and resurrected body also presumes participation in the community of believers.⁵⁵

Paul further explains (γάρ) that before believers had died, they were “in the flesh,” with “sinful passions (τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν) activated (ἐνεργέω) through the law in our members to bear fruit to death” (v. 5). Moreover, he establishes that the law “restrained” or “bound” (κατέχω) people before they were liberated from it through death (v. 6). As a result of this death, believers are enslaved (δουλεύω) no longer in “the oldness of the letter” (παλαιότητι γράμματος) but in “newness of Spirit (καινότητι πνεύματος)” (v. 6).⁵⁶ In vv. 1–6, Paul’s rhetoric creates a binary: prior to transformation, people are governed by the law, in the flesh, driven by sinful passions that the law empowers, and bear fruit to death. During and after transformation, believers died to the law through the body of Christ and bear fruit to God.

Before Transformation	During and After Transformation
Bound by law	Death to law; freed from law
“In the flesh;” sinful passions in members	Died through the body of Christ
Bearing fruit to death	Bearing fruit to God
Enslaved in oldness of letter	Enslaved in newness of Spirit

Table 4:
Inner and Outer Person in 2 Cor 4:16

In v. 7, Paul opens a new pericope by anticipating another question: “Is the law sin?” Here (and continuing through v. 25) he shifts to first-person discourse and writes with an “I” that has produced unending scholarly debate. Since at least Augustine’s *Confessions*, the dominant view was that Paul writes autobiographically in vv. 7–25.⁵⁷ Yet more recent scholarship has

⁵⁴ Note that participation in Christ through believers’ death and resurrection in 6:1–4 is portrayed as a communal event (see 5.1 above). On the experience of Christ’s death as something that believers can experience in the present, see discussion in ch. 2 (2.1.2).

⁵⁵ Cf. the account of the body of Christ as the presence of Christ among human believers in 1 Corinthians in Johnson, “Body in Question.”

⁵⁶ Here, γράμμα probably refers to the law. Cf. 2:27–29; 2 Cor 3:6; 2 Tim 3:15.

⁵⁷ For a recent overview of the history of interpretation see Jewett, *Romans*, 441–45. I disagree, however, with Jewett’s conclusion that Paul’s “I” portrays elements of personal autobiographical history

argued convincingly that Rom 7:7–25 is speech-in-character (προσωποποιία) and that Paul uses a fictive “I.”⁵⁸ He uses this rhetorical technique “to make a point vividly and personally. The first-person discourse is less a window giving access to Paul’s personality than it is a mirror for the reader’s reflection and self-examination.”⁵⁹

What point(s) does Paul attempt to make with his use of προσωποποιία? To begin, he rejects the question raised in v. 1 (μὴ γένοιτο) by refusing to conflate the law with sin.⁶⁰ Rather, he argues that the law *brings knowledge* of sin (v. 7b; 3:20).⁶¹ Furthermore, by portraying sin as a power with agency, he writes that that sin took advantage of the opportunity provided by “the commandment” (paralleled in v. 11) and “produced” (κατεργάζομαι) covetous desires (ἐπιθυμία) in him.⁶² Here, although the law brings awareness of sin, it cannot prevent sin by empowering

(445). My view is closer to that of Meyer (“Worm at the Core of the Apple”) who argues that Paul “is employing rather a rhetorical style in which the self functions in a representative way as a type or paradigm for others. At the same time, the pronoun is not used in a purely fictive way, as though Paul were excluding himself from its pattern” (64). See also Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 1–41, 264–84; Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 112–16.

⁵⁸ See, esp. Stowers, “Romans 7.7–25 as Speech in Character (προσωποποιία)” in Engberg-Pedersen, ed. *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, 180–202.

⁵⁹ Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 115. As Meyer (“Worm at the Core of the Apple”) writes, “A fairly strong consensus seems to have emerged that the passage is not autobiographical in any sense that allows it to yield details about Paul’s personal life, either before his conversion or after. Paul is employing rather a rhetorical style in which the self functions in a representative way as a type or paradigm for others” (64). For a developed argument on how the fictive “I” functions to invite Paul’s audience into identification with the “I,” see Gaventa, “The Shape of the ‘I,’” 77–91.

⁶⁰ As Meyer (“Worm at the Core of the Apple”) notes, Paul’s rhetoric to this point “has progressively confused the roles of the law and the sin it condemns and discloses” (72). Paul’s arguments in ch. 6 attempt to ward off antinomian conclusions (beginning with the question, “Should we continue in sin so that grace would increase?” in 6:1) that one could draw from his claims in ch. 5. Yet, as Meyer shows, Paul’s rhetoric risks conflating sin and the law, “so that ‘dying to sin’ in 6:10’ has become ‘being put to death to the law’ in Paul’s little tableau (7:4), and ‘being set free from sin’ in 6:18 has become ‘being vacated from the law’ (7:6). The confusion is complete in 7:6a. The grammatical antecedent of the relative clause *en hō kateichometha* (“what bound us” NAB) is the law. Ironically, an illustration intended to rebut an antinomian argument has suddenly become itself susceptible to an antinomian interpretation, as if God’s law and the demonic power of sin are to be identified” (72). Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 446.

⁶¹ See discussion in Jewett, *Romans*, 446–47: “Not to ‘know sin’ in this context means that Paul was not able to recognize that a particular act or deed was wrong until it was pointed out as such” (447).

⁶² As Johnson notes, Paul’s choice of choosing the commandment not to covet (ἐπιθυμέω), is especially clever because it “cuts to the secret places of the human heart and not simply to actions in the external world” (121). Although ἐπιθυμία can have sexual connotations, Paul here seems to use it to refer

moral behavior. Even worse, “sin is potentiated.”⁶³ Alternatively, “apart from the law, sin is dead” (v. 8). Thus, paradoxically, the law—although it is “holy, righteous, and good” (v. 12)—gives life to sin. Paul’s knotty rhetoric aims to support his overall argument that the law raises awareness of sin, which unexpectedly arouses sinful desires and provides an opportunity for the cosmic power of sin to enslave people.

In vv. 9–11, Paul continues his speech-in-character and claims that although “he” was once alive “apart from the law,” sin gained new life (ἀναζάω) after the “commandment” arrived. As a result, he died (ἀποθνήσκω). His reference to life “apart from the law” is not autobiographical but is part of his speech-in-character, which functions to convey the power of sin to destroy humanity.⁶⁴ As a result of sin’s act, the commandment that was meant for life produced death (v. 10). Paul describes this death again in v. 11, “For sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and, through it, killed (ἀποκτείνω) me” (v. 11). These references to death are difficult to account for alongside Paul’s previous claim that he *died* to the law (v. 4; 6:4). Does he envisage multiple, differing deaths?

As Paul Meyer argues, Paul’s primary focus in 7:7–25 is not the “I,” but rather, sin and its power to corrupt that which was intended to give life.⁶⁵ One could thus take Paul’s claims (in character) in vv. 9–11 that sin killed him as expressing the principle that the wages of sin is death

a “need to have, possess, or acquire” more broadly (Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 121). Additionally, Stowers, (“Romans 7.7–25”) observes, “Romans 7 plays on a tradition in which Jewish writers held out the law epitomized by the tenth commandment of the decalogue as the solution to Gentile enslavement to passion and desire” (200). See, e.g., Philo, *Dec.* 142, 151–3; *Virt.* 179–82; *Spec. Leg.* 4.92–132. Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 448–49.

⁶³ Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 118. Meyer (“Worm at the Core of the Apple”) writes, that the Torah “is not only powerless to prevent what it prohibits but in fact produces the very thing it is supposed to prevent” (73).

⁶⁴ Meyer, “Worm at the Core of the Apple,” 73–80.

⁶⁵ Meyer, “Worm at the Core of the Apple,” 73–80; see also Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 237–38.

(6:23).⁶⁶ In Romans, death and sin are often dual rulers that lead to humanity's death and stand in opposition to the "gift of God," which is "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:23).⁶⁷ To reconcile this dying with Paul's descriptions of death as dying to the law (6:1–4; 7:4), one could understand the latter as a *death* to the form of existence that is governed by sin and death (7:1–6) and that produces death in humanity (7:5). Yet, ultimately, Paul's apparent series of deaths are not systematic, and efforts to make them logically or chronologically neat only frustrate.⁶⁸ Most pertinent to this study, however, is that Paul effectively describes pre-transformation life as a loss of the moral self's vitality (cf. 7:17–20), as a dying because of sin, described figuratively as the cosmic power of sin killing the fictive subject of Paul's speech.⁶⁹ Without transformation "through the body of Christ" (v. 4), humanity exists in a state of death.

Paul shifts once more at v. 13 with a question that follows from his defense of the law and his description of the commandment as holy, just, and good (v. 12).⁷⁰ He asks if "the good" (τὸ ἀγαθόν) in him caused his death, and he again rejects the possibility (μὴ γένοιτο). Rather, he reasserts, sin worked thorough "the good" to "produce death" (κατεργαζομένη θάνατον) in him (v.

⁶⁶ On sin leading to or producing death in Romans, see also 5:12; 6:16, 21; 7:5, 13; cf. 1:32; 8:6. Jewett (*Romans*) also makes this connection (452).

⁶⁷ See Beker, "Sin and Death in Romans," 57–58; Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 226.

⁶⁸ See, e.g., Jewett's (*Romans*) attempt to smooth over the multiple references to death by claiming that Paul here refers to conversion (6:1–4; 7:4). In this view, "living apart from the law (ἔξω χωρὶς νόμου) in v. 9 refers to "the typical experience of a Jewish boy who was not required to obey the Torah until he was initiated as a 'son of the commandment'" (450–51). Yet, when at the age of accountability, when "the commandment entered" and "sin revived" (v. 9), Paul needed to "die" when he turned to Christ. The fundamental problem in this reading is that Jewett presumes that Paul includes more of his personal experiences 7:7–25 than we can safely presume (see Meyer, "Worm at the Core of the Apple"), which forces him to fix various details in chs. 6–7 into a coherent, autobiographical narrative. In my view, he imports more of Paul's personal experience, as well as religious and cultural freight, into 7:7–12 than is tenable.

⁶⁹ This is "the obsolete quality of life in 'what bound us' that "is depicted and analyzed in 7:7–25 in preparation for the discussion of the eschatological quality of life in 8:1–11" (Meyer, "Worm at the Core of the Apple," 73). Cf. Emma Wasserman, *The Death of the Soul in Romans 7: Sin, Death, and the Law in Light of Hellenistic Moral Psychology*, WUNT 2.256 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008). 96–98

⁷⁰ After v. 13, Paul advances his rhetoric with a sequence of two thought units that begin with the verb οἶδα: vv. 14, 18. This marks v. 13 as a small, transitional unit, beginning with a rhetorical question and ending with Paul's response.

13b). This occurred so that “sin would be shown to be sin” (ἀλλ’ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία), and “through the commandment, sin would become sinful beyond measure (καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλὸς ἡ ἁμαρτία)” (v. 13c). That is, as Meyer states, “The transcendently (*kath’ hyperbole*, v. 13) demonic nature of sin is its power to pervert the highest and best in *all* human piety, typified by the best in Paul’s world, his own commitment to God’s holy commandment, in such a way as to produce death in place of the promised life.”⁷¹

In sum, in 7:1–12, Paul argues that sin, as a personified power, used the law to create sinful passions in people and to set them on a trajectory toward death. They were subject to the governance of the law and were in slavery to sin (vv. 4–6). Via death through the body of Christ, believers were freed from the power that had, in a sense, already killed him (vv. 9–10). Paul does not here repudiate the law or its practices (v. 12). Yet sin was powerful enough to use even the law to corrupt and kill humanity. The law is unable produce life by providing a way to deal with sin (8:3). The answer was in God’s life-giving act in Christ (8:1–4) and believers’ participation in it through death with Christ (6:1–4; 7:4): believers died to the powers that had already put them in a state of death so that they could experience life through resurrection (7:4–6, 9–11).⁷²

1.2.2 Transformation in Romans 7:1–12: Necessity, Categories, and Factors in Change

Necessity for Change

As the overview above shows, people need transformation because humanity is enslaved to sin, which leads to sinful actions (cf. 5:12).⁷³ Two aspects of this predicament require elaboration. First, in 7:1–13, Paul envisages the problem of sin not as a problem of “the will” or

⁷¹ Meyer, “Worm at the Core of the Apple,” 74.

⁷² So, Meyer, “Worm at the Core of the Apple,” 79–80.

⁷³ Paul does not here separate sin as power from sin as action. Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 1. Auflage EKK (Zürich: Neuckirchener, 1978), 172–73; Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 226.

only as a problem of moral psychology,⁷⁴ but as a problem centered in the human body. He summarizes sin's "energizing" (ἐνεργέω) of sinful passions (τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν) in people (v. 5) and the "production" (κατεργάζομαι) of covetous desires (v. 8) as living "in the flesh" (v. 5). His use of use of σὰρξ plays on the bodily aspects of passions, which are aroused in people's "members" (μέλος in v. 5).⁷⁵ Yet, the problem of sin does not *originate* with the body or with inherently faulty human "moral equipment."⁷⁶ Despite their desires and efforts otherwise (7:14–25), people sin because they are enslaved to sin (v. 6), which *produces* passions in human bodies.⁷⁷ Thus, humanity needs a way to be liberated from their embodied enslavement to sin.

Second, humanity has a problem in its moral agency, which Paul describes as a condition of "death." "Taking an opportunity through the command" sin seized and killed the subject of Paul's discourse (vv. 10–12). As vv. 14–25 show, Paul depicts a pre-transformation predicament in which people can know what is morally right but lack moral agency to do it because of sin's power at work in their members. To be sure, Paul does not here depict humanity as *completely lacking* moral agency. Rather, as discussed below (5.25), human agency is always bound up with "networks of power," and people are obedient as slaves to the powers that act as masters over them (6:16).⁷⁸ Prior to transformation, humanity cannot resist sin because sin is the power that

⁷⁴ Yet, as argued below, sin does have psychological and epistemic dimensions in Romans broadly and in 7:1–13. For accounts of the moral-psychological aspects of sin in Rom 7, see Stowers, *Rereading Romans*, 260–64; Wasserman, *Death of the Soul*, 76–115.

⁷⁵ Cf. Wasserman, *Death of the Soul*, 95–96. Paul further develops the notion of life "in the flesh," which is in contrast to the spiritual (cf. Gal 5:16–25) in 7:14–25 and 8:1–17. Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 436. On bodily "members" serving as instruments or as the arena for sin, see 6:13, 19; 7:23.

⁷⁶ I borrow the term "moral equipment" from Carol A Newsom, "Models of the Moral Self: Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism," *JBL* 131 (2012): 15, 24.

⁷⁷ This somatic character of sinful passions, along with Paul's coupling of sin and death, illuminate Paul's later question, "Who will rescue me from this *body of death* (τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου)?" (7:25; cf. 6:6).

⁷⁸ Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 248. Wells argues for particular model of divine agency in Paul: "While human agency retains its integrity, it is so bound up with higher networks of power that human accomplishment can be attributed without reservation or qualification to that power." He adds that in Paul's "structures of thought" just as in certain Jewish writings (1QS 3–4; *Jubilees* 11:5)–"humans are

governs their moral agency. The law, moreover, is unable to liberate people from sin's power over their bodies (Rom 8:4–5).⁷⁹ Here, the human condition of death involves the death of the moral self—the self's inability to live according to “the good” (v. 13). Humanity needs transformation because it is morally “disempowered” with respect to right moral conduct⁸⁰

Categories of Change

Paul's persistent, thematic use of life and death is instructive for characterizing transformation in 7:1–13. As in Rom 6:1–11, Paul here portrays transformation as death and resurrection. Paradoxically, before transformation, he describes existence under sin both as “living” (ἐζὼν χωρὶς νόμου in v. 9) and as dying (vv. 10–11, 12), which envisages pre-transformed existence as a form of death. Transformation itself is death to the law—sin's instrument and an impotent guide for human behavior—and thus, to sin (6:1–11). Implicitly, after death, believers are resurrected (6:4–6). Moreover, as he attempts to show with his marriage analogy, this change involves death *from* something and resurrection *into* something else. After death and resurrection, believers “belong to” Christ (v. 4) and are to be “enslaved in newness of spirit,” most likely a reference to the spirit of God and/or Christ (8:9).⁸¹ This schema of death-resurrection under the governance of cosmic powers points to *existential* transformation.

Additionally, Rom 7:1–13 describes *moral* transformation. As the “necessity for change” analysis above shows, Paul's concern is with humanity's inability to overcome the power of sin.

determined by supra-human powers,” and “their agencies coincide and are set in a direct, positive relationship” (248). This view is quite close to the contemporary perspective in Manual Vargas, “The Social Constitution of Agency and Responsibility: Oppression, Politics, and Moral Ecology” in Katrina Hutchison, Catriona Mackenzie, and Marina Oshana, eds., *Social Dimensions of Moral Responsibility* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 110–36.

⁷⁹ On the law's inability to empower human moral conduct, see Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 118; Gaventa, “Shape of the ‘I,’” 87; Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 239–40; cf. Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 280.

⁸⁰ Gaventa, “Shape of the ‘I,’” 87; see also Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 233–34.

⁸¹ See, e.g., Rom 8:9–11, where Paul writes of the “spirit of God” and the “spirit of Christ” interchangeably, indicating that both terms refer to the same spirit.

Although the law is supposed to dictate human morality and lead to life, it was unable to empower moral agency, which resulted in the moral self's death (v. 10). Paul writes also that people previously "bore fruit" to death (καρποφορέω in v. 5). After transformation, believers "bear fruit (καρποφορέω) to God" (v. 4). He uses similar language in the preceding pericope to describe moral capacity (6:21–23). When those in his audience were "slaves of sin (δοῦλοι τῆς ἁμαρτίας)," Paul asks, "What fruit (καρπός) were you having (εἶχετε) in those things of which you are now ashamed?" (6:20–21). He adds, "For the end (τέλος) of those things is death" (6:21). This functionally describes enslavement to sin, in which people cannot overcome the fleshly passions that sin produces through the law. This is the person in a state of death, with its moral agency governed by sin.

After being transformed, however, humanity has a new master, and the spirit rules their moral agency (vv. 4–6). In contrast, believers are "free from sin, enslaved (δουλόω) to God" and "have fruit (ἔχετε τὸν καρπὸν), which results in...sanctification" (v. 22). Following from these statements, one can understand the new existence in 7:4–6 as believers' liberation from a former master and freedom to be slave to a new master, namely, the spirit of Christ/God (v. 6). Believers are thus empowered with moral agency to live into "the good" (7:13) that the law envisions and prescribes. Paul further develops these points in ch. 8, where he describes life lived according to the spirit, as opposed to life in the flesh (8:1–15; cf. 7:5). In sum, this transformation produces a new moral self with new moral agency that is empowered by the spirit. In sum, the changes in 7:1–13 constitute *past, existential-moral transformation* that shapes present existence.

Although Paul does not here describe bodily transformation, this change has somatic dimensions. As argued above, an inherent moral "defectiveness" of the body is not the origin of humanity's sin. Rather, sin acts on human bodies to produce passions and to use its "members as

instruments of unrighteousness” (6:13).⁸² This is why believers receive Christ’s Spirit into their bodies, into the symbolic organ of the heart (5:5). As a result, Christ resides in believers and, in the future, “will give life to...mortal bodies through his spirit” (8:11).⁸³ Thus, because of the reception of Christ’s spirit, believers are able to present themselves to God and their “members as instruments of righteousness to God” (6:13). They are able to offer their “bodies as a living sacrifice...to God” (12:1). Thus, not only are the signs of renewed moral agency present throughout Romans, so too are indications that transformation and moral existence are embodied realities, even if the body is not explicitly transformed in the process.⁸⁴

In addition to passions in the human body, Paul hints that humanity’s sin problem is also psychological and epistemic.⁸⁵ Not only had sin used the law to affect bodily passions, but it had also “deceived” people (v. 11).⁸⁶ With this reference, Paul alludes to the problem of the human mind (νοῦς) and how its corruption leads to sin. He writes in 1:28, for example, that God had

⁸² As Jewett (*Romans*) rightly observes, “Unlike in Hellenistic parallels, Paul does not imply that the passions have their seat in bodily parts,” but, instead, that sin creates passions that find expression in the body (437).

⁸³ Romans 8:9–17 nearly qualifies as transformation discourse for this study, but it does not quite fit my criteria. Yet it plays on themes that intersect with 7:1–13. In it, Paul focuses both on the past moral self and its present and future. It portrays life working in one aspect of the human and death in other. Specifically, he writes, “If Christ is in you, the body is dead on account of sin, but the spirit is “life” on account of righteousness” (v. 10). Here, he seems to describe the results of prior moral transformation. Moreover, believers can anticipate future transformation, since God’s Spirit, which resurrected Christ, “will give life to your mortal bodies through God’s Spirit that is living within you” (v. 11). In this presumably eschatological event, believers can anticipate future “life” in relation to their moral existence. In v. 13, Paul’s use of the death/resurrection schema continues to guide his discourse on moral conduct. In v. 13a, he writes, “For if you live according to the flesh, you must die,” which recalls the logic of 6:1–11 and 7:1–13. If, however, believers put to death the body’s practices, they will live (v. 13b). Paul here presumes a continual putting-to-death of the sinful aspect of the human (Rom 12:1–3). Put into conversation with references to the past death of the moral self throughout Romans, Paul here portrays the continued life of the moral self, for whom a type of repeated death is necessary.

⁸⁴ Cf. the corporality in the reading of Jewett, *Romans*, 434–35.

⁸⁵ So, Jewett, *Romans*, 437; Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 227–31. cf. Wasserman, *Death of the Soul*, 96–98.

⁸⁶ In this reference to deception, one discerns an echo of the fall story in Gen 3. Yet Paul’s primary concern is with the law, and specifically the command not to covet. See Meyer, “Worm at the Core of the Apple,” 73.

handed Gentiles over to a “corrupted mind (ἀδόκιμον νοῦν),” which led to their immoral behavior (1:18–32).⁸⁷ Since the mind’s corruption relates directly to sin, Paul later commands his audience to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind (νοῦς)” (12:2).⁸⁸ Although he does not develop the theme here, Paul implies that human sin is in part a psychological and epistemic problem because sin deceived humanity. Tacitly, then, this epistemic problem is at least partly overcome by the moral self’s death and resurrection.

Factors in Change

Within the binary frame constructed in parts of 7:1–13, the most prominent factors in change fall on either side of the binary. On one side lie the law/commandment (mentioned in each verse), sinful desires and passions (vv. 5, 7), sin (vv. 5, 7–9, 11, 13), and death (vv. 8, 10–11, 13). On the whole, Paul argues that sin uses the law to produce sinful passions in people’s “members.” To live according to these desires is to live “in the flesh” (v. 5), which creates a condition of death and leads to ultimate death.⁸⁹ This summarizes, in these passages, the pre-transformation, human predicament and its constitutive factors.

On the other side of the binary lie God (v. 4), Christ (v. 4), the “newness of Spirit” (v. 6) and resurrection (v. 4). God stands in opposition to death (vv. 4–5), and transformation occurs by death “through the body of Christ (v. 4).”⁹⁰ Consequently, believers belong to Christ (v. 4) and are slaves to the spirit of Christ/God (v. 6). Here again, Paul portrays human transformation through

⁸⁷ Paul writes that they were “futile in their thoughts (ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν)” and “without understanding in their hearts (ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά)” (1:21). They became foolish (v. 24), and they did not “prove to have God in knowledge [lit.] (οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει)” (v. 28).

⁸⁸ For further discussion, see Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 227–31.

⁸⁹ Death is, then, a condition, experience, and *telos*.

⁹⁰ In terms of Paul’s binary, death belongs on one side as a condition, experience, and *telos*, but it is also the mechanism to transfer people from one side to the other.

death and resurrection, which is the mechanism for a *transfer* from one group of competing powers to another.

In terms of agency, the passive use of θανατόω (v. 4) shows that this change was not a human achievement.⁹¹ People were “put to death.” Since God raised Christ, divine power produces the moral self’s resurrection. Presumably, humans have some role in giving themselves for both death and resurrection. Yet, ultimately, Paul envisages the transformation as an act of God through Christ.

1.2.3 Transformation & Selfhood in Romans 7:1–13

Here, as elsewhere in his epistles, Paul envisages humanity as governed and determined by cosmic powers. Prior to transformation, the law “reigns” (κυριεύω) over people and their moral agency (5:12–21). Sin uses the law as a tool to produce sinful passions within people, and the human inability to overcome sin leads to death. As argued above, this is humanity’s existential-moral predicament: people are *subject* to sin and death to the degree that the human moral self is already effectively dead (vv. 10–11). This state is so absolute that humanity cannot overcome it without being transformed into something new. Thus, God transforms believers through the death and resurrection of their moral selves.

Yet, even after existential-moral transformation, Paul does not portray humanity as free moral agents in the sense that they are autonomous and possess moral agency on their own. As Robert Jewett states, “The premise here is that all people are slaves. None is absolutely free.”⁹² This is because people are inescapably, “always caught up into larger networks of power.”⁹³

⁹¹ So Jewett, *Romans*, 433–34.

⁹² Jewett, *Romans*, 438. Jewett later adds, “So the question for Paul is whom shall groups serve?” (438).

⁹³ Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 247.

Through death and resurrection, however, believers are liberated from one governing power and given over to another. After this event, they are “enslaved (δουλεύω) in the newness of spirit,” which indicates that they are now “enslaved” to Christ (12:11; 14:18; cf. 6:16–17; 16:18).⁹⁴ In the world of Romans, this new state of enslavement produces new moral agency, and it encapsulates the subjectivity that Paul aims for his audience to adopt. Just as he introduces himself to the Romans as Παῦλος δοῦλous Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ⁹⁵ (1:1), part of his concern in 7:1–13 is to persuade the Roman church to understand themselves as “Christ-slaves,” or, in the language of selfhood, as “Christ-subjects.”

Just as the “old person” is still present in the new person’s subjectivity (2.1.3 above), the world of the sin, death, the law, and the flesh do not cease to exist when believers transfer into the new world of God, Christ, life, and spirit. The factors that structured and determined people in their the condition of death continue to exist as realities that shape believers’ self-understanding and against which they contend. To account for this, the metaphor of integration—or incorporation—is again helpful. The world of God and Christ has eclipsed the world of sin and death, and the latter world has been incorporated into, transformed, and disempowered by the former.⁹⁶ Yet, believers can still live “in the flesh,” as if they were still enslaved to sin and the law.⁹⁷ Paul’s rhetorical efforts thus aim partly to persuade his audience to

⁹⁴ As Meyer, (“Worm at the Core of the Apple) states regarding being made righteous in Romans, “Justification is a change of controlling allegiance; it sets one free from sin only insofar as it makes one an obedient ‘slave’ to God (6:15–23)” (72). See also Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 296–97. For a full treatment of Paul’s slavery metaphors, see Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

⁹⁵ The transposition of Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ in some MSS makes no difference here.

⁹⁶ Cf. the description in Beker (“Sin and Death”) of “the triangular relation between sin, death, and the creation,” which, “determines the structure of the created order and the nature of its redemption” (59). To play on this description, we might say that the new “triangular relation” between God, Christ, and creation eclipses the original relations, thereby absorbing, redefining, and disempowering its constituent factors (e.g., law, passions, etc.).

⁹⁷ This is presumed in 6:1–23.

recognize and live according to the perspective that he articulates. This is, as 2.3 below shows, in part why he encourages his audience continually to “be transformed by the renewing of your minds” (12:2). Right perceptions and moral reasoning are essential to righteous morality. Most important for this section, however, is that in Rom 7:1–13, human selfhood is relationally-constituted. People in general are governed by the “world” to which they belong, and believers in particular are determined by the world of God and Christ, into which they have been incorporated and with which they align their moral existence.⁹⁸

1.3 Romans 12:1–2

Romans 12:1–2 qualifies as transformation discourse according to my second criterion—the explicit use of transformation terminology. Paul uses the imperative of the verbs μεταμορφόω and συσχηματίζω, as well as the noun ἀνακαίνωσις, to exhort the Romans not to be “conformed (συσχηματίζω) to this world,” but to “be transformed (μεταμορφόω) by the renewing (ἀνακαίνωσις) of the mind (νοῦς)” (v. 2).⁹⁹ As the following analysis shows, Paul here draws on themes from Rom 1–11 to implore the Roman believers to be transformed.

⁹⁸ So Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 296. To again anticipate Rom 12:1–2, this world-self marriage is presupposed in Paul’s injunction not to be “conformed to this age” (i.e. the sphere of sin and death).

⁹⁹ The MSS support for imperative passives συσχηματίζεσθε and μεταμορφοῦσθε versus the passive infinitives συσχηματίζεσθαι and μεταμορφοῦσθαι is pretty well split. As Richard N. Longenecker (*The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016]) argues, the imperatives fit the rhetorical context, and it is more probable that scribes changed the imperatives to infinitives so as to parallel the infinitive παραστήσαι in v. 1 than that the infinitives were original (917). Also, the shorter reading of τοῦ νοῦς is preferred to the reading in MSS that insert ὑμῶν (“your mind”). On this as well, see Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 917.

1.3.1 Overview of Pericope

Rom 12:1–2 is a single pericope that Paul uses to transition into a parennetic section of the epistle (Rom 12:1–15:13).¹⁰⁰ He transitions with οὖν in 12:1, which signals that the exhortations that follow are based on what he has written to this point.¹⁰¹ Fittingly for this shift, Paul uses the verb παρακαλέω for the first time in the epistle here at 12:1: “I urge (παρακαλέω) you, brothers and sisters, through the mercies of God.”¹⁰² Paul requests that the Romans “present” (παρίστημι) their “bodies (σῶμα) as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God.” The verb παρίστημι recalls his earlier injunctions for the Roman believers to present themselves to God (6:13) and to present their members as “instruments to righteousness” (6:19).¹⁰³ Each of these imperatives in ch. 6 rests on premise that that people are slaves to whom they “present” or “give” themselves (6:16). Moreover, in Romans, the body is often a locus and an instrument that is used either by the power of sin or the power of God, either for unrighteousness and death (making it a “body of sin” [6:6] and a “body of death” [7:24]) or for righteousness and life (e.g. 6:12–13; cf. 8:9–

¹⁰⁰ On the purpose of this section, see Walter T. Wilson, *Love without Pretense: Romans 12.9–21 and Hellenistic-Jewish Wisdom Literature*, WUNT 2.46 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 127–29; Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 317–18; cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 724–25; Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 911–16.

¹⁰¹ In my reading, Paul’s οὖν points back not only to chs. 9–11, but also to chs. 5–8. The number of thematic and terminological links to content in chs. 5–8 supports this view. For similar views, see James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), II.708; Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 918–19; Nijay K. Gupta, *Worship That Makes Sense to Paul: A New Approach to the Theology and Ethics of Paul’s Cultic Metaphors*, BZNW 175 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 118.

¹⁰² Paul uses the verb παρακαλέω 4x in Romans: 12:1, 8; 15:30; 16:17. He uses the noun παράκλησις 3x: 12:8; 15:4 (2x). On the phrase διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ against the backdrop of the theme of mercy in the LXX and Paul’s notions of mercy in Romans, see Nijay K Gupta, “*What ‘Mercies of God’?: Oiktirmos in Romans 12:1 against Its Septuagintal Background*,” *BBR* 22 (2012): 81–96.

¹⁰³ So, John Koenig, “The Motif of Transformation in the Pauline Epistles: A History-of-Religions/Exegetical Study” (Thesis, ThD, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1970), 163; Dunn, *Romans*, II: 708; Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 189; Jewett, *Romans*, 728; Keener, *Mind of the Spirit*, 145.

11).¹⁰⁴ Thus, Paul's instruction in 12:1 reformulates his command in 6:12 not to let sin reign in their mortal bodies. Believers are, instead, to give their bodies to God.

The notion of a “*living sacrifice*” (θυσίαν ζῶσαν) also recalls themes from earlier in Romans (cf. 1 Peter 2:5).¹⁰⁵ In 6:2, Paul asks how those who have died to sin can go on *living* in it. In 6:10, he directs his audience to consider themselves “dead to sin and living to God.” In 8:12–13, he promises the audience that if they do not live according to the flesh but, rather, “put to death the deeds of the body” (NRSV) then they will live. With the phrase “*living sacrifice*” in 12:1, Paul maintains these emphases on presenting bodies to God and “*living to God*,” effectively restating the concept of “*walking in newness of life*” in 6:4.¹⁰⁶ He simply does so with cultic imagery—that of a sacrifice that is “*holy, acceptable to God—your reasonable worship*” (cf. 3:25; 5:2; 6:19, 23; 14:18; 15:16).¹⁰⁷ This cultic frame functions both to contrast the self-giving of living believers with idolatry (1:25) and to urge readers toward virtuous conduct, to appropriate the proper “*disposition of the self through moral behavior in the church and in society*.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ The body is, therefore, a relational aspect of humanity. On the relationality of σῶμα in Paul, see Käsemann, “On Paul’s Anthropology,” 22; Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 84–105; cf. Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 301–304; Dunn, *Romans*, II.709.

¹⁰⁵ Here, commentators generally note that a “*living*” sacrifice contrasts a dead sacrifice. See, e.g., Dunn, *Romans*, II:709–710; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 640; Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 920. For readings that recognizes allusions to previous parts of Romans (esp. ch. 6) in Paul’s language of sacrifice, see Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 164–65; Sarah Whittle, “Bodies given for the Body: Covenant, Community, and Consecration in Romans 12:1,” WTJ 46 (2011): 90–105, esp. p. 94; Gupta, *Worship that Makes Sense*, 120.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 164–65.

¹⁰⁷ As Johnson (“The Transformation of the Mind and Moral Discernment in Paul” in Johnson, *Contested Issues*) rightly observes, Paul’s description of “*reasonable worship*” (λογικὴν λατρείαν) fits with his cognitive emphases in 12:1–2 (257–58). See also, Jewett, *Romans*, 729–31; Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 920–21; Craig S. Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul’s Approach to Transformed Thinking* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 150–52. For helpful and recent discussion of Paul’s cultic language in its Greco-Roman context, see Keener, *Mind of the Spirit*, 146–50.

¹⁰⁸ Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 190; see also Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 317–18; cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 726–27.

In v. 2, Paul issues a negative imperative. The Romans are not to “be conformed (συσχηματίζω) to this world (τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ).”¹⁰⁹ Here, the verb συσχηματίζω means “to form according to a pattern or mold.”¹¹⁰ The particular pattern or mold of “this world” is that of humanity’s enslavement to sin and death, which Paul describes throughout Romans (esp. chs. 1–8).¹¹¹ His instruction, then, is that the Roman Christians not be molded and changed by and according to the patterns of sin and death.

The Romans believers are instead to “be transformed (μεταμορφώω) by the renewing of the mind (νοῦς).”¹¹² The mind’s renewal alludes to the problem of the depraved mind as part of humanity’s struggle with sin in Romans.¹¹³ As a result of God giving humanity over to a “corrupted mind (ἀδοκίμασαν νοῦν),” for example, they indulged in lives of sin (1:28–32). Also, people struggle with sin, in part, because sin deceived humanity (7:11; see. 5.3 above). As a result, “The corruption of the νοῦς makes moral discernment impossible rather than simply difficult.”¹¹⁴ Because of this moral-psychological condition, Paul urges the Romans to have their

¹⁰⁹ In the NT, the verb συσχηματίζω appears only here and in 1 Peter 1:14. The verb μετασχηματίζω appears 5x in Paul. He uses it in Phil 3:21 to describe ontological, somatic transformation (see ch. 2) and in 2 Cor 11:13–15 to describe the transformation of appearances (see ch. 3). As Jewett (*Romans*) rightly observes, Paul does not here use the terms synonymously (731 n. 75). Rather, Paul’s use of συσχηματίζω presumes that believers have been transformed (6:1–11; 7:1–13) but may still live according to the pattern of sin and death. As argued below, his use of μεταμορφώω calls for continued metamorphosis on the basis of their an initial, foundational transformation.

¹¹⁰ BDAG, s.v., συσχηματίζω.

¹¹¹ For the translation of αἰών as “world,” see BDAG, s.v., αἰών. See also Johnson (*Reading Romans*) who argues that Paul’s use of αἰών functions “more or less equivalently to ‘the world,’ that is the arena of human activity outside the norms and values of the community of saints (see 1 Cor 1:20; 2:6–8; 3:18; 2 Cor 4:4). The measure of ‘the world’ is one that operates without reference to the claim of God. His readers are not to ‘conform themselves’ to this perception of reality” (190–91).

¹¹² The verb μεταμορφώω appears in Pauline literature only here and in 2 Cor 3:18. See also Matt 17:2; Mark 9:2.

¹¹³ For full discussion of the renewed mind in Rom 12:2, see Johnson, “Transformation of the Mind,” 255–75. Here, as Johnson (258–59) notes, Paul addresses Gentiles (11:13) who lived lives of vice God had given them over to “corrupted minds” (1:18–32). See also Jewett, *Romans*, 733. Keener, *Mind of the Spirit*, 143–44.

¹¹⁴ Johnson, “Transformation of the Mind,” 265.

minds renewed so that they will be able to test or discern (δοκιμάζω) God's will (12:2), a capacity that is necessary for appropriate moral behavior (cf. 15:5).¹¹⁵

Significant for the following analysis is that the somatic self-giving in v. 1 and the mind's renewal in v. 2 are two aspects of a singular exhortation. Grammatically, the coordinating conjunction καί joins the infinitive of παρίστημι in v. 1 with the imperatives of συσχηματίζω and μεταμορφόω in v. 2, as a continuation of the same plea (παρακαλέω). Conceptually, Paul's somatic and epistemic injunctions form a unity: presenting bodies to God as an act of worship goes hand-in-hand with transformation through the mind's renewal.¹¹⁶

In sum, in Rom 12:1–2, Paul pulls together a number of themes from chs. 1–11 to form a transitional exhortation. In doing so, he ties the giving of human bodies to God with the renewing of their minds to create singular image of human transformation. This image is foundational for the moral instructions that Paul delivers in the following chapters.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 191; Jewett, *Romans*, 733. See also Valérie Nicolet Anderson, *Constructing the Self: Thinking with Paul and Michel Foucault*, WUNT 2.324 (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2012). Keener (*Mind of the Spirit*), by observing linguistic connections (θέλημα and/or δοκιμάζω) between 12:2 and 1:28; 2:18, argues, that “the renewed mind of 12:2 contrasts with both the pagan mind unformed by the law (1:28) and the fleshly mind informed but not transformed by the law (2:18)” (158–59). Furthermore, as the analysis below shows, Paul's rhetoric in 12:2 is concerned with *phronēsis*, and this theme brackets his parentic section: he begins the section's conclusion by hoping for God to give to the audience the same “moral reasoning among one another” (τὸ αὐτὸ προνεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις) that is “according to Christ (κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν)” (15:5).

¹¹⁶ Cf. Keener's (*Mind of the Spirit*) assertion of the unity of these two dimensions based on Paul's use of εὐρεστος in each verse: “God's will in verse 2 is the purpose for which we present our bodies. Likewise, our minds are renewed to discern God's will in terms of how we can use our bodies on behalf of his greater body” (150). See also, Dunn, *Romans*, II.714; Longenecker, *Epistle to the Romans*, 921–22.

¹¹⁷ So, Jewett, *Romans*, 724–25. On Paul's moral instruction in Romans, see Wilson, *Love without Pretense*, 126–212.

1.3.2 Romans 12:1–2: Necessity, Categories, and Factors in Change

Necessity for Change

Why is this transformation needed? To begin, as argued above, Paul envisages the body as the locus where the power of sin acts to create sinful passions (7:1–13). Believers' past transformations in baptism freed them from sin's power over their bodies, and enslaved them to God (6:6–11, 12–14). Here, then, Paul is consistent in his instructions that believers present their bodies to God: it is necessary for their continued progress as Christ-subjects.¹¹⁸

Similar is Paul's concern for mind's renewal (τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς). As argued above, throughout Romans he establishes enslavement to sin is related directly to moral-psychological perversion, and, in this context, he describes the renewal of the mind as the *means* by which believers are transformed. Rom 12:2 assumes, conversely, that without ongoing renewal of the mind, people cannot discern God's will, which is necessary for them to live virtuously.¹¹⁹

Yet, if believers have already been transformed (6:1–11; 7:1–13), why must they undergo continued transformation? Why must they continuously present their bodies to God and thereby resist being conformed to the world? Ongoing transformation is needed because Paul presumes that the previous change was foundational, but did not accomplish a full transformation into the *telos* of what believers could or should become. The initial liberation does not guarantee that believers will not continue in sin. Paul presumes this not only in his negative imperative in 12:2, but throughout chs. 5–8 and in his parenetic discourse in chs. 12–15. Thus, the foundational change empowered a new mode of moral “living” that requires ongoing change for it to be

¹¹⁸ On the changes that establish believers as Christ-subjects, see 2.1 and 2.2 above.

¹¹⁹ Johnson, “Transformation of the Mind,” 257, 259–60; Jewett, *Romans*, 733.

enacted and realized. It was the condition for the possibility of a new mode of ongoing transformation that leads to the ends of righteousness and life that cannot be realized under sin.

Categories of Change

As argued above, Paul's exhortation for the Roman believers to present their bodies to God as a living sacrifice recalls his previously-developed notions of the body as an arena for the actions of cosmic powers. Prior to believers' foundational transformation, people were enslaved to sin, and they presented their bodies as "instruments of unrighteousness" (6:13). Sin "reigned" in their "mortal bodies" (6:12). After death to the law and sin, believers are "enslaved to God" (6:22), and Paul exhorts them to present their bodies as slaves for righteousness (6:6). So too, in 12:1, Paul begins his parenesis with a call for the Roman Christians to present their bodies to God. Moreover, they are to offer their bodies as "living sacrifices," which recalls Paul's earlier arguments about the person's dying, being resurrected, and continued "living" (2.4.1). Thus, we should understand the giving of bodies as living sacrifices to God, the supreme cosmic power, as present, *existential* transformation.

Because it occurs via the yielding of bodies, this present change has somatic dimensions. Yet, Paul does not portray the body itself as undergoing change, as he does elsewhere (e.g. 1 Cor 15:35–57; 2 Cor 3–5; Phil 3:21). Rather, the giving of the body is a means by which the self experiences existential transformation.¹²⁰

Paul's language of not being "conformed to this world" and being transformed by the mind's renewal also evokes *moral* transformation. As argued above, "this world," alludes to the pattern of enslavement to sin from which believers have been delivered. This enslavement was due largely to the corruption of the mind (νοῦς), which reflects a problem of moral reasoning or

¹²⁰ So, Gupta, *Worship that Makes Sense*, 120–21.

phronēsis (8:5–8; 12:16).¹²¹ Now that people are enslaved to God, ongoing transformation requires the mind’s continued renewal so that the community’s moral reasoning and behavior will fit the pattern of Christ, or, as Paul says elsewhere, the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16).¹²² In sum, Paul exhorts the Roman believers to give themselves for ongoing existential-moral transformation, and continued epistemic “renewal” functions as the means for this change.¹²³

Factors in Change

God is the primary factor and agent of transformation in Rom 12:1–2.¹²⁴ Although now enslaved to God and Christ (6:22; 7:6), Paul presumes that believers possess sufficient moral agency to present their bodies and their minds to God for ongoing transformation and to resist conformation to the pattern of sin and death. Yet his use of the passive imperative of μεταμορφώω in v. 2 indicates that divine power accomplishes the existential-moral transformation through the mind’s renewal. Additionally, the relationship between the renewed νοῦς and the pattern of Christ presumes the presence of the Christ’s spirit (8:9) in this process of transformation. This ongoing change is, as Johnson argues, “a process of renewal by the mind of Christ” (cf. 1 Cor 2:16), which enables the community to “to act according to the pattern of life” that characterized Christ.¹²⁵

¹²¹ See esp. 1:21–22, 28–32; 8:5–8; 11:20; 12:3, 16; 15:5; cf. Phil 2:2, 5; 3:15, 19; 4:2; 1 Cor 13:1; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 5:10; Col 3:2. See arguments in Johnson, “Transformation of the Mind,” 260–65; Keener, *Mind of the Spirit*, 167–72.

¹²² Johnson, “Transformation of the Mind,” 267–69; Jewett, *Romans*, 733; Keener, *Mind of the Spirit*, 166–67.

¹²³ Cf. the account of “transformed perception” in Paul in Gupta, *Worship that Makes Sense*, 125, 191–204.

¹²⁴ So, Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 641.

¹²⁵ Johnson, “Transformation of the Mind,” 271; cf. Keonig, “Motif of Transformation,” 167. In arguments that cannot be reproduced here, Johnson demonstrates that, although Paul’s rhetoric in Rom 12–14 has few references to the spirit, a close reading of his language “reveals a number of important implicit connections” (269–71). See also Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 165–66; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 641; Dunn, *Romans*, II.714.

In this passage, σῶμα and νοῦς are also key factors in change. As argued below (2.4.3), these two dimensions of the human do not comprise the whole self. Yet, through the interaction of these dimensions with cosmic powers, they are constitutive elements of the human and what it becomes. Because σῶμα is the relational aspect of humanity by which people are given to powers, believers are changed according to the pattern of Christ as they present their bodies to God, rather than to the power of sin. Similarly, the condition of the νοῦς affects morality. In Rom 1, for example, when humanity did not honor God and turned to idolatry (1:21–22), “God gave them over to a corrupted mind,” (1:28). As a result, humanity lived in sin (1:29–32) according to fleshly moral reasoning (8:5–8). In 12:1–2, the mind’s corruption is undone through ongoing renewal so that believers can discern God’s will in their relations with one another (v. 2).

1.3.3 Transformation & Selfhood in Romans 12:1–2

In 12:1–2, Paul shifts between singular and plural language. He uses second-person pronouns throughout, calls his audience ἀδελφοί, uses second-person plural verbs (συσχηματίζεσθε and μεταμορφοῦσθε), and exhorts the Roman believers to present their bodies (plural) to God. Yet the offering of bodies is a “living sacrifice” (singular), and he instructs them to be transformed by the renewal of their singular νοῦς, as if the members of the community share a mind.

He also makes these shifts without explanation, I submit, because he does not distinguish sharply between the individual, the community, and the presence of Christ.¹²⁶ Rather, only a few verses after this pericope he writes that “the many...are one body in Christ” and that believers are “each members of one another” (v. 5). Thus, although Paul writes mostly with plural address in 12:1–2, his language envisages “selves” that are determined in and by relationships with

¹²⁶ Though, cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 727.

Christ and with one another. In this view, relationality is fundamental for selfhood, which for Paul, as argued above, “is first and always a nexus of relations.”¹²⁷ To be sure, in Rom 12:1–2 *σῶμα* and *νοῦς* are essential structures of the self. Yet the self is neither a body nor a mind, and *σῶμα* and *νοῦς* together do not solely determine selfhood. Rather, *σῶμα* and *νοῦς* are aspects of the human that are subjected to cosmic powers and instruments through which those powers work. This combination, in part, determines human subjectivity. The Christ-subject could, therefore, be viewed as an “assemblage” or a “multiplicity,” whose constitutive parts include Christ, the community/communities of believers, the individual, and the individual’s components (body, mind, heart, etc.), but whose selfhood is not reducible to any one of these parts.¹²⁸

Moreover, Paul’s imperatives point to *ongoing* existential-moral change. On this, I raise two points. First, in Rom 12:1–2, the subject is never static. Paul presumes that the human is always in some process of change. One is either being “conformed” to the pattern of the world or “transformed” to fit the pattern of Christ. The larger context of Romans shows that these patterns of change include two different trajectories. One leads to sin and death, and the other leads to life, righteousness, and resurrection. In either case, humanity is always becoming.

Second, the existential-moral transformation in Rom 12:1–2 is in a sense both determined and undetermined. One on hand, it has an immediate *telos* of metamorphosis by the mind of Christ (12:2) and a future *telos* of life and resurrection (8:5–6, 11, 13, 18–25). Yet, in 12:1–15:13, moral conduct—the purpose/will of God in 12:2—does not consist of pre-established

¹²⁷ This description comes from the account of relational ontology in Brent D. Slife, “Taking Practice Seriously: Toward a Relational Ontology,” *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 24 (2004): 159. It also largely summarizes the arguments of Eastman, *Paul and the Person*.

¹²⁸ I borrow the terms “assemblage” and “multiplicity” from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). The notion of the self as constituted both by “internal” and “external” factors, yet not fully constituted by any one of these factors, draws inspiration from Naomi Quinn “The Self,” *AT* 6 (2006): 362.

codes of conduct.¹²⁹ Rather, Paul portrays morality as dynamic, with decisions made based on discernment of the pattern of Christ, characterized by “other-regard,” and with love as the criterion (13:8–10).¹³⁰ As participants—who have differing gifts (12:1–8) and who may be strong or weak in their faith (14:1–4)—face various situations, diversity will inevitably result. Participants may, for example, differ in their diets (13:1–4, 13–23) or in the days that they observe (13:5–6). In short, Roman Christians are to make decisions based on moral discernment, and proper discernment requires a body given to God and a renewed mind.¹³¹

To tie these two points together, the community is ever-changing, and its immediate moral trajectories are uncharted, even if living according to the Christic pattern will lead ultimately to resurrection. One should not here understand believers as progressing steadily and upward in their transformation until it “culminates” in wholesale transformation at the eschaton, as scholars sometimes claim for Paul.¹³² Neither should we understand Paul to envisage something less than genuine metamorphosis, like merely a mere repetition of self-giving or a “daily renewal which must occur again and again.”¹³³ Rather, in 12:1–2, Paul has his eye on “the middle,” between a basis of foundational transformation (6:1–11; 7:1–13) and resurrection (8:18–25), and the Christ-subjects who live in this middle space live in a mode of becoming.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ So, Jewett, *Romans*, 734; cf. Wilson, *Love without Pretense*, 209–12.

¹³⁰ For the term “other-regard,” see David G. Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul’s Ethics* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 166–203.

¹³¹ For further discussion on moral discernment in Rom 12:2, see Jewett, *Romans*, 734; Johnson, “Transformation of the Mind,” 264–65.

¹³² See, e.g., Asher, *Polarity and Change*, 27; Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 172–73; cf. Engberg-Pederson, “Complete and Incomplete Transformation,” 138, 45;

¹³³ Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 174.

¹³⁴ On the concept of “the middle” (through the metaphor of being as a rhizome) as a space of dynamism, intensity, and unpredictability, see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 25. Cf. Jorunn Økland, “Genealogies of the Self: Materiality, Personal Identity, and the Body in Paul’s Letters to the Corinthians,” in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, eds. Seim and Økland, *Metamorphoses*, 66–82.

They are continually morphed as they yield to the mind of Christ while they navigate new circumstances, challenges, and participants that come and go in their community over time.

Furthermore, Paul presents this this unpredictable process of existential-moral change as partly determinative of Christian subjectivity. That is, if we could ask the Paul of Romans, “What does it mean to be human as a believer,” part of the answer would include that the s/he is characterized by ongoing processes of existential-moral transformation. The Christ-subject is a transforming phenomenon.

1.4 Conclusion: Transformation Discourse in Romans

Paul’s transformation discourse in Romans contains descriptions of past transformation and ongoing, present transformation. In 6:1–11, he describes existential-moral change at baptism. He also describes existential-moral change in 7:1–13. In both of these passages, Paul describes transformation as an experience of death and resurrection. After the resurrection, believers are no longer under the power of sin, but are enslaved to God as new moral subjects. This previous change has effects in the present. It is the condition for the possibility of *continued* existential-moral transformation, which is needed to discern God’s will in their moral conduct.

In these passages, Paul’s emphases on human enslavement to cosmic powers and on bodies and minds as the venues in which those powers operate reveal the significance of relationality and participation in Pauline conceptions of selfhood. Prior to transformation, people are determined by their enslavement to sin, and, morally, they are governed by sin. Only by participating in Christ’s death and resurrection can the enslaved self die to sin die and be resurrected into new enslavement to God. Thus, before, during, and after transformation, selfhood is determined by that powers that govern humanity. Moreover, Paul writes that

believers are at once members of Christ's body and "members of one another" (12:5), which shows that the subject is constituted not only by divine relationships but by social relationships as well. Indeed, although Paul surely maintains an ontological distinction between creator and creation, he portrays the subjectivity of believers as reducible neither to the human nor to the divine. Christian subjectivity is constituted by the enmeshment of the divine and the human. self is a "multiplicity."

In Romans, humans are not only relationally-constituted, but they are also characterized by change. Prior to dying and rising with Christ, humanity was "being conformed to this world," being formed by their vices and on a trajectory toward death. Yet believers' new moral selfhood is established through existential-moral transformation, and their existence is characterized by ongoing process of transformation. Here, change, is in part constitutive of subjectivity. Thus, to join Paul's notions of multiplicity and ongoing transformation, we find a subject that is always "hybrid and in-between states."¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 162.

Paul's Transformation Discourse: Conclusions

The following table summarizes my findings from Paul's transformation discourse:

	Text	Time of Change	Transformation Category
1.	Galatians 2:18-20	Past	Existential-Moral
2.	Galatians 3:23–29	Past	Existential-Moral
3.	Galatians 4:1-11	Past	Existential-Moral
4.	Galatians 4:19	Present	Existential-Moral
5.	Galatians 5:24	Past	Existential-Moral
6.	Galatians 6:14–15	Past	Existential-Moral
7.	Philippians 3:10–11	Present	Epistemic; Existential
8.	Philippians 3:21	Future	Bodily, Ontological, Status
9.	1 Corinthians 13:8–12	Past	Epistemic
10.	1 Corinthians 15:35–57	Future	Bodily, Ontological, Moral
11.	2 Corinthians 3:18	Present	Existential, Epistemic
12.	2 Corinthians 4:16–18	Present	Existential
13.	2 Corinthians 5:1–5	Future	Bodily, Ontological
14.	2 Corinthians 5:14–15	Past	Existential-Moral
15.	2 Corinthians 5:17	Past	Existential, Moral, Epistemic
16.	2 Corinthians 11:13–15	Present	Transformation of Appearance
17.	Romans 6:1–11	Past	Existential-Moral
18.	Romans 7:1–13	Past	Existential-Moral
19.	Romans 12:1-2	Present	Existential-Moral, Epistemic

Table 5:
Summary of Paul's Transformation Discourse

What have we learned from the preceding analysis of Paul's transformation discourse?

Five points are most pertinent to this study.

1. Transformation is a prevailing and important theme in the undisputed Pauline epistles. Although not all of these letters contain what this study qualifies as transformation discourse (it occurs in neither 1 Thessalonians nor Philemon), human change is no minor

motif in Paul.¹ Human transformation appears in five of the seven undisputed letters, and it plays a significant role in each. He disperses transformation references throughout large portions of his letters (Gal 2:18–20; 3:23–29; 4:1–11, 19; 5:24; 6:14–15; 2 Cor 3–5; Rom 6–8), and he often employs it to establish critical rhetorical shifts (2 Cor 3; Rom 6:1–11; 12:1–2) and to develop significant literary themes (2 Cor 3:1–18; 1 Cor 15:35–57; Rom 6–7; 12:1–2). In sum, in diverse geographical, circumstantial, and literary contexts, Paul uses references to human transformation as critical aspects of his rhetorical efforts.

2. Transformation discourse appears most frequently in letters in which Paul must address matters of self-understanding (see table above). He references or describes transformation at least six times in Galatians, a letter in which he works to persuade his audiences of who they are in Christ in relation to Jewish believers and the history of Israel. In 2 Corinthians, Paul defends his apostolic credentials, which leads him to argue for particular ways of understanding the identities of his opponents, his apostolic team, and those in the Corinthians church. Paul uses Romans as a self-introduction and as means of accounting for the inclusion of the gentiles among God's people. Philippians contains only two instances of transformation discourse. But it consists of only four chapters, and the transformation passages appear in a section in which ethnic and religious identities are salient concerns (ch. 3). On the whole, then, Paul employs transformation discourse the most in contexts in which self-definition is of the highest concern, and this suggests further that transformation is, for Paul, a central feature of Christian self-understanding.
3. Paul's transformation discourse is also multidimensional. The distinct needs for change in various contexts produce a plurality of transformation types and descriptions. In some places, his varied references fit multiple categories: existential-moral, identity epistemic, somatic, appearance, and ontological transformations. In various places, these changes occur in the past (Galatians 2:15–21; 3:23–29; 4:1–20; 5:16–26; 6:11–16; 2 Cor 5:14–15, 17; Rom 6:1–11; 7:1–12), present (2 Cor 3:18; 4:16–18; Phil 3:10–11; Rom 12:1–2), and future (1 Cor 13:8–13; 15:35–57; 2 Cor 5:1–5; Phil 3:21). Moreover, in some places, past transformation produces a new self—what this study has termed a “Christ-subject.”² Elsewhere, transformation will prepare believers for life after the resurrection (e.g. Phil 3:10–11, 21; Rom 6:3–4). Elsewhere, Paul depicts believers' selfhood not as threatened by present, ongoing change, but as characterized by continuous transformation (Phil 3:8–11; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:16–18; Rom 12:1–2). Finally, through portrayals of the self's death and resurrection with Christ, an array of metaphors (clothing, childbirth, dwellings, etc.), analogies (aging, agricultural, being widowed, etc.), terms (e.g., μετασχηματίζω and μεταμορφόω), references to “new creation,” moral imperatives, and more, Paul's describes human change in diverse ways and for numerous rhetorical aims.

¹ The same would be true if we were to expand the study to the undisputed letters. See e.g., Col 2:8–15, 20–23; 3:1–4, 5–11; Eph. 2:1–10, 11–22; 4:14–16; 2 Tim 2:11–13, 21–22; Titus 3:5.

² See the term “Christ-subjectivity,” in Richard Valantasis, “Competing Ascetic Subjectivities,” 219.

4. Despite variations in presentation, Paul is remarkably consistent in his presumptions that the self is relationally-constituted. He portrays the self as aligned with (2 Cor 11:12–15) or determined by various factors or powers (sin, death, the law, Christ, Spirit, God, other people, etc.).³ The Christian self is defined by human relations as well, finding itself to be so enmeshed in self-defining communal relations that Paul's rhetoric often shifts between the singular and plural (e.g. Gal 3:23–29; 2 Cor 4:16–18).

5. In Paul's letters, the needs for transformation vary. In some instances, transformation was necessary for believers to gain new moral life, with new moral agency, for present existence in the sphere of Christ (e.g. Gal 3:23–29; 4:1–11; 6:14–15; 2 Cor 5:14–15, 17; Rom 6:1–11). Elsewhere, Paul describes future transformation that is needed for humans to inhabit the divine sphere, since "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 15:35–57; 13:8–12; 2 Cor 5:1–5; Phil 3:21). In Paul's references to present transformation, he presumes that people need ongoing transformation in order to experience deepening epistemic, moral, and existential participation in Christ, in anticipation of future incorporation into the sphere of Christ (Phil 3:10–11; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:16–18; Rom 12:1–2 cf. Gal 4:19). To synthesize these points, believers needed transformation to become new moral persons and to experience ongoing change, which is also necessary for eschatological transformation.

³ This is not a novel claim. Interpreters have for some time recognized various forms of relationality in Pauline anthropology, from Bultmann's notion of the person relating itself to itself, Käsemann's emphasis on the body as related to the cosmos, to Tannehill's arguments for the self's death and resurrection as a transfer from one power to another, to Rabens' recent arguments for the role of relationality in Pauline ethics. Recently, Eastman has provided the most explicit and sustained argument for relational selfhood in Paul's letters. In many ways, chs. 2–4 of this study corroborate and expand Eastman's thesis.

Chapter 5

Human Transformation in Greco-Roman Antiquity

Two key premises undergird this chapter and the next. The first is that literary descriptions of human transformation provide “a vehicle for the treatment of identity.”¹ Transformation discourse has “tremendous utility as a medium for exploring the complex problem of identity: personal, national, and human.”² Second, discourse about human change in different settings can accomplish different types of “cultural work.”³ That is, descriptions of change serve different functions in different cultural places and times. Here, I examine diverse descriptions of transformation in a variety of ancient writings to highlight some conceptions of selfhood that authors either envisage, or discuss explicitly in literature and philosophy.

For my analysis, I borrow three analytical categories from Caroline Walker Bynum’s *Metamorphosis and Identity*, in which she explores Medieval transformation stories and how authors use them to negotiate identities. The first category is *hybridity*, which is the “the joining of two incompatibles.”⁴ The hybrid inherently violates species distinctions: it is “a double-being, an entity of parts, two or more” such as a centaur or a satyr.⁵⁶ Bynum’s second category is

¹ Leo C. Curran, “Transformation and Anti-Augustanism in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*,” *Arethusa* 5.1 (1972): 75. See also Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone, 2001), 15–36.

² Curran, “Transformation and Anti-Augustanism,” 75.

³ See Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 29–30; David Dean Shulman and Guy G. Stroumsa, ed., *Self and Self-Transformation in the History of Religions* in ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁴ Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 17.

⁵ Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 29. Bynum uses examples from the writings of Gerald of Wales, which appear in the form of a “doubles” such as ox-men or bearded ladies (29).

⁶ Bynum, (*Metamorphosis and Identity*) 29–30 adds that a hybrid is “spatial and visual, not temporal.” That is, hybridity refers to a figure that is “inherently two,” and not to a process of change or the *merging* of two different beings (29–30).

metamorphosis, which is a “change of one body into another or change of species.”⁷ A third category is *masquerade*, which is more or less what I call in ch. 3 the “transformation of appearances.” It is a change “of costume or skin, where nature endures.”⁸ That is, “something that perdures is overclothed or re-overclothed with something else.”⁹ Although I do not organize my chapter around Bynum’s categories, I employ them throughout.

1. Transformation & Selfhood in Greco-Roman Literature

I begin with mythic stories of transformation in ancient Greek and Roman literature. These tales typically feature two types of change: the transformation of gods (usually for deceptive purposes) and the transformation of humans by gods. I focus on the latter. Such tales played only minor roles in Homer but were more significant for the Attic tragedians.¹⁰ They begin to take center stage in some Alexandrian literature, as attested in Nicander’s *Heteroioumena* and Boeus’s *Onithogonia*.¹¹ We find the most substantial and influential collection of such stories in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. After Ovid’s work, Apuleius of Mardura’s novel *The Golden Ass* (Latin title: *Metamorphoses*) provides a sustained narrative that includes the change of Lucian into an ass and his return to human form by the power of Isis.¹²

⁷ Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 84. Metamorphosis, in contrast to hybridity, has temporal dimensions: it “goes from an entity that is one thing to an entity that is another. It is essentially narrative (30).”

⁸ Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 17.

⁹ For my purposes, masquerade is similar to metamorphosis, in that each involves a change of form. Yet the main distinction for this work is that a masquerade is deliberately temporary and usually for a specific purpose, such as a god disguising himself or herself to deceive humans.

¹⁰ See P. M. C. Forbes Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*; OCM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7.

¹¹ Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*, 7.

¹² Although the literature as we have it is from Hellenistic period authors, many of the stories undoubtedly emerged from earlier periods.

1.1 Boeus and Nicander in Antoninus Liberalis, *Metamorphoses*

Our best access to the stories by Nicander and Boeus are in the *Metamorphoses* of Antoninus Liberalis, a figure whose biographical details are obscure.¹³ Antoninus wrote in Greek, probably in the second to third century CE. His work is a compendium of forty-one transformation stories that are neither linked by a narrative thread nor given with commentary. Most of them are attributed either to Boeus or to Nicander.

Boeus (alternately spelled Boios) is a figure about whom we know virtually nothing, and we have no fragments of his *Onithogonia*, a collection of stories about humans being transformed into birds.¹⁴ We lack the details needed to confirm Boeus' broader purposes or to nail down a provenance or date for his writing.¹⁵ Nicander's tales feature diverse forms and patterns of metamorphosis, and it seems that he was drawn to these stories "not for the psychologically or physically grotesque description, but rather the air of simple-minded magic and superstition which so obviously suited the local cults and landmarks of his stories."¹⁶ It is possible that his compilation "is a collection of 'slotable' metamorphoses for use by would-be poets, or, perhaps, by students."¹⁷ In short, therefore, we have stories that were collected by an obscure figure and attributed to equally obscure authors. Thus, my discussion is literary, with an

¹³ See "Introduction" in Francis Celoria, *The Metamorphoses of Antoninus Liberalis: A Translation with Commentary* (London: Routledge, 1992), 10–14.

¹⁴ Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*, 33. Irving also notes, "Boios was the name of an ancient Delphic poetess" as well as a soothsayer connected with "the mythical prophetesses of Hippo and Manto." It is thus possible that the author of *Onithogonia* attributed his writings to either these figures. It is also possible that the work is a blend of the ancient genre of *orinthomanteia* with a collection of metamorphoses

¹⁵ Irving (*Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*) suggests only that the author seems to be "a Hellenistic work" (33). Few details point to specific "local elements" that could identify the writings with specific cults or genealogies, and Boeus almost always features Zeus or Apollo—"standardized" deities—as the gods who transform (Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*, 34).

¹⁶ Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*, 28. Most of his tales are terse, and lack details concerning the metamorphoses, literary creativity, or (unlike Boeus), references to major Olympian God (31).

¹⁷ Celoria, "Introduction," 12–13.

interest in some prominent themes and patterns, including (1) etiology, (2) boundaries and natural or social order, (3) death-and-exaltation patterns, (4) notions of selfhood, and (5) agency.

First, Boeus' tales are etiological in that they function in part to account for the origins of different bird types. In one story, for example, Aegyptius fell in love with Timandre but was deceived by her son Neophron into sleeping with his own mother, Bulis. (*Metam.* 5).¹⁸ When Bulis discovered that she had slept with her son, she tried to kill Aegyptius and herself with a sword. Aegyptius "looked up to heaven and prayed that he should vanish—and all with him." Zeus turned Aegyptius and Neophron into vultures, Bulis into a heron, and Timandre into a tit.¹⁹ Similarly, Boeus portrays origins of the hawk in the story of Hierax, "a man of justice and distinction" who lived in the region of the Mariandyni (northern Asia Minor) and who "set up temples for Demeter."²⁰ The Teuricians suffered a famine as Poseidon's punishment, and Hierax sent them food.²¹ Enraged, Poseidon turned Hierax "into a bird, which to this day is called the hierax [hawk]."²² Etiology is not Boeus' only concern, but it is a consistent feature of his tales.

Second, Antoninus' stories interweave themes of crime, pollution, breakdowns in social order, and transgressions of "natural" boundaries. This is true of the etiological myths described above. As P. M. C. Forbes Irving's work on Greek myths shows, "Transformation into a bird often follows a family crime," such as incest, and transformations into nocturnal birds and/or

¹⁸ Unless noted otherwise, all translations of Antoninus' stories are from Celoria, *Metamorphoses*.

¹⁹ In accordance with his etiological emphasis, Boeus adds, "Bulis became a heron and Zeus ordained that she was to eat nothing that grew out the ground and instead to feed on the eyes of fishes, birds, and snakes, since she had been about to put out the eyes of her son Aegyptius. Timandre he turned into a tit. And henceforth these birds never appeared together in the same spot." On Bulis' attempt to gouge "his eyes," Celoria observes, "It was a symbolic malapropism, since she was naively appropriating the behaviour of Oedipus who put his own eyes out when he discovered that he had unwittingly married his own mother" (*Metamorphoses*, 116).

²⁰ On "the land of the Mariandyni" see Celoria, *Metamorphoses*, 112.

²¹ According to the story, the Teuricians had failed to offer sacrifices to Poseidon.

²² Moreover, "In making him disappear he also changed his character. He who had been greatly loved by mankind was made most hateful to birds. He who had saved many of mankind from death was turned into a slaughterer of many a bird." Here, not only does Boeus describe the origin of a number of birds, but the stories also consider the nature or "character" of different bird species.

birds of prey often result from pollution and disorder.²³ Such metamorphoses also often represent the crossing of boundaries “between the home and the wilds,” which suggests that a “new wild life” results from the destruction of the household.²⁴ In the story of Aegyptius, for example, incest is itself a form of illicit boundary crossing, and it leads to all parties being transformed by crossing a border between humans in households to animals in the wild. The story of Hierax plays on an additional theme—“that for Greeks there was a close connection between social order and the order of the land (Demeter is the goddess both of the crops and civilized life).”²⁵ When Hierax, whose agricultural productivity represents an orderly household, defies Poseidon, “he becomes a rapacious and anti-social bird hated by its fellow creatures.”²⁶

In a non-bird-related etiology tale, Smyrna desired her father Thias, and her nurse Hippolyte deceived Thias into sleeping with Smyrna (*Metam.* 34). Smyrna became pregnant, and, after Thias discovered her identity, she gave birth prematurely to her child. Zeus turned her into a tree known as the Smyrna. Thus, Smyrna is driven by that passion to cross a sexual and familial boundary, upsets the household order, and incurs transformation into a non-human state as a result. In such stories, through pollution, crimes, or the spurning of gods, people change: they become socially disordered and animalistic.

Third, in Antoninus we find a pattern of people dying or nearly dying, only to be exalted. For instance, when all of Aonia²⁷ suffered a plague, the oracle of Apollo at Gortyne announced that two maidens should be sacrificed in order to appease the anger of the two gods of the underworld (*Metam.* 25). Metioche and Menippe volunteered readily, and, after their death,

²³ Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*, 107.

²⁴ Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*, 110.

²⁵ Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*, 111.

²⁶ Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*, 111.

²⁷ That is, Boeotia. See Celoria, *Metamorphoses*, 171.

Persephone transformed them into heavenly bodies.²⁸ Similarly, Iphigenia, daughter of Theseus and Helen, was to be sacrificed in order for the Achaean army to have wind to sail from Aulis (*Metam.* 27). When she reached the altar, Artemis intervened and supplied a bull calf. She carried Iphigenia “to what is called the White Island to be with Achilles and changed her into an ageless immortal deity, calling her Orsilochia²⁹ instead of Iphigenia.” In the story of Byblis, her unspeakable desire for [her brother] Caunus was driving her mad” (*Metam.* 27). As a victim of passion,³⁰ she tries attempts suicide by jumping from a cliff, but a group of nymphs rescues her. “Casting her into a deep sleep they change her from a mortal to a deity into a nymph called a hamadryad.³¹ They made her their companion and sharer of their way of life.” In each tale, a figure (or figures) approaches death or dies because of morally upright decisions, and they, as a result, experience ontological transformation into a new deified state.

Fourth, Antoninus’ metamorphosis stories reflect multiple conceptions of selfhood. In the above tales attributed to Boeus, for example, the self is lost, not in death, but through replacement—through transformation into something different.³² In nearly all of Boeus’ stories recorded by Antoninus, there is no evidence that the self—the original “I”—perdures in its new

²⁸ Moreover, Antoninus writes, “All of the Aonians set up at Orchomenus (city on the former Lake Copais’ west bank in Boeotia. See Celoria, *Metamorphoses*, 171). in Boeotia a notable temple to these two maidens. Every year young men and young women bring propitiatory offerings to them.”

²⁹ “The name means ‘helper or promoter of childbirth,’ a function that belongs to Artemis” (Celoria, *Metamorphoses*, 178).

³⁰ She was “being gripped by an...unmanageable demon,” despite her efforts to hide it.

³¹ According to Celoria (*Metamorphoses*) a hamadryad was “a tree nymph whose continued existence was thought to go with the life of a tree” (196).

³² Irving (*Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*) notes that birds tend to be remote from human life and that the stories seem to explain why some bird species exist. Functionally, then, the loss of the original self may have been a source of comfort: “Since they are describing everyday facts of nature and since the present birds are no longer really the original transformed people these birds will tend to be less alarming or extraordinary than the unique freaks created by transformation into an animal; also the position of these transformations at the end of their story, and the fact that they will last for ever, removes any sense of urgency about the hero’s behaviour or state of mind as birds, and produces a perhaps artificial sense of serenity about their new state” (107).

bird form.³³ In other stories, the self's post-transformation state is ambiguous. At the end of the Smyrna tale, for example, Antoninus writes, "It is said that each year the tree weeps tears from the wood as its fruit." It is unclear, however, whether Smyrna, or aspects of her, continue in the form of a tree, or whether the tree's "weeping" merely reflects its origins. In another story, Leto transforms the girl Leucippus into a boy simply by "grafting" the male sex organ onto her (*Metam.* 17). In terms of selfhood, however, we cannot determine whether Leucippus has become a new person or is the same person with a new anatomy. Indeed, rather than clarify matters of selfhood, such stories may purposely obscure these categories in order to show the slipperiness of notions like gender and identity, or even to evoke reflections on them.³⁴ In sum, Antoninus portrays changes that destroy the self, that obscure the self's identity, and that result in the self's exaltation in a deified state.

Fifth, gods are the agents of change. In every story discussed here, whether as punishment, pity, or reward, a deity accomplishes the transformation(s). The only distinction is in which figures—e.g., Olympians or minor figure like nymphs—bring about the changes. As the following discussions show, divine agency in human transformation is standard in this literature.

³³ The one exception that I have found is the tale of Oenoe. Athena transformed Oenoe into a crane after she did not honor the goddess. But, "Yearning for her child Mopsus, Oenoe flew over houses and would not go away." To emphasize the etiological dimension of the tale, Boeius continues, "But the Pygmies armed themselves and chased her away. Because of this there arose a state of war then as well as now between the Pygmies and cranes." Here, it seems that Oene's self—inasmuch as she is identified by her relationship to and desire for Mopsus—continue in her new bird body. Apart from this tale, however, Boeius' stories predominantly depict the destruction of the self through transformation.

³⁴ Cf. a discussion of the ways in which Ovid uses gender representations to complicate notions of identity in Warren Ginsberg, "Ovid and the Problem of Gender," *Mediaevalia* 13 (1987): 10–11. Compare also the analysis of transsexual myth in Hinduism in Wendy Doniger, "Transformations of Subjectivity and Memory in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*" in Shulman and Stroumsa, eds., *Self and Self-Transformation in the History of Religions*, 57–72. In the deification tales like those about Metioche and Menippe, Iphigenia, and Byblis, however, the self endures in a new ontological mode.

1.1.2 Summary: Boeus and Nicander in Antoninus Liberalis, *Metamorphoses*

In the stories attributed to Boeus, an animal replaces the human as the result of moral boundary crossing. By contrast, in Nicander, we find the self's enhancement and continuity through a pattern of ontological transformation, or deification, that results from death or a near-death experiences. Nicander features stories that obscure the boundaries that give shape to selfhood and that raise questions about the nature of the self amidst change. Although the stories of Boeus and Nicander differ in many ways, they also have several similarities. In each, for example, gods are the agents of transformation, and the tales frequently play on notions of identity boundaries with moral implications.

1.2 Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* contains roughly 250 transformation myths. Two features of his work are especially pertinent to my study. First, recent scholars have argued that *Metamorphoses* functions as a means of reflecting on notions of identity amidst the socio-political changes that Augustus' imperial expansions and reforms brought.³⁵ Wendy Olmstead, for example, argues that Ovid uses his stories "to come to terms with—sometimes in order to facilitate and at other times to resist—transformations of identity as a product and agent of social change."³⁶ Yet, this view is contested, and it is beyond the scope of my work to establish the degree to which Ovid

³⁵ See, e.g., Charles Segal, "'Myth and Philosophy in the Metamorphoses: Ovid's Augustanism and the Augustan Conclusion of Book XV'" *The American Journal of Philology* 90 (1969): 264–65; Curran, "Transformation and Anti-Augustanism, 71–91. This view has been contested in scholarship. For an overview of Augustus' expansions, reforms, and restorations, see Mary Taliaferro Boatwright, et al. *A Brief History of the Romans*, Second ed. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 172–92.

³⁶ Wendy Olmsted, "On the Margins of Otherness: Metamorphosis and Identity in Homer, Ovid, Sidney, and Milton," *New Literary History* 27 (1996): 168.

wrote with socio-political motivations or agendas.³⁷ I do, however, presume with these scholars that Ovid's myths function as vehicles for reflections upon identity and selfhood.³⁸

A second important feature of Ovid's poem is that he writes from a Pythagorean perspective.³⁹ In Book XV of *Metamorphoses*, framed as a discussion of Pythagoras' refusal to eat meat, Ovid gives a long exposition of some features of Pythagorean doctrine. He discusses, for example, metempsychosis: the soul is immortal, characterized by perpetual relocations (XV. 152–60).⁴⁰ Moreover, the soul's endless migrations from body to body occur within an ever-changing cosmic context:

“Everything changes; nothing dies; the soul roams to and fro, now here, now there, and takes what frame it will, passing from beast to man, from our own form to beast and never dies, as yielding wax is stamped with new designs and changes shape and seems not still the same, yet is indeed the same, even so our souls are still the same for ever, but adopt in their migrations ever-varying forms (XV.166–74).⁴¹

The constant cosmic changes correspond with the changes humans experience in our bodies. Despite the soul's constancy, according to Ovid, “Our bodies too are always, endlessly changing; what we have been, or are today, we shall not be tomorrow” (XV.212–14). Ovid's Pythagorean views influence his poem's logic, illustrated by his thematic opening lines, “Of

³⁷ For a judicious overview of the attitudes towards Augustus across Ovid's writings, see Peter White, “Ovid and the Augustan Milieu” in *Brill's Companion to Ovid*; ed. Barbara Weiden Boyd (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2002)1–25.

³⁸ On Ovid's efforts to use metamorphosis to reflect on identity and selfhood, see Leonard Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis & the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven: Yale university press, 1986), 37–56. On transformation myths in general as means for such reflections, see Curran, “Transformation and Anti-Augustanism, 75; Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 15–36.

³⁹ Although the seriousness and consistency with which he does so is unclear. See Barkan, *God's Made Flesh*, 86–87; Segal, “Myth and Philosophy.”

⁴⁰ “You race of men whom death's cold chill appals, why dread the Styx, the dark, the empty names, sad stuff of poets, perils of a world that never was? Your bodies, whether age shall waste at last or burning pyre consume, be sure no ills can ever harm. Our souls are deathless; when they leave their former home, always new habitations welcome them, so live afresh.” All translations are from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A.D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁴¹ In this same context, he states bluntly, “Nothing endures, all is in endless flux” (XV.181).

bodies changed to other forms I tell; You Gods...have yourselves wrought every change” (I.1–2). On one hand, change is merely an aspect of the natural order; it is the essence of nature. On the other hand, the *metamorphoses* that Ovid narrates involve transformations of the body while the self, or some aspects of it, persists, just as a soul continues amidst cosmic flux.

In what follows, I examine a number of Ovidian myths literarily, according to three focal points. The first and longest discussion is of some patterns and features of Ovid’s transformation tales, with attention to matters of selfhood. Second, in a more cursory fashion, I examine some representative tales that feature the self’s death/near death, leading to exaltation, similar to what we find in Nicander. Third, I briefly highlight several occurrences of apotheosis in the poem.

1.2.1 Patterns and Features of Transformation in Ovid

Metamorphosis & the Self

Transformation and selfhood are linked. As Bynum argues, “The question of change is...the other side of the question of identity.”⁴² In Ovid, the relationship between the two is complex and multilayered. As his opening lines suggest, *metamorphosis* is the dominant category. Although Ovid’s tales are diverse, in most, if not all of them, the transformed person persists in some way.⁴³ Two examples give a sense of this continuity.

First is the story of Io, daughter of Inachus the mythological ruler of Argos (*Metam.* I.569–754). Her story resembles the death/near death-to-exaltation pattern that characterizes other transformation tales, and it anticipates the story of Lucius (1.3.1 below). Jove raped Io

⁴² Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 29.

⁴³ Irving (*Metamorphoses in Greek Myths*) observes this as a difference between Boeus and Nicander’s writings and Ovid’s: “Ovid uses all except three of Nicander’s stories, and in nearly every case there are important differences. The most consistent change is that Ovid ignores the cult *aition*.” He adds, “What Ovid tends to add in place of the cult *aition* is a more obvious explanation of animal features and an emphasis on the continuity of human traits” (29).

after she caught his attention as she walked from one of her father's streams (I.587–602). To capture her, he “drew down a veil of darkness” to stop Io from running away, and when Juno saw the darkness, she suspected that Jove had been unfaithful (I.602–13). As Juno approached “Jove had fore-sensed his spouse's visit and transformed poor Io into a sleek white heifer (lovely still although a cow)” (I.516–17). Juno admired the cow, and, once she persuaded Jove to give it to her, she put it in the care of Argus. Io followed her family around her father's rivers, and, one day, she revealed her true identity by writing in the sand with her hoof. Argus then drove her away (I.622–68). Moved by Io's distress, Juno sent Hermes to kill Argus, which angered Jove (I.669–719). She pursued Io throughout the world. After Io prayed to Juno for mercy, Juno pleaded with Jove to restore her. Jove obliged and transformed her into a goddess (I.720–47).

Io's change is metamorphosis, but Ovid's descriptions present complexity regarding selfhood. On one hand, Io's self, her “I,” continues to exist in a cow body, and the new body restricts the capacities she held as a human. Ovid writes, for example, “And when, to plead with Argus, she would try to stretch her arms, she had no arms to stretch. Would she complain, a moo came from her throat. A startling sound—her own voice frightened her” (I.637–39). Similarly, she was frightened by her appearance when she saw her reflection in a river. She had the same desires for her family as before—crying as she interacted with them—and, as noted above, she was able to communicate with them by writing in the sand with her hoof. Yet she also had the physical nature and appetite of a cow: she allowed her family members to stroke her as an animal, and she “browsed on leaves of trees and bitter weeds” and “drank the muddy streams” (I.633–50). In cow form and with cow appetites, she remained Io.

Selfhood in the Io story shares notions of integration that we have seen elsewhere in this study. While bearing the form of a cow, one could view Io's self as integrated into a cow body.

In that state, her self persists with its emotions and desires, but her existence, which includes her relationships, communication, and diet, are altered by the physical restrictions of living as a cow. Once transformed for the second time, the same continuity/difference tension continues. Ovid writes, “Io regained her shape, became once more what she once was (I.739–40).”⁴⁴ Yet she also became more than she once was, “a goddess now, famous, divine, and linen-robed adorers throng her shrine” (I.751–52).⁴⁵ The “I” of Io now has not merely a new form, but also a new ontological existence. Yet this new state is not realized apart from the previous iterations of her self: human daughter of Inachus, victim, and cow. The self’s continuity in different bodies here resembles the Pythagorean view of the soul’s immortality. Yet, in each form, the current reality tacitly integrates previous states into its current state, giving a narrative aspect to present self-understanding. Although what was is no longer as it was, her “body carries the story.”⁴⁶

We find another example of the complexity of selfhood in *Metamorphosis* in the story of Myrrha and Cinyras (X.293–515). The tale is one of boundary crossing and category disruption, and it resembles the story of Byblis (above).⁴⁷ A fury (“One of the three dread sisters”) “blasted [Myrrah] with viper’s venom and firebrands of Hell,” and, as a result, she fell in love with her father (X.312–15). She, like Byblis, is a victim of passion.⁴⁸ Myrrha’s laments exhibit frustrations with the boundaries of humans and animals, as well as the boundaries between her people and others. She complains, “Why, other creatures couple as they choose regardless. If a heifer’s mounted by her father, that’s no shame; a horse becomes his daughter’s husband; goats

⁴⁴ This reinforces the point that she was never “not Io.”

⁴⁵ One finds similar patterns in the story of Lycaon (I.210–243).

⁴⁶ Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 178. She adds later, “The shape I speak of...encapsulates graphically and simultaneously the sequence, the before and after, of a self. But it can do this only paradoxically and partially, only in traces or vestiges, not fully. For what shape carries is story, and story is change; before must be (mostly) lost in order for there to be an after” (181).

⁴⁷ Cf. the tale of Atalanta (X.560–739).

⁴⁸ So Segal, “Myth and Philosophy,” 266.

mate with kids. They've sired themselves; why, even birds conceive from seed that fathered them. How blest are they that have such license!" (X.327–33).⁴⁹ She has heard of other people "where sons will marry mothers and daughters fathers, and their double love increase duty's bond. But I, poor me, was not so lucky—I was not born there" (X.335–39.) She desires to leave her "native borders" in order to "flee from crime" (X.340).

She denied many suitors because she is, as Ovid portrays it, a victim of desire. She is a "prey to ungoverned passion," (X.366) and, "as a huge tree, wounded by an axe," her mind was "weakened by wound on wound" (X.370–73). She decides to hang herself, but is caught and saved by her nurse. After the nurse discovered why Myrrha had attempted suicide, she deceived Cinyras into sleeping his daughter under the cover of darkness during the festival of Ceres, in which women participants abstain from sex (X.376–447). In this first encounter, Myrrha conceived. After multiple meetings, Cinyras wanted to know the identity of the woman and brought a lamp to the next occasion. When he discovered that it was Myrrha, he tried to kill her with a sword. Myrrha escaped, and, after roaming for some months, she prayed that she would be expelled "from both realms," that "some nature" would be given in which she would "neither die nor live." She was transformed into a tree, albeit with her continued human emotions. Despite her tree form, she gave birth to a baby boy (X.469–15).

The violation of boundaries in this story complicates notions of selfhood. All identity formation requires the negotiation and permutation of various types of boundaries (cultural, ethnic, racial, etc.),⁵⁰ and this story contains both the blurring and transgression of borders.⁵¹ The incestuous relationship, for example, crosses boundaries, but the baby's conception blurs them.

⁴⁹ Segal ("Myth and Philosophy") notes that Myrrha uses "animals as models to justify her incestuous passion," which reveals the bestial nature of her desires (265–66).

⁵⁰ Vince P. Marotta, "The Hybrid Self and the Ambivalence of Boundaries," *Social Identities* 14 (2008): 295–310.

⁵¹ Cf. Barkan, *God's Made Flesh*, 29–30, 63–64.

Ovid writes, “Filled with her father Myrrha left the room, his wicked seed within her tragic womb, the crime conceived.” The reception of Cinyras’ seed as an absorption of himself into Myrrha suggests that, in part, “metamorphosis transforms the other into the self” as an act of “assimilation.”⁵² The boundaries between Myrrha and Cinyras blur in the reproductive act; their selves are in some sense fused together, and Myrrha’s sense of identity is, to some degree, determined by Cinyras.⁵³

The same is true of Myrrha’s transformation into a tree and her labor. First, her emotions have changed with her body, but not completely: “Though with her body she had forfeited her former feelings, still she weeps and down the tree the warm drops ooze” (X.499–501). Unlike Nicander’s story of Smyrna (above), Ovid attributes the tree’s “weeping” to Myrrha. Second, the child that conceived grew within the tree, and the process of gestation and birth indicate that more than an emotional aspect of Myrrha continues. “The trunk swelled in the middle with is burdened womb. The load was straining, but the pains of birth could find no words, no voice in travail call Lucina.”⁵⁴ Yet the tree, in labour, stooped with groan on groan and with falling tears” (X.506–11). Lucina responded with pity, and “The tree split open and the sundered bark yielded its living load: a baby boy” (X.512–18). The tale obscures the borders between human and plant: Myrrha, in/with the form of a tree, cannot speak or cry, but feels pain and delivers a child.

⁵² Although the categories are different, I borrow these descriptions from the analysis of transformation that occurs in cannibalism from Olmsted, “Margins of Otherness,” 172. Olmsted views cannibalism as “the ultimate destruction by assimilation,” and, although the incestuous birth does not destroy a self, it is similar in its metamorphosis through assimilation.”

⁵³ Cf. the reading of the Daphne’s transformation into a tree and Apollo’s subsequent role in determining her identity in Ginsberg, “Ovid and the Problem of Gender,” 11–12.

⁵⁴ Lucina is an epithet for Juno (full name: Juno Lucina), goddess of childbirth. See Oxford Classical Dictionary, s.v. “Juno.”

Although her “self” endures in its tree form, she is neither her previous human self nor wholly a tree. She is a multiple being or an “assemblage.”⁵⁵

This story also portrays metamorphosis as the result a breakdown in order. As Olmsted argues, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* suggest that “efforts to establish harsh moral codes and rigid boundaries are futile because the greater the effort to ‘keep nature and life in its place,’ the more powerful the forces that dissolve the distinctions between them.”⁵⁶ As in the Myrrha story, passion is such a force. It is “an undifferentiating energy working against all familial and social order.” Once that order is “in any way breached, even if the breach amounts merely to an excess of a good thing, then the whole structure of family and society must be systematically transformed and thereby destroyed.”⁵⁷ Despite Myrrha’s efforts to extinguish passion through suicide, it eventually leads to the destruction of the household and necessitates her transformation into a tree. The tree, as according to Myrrha’s prayer (X.479–85), represents a perpetually liminal state in which she is trapped, not only somewhere between human and plant, but also between life and death.⁵⁸

Death/Near Death to Exaltation Pattern

A number of transformation myths in Ovid fit the death/near-death-to-exaltation pattern that we find in some of Nicander’s tales. For instance, in the story of Callisto, a nymph and Diana’s warrior, Jove masquerades as Diana to deceive and rape Callisto (II.399–439). After Diana discovered that Callisto was pregnant, she banished her from her fellowship (II.440–67).

⁵⁵ I borrow the term assemblage from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3–38. Barkan (*Gods Made Flesh*) similarly writes, “Such is very much the heritage of metamorphosis: it is an image of simultaneous but divisible multiplicity; and throughout its history it maintains associations with the belief that human identity is itself multiple” (32).

⁵⁶ Olmsted, “Margins of Otherness,” 172.

⁵⁷ Olmsted, “Margins of Otherness,” 172.

⁵⁸ Barkan, *Gods Made Flesh*, 64–65.

When her son Arcas was born, Juno transformed Callisto into a bear as punishment, but, similar to the Ovidian tales above, Callisto “kept her woman’s heart” (II.468–84). Sixteen years later, Callisto encountered Arcas in the forest. Arcas “aimed his javelin to strike her dead. The Almighty stayed his hand and swept away both son and mother—with the threatened crime—whirled in a wind together through the void, and set them in the sky as neighbouring stars,” making Callisto into a goddess (II.498–538). To Juno’s shame and anger, Jove exalted Callisto from her punishment, suffering, and near death to a place of honor. Like Io, Callisto is a victim who experiences metamorphosis into an animal as the result of an affair with Jove. Also like Io, her self persists in the animal body. Yet, as Callisto reaches the point of death, Jove elevates her into the heavens and transforms her into a goddess.

In a second example, Jason, after winning the golden fleece, returns home to find his father Aeson near death. He asks Medea for help, and she obliges (VII.159–76). After sacrificing a black sheep to appease the gods, Medea uses a spell to put Aeson into a deep sleep, and “laid his body, lifeless it seemed, stretched on a bed of herbs” (VII.231–55). She then mixed an elixir in a cauldron that produced leaves on a stirring stick and vegetation on the ground that it touched. With her brew completed, Medea “slit the old king’s throat and let the blood run out and filled his veins and arteries with her elixir” (VII.285–87). Once Aeson had imbibed the elixir,⁵⁹ his youth was restored: “Through wound and lips, at once his hard and beard, white for long years, regained their raven hue; his wizened pallor, vanquished, fled away and firm new flesh his sunken wrinkles filled, and all his limbs were sleek and proud and strong. Then Aeson woke and marveled as he saw his prime restored of forty years before” (VII.287–322). Although he is neither deified nor exalted into a heavenly sphere, Aeson is transformed into a new, youthful state through death and the working of magic. Moreover, as in several of Nicander’s

⁵⁹ Ovid portrays this as consumption: “and when Aeson drank.”

stories, Aeson's bleeding out makes death (the context of transformation) not simply a remedy for aging, but a reversal of death.⁶⁰

In each of these stories, figures suffer, approach death, or die but experience a reversal, either into an exalted state or in the form of a renewed life. In each the self continues in a new body. As the self is integrated into a new form, the self both is and is not something different.

Apotheosis

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* also contains several apotheosis myths. As forms of eschatological transformation—in the sense of *personal* eschatology—they are significant for my study. Heracles, for example, after clothing himself with the shirt with the hydra's poison after Nessus' deceit, was deified after the gods agreed with Jove that it should be so (IX.102–277). Once the shirt had burned away Heracles' body, "his mortal frame removed, through all his finer parts gained force and vigour, in stature magnified, transformed into a presence clothed in majesty and awe" (IX.271–74). Jove took him away and "stationed him among the shining stars" (IX.275–77). Similarly, after Polyphemus threw a giant boulder onto Acis and killed him, Acis was made a deity: "Then in the rock a crack split wide, and from the hollow opening came the sound of waters leaping forth, and suddenly—most wonderful!—there stood a youth waist deep with woven rushes round his new-sprung horn. And he, though larger and his face wave-blue, was surely Acis—Acis there himself, changed into a river-god" (XIII.750–903). Similarly, after Romulus conquered and ruled Rome, Mars had the gods agree to give him a place in heaven. Romulus was deified and, shortly after, his queen Heresilia underwent apotheosis as well (XIV.772–851). Finally, Ovid writes that Julius Caesar was made a "god divine," in the form of

⁶⁰ For an additional example of this pattern, see the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone (XI.410–747).

“a star, a comet new in heaven,” and he closes his work with a prayer that Augustus too will be deified after his death (XV.743–870).⁶¹

Within Ovid’s literary world, apotheosis envisages not only “a transfigured version of the original self” but also a new existence unaffected by the world of change.⁶² It presents “at once the birth of a divinity and the turning away from fluidity toward a stable identity. It is, in short, a change from which there is no further change.”⁶³ Apotheosis is both ontological transformation and a means of escaping a world of unpredictable mutations.

1.2.3 Summary of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*

Ovid’s view of the cosmic order frames his depictions. In his understanding of cyclical, cosmic flux, “nothing is completely new.” In his metamorphoses, therefore, “something of the creature that has undergone the change survives its metamorphosis.”⁶⁴ Despite this continuity, however, change and difference seem to dominate over sameness. Thus, even though the self persists, “identity itself is problematic.”⁶⁵ Because nature is in a constant state of change, efforts to impose order or neat identity categories are ultimately confounded. Paradoxically, change and difference are more fundamental for selfhood than sameness of identity; the self perdures, but in a mode of becoming. Put differently, “difference is identity: change is of the essence.”⁶⁶

⁶¹ See discussion in Segal, “Myth and Philosophy,” 287–92; Curran, “Transformation and Anti-Augustanism,” 88–90.

⁶² Barkan, *Gods Made Flesh*, 81.

⁶³ Barkan, *Gods Made Flesh*, 81. Barkan adds later that “apotheosis is a metamorphosis that denies metamorphosis, producing a transfigured form of the individual that is and is not the human self. Each of the four times that apotheosis occurs in the last half of the poem it takes the quasi-chemical form that so many Ovidian transformation stories take, but the destination in each case is the removal of all physicality and particularity that makes metamorphosis possible” (82).

⁶⁴ Ginsberg, “Ovid and the Problem of Gender,” 13.

⁶⁵ Ginsberg, “Ovid and the Problem of Gender,” 10.

⁶⁶ Ginsberg, “Ovid and the Problem of Gender,” 24. See also Barkan, *Gods Made Flesh*, 31–32.

Selfhood in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is also conceptualized in relation to theological presuppositions. In his myths, gods are the agents of metamorphosis. Ovid therefore portrays reality not only as characterized by natural cycles of change, but humanity is also at the mercy of divine powers that produce unexpected and unpredictable transformations. Although the humans recognize their "selves" after they change, the gods have the power to make them something radically different than they were before.

1.3 Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*

Apuleius was born c. 125 CE in Africa at Madaurus, to wealthy parents.⁶⁷ He received his education in Carthage, Athens, and Rome, and at least some regarded him as a philosopher. Around 158 or 159, he was accused and acquitted of having persuaded a former student's mother to marry him through the use of magic, a story he recounts in his *Apologia*. Evidence suggests that he delivered philosophical lectures in Carthage in the 160s and that he was made a provincial priest for the imperial cult. We have no details of his life after around 170 CE. In addition to the *Apologia*, his novel *Golden Ass*, also known as the *Metamorphoses*, is among his undisputed works. Its date is uncertain.⁶⁸

Although the story includes a number of digressions, the basic plot of *The Golden Ass* is fairly simple. Lucius, the main character, recounts a story to Aristomene. In this story, Lucius travels to Hypata and stays with a friend Milo, Milo's wife Pamphile, and Milo's servant Photis,

⁶⁷ Biographical details on Apuleius come from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. Apuleius.

⁶⁸ Apuleius' tale shares a basic plotline with Lucian of Samosata's story "Lucius or the Ass" (*Asin.* VIII.1–56), but the relationship between Lucian's work and Apuleius' is unclear. According to Photios of Constantinople, a Lucius of Patras authored the original version of the story, and Lucian adopted and epitomized Lucius' work (*Bibl. Cod.* 129, Migne). It appears that the general narrative preceded both Lucian and Apuleius, and we cannot be sure of whether Apuleius drew on Lucian or vice versa. For discussion see M.D. Macleod, trans. 1913–1967. *Lucian*. 8 vols. LCL 432 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 47–51.

with whom Lucius has a love affair during his stay. Lucius, intrigued by witchcraft, discovers that Pamphile is a witch. He and Photis spy on her one evening, and they watch her transform into an owl by the power of a magical brew. In efforts to repeat the trick on himself, Lucius applies the potion to his body but accidentally turns himself into an ass. Photis informs him that he can reverse the spell by eating a rose, but before he can, bandits kidnap him. Lucius enters a life of suffering, in which different owners take him for periods of time and abuse him. They beat him and force him to carry heavy loads. After escaping from the last owners in the story, Lucius goes to the ocean for purification. There, Isis appears to him in the first of several visions and returns him to his human form. Lucius then returns to Rome, undergoes two initiations into the cult of Isis, and lives a life of service to and worship of Isis.

1.3.2 Transformations in *The Golden Ass*

Lucius' First Metamorphosis

In the first transformation, Lucius portrays the self's continuity in a new body, but his descriptions also blur a number of boundaries, especially the borders between human and non-human. When he first applies the potion, Lucian claims,

I then flapped my arms up and down, imitating the movements of a bird. But no down and no sign of feathers appeared. Instead, the hair on my body was becoming coarse bristles, and my tender skin was hardening into hide. There were no longer five fingers at the extremities of my hands, for each was compressed into one hoof. From the base of my spine protruded an enormous tail. My face became misshapen, my mouth widened my nostrils flared open, my lips became pendulous, and my ears huge and bristly. The sole consolation I could see in this wretched transformation was the swelling of my penis—though now I could not embrace Photis. As I helplessly surveyed the entire length of my body, and came to the realization that I was not a bird but an ass, I tried to complain at what Photis had done to me. But I was now deprived of the human faculties of gesture and speech” (3.24–25).

These descriptions anticipate a number of recurrent identity-blurring themes. To begin, Lucius describes his condition largely as a change of body with his self enclosed. His “I” continues, and every part of his body that changes he describes as “my” part. Apuleius uses similar portrayals throughout the novel to describe Lucius. For example, after he and another victim—Charite, a young woman the thieves had kidnapped—escape temporarily, Charite, while riding Lucius’ back, talks imaginatively of a day when people will recount her being rescued by an ass. In her speech, she muses, “If it is true that it was Jupiter who bellowed in the form of a bull, there may lurk within my donkey some human identity or divine personality” (6.29). Similarly, at point when Lucius is sold at an auction, the auctioneer says of him mockingly, “You could believe that in this ass’s skin there lurks an unassuming human being” (8.25). He could continue to understand everything said by humans and could understand Latin, even when his owners could not (9.39). He seemingly maintains his same affections for women, and he would be able to speak if his new body did not impose limits on his communication. From the viewpoint of Lucius’ narration, and with literary references like the ones noted here, Lucius portrays himself as the same self in a donkey’s body.

Yet there is some tension in the portrayals of Lucius’ selfhood. Although he eats vegetation such as grass or hay throughout the story, near the end he proves still to have an appetite for human food. Moreover, he explicitly relates these desires to his self-understanding. After being sold to two brothers, one a baker and the other a cook, he lived with them in their lodging. After their work, the brothers would bring leftovers into the home. Lucius recalls, “One of them would carry sizeable remains of pork, chicken, fish, and all sorts of meat, while the other brought bread, cakes, pastries, tarts, biscuits, and several other honeyed sweetmeats. Once they had locked up their lodging and departed to the baths to freshen themselves up, I used to stuff

myself to repletion on these god-given feasts, for I was not such a fool or complete ass as to dine on prickly hay and leave all that delicious food untouched” (10.13). Bodily, Lucius is a donkey and is physically equipped to eat hay. Moreover, his body limits some of his previous human capacities, such as the ability to speak (as shown in his metamorphosis descriptions).⁶⁹ Yet he also maintains desires for human food, maintaining his human appetite amidst his typical diet of livestock feed. In this tale, his actions show some blurring of boundaries that would otherwise identify Lucius as human or non-human.

Similar tensions manifest in Lucius’ sexuality. In a section where Lucius’ owner taught him new tricks for which they gained fame, Apuleius constructs a scene that depicts sexual boarder-crossing and an excess of desire. Crowds would gather and pay admission to see Lucius’ tricks, and a “married lady of position and wealth” developed “insane lust” for him. She paid his owner for an evening with Lucius. She embraced him, kissed him, and expressed her love for him “from the heart” (10.21). Although a donkey, Lucius desired “to enjoy the embraces of so beautiful and passionate a woman, and this after so long a time” (10.21). Yet Lucius was also afraid, “wondering how I could mount such a fragile lady with my four hulking legs; how I could embrace such soft and shining limbs fashioned of milk and honey with my hard hooves; how I could kiss such small red lips steeped in the liquid of ambrosia with my huge mouth, which was so misshapen and ugly with its teeth like rocks; finally, how that woman could admit my massive penis, however much she yearned for it from the tips of her toes” (10.22). To his surprise, she was relentless in her sexual desire. She overcame him, and, even when he attempts to restrain his force “in order to spare her,” he writes that “she would lunge madly towards me, seize my back, and cling to me in a still closer grip.” Despite his bestial form, he supposes he “had not the

⁶⁹ Cf. VII.26; 9.39; 10.17

strength to satisfy her” (10.22). After the night-long encounter, the woman paid to have Lucius again for the next evening.

The boundary transgressions in this scene are multilayered. To begin, the woman was married, meaning that a love affair with even another human would be adultery. Moreover, she was rich, meaning that an affair with an impoverished person would cross socio-economic borders. Worse, she makes love to a donkey, which hyperbolizes the nature of the transgression. Beyond the impropriety in joining a human body with non-human one, Lucius’ account portrays the woman’s love for Lucius as surpassing mere sexual desires. Apuleius portrays this *human* woman’s desires as bestial. In addition to these boundary-transgressions, the scene also blurs borders. As a conscious agent, Lucius has characteristically human desires for the woman, and, when they make love, she does not merely copulate with a body in a mechanistic sense. Rather, in reality—although it is impossible to know the degree to which the woman is aware of it or how she perceives it—they share an intimate, subject-to-subject experience. Does she make love to Lucius or to a donkey? Apuleius’ literary creation forces us to answer yes to both.

This identity boundary-blurring is further emphasized when one considers the perspective of onlookers in the novel. As noted above, at different points in the story, people seem to discern human traits in the donkey. That is, from the viewpoint of uninformed outsiders, Lucius’ identity is understood as that of an ass with some human capacities. People who saw Lucius’ performances, for example, and said of him and his owner, “That’s the man...who keeps an ass as a companion and guest at table. The creature wrestles, and dances, and understands human language, and indicates its feelings by motions of the head” (10.17). From a certain vantage point, they are correct in viewing Lucius as a donkey with human abilities. Even given the self’s continuity, one cannot reduce his selfhood either to his persistent and fairly stable “I” or to his

body. And when one considers the larger narrative that includes his previous life as a human, Lucius' status in this moment is neither fully human nor fully donkey, and yet not a hybrid, according to Bynum's categories.⁷⁰ Lucian is an in-between being, an "assemblage" that challenges, or perhaps even destroys, the boundaries typically used to establish an ontology of the self.

Lucius' metamorphosis into an ass also involves the self's diminishment, as he is transformed into a life of suffering at the hands of Fate/Fortune. Throughout the story, whether through scheming (e.g., 7.17) or turning a blind eye on him (e.g., 8.24), Fate heaps one form of hardship after another onto Lucius. After he believes that he has gained some respite by acting disorderly and becoming "confined in a prison," for example, Lucius reflects upon his near reversal of circumstances with an illustrative statement, "But the truth is that if Fortune is hostile, nothing can turn out auspiciously for any person alive. The economy of divine providence is foreordained, and cannot be undermined or changed by any wise plan or sage remedy" (9.1). Lucius' hardships as an ass are not circumstantial but the result of the acts of a divine power.

In terms of suffering, Lucius is not only changed into a beast of burden, but people throughout the narrative complain that he is a worthless donkey. In one scene, for example, his present owners loaded him with heavy baggage and drove him with "repeated blows," causing him to stumble and injure his left hoof and right leg. One of the men complained, "How long are we to waste our time feeding this broken-down ass now that he is lame as well?" (6.26). At the auction, he is insulted as horses and other donkeys "turned up their noses at" him, which left him "forlorn and isolated." In addition to suffering ridicule from other pack animals, the auctioneer questions, "For how long are we to try in vain to sell this nag? The poor old thing is feeble, his

⁷⁰ In Bynum's analysis (*Metamorphosis and Identity*, 28–33), Lucian clearly undergoes *metamorphosis*. Thus, according to her terms, we should understand the narrative to emphasize *process* and change more than stability or sameness of identity.

hooves are worn down, and the painful treatment he has suffered has made him unsightly. He is vicious too, for all his stupidity and lethargy. He is nothing better than a braying, worn-out sieve” (10.23).

In addition to being a less-than-adequate ass, Lucius experiences almost continual suffering during his time as a donkey. With embellished descriptions, Lucius describes being burdened with extreme loads and labor (6.25; 7.15–19; 8.28, 30; 9.9, 11), beaten relentlessly (7.15, 18, 28; 8.30), starved and left in the elements (9.32), nearly castrated (7.23, 26), almost burned in his buttocks with a fiery brand (7.28), falsely accused of crimes (7.3, 21), accused of madness (9.2), attacked by horses (7.17) and dogs (8.17–18), threatened with death (6.26, 7.19, 22; 8.30, 31; 9.2; 10.28–35), and suicidal (7.24; 10.29). At one point, he summarizes his fallen condition clearly, “As I recalled the happy state of the Lucius of old, now reduced to a most precarious level of existence, I dropped my head in depression” (9.13). This portion of the story ends with Lucius wanting to commit suicide but unable for lack of arms to hold a sword (10.29) and escaping near death and journeying to a Corinthian harbor (10.35).

Lucius’ Second Metamorphosis

Lucius’s return to human form by the power of Isis is not merely a restoration to his previous form; it is also an elevation of the self as Isis delivers him from the power of Fate. Aroused from his sleep on the beach, and, starting at the full moon over the sea, he experienced a new awareness of how “the supreme goddess wielded her power with exceeding majesty” (11.1). In resolving that Fate was satisfied with his sufferings, Lucius had new “hope of deliverance” from her torments (11.1). After purifying himself with seven baths in the sea, he prays to “the queen of heaven,” that she would either restore him or let him die: “Restore me to the sight of my skin; make me again the Lucius that I was. But if I have offended some deity who continues

to oppress me with the implacable savagery, at least allow me to die, since I cannot continue to live (11.2).

In response, Isis, the “loftiest of all deities,” appears to him (11.5). In this moment of revelation, she describes herself, “Here I am, Lucius, roused by your prayers. I am the mother of the world of nature, mistress of all the elements, first-born in the realm of time. I am...queen of departed spirits, foremost of heavenly dwellers, the single embodiment of all gods and goddesses. I order with my nod the luminous heights of heaven, the healthy sea-breezes, the sad silences of the infernal dwellers. The whole world worships this single godhead under a variety of shapes and liturgies and titles.” She continues by revealing that people who worship her in different lands know her by many different names. “But,” she reveals, “the peoples on whom the rising sun-god shines with his first rays—eastern and western Ethiopians, and the Egyptians who flourish with their time-honoured learning—worship me with the liturgy that is my own, and call me by my true name, which is queen Isis” (11.5).

Isis announces that Lucius’s “day of salvation is now dawning” and that, to be changed, he must join a procession of her priests that will pass by (11.5–6). She commands, “What you must carefully remember and keep ever locked deep in your heart is that the remaining course of your life until the moment of your last breath is pledged to me, for it is only right that all your future days should be devoted to the one whose kindness has restored you to the company of men” (11.6). She promises that the rest of his life will be blessed and that after he dies he will live in her brightness in the fields of Elysium (11.6).

When morning comes and the procession arrives, Lucius approaches a priest with a garland of roses, and, as Isis had instructed the priest in a dream, he fed them to Lucius (11.12–13). After Lucius ate, he was changed back to a man: “First my unsightly bristles disappeared,

and then my thick skin thinned out; my fat belly contracted; and the soles of my feet extended into toes where the hooves had been; my forefeet became hands equipped for two-footed tasks; my long neck shrank, my face and head became round, my projecting ears resumed their earlier modest shape; my rocklike teeth were restored to human size, and my tail, earlier the chief cause of my distress, totally disappeared” (10.13). With his “tongue reborn,” Lucius is again able to speak, and the priests clothe him with new garments, since the “ass had stripped [him] of his accursed skin (11.14). One of the priests instructs him to live his new life in devotion to Isis (11.15). From this point forward, Lucius undergoes multiple initiations into the cult of Isis and Osiris, and afterwards gives his life in full devotion and worship to the goddess (11.19–30).

1.3.3 Transformation and Selfhood in *The Golden Ass*

To describe the nature of his second transformation and his initiations, Lucius uses the language of birth, as well as descriptions of death. While still among the priests after his restoration, for example, the crowd presumes that his previous life was virtuous to warrant his being “in a manner reborn” (11.16). Similarly, while Lucius longs for his initiation into the mysteries—since as he learns he learns that the event must occur only by the goddess’ initiative—he describes the nature of initiation and what it produces. He reflects, “The act of initiation itself was performed as a rite of voluntary death and of salvation attained by prayer; indeed; it was the will of the goddess to select persons when their span of life was complete and they were posed on the very threshold of their final days. Such people could be safely entrusted with the profound mysteries of the sect. By her providence, they were in some sense reborn, for she set them back on the course of renewed health” (11.21).

This transformation is accomplished through a form of death and the experience of new life. Not only did Lucius suffer but he nearly died on multiple occasions. Just before he receives his transformative revelation of Isis, he reaches the point of death, asking to die if he cannot be restored. One could, therefore, view his suffering as a donkey as an extended period of dying, in which his trials reveal a pre-transformed state of being that is caught between life and death. Since he lives in this stage in the form of an ass, we can also understand this as an “in-between” state of selfhood, in which the subject is animalistic. Although the self is not fully a donkey, its life is bestial, and, until the deity transforms it by divine power, it is never fully human either.

Thus, when Lucius is restored to human form, he is “reborn” (11.16, 24). After his transformation, he is neither what he was originally—Lucius of old—or what he had most recently become—an ass—but he began a new life that dramatically contrasts his previous life. Before becoming an ass, Lucius enjoyed an indecent love affair with the servant Photis (2.6–28, esp. 2.6), and he was preoccupied with also with his desire to learn and practice magic (2.5–6; 3.19–26).⁷¹ Thus, in his second transformation, was born into a process of initiations, but the initiation also entails death. Lucius says, “I drew near to the confines of death and trod the threshold of Proserpina, and before returning I journeyed through all the elements. At dead of night I saw the sun gleaming with bright brilliance.”⁷² I stood in the presence of the gods below

⁷¹ In some sense, then, in his ass form, Lucius’ body aligned with his desires.

⁷² Here, Apuleius may possibly to refer back to the long story of Psyche and Cupid that he inserts into the heart of the narrative through the lips of an elderly woman (4.28–6.24). The story also evokes a pattern of the self’s diminishment and exaltation with the figure of Psyche. After Venus’ failed attempt to kill Psyche out of jealousy over her beauty, she becomes the wife of Venus’ son Cupid who cannot reveal his identity, but meets with her only in the darkness of night. When she uses a lamp to discover his identity, Cupid leaves her. Afterwards, Venus burdens Psyche with numerous tasks. In a reversal of Psyche’s fortunes, Cupid appeals to Juno on her behalf. In response, Juno gives Psyche to Cupid in marriage. To make this possible, he gives her a cup of ambrosia saying, “Take this, Psyche, and become immortal. Cupid will never part from your embrace; this marriage of yours will be eternal” (6.23). Thus, in a similar arc as Lucius’ life evokes, Psyche suffers at the hands of Venus, only to be exalted through ontological transformation. There may be no significant literary connection between Apuleius’ initiations and the story of Psyche and Cupid. But the thematic similarities are noteworthy.

and the gods above and worshipped them from close at hand” (11.23). When morning arrived, he “emerged sacramentally clothed in twelve garments” and, afterwards, “celebrated a most happy birthday into the sacred mysteries” (11.24). Lucius describe the birth as through a process of border transgression and death (he visits the “confines” of death and passes through the elements) and the reversal of nature (sun shining in the dead of night). This rebirth is not merely a restoration but the emergence of a new moral self.⁷³

1.3.4 Summary: *The Golden Ass*

Apuleius portrays Lucius’s transformations as metamorphoses, that is, as changes of forms and species. Yet it is challenging to determine whether most of the emphasis is on the continuity or difference of identity over time. On one hand, the “I” of Lucius persists through his metamorphosis into a donkey and his restoration into a human. On the other hand, Lucius has multiple experiences of his “self” in each stage. While he lives in a donkey’s body, as the analysis above shows, he is neither fully donkey nor fully human. He is also not a hybrid, like a centaur or a satyr. In ass form, his body carries the narrative of his previous existence, and his present self-understanding is dependent on his prior human life for its raw materials. Similarly, once he returns to human form, he is “reborn” into a new self that constructs its self-understanding in relation to the past iterations of itself. He cannot be what he is without the memory of what he was. The previous human self and his “ass-self” have been integrated into his new religious-moral self.

As the preceding discussion shows, Apuleius accomplishes this narrative reflection on change and identity by portraying constant motion and the transgression and blurring of the

⁷³ On the “birth of the subject” in *The Golden Ass*, see Assaf Krebs, “Body without Borders: The Phenomenological Body in Apuleius’ Metamorphoses 1.5–1.19,” *Greece and Rome* 65 (2018): 69–71.

boundaries by which we often shape our identities. Prior to his first metamorphosis, Lucius lives in an in-between state, as a traveler who lives temporarily at an inn. Once transformed, his journeys continue unpredictably as he passed from owner to owner while trapped in a state between human and non-human. As an ass, his suffering gives the sense that he is suspended between life and death. It is fitting that his final transformation occurs as he encounters a *procession*, and he transgresses human existential limits in his initiation through an experience of death. Through the continual flux, crossing of borders, and blurring of boundaries, Apuleius uses this narrative of transformations as material for reflections on existence and self-understanding.

1.4. Conclusion: Transformation in Greco-Roman Literature

From this overview of Greco-Roman mythic literature, we find several insights that are pertinent to this study. First, in the mythic literature, divine agents are responsible for human transformations. These narratives portray humanity as subject to the unpredictable actions of deities, whether they be Olympians, minor divine figures, the all-encompassing Isis, or tormenting Fate. The gods have the power to change people into something completely new, and their power is sufficient to destroy the human self completely, or even to transform it ontologically into a new deified and eternal state of existence.

Second, it is important to note that mythic literature is a distinct type of vehicle to evoke reflections on selfhood and identity. Unlike philosophical literature, these stories are neither overtly theoretical in their accounts of human change, nor are they explicitly exhortative or imperative. Rather, through the power of narrative, these tales work to envisage, blur, or resist conceptions of selfhood by depicting radical transformations.

Third, in terms of selfhood and change, we discover a range of viewpoints. In some stories, such as Boeus' tales, metamorphosis leads to such radical change that all traits of the human self are seemingly lost. Thus, the person not only undergoes changes that make it into something different, but the self seems to be replaced completely by a plant or animal. The human self changes and becomes not-human. Other writings, especially those of Ovid and Apuleius, offer more ambiguity. As selves are incorporated into new bodies, become something new that is neither a hybrid, nor fully equated with its previous state, nor reducible to its new body. A new in-between being blurs conventional identity-shaping boundaries. As I have offered, the new self is, therefore, an assemblage of plant and animal "parts" and human traits, which also creates uncertainty about what changes may lie in the future. In this way, transformation is a defining characteristic—and seemingly more fundamental than sameness or continuity—of selfhood.

Fourth, in one way or another, all of these texts deal with various sorts of boundary-transgressions, and a number of them creatively address issues of social order. Inherent in these themes are moral issues as well. In some tales, for example, illicit sexual and/or familial border crossings lead to breakdowns of social order and the transformations of selves into the nonhuman, especially the bestial. Often, the same first-person perspective continues, but the nature, "lifestyle," and experience of the self are radically different after the metamorphosis.

Fifth, death is a prominent theme in this literature, often providing a context for transformation. Frequently, a person acts immorally or experiences significant abuse or suffering, to the point of dying or nearly dying, and then has her or his fortunes reversed by being exalted to a new, deified state. For such stories, the death/near-death-to-exaltation pattern seems to provide a structure for reflecting on human nature and change. In other

examples, apotheosis is as a reward for moral self-giving, living a noteworthy life, or heroism. Such events are the exception to the norm, and they seem to have a more future-oriented focus, suggesting perhaps that future benefits remain for those who live exceptional lives.

2 Transformation & Selfhood in Greco-Roman Moral Philosophy

We find explicit theories on human transformation, cosmic change, and selfhood in the writings of Greek and Roman philosophers. In the following, I focus on how several authors describe the human change in relation to their understandings of reality. I first provide some brief comments on Pre-Socratic perspectives and on Plato, followed by a more detailed examination of Aristotle. I then turn to Stoic thought, with a focused discussion of Epictetus, followed by a section on Plutarch as a representative of Middle Platonic philosophy.

2.1 Pre-Socratic Philosophers and Plato

Several pre-Socratic philosophers were foundational in that they established problems that later thinkers address in various ways. Heraclitus, for example, famously said that it is “not possible to step twice into the same river” (fr. 91a; cf. fr. 12).⁷⁴ That is, as the river changes through flow, it becomes something different.⁷⁵ Heraclitus also believed that the cosmic elements

⁷⁴ Cf. fr. 12: “As they step into the same rivers, different and <still> different waters flow upon them.” Unless noted otherwise, translations of Heraclitus come from T.M. Robinson, *Heraclitus: Fragments: A text and Translation with a Commentary*, Phoenix Supplementary volume 22 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

⁷⁵ If indeed Heraclitus made this claim. See discussions in Robinson, *Heraclitus*, 140–41; Raymond Martin, *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self: An Intellectual History of Personal Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 12. Regardless of whether the assertion is authentically from Heraclitus, this account of radical change and difference is widely attributed to him in antiquity. See, e.g., Plato, *Crat.* 402A; Aristotle, *Metaph.*, I.6.2; IV.7.8; Plutarch, *Mor.*, 388.D–E; 392.D–E. Note especially the Heraclitean aphorism recorded by Plato (*Crat.* 401D): “All things move, and nothing remains” (τὰ ὄντα ἰέναι τε πάντα καὶ μένειν οὐδέν).

were constantly flowing and transforming (fr. 31a–b; 41; 76a–c 125; cf. fr. 30; 90; 126),⁷⁶ and he describes the human as marked by a tension of change and sameness. In contrast stands Parmenides (6th/5th century BCE). In what we have of his poem *On Nature*, he argues that it is senseless to try to conceptualize that which is not—that which has no being. For Parmenides, that which exists has always existed and, thus, there can be nothing truly new.⁷⁷ He not only argues that all being is whole, uniform, immovable, eternal, unified, and in balance, but he also questions the possibility of change altogether.⁷⁸ In sum, therefore, Heraclitus and Parmenides form the foundation for the western problem of identity and change. Heraclitus offers a possible solution, namely, “that nothing that changes can remain the same.”⁷⁹ Yet for Parmenides, nothing changes, and all remains the same.⁸⁰

Pythagoras is also noteworthy for two reasons. First, he espouses a theory of change, but he marries the metaphysical to the moral. Pythagoras established a philosophical community that understood his teachings as “revelatory pronouncements that guided practice in a truly ascetical

⁷⁶ See discussion in A. A. Long (*Greek Models of Mind and Self*, Revealing Antiquity 22 [Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2015]), 84. Heraclitus even seems to suggest that God changes as well (fr. 67).

⁷⁷ Since only what actual exists “is,” it has always been because something would have to have been nothing for it to come into being (20). Thus, “Wherefore all holds together; for what is; is in contact with what is. Moreover, it is immovable in the bonds of mighty chains, without beginning and without end; since coming into being and passing away have been driven afar, and true belief has cast them away. It is the same, and it rests in the self-same place, abiding in itself” (25). He adds, “And thus it remains constant in its place... It is the same thing that can be thought and for the sake of which the thought exists” (30).

⁷⁸ István Bodnár, “Parmenides,” *Brill’s New Pauly*, http://dx.doi.org.proxy.library.emory.edu/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e908320. See also Aristotle’s descriptions of the Eleatic School in *Metaphysics*, I.3.12.

⁷⁹ Martin and Barresi, *Rise and Fall*, 12.

⁸⁰ For an economical discussion of Parmenides’ views in conversation with other ancient views on change (including Paul’s), see Vigdis Songe-Møller, “‘With what kind of body with they come?’: Metamorphosis and the Concept of Change: From Platonic Thinking to Paul’s Notion of the Resurrection of the Dead” in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, eds. Turid Karlsen Seim and Jorunn Økland, Ekstasis (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 109–22.

life, with rules for diet, sex, clothing, and things safe or unsafe to touch.”⁸¹ Second, his theories anticipate Plato and later Platonists. He argues that the cosmos is in constant flux.⁸² Like Heraclitus, Pythagoras also distinguishes sharply between the soul and the material world, which includes the human body.⁸³ Although the world is characterized by cycles of regeneration, the soul is immortal and moves from one instantiation to another as its body dies (metempsychosis).⁸⁴ Significantly, the changing world is something people must overcome.⁸⁵

Plato also distinguishes between material and non-material, between body and soul, and, like Pythagoras, describes the material world as a problem to overcome. His discussions of the soul vary,⁸⁶ but the *Phaedo* gives Plato’s most radical body-soul distinction. By way of Socrates’ final dialogue, he argues that the soul is immortal.⁸⁷ The body, in contrast, is perishable.⁸⁸ Thus, the body changes, but the soul does not. One should, therefore, seek purification of the body’s evils.⁸⁹ In anticipation of the separation of soul from body at death, Plato argues that “the true

⁸¹ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 82–83.

⁸² On cosmic elements and the constantly-transforming nature of the cosmos, see the references in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 8.1.22; *Pythagorean Reception*, R33; R 51; cf. the views of a later Pythagorean in *Pythagorean Reception*, R51.

⁸³ Life in the body is divided into four quarters, which correspond to the four seasons (Diogenes, *Lives*, 8.1.10).

⁸⁴ Diogenes, *Lives*, 8.1.5, 14, 28; 45; cf. 8.1.35; *Pythagorean Reception*, R4; R5; R19; R26; R33; R35; R36; From Philolaus, a later Pythagorean, see *Pythagorean Reception* 47. On the nature of the soul, see Diogenes, *Lives*, 8.1.30–31. Long (*Greek Models of Mind and Self*) argues that Pythagoras’ theory of metempsychosis is not only interesting but also marks a significant shift in western thought. In his view, the “sheer boldness of the notion that human beings continue to have real life after their present body has ceased to exist” departs from the Homeric tradition of existence as shades after death. “If that is right,” argues Long, “the essence of human identity is no longer psychosomatic, as we found it to be in Homer, but psychic” (69).

⁸⁵ Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 82–84.

⁸⁶ For discussion, see Martin and Barresi, *Rise and Fall*, 15–21.

⁸⁷ Plato, *Phaed.*, 66.E; 114.D.

⁸⁸ The body is also a hindrance to discovering the truth. See Plato *Phaed.*, 66.B.

⁸⁹ This “consists in...separating, so far as possible the soul from the body and teaching the soul the habit of collecting and bringing itself together from all parts of the body, and living, so far as it can, both now and hereafter, alone by itself, freed from the body as from fetters” (Plato, *Phaed.*, 67.E).

philosophers practice dying” in educating the soul.⁹⁰ Moreover, because one must cultivate a healthy soul through moral exercises (*askēsis*), “living well requires constant practice, self-examination, and self-discipline.”⁹¹

For Plato, the soul constitutes “the essentially mental and moral identity of the self or person”⁹² and provides the answer to the problem of personal identity.⁹³ Although he affirms a tripartite soul,⁹⁴ he emphasizes the soul’s rational function. Plato encouraged the soul’s mastery of the body and its passions by establishing “the rule of reason within the soul.”⁹⁵ Reason is not inherent in the human being, but is part of the natural order with which one must properly align.⁹⁶ In sum, Plato, like Pythagoras, describes a distinctly *moral* vision of selfhood that makes sense within his construal of the cosmic order.

2.1.1 Summary: Pre-Socratic Philosophers & Plato

Common to Heraclitus and Pythagoras is their affirmation of constantly-transforming cosmos. Each understands the human in relation to his cosmology: the human soul is eternal and unchanging, but the body, as part of the material world, undergoes changes that relate to cosmic changes. Parmenides, in contrast, casts doubt on the possibility of cosmic change, which results

⁹⁰ This process of dying is not only for philosophers. Of the soul in general, Plato has Socrates say, “[W]e ought to bear in mind, that, if the soul is immortal, we must care for it, not only in respect to this time, which we call life, but in respect to all time, and if we neglect it, they danger now appears to be terrible” (*Phaed.*, 67.C-D). The terrible danger to which he refers is that the soul goes to Tartarus after death (*Phaed.*, 112.B). One is, therefore, to avoid this destiny by engaging in purification, which involves self-care through the rejection of the body’s pleasures and the building up of the soul through the acquisition of virtue and wisdom (*Phaed.*, 114.C-E).

⁹¹ Long, *Greek Models of Mind and Self*, 110.

⁹² Long, *Greek Models of Mind and Self*, 118.

⁹³ Martin and Baressi, *Rise and Fall*, 15-16.

⁹⁴ The calculative/rational, spirited, and appetitive. For discussion, see Long, *Greek Models of Mind and Self*, 128-29.

⁹⁵ Long, *Greek Models of Mind and Self*, 122. For Plato, that is, self-mastery begins with the reason’s rule over desires (Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 124).

⁹⁶ Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 121. Thus, as Taylor argues, “the correct vision or understanding of ourselves is one which grasps the natural order” (121).

in a view of nature as unified and stable. Although his views differ from Heraclitus and Pythagoras, Parmenides is similar in that he locates particulars within a larger view of reality. In a general sense, Plato follows the traditions of Heraclitus and Pythagoras. He splits the immortal soul from the changing and perishable material world. The soul is the true self, and he emphasizes the need to overcome the material, including the body, by training the soul through reason. For Plato, then, the idealistic *telos* for the human is not one of transformation but of escape, in which the soul finds liberation from its material encumbrances.⁹⁷

2.2 Aristotle

Concerning human change, Aristotle is both a theorist of metaphysics and a moralist. Yet, even more than Pythagoras and Plato, he develops the moral dimensions of human existence. In the following, therefore, I discuss his view of human change as it relates to his understandings of change broadly, his perspectives on moral transformation, and the coherence between the two.

Theories of Change

In his refutations of Plato and Parmenides, Aristotle argues that change is necessarily “from something into something.”⁹⁸ That is, “there must be something which becomes something, i.e., out of which something is generated.”⁹⁹ To account for change from something into something else, Aristotle argues that an object’s change has three principles. The first two

⁹⁷ Plato, *Phaed.*, 67.A–B. See discussion in Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 83–84.

⁹⁸ *Metaph.*, IV.8.8. My readings of Aristotle’s theories of change are informed by S. Marc Cohen, “Aristotle’s Metaphysics” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotlemetaphysics> and Cohen’s site “An Outline of Metaphysics Z,” <http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/zetaoutl.htm>.

⁹⁹ *Metaph.*, III.4.4–5. With these claims, he has in mind figures like Parmenides who argue against change, specifically, against notions of generation. According to Aristotle’s construal, such thinkers claim that something that is cannot be generated from “not-is” because the latter does not exist. But if something is generated from what already is, then the “is” was already there to begin with, which means that it was not truly generated. See *Physics*, I.VIII.191a.23–31.

principles he characterizes by possession of certain properties and a “shortage” of other properties.¹⁰⁰ For example, he distinguishes between (shaped) bronze and unshaped bronze (shortage/lack of shape), and between a cultivated person and uncultivated person (shortage/lack of cultivation). Between these two principles, Aristotle argues that a third must exist. This third principle is the “underlying subject,” which persists through the change.¹⁰¹ In the case of the change from the uncultivated to cultivated person, the “person” is the underlying principle that persists through the change. Yet, in what does this enduring principle consist, particularly with respect to people?

In terms of human “equipment,” Aristotle, like Plato, affirms notions of body and soul. Unlike Plato, however, Aristotle argues that the soul comes into existence in human conception and is not eternal. Moreover, he does not oppose body and soul. Rather, “For Aristotle, body and soul are two aspects of one thing, corresponding to matter on the one hand and form on the other hand. In Aristotle’s view, the human body (or, rather, any living thing’s body), is not intelligible as the complex structure that it is without the soul as its activating principle, nor is the soul intelligible as something that could exist apart from the body because the soul is precisely the essence of the organic body.”¹⁰² The unity of soul and body, and not the soul only, is constitutive of the human for Aristotle.

Concerning personal identity, Aristotle seems to affirm in his earlier writings that the *nous* grounds continuity. The *nous*, the human “agent-intellect,” enables conformity to the rational order, is eternal and grounds the self’s persistence, even after death.¹⁰³ Since all

¹⁰⁰ *Physics*, I.VIII.191a.10–14.

¹⁰¹ *Physics*, I.VIII.191a. 15–20.

¹⁰² Long, *Greek Models of Mind and Self*, 122–23.

¹⁰³ On conformity to the rational order, which accomplishes excellence in virtue, see Aristotle, *Eth. nic.*, I.7.14–16.

differentiated humans share one *nous*, the *nous* exists after death.¹⁰⁴ Yet it is unclear in Aristotle's later writings that he indeed affirmed the soul's continuity after death.¹⁰⁵ Whatever the case, his general theory of change coheres with his understandings of human selfhood in the broad sense that, in contrast to a figure like Heraclitus, the self persists amidst change. This view also coheres with his accounts of moral transformation.

Moral Transformation

In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle describes two parts of the person—the rational and the irrational.¹⁰⁶ His primary concern is with the rational: the “function of man is the active exercise of the soul's faculties in conformity with rational principle.” This conformity with the rational principle brings excellence in virtue, which is the *telos* of human existence.¹⁰⁷ Nature itself does not grant virtues to people. Rather, “nature gives us the capacity to receive them, and this capacity is brought to maturity by habit.”¹⁰⁸ Humans thus have the requisite moral equipment for the development of virtue. One needs only to “mature” them through habit.

In places, Aristotle describes the achievement of virtue through habit in ways that resemble his theory of change in *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. He writes, for example, “We learn an art or craft by doing the things that we shall have to do when we have learnt it: for instance, men become builders by building houses, harpers by playing on the harp. Similarly we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.”¹⁰⁹ Moral progress is akin to learning an art or craft. Yet, in the process of learning an art through habit, the person involved undergoes change. One builds and becomes a builder. One plays the harp and

¹⁰⁴ Martin and Baressi, *Rise and Fall*, 23.

¹⁰⁵ See Martin and Baressi, *Rise and Fall*, 21–22.

¹⁰⁶ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.*, I.13.9. Though, the irrational part of the soul has two dimensions (*Eth. nic.*, I.13.10–20).

¹⁰⁷ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.*, I.7.14–16.

¹⁰⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* II.1.3.

¹⁰⁹ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* II.1.4.

becomes a harp player. Likewise, one practices virtuous habits and, over time, *becomes a virtuous person*.¹¹⁰

Yet, he does not oppose the new self to the former self, as if there were no continuity between the two. Consistent with his example of a non-cultivated person becoming a cultivated person in *Physics*, Aristotle presumes that an “underlying subject” persists through the change from a non-virtuous person into a virtuous person through the acquisition of virtue through habit. From the raw materials of the former, the latter is achieved.

2.2.1 Summary: Aristotle

In Aristotle’s theories of change, he asserts not only that something must come from something else, but also that an “underlying subject” perdures through the changes. Similarly, in moral change, a self endures as the person becomes what it was not before, namely, a *virtuous* person. Thus, Aristotle’s metaphysical theories seem to ground his notions of moral change, and his philosophical outlook—especially his ethical perspectives—sets the table for thinkers that follow in the Greco-Roman era.

2.3 Stoic Philosophers: Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius

In his work *Hellenistic Philosophy*, A.A. Long argues that Stoics held that nature (*physis*) is a physical power that holds the world together and causes both stability and change. “Nature” is endowed with rationality and is another way of referring to God within the Stoic (pantheistic) cosmology. “That which holds the world together is a supreme rational being, God, who directs all events for purposes which are necessarily good. Soul of the world, mind of the world, Nature,

¹¹⁰ Cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* II.1.7. Practices are how, for example, “some of us become just and others unjust” (οἱ μὲν δίκαιοι οἱ δὲ ἄδικοι).

God—these terms all refer to one and the same thing—the ‘artistic fire’ going on its way to create.”¹¹¹ Perpetual movement and change characterize the nature of the cosmos, and this larger reality provides the larger context in and by which humans should understand themselves.

Although Long’s study provides a helpful and enduring synthesis of Stoic thought, individual Stoic philosophers exhibit diversity in their views of cosmic and human change, as well as their perspectives on selfhood. For this section, I examine the writings of two Stoic philosophers, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, to highlight some of their convictions on human transformation and the self. In the following, I argue that each locates his understanding of the human within a particular understanding of the larger cosmic order. Yet, in following the leads of each author, the following discussion focuses largely on moral transformation in Epictetus and “natural” change in Aurelius.¹¹²

2.3.1 Moral Transformation in Epictetus

For Epictetus, like other Stoics, “the universe is, in effect, a living being.”¹¹³ The Stoics also embraced a view of the universe as ever-changing as it undergoes “cycles of regeneration,” and they held that the universe is imbued with reason.¹¹⁴ For Epictetus in particular, God is the

¹¹¹ A.A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics* (London: Duckworth, 1974), 148.

¹¹² As Johnson (*Among the Gentiles*) notes, Epictetus’ “main concern...is not with logic or physics but with ethics” (69). This is also true of other Stoics, for whom moral transformation is a ubiquitous topic. Seneca, for example, writes that philosophy is not for show or mere words. Rather, it “molds and constructs the soul” (*Ep.* XVI.3). Similarly, Musonius Rufus describes training in virtue as “the art by which a human being becomes good” (“Should Daughters Receive the Same Education as Sons?,” IV.10).

¹¹³ Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 69.

¹¹⁴ Epictetus, *Diatr.* II.1.18. Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 69.

source of reason, and humanity is able to participate in divine reason. Within the fluctuating cosmos, humans, unlike non-human animals, are endowed with part of God's own self:¹¹⁵

Well, then, anyone who has attentively studied the administration of the universe and has learned that 'the greatest and most authoritative and most comprehensive of all governments is this one, which is composed of men and God, and that from him have descended the seeds of being, not merely to my father or to my grandfather, but to all things that are begotten and that grow upon earth, chiefly to rational beings, seeing that by nature it is theirs alone to have communion in the society of God, being intertwined with him through the reason,'—why should such a man not call himself a citizen of the universe? Why should not such a man call himself a son of God?¹¹⁶

God's gift of rational capacities to humans gives them the ability to distinguish between what is within their sphere of power (the ability to make use of external impressions) and what is under God's control.¹¹⁷ This is the foundation of Epictetus' moral vision.

The one thing that is under a given person's control and that cannot be taken by another is moral purpose,¹¹⁸ which Epictetus calls "the greatest thing in each person."¹¹⁹ It allows one to grow in virtue by means of living in accordance with nature as established by God.¹²⁰ Illustrative of the centrality of moral formation is Epictetus' record of his response to a man who inquires about beauty. Epictetus responds to him by describing a virtuous person and then urges, "In making yourself that kind of a person, therefore, rest assured that you will be making yourself beautiful." He then refrains from hurting his interlocutor's feelings but justifies his seemingly harsh response with a telling question: "Besides, is it anything but cruel for me to leave you unreformed?"¹²¹ Reformation—i.e. moral transformation—is the *telos* of philosophical study.¹²²

¹¹⁵ Epictetus, *Diatr.* I.27-28; II.13.9-14; III.24.3. See Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 69.

¹¹⁶ Epictetus, *Diatr.* I.9.3-6. See also I.14.5-7; I.16.20-21; I.18.17-20; I.26.1-3; I.29.1-3.

¹¹⁷ Epictetus, *Diatr.* I.1.3-6, 11; 12:34-35.

¹¹⁸ Epictetus, *Diatr.* I.12.8-10.

¹¹⁹ Epictetus, *Diatr.* I.XVIII.8-9.

¹²⁰ Epictetus, *Diatr.* I.11. I.15.1-5.

¹²¹ Epictetus, *Diatr.* III.1-14.

¹²² Epictetus, *Diatr.* I.7.3; 2.19

For those in Epictetus' school, his goal is for them to be "fashioned (τυπόω) and to make of them a "perfect work" (ἀποτελέσαι ὑμᾶς ἀκωλύτους).¹²³

How does a person become beautiful in virtue? For Epictetus, growth in virtue comes through moral training (*askēsis*), which is central to the philosophical task.¹²⁴ As Luke Timothy Johnson summarizes, "Epictetus makes use of the two great metaphors of ancient moral philosophy: athletics and medicine. His students are like athletes preparing for the Olympics, and he is their coach (I.18.23); they are like sick people and he is the physician (2.14.21)."¹²⁵ Similarly, Epictetus uses an animal analogy to describe a process of learning what is appropriate to one's character. He writes, "[A] bull does not become a bull all at once, any more than a man becomes noble (γίνεται οὐδὲ γενναῖος ἄνθρωπος), but a man must undergo a winter training (χειμασκέω), he must prepare himself and must not plunge recklessly into what is inappropriate for him."¹²⁶ Through moral training, a person undergoes change and can become something new. Here—similar to what we find in Aristotle—through a process of training, a person becomes a *noble person*. To be sure, Epictetus does not envisage the changed person as something completely new, but he clearly asserts a picture of moral transformation as a process of becoming morally upright. In sum, humans are endowed by God with the rational and moral equipment needed for training in virtue, and, through this training, a person *becomes* virtuous.¹²⁷

Epictetus does not provide a physical theory of change. Rather, he emphasizes his view of God, the natural order of the cosmos, and the human place within it that sphere in order to guide his students on how to live in accordance with God's design. People are endowed with

¹²³ Epictetus, *Diatr.* II.19.20–28.

¹²⁴ Epictetus, *Diatr.* I.27.4. See discussion in Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 70.

¹²⁵ Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 70.

¹²⁶ Epictetus, *Diatr.* I.2.32.

¹²⁷ Moreover, because such a person is not subject to compulsion, passions, or external pressures, and, instead, has the moral purpose aligned with God, this person is truly free (*Diatr.* IV.1.1–5). This freedom, for Epictetus, is a gift from God (*Diatr.* I.29.29). See Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 73.

reason as God's gift, and use of that reason enables people to align their moral purpose with nature rather than "externals." Human moral selfhood in Epictetus is, therefore, understood only in the context of a divinely-permeated universe and light of the unique relationship that humanity has with the divine. In this sense, the moral self is relationally-constituted.¹²⁸ Furthermore, the human is malleable. By conforming to the divine purpose and participating in the divine nature, humans can undergo moral transformation through *askēsis* and become virtuous people.

2.3.2 Transformation in Marcus Aurelius

Like Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius casts a vision of the cosmic order and the human place within it. As a matter of principle, he states that people should reflect on "the Nature of the whole of the Universe" of which they should understand themselves as a part.¹²⁹ The cosmic order is like a web whose parts are interconnected and interdependent.¹³⁰ He writes, for example, "All things are mutually intertwined, and the tie is sacred, and scarcely anything is alien the one to the other. For all things have been arranged side by side, and together help to order the ordered Universe."¹³¹ Also like Epictetus, Aurelius understands the universe as a "living being."¹³² It is a whole that is permeated with reason as a gift from God—indeed, as a part of God—and, therefore, humans are to live in accordance with (rational) nature.¹³³ This is the cosmic

¹²⁸ C.f. Susan Grove Eastman, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul's Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 29–62.

¹²⁹ Aurelius, *Med.* II.9. Unless noted otherwise, all translations are from Marcus Aurelius. *Marcus Aurelius*, C. R. Haines, ed. and trans., LCL 58 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916).

¹³⁰ Aurelius, *Med.* III.11; VI. 38; .36; XI.18; IX.1; XII.27, 30; cf. VIII.50; IX.9; X.6.

¹³¹ Aurelius, *Med.* VII.9; see also VI.38.

¹³² Aurelius, *Med.* IV.40.

¹³³ I.2, 5; II.1; III.3, 6, 9; IV.1, 4; VI.1; VIII.35; XII.2.

framework in which people are to pursue morally upright lives, which is the goal of their existence.¹³⁴ He states this aim baldly: “What is thy vocation? To be a good man.”¹³⁵

Aurelius also portrays the universe as always changing, since its elements are constantly transforming from one into another.¹³⁶ This sense of cosmic transformation reveals a principle of change that echoes Aristotle and that appears throughout the *Meditations*, namely, that something must always have come from something else.¹³⁷ He writes, for instance, “By Nature’s law all things must change (μεταβάλλω), be transformed (τρέπω), and perish (φθείρω), that other things may in their turn come into being (ἵνα ἕτερα ἐφεξῆς γίνηται)”¹³⁸ Paradoxically, Aurelius also asserts frequently that all things are the same and that nothing changes.¹³⁹ Although a new entity is something new, it is formed from the transformation of something that existed previously and, as such, is something different from what it was before.¹⁴⁰ That is, the material has been reconfigured to form the new entity.¹⁴¹ Echoing Heraclitus on this point, he writes, “For all substance is as a river in ceaseless flow, its activities ever changing and its causes subject to countless variations, and scarcely anything stable; and ever beside us is this infinity of the past and yawning abyss of the future, wherein all things are disappearing.”¹⁴²

Within this context of cosmic change, humans consist of cosmic elements, and, as interwoven into the cosmic order, people undergo constant mutations as well.¹⁴³ Aurelius asks,

¹³⁴ So, VII.55; IX.9; XI.9.

¹³⁵ Aurelius, *Med.* XI.5.

¹³⁶ Aurelius, *Med.* II.17; IV. 3–4, 36; VI.4; VII.18–19, 25, 47; VIII.6; IX.28; X.7, 18, 31. XI.1. In IV.46 he explicitly cites Heraclitus to argue for his cyclical understanding of the cosmos. Cf. IV.43. In X.1.11, instructs his audience to take up the study of change because “nothing is so conducive to greatness of mind.”

¹³⁷ Aurelius, *Med.* III.2; IV.4–5, 36, 43, 45; IX.1, 35; XI.17; XII.21; cf. VI.46

¹³⁸ Aurelius, *Med.* XII.21.

¹³⁹ Aurelius, *Med.* VI.36–37; VII.1, 49; IX.14; X.27.

¹⁴⁰ Aurelius, *Med.* II.3; VI.26; VII.1.

¹⁴¹ Aurelius, *Med.* II.3.

¹⁴² Aurelius, *Med.* V.23. Cf. VII.19; VIII.3.

¹⁴³ Aurelius, *Med.* V.2.13, 24; VI.15; VII.18; IX. 19, 21, 36; X.7. Cf. V.10.

“Does a man shrink from change? Why, what can come into being save by change? What be nearer or dearer to the Nature of the Universe? Canst thou take a hot bath unless the wood for the furnace suffer a change? Couldst thou be fed, if thy food suffered no change, and can any of the needs of life be provided for apart from change? Seest thou not that a personal change is similar, and similarly necessary to the Nature of the Universe?”¹⁴⁴

On this point, Aurelius has “natural” changes in mind, in the sense that such changes are in accordance with the fluxes of the natural order.¹⁴⁵ Particularly germane to my study is that Aurelius emphasizes the differences that such changes make, rather than whatever continuity of substance exists. In Book IX, for example, he writes, “Change is the universal experience. Thou art thyself undergoing a perpetual transformation (διηνεκεῖ ἀλλοιῶσται) and, in some sort, decay: aye and the whole Universe as well.”¹⁴⁶ He expands this general claim by addressing aging, “Follow now the life stages—childhood, boyhood, youth, old age—for each of these ages, change is a death.”¹⁴⁷ By applying his notions of cosmic change to the progression of human life, Aurelius’ language envisages multiplicity of persons in a given lifespan. On the heels of his claim that people are “undergoing a perpetual transformation” his claim points to fissure in the self’s continuity rather than a seamless process of developmental change.¹⁴⁸ With a succession of life stages that each ends in death, Aurelius indicates that what appears to be a unified self is actually multiple persons, a child self, an adult self, and so forth. Here, his views on human change resemble those of Heraclitus and emphasize difference over continuity.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Aurelius, *Med.* VII.18.

¹⁴⁵ E.g. Aurelius, *Med.* IX.3, 21.

¹⁴⁶ Aurelius, *Meditations*, IX.19.

¹⁴⁷ Aurelius, *Meditations*, IX.21. My translation.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* I.2; XXIV 20.

¹⁴⁹ Note the places in the *Meditations* where he explicitly appeals to Heraclitus: III.1; IV.46; VI.42, 47; VIII.3;

Although Aurelius' descriptions of change primarily concern natural human change (i.e. aging and death), he also describes moral formation and progress.¹⁵⁰ In at least one place, moral formation seems to cohere with his comments on natural change in that it envisages a multiplicity of persons. To those who grow in certain virtuous "appellations" ("a good man, a modest man, a truth-teller, wise of heart, sympathetic of heart, great of heart"), Aurelius instructs, "Only keep thyself entitled to these appellations, not itching to receive them from others, and thou wilt be *a new man* (ἕσθι ἕτερος) and enter on *a new life* (βίον εἰσελεύσῃ ἕτερον)."¹⁵¹ This is more radical than one becoming virtuous. Moral transformation produces a new person and a new life. In aging, a person dies at the end of each life stage, and new person appears. So too, in moral growth, one becomes a new person as one experiences moral changes. Thus, flux is fundamental to the universe; it both creates identity and destroys it.

2.3.3 Summary: Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius

As Stoic philosophers, both Epictetus and Aurelius describe the cosmic order as characterized by cyclical flux. Although both are Stoics, Epictetus does not portray natural life changes as driving a wedge into the self's continuity as Aurelius does. Similarly, Aurelius describes moral transformation as producing a new moral self, but Epictetus' language is less radical. Beyond the issue of personal identity, however, both thinkers envisage the self as determined by its place and participation in the natural order, and both construe the human in terms of *moral* selfhood. That is, the human life, as uniquely related to God, is characterized by moral traits and the pursuit of moral aims. These moral concerns central to human existence and relativize the significance of natural human changes, whether through aging or death.

¹⁵⁰ VI.17; VI.9; VII.55; cf. VII.29.

¹⁵¹ Aurelius, *Meditations*, X.1. Emphasis added.

2.4 Plutarch: A View from Middle Platonism

A final philosophical perspective for consideration is that of Plutarch. Like Aristotle, his writings are too vast to analyze in depth here. Yet several selections from Plutarch reveal both a theoretical perspective on human change and an emphasis on moral transformation.

Theories of Change

To begin, Plutarch's Neoplatonism shapes his understanding of what does and does not change. In "The E at Delphi," for example, he asks, "What, then, really is Being?"¹⁵² He answers that being is "that which is eternal, without beginning and without end, to which no length of time brings change (ὁ χρόνος μεταβολὴν οὐδὲ εἰς ἐπάγει)." He adds, "For time is something that is in motion (κίνητον γάρ τι καὶ κινουμένη), appearing in connexion with moving matter, ever flowing, retaining nothing, a receptacle, as it were, of birth and decay, whose familiar 'afterwards' and 'before,' 'shall be' and 'has been,' when they are uttered, are of themselves a confession of Not Being" (τοῦ μὴ ὄντος).

Here, Plutarch divides being, which is eternal, from material reality (ὕλη), which is in a constant state of change. He rejects any possibility of change in the eternal sphere and even repudiates the mythic traditions that portray Apollo's masquerades.¹⁵³ Material reality, however, is in a constant state of flux. Again in the "E at Delphi," Plutarch writes, "The fact is that we really have no part nor parcel in Being, but everything of a mortal nature is at some stage between coming into existence and passing away" ("E," 392B). He adds later that "there is nothing in Nature that has permanence or even existence, but all things are in a process of

¹⁵² "Τί οὖν ὄντως ὄν ἐστι;" (*Mor.*, V.392.E). Unless noted otherwise, all translations Plutarch are from Plutarch. *Moralia, Volume V: Isis and Osiris. The E at Delphi. The Oracles at Delphi No Longer Given in Verse. The Obsolescence of Oracles*. Frank Cole Babbitt, ed. and trans. LCL 306 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936).

¹⁵³ He instructs his audience not to listen to such stories ("E," 393E–F) and asserts that "no vagary or transformation takes place in him" ("E," 394A).

creation and destruction according to their relative distribution with respect to time” (393A).¹⁵⁴ On this point, he evokes Heraclitus: “‘It is impossible to step twice into the same river’ are the words of Heraclitus, nor is it possible to lay hold twice of any mortal substance in a permanent state; by the suddenness and swiftness of the change in it there ‘comes dispersion and, at another time, a gathering together;’ or, rather, not at another time nor later, but at the same instant it both settles into its place and forsakes its place; ‘it is coming and going’” (“E,” 392B–C; cf. 388D–E).

Plutarch’s dualism complicates efforts to account for his anthropology with respect to change. On one hand, he seems to indicate that the human soul and intellect are immortal.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, he uses descriptions that anticipate the perspective of Marcus Aurelius by portraying natural human change in terms of multiplicity. He embeds humanity within the context of natural order, characterized by flux, and writes, “Wherefore that which is born of it never attains unto being because of the unceasing and unstaying process of generation, which, ever bringing change, produces from the seed an embryo, then a babe, then a child, and in due course a boy, a young man, a mature man, and elderly man, and old man, causing the first generations and ages to pass away by those which succeed them.” From this description of a natural life cycle, Plutarch continues, “But we have a ridiculous fear of one death, we who have already died so many deaths, and still are dying!” Again evoking Heraclitus, he adds, “For not only is it true, as Heraclitus used to say, that the death of heat is birth for steam, and the death of steam is birth for water, but the case is even more clearly to be seen in our own selves: the man

¹⁵⁴ He continues by saying that everything “presents only a dim and uncertain semblance and appearance of itself; and if you apply the whole force of your mind in your desire to apprehend it, it is like unto the violent grasping of water, which, by squeezing and compression, loses the handful enclosed, as it spurts through the fingers; even so Reason, pursuing the exceedingly clear appearance of every one of those things that are susceptible to modification and change, is baffled by the one aspect of its coming into being, and by the other of its passing away; and thus it is unable to apprehend a single thing that is abiding or really existent” (392A–B).

¹⁵⁵ George Karamanolis, “Plutarch,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plutarch>.

in his prime passes away when the old man comes into existence, the young man passes away into the man in his prime, the child into the young man, and the babe into the child. Dead is the man of yesterday, for he is passed into the man of to-day; and the man of to-day is dying as he passes into the man of to-morrow.”

Inherent in his claims is that once a person changes, the former person ceases and a new person appears. What he leaves implicit in his discussion of aging he makes explicit in what follows: “Nobody remains one person, nor is one person; but we become many persons, even as matter is drawn about some one semblance and common mould with imperceptible movement.” He elaborates on this with reference to changing tastes, preferences, and emotions that a person experiences in life. Plutarch concludes, “For without change it is not reasonable that a person should have different experiences and emotions; and if he changes, he is not the same person; and if he is not the same person, he has no permanent being, but changes his very nature as one personality in him succeeds another” (“E,” 392C–E).

On these descriptions change, several points are noteworthy. First, regardless of how these statements fit within Plutarch’s larger philosophical viewpoints, they express a perspective that was not only plausible, but is present in Aurelius’ *Meditations*. Second, Plutarch portrays human change with seemingly no emphasis on continuity. What appears to be the same person in different life stages are different persons. Third, Plutarch also uses the metaphor of death. For the adult, the young man has died, and the adult too will die when the elderly person comes about.

Moral Transformation

Plutarch theorizes about moral change in light of his larger view of the natural order. In his writings on progress in virtue, for example, he compares philosophy, which he views as the means of growth in virtue, with the cosmos: “[I]n the study of philosophy, there is no

intermission when progress halts, nor any such thing as remaining stationary, but Nature, being never free from motion of some sort, is wont to move up or down, as though suspended on a balance, and to be swayed by the better motives, or else under the influence of the contrary motives it moves rapidly towards what is worse” (*Progress*, 76E). Like the cosmos, philosophical growth in morality is never static but always in motion, for better or for worse.

Plutarch also describes the acquisition of virtue as moral *progress*. He complains that, most often, when people begin to study philosophy, they “enter a course in Logic and Argumentation, where they straightway stock themselves up for the practice of sophistry” (*Progress*, 78F). That is, they appropriate philosophical speech without reforming their character. Yet, “when students of philosophy pass from the ostentatious and artificial to the kind of discourse which deals with character and feeling they begin to make real and unaffected progress” (*Progress*, 79B). In this progress, a person undergoes changes in disposition. Training in philosophy “makes persons perceptive and receptive of anything that conduces to virtue, from whatever source it come” (*Progress*, 79F).

This change of disposition is accompanied by a change in emotions and an enhancement of moral agency. Plutarch explains this with an analogy: “well-trained beasts of burden, even if their driver lets go the reins, do not attempt to turn aside and leave the road, but in their accustomed manner they go on in their places and keep to their course without mishap” (*Progress*, 83A–B). So too, a person who trains in virtue forms new emotions and can rule over the body. For the one “in whom the irrational impulse has already been rendered obedient and gentle by reason,” through “habit,” they have newly endowed “vigilance” over their morality.

For if the body by virtue of training (*askēsis*) is actually capable of rendering itself and its members so obedient to its injunctions of indifferences that the eyes refrain from tears at a piteous sight, and the heart from throbbing in the midst of terrors, and the passions chastely remain unexcited and undisturbed in the presence of youthful or maidenly beauty, is it not indeed even more probably that training, by taking hold of the emotional

element in the soul, will, as it were, do away with the irregularities and vagaries of our fancies and incitements, and carry its repression of them even into our slumbers? (*Progress*, 83B–C).

He later writes that “it is our duty to compare our present emotions with their former selves and with their former selves and with one another, and thus determine the differences. We must compare them with their former selves, to see whether the desires and fears and angry passions which we experience to-day are less intense than they used to be, inasmuch as we, by means of reason, are rapidly getting rid of the cause that kindles and inflames them (*Progress*, 83E). He adds, “[T]he vice of those who are making progress is transformed into more moderate emotions” (*Progress*, 84A). Thus, by training in virtue, a person becomes a moral person with new emotions, feelings, and dispositions (84E)

2.4.1 Summary: Plutarch

In his theories of change, Plutarch emphasizes discontinuity, describing change as the death of one self and the realization of another. Regarding moral change, Plutarch portrays a process of moral maturation that produces new emotions and moral agency — a new moral self. He also links moral progress with the acquisition of knowledge and reason (e.g. *Progress*, 77E). When one grows in virtue, “reason is...growing within him and taking root in his own self” (*Progress*, 81B). Moral transformation is, therefore, a holistic transformation that involves growth in knowledge and praxis through the development of habits.

2.5 Conclusion: Transformation & Selfhood in Greco-Roman Antiquity

From these discussions of human transformation in Greco-Roman writings, I offer four observations.

1. **Modes of Discourse:** The modes of discourse in which we encounter human transformation affect what we find. Mythic literature provokes reflections on change by representing transformations that can confirm, resist, or complicate understandings of human changes. As discussed in more detail below, the mythic literature seems to be more comfortable with blurring identity boundaries and with provoking questions about selfhood that the stories themselves do not answer. The philosophers, in contrast, provide theoretical arguments and seek precision. Rather than obscure boundaries and upset categories, their works construct cosmologies and anthropologies in instructive modes.
2. **Agency:** In Greco-Roman mythic literature, deities are the agents of human transformation. Whether people are victims or change or experience transformation as deification, divine agency empowers the changes, and humans are powerless to resist or alter it. Among the moral philosophers, we find at least two dominant types of change, but in neither type are divine agents responsible for the changes. The first is natural change through aging, which some describe as the self's continuity through changes while others, with death metaphors, describe such changes as rupturing the self's continuity. The second type is moral transformation, in which humans have the requisite moral equipment to effect such change. Even if this capacity is linked with and/or granted by the divine, as in Epictetus, growth in virtue emerges from human practices.
3. **Categories of Transformation:** The literature addressed here contains a diverse range of transformation types. The mythic literature is filled with examples of metamorphosis, but it also contains examples of ontological transformation (esp. apotheosis), and, in *The Golden Ass*, a dramatic story of moral and religious transformation. The philosophers I examine here discuss theories of natural human change over time, and the Stoics (esp. Epictetus) emphasize the epistemic, even if they focus more on epistemic conformity to the natural order than on epistemic transformation. They also stress moral transformation through virtuous habits. As noted about, however, although both the narratives and the philosophies both contain moral transformations that make sense within their particular cosmological construals, the mythic literature places a greater role on divine agency.
4. **Selfhood:** Both the literature and the philosophical accounts show diverse perspectives on personal identity. Some authors view change as the negation or destruction of the self, and others envisage the self's continuity through change. Yet the mythical literature is a more powerful vehicle to evoke visions of selfhood that blur boundaries between identity categories, between one self and another, and so forth. In several of the narratives discussed in this chapter, when a person is transformed, the self is neither transformed into something wholly new, nor fully continuous with the former self, nor becomes a hybrid. Rather, the mythic literature is more comfortable in portraying the self as an in-

between being as a result of its transformations. Put simply, the mythic tales show higher tolerance for the self's liminality.

5. Relationality: Whether through narrative or philosophical theories, Greco-Roman notions of transformation are informed by a larger vision of the cosmos. Except in tales that obscure or challenge notions of change and selfhood, depictions or discussions of human transformation make sense within their larger understandings of the natural order. Consistently, the human self is determined by its relationships to larger cosmic realities.

Chapter 6

Human Transformation in Jewish Antiquity

I explore transformation discourse in a selection of ancient Jewish writings here in order to identify convictions about selfhood disclosed by such descriptions. My selection of texts is not comprehensive. I have chosen examples of transformation discourse from multiple historical contexts that include themes common to other ancient Jewish writings.¹ From my examinations of texts from the Hebrew Bible and from the Second Temple period, two dominant categories of human transformation emerge. First, I discuss functional transformations: changes of people for divine purposes in 1 Samuel, Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (LAB), Daniel, and *Joseph and Aseneth*. Next, I explore *moral* transformation in passages from Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Psalm 51, two texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls—*Barkhi Nafshi* and the *Hodayot*—and a selection from the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*. These transformation categories are distributed by genre, with functional transformations occurring in narrative works and moral transformation characterizing prophetic and prayer texts.

¹ Among the roads not taken are, e.g., descriptions of human transformation in writings from apocalypses, Philo of Alexandria, numerous texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls (from which I briefly discuss two selections), and various writings from the Second Temple Period. For the widest-ranging and most thorough analyses of transformation in ancient Jewish texts of which I am aware, see Tyson Lee Putthoff, "Human mutability and Mystical Change: Explorations in Ancient Jewish Ontoanthropology" (PhD diss., University of Durham, 2013); Putthoff, *Ontological Aspects of Early Jewish Anthropology: The Malleable Self and the Presence of God*, BRLJ (Leiden: Brill, 2017). See also the study of human transformation in a range of Jewish and Greco-Roman writings in Frances Back, *Verwandlung durch Offenbarung bei Paulus: Eine religionsgeschichtlich-exegetische Untersuchung zu 2 Kor 2,14-4,6*, WUNT 2.153 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 24–76. For a study of the heart's moral conditions and moral transformations through changes to the heart or the giving of a new spirit in Baruch (esp. 2:30–35; 3:6–7), Jubilees (esp. 1:19–21), 2 Baruch (esp. 46:5–6; 51:1–3; 78:6–7; 85:3–5, 8–11), 4 Ezra (esp. 3:20–21; 6:25–28; 7:45–48; 14:34), an Philo (esp. *Praem* 80; 114–15; 163–64; *Fug* 138–41; *Virt* 175–86; *QG* 3:46, 48, 52; *Spec* 1:6, 303–306; *Migr* 92; *Leg* 3:140; *Mut* 270; *Somn* 2:234) see Kyle Wells, *Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism Interpreting the Transformation of the Heart*, NovTSup (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 134–206. See also the analysis of various texts, with notable attention to somatic transformations and angelomorphism, in Frederick S. Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul: Cognition, Metaphor, and Transformation* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 88–97. See as well analyses in Edith McEwan Humphrey, *The Ladies and the Cities: Transformation and Apocalyptic Identity in Joseph and Aseneth, 4 Ezra, the Apocalypse and the Shepherd of Hermas*, JSPS 17 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995).

Among the observations about human change that I make in this chapter, one of the more striking features is the relative paucity of transformation discourse contained in ancient Jewish writings, especially in the Hebrew Bible. In comparison even to a single work like Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—which alone contains hundreds of transformation myths—descriptions of human transformation in ancient Jewish writings are rare. As the following discussion suggests, this sparseness may result from historical developments in models of the moral self in Jewish antiquity.² Prior to the Babylonian exile, a Deuteronomistic view, in which the human has sufficient moral agency to obey God's law, provides the standard model of moral selfhood. Yet, beginning perhaps most clearly in Ezekiel, the crises of exile led some to conclude that Israel was simply incapable of obedience. As a corollary to this new, pessimistic model of the moral self, the people's repentance from a place of capable moral agency no longer suffices as a remedy for Israel's sin problem. They need, instead, for God to transform them by creating a new moral self in order that they might obey God's law. Given this development, one can understand why the majority of Jewish transformation discourse emerges not in the biblical texts, but in the late Second Temple period.

1. Human Transformations for Divine Purposes

In the writings of Hebrew Bible and late Second Temple literature, we encounter human transformations for empowerment to fulfill divine purposes. Although some examples have moral dimensions, these changes are predominantly functional, in that they equip people for

² For the summary that follows, I draw on Jacqueline E. Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?: The Problem of the Moral Self in the Book of Ezekiel*, BZAW 301 (New York: de Gruyter, 2000); Carol Newsom, "Toward a Genealogy of the Introspective Self in Second Temple Judaism" in Mika S. Pajunen and Jeremy Penner, eds. *Functions of Psalms and Prayers in the Late Second Temple Period*, BZAW 486 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 63–79.

specific tasks, such as prophecy or military engagements.³ In the following, I discuss such transformations in passages from 1 Samuel, Daniel, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, and *Joseph and Aseneth*.

1.1 “You will become another Person.” The Transformation of Saul in 1 Samuel 10

In 1 Sam 10:1, Samuel anoints Saul and announces that he will be Israel’s first ruler. He foretells several signs that will confirm this.⁴ Among these signs, Samuel predicts, “[Y]ou shall come to Gibeath-elohim, at the place where the Philistine garrison is; there, as you come to the town, you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the shrine with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre playing in front of them; they will be in a prophetic frenzy (MT: וְהָמָה מִתְנַבְּאִים; LXX: αὐτοὶ προφητεύοντες). Then the spirit of the LORD will possess you, and you will be in a prophetic frenzy (MT: וְהָתְנַבִּית; LXX: καὶ προφητεύσεις) along with them and be turned into a different person (MT: לְאִישׁ אֲחֵר; LXX: στραφήσῃ εἰς ἄνδρα ἄλλον)” (10:5–6).⁵ In addition to Saul’s becoming “a different person,” after he “turned away to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart (MT: לֵב אֲחֵר; LXX: καρδίαν ἄλλην); and all these things were fulfilled that day” (10:9).

³ The obvious exception to this functional type of change is the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s transformation in Daniel 4.

⁴ First, he will meet two men at Rachel’s tomb at Zelzah, and they will tell him that the donkeys for which he had been looking are found and that Saul’s father is now concerned for him. (10:2). Second, he will approach the oak of Tabor and encounter three men with three kids, three loaves of bread, and a wineskin will meet him and give him two loaves of bread (10:3–4). According to Ralph W. Klein (*1 Samuel*, 2nd ed., WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2008).), these first two signs meet two of Saul’s needs, namely, the need to find the missing donkeys and his hunger (91).

⁵ Unless noted otherwise, English translations are from the NRSV.

At least three aspects of this larger composition illuminate the passage at hand. First, 1 Samuel emphasizes divine agency within a Deuteronomistic perspective.⁶ In 1 Samuel, when God acts on the basis of human actions, people are helpless to alter God's actions, and this view comes through explicitly through the statements of key characters. In Hannah's song, for example, she says, "[God] will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness; for not by might does one prevail" (2:9). Similarly, on David's lips, the author writes, "The Lord rewards everyone for his righteousness and his faithfulness" (26:32). Yet when God deals with people with respect to their conduct, "nothing can hinder the Lord" (14:6) in what God decides to do. Ultimately, God gives and takes life (2:25; 5:6–12; 7:8–9; 12:19; cf. 2:31; 6:20), grants military victory or defeat (7:3–11; 14:23; 15:10–23; 17:45–47; 23:4; 24:10, 12; 30:8, 23), and installs and removes rulers (8:1–22; 10:1–24; 12:12–16; 13:8–15; 16:1), even if the former is a capitulation to Israel's requests and not in accordance with God's desire. In this literary world, God, by sending a spirit onto him, functions as the agent of Saul's transformation into a new person. When God eventually rejects Saul and gives the spirit to David, God continues to torment Saul with an evil spirit. Thus, from selecting Saul, to transforming him, to later rejecting him, God empowers and rejects.

Second, God gives Saul a new heart (10:9). In 1 Samuel, as elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the heart represents a person's innermost self. It is the seat of human emotions and desires (4:13; 17:32; 24:6; 25:31, 36, 37; 28:5), and of responsiveness to the divine (6:6; 10:26). It is also the part of the person that God regards, in contrast to outward appearances, which humanity prioritizes (16:7). Thus, when God gives Saul a new heart, the Lord changes Saul's core self in

⁶ See, e.g., 2:9, 30; 7:3–17; 12:12–24; 26:23. Cf. Klein, *1 Samuel*, xli; A. Graeme Auld, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 15–16.

some way. Although the chronology of the events in 10:6–13 is unclear, the descriptions of Saul being “turned into another person” and God “turning to him another heart” (וַיַּהֲפֹךְ־לוֹ אֱלֹהִים לֵב אַחֵר) are basically “equivalent in import.”⁷ When God replaces his heart, Saul, in some way, becomes another man.

Third, Saul’s change corresponds with Israel’s national transformation. 1 Samuel functions, in part, to account for Israel’s shift from a tribal confederation to a monarchy.⁸ As Samuel anoints Saul and names him Israel’s ruler, God’s people undergo initiation into new social and political structures. God’s transformation of Saul seemingly functions to make him fit for his new position as king (see below), a role characterized by significant ambiguity.⁹ Thus, Saul’s change is inextricably linked with the context of Israel’s larger transition.¹⁰

From these observations, what might we conclude about God’s transformation of Saul? To begin, the language of “another person” and “another heart” indicates a break in Saul’s personal identity. That is, the text emphasizes the self’s difference, rather than continuity, through the change. Yet Saul’s change, and the degree to which it is recognizable, remains unclear. When he returns home after prophesying, for instance, his uncle asks, “Where did you go?” and requests, “Tell me what Samuel said to you” (10:14–15). Saul reveals only that Samuel told him that the donkeys had been located, and he does not disclose “the matter of the kingship” to him (10:16). His uncle’s probing may simply be inquiry, but it might function as “more polite

⁷ R. Kyle McCarter, *I Samuel*, AB (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 183.

⁸ Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 10, 16–17.

⁹ Ralph K Hawkins, “The First Glimpse of Saul and His Subsequent Transformation,” *BBR* 22 (2012): 360.

¹⁰ It may be that God’s transformation of Saul symbolizes, as it effects, Israel’s larger change. That is, as prophets often portray Israel’s situations in their own bodies and actions (e.g. Jer 13; 19; 17:1–11; 32:1–25; 43:8–13), Saul’s change into a new person, may, in part, represent the transformation of Israel’s national “self” as it becomes a monarchical body.

alternatives to, ‘What happened to you?’”¹¹ He may discern changes in Saul and seek to understand them. Whatever the case, the reception of God’s spirit inspires Saul’s temporary act of prophesying, but his transformation and his reception of God’s spirit appears to have lasting effects.¹² He experiences “a loss of self, or rather, the emergence of a new self.”¹³

Saul’s transformation equips him for certain roles and tasks, as evidenced by the spirit of the Lord coming upon him. As Ralph Klein observes, “The Spirit is also said to have rushed on the judges Gideon (Judg 6:34), Jephthah (Judg 11:29), Samson (Judg 14:6, 19: 15:14), and on David at the time of his anointing (1 Sam 16:13). Thus, Saul is seen as a savior figure like the judges (cf. 1 Sam 11:6) though the connection of the spirit with his anointing is not as direct as it is with David.”¹⁴ The immediate literary context also points to a functional purpose for Saul’s becoming a new person. In 10:7, Samuel says to Saul, “Do for yourself what your hand finds to do.”¹⁵ This expression of doing what one’s hand finds to do is commonly militaristic language, which indicates that, like inspired judges, Saul’s change equips him for a new role.¹⁶ Although the narrative portrayal of Saul’s various changes—which correspond with God’s selection and rejection of him¹⁷—are ambiguous, perhaps even inconsistent, the initial transformation of Saul into a new person is functional. God does not, for example, enact moral change buy empowering Saul’s agency to obey God’s law. Rather, Saul becomes a different person and receives a new

¹¹ Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 114.

¹² Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 114; Hawkins, “The First Glimpse of Saul,” Cf. Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1-12*, BLS 10 (Decatur, GA: Almond Press, 1985), 322–27.

¹³ McCarter, *I Samuel*, 183.

¹⁴ Klein, *I Samuel*, 92.

¹⁵ Translation mine.

¹⁶ Hawkins, “First Glimpse of Saul,” 360.

¹⁷ E.g., when God later rejects Saul, God removes the spirit (16:14, 23) and sends upon Saul an evil spirit (16:15–16, 23; 18:10; 19:9; cf. 19:20).¹⁷ See Klein, *I Samuel*, 92. See also McCarter, *I Samuel*, 182.

heart in order to fulfill a heroic role with prophetic and regal aspects.¹⁸ His change functions as an “induction into the theocratic service.”¹⁹

Implied in this transformation is a *need* for God’s intervention to accomplish divine purposes. For the task of prophecy and the vocation of kingship, it seems that Saul’s previous “self” was insufficient. Thus, for these divinely-appointed roles, the original person is has to be replaced by a new person who is empowered by a spirit from God.

In conclusion, Saul’s transformation is definitive, but the effects of that change remain obscure. On one hand, by sending the spirit upon him, God replaces Saul’s heart and thereby transforms him into a different person. This radical change enables Saul to prophesy and equips him for kingship. On the other hand, the transformation seems to have lasting effects that continue after Saul prophesies, ending, presumably, when God removes the spirit from him. Moreover, Saul’s moral shortcomings suggest that he has not experienced change of his moral selfhood, but, rather, a pragmatic change that makes him serviceable to God as Israel’s ruler. God’s transformation of Saul is, nonetheless, a transformation of his person from one self to another, and it both enacts and reflects Israel’s larger context of transformation.

1.2 Functional Transformations in Pseudo Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*

Pseudo Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (LAB) was probably written between mid first century C.E. and mid second century C.E.²⁰ In LAB, one finds striking depictions of change, and I examine the transformations of four biblical characters: Moses, Joshua, Kenaz, and David.

I organize the discussion according to the types of transformation.

¹⁸ Cf. McCarter, *I Samuel*, 182–83.

¹⁹ Eslinger, *Kingship of God*, 322–23.

²⁰ Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum: with Latin Text and English Translation*, AGAJU 31, 2 vols. (Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1996), 1:199–210.

Transformation of Appearances

The first category is the transformation appearance. In LAB's retelling of Exodus 34:29-35, for example, the author transposes the event to Moses' first ascent instead of his second.²¹

The passage reads,

And Moses came down. And when he had been bathed with invisible light, he went down to the place where the light of the sun and moon are; and the light of his face surpassed the splendor of the sun and the moon, and he did not even know this. And when he came down to the sons of Israel, they saw him but did not recognize him. But when he spoke, then they recognized him. And this was like what happened in Egypt when Joseph recognized his brothers but they did not recognize him. And afterward, when Moses realized that his face had become glorious, he made a veil for himself with which to cover his face (12:1).

In addition to the transposition, the author adds that the people are unable to recognize Moses visually. They can only recognize him by the sound of his voice. This change is a transformation of appearance, but the author's purpose in this seemingly unique alteration is unclear.²²

The author again depicts a change in Moses' appearance at his death. Just before Moses dies, "his appearance become glorious; and he died in glory according to the word of the Lord." The account draws on Deut 34:5-6, but LAB adds the change of Moses' features. There is no indication in the Hebrew Bible that the glory from Moses' prior ascent persisted through his life, and LAB implies that this change occurs specifically at his death.²³

A final example of transformed appearance in LAB occurs when David defeats Goliath. After David strikes him with a stone,

David said to him, 'Before you die, open your eyes and see your slayer, the one who has killed you.' And the Philistine looked and saw an angel and said, 'Not you alone have killed me, but also the one who is present with you, he whose appearance is not like the appearance of a man.' And then David cut off his head. Now the angel of the Lord had changed David's appearance, and no one recognized him. And Saul saw David and asked him who he was, and there was no one who recognized him (61:8-9).

²¹ Jacobson, *Commentary*, 1:483.

²² Jacobson (*Commentary*, 1:483) is equally stumped by the change.

²³ Jacobson, *Commentary*, 2:652-53.

Unlike the accounts of Moses, LAB's retelling of 1 Sam 17 may have practical explanations. First, in v. 8 it is difficult to determine whether David's appearance has been transformed, or whether Goliath sees an angel instead of David. Either way, the alteration seems to emphasize the divine assistance at work in David's killing of Goliath. Second, v. 9 says explicitly that the angel of the Lord had transformed David's appearance, which may function to explain why Saul fails to recognize David in 1 Sam 17:55.²⁴

As one can detect from these descriptions, the transformations of appearances in LAB are puzzling. Yet, they are prevalent enough in this composition to warrant this brief discussion. Most important for this study is that LAB features a pattern of divine alterations of the human by divine agency and for functional purposes: when God chooses someone for a task, one can see evidence of divine empowerment in the person's transformed features.

Transformation of the Self

In the story of Kenaz, we find a different, creative form of transformation. Pseudo-Philo constructs his portrayal from a slim selection of biblical text:

But when the Israelites cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the Israelites, who delivered them, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. The spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel; he went out to war, and the Lord gave King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. So the land had rest forty years. Then Othniel son of Kenaz died (Judg 3:9-11 NRSV).

From these slight references, Pseudo-Philo fashions a story that portrays Kenaz as a military figure (LAB 27-28). In LAB 27:7-8, Kenaz prays and walks near the Amorite army where he hears them plotting to fight against Israel. The text reads, "And Kenaz arose, and the spirit of the Lord clothed him, and he drew his sword" (27:9). In the LXX and in the New Testament,

²⁴ Jacobson, *Commentary*, 2:1186.

clothing metaphors often represent changes in identity or selfhood.²⁵ Here, the spirit's clothing of Kenaz echoes Judg 6:34, in which the Spirit clothes Gideon.²⁶ Most important for my purposes, however, is LAB's next reference to the spirit. Once the Amorites recognize Kenaz, they decide to enter into battle. Then Kenaz undergoes a change by means of the spirit: "And when Kenaz heard their words, he was clothed with the spirit of power and *was changed into another man*, and he went down to the Amorite camp and began to strike them down. The Lord intervened by sending angels to aid Kenaz, and he struck down 45,000 Amorites" (27:10 emphasis mine).

For the spirit's transformation of Kenaz into another person, Pseudo-Philo draws on 1 Samuel 10:6. There, as discussed above, God changes Saul into another person by giving him a spirit and a new heart, and this transformation empowers Saul for prophetic and regal roles.²⁷ In LAB, Kenaz's transformation is also functional, but the spirit empowers him for military purposes, to the extent that he alone is able to slay 45,000 people. Yet, by using the language of 1 Sam 10:6, Pseudo-Philo portrays more than empowerment. He depicts the transformation of the Kenaz into a different person to enable this military prowess.²⁸

LAB again uses 1 Sam 10:6 to depict the spirit's transformation of Joshua. After Moses' death, God makes a covenant with Joshua (LAB 20:1). God then speaks to him,

Why do you mourn and why do you hope in vain that Moses yet lives? And now you wait to no purpose, because Moses is dead. Take his garments of wisdom and clothe yourself, and with his belt of knowledge gird your loins, and you will be changed and become another man. Did I not speak on your behalf to Moses my servant saying, 'This one will lead my people after you, and into his hand I will deliver the kings of the Amorites (20:2).

²⁵ See discussion in section 1.2 of Chapter 2.

²⁶ John R. Levison, *The Spirit in First Century Judaism*, AGAJU 29 (Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1997), 85-86.

²⁷ See McCarter, *I Samuel*, 182-83; Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 113.

²⁸ Levison, *Spirit in First Century Judaism*, 84-88.

The promise is fulfilled in the next verse: “And Joshua took the garments of wisdom and clothed himself and girded his loins with the belt of understanding. And when he clothed himself with it, his mind was afire and his spirit was moved” (20:3). In light of the biblical antecedent of Judg 6:34 and Kenaz’s being clothed in the spirit (LAB 27:10; Cf. 36:2), we can understand Joshua’s clothing of himself as a metaphor for the spirit coming upon him.²⁹

Given the militaristic effect of Kenaz’s transformation and God’s promise to Joshua that he will defeat the Amorites (20:2), one would expect Joshua’s spiritual change to lead to military strength. Yet the result coheres more closely with 1 Sam 10:6: Joshua addresses the people of Israel with a prophecy that interprets their present circumstances and exhorts them to walk in God’s ways (20:4-5). This makes sense of why the author describes Joshua’s transformation as his mind being set afire. Although this terminology has no specific biblical precedent, the language of heat and a troubled spirit echoes several prophetic descriptions (Jer 4:19; 20:9; Isa 21:3; Ezek 3:14; Hab 3:16; Dan 7:15).³⁰ In the event of Moses’ death, the spirit transforms Joshua into a prophet. Here again, LAB draws on 1 Sam 10:6 to describe God’s transformation of someone into another person in order to equip him for a specific set of tasks.

Summary

In sum LAB describes at least two types of transformation. First, it depicts the transformations of Moses and David’s appearances, the functions of which are unclear. Second, LAB describes the spirit’s transformations of Kenaz and Joshua into different people. By using the same tradition from 1 Sam 10:6, along with clothing imagery from Judg 6:34, Pseudo-Philo creatively portrays the transformation of both of these figures for two distinct purposes. Kenaz is changed for military heroism, and the spirit transforms Joshua for prophecy.

²⁹ Levison, *Spirit in First Century Judaism*, 100.

³⁰ Levison, *Spirit in First Century Judaism*, 101.

In terms of selfhood, the second of these two categories is the most germane to this study. In each example, God produces the change. Rather than portraying the mere empowerment of a self, the text presumes that the original person is inadequate for the task and that God must create a new person to carry it out. Thus, regarding personal identity, these tales emphasize difference more than sameness. Moreover, in contrast to the passages I examine in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Psalm 51 (below), these transformations are functional rather than moral: they follow the tradition of 1 Samuel 10:6 by portraying divine transformation of the human for specific tasks, not for enhanced moral agency.

1.3 The Temporary Transformation of Nebuchadnezzar's Mind

In Daniel 4, God transforms Nebuchadnezzar because of the king's pride.³¹ The story opens with Nebuchadnezzar in need of a dream interpretation. In the dream, "there was a tree at the center of the earth," and it was so large that "it was visible to the ends of the whole earth" (vv. 10–11).³² The tree was beautiful and fruitful. It provided shade for land animals, branches for birds' nests, and "from it all living beings were fed" (v. 12). As the dream continues, a "holy watcher" descends from heaven and orders the tree to be cut down. The watcher instructs, "But leave its stump and roots in the ground, with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let him be bathed with the dew of heaven, and let his lot be with the animals of the field in the grass of the earth. Let his mind be changed from that of a human, and let the mind of an animal be given to him. And let seven times pass over him" (vv. 15–16). This will happen "in

³¹ The Nebuchadnezzar stories in Dan 4 ultimately draw on traditions of the Babylonian king Nabonidus, but Daniel replaces Nabonidus with Nebuchadnezzar who serves in the composition as "a symbol for all Gentile Rules" (Carol A. Newsom and Brennan W. Breed, *Daniel: A Commentary*, OTL [Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014], 128–30). See further discussions in John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 216–19; John Goldingay, *Daniel*, WBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 93.

³² Unless noted otherwise, all translations of Daniel are from the NRSV.

order that all who live may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of mortals; he gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of human beings” (v. 17).

After “the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and diviners” (v. 7) cannot interpret the dream, Daniel, “who is endowed with a spirit of the holy gods” (v. 9), interprets it.³³ The dream represents what will happen to Nebuchadnezzar: “You shall be driven away from human society, and your dwelling shall be with the wild animals. You shall be made to eat grass like oxen, you shall be bathed with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, until you have learned that the Most High has sovereignty over the kingdom of mortals, and gives it to whom he will” (4:25–26).

The events come to pass as predicted. Nebuchadnezzar asks, as he admires his kingdom from his palace roof in Babylon, “Is this not magnificent Babylon, which I have built as a royal capital by my mighty power and for my glorious majesty?” (v. 28). A voice from heaven responds, announcing that the kingdom has departed from Nebuchadnezzar (v. 31).

“Immediately, the sentence was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven away from human society, ate grass like oxen, and his body was bathed with the dew of heaven, until his hair grew as long as eagle’s feathers and his nails became like birds’ claws” (v. 33).³⁴ After the period of time in this state expires, God restores Nebuchadnezzar, and the tale ends with a doxology in which the king acknowledges God’s sovereignty and God’s power to humble the

³³ On the phrase רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים קָדְשִׁין Newsom and Breed (*Daniel*) note that it might be translated as ‘a spirit of the holy gods,’ ‘a spirit of the holy god,’ or ‘a holy divine spirit,’ adding that “the first option would highlight Nebuchadnezzar’s pagan perspective. The so-called ‘plural of majesty’ is regularly used to refer to the God of Israel, and the equivalent Hebrew phrase *’ēlōhîm qēdōšîm* is applied to YHWH in Josh 24:19” (136).. They also show that the term “spirit” here “could refer either to the quality of Daniel’s spirit, or to his ability as a ‘god-given’ talent, or to both” (136). Cf. Collins, *Daniel*, 222–23.

³⁴ The LXX lacks a prediction that Nebuchadnezzar’s mind will be replaced with that of an animal’s. Yet when he is driven away and lives as an animal, he recalls, “My flesh and my heart were changed” (NETS): ἡλλοιώθη ἡ σὰρξ μου καὶ ἡ καρδία μου.

proud (vv. 34–37).³⁵

In this tale, God is the agent of transformation in a literary context that emphasizes divine agency more broadly. Daniel portrays God as sovereign over human circumstances and as responsible for installing and dethroning human rulers, for establishing and destroying kingdoms, and for taking and saving human life.³⁶ God grants knowledge, wisdom, and skills (1:17), as well as abilities to interpret visions and dreams that humans are unable to interpret apart from divine gifts.³⁷ God announces Nebuchadnezzar’s transformation through a dream and a voice from heaven, and the change functions to teach Nebuchadnezzar and others that “the Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of mortals” and “gives it to whom he will” (4:17, 25, 32). In sum, God is sovereign over human affairs and transforms Nebuchadnezzar temporarily to demonstrate it.³⁸

This story also features the common pattern of the self’s humbling/humiliation—indeed, a loss of self (see below)—followed by exaltation.³⁹ Because of his pride and his unwillingness to recognize God’s sovereignty, God changes Nebuchadnezzar by altering his mind to that of a beast (v. 16), drives him from society, and causes him to live and eat in the wild like an ox (v. 33).⁴⁰ The world, in Ancient Near Eastern perspectives, consisted of divine beings, humans, and animals. Kings, however, “occupied a distinctive and exalted status” serving as “intermediaries

³⁵ There may be reason to view the doxology as redactional, but it plays a key literary role in the final form of Dan 4. See discussion in Newsom and Breed, *Daniel*, 149.

³⁶ 1:2, 9; 2:37–38; 2:44; 3:19–30, esp. v. 29; 4:1, 16–17, 25, 32, 35; 5:18, 23; 6:16–23, 26–27.

³⁷ 1:17, 20; 2:17–18, 27–28, 45, 47; 4:8–9, 18; 5:11–12; 24–28; cf. 6:3.

³⁸ Daniel’s presentation of divine agency would, in part, function instructively for broader audiences who are wrestling with the challenging realities of exile.

³⁹ Newsom and Breed (*Daniel*) liken the structure of Nebuchadnezzar’s changes—stripping of status, a liminal state of humiliation, and new knowledge at the conclusion—to a rite of passage (149).

⁴⁰ On the fundamental issue of Nebuchadnezzar’s God’s ultimate rule, see Goldingay, *Daniel*, 93–97.

between the divine and human realms and were even spoken of as ‘the image of god.’”⁴¹ Thus, for Nebuchadnezzar to have his mind replaced with an animal’s only demotes him to a lower status of human, but reduces him to “a subhuman rank.”⁴² He crossed a hierarchical boundary within the divine order, from an exalted human to the bestial, the non-human.⁴³

When Nebuchadnezzar’s transformed state ends, he is not only restored but has his life enhanced: “At that time my reason returned to me; and my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom. My counselors and my lords sought me out, I was reestablished over my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me” (v. 36). God changes Nebuchadnezzar from a proud king into a beastly state—a man with the mind, behavior, and diet of an animal—and back into a king with more than he had before. In this final state, however, he acknowledges the truth of the natural order. The king blesses and honors God, and he acknowledges that “all his works are truth, and his ways are justice; and he is able to bring low those who walk in pride” (vv. 34–36). In his new state Nebuchadnezzar aligns properly with the divine order, recognizing the Most High God as the “King of Heaven.”⁴⁴

Nebuchadnezzar’s transformation seems to entail not merely diminishment but a temporary loss of self. Although his physical features begin to resemble those of animals—“his hair grew as long as eagles’ feathers and his nails became like birds’ claws” (v. 33)—the locus of this transformation is the king’s mind (4:16, 34, 36).⁴⁵ Just as the pronouncement in his dream

⁴¹ Newsom and Breed, *Daniel*, 141.

⁴² Newsom and Breed, *Daniel*, 141.

⁴³ So Newsom and Breed, *Daniel*, 144. Cf. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 96.

⁴⁴ Newsom and Breed, *Daniel*, 144–45, 149.

⁴⁵ With these animalistic descriptions, Daniel emphasizes not so much the king’s madness, but his experience of a state of death. For this argument, see Christopher B Hays, “Chirps from the Dust: The Affliction of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:30 in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context,” *JBL* 126 (2007): 305–25; Newsom and Breed (*Daniel*) also observe that Nebuchadnezzar’s bird-like resemblance, in the context of Ancient Near Eastern imagery, hints at an experience of death (141). These death-like descriptions of the king strengthen the sense that he experiences a temporary loss of self, a seven-year *death of the self*.

declares that his mind will be “changed from that of a human” and that he will receive the “mind of an animal” (4:16), God temporarily replaces his mind with another. When God restores Nebuchadnezzar’s reason, it is for him to “learn” and “know” the truth about God’s sovereignty (4:17, 26, 32). Thus, the purpose of this experience is pedagogical, and the result is instant transformation of the king’s perspective.⁴⁶ The story portrays the “*transformation of Nebuchadnezzar’s consciousness* from a king who considers himself to be the most powerful figure in his kingdom to one who recognizes that his extraordinary greatness is but a gift from the Most High God.”⁴⁷ Nebuchadnezzar’s transformation is thus epistemic, and his new knowledge enables him to align properly with the cosmic order.⁴⁸

Here, a loss of the mind is a loss of self, and the mind’s restoration produces a new self. Yet, as elsewhere in this study, Nebuchadnezzar’s new self is not completely discontinuous with the old. The king is neither what he was prior to his transformation, nor does he remain in an animalistic condition. Rather, the new depends on the old: for the new self to emerge, Nebuchadnezzar has integrated what he learned from his experience, which enables him properly to align his self-understanding with his true place in God’s order.

To summarize, God transforms Nebuchadnezzar to humble him. God gives him an animal mind, which causes him to behave as an animal. After this period, God restores Nebuchadnezzar’s reasoning, and, in his doxology, he shows that he has learned his proper place in the cosmic hierarchy. As a result, God not only restores Nebuchadnezzar, but he exalts him,

The OG’s physical descriptions differ, including that the king’s nails were like a lion’s and that his “heart and flesh were changed.” See Collins, *Daniel*, 213, 231.

⁴⁶ So, Newsom and Breed, *Daniel*, 142, 148.

⁴⁷ Newsom and Breed, *Daniel*, 128. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁸ Goldingay (*Daniel*) suggests, “Perhaps one should say that the true insanity belongs to the Nebuchadnezzar who has earlier been talking as if he were the eternal king and God did not exist. His outward madness is the external expression of a delusion that he as already been the tragic victim of” (96). Along these lines, his restoration involves proper recognition of his place with in the larger cosmos.

completing the self's humiliation-to-exaltation pattern. God's method for bringing Nebuchadnezzar to this exalted state is epistemic change, which involves a temporary loss of self, followed by restoration in which the self gains new understanding of the divine economy.

1.4 Varieties of Change in *Joseph and Aseneth*

The story of *Joseph and Aseneth* provides an account of transformation through Aseneth's dramatic conversion experience. The composition's date and provenance are uncertain, and some scholars have argued for a Christian origin.⁴⁹ I follow the majority scholarly view, which dates the writing somewhere between the first century BCE and the second century CE and attributes it not to a Christian author but to a Hellenistic Jewish author, most likely writing in Egypt.⁵⁰ My primary concern in this section, however, is with the tale's literary depictions of transformation and what those depictions contribute to our broader understandings of discourse on human change in Jewish antiquity.

Aseneth's dramatic transformation is the crux of the tale of *Joseph and Aseneth*, in part, because it marks the pivot of a humility-to-exaltation pattern within the narrative. When the story opens, the author describes Aseneth as "despising and scorning every man" and as "boastful and arrogant with everyone (2:1)."⁵¹ Her magnificent estate contains ten elaborate chambers with

⁴⁹ For discussion, see C. Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth" OTP, 177–201, esp. pp. 187–88. John M. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117CE)*, HCS (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1996), 204 n. 37.

⁵⁰ Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth," 187; Randall D Chesnutt, "The Social Setting and Purpose of Joseph and Aseneth," *JSP* 2 (1988): 21–48. See especially Chesnutt's summary of the consensus view on p. 21. See also Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 204, 215–16; John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 103–110, 237–38.

⁵¹ Aseneth's rejection of men, commitment to virginity, and her about-face at the sight of Joseph represent "clichés of the romance genre" in ancient Greek and Roman novels (Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 204–205). Cf. Humphrey, *The Ladies and the Cities*, 35. For discussion of the parallels between *Joseph and Aseneth* and ancient romance novels, see Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth,"

ornaments and chests that are full of silver and gold, as well as Egyptian gods to whom she offers regular sacrifices (2:1–6). In the chamber in which “her virginity was being fostered,” she sleeps on a golden bed with purple, violet, and white material that is interwoven with gold (2:7–9). Throughout the tale, her clothing symbolizes her religious, moral, and existential state (more below).⁵² In the narrative’s beginning, her clothing is interwoven with silver and gold, and she wears jewelry and ornaments engraved with the names and faces of Egyptian deities (3:4).

Her transformation begins when she first sees Joseph, “the powerful one of God” a man “powerful in wisdom and experience” and upon whom rests God’s spirit (4:7–8). When she sees Joseph on his chariot, she “was strongly cut (to the heart), and her soul was crushed, and her knees were paralyzed, and her entire body trembled, and she was filled with great fear” (6:1). After Joseph prays for her conversion (8:1–9), she rushes to her room and falls on her bed, “exhausted, because in her there was joy and distress and much fear and trembling and continuous sweating” (9:1). Fitting for her current state, Aseneth then collects ashes and changes her clothing. She “put off her linen and gold woven royal robe and dressed in the black tunic of mourning, and loosened her golden girdle and girded a rope around (her), and put off the tiara from her head, and the diadem and the bracelets from her hands and feet, and put everything on the floor. And she took her chosen robe and the golden girdle and the headgear and the diadem, and threw everything through the window looking north to the poor” (10:10–12). She gathers her gods and cultic materials and throws them from the window (10:12–13). She covers her head and her floor with ashes, and “struck her breast often with both hands, and wept bitterly, and fell upon the ashes and wept with great bitter weeping all night” (10:14–15), to the extent that her tears mixed with the ashes to form mud (10:16; cf. 13:28).

183–85. Cf. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 230. Unless otherwise noted, I use the translation of Joseph and Aseneth by C. Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” OTP.

⁵² So, Humphrey, *The Ladies and the Cities*, 45.

For a week she remains in this state, without eating or drinking, and the author labels this period “the seven days of her humiliation” (10:17; 11:3; cf. 11:6, 10, 12–14). Aseneth offers a longer prayer of repentance, in which she says she reveals also that her family has rejected her (11:1–14). She closes the prayer with hope, “Who knows, (maybe) he will see my humiliation and have mercy on me. Perhaps he will see this desolation of mine and have compassion on me, or see my orphanage and protect me because he is the father of orphans, and a protector of the persecuted, and of the afflicted a helper” (11:12–13; see also 12:12–13:1). At the sight of Joseph, Aseneth has descended from a proud and boastful state to a humiliated condition that bears the characteristics of death and mourning.

When a heavenly figure appears to Aseneth, he commands her to change her clothing: “put off your black tunic of mourning, and the sackcloth put off your waist, and shake off those ashes from your head, and wash your face and your hands with living water, and dress in a new linen robe (as yet) untouched and distinguished and gird your waist (with) the new twin girdle of your virginity” (14:12). He promises her that she will marry Joseph and commands her again to change: “dress in your wedding robe, the ancient and first robe which is laid up in your chamber since eternity, and put around you all your wedding ornaments, and adorn yourself as a good bride, and go meet Joseph” (15:10).

He instructs Aseneth to eat a honeycomb from heaven (16:1–14). After she eats it, the man explains to Aseneth that she has been transformed:

Behold, you have eaten bread of life, and drunk a cup of immortality, and been anointed with ointment of incorruptibility. Behold, from today your flesh (will) flourish like flowers of life from the ground of the Most High, and your bones will grow strong like the cedars of the paradise of delight of God, and untiring powers will embrace you, and your youth will not see old age, and your beauty will not fail for ever. And you shall be

like a walled mother-city of all who take refuge with the name of the Lord God, the king of the ages (15:16).⁵³

In this explanation, the heavenly man describes Aseneth as exalted to a state that surpasses any point of her previous existence. She receives immortality, physical strength and beauty, and a role as “a walled-mother city of all who take refuge in the name of the Lord God.” Moreover, she marries Joseph. When they first kiss, “both came to life in their spirit,” and Aseneth is further changed. The author writes, “And Joseph kissed Aseneth and gave her spirit of life, and he kissed her the second time and gave her a spirit of wisdom, and he kissed her the third time and gave her spirit of truth” (19:11).⁵⁴ Beyond being restored from her humiliation and mourning, Aseneth is exalted through her transformation. She is now “a daughter of the Most High and a bride of Joseph from now on and forever” (21:5; cf. 21:21).⁵⁵

In addition to forming a pattern of humiliation to exaltation, the author portrays Aseneth’s transformation as a change from life into death. The story anticipates this aspect of the change in Joseph’s prayer for Aseneth’s conversion. He prays to God “who gave life to all” that God would “renew her by your spirit, and form her anew by your hidden hand, and make her alive again by your life, and let her eat your bread of life, and drink your cup of blessing” (8:9). After this prayer, Aseneth enters her seven days of humiliation, in which she evokes images of death by covering herself and her floor with ashes. In her moment of transformation, the man from heaven echoes Joseph’s language, promising that “from today, you will be renewed and formed anew and made alive again” (15:4–6). Furthermore, the comb she eats has “spirit of life” and “everyone who eats of it will not die forever” (16:15). Once Aseneth’s parents saw her

⁵³ Some scholars detect in this passage the influence of mystery religions, mystic rituals in ancient Judaism, or the Christian Eucharist, though such arguments have been inconclusive. See discussions in Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 211–12; Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 232–33.

⁵⁴ Cf. T. Reu. 2:1–3:2; T. Sim. 3:1; 4:7; T. Levi. 2:3; T. Jud. 13:3; 20:1–5; 24:2; 25:3; T. Iss. 4:4; 7:7; T. Dan. 1:6, 8; 2:1; 3:1–2; T. Gad. 1:9; 3:1; 6:2; T. Jos. 7:4; T. Benj. 3:3; 5:2; 6:1.

⁵⁵ So Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 235–36.

newly transformed state, they “rejoiced and gave glory to God who gives life to the dead” (20:7). Finally, near the story’s end, Aseneth prays, “Lord my God, who made me alive again and rescued me from the idols and the corruption of death, who said to me, ‘Your soul will live for ever,’ rescued me from the hands of these wicked men” (27:10). From beginning to end, the author portrays Aseneth’s change as an existential and ontological transformation: she was dead and now is not only alive, but will live forever.⁵⁶

Aseneth’s change also includes a conversion from idols to the “Most High God,” and through it, she is incorporated into the people of God. One can see this especially in the symbolic role that kisses play in the story.⁵⁷ When Aseneth first arrives and her parents tell her to kiss Joseph, he refuses her, explaining that it is “not fitting for a man who worships God, who will bless with his mouth the living God and eat blessed bread of life and drink a blessed cup of immortality and anoint himself with blessed ointment of incorruptibility to kiss a strange woman who will bless with her mouth dead and dumb idols and eat from their table bread of strangulation and drink from their libation cup of insidiousness and anoint herself with ointment” (8:5). Joseph’s lips are reserved for those who are from his own people: “But a man who worships God will kiss his mother and the sister (who is born) of his mother and the sister (who is born) of his clan and family and the wife who shares his bed, (all of) who(m) bless with their mouths the living God” (8:6). As described above, after Aseneth’s transformation, she kisses Joseph and receives spiritual impartations from him. (19:11). After her change, Aseneth goes with Joseph to meet his father Jacob. When Jacob sees her, he calls her to himself, blesses her, and kisses her (22:9). In response, Aseneth stretched out her hands and grasped Jacob’s neck and hung herself on her father’s neck “just like someone hangs on to his father’s neck when he

⁵⁶ Cf. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 209.

⁵⁷ Cf. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 208–209.

returns from fighting into his house, and she kissed him” (22:10).⁵⁸ As the kisses represent, Aseneth is not only united with God, but she also has been integrated into the household of Jacob, the people of God.⁵⁹

This transformation has epistemic dimensions as well. Her perception begins to change when she first sees Joseph. In addition to her physical and emotional response (6:1), she confesses that she had erred in speaking negatively because she “did not know that he is (a) son of God” (6:3). She acted foolishly when she said such things to her father (6:4). In addition to her new awareness of the truth of God and Joseph, the man from heaven places his hand on her head and before praying says, “Happy are you, Aseneth, because the ineffable mysteries of the Most High have been revealed to you” (16:14). Although the author does not elaborate on the nature of such changes, it is clear that Aseneth experiences epistemic transformation in this narrative.

Finally, although it does not contain examples of masquerades (as in some of the mythic stories in ch. 5), the story of Joseph and Aseneth includes the transformation of appearances. After she eats the honeycomb and puts on her wedding clothes, Aseneth washes her face with spring water. She sees her reflection in the water, and her face “was like the sun and her eyes (were) like a rising morning star, and her cheeks like fields of the Most High.” Her lips were “like a rose of life coming out of its foliage, and her teeth were like fighting men lined up for a fight, and the hair of her head (was) like a vine in the paradise of God prospering in its fruits, and her neck like an all-variegated cypress, and her breasts (were) like the mountains of the Most High God” (18:9). Her new beauty, which is attributed to God’s choosing her as Joseph’s bride (18:11) is so radiant that Joseph does not recognize her and asks, Who are you? Quickly, tell me” (19:4). Later, when Aseneth’s parents see that her beauty is “like (the) appearance of light” and

⁵⁸ Aseneth also has a special relationship with Levi, expressed through their handholding (22:12), and she also kisses Simeon and calls him her brother (28:14).

⁵⁹ So Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 213–14.

“like heavenly beauty,” they give thanks to God (20:6–8). Thus, in addition to her existential/ontological and epistemic changes, she has also undergone physical transformations.

In sum, the story of Joseph and Aseneth exhibits the common mythic pattern of a character’s exaltation after being humbled or humiliated. Aseneth descends from her place of pride and boasting to a seven-day period of humiliation that resembles death. She wears funerary garments, abuses herself, and covers herself and her chamber floor with ashes as she mourns. When the man from heaven appears to her, the transformation that she undergoes is described as new formation and new life, in line with Joseph’s prayer. Her change is holistic. Aseneth undergoes ontological/existential transformation by receiving immortal life. She receives new perception and divine mysteries, and, bodily, she is made more beautiful with a “heavenly beauty.” Moreover, she is incorporated into the people of God by becoming part of the house of Jacob.

In terms of subjectivity, Aseneth receives a new form of selfhood, as shown in the new name that the heavenly man gives to her: “And your name shall no longer be called Aseneth, but your name shall be City of Refuge” (15:7).⁶⁰ She has experienced exaltation and ontological change. Moreover, in her conversion, she transitions from her natural family and her worship of Egyptian deities into a set of relationships within which she worships the Most High God. Significantly, her new religious and familial relationship is established by her participation in the spirit via Joseph, a man who has God’s spirit (4:8). In this way, her new religious and ontological/existential self is shaped by relationality: her new relationships to God and God’s people determine Aseneth’s new existence.

⁶⁰ Cf. the discussion of identity this tale in Humphrey, *The Ladies and the Cities*, 48–53.

1.5 Summary: Functional Transformation in Jewish Antiquity

The texts in this section predominantly feature functional transformations.⁶¹ In 1 Samuel 10 and in the stories from LAB, the characters undergo transformations to fulfill divine purposes. In Daniel 4 and in Joseph and Aseneth, the transformations function pedagogically—to humble the king in the former and to bring conversion in the latter.

Unlike the discourse of moral transformation from the Hebrew Bible discussed above, each example of functional transformation depicts an event or experience of change described in a narrative mode. Consequently, the conceptions of selfhood differ from those in the biblical accounts of moral change. Perhaps the most obvious difference is that in the functional transformation accounts, the moral dimensions of the self are not emphasized. Even in the changes to Nebuchadnezzar and Aseneth, where the moral dimensions are more prominent, the accounts do not focus on moral agency, divine empowerment for keeping Torah, or moral organs. Rather, these narrative descriptions highlight the human inability to fulfill divine purposes apart from the transformation of the person into something new, as well as the human need for divinely-empowered change in order properly to relate to God and to align with God's order. In this way, the self is determined by its relationship to God, and, in the case of Aseneth, its relationship to God's people. The person is a *subject*, in the sense that its self-understanding centers on subjection to divine power.

⁶¹ The one exception may be the transformations of appearances in LAB, since it is unclear from the details what functions these changes serve.

2. Moral Transformation in Ancient Jewish Writings

2.1 The Inscription of the Heart in Jeremiah 31:31–34

Jeremiah describes human change in numerous places, and the composition's larger moral anthropology informs such references. Yet, Jeremiah includes diverse references to human interiority, and the composition contains multiple, if not inconsistent, models of the moral self. It is beyond the scope of this work to disentangle the prophet's varied anthropological presentations. Rather, in this section, I focus on the transformed heart in Jer 31:31–34. My discussion engages the larger literary context of Jeremiah, and, while noting points of dissonance, I primarily consider how the larger context illuminates the heart inscription in ch. 31.

Jeremiah interprets Israel and Judah's destruction by Babylon, as well as their subsequent restoration, within a theological and moral frame.⁶² God's people disobeyed God, and, as a result, they incur judgment and destruction. Afterward, God promises to restore them and to make a new covenant with them:

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant (בְּרִית הַדְּשָׁה) with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts (וְעַל-לִבָּם); and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know (יִדַע) the LORD,' for they shall all know (יִדְעוּ) me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more (31:31–34).⁶³

The announcement of a new covenant in vv. 31–33 recalls references elsewhere in Jeremiah to Gods' covenant with Israel. In Jer 11, for example, the prophet rebukes the people in Deuteronomistic fashion: "Cursed be anyone who does not heed the words of this covenant

⁶² So, ⁶² Leslie C. Allen, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 1.

⁶³ Unless noted otherwise, translations of Jeremiah are from the NRSV.

(ברית), which I commanded your ancestors when I brought them out of the land of Egypt” (11:4; cf. Deut 27:26).⁶⁴ Yet Israel and Judah’s ancestors broke the covenant through their disobedience, and, as a result, God “brought up on them all the words of this covenant” (11:8). Similarly, Jeremiah writes that “the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken the covenant” (11:9–10), which brings the Babylonian destruction that Jeremiah describes throughout. As in Jer 31:32, Jeremiah describes covenant disloyalty in relational terms, as adultery and defilement.⁶⁵ As a result of their unfaithfulness, the people not only incur judgment but also require larger, structural changes in the form of a new covenant.

Although Israel has broken its covenant with God, Jeremiah predominantly presumes that God’s people have sufficient moral agency to obey God’s law.⁶⁶ For example, although Yahweh set the law before God’s people, they disobeyed the divine voice and followed their own stubborn heart (9:12–14; cf. 11:1–5). Jeremiah pronounces a curse on people who trust in humanity and thereby turn away from Yahweh (17:5–6) and a blessing on those trust in Yahweh (17:7–8). Moreover, in an imperative that the people would acknowledge their guilt and return to God (3:13–14), the text “explicitly expresses a view of human beings in which they are capable of ‘acknowledge their guilt’ and repenting of their wickedness, even if his hope is that

⁶⁴ On echoes of Deuteronomy in Jer 11, see Weinfeld, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis,” 29.

⁶⁵ See also Jer 2:23, 27–28; 3:1, 6–10 (esp. v. 9), 20; 4:30; 5:4–5, 7–8, 19; 7:8–10, 19; 9:7–9, 12–16; 10:1–16; 11:13, 17; 13:22, 27; 14:10; 16:18; 18:15; 19:4–9; 22:8; 25:1–7.

⁶⁶ This is characteristic of Jeremiah’s “Deuteronomistic flavor” (Allen, *Jeremiah*, 1). For evidence of a Deuteronomistic outlook that presumes the capacity for obedience in its moral commands, see Jer 1:16; 2:17; 3; 4:14, 18; 5:6, 18, 29; 6:14–15; 7:5–7, 16–20, 21–24; 8:10–17; 9:7–11, 12–16; 10; 11:1–5, 6–17; 13:22; 14:10; 16:13, 16–18; 17:5–10, 24–27; 19:4–9; 21:8; 22:8; 25:1–15.

Similarly, early in the composition, Jeremiah recalls a “golden period” in which Israel was faithfully devoted to God. Yet they damaged their relationship with Yahweh by defiling themselves when they entered into the land (2:1–7). Throughout his descriptions, Jeremiah presumes that Israel has the moral capacity to repent. For discussion, see Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 49.

they might do so is slim.”⁶⁷ On the whole, therefore, “Jeremiah’s underlying anthropology is optimistic—people, for him, possess moral equipment to make the right moral choices.”⁶⁸

Jeremiah does, however, contain notable exceptions to its more typical anthropological optimism. As the writing progresses, Jeremiah’s outlook seemingly gives way to some pessimism (25:4–7; 35:12–17).⁶⁹ In some cases, he questions whether humans have the capacity to avoid sin. In 13:23, he writes, “Can Ethiopians change their skin or leopards their spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil” (13:23). That is, “what spots are to the leopard, evil is to human beings—part of their fundamental being.”⁷⁰ Despite such exceptions, which may show signs of the author’s doubt or uncertainty, Jeremiah largely maintains an optimistic anthropology in which humanity has the moral agency needed to follow God’s ways.⁷¹

Jeremiah exhibits parallel patterns in his references to the heart (לב). For the prophet, as elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, “the heart is the nucleus of the moral Self.”⁷² It is the “seat of the will, which controls moral decision-making.”⁷³ As the human’s moral center, Jeremiah describes it as the symbolic moral organ that God judges (שפט) and searches (11:20; 17:9; 20:12).

⁶⁷ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 49.

⁶⁸ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 49.

⁶⁹ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 50.

⁷⁰ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 49. Though, the passage contains some ambiguity, since למדי may mean “accustomed to” (Jer 2:24) or whether it denotes “having been taught” (Isa 8:16; 50:4, 54:13). Yet, as Lapsley argues: “Despite this ambiguity, the overall thrust of the verse depicts the people as inherently sinful and unchangeably corrupt (58–59).”

⁷¹ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 58–59.

⁷² Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 41; Thomas Krüger, “Das ‚Herz‘ in der alttestamentlichen Anthropologie” in *Anthropologische Aufbrüche: alttestamentliche und interdisziplinäre Zugänge zur historischen Anthropologie*, ed., Andreas Wagner FRLANT 232 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009) 104. See also Silvia Schroer and Thomas Staubli, *Body Symbolism in the Bible*, trans. Linda M. Maroney (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical, 2001), 43–44. See, e.g., Jer 3:10; 4:8, 14; 5:2; 9:13; 11:8; 16:12; 22:17.

⁷³ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 51; Krüger, “Das ‚Herz‘,” 109–13.

In this context, Israel's moral failing centers on its לב. Israel's sin is "engraved on the tablet of their heart" (17:1). Israel possesses an "evil will" (הרע לבם), according to which it walks (3:17; 7:24; 11:8; 16:12; 18:12; cf. 22:17). Its heart has become "stubborn and rebellious (לב סוֹרֵר וּמוֹדָה)" (5:23), and it needs to be cleansed of its evil (4:14). Yet, as Jaqueline Lapsley shows, Israel's moral difficulty is not that it has an inherently corrupt heart or moral equipment. Rather, the people possess an "evil will" (לבם הרע). In 18:12, for example, Jeremiah writes, "But they say, 'It is no use! We will follow our own plans (מַהֲשִׁבוֹתֵינוּ נַלְךְ), and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of our evil will (לְבוֹ-הָרָע נַעֲשֶׂה)." Fundamentally, Israel's error is that, in its "stubbornness" (שָׁרָר), it "refuses to be moved from its present course of evil, and for Jeremiah, this is the moral problem at the root of all people's problems."⁷⁴ Israel's problem is, therefore, not its moral *equipment* but its moral *will*, the "locus of perversity or corruption."⁷⁵ Israel's ב is evil because they have chosen to follow their own ways, rather than Yahweh's law ל

In line with the threads of positive moral selfhood that run through Jeremiah, the prophet mostly presumes that Israel can correct its heart problem by its own efforts. Like the uncircumcised nations, he describes Israel as "uncircumcised in heart" (4:4; 9:25–26; cf. Deut 10:16), and, for this reason, God punishes them (9:25–26).⁷⁶ Yet the people are able to remedy this situation. Just as God's people physically circumcise their men in order to consecrate them

⁷⁴ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 50–51. As Lapsley argues, "The root שָׁרָר means 'to be firm' in Aramaic and Arabic, but in biblical texts it always conveys a sense of excessive firmness, i.e., of 'stubbornness.'" (51). She cites Jer 5:23 and 6:28 as examples (51 n. 20). See also Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 168–69. Cf. ⁷⁴ J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 435–36.

⁷⁵ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 51.

⁷⁶ In Jeremiah, the state of the heart is as significant as ritual markers: the "assumption that physical circumcision on its own secured special favour with God was a grace mistake" (Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 42).

to God, so too can Israel take the initiative circumcise their hearts and thereby consecrate themselves again to Yahweh. Hence the command: “Remove the foreskin of your hearts” (4:4).⁷⁷

Yet, Jeremiah also describes inherently deviant hearts. He writes, “The heart is devious above all else (עֲקֹב הַלֵּב מְכַל); it is perverse” (17:9). This is perhaps Jeremiah’s most morally pessimistic reference to the לֵב, and he seems to suggest here, as in 13:23, that the source of the human problem with sin is its faulty moral equipment: the center of Israel’s moral will is inherently corrupt.⁷⁸ In such cases, the agent of change is necessarily divine, since people are unable to overcome their natural moral flaws. It is perhaps along this line of reading that in 24:7, God promises a heart replacement: “I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Yahweh” (translation mine). Similarly, in 32:39, God promises to give “one heart and one way.”⁷⁹ In short, Jeremiah’s descriptions of the heart, like his moral anthropology more broadly, are mixed.

In 31:31–34, Jeremiah emphasizes divine agency in moral transformation. As noted above, God’s judgment results from Israel’s covenant unfaithfulness. Rather than demand renewed faithfulness to the previous covenant, however, Jeremiah proclaims a new covenant upon Israel’s return from exile. This new covenant “will not be like the covenant” that God made with the people after delivering them from Egypt; God will put Torah “within them” and “write it on their hearts.”⁸⁰ Jeremiah does not here describe an organ replacement. Rather, he describes

⁷⁷ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 51. Cf the circumcision of the sinful inclination in 1QS V.4–5 (see discussion in Miriam T. Brand, *Evil Within and Without: The Source of Sin and Its Nature as Portrayed in Second Temple Literature*, Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements 9 [Göttingen: Bandenhoeck & Ruprecht: 2013], 87).

⁷⁸ Here, Jeremiah’s reference seems to be to a “corporate heart,” rather than an individual one. So, William Lee Holladay, *Jeremiah I: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1–25*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 198.

⁷⁹ Though, in this passage, the aim for transformation is not that Israel would know God, but that they would *fear* God. For discussion of this passage and 31:31–34, as well as their possible uses of Deuteronomy, see Moshe Weinfeld, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel,” *ZAW* 88 (1976): 30–31.

⁸⁰ In the context of Jeremiah, Israel needs the law inscribed on its heart, it seems, because Judah’s sin is written on their hearts (17:1). See Allen, *Daniel*, 356. Thus, the seeming “novelty” of the new

a moral change as an alteration of the central moral organ.⁸¹ Because it portrays the heart's transformation through the inscription of the new covenant, Jeremiah presupposes in 31:31–34 that Israel is *in need* of change for obedience. Thus, this discourse aligns more with Jeremiah's pessimistic conceptions of moral selfhood than with the Deuteronomistic ones.

Just as heart circumcision seems to open up the “blockage” that kept Israel from properly understanding the law in order to keep it, God's inscription of the covenant on Israel's heart produces new capacity for obedience.⁸² God empowers moral agency by producing new knowledge. In Jer 24:7, the purpose of Yahweh's gift of the new heart is for Israel to receive new awareness of Yahweh: “I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD.” After God inscribes Torah on Israel's heart, “No longer shall they teach one another, or say to one another, ‘Know (יִדְעוּ) the LORD,’ for they shall all know (יִדְעוּ) me, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more” (31:34). In this vision, Israel will no more learn Torah through teaching and study, but, rather, God will inscribe it onto their moral organ so that it will be neither forgotten nor disobeyed (cf. Deut 4:9–10).⁸³ As a result they will know God in a relational sense.⁸⁴ The heart is, therefore, both a moral organ and an epistemic organ.⁸⁵ By

covenant appears to lie in its internality—that it was written on Israel's heart (Weinfeld, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis,” 28). Cf. Terence E. Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, SHBC (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys Pub, 2002), 442.

⁸¹ Although Jeremiah's descriptions of heart transformation differ from those in Ezekiel 11, 36, there may be a literary relationship between the two compositions. See, Par Bernard Gosse, “La nouvelle alliance de Jérémie 31, 31–34: Du livre d'Ezéchiel au livre de Jérémie” *ZAW* 116 (2004): 568–80.

⁸² Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 51. See also Allen, *Daniel*, 62. As Weinfeld (“Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis”) shows that the notion of a circumcised heart also relates the idea of a new covenant: since male circumcision was necessary for entry into the previous covenant, circumcision of the heart is needed for the covenant written upon Israel's heart (34).

⁸³ Holladay, *Jeremiah*; 198; Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 611–12; Weinfeld, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis,” 26; Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, 443, 470.

⁸⁴ Fretheim, *Daniel*, 444. Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 581.

⁸⁵ For discussion of the heart as “the locus of reason and intelligence, of secret planning, deliberation and decision” in the Bible, see Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 43–44. See also the discussion of the range of possible meanings of “heart” in the Hebrew Bible in Krüger, “Das ‚Herz’,” 106–18.

altering the people's heart, God reconstitutes their knowledge, which newly empowers moral agency for future obedience.⁸⁶

A final point to observe is that the larger context of change—religious, social, political, and cultural—involved in “Israel’s rebirth” provokes reflections on transformation and selfhood.⁸⁷ Amidst Israel’s judgment, destruction, exile, and hope for restoration, can traditional models of the self be sustained as the people struggle to account for the theological significance and meaning of their experiences? Jeremiah seems predominantly to hold to a Deuteronomistic, optimistic view of the moral self, in which the self has the requisite moral agency to uphold God’s law.⁸⁸ Most important for my purposes, however, is that Israel’s circumstances of crisis and their experiences of destruction and exile provoke desire for transformation and questions about selfhood. For Jeremiah in particular, his theological and moral interpretations of Israel’s historical changes lead him to employ the discourse of human transformation and, implicitly, to reflect on his received conceptions of the moral self.

In sum, Jeremiah expresses a view of the moral self as capable of obeying God. Israel’s sins were not due to faulty moral equipment. Rather, the people sinned because they stubbornly persisted in following their own evil will. After God’s judgment, God inscribes a new covenant onto their hearts, which empowers obedience through epistemic transformation. In doing so, God effectively re-establishes Israel. Through this transformation discourse, Jeremiah seemingly

⁸⁶ See Allen, *Daniel*, 356–57; Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 198; Brueggemann, *Commentary*, 293–94. Weinfeld (“Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis”) argues that, although we cannot know his immediate context with certainty, Jeremiah seems to presume inadequacies in Israel’s larger environment of Torah education (28–29). That is, Jeremiah reflects “a certain disappointment with the literary-religious activity which failed to improve the spiritual attitude of the people” (29).

⁸⁷ I borrow the term “Israel’s rebirth” from Weinfeld, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis,” 27. See also Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, 441–43; Brueggemann, *Commentary*, 291–924.

⁸⁸ As noted above, pessimistic models of the moral self sometimes emerge in the final form of Jeremiah’s discourse, and such insistences may reveal some doubts or questions about the traditional model. Despite these occurrences, Jeremiah mostly upholds an optimistic view of selfhood—a response to God’s judgment that differs from Ezekiel’s (below).

maintains a Deuteronomistic view of capable moral selfhood amidst God's alteration of their core moral organ by divine initiative and agency.

2.2 The Creation of a New Moral Self in Ezekiel

Ezekiel predicts and describes the transformation of Israel, often with bodily language. Specifically, he prophesies that God will give the people a new heart and a new spirit (11:19-21; 36:24-27; 37:5-6 cf. 20:18-21).⁸⁹ As a result of these changes, the community will obey God's commands (11:21; 36:27). As with Jeremiah, to understand this transformation and the reasons for it, one must contextualize the composition historically—in relation to the audience's circumstances—and the transformation language literarily—in relation to the Israel's condition as portrayed by Ezekiel.

Historically, Ezekiel provides a response to the questions that arise with the realities of exile. In light of the national catastrophe brought by the Babylonian crisis, Ezekiel addresses “events that demanded theological interpretation.”⁹⁰ Stripped of two kings, its city, and its temple, Judah had reason to question its status as God's chosen. Moreover, it had reason to ask if the Babylonian gods had defeated Yahweh. Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel “articulated a theological meaning of the national crisis: the disaster was YHWH's powerful and just act, punishing his own people for their sins.”⁹¹

Literarily, a tension runs through Ezekiel with regard to the people's sin. In this tension, “people are variously portrayed as capable and as incapable of obedience.”⁹² On one hand,

⁸⁹ Cf. *Jub.* 1:19–21.

⁹⁰ Paul M. Joyce, “Ezekiel and Moral Transformation,” in *Transforming Visions: Transformation of Texts, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel*, ed. William A. Tooman and Michael A. Lyons, PTMS (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 140; Franz, Sedlmeier, “Transformationen: Zur Anthropologie Ezechiels” in *Anthropologische Aufbrüche*, ed. Andreas Wagner, 203–204.

⁹¹ Joyce, “Ezekiel and Moral Transformation,” 140–41.

⁹² Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 68.

certain portions of Ezekiel envisage a model of virtuous moral selfhood (3:16-21; 33:1-20; 9; 14; 18).⁹³ In this view “moral selfhood is innate in human beings and it manifests itself as moral action.” Humans are thus capable of right action and of repentance when they are disobedient. On the other hand, some sections portray humans as incapable of producing moral virtue (chs. 16, 20, 23, 24).

One can see the differences in two distinct ways in which Ezekiel portrays transformation as a solution to Israel’s sin. In ch. 18, Ezekiel speaks to the people on the basis of a virtuous moral self. He commands Israel not only to repent of their ways (18:30) and to cast away their transgression (18:31a), but also to “get yourselves a new heart (לֵב הַדָּשׁ) and a new spirit (רוּחַ הַדָּשׁ)” (18:31b). Presupposed in these commands is the conviction that the audience has the agency to resist sin and to achieve moral self-transformation.⁹⁴

In 11:19-21 and 36:24-27, however, God is responsible for the moral organ transplants that are needed for obedience. In 11:19–20, God says of Israel, “I will give them one heart,⁹⁵ and put a new spirit in them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. They shall be my people, and I will be their God.” Yet, “for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abomination” God will “bring their deeds upon their own heads (v. 21). In this passage, heart and spirit are primarily moral terms, denoting the seed of the human moral will.⁹⁶ God promises to give new moral life by means of a new spirit, as well as to replace the hardened heart

⁹³ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 68-77.

⁹⁴ See Gordon Matties, *Ezekiel 18 and the Rhetoric of Moral Discourse*, SBLDS 126 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990), 205–208.

⁹⁵ Here, “one heart” (cf. Jer 32:39) contrasts with the possibility of a “double heart” (Psalm 12:2[3]) or a “divided heart” (Psalm 86:11) See Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, AB (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1.190; Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 116.

⁹⁶ See the discussion of heart and spirit in Ezekiel in Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 114–16. Cf. Sedlmeier, “Transformationen,” 205–210, 213–16.

with a more malleable heart of flesh (more on this below). As a result of these divine organ replacements, the people will gain new moral agency and, therefore, obey God's law (v. 20).⁹⁷ God's transformation of the human grounds the possibility for obedience.⁹⁸

Portions of Ezekiel 36 are similar to ch. 11.⁹⁹ God promises to restore the people from the nations and to cleanse them from their uncleanness and their idolatry (vv. 24–26). Ezekiel writes, “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances” (vv. 26–27).¹⁰⁰ Here, Israel's heart is compared to a stone, which indicates that the “seat of the mind, of inclinations and resolutions” is “obdurate and obstinate.”¹⁰¹ Their present moral equipment is incapable of yielding obediently to God's law.¹⁰² Yawheh thus replaces the stony heart with a heart of flesh—one that is “yielding, malleable, impressionable.”¹⁰³ God also promises to place God's spirit inside of them. The רוּחַ here seems to refer to the human “animating impulse” and the empowerment of human moral life.¹⁰⁴ As in 11:19–21, by promising to replace the human spirit

⁹⁷ So Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 116; Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 1.262.

⁹⁸ Cf. Sedlmeier, “Transformationen,” 218–20.

⁹⁹ For a close reading of the similarities and differences between Ezek 11:19–21 and 36:24–26, see Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 114–15.

¹⁰⁰ This transformation is part of the divine cleansing of Israel from the impurities described in vv. 16–23. See Greengberg, *Ezekiel* 2.730.

¹⁰¹ Greengberg, *Ezekiel* 2.730; see also Sedlmeier, “Transformationen,” 205–210, 218.

¹⁰² So Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 2.248.

¹⁰³ Greengberg, *Ezekiel* 2.730. Cf. Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 499–500.

¹⁰⁴ Greengberg, *Ezekiel* 2.730; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 2.249. Sedlmeier, “Transformationen,” 228–30. Joyce (*Ezekiel*) argues that heart and spirit should be understood together in this passage as describing the “the renewal of the moral will of the of Israel by the outpouring of the dynamic power of YHWH” (204).

with God's own, Ezekiel presents an image of divine empowerment of Israel's moral agency through God's direct participation in human obedience (36:27).¹⁰⁵

In ch. 37 Israel, having been slain by their enemies, is morally and nationally dead.¹⁰⁶ When the spirit of Yahweh brings him into the valley of dry bones, God asks, "Son of man, can these bones live?"¹⁰⁷ God commands Ezekiel to prophesy Israel's resurrection: "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the LORD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come up on you, and cover you with skin, and put breath into you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD" (37:1–6). Here, God's gift of animating רוח to humanity recalls the account of God's creation of humanity in Gen 2:7.¹⁰⁸ Ezekiel then prophesies, and God restores the valley of dry bones to a multitude of living people (37:7–14). God promises also Israel's restoration as a people and their return from exile: "I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD have spoken and will act" (37:14).¹⁰⁹ In resurrecting Israel to new life, Yahweh will not only restore them to their land, but will also transform them into a new moral self with new knowledge of God (37:6). God will resurrect Israel from the dead and empower them with new moral agency to obey God's ways.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 2:249; Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 204. Here, as Joyce (*Ezekiel*) the image is not one of individual moral transformation but, rather, a description of Israel's collective moral restoration (205).

¹⁰⁶ Greengberg, *Ezekiel* 2.744. Cf. Matties, *Ezekiel 18 and the Rhetoric of Moral Discourse*, 200–202.

¹⁰⁷ Translation mine. Ezekiel's response, "Oh Lord God, you know," "presents YHWH as the subject of knowing" (Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 208) and, thus, may set the stage for the promise of new knowledge for Israel that follows in 37:6.

¹⁰⁸ Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 2.744; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 2:261; Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 209. Though, the רוח in vv. 6, 9 seems to refer to animating wind that Yahweh summons from the earth (Cf. Psalm 104:4; 148:8), which differs from the conception of God's spirit in v. 14 (Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 2.743–44).

¹⁰⁹ Here, "unlike the case of the restored bones into whom it was the wind that breathed life, the disinterred are vivified by God with 'my spirit'" (Greengberg, *Ezekiel* 2.746).

¹¹⁰ Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 500–501. Greengberg, *Ezekiel* 2.746–47.

In these latter instances of transformation discourse, Ezekiel envisages a pessimistic model of the moral self. As noted above, Lapsley argues that Ezekiel inherited both cultural viewpoints on the moral self—the virtuous model and the pessimistic model.¹¹¹ Yet in the sections that depict virtuous moral selfhood (e.g. 3:16-21; 18:30–31 33:1-20; 9; 14; 18), Ezekiel is the least innovative and “most obviously indebted to his priestly heritage.”¹¹² Ezekiel’s more pessimistic perspectives seemingly arise from his observation of a series of failures that led to exile. For this reason, his most innovative language strips humans of their moral capacity as “the first step toward a new way of thinking about moral identity.” Put simply, the realities of Israel’s sin and the destruction to which it led lead Ezekiel to conclude that Israel is simply incapable of obedience and that God must recreate the people’s moral selfhood in order for them to obey in the future. Thus, in the transformations in chs. 11 and 36, Ezekiel portrays human moral capacity as necessarily a gift from God. “This marks the beginning, but only the beginning, of a shift from the dominant view to an new way of analyzing, and potentially solving, the problem of how people can relate faithfully to their world and to their God.”¹¹³ In addition to promising Israel’s restoration, therefore, the author seeks to transform the audience’s moral self-understanding. The old view is dead and the audience needs a new conception of the moral self—“a restructuring of the national psychology.”¹¹⁴

In conclusion, like Jeremiah, Ezekiel’s account contains multiple models of the moral self. Yet, in wrestling with implications and consequences of Israel’s sin, Ezekiel ultimately affirms a pessimistic anthropological view. In chs. 11, 36, and 37, for example, God’s people sin not only because they have chosen disobedience; they are inherently incapable of obedience.

¹¹¹ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 68.

¹¹² Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 106.

¹¹³ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 107. Though, for a different view, see, “La nouvelle alliance de Jérémie 31, 31–34,” 568–80.

¹¹⁴ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, 170.

Thus, the people need *existential-moral* transformation: Israel is morally dead, and God, as a capable agent, transforms their moral agency.¹¹⁵ Because Israel's moral inadequacy stems from a "structural defect of the heart," their transformation demands not merely an alteration, but a wholesale "replacement of that moral organ."¹¹⁶ Moreover, God accomplishes transformation by giving new spirit to empower Israel's existential-moral conduct. Beyond Jeremiah's inscription of a new covenant on Israel's heart, God gives the people new moral equipment and resurrects Israel's morally dead community, creating a new moral self.¹¹⁷

2.3 Prayers for a New Heart in Psalm 51

In Psalm 51, the petitioner prays for forgiveness and renewal with language similar to that in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Indeed, the author seems to have drawn on Ezekiel 36 for his images when he asks for a new heart and a new spirit as part a larger prayer for "liberation" from sin.¹¹⁸

I structure the Psalm into two sections: prayers for forgiveness of sins (vv. 1–9), and prayers for transformation and restoration (vv. 10–19).¹¹⁹ In the first part, the psalmist asks God for forgiveness and for cleansing (vv. 1–2). In vv. 3–5, the petitioner confesses his sin and

¹¹⁵ On the divine initiative, see Joyce, "Ezekiel and Moral Transformation," 149–50. As Lapsley argues, "Their capacity for right action is dependent upon a radical change in their being, which only Yahweh has the power to affect" (*Can These Bones Live?*, 105). The transformations described in Ezekiel also have epistemic dimensions (Sedlmeier, "Transformationen," 217–18; cf. Krüger "Das ,Herz'," 116–17).

¹¹⁶ Newsom, "Genealogy of the Introspective Self," 67.

¹¹⁷ Ezekiel's portrayal of the moral self shows little concern to distinguish between the community and the individual. It may be that what applies to the community also applies to the individual (so Sedlmeier, "Transformationen," 228). Or, as this study suggests is true for other ancient writers, it may be that the strong distinctions between community and individual that are so common in the post-Enlightenment West are simply foreign to Ezekiel, who may more naturally think about humanity in relational and collective terms.

¹¹⁸ Frank-Lothar Hossfeld *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 15–16.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Hossfeld, *Psalms*, 16–18.

acknowledges that God is upright in God's judgments concerning his transgressions: "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified (צדק) in your sentence and blameless (זכה) when you pass judgment (שפט)." ¹²⁰

Beyond confessing that he has sinned, the psalmist adds that he was "born guilty" and a sinner at conception (v. 5). He thus locates the source of sin not merely in poor decision-making or rebellion, but in an entanglement with sin that characterizes humanity from its inception. ¹²¹ God desires, however, for truth to reside in the author's "innermost being," and God teaches wisdom to the author in the "hidden parts" (v. 6). Thus, God can effect changes in the interior of the moral self, which is necessitated by the author's being broken and crushed (v. 8). In these descriptions, the psalmist, like Ezekiel, presumes a pessimistic view of the moral self in which the human is inherently flawed and reliant on God to produce the changes necessary for obedience to God.

In response to his moral plight, the psalmist prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." With the verb ברא, the author envisages not merely a need for forgiveness but also a need for Yahweh to *create* part of the moral self anew. ¹²² He requests a

¹²⁰ It is possible that the psalmist's confession includes sins both against God and against humanity. See Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 456.

¹²¹ Hossfeld, *Psalms*, 2.20; Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1990), 19–20. Cf. Mitchell J. Dahood, *Psalms II, 51-100: Introduction, Translation and Notes*, AB (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), 4. This is not to say that sin is linked with birth or that it is somehow "transmitted genetically." Rather it seems to imply that the individual's sins, like Israel's in his history, is "affected by sin" in its entire existence (John Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3 vols., BCOTWP [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 2.129–30). Moreover, as argued below, the subsequent prayers for a new heart and renewed spirit imply defective moral organs as the source of sin.

¹²² As Tate (*Psalms*) argues, it is not necessary to hold that ברא refers to *creatio ex nihilo*. In this prayer, the creation is more likely the creation of "a new order of existence, a new arrangement, or a new emergence of something shaped by the divine power and will" (23). The text envisages "a transformation which could be accomplished only by divine power and a work on the order of the first creation of the world" (23).

new לב and a renewed רוח together in order to portray “the very center of his existence.”¹²³ In the literary context of this Psalm, the author draws attention not only to the moral aspects of these symbolic organs but also to the epistemic and existential dimensions.¹²⁴ As suggested elsewhere in this study, the heart is both a moral and epistemic organ¹²⁵ spirit too functions as “the center of the life force and the will.”¹²⁶ By praying for *both* a clean heart and a renewed spirit, the psalmist requests not only a renewed/recreated moral center but also for moral “dynamism”—a spirit empowered by God, no longer weak and susceptible to sin.¹²⁷ This request presumes also that this transformation can only be accomplished by divine agency and divine power.¹²⁸

The petitioner vows also to teach sinners the ways of God so that they too would return to Yahweh (v. 13). After an additional request that God would enable his speech—a request that further demonstrates his total dependence on divine power—the author turns to cultic discourse by describing a “broken spirit” and a “broken and contrite heart” as the sacrifices that God finds acceptable (v. 17). In the final section, he maintains a cultic focus by praying for God to restore Jerusalem’s walls and for Israel’s sacrifices to resume in ways that are indeed pleasing to God.¹²⁹ In this final move, the psalmist reveals that the themes and petitions are not limited to an individual and his sins; the personal descriptions apply in some way to the larger community of God’s people as well.

¹²³ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 2.21. Cf. *Jub* 1:19–21.

¹²⁴ Cf. *Jub* 1:19–21.

¹²⁵ On the use of heart in an epistemic sense in Psalm 51, see Hossfeld, *Psalms*, 2.21; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Continental Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 505. See also, Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 41–55. Though note that they specifically associate the “clean heart” in Psalm 51 with a “clear conscience” (46).

¹²⁶ Hossfeld, *Psalms*, writes, “In a certain sense life and death depend on the ‘spirit.’ Anyone who has ‘spirit’ has a share in God’s ‘Spirit’ and is thereby enabled to speak and act in God’s stead (e.g. as king, prophet, or charismatic)” (2.21). See also Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 505.

¹²⁷ Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2.133–34.

¹²⁸ See Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 504–505.

¹²⁹ See discussion in Declaissé-Walford, *Book of Psalms*, 457.

Although Psalm 51 does not portray a transformative event, the author advances “a sense of crisis involving the inadequacy of the moral organ of the heart,” which “is articulated first in the imagery of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (and in a contemporaneous strand of Deuteronomy) as a structural defect of the heart requiring physical action—circumcision, direct inscription of torah, or even replacement of that moral organ.”¹³⁰ Thus, the psalmist resembles (and perhaps draws on) Ezekiel more than Jeremiah in that his moral equipment is so corrupted that it must be replaced. He uses these the heart and the spirit as symbolic representations of the self, and this suggests that the divine action would do more than alter “parts” of one’s self or newly empower human agency. God’s creative power would create a new moral self that would be liberated from the existential-moral condition described in v. 5.

In sum, as in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the psalmist’s prayers for a new heart and a renewed spirit presume a defective moral self. The author has not only sinned, but he was born into a sinful condition (v. 5) and is dependent on God for restoration. By praying for new moral equipment, the psalmist asks for God to create a new moral self that, tacitly, would understand how to obey God’s ways (cf. v. 6). This new self would be able to teach Israel the ways of God so that they too could return to Yahweh (v. 13). Furthermore, the author applies this same theme of transformation to the people of God more broadly and thereby envisages the same moral predicaments and solutions to the people of God’s corporate sense of self. For the individual as for the nation, defective moral agents require the creation of new moral selves by divine power.

¹³⁰ Newsom, “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 67. Cf. the argument of Goldingay (*Psalms*) that this transformation “deals not only with the stain that results from past wrongdoing but also with the dynamics that will continue to produce wrongdoing” (133). On the request, which echoes Ezekiel and Jeremiah, for a change that has not yet occurred, Krüger (“Das ‚Herz’”) suggest that the Psalmist requests that which Ezekiel promises (117).

2.4 Moral Transformation in the Dead Sea Scrolls: *4QBarkhi Nafshi* and the *Hodayot*

In this section I briefly examine two texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls: *4QBarkhi Nafshi* and the *Hodayot*. An in-depth analysis of these writings or others from Qumran is beyond the scope of my study.¹³¹ Some discussion is warranted, however, because these two texts pull together a number of themes that have emerged in the writings examined in this chapter.

4QBarkhi Nafshi

Although biblical passages like Jer 31, Ezek 36, and Psalm 51 use symbolic organs to describe moral predicaments and transformations, *4QBarkhi Nafshi* presents an innovative and creative use of such organs for moral reflection. The author presents an “extraordinary catalogue of body parts” in the form of a first-person prayer to describe organs upon which God takes some action.¹³² These organ changes signify different components of a person’s moral change through God’s direct intervention.¹³³ For example, the author claims that, for the needy, God has “opened their eyes to see his paths, and their ear[s] to hear his teaching” (4Q434 f1i: 3-4), “circumcised the foreskin of their hearts” (וימול עורלות לבם), “set their feet firm on the path” (4Q434 f1i:4), and promises to give “an[oth]er heart” (וּכְלַב אַחֵר) in 4Q434 f1i:10). A selection of 4Q436 that contains a first-person prayer is illustrative:

Li 5(...) You have commanded my heart, and my kidneys you have taught well, lest they forget your statutes. 6 [On my heart] you [have enjoined] your law, on my kidneys you have engraved it; and you have prevailed upon me, so that I pursue after you[r] ways (...) 10 [the heart of stone] you have [re]buked out of me, and have set a pure heart in its place. The evil inclination [you] have rebuked

¹³¹ Other examples of human transformation from Dead Sea Scrolls might have been considered. See, e.g., the circumcision of the will in *The Community Rule* (1QS V.5–5). Though, as Brand (*Evil Within and Without*) shows, this moral transformation presumes human free will and occurs by human agency. This text depicts neither divine decision nor divine action in the moral change (87–88). See also the analysis of prayer collections from Qumran, especially in *The Words of the Luminaries* and the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, in Daniel K Falk, “Liturgical Progression and the Experience of Transformation in Prayers from Qumran,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 22.3 (2015): 267–84.

¹³² Newsom, “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 68.

¹³³ Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, 42-58.

[out of my kidneys] [...] *vacat* 1ii 1 [and the spirit of ho]lines you have set in my heart. Lechery of the eyes you have removed from me, and they (lit. it) gazed upon [all] 2 [your ways. The s]tiffness of neck you have expelled from me, and you have made it into humility. A wrathful nose you have removed [from me, and have set] 3 [in me a spirit of lo]ng suffering. (4Q436 li 5b-6,10–lii 4 par. 4Q435 2i 1–5)¹³⁴

From these lines one can observe several features of the transformations that the author describes, as well as some convictions about selfhood presumed in his descriptions. To begin, the author uses these organs rhetorically to express human sinfulness: he needed these somatic changes because his moral organs were corrupt.¹³⁵ Prior to the changes, he had a heart of stone and an evil inclination (יצר רע in 4Q436 fl a+bi:10), which is seemingly housed in the kidneys. By objectifying his organs as sources of sin, “the self is represented as a complex psychic body whose key organs are not under his own control and whose transformation into a desired moral state requires forceful action by God on those organs.”¹³⁶ In this pessimistic view of moral selfhood, the faulty moral organs must be replaced in order for the author to be freed from his sinful condition.¹³⁷

As a corollary, God is the necessary agent of moral transformation. In the passage under consideration, God commands, rebukes, inscribes, and even replaces the heart, inscribes, rebukes, and instructs the kidneys, rebukes the evil *yetzer*,¹³⁸ removed the eyes’ lechery, expels

¹³⁴ I borrow this translation, which follows Brand’s (*Evil Within and Without*) “adaptation of DJD XIX (p. 299)”: from Newsom, “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 68. The underlined portions occur in multiple manuscripts (68 n. 15).

¹³⁵ Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, 44; Newsom, “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 68. Cf. David Rolph Seely, “Implanting Pious Qualities as a Theme in the *Barkī Nafshī* Hymns” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty Years after Their Discovery; Proceedings of the Jerusalem Congress, July 20–25, 1997*, eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman, Emanuel Tov, and James VanderKam (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000), 331.

¹³⁶ Newsom, “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 69.

¹³⁷ Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, 44–46.

¹³⁸ On conceptions of the *yetzer* in ancient Jewish writings, see discussions Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, 69–146.

the stiff neck, and replaces the wrathful nose.¹³⁹ Here, the language of God “rebuking” the inclination and the stone heart is language “for the exorcism of evil spirits and suggests that the speaker’s agency was previously controlled by an alien will.”¹⁴⁰ Thus, even if that which is rebuked is the evil inclination within and not an external spirit, when God acts on the author’s body to rescue him from the effects of his corrupt moral organs, he hints at a conflicted inner self and portrays his body as “a locus where other agents operate.”¹⁴¹ That is, the author may be influenced by traditions that symbolize one’s moral equipment, but, in the text above, he conceptualizes the source of sin as a sinful power. He therefore he needs an act of God to replace that equipment.

What does God’s transformation accomplish? To begin, the replacement of the corrupt moral organs and God’s inscriptions of the law on the heart and kidneys portray the removal of the source of sin like the removal of a foreskin (Q434 1 i 2–4) and the internalization of God’s law in his “inmost parts.”¹⁴² When God transforms the speaker’s organs, therefore, God does more than instruct, inspire, or call to repentance. As Miriam Brand argues, “the change wrought by God in 4QBarkhi Nafshi is not merely pedagogical, but a change in the speaker’s internal being.”¹⁴³ By transforming the moral organs that are the ultimate source of sin, God transforms the author’s “evil nature.”¹⁴⁴ In effect, the speaker describes God’s creation of a new moral self.

¹³⁹ In biblical texts, kidneys are often related to the heart and similarly function as organs associated with integrity, thought, and emotional feeling (Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 70–71). The eye, when referred to negatively, can relate to evil desires that often lead to evil actions (Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 103–21, esp. pp. 118–21). The neck often symbolizes pride, and the nose is often associated with anger and wrath (Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 91–96).

¹⁴⁰ Newsom, “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 68–69.

¹⁴¹ “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 68–69. Cf. Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, 46–47.

¹⁴² Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, 44, 45.

¹⁴³ Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, 43–44.

¹⁴⁴ Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, 44.

Hodayot

In the above passages from Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Psalm 51, and *Barkhi Nafshi*, we find a trajectory of authors describing moral transformation through the alteration of symbolic moral organs. The *Hodayot* is different. Although it includes references to moral organs and to spirit, it does not include dramatic portrayals of transformation into a new moral self or detailed accounts of organ replacements. The *Hodayot* contains references to human change, to be sure. The author writes, for example, “I thank you, Lord, that you have redeemed my life from the pit and that from Shel-Abaddon you have lifted me up to an eternal height, so that I walk about on a limitless plain. I know that there is hope for one whom you have formed from the dust for an eternal council. And a perverted spirit you have purified from great sin that it might take its place the host of the holy ones and enter into community with the congregation of the children of heaven” (XI.20–23). Similarly, “[Y]ou set my feet upon a rock and you have turned my steps from the w[ay...] [...] in the eternal way, and upon the paths that you have chosen my steps” (XI.4). He also writes that God “opened a broad place in my heart” (XIII.35) and “opened my ears with instruction” (XIV.7).

On the whole, however, the details of transformation in the *Hodayot* are not described as much as they are assumed. Yet the composition presumes some of the transformation traditions discussed above and offers a unique vision for moral selfhood. In the following brief treatment, I discuss some aspects of the transformations that have taken place in the *Hodayot*’s author.

To begin, the *Hodayot*’s Community Psalms envisage a negative moral anthropology.¹⁴⁵ “Our creation is from dust as a ‘vessel of clay’ (1QH^a 9:23) with a ‘spirit of flesh’ (1QH^a 5:30). We are ruled by a ‘spirit of perversity (1QH^a 5:32) and a ‘spirit of error (1QH^a 9:24), and utterly

¹⁴⁵ For a nuanced and more thorough account of the mixed anthropological discourse in the *Hodayot*, see Nicholas A. Meyer, *Adam’s Dust and Adam’s Glory in the Hodayot and the Letters of Paul: Rethinking Anthropogony and Theology*, NovTSup 168 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 18–94.

characterized by sin, guilt, impurity, and a general sense of disgustingness.”¹⁴⁶ Notably, the author of the *Hodayot* links the moral with the ontological. God created humanity from the earth, and, as a result, humanity, in its natural state, is hopelessly sinful. For this reason, sin is linked with human corporeality (e.g., 1QH^a IX.23b–25). Sinfulness is, therefore, “not connected to any particular transgression;” rather, sinfulness is a natural consequence of being human, a being made of clay and water.¹⁴⁷

Particularly noteworthy is that, for the author of the *Hodayot*, one who lives by “a spirit of flesh” is incapable of proper moral understanding (1QH^a 5:30–21). Yet he thanks God that God has placed spirits in him (1QH^a 4:29) and has given him insight (1QH^a 6:36). His understanding, that is, comes from God (1QH^a 7:25).¹⁴⁸ This difference between the natural human state of moral ignorance and the author’s thankfulness for God-given knowledge presupposes an experience of significant transformation by divine agency.

Specifically, the author has experienced moral change by way of epistemic transformation. “The speaker refers to a conception of a second creation, exegetically derived from Ezekiel 36. The *spirit of God placed within a person* is what creates a being capable of understanding and of righteous action.”¹⁴⁹ Unlike in Ezekiel 36, however, the transformed person in the *Hodayot* is not free from sinfulness, and he continues to reflect upon his sin and his moral change, even if sin is no longer the determining factor of his selfhood. “Now his subjectivity is one that is formed by God’s spirit within him, which itself is the focus of attention. And this spirit, by knowing itself, is also enabled to look upon and understand the transcendent divine

¹⁴⁶ Newsom, “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 77.

¹⁴⁷ Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, 60–61.

¹⁴⁸ Newsom, “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 78. Cf. Jub 1:19–21.

¹⁴⁹ Newsom, “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 78. Emphasis mine.

mysteries.”¹⁵⁰ Thus, the author has been transformed through God’s spirit, and this epistemic transformation provides knowledge of sin and sinfulness that is seemingly unavailable to non-transformed figures. This transformation through gifts of knowledge from God, in turn, empowers moral agency for the creature of clay. Through divine agency, the author has undergone epistemic and moral transformation while continuing to live in his mortal, somatic state of existence.

2.5.1 Summary: Transformation and Selfhood in *Barkhi Nafshi* and the *Hodayot*

Similar to the pessimistic views of the moral self in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Psalm 51, the author of *4QBarkhi Nafshi* describes the human as inherently sinful. The author’s originally corrupt moral organs, which express aspects of his moral self, are the source of his sinful nature, and he is helpless to alter this condition. Yet, in this prayer he gives thanks to God for liberating him from this nature by altering or replacing his evil moral organs. In so doing, he envisages a conception of the moral self that is subjected to evil inclinations and powers in its pre-transformed state, but subjected to God for change and, presumably, for future obedience. With similarities to Ezekiel 36, Jer 31, and Psalm 51, the author needs not merely an alteration or empowerment of the self, but God’s creation of a new self for new moral existence.

The author of the *Hodayot* presumes and partially describes epistemic transformation through the gift of God’s spirit. As a result of this change, he has new knowledge that partially empowers moral obedience to God. Yet he has not fully overcome his sinful condition that derives from his natural, physical created state. He continues to revisit and reflect upon his status, according to his new knowledge. In this way, one finds in the *Hodayot* “a new way of

¹⁵⁰ Newsom, “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 78. For a more thorough account of subjectivity in the *Hodayot*, see Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran*, STDJ (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 191–286.

being a self”—a subject with “an introspective experience of the self in its wretchedness and in its transformation, an experience that it models and practices over and over again.”¹⁵¹

Nonetheless, this more introspective moral self is still determined by powers that are not intrinsic to the self—above all, spirit that is a gift of God.

An important feature that both *Barkhi Nafshi* and the *Hodayot* share is that they interlace the moral with the existential. In *Barkhi Nafshi*, the original moral organs function as powers that govern the author’s existence and that determine his moral potential. In the *Hodayot*, similarly, spirits of flesh, perversity, and error previously ruled over the author. In both writings, God replace the sources of sin that govern human moral existence. The authors present themselves as existential-moral subjects in the sense that they were previously *subjected to* powers that dominated their moral existence. After their respective transformations, however, each is in a new position to have God govern his existence and to empower his moral agency.

2.5 From Jealousy to Sympathy: Moral Transformation in the *Testament of Simeon*

A final example to consider is from the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, specifically, in the *Testament of Simeon*.¹⁵² Some scholars have argued that the *Testaments* is a Christian document. My view aligns, however, with the assessment of James L. Kugel who argues that the composition’s literary history does seem to bear traces of Christian influence or editing. Yet if such editing did occur, the Christian material is only a “small fraction of the whole” and is not

¹⁵¹ Newsom, “Genealogy of the Introspective Self,” 78.

¹⁵² Unless otherwise noted, English translations are from James L. Kugel’s translation and commentary in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*, eds. Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffman, eds., 3 vols. (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013).

explicitly identified with the teachings of Jesus or his followers.¹⁵³ It is not fitting, then to label the *Testaments* a Christian document. They more likely represent a Jewish writing that was originally authored in the second century B.C.E., but that was copied and amended over time, creating a complex literary history.¹⁵⁴

In the *Testament of Simeon*, that author has Simeon open with a confession. Although he was physically strong, active, and fearless, he acknowledges,

[Yet] my heart was hard and my liver was immovable and my innards had no compassion. For courage...is given to men from the Most High in [both] their souls and their bodies. And at that time I was envious of Joseph because our father loved him. And I set my liver against him to kill him, because the Angel of deceit had sent the Spirit of envy and blinded my mind, so that I did not treat him as a brother—indeed, I did not even spare [the feelings of] my father Jacob (2:4–7).

Simeon's moral condition is complicated. His symbolic moral organs—heart, liver, and “innards”—are obstinate. Here, the author seems to join multiple organs together, collectively, to represent the “great inside of human beings”—the seat of emotions, thought and will.¹⁵⁵ It would appear at first, then, that Simeon's moral equipment is inherently defective. Yet, in 2:7, the author discloses that Simeon sets his liver against Joseph to kill him “because the Angel of deceit had sent the Spirit of envy” and “blinded [his] mind.”¹⁵⁶ In this passage, then, Simeon does not give into the vice of envy and desire to kill Joseph because of an intrinsically sinful condition. Rather, cosmic spiritual forces have blinded his mind and, implicitly, have hardened the various facets of his moral self, symbolized by this collection of moral organs in 2:4. Simeon later

¹⁵³ Kugel, “Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 1702–1703. Kugel suggests, “What seems far more likely is that the sections in each testament that ‘predict’ the future...attracted the attention of an early Christian, who saw in them the perfect opportunity to insert his own ‘prediction.’ Thus I show *all* the Christian interpolations entered the *Testaments*, and why they are a relatively small part of the whole” (1702).

¹⁵⁴ Kugel, “Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 1697–1700.

¹⁵⁵ Kugel, “Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 1716.

¹⁵⁶ Kugel (“Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs”) notes that the liver was understood as the seat of aggression in Greek science (1716).

elaborates on this spiritual and moral oppression when he instructs his children to “beware of the Spirits of deceit and of jealousy, since jealousy takes over a person’s whole mind and will not allow him to eat or drink or do anything good” (3:2).¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, these spirits are “always pushing him to kill the person of whom he is jealous, and so long as the person of whom he is jealous flourishes, he himself will wither away” (3:3) In short, these powers have enslaved Simeon’s moral self.

Yet Simeon repents of his sins. He recounts, “For two years’ time, [therefore,] I afflicted my soul with fasting in the fear of the LORD, and I found out that freedom from jealousy comes the fear of the LORD” (3:4). Simeon then discusses repentance as an act that leads to transformation: “If a man flees to the LORD, the evil Spirit will depart from him, and his mind will be relieved” (3:5). Moreover, “he will even feel some sympathy for the person of whom he was jealous and not be prejudiced against those who love him and so cease being jealous” (3:6). Here, Simeon describes moral transformation with two dimensions. First, the spirit that blinded the mind departs and brings relief. This envisages epistemic transformation. Second, jealousy and murderous intentions disappear, and sympathy replaces jealousy. Simeon thus describes transformation of the moral disposition.

The Testament of Simeon exhibits a tension in divine and human moral agency. Early in the testament, Simeon recalls a moment in which he wanted to kill Joseph, but “God restrained and prevented” him from carrying out the acts of his “own hands” by causing Simeon’s to wither for a week (2:11). This occurs while Simeon is enslaved to cosmic spirits and seems to presume that he has no control over his actions. Yet the process of moral transformation begins with

¹⁵⁷ Such references to various types of spirits animating, changing, or motivating people are common in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*. See, e.g., T. Reu. 2:1–3:2; T. Levi. 2:3; T. Jud. 13:3; 20:1–5; 24:2; 25:3; T. Iss. 4:4; 7:7; T. Dan. 1:6, 8; 2:1; 3:1–2; T. Gad. 1:9; 3:1; 6:2; T. Jos. 7:4; T. Benj. 3:3; 5:2; 6:1.

repentance, which causes the spirit to flee, freeing the person from enslavement (cf. James 4:7). Similarly, Simeon advises his children later, “So now, my children, make your hearts good in the LORD’S sight and make straight your paths in the sight of men, and in this way you will find favor in the eyes of God and men” (5:2). This instruction presumes that humanity can be enslaved to cosmic powers, but that they have the capability to repent and find liberation from enslavement.

In sum, the Testament of Simeon describes a moral predicament in which Simeon is subjected to the power of powerful spirits. These spirits blind his mind and govern his actions. Yet, when Simeon repents and turns to God, he finds liberation from the spirits and transformation in his mind and in his moral disposition. In terms of selfhood, this account walks a fine line between pessimistic and optimistic models: humans can be enslaved by cosmic spirits that take over their symbolic moral organs, yet humanity also has the requisite moral agency to repent and experience God’s liberation from spiritual oppression.

2.6 Summary: Moral Transformation in Jewish Antiquity

The writings discussed above contain numerous references to moral transformation, commonly through the alteration or replacement of symbolic moral organs. These writings also disclose multiple conceptions of moral selfhood. From Jeremiah to Ezekiel and Psalm 51, one finds a shift from Deuteronomistic models of a virtuous moral self to more pessimistic conceptions, in which the self is inherently morally flawed and needs transformation—indeed, recreation—by God. *Barkhi Nafshi* heightens somatic reflections of this tradition by presenting not only heart changes, but also a vision for God’s fashioning of a new moral self through the transformation of numerous moral organs. These negative views of moral selfhood persist

through Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Psalm 51: the self's moral equipment is defective, and only divine power can enable human obedience. The *Hodayot* presumes, more than describes, moral change. In each of these writings, human moral selfhood is transformed and determined not ultimately by inherent human characteristics or agency, but by divine power and ongoing relationship with God.

Among these traditions, one finds a strong emphasis on spirit. In the writings from the Hebrew Bible, the gift of Yahweh's spirit both recreates and empowers moral selfhood. In the *Hodayot* and in the Testament of Simeon, multiple spirits influence or control human moral agency. Although the accounts are diverse, spirit develops into a central focus in these writings.

Significantly, the writings discussed from the Hebrew Bible do not describe *experiences* of moral transformation. Rather, they contain promises (Jer 31; Ezek 11, 36) and prayers (Psalm 51) for change. The future-oriented, unrealized nature of this discourse reflects not experiences of change but the emergence of a moral consciousness that is newly aware of its need for moral transformation by divine power. The moral changes in *Barkhi Nafshi* and the *Hodayot*, are, however in the past tense, which provide a significantly different subjectivity than the writings of the Hebrew Bible. For one who needs and anticipates moral transformation (as in the biblical texts), the moral self is 'produced, experienced, and articulated,'¹⁵⁸ in relation to the realities of sinfulness and an inability to avoid sin apart from divine intervention. Morally, this is a self shaped by need and longing. For writings that portray and rehearse moral change as a prior event, however, the self is achieved, experienced, and described on the basis of past transformations and continued moral empowerment. That is, as the authors of *Barkhi Nafshi* and the *Hodayot* reflect on and rehearse their sins (in the case of the *Hodayot*) and their experiences

¹⁵⁸ This, again, is the definition of subjectivity with which this study operates, drawn from Newsom, *Self as Symbolic Space*, 192.

of change, their discourse indicates that moral transformation is a central feature of their self-understanding. Their past moral transformation and continued reflections on it are, therefore, partly constitutive of their subjectivity.

3. Conclusion

From the discussions above, I offer the following summary conclusions:

1. As noted in the chapter introduction, two major types of change emerge from my study of human transformation in ancient Jewish writings.
 - a. The first is moral transformation. The passages that I discuss from the Hebrew Bible emphasize moral change through God's alteration or replacement of the heart and, often, the giving of spirit as well. The conceptions of the moral self in these works are increasingly pessimistic from Jeremiah to Ezekiel to Psalm 51. *Barkhi Nafshi* and the *Hodayot* inherit these pessimistic models, and, in their own ways, showcase moral transformation as a defining feature of the moral self. The Testament of Simeon, in contrast, walks a thin line between anthropological pessimism and optimism, emphasizing both the human enslavement to cosmic powers and the moral agency needed to repent and find liberation.
 - b. The second category is functional transformation. These examples are diverse. In 1 Samuel 10 and the stories in LAB, God alters characters' appearances, or God changes them into different people in order for them to accomplish divine purposes. In both Dan 4 and *Joseph and Aseneth*, the transformations function pedagogically. For Nebuchadnezzar, this change brings him into alignment with God's order, and God transforms Aseneth as part of her conversion to the true God and her incorporation into the people of God. Both Nebuchadnezzar and Aseneth exemplify a humiliation-to-exaltation pattern as part of an epistemic change. In sum, the discourses of transformation in this category feature replacements of the self, transformations of appearances, clothing metaphors, epistemic change, and ontological change.
2. In these diverse examples of moral and functional transformation, divine agency in change is consistent. Whether explicitly by giving of God's spirit or by some other means, God possesses the requisite power to effect change. Even in the context of the Testament of Simeon, in which one can repent of sin while under the governance of spirits, God accomplishes the transformation.

3. Although these writings feature diverse types of transformation, the epistemic dimensions of change are strikingly prevalent. Because the heart is both a moral and epistemic organ, heart alterations and replacements produce new knowledge and perspectives that enhance moral agency. Although the moral aspects of selfhood differ in Dan 4 and in Joseph and Aseneth, both characters receive new understandings of their relations to God and their places within the divine order. From Hebrew Bible texts through the late writings of the late Second Temple period, human changes by divine power commonly include epistemic changes.
4. The transformation discourse of Jewish antiquity features considerably more references to spirit than that of the Greco-Roman writings discussed in ch. 5. In Ezekiel and in Psalm 51, God's spirit transforms and enlivens Israel's moral selfhood. In 1 Samuel 10 and in the examples from LAB, Gods' spirit consistently serves as the catalyst for empowerment and change. In the Testament of Simeon and in the *Hodayot*, spirits—whether God's or malicious ones—govern human moral selfhood and practice. Throughout these writings, the self is subjected to a spirit or spirits. Yet, even when spirit language is absent, divine agency in change is consistent in these diverse examples of moral and functional transformation. Whether explicitly by giving of God's spirit or by some other means, God possesses the requisite power to effect change. Even in the context of the Testament of Simeon, in which one can repent of sin while under the governance of spirits, God accomplishes the transformation.
5. Like the epistemic dimensions of change, these varied Jewish writings emphasize the corporeal. Whether through changes to or replacements of moral organs, Nebuchadnezzar's embodiment of the animalistic, or transformations of appearance, the body takes center stage both as the locus of transformation and as the subject matter for reflections on change. Especially in the category of moral transformation, these authors often contemplate moral change and moral selfhood by means of the body.
6. In terms of selfhood, these writings all portray the human self as subjected to divine or cosmic powers. Notably, in accounts of moral transformation and in other writings discussed in this chapter—apart from Joseph and Aseneth—changes do not include ontological transformations, even when the self is empowered or replaced. Each transformation, as discussed, is either moral or functional and carried out under divine governance. In the various conceptions of moral selfhood, increases in transformation discourse correspond to a growing prominence of negative anthropological models. Other examples emphasize human weakness and inabilities to fulfill divine purposes. Whether changes occur for prophecy, military endeavors, national leadership, or pedagogy, these examples all envisage the self as incapable of fulfilling divinely-ordered tasks or roles, and, thus, reliant on divine initiatives and divine power. In each category, the self is determined by divine power.

Chapter 7

Transformation & Selfhood in Paul's Letters

Returning to Paul, I offer a synthetic statement concerning transformation and selfhood in his letters. My primary focus is on Paul's references to pre-death and pre-resurrection changes, which are, in some ways, the most difficult to understand. Future transformations in Paul's letters are eschatological, whether at death (2 Cor 5:1–5; cf. Phil 1:12–26) or at the resurrection (1 Cor 13:8–12; 15:35–57; Phil 3:21), and they describe the ontological, somatic, and epistemic changes that will occur when God makes humanity fit for its new abode in the divine realm. Although these descriptions contain their share of conceptual challenges, they are, paradoxically, somewhat easier to understand because they occur on a higher cosmic plane.¹ If one can conceptualize Christ's resurrection and transformed into spirit (1 Cor 15:45), then one can also conceptualize this happening to other people, even if the metaphysical processes are beyond explanation. More challenging, however, is to account for what has happened and what it is happening when Paul writes about personal transformations *in this life*.

My synthesis has four major sections. First, I summarize some salient features of Paul's transformation discourse. Second, I set Paul's transformation discourse against the backdrop of Greco-Roman and Jewish writings, in order to show how they illuminate Paul's writings, and to determine what distinguishes Paul's views. Third, I return to Paul for a final, summative analysis of this distinctive transformation discourse. Fourth, I propose aspects of selfhood in Paul's letters that his transformation discourse discloses.

¹ In addition to my exegetical work, see especially Luke Timothy Johnson, "Life-Giving Spirit," in Johnson, *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament: Collected Issues* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 277–93; Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul: Cognition, Metaphor, and Transformation*, ECL (Atlanta, SBL).

1. Key Features of Paul's Transformation Discourse

As my exegetical analyses show, Paul's transformation discourse is multifaceted and complex.² Here, I summarize the main features of Paul's transformation discourse according to the guiding questions with which this work began.

A. To begin, why is transformation necessary or useful for Paul? The answer has two aspects. The first concerns Paul's broad *rhetorical* context as an apostle to the gentiles. In ways that are analogous to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Paul finds himself in new situations that demand reflections on change and selfhood. He must, in ways unique to each letter's context, help gentile believers in Christ make sense of their own experiences and identities after receiving the spirit of the Jewish messiah. This is new territory, and new theological understandings of reality provoke discussion of transformation and selfhood.³

Moreover, as with the prophets and Qumran authors, previous models of selfhood are insufficient for this new situation. There was no available model in antiquity that one could fit into the cosmic framework of a resurrected Christ who empowers the lives of his followers with his own spirit. For this reason, as the following discussion shows, Paul's references to transformation, and the convictions about selfhood that underlie those references, are distinctive. Within this new understanding of reality, Paul must clarify for believers who they have become, who they are becoming, and who they will become.

² I cannot rehearse or draw on all of the insights that I gained from each pericope. My hope is that the exegetical analyses of Paul's transformation discourse that comprise the first section of this study, including the details I cannot address here, are themselves a contribution to the field of Pauline studies. I am aware of no other work that isolates these particular passages in order to examine what they reveal about Paul's perspectives on human transformation.

³ Cf. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 26–27, 77; Wendy Olmsted, "On the Margins of Otherness: Metamorphosis and Identity in Homer, Ovid, Sidney, and Milton," *NLH* 27.2 (1996): 168.

Second, Paul indicates that the *fact* of change is necessary for several reasons. With respect to transformation *in the future*, people must be transformed because “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor 15:50). That is, Paul understands the sphere of God and Christ to be pneumatic, and humanity must be changed in order to inhabit that sphere. Regarding *transformation that has already occurred*, such changes were needed because they ground the possibility of life “in Christ” in the present. In order for believers to live in Christ, they must die to the sphere of sin and death and be transferred into the sphere of Christ’s body. In terms of *present changes*, they are necessary for multiple reasons, including need for internal renewal and empowerment through suffering (2 Cor 4:16–18), moral change—into Christ’s image or according to the pattern of Christ—as believers navigate unpredictable ethical decisions (e.g. 2 Cor 3:18; Rom 12:1–2), and the deepening of relational knowledge through participation in Christ (Phil 3:10–11). These diverse types of change arise, generally, from the need for people to be incorporated into Christ and to live according to that reality in anticipation of full incorporation into the divine realm.

B. Next, who is responsible for change? Humans cannot accomplish these changes by their own power. Paul consistently emphasizes divine initiative and divine agency in human transformation. The faith of Christ establishes the ground for the possibility for transformation (e.g., Gal 2:16; Rom 3:21–22), and divine power creates new existential-moral beings (e.g. Gal 2:18–20; 3:23–29; 4:1–11; 5:25; 6:14–15; 2 Cor 5:14–15, 17; Rom 6:1–11; 7:1–13; cf. Gal 4:19). The spirit of Christ empowers ongoing existential, epistemic, and moral transformation (Phil 3:10–11; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:16–18; Rom 12:1–2), and Christ will transform believers ontologically and somatically at death (2 Cor 5:1–5) or the resurrection (Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:35–57). Yet, within that framework, Paul also affirms roles for human agency in these changes. People yield

to God's act of initial transformation into the sphere of Christ (Gal 2:18–20; 3:23–29; Rom 6:1–11; 7:1–13), and his moral instructions presume that believers have sufficient agency to obey (Rom 12:1–2). Ultimately, therefore humans participate in transformations that God inaugurates, empowers, and produces.

C. What categories of change appear in Paul's letters? Eschatological transformations are chiefly ontological, somatic, and epistemic (Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:35–57).⁴ Past transformations overwhelmingly feature existential-moral changes (Gal 2:18–20; 3:23–29; 4:1–11, 19; :24; 6:14–15; 2 Cor 5:14–15; Rom 6:1–11; 7:1–13), but some have epistemic dimensions (2 Cor 5:17). Ongoing present transformations are predominantly existential, moral and epistemic (Phil 3:10–11; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:16–18; Rom 12:1–2). For the purposes of my final analysis, this prevalence of existential, moral, and epistemic changes in pre-death and pre-resurrection transformations provide the primary categories for consideration.

2. Paul in His Milieu

With these reminders of the main features of Paul's transformation discourse before us, we can discuss Paul in conversation with Greco-Roman and Jewish texts on transformation. Before turning to specific themes, I situate Paul's mode of discourse among the works from each of these contexts.

⁴ Ontological differs from existential change in that ontological change involves the wholesale change of a person, including the reception of a new body, in order for her to inhabit the divine realm. Existential change involves transference into a new moral life grounded in and empowered by Christ's spirit.

Modes of Discourse

Paul's use of letters distinguishes him from other writers discussed in this work in that they are highly occasional and written with specific contextual needs in mind.⁵ His discourse differs from Greco-Roman moral philosophers like Aristotle, Plutarch, and Marcus Aurelius who produce systematic moral theories, or theories of change in general. Paul's letters most resemble Epictetus in the way that they offer moral exhortation within an explicitly theological and cosmological frame.⁶ Although Pauline transformation discourse contains some few narrative elements (e.g. Gal 2:18–20; Rom 6:1–11), he does not write mythical tales of transformation like Boeus, Nicander, Ovid, 1 Samuel, or Daniel. Yet his epistles are highly mythical in the sense that at the center of his worldview is the spirit of the resurrected who exerts power among humans from his place right hand of God's throne (1 Cor 15:20–28).⁷ In comparison with the other writings examined in this study, Paul's transformation discourse most resembles Jewish prophetic traditions (and to some extent, prayer literature) in that it is intertwined with moral

⁵ Even Paul's letter to the Romans is not a systematic treatise but, rather, functions a letter of introduction and self-commendation to a church he did not found (Rom 15:20–24) so that he can partner with them in his work on the collection (15:16, 25–33), and so that would serve as a base for a future mission to Spain (Rom 15:24, 28)

⁶ On Epictetus' moral reflections within a theological frame, see, e.g., *Diatr.* I.9.3–6; I.14.5–7; I.16.20–21; I.18.17–20; I.26.1–3; I.29.1–3.

⁷ By mythical, I mean simply that Paul's "imaginative patterns, networks of powerful symbols that suggest particular ways of interpreting the world" (Mary Midgley. *The Myths We Live By* [London/New York: Routledge, 2003], 1) are informed by non-empirical realities. Theoretical questions in biblical scholarship about the role of myth in shaping New Testament writings have persisted at least since the publication of David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, trans. George Eliot, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973) in 1846. Rudolf Bultmann catalyzed new debate about myth and Pauline interpretation in his essay, "New Testament and Mythology: The Problem of Demythologizing the New Testament Proclamation," in Bultmann, *New Testament & Mythology: And other Basic Writings* (ed. and trans. Schubert M. Ogden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984). For recent discussion on myth and New Testament interpretation, see Dexter E. Callender Jr., ed., *Myth and Scripture: Contemporary Perspectives on Religion, Language, and Imagination*; RBS 78 (Atlanta: SBL, 2014); for a similar understanding of Paul's mythic language in Callender's collected essays, see Luke Timothy Johnson, "'God Was in Christ': 2 Corinthians 5:19 and Mythic Language," 201–11.

instructions and reflections that draw largely on the a Jewish symbolic universe, a universe that is inherently mythical.

Pauline Transformation Compared to Greco-Roman Writings

Like Paul's letters, Greco-Roman mythic *narratives* consistently portray divine agents as responsible for human transformation.⁸ In contrast, although they link human moral agency with divine purposes and divine reason, Greco-Roman moralists typically affirm that people have the moral agency needed to achieve growth in moral progress. Paul is similar to the mythic portrayals in that he envisages transformation as divinely produced. For Paul, however, moral transformation is not only possible because of divine power, but it is empowered and governed by Christ's spirit (e.g. Gal 5:16–25; Rom 12:1–2). This combination of newly created moral agency with divine empowerment for ongoing change distinguishes Paul from other Greco-Roman authors.⁹

Similarly, Paul is like the Greco-Roman moralists in that he emphasizes moral change that is inseparably connected with the divine and oriented towards a *telos*.¹⁰ Like the moralists as well, he understands epistemic change to be part of moral change, and the epistemic dimension of moral progress necessarily aligns with the divine order. Yet Paul's *telos* is not simply virtue, but a person—the living Christ and the pattern of Christ's self-giving. In this way, Pauline moral transformation is distinctive in that it is always oriented towards Christ and governed by the question of how conformity with Christ's pattern will take shape in a given context. Paul

⁸ In *The Golden Ass* Apuleius narrates Lucian's change into a donkey as the result of magic, but his final transformation is by the power of Isis.

⁹ Here again, Paul's conceptions of moral transformation most resemble those in *The Golden Ass*: Lucian was born anew into a new moral existence, and his subsequent moral life was to be within the sphere of Isis's influence.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Aristotle, *Eth. nic.*, I.7.14–16; II.1.4.

understands epistemic change, likewise, as governed by conformity to *Christ's* pattern, what Paul calls “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16).

In terms of personal identity—the continuity of a person through change—Paul again resembles some writers more than others, but remains distinctive. In his descriptions of past and ongoing change, Paul indicates that transformation produces a genuinely new person, but that the former person is integrated into the new, resulting in a form of subjectivity in which self-understanding is established by relating the present “self” to the old. Moreover, the new person is also constituted by its relationship to Christ and to Christ’s body as the source of existential-moral life and as the structure for making sense of its selfhood.

In my reading Greco-Roman writings, three dominant views on personal identity emerged.

1. Change *threatens* human identity: when a person changes, she becomes someone different than she was before.¹¹ Although Paul’s rhetoric of transformation often stresses difference, he does not portray human change as a threat to personal identity in the sense that change produces a *completely* different person.¹²

2. Change involves continuity, sometime through a humiliation-to-exaltation pattern.¹³ The prevalence of this pattern in ancient transformation discourse suggests that it was available to Paul. My analyses show that he did indeed make use of this pattern in multiple letters, but he

¹¹ This view is envisaged in the mythological tales of Boeas, in which human selves are lost through transformations into birds. Several Greek and Roman moral philosophers articulate this view explicitly in their theoretical accounts, beginning with Heraclitus and appearing later in Plutarch, and Marcus Aurelius.

¹² Paul’s letters do not continue the tradition of Heraclitus. On Paul’s emphasis on difference in transformation, see especially my analyses of transformation discourse in 1-2 Corinthians in Chapter 3.

¹³ Aristotle, for example, stresses that a person can indeed become someone new, but also that as a one changes, part of the person remains the same. There is an underlying “self” that continues through these changes. The self’s continuity is also presumed in the pattern of various figures’ progressions from humiliation to exaltation.

reconfigures it christologically. When, in Paul, one is initiated into new existence in Christ, the person is not merely humbled. Often, the self dies and is subsequently exalted through (implied) resurrection with Christ (Gal 2:18–20; 6:14–15; Rom 6:1–11; cf. Rom 7:1–13). The christic shape of Paul’s various uses of the humiliation-to-exaltation pattern distinguish his transformation discourse from other writings in his milieu.

3. In several mythological narratives, we find more ambiguous notions of personal identity: a person becomes something truly new as a result of transformations, yet depends on a dialectical relationship to the former self for its current self-understanding.¹⁴ Here, the self becomes something new as previous iterations of the self are integrated into the current state, and, in each phase, the figure’s self-understanding—its subjectivity—is determined, in part, through a dialectical relationship of the current self to the former self. Conceptions of personal identity are murkier, however, in other writings, which show a high tolerance for understanding the self in liminal states, as persisting as an “in-between” being.¹⁵

Paul’s conceptions of personal identity have more in common with the second and third models than the first. Like Aristotle and other moral philosophers, broadly, Paul presumes some form of continuity of the self as the person changes. Yet many of Paul’s transformation

¹⁴ In Ovid’s tale of Io, for example, a consistent “I” persists through changes from the human daughter of Inachus and victim, to a cow, to an ontologically-transformed state at the end. Here and throughout my study, I develop this view by drawing on conceptions of *integration* of a former self into a new self in Patrick McNamara, *The Neuroscience of Religious Experience*, Reprint edition (Cambridge University Press, 2014). I also draw on discussions of the present self as partly established by relationships with past events and past selves from the field of psychology in Gergen, *Relational Being*, xxvi, 292–302, as well as the discussion of ways of understanding multiple selves in the same body in Jennifer Radden, “Multiple Selves,” *The Oxford Handbook of the Self*, 548–70.

¹⁵ E.g., in Ovid’s story of Myrrha and Apuleius’ tale of Lucian’s transformations. Myrrha’s self continues in some way as she painfully gives birth in the form of a tree. In that moment, she is neither human, nor tree, nor hybrid. She is an “assemblage,” in that her selfhood is determined by the interrelation of these human and tree features. Similarly, I found the story of Lucian that, in his donkey state, Lucian was neither fully donkey, nor fully human, nor a hybrid. He persisted, instead, as an in-between being who later undergoes transformation into a new moral self, a process that the narrative depicts as dependent upon his ongoing experiences of as an ass.

descriptions seem to occur in a single moment (e.g. Gal 2:18–20; 3:23–29; Rom 6:1–11; 2 Cor 5:14–15, 17), producing a new person who undergoes continual transformations (Phil 3:10–11; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:16–18; Rom 12:1–2; cf. Gal 4:19) and who will be transformed fully at the resurrection (Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 13:8–12; 15:35–57; cf. 2 Cor 5:1–5). Thus, in his references to past change, he stresses *difference* even if he presumes some form of continuity, as well as dependence on past selves for present self-understanding (see esp. Gal 2:15–20; Phil 3:10–11). This is because the Christ-subject, according to Paul, lives not only between the times but in a state of constant change *between transformations*. Paul thus aligns to some degree with the mythological narratives, despite his very different rhetorical vehicle. In short, like mythological figures who undergo multiple transformations, Paul portrays the present Christian person as an in-between being who persists in a liminal state, characterized by ongoing transformation (more on this below).

Pauline Transformation and Jewish Writings

Paul's letters resemble Jewish writings in their regular attribution of transformation to a single, if complex, divine agency. God ultimately produces new selfhood in Paul's letters (e.g. Gal 6:14–15; 2 Cor 5:17; cf. Gal 4:19) and empowers ongoing change through the spirit (e.g. Gal 5:16–25; Rom 12:1–2). Believers have experienced liberation from the sphere of sin when Christ's spirit entered into their hearts (Gal 4:6; cf. 2:20; 4:19), when they clothed themselves with Christ's spirit (Gal 3:27). In the present, Paul himself is "being conformed to Christ's death" through participation in the spirit (Phil 3:10–11), and Christ's Spirit is the driving agent of ongoing moral (and epistemic) transformation for all believers (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 12:1–2; cf. 2 Cor 4:16).

Despite genre differences, Paul's emphasis on transformation as the production of a new person resembles the creation of new people by God's spirit in narratives like 1 Samuel and Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*. Similarly, the combination of divine agency with the role of divine spirit fits Paul's models of moral transformation, broadly, within Jewish prophetic and prayer traditions emphasizing moral change empowered by God's spirit.¹⁶ Although such emphases on divine agency in change are also prominent in some Greco-Roman writings, the primacy of place that Paul gives to the divine spirit draws on a Jewish symbolic universe and reflects his Jewish heritage. Once again, however, Paul reconfigures these traditions christologically, making *Christ* and *Christ's* spirit the starting point for understanding the role of divine agency in human transformation.¹⁷

In terms of moral transformation, Paul shares common features with a number of Jewish writings.

1. Although he envisages a degree of human agency in believers' participation with divine power, Paul's expressed dependence on Christ's action as the ground of human moral change also implies a pessimistic view of moral selfhood. This aligns his discourse less with Deuteronomistic perspectives and more with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Psalm 51, and most of the Second Temple literature discussed in ch. 6.

2. Existential-moral change in Paul is somatic. The believer is liberated from the powers of sin and death and transferred into life in Christ when Christ's spirit enters and transforms the

¹⁶ See esp. Ezek 11:19-21; 36:24-27; 37:5-6 cf. 20:18-21; Psalm 51:10; 4Q436 li 5b-6,10-līi; 1QH^a 4:29

¹⁷ In addition to these similarities in descriptions of change, Paul's *method* of constructing subjectivity resembles methods in the *Hodayot*. Just as the author of the *Hodayot* develops and maintains a certain moral self-understanding by "rehearsing" his past sinfulness and tacitly recalling his past transformations, so too Paul constructs Christian self-understandings through similar forms of rehearsal. Especially prominent in Galatians, Romans, and 2 Corinthians are reflections on *past* transformations to make sense of *present* understandings of Christian selfhood.

heart (e.g. Gal 4:6; 2 Cor 3:1–5; 4:6). Ongoing moral change continues through the renewing of the believer’s mind (Rom 12:2), and such changes are in opposition to the influence of the flesh (Gal 5:16–25). These bodily aspects of moral transformation resemble, and probably draw on, traditions like those in Jeremiah 31:31–34 and Ezekiel 36:24–27, and Paul’s stress on the spirit and somatic transformation shares much in common with the second temple writings examined in this study.

3. Moral transformation for both Paul and Jewish authors involves epistemic transformation. In the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature, the heart is both a moral and epistemic organ, and a transformed or new heart establishes new knowledge that creates new moral selfhood and empowers new moral agency. For Paul, similarly, moral transformation comes by way of ever-deepening relational knowledge of Christ (2 Cor 3:18) and by the mind’s renewal (Rom 12:2).

The most distinctive characteristic of existential-moral transformation in Paul is that it does not occur within the essential frame for transformation in Jewish literature, namely, obedience to Torah. The shift from Deuteronomic views to conceptions of newly-created moral selfhood in Jeremiah and Ezekiel occurred when they reach the anthropological conclusion that Israel was incapable of fully obeying God. Yet Paul’s transformation discourse does not arise from his concern with the human inability to keep the law. For Paul, the problem assumed in his transformation discourse is not primarily with *human* agency—although such change does sometimes produce new agency—but with the *law’s* lack of agency or power; it is incapable of giving existential-moral life (Gal 3:21; Rom 3:21). In this view, Christ’s resurrection has created a radically new framework—the sphere of Christ—and the Torah now finds meaning and significance *within that larger reality* (see esp. Gal 3–4; Phil 3:2–21). Moral reasoning

(*phronēsis*) and norms now find their point of reference in Christ (Phil 2:1–11), and Christ's spirit empowers moral discernment, practices, and transformation. For Paul, spirit-guidance, not Torah, governs Christian moral existence, and this understanding of ongoing existential-moral change distinguishes Paul from other Jewish writers of his time.

Summary

Paul's transformation discourse resembles a number of Greco-Roman mythic narratives in that he has a high tolerance for understanding the human as characterized by ongoing states of liminality. Like Greco-Roman moralists, he emphasizes moral transformation that is to be understood within a larger theological and cosmological framework. He shares with a number of Jewish thinkers a conviction that certain contexts lead God to create new persons, and, with others, he affirms that God inaugurates moral transformations that are somatic and epistemic. With some Greco-Roman and all Jewish authors, Paul consistently stresses that, although humans have some degree of agency to participate with the divine, divine power is ultimately responsible for human existential, moral, and epistemic transformations. These features are not unique to Paul, but Paul is unique in that his transformation discourse is always grounded in his christological assumptions and takes a decidedly christic shape. This is because, for Paul, the new realities that Christ's resurrection brings demand that the dominant framework within which the traditions, symbols, and characteristics of transformation in Greco-Roman and Jewish themselves *must be transformed*.

3. Pauline Transformation Discourse: A Final Assessment

In the final analysis, four aspects of human change are especially noteworthy.

1. Human transformation is a critical element in Pauline anthropology. This may seem like an obvious point, and it may even be taken for granted by scholarship on Pauline anthropology (since it does not commonly receive designated attention in works on Pauline theology). This study, however, shows how central human change is for Paul. How does one substantiate the broad descriptor “critical?” First, in comparison with other writings from Paul’s milieu, the prominence and diversity of transformation descriptions in his comparatively small corpus is striking. I have limited my investigations to the undisputed Pauline epistles, and five of these seven letters contain nineteen passages qualifying as transformation discourse. In these passages, Paul describes human change with a range of creative metaphors and narratives. These references, moreover, comprise an array of categories that range from transformation of appearances, to somatic and ontological changes, to a disproportionate number of existential-moral transformations that include epistemic changes as well. One would need, as I have done, to work through numerous texts from antiquity to discover an equal range of transformation categories that Paul concentrates in only five epistles.¹⁸ If one were to expand to the disputed epistles, more transformation discourse would be included.¹⁹

Furthermore, Paul employs transformation discourse most densely in contexts in which issues of identity and selfhood are the most pressing: Galatians, 2 Corinthians, and Romans.²⁰ The Galatians experience pressures for their men to be circumcised in conformity to the Jewish law, and, in 2 Corinthians, Paul must affirm his apostolic identity and demonstrate to the

¹⁸ In this study, the most comparable examples include *The Golden Ass* and *Joseph and Aseneth*.

¹⁹ See, e.g., Col 2:8–15; 3:1–4, 9–11; Eph 2:1–10; 4:11–16, 20–24; 5:7–10

²⁰ Of the 19 passages examined in this study, 15 appear in these three epistles—five in Galatians, six in 2 Corinthians, and three in Romans.

Corinthians that their identities are linked with his. In Romans, Paul not only introduces himself to the community as an apostle, but he also provides reasoned and structured arguments to persuade a Gentile church about their place within God's larger plans and in relation to natural Israel. Although identity concerns are not the central concern for Philippians, they are the chief focus of Phil 3, in which Paul's only transformation discourse in the letter appears. In these contexts, in which the largest swaths of transformation references occur, the occasions demand that Paul argue for particular self-understandings that will maintain (Galatians and 2 Corinthians; cf. Phil 3) or establish (Romans) the communities in connection with him and his mission. In short, he uses the language of human change when relationship-saving or relationship-creating needs arise, and this again points to the importance of transformation for Paul.

2. Christ's death and resurrection provide the hermeneutical lenses through which Paul interprets experiences of transformation.²¹ It is not inevitable that Paul would describe past and present religious experiences of radical change as crucifixion and rising into new life.²² Yet, as discussed above, Paul does not fold the Christ-event and human transformation into the symbolic universe of ancient Jewish thought, but, instead, he incorporates such experiences and Jewish traditions into the pattern of Christ's death and resurrection.

Although Christ's resurrection establishes the possibility of human transformation and shapes most of Paul's descriptions of change, Paul also commonly draws on another tradition in instances where he does not explicitly invoke a death-resurrection schema, namely, the creation

²¹ Cf. Vigdis Songe-Møller, "'With What Kind of Body Will They Come?' Metamorphosis and the Concept of Change: From Platonic Thinking to Paul's Notion of the Resurrection of the Dead," in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, eds. Turid Karlsen Seim and Jorunn Økland, Ekstasis (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 112.

²² Past changes are death and resurrection with Christ or being clothed over with a new self. Ongoing transformations are continual conformation to the present reality of Christ's death (Phil 3:10–11), metamorphosis into his image (2 Cor 3:18), or transformation in accordance with the mind of Christ (Rom 12:1–2).

tradition. Paul often blends this tradition with the Christ-event, through which Christ becomes “life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45). He writes, for example, that it is “God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness’ who shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor 4:6). God’s act in Christ established “a new creation” (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17), and, as part of the new creation, people undergo continual permutations as they conform to Christ’s image (2 Cor 3:18; cf. 4:16–18) and his death (Phil 3:10–11). My point here is that Paul’s transformation discourse, when it does not invoke a death-resurrection schema, often conveys the point not only that God established a new creation through Christ’s resurrection, but also that God continues to create humanity anew. Here again, initial transformation establishes the ground for the possibility of ongoing transformation through participation in Christ.²³

3. Paul’s descriptions of past, present, and future transformations are related, interdependent, and mutually informing, but they cannot be neatly systematized. To be sure, Paul envisages foundational change that creates the possibility for ongoing change, which anticipates eschatological transformation at the resurrection. But my exegetical study does not find in Paul a vision of ongoing transformation in a linear progression that “culminates” in wholesale eschatological change as some scholars indicate.²⁴ Such views seem almost to suggest that believers could reach full ontological transformation into pneumatic bodies before the resurrection if they continue the course long and faithfully enough. Instead, because present, continuous formation relies on moral discernment in diverse and unpredictable contexts, and

²³ And pre-resurrection transformation grounds the possibility of transformation at the resurrection. See Songe-Møller, “‘With What Kind of Body Will They Come?’”, 112–13.

²⁴ E.g. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 468–69, 498; Schnelle, “Transformation Und Partizipation,” 63–63; Engberg-Pederson, “Complete and Incomplete Transformation,” 145–46; Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*; Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*; Harding, *Eschatological Anthropology*, 415–16.

because believers inevitably make good or poor ethical decisions at different points, the shape that transformations takes will also vary in unforeseeable ways.²⁵ It is best to conclude, therefore, that even though Paul portrays past transformations as grounding the possibility for ongoing changes “in Christ” and, though these continuous changes anticipate and ensure eschatological transformation, ongoing transformations do not follow a direct and predictable path that leads to that end goal.

4. Selfhood: Paul’s Convictions about the Human Person

What does Paul’s transformation discourse disclose about his understanding of selfhood? Three points are interdependent and mutually informing.

1. What remains continuous through change? Does Paul assume that a soul, the mind, the body, or some combination of each fills this role? In my view, efforts to locate in Paul the “essence” of a person or to account for a person’s continuity through change in some essential feature of the human are misplaced.²⁶ Rather, since, as I argue in more detail below, Christ’s spirit is part of that which constitutes the Christ-subject, one cannot presume that the ground of the subject’s continuity is inherent in the human, conceived of as an autonomous entity. It may well be, instead, that the subject’s continuity is in fact made possible not by a human body, soul, or mind, but by Christ. If believers understand themselves primarily as beings who have been both filled with Christ’s spirit and *incorporated into Christ* (more on this combination below), Christ has not only become part of them; they have become part of Christ. Paul makes this clear when he describes believers as Christ’s body and individually members of it (1 Cor 12:27). Thus,

²⁵ My view is much closer to Thomas Koenig, “The Motif of Transformation in the Pauline Epistles: A History-of-Religions/Exegetical Study” (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary of New York, 1970).

²⁶ Here, my view is close to the criticism in Vigdis Songe-Møller, ““With What Kind of Body Will They Come?””

for Paul, a (Christian) person is not determined from the bottom up, in terms of parts that function as building blocks, but from the top down, in terms of its location within a larger sphere of power that governs its existence and structures its self-understanding. Once the human is incorporated into and participates in Christ, then Christ grounds continuity amidst change.²⁷

2. As a corollary, Paul's references to transformation reveal an understanding of the human as malleable and permeable.²⁸ Clearly, Paul believes that people can be created anew and continually fashioned by divine power, which inherently assumes that the person is malleable. Paul affirms, with a variety of Jewish authors, that believers can be penetrated by divine *pneuma*. Paul is distinctive, however, in his view that, through transformation, believers are transferred into the sphere of Christ; they are "in Christ." As a result, Christians are not only internally empowered by Christ's spirit, but they are also governed by the power sphere of Christ as Christ-subjects and understand themselves as part of the larger structure that Paul calls "the body of Christ." Paul's rhetoric suggests models of selfhood characterized by mutual indwelling, in which Christ inhabits people and people inhabit Christ. Since Christ's spirit provides the means by which Christ and believers exist and are determined by an interpenetrating relationship, Paul provides a vision of the human as permeable.²⁹

3. Paul's transformation discourse envisages a form of relational selfhood. Various understandings of subjectivity as relationally constituted have persisted in western philosophical discussions at least since Hegel, and New Testament scholars—notably and most recently, Susan

²⁷ Cf. Songe-Møller, "'With What Kind of Body Will They Come?'" 118–19

²⁸ Cf. Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 25–29.

²⁹ Cf. Adolf Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu"* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1892), 88; Sarah Harding, *Paul's Eschatological Anthropology: The Dynamics of Human Transformation*, Emerging Scholars (Fortress Press, 2016), 86–93.

Eastman—have argued that Paul espouses a relational model of selfhood.³⁰ My study supports this view. Consider Paul’s diverse descriptions of transformation. Believers are transformed through dying and rising *with* Christ (Gal 2:18–20; Rom 6:1–11; 7:1–13) or being clothed over with Christ (Gal 3:27–29). They receive Christ’s spirit into their hearts (Gal 4:6; 2 Cor 4:6), have their hearts inscribed (2 Cor 3:1–5), have Christ “formed” in them like a fetus (Gal 4:19), are conformed to Christ’s death (Phil 3:10–11), are ultimately transformed into the same *pneuma* that Christ inhabits (1 Cor 15:35–57), or receive in some way Christ’s *nous* (Rom 12:1–2; 1 Cor 2:16). In each of these examples, the person is not transformed by becoming someone new who then serves Christ, but, instead, the human is transformed by means of Christ’s spirit and is joined with Christ in a metaphysical *union*. As argued throughout my study, the human in Paul’s letters is not first a “self” that enters into relationships but, rather, is a self as produced by relationships. When one is transferred from the sphere of the powers of sin and death into the sphere of Christ, this new relationality achieves and sustains the new creation.

In addition to the human relationship with Christ determining the believer’s selfhood, so too do human relationships. Christ-subjects are not only produced and sustained in relationship with Christ, but Christ’s spirit also joins them together as one body.³¹ Paul’s body language is more than figurative; it envisages a reality in which Christ’s spirit so joins people together that, for example, when one engages in porneia, the whole community is infected with sexual

³⁰ For a clear and economical overview of philosophical discussions of the self and other broadly and relationality specifically, see Linda Alcoff, *Visible Identities : Race, Gender, and the Self*, Studies in Feminist Philosophy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006)., 47–83. For sustained arguments on relationality in Paul’s understanding of the human, see Susan Grove Eastman and John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul’s Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017); Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul : Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life*, Second revised edition, Fortress Press edition.. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013).

³¹ Johnson, “The Body in Question.”

impurity (1 Cor 5:1–5; 6:12–20).³² This bears out in Paul’s transformation discourse, in which he communicates, for example, that the union with Christ incorporates gentiles into God’s people (Gal 4:1–11), that people corporately yield their bodies for the renewing of their (singular) mind (Rom 12:1–2), and that they share “body of humiliation” that will day be transformed into the “body of [Christ’s] glory” (Phil 3:21). In short, believers are not only members of Christ but also “members of one another” (Rom 12:5).

Taken together, a relational model of subjectivity underlies Paul’s transformation discourse. That is, for him, the “ways in which the meaning of one’s self is produced, experienced, and articulated”³³ are relational, both in their vision for human-Christ relations and in their conception of human relations with one another. Indeed, these are two dimensions of the same reality that constitutes Christ’s body. As such, the image of selfhood that emerges from Paul’s transformation references is striking in its particular form of “multiplicity.” If Paul indeed has a conception of a “self,” it is reducible neither to that which is seemingly intrinsic to the human nor to Christ. Rather, for Pauline subjectivity, “multiplicity is part of its nature, not is by-product.”³⁴ The subject is indeed a *Christ-subject* in the sense that selfhood is determined by the combination³⁵ of Christ’s spirit with human agents.

4. In Paul, Christian subjectivity is not only constituted by relationships, but it is also constituted by transformation. As argued above, and as demonstrated in the evidence of chs. 2–4 of this study, Paul employs transformation discourse most frequently in epistolary contexts in which the occasion demands that he address matters of self-definition. To state this in reverse

³² Johnson, “The Body in Question.”

³³ Newsom, *Self as Symbolic Space*, 192.

³⁴ Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

³⁵ The “assemblage” to borrow philosophical terminology from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3–38.

order, when Paul must address Christian self-understanding, he uses references to transformation to accomplish his goals.

The centrality of transformation for believers' subjectivity is true in all three temporal dimensions. That is, if one could ask Paul, "What is a person 'in Christ,'" part of his answer, I propose, would be that such a person has been transformed through liberation from sin and death into a mutually-indwelling union with Christ and Christ's body. He would add that a person in Christ aims for and anticipates eschatological transformation in which believers will be changed ontologically to become part of the realm in which the divine dwells, and, he would include that such a person is characterized by ongoing transformation. Whether past, present, or future, transformation is integral to the Christ-subject's self-understanding.

Although all three temporal dimensions of change are interdependent, the implications of present, ongoing transformation are worth considering in isolation. The Christian subject, in my reading of Paul, is less a human *being* than a human *becoming*. Ongoing change is fundamentally constitutive of the person in ways analogous to how bodily systems and processes are fundamental to a human body.³⁶ A believer is thus a changing-thing with Christ as the *telos* of its ongoing moral, epistemic, and existential transformations. In this way, my reading recalls Athanasius' famous statement, "He became what we are so that we might become what he is." But while my study affirms the goal of transformation in this claim, it places the emphasis less on the destination and more on the verb "become." That is, the believer in Paul's view is a

³⁶ In my view, Paul's vision for Christian subjectivity shares more in common with postmodern theories of nomadic subjectivity, which selfhood is characterized by fluidity and flux, than with conceptions of identity as fixed and rigidly structured. See, e.g., Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*. The only other scholar I have found who argues for something like a nomadic subjectivity in Paul is Jorunn Økland, "Genealogies of the Self: Materiality, Personal Identity, and the Body in Paul's Letters to the Corinthians," in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, eds. Seim and Økland, *Metamorphoses*, 82–107, esp. pp. 106–107. My work, therefore, confirms her general arguments and expands them.

“becoming-Christ,” not in the sense that one will literally become Christ, but in that Christ is always the point of reference for ongoing change and the goal of ultimate transformation. In sum, whether we bracket out each temporal dimension or relate each phase of change to the others, transformation is a defining feature of Christian subjectivity in Paul’s letters.

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