Lawful Sexuality
Re-Evaluating the Rhetorical Methods and Aims of
1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Advisor: David Nyström
 Examiner: Håkan Bengtsson
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By: Rebecca Runesson
Judaizing was a slippery slope.
Paula Fredriksen
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Question

The purpose of this essay is to establish that the rhetorical aim of 1 Cor 6:12-20 is to create an argumentation that will convince Gentile Christ-believers that even though they are not bound by the Jewish Law in its entirety, it is in their benefit to follow the Jewish laws regulating sexuality. I also wish to illustrate the problems arising when one attempts to reconstruct the audience of 1 Corinthians using supposed ‘slogans’ in the text. In order to support my hypothesis, I will begin by analyzing the ancient rhetorical methods present in the passage. I will argue against the existence of Corinthian slogans in vv.13 and 18, and instead advocate for a diatribal pattern of hypothetical objections in vv.12 and 15. I will then argue that re-interpreting the passage in light of this rhetorical analysis indicates that the diatribal pattern in the passage cannot be used to discern Corinthian slogans, but rather supports a different argumentation. I thereby hope to illustrate that the rhetorical methods used by Paul in the passage suggests that the aim of the text is not to argue against a number of adiaphoric Corinthian slogans, but rather to create a pedagogical argumentation that will convince his audience that even though they are not Jews, they should follow the Jewish rules regulating sexuality.

Paul presents the sexual behaviours of non-Jews as negative and/or sinful in a number of his writings. In 1 Thess 4:3-5, he states that Christ-believers must abstain from πορνεία in order to sanctify themselves to God (v.3), and that they must control their bodies with holiness (v.4), unlike the Gentiles (ἔθνη), who let their ‘lustful passions’ control their bodies (v.5). In 1 Cor 5:1, Paul uses a hyperbolic comparison between Gentiles and the Corinthian congregation in order to emphasize just how terrible the sexual sins being committed by certain members of the congregation are. In other words, Paul presents Gentiles as the worst offenders on the comparative scale of sexual sin. In Rom 1:22-27, Paul describes how humans who have exchanged the “glory of the immortal God” for “images resembling a mortal human or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles” (v.23) are in return given up by God, and consequently engage in the “lusts of their hearts”, which results in “impurity” and the “degrading” of their bodies (v.24). Who, then, are these humans who have exchanged the worship of the immortal God with the worship of idols? It is clearly a reference to non-Jews, or Gentiles. Consequently, Paul connects Gentiles and their idolatrous habits to sinful sexuality. Based on this, and on the fact that we have little evidence of a unifying sexual
purity moral resembling the Jewish rules of moral purity in the First Century CE in Hellenistic culture,\(^1\) it is safe to argue that Paul did not believe Gentiles to live according to what he saw as a sanctioned sexuality. This, in combination with the fact that the sanctioned sexuality Paul does describe bears an uncanny resemblance to the one already expounded by the Jewish custom at this time,\(^2\) should indicate to us that Paul’s attempts to steer his congregations away from ‘Gentile sexuality’ could be designated as a Judaizing demand.\(^3\)

In order to argue against the scholarly consensus of 1 Cor 6:12-20, as this thesis will humbly attempt to do, we must first analyze previous scholarship in some depth. In the following section, I will do my best to summarize preceding interpretations of our Corinthian passage, and, where necessary, provide a critique of theories that I believe to be problematic.

### 1.2 History of Research

#### 1.2.1 The Structure, Themes, and Context of 1 Cor 6:12-20

1 Cor 6:12-20 is an oft-debated text, due to its complex theological constructions and a rhetorical ambiguity that often leaves the reader struggling to follow the arguments. Exegetes and theologians have discussed the text for centuries, and the nuances of its research history are not easy to summarize. In this section, I will make an attempt to condense and abbreviate the more recent and influential research dealing with the interpretation of the pericope.

#### 1.2.1.1 Structure

The majority of commentators would assert that the main aim of vv.12-20 is to argue against what is often assumed to be the Corinthian slogan in v.12a: Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν.\(^4\)

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) By ‘Judaizing demand’ I mean a demand for Gentile Christ-believers to live according to Jewish ritual rules. For example, demanding that non-Jewish Christ-believers not engage in idolatry can be considered a Judaizing demand, since solely worshipping the Jewish God was a ritual activity normally limited to Jews. See Paula Fredriksen, “Judaizing the Nations,” *NTS* no. 56 (2010) 232-252. See esp. 252.

Consequently, the aim of the passage is to present a theology contrary to the one presented in v.12a. The result is a corporeal theology, which sees the body as the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. It should be noted that the interpreter’s understanding of 1 Cor 12-20 is consequently based at least in part on her/his understanding of v.12a. The majority of commentators see vv.12b-20 as an attempt to disprove the ‘libertine’ notions introduced in v.12a, and which re-occur throughout the passage in the form of slogans. Because of this, many commentators and interpreters see the passage as a Pauline argumentation in favour of a somatic theology/Christology.

Gordon Fee writes that it is not clear how the section relates to that which immediately precedes it, and it is true that many scholars have struggled to place the passage within its larger literary context. Fee points out that sexual immorality was on the list of the vices in vv.9-10, and this is indeed noteworthy, as it thematically connects vv.12-20 with the preceding verses. V. 11, however, creates a barrier between v.10 and v.12, in which Paul states that the Corinthians are no longer any of the things listed in v.9-10, because they have been sanctified and washed in the name of “the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God”. Consequently, v.12 appears to be on the subject of how Christ-believers should behave, in order to “inherit the Kingdom of God” (v.10). Anthony Thiselton points to this in his statement that the section demonstrates that the Christ-believing identity and lifestyle are inseparable. Indeed, Thiselton takes a position contrary to Fee’s in his assertion that v.12-20

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5 Thielson, The First Epistle, 259. Fee notes that the words σόμα and πορνεία dominate the passage (see Fee, The First Epistle, 250), and Barrett points out that Paul’s usage of σόμα (defined by Barrett as the ‘man as a whole’) is a crucial part of his argument, especially in relation to the slogans (Barrett, A Commentary, 147).

6 Jay Smith, “The Roots of the ‘Libertine’ Slogan”, 95. Smith defines ‘libertine’ as the notion of the body’s moral irrelevance. In this aspect, his thesis follows Murphy-O’Connor (see pg. 63).


8 Thiselton writes that “this third example of illicit conduct turns, like the other two, on the importance of the body and bodily actions, and its relation of union with Christ.” (Thiselton, The First Epistle, 458). This sentiment also appears in the interpretative work of Fee (Fee, The First Epistle, 251), Barrett (Barrett, A Commentary, 148), and Murphy-O’Connor (Jerome Murphy-O’Connor. “Corinthian Slogans in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20”. Catholic Biblical Quarterly no 40 [1978], 391-396. See 393, where Murphy-O’Connor writes that “For Paul…[somatic] action was the only sphere in which commitment became real”. In his commentary on 1 Cor, Murphy-O’Connor also writes that Paul’s aim in 1 Cor 6:12-20 is to rebuff the Corinthian view that physical activity had no moral character, and thus everything corporeal was allowed [see Jerome Murphy-O’Connor. I Corinthians. New Testament Message {Wilmington: Michael Glazier Inc., 1979}, 49.], which means that Paul must have stood for a position where the corporeal aspects of existence were morally relevant).

9 Fee, The First Epistle, 250.

10 Ibid.

are in fact deeply thematically connected to the preceding verses. He argues this based on the fact that the sin of idolatry in vv.9-10 relates to two kinds of moral failures: (a) seeking self-gratification in terms of illicit sexuality and (b) seeking self-gratification in terms of ignoring/disrespecting justice and property rights. Both of these categories are related to the body in vv.9-10, and this connects it to v.13, where the body is said to be meant for the Lord, rather than self-gratification.

One of the main assumptions lying behind the need to connect vv.12-20 with the preceding verses rather than the proceeding verses is the belief that 1:10-6:20 represents Paul’s answers to the first “reports” given to him about the congregation (1:11), and that 7:1-40 is the first argument in Paul’s attempts to answer “the matters about which you wrote” (7:1). According to this division of structure, 6:12-20 is firmly anchored in the same section as its preceding verses. Jill Marshall has problematized this assumption, however, and suggests a different solution to the issue; namely, that 6:12-20 is connected to 7:1-7 in terms of argumentation. According to Marshall, the argument in 6:12-7:7 progresses in three stages: (1) the danger of πορνεία for the body (6:12-20), (2) marriage as a solution for avoiding πορνεία (7:1-5), and (3) the conclusion of the general argument about πορνεία and marriage (7:5-7). This conclusion then transitions into specific advice for different marital situations (7:8-40).

The reasoning behind this argument is sound and well-attested in the text itself. According to Marshall, 6:12-20 sets up a problem, which 7:1-7 aims to solve. First, it is clear that Marshall is correct in her assertion that vv.12-20 presents a problem. V. 13c makes this clear: “the body is not meant for πορνεία but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body”. This sentence directly indicates that Paul feels that πορνεία is a problem for the Christ-believers.

Marshall argues that πορνεία constitutes a problem because Paul sees the community as Christ’s body, and since Christ’s body (the community) is holy like a temple (3:16; 6:19), each member of it must adhere to certain rules, in order to maintain its holiness, as one would

13 Ibid.
15 Marshall, “Community is a Body”, *JBL*, 842.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
a site of sacrifice.\textsuperscript{19} From this perspective, 7:1-7 does indeed present a solution for 6:12-20, something which is highlighted by 7:2: “but because of πορνεία, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband”. Hence, it seems reasonable to assert that 7:1-7 includes the ingredients for a solution to the problem outlined in 6:12-20. However, it should also be kept in mind that Thiselton makes a compelling argument in favour of a continuity between 6:9-11 and 6:12-20. Indeed, one could argue for the fact that 6:12 represents the solution to 6:11 in that v.11 speaks of how the congregational members can no longer live as sinners, since they have been ‘sanctified’ and ‘washed’, and v.12 begins a section describing how the congregational members should keep themselves sanctified (\textit{cf}. 6:19-20). It is perhaps best to avoid speaking of any clear divisions between 6:12-20 and its surrounding passages, and instead view the entire section as a loosely connected string of arguments. We will discuss the specific rhetorical structure of the passage in the proceeding section, since the structuring of the verses is in large part dependant on the identification of slogans.

1.2.1.2 Themes

The theme of 1 Cor 6:12-20 is often identified based on v.12a; namely, individual freedom in relation to sexuality.\textsuperscript{20} Margaret Mitchell has argued that the assumed slogan in v.12a is similar to Greco-Roman slogans in party-political contexts, which often call for freedom in a similar way.\textsuperscript{21} With this in mind, she suggests that Paul’s retort to the slogan paints a picture similar to the Greek political thought displayed in the works of Aristotle; namely, that the individual member of a community cannot live a life in moral isolation from the remainder of the community.\textsuperscript{22} This idea is reminiscent of Cecilia Wassen’s argument that the temple metaphor in v.19 indicates that Paul believed that sexual sin harms not only the individual member, but the community as a whole.\textsuperscript{23} Indeed, it could be argued that the idea of ‘community’ is one of the main themes of the section, particularly in relation to the concept of freedom. Marshall summarizes this theme in her assertion that “since community is Christ’s body, each member participates in the spirit and is responsible for maintaining its holiness”.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21} Mitchell, \textit{Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation}, 118.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 121.
\textsuperscript{23} Wassen, “Do You Have to be Pure in a Metaphorical Temple?”, 75.
\textsuperscript{24} Marshall, “Community is a Body”, \textit{JBL}, 844-5.
This statement highlights what is at stake: the individual member must adhere to certain rules in order to maintain the sanctity of the community as a whole. Many commentators allege that the temple metaphor in 6:19 is a more individual application of the communal temple metaphor in 3:16. While it is without a doubt justified to claim that the metaphor of v.19 is an application of the community metaphor of 3:16 on an individual level, it is perhaps problematic to remove the concept of community from the picture. Because of the temple metaphor of v.19 as well as the individual nature of πορνεία and the slogan of v.12a (which sets the stage with its first person pronoun), one might be tempted to reduce the role of ‘community’ in the passage. As Mitchell, Marshall, and Wassen have pointed out, this would be a mistake, since the rules of individual conduct described by Paul are in place for the good of the larger community.

Having thus identified that the themes of individual freedom and community responsibility in relation to sexuality can both be found in the passage, let us move on to the arguably most prominent theme of the section: σῶμα. Fee points out that the word σῶμα dominates the passage, together with πορνεία. Due to this dominance, the understanding of the word σῶμα and what it implies is crucial for the exegete’s understanding of the passage as a whole. This is especially relevant due to the common historical reconstruction of the Corinthian congregation as followers of a variety of stoic philosophy, where the body was seen as morally irrelevant. Brendan Byrne has argued that Käsemann’s definition of σῶμα as a possibility of communication is the most apt description of the meaning lingering beneath the word. To the contrary affect, Murphy-O’Connor has argued that the holistic view of σῶμα, first proposed by Johannes Weiss, is not evidenced by the texts themselves. He bases his position on the work of Robert Gundry, who claims that there is limited to no evidence for

26 See esp. Mitchell, Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 121. The phrase “you are not your own” in v.19 is a crucial part of the Mitchell’s argument, and it also plays a part in Wassen and Marshall’s suggestions (Wassen, “Do You Have to be Pure in a Metaphorical Temple”, 75. Marshall, “Community is a Body”, 844). Cf. Thiselton, The First Epistle, 661-3, where he argues along a similar line with regards to 1 Cor 9:1-3; namely, that the aim of the passage is to show that Paul gives up personal rights and freedoms for the greater good of the community. It is noteworthy that 9:1-14 also includes allusions to temple praxis.
27 Fee, The First Epistle, 250.
29 Brendan Byrne, “Sinning Against One’s Own Body: Paul’s Understanding of the Sexual Relationship in 1 Corinthians 6:18”. CBQ 45 (1983), 608-616. See 609. This holistic view of σῶμα is derivative of J. Weiss’ discussions of the term (see pg. 608).
the theory that the libertines in Corinth used σῶμα to refer to the ‘whole body’, or ‘person’, rather than the physical body.\textsuperscript{31} Gundry argues that the definition of σῶμα as ‘person’ introduces a double meaning to the verses in which it is used. If σῶμα is defined as ‘physical body’, those who sin against it by πορνεία are sinning against the ekklesia, because the physical body of the Christ-believer belongs to the ekklesia and vice versa, by virtue of membership.\textsuperscript{32} If, on the other hand, σῶμα is taken to mean ‘person’, such passages would also insinuate that the fornicator sins against himself - that is, he sins against his own person, as separate from the notion of corporeal connection to the ekklesia of Christ.\textsuperscript{33} This is a valid observation, in particular with respect to v.19, where Paul states that the Christ-believer’s body does not belong to her/him, but rather to God, and by extension Christ, and by extension the ekklesia. Consequently, Gundry and Murphy-O’Connor hold that σῶμα is a reference to the physical body, since they do not see evidence in the text for the double meaning implied by defining σῶμα as ‘person’.

Käsemann’s theory should not be discounted, however. The following assertion should be noted: “For Paul, it [the body] is a possibility of communication. As body, man exists in relationship to others, in subjugation because of the world, in the jurisdiction of the Creator”.\textsuperscript{34} As Byrne points out, Käsemann’s theory of σῶμα holds that the body is a vehicle of communication, by which a relationship between the divine and the human can be realized.\textsuperscript{35} This is an excellent observation, especially with regard to the manner in which the idea of Jewish ritual purity is expressed in corporeal terms. Due to the demands of ritual purity in relation to God’s dwelling in the Temple among the people, it could be argued that the Second Temple Jewish body was indeed a vehicle of communication, since its state of purity or lack thereof determined the ability of the divine to be accessed. Byrne takes Käsemann’s argument too far, however, when attempting to argue against Murphy-O’Connor’s assertion that 6:18 is a Corinthian slogan. His argument looses traction when he admits that you have to define σῶμα as both purely physical (in v. 18b) \textit{and} as ‘person’ or ‘whole being’ (v.18c) in order to support the thesis that v.18 expresses a wider somatic experience.\textsuperscript{36} It is difficult to find support for this in the text, since there is no clear distinction

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Gundry, \textit{SOMA in Biblical Theology}, 74-5.
\textsuperscript{35} Byrne, “Sinning Against One’s Own Body”, \textit{CBQ}, 611.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 612-13.
between the way σῶμα is used in v.18b and v.18c. The heart of Byrne’s thesis is that v.18 indicates that the individual who sins against his/her physical body (σῶμα) sins against his/her entire being (σῶμα), because the physical body is the most intimate instrument of communication between human beings. Although there is much to be said for the idea that the human body is a vehicle of communication – between fellow human beings and between humanity and the divine – the idea that σῶμα changes meaning in the same verse is difficult to justify. I would therefore conclude that σῶμα should be defined as the physical body, without any wider meaning, but that this physical body was a means of communicating wider meaning.

1.2.1.3 Context

The Corinthian context is a subject of much discussion. There is a general agreement among scholars that the congregation consisted of Gentile converts. Ben Witherington III claims that this may be ascertained based on the warnings in ch.10 concerning Pagan feasts and temples. It is true that such warnings would hardly need to be issued to Jews. On the other hand, it also seems clear that Paul assumes his audience to have a working knowledge of Hebrew Bible texts (6:12,16; 9:9), as well as an understanding of Jewish temple theology (3:16; 6:19; 9:13). Indeed, the descriptions of the functions of the congregation correspond to the functions of Diaspora association synagogues. Consequently, one should be wary of assigning the ekklesia to a strict religio-ethnic category, with no room for dialogue, intersection, or amalgamation. With regards to the nature of the presumed gentile-convert-congregation, many scholars have in the past argued that the members were proto- or quasi-

37 Ibid., 613, 616.
39 Ibid. It should also be noted that Paula Fredriksen has argued that this insistence that Christ-believers could not participate in pagan cults was a Judaizing demand – that is, a ritual demand with Judaizing implications (see Paula Fredriksen, “Judaizing the Nations,” 251). Of course, the fact that it was a Judaizing demand implies that those of whom the demand was being made were originally non-Jews.
40 Again, this can be connected to Fredriksen’s thesis that Paul’s gospel was specifically Judaizing in nature. Fredriksen points out that Paul’s usage of temple diction is a crucial part of his way of conceptualizing Christ-belief and the place of Gentiles in the early Christ-believing congregations. The Jerusalem Temple was, of course, a specifically Jewish institution (see Fredriksen, “Judaizing the Nations”, NTS, 250).
41 There are a number of functions that characterize ancient synagogues, the first of which is Torah veneration (Anders Runesson, The Origins of the Synagogue: A Socio-Historic Study [Stockholm: Almqvist&Wiksell, 2001], 200), something which the Hebrew Bible quotes in 1 Cor attest for the Corinthian community. Another function is an independent court system (Ibid., 233), something which Paul clearly wants the Corinthian community to have (1 Cor 6:1-2). In addition, Diaspora synagogues sent offerings to Jerusalem (Philo, Legat. 155-61 (Colsson, Earp, LCL), something which the Corinthian congregation also did, albeit to a different recipient (1 Cor 16:1-3). In addition, Ralph Korner has argued that the term ἐκκλησία is in fact a synagogue term (see Ralph Korner, “Ekklesia as a Jewish Synagogue Term: Some Implications for Paul’s Socio-Religious Location”. JMJJS no 2 (2015), 53-78).
gnostic.\textsuperscript{42} Due to the changing definitions of ‘gnostic’, more recent scholarship has rightly distanced itself from such assumptions. Instead, many recent commentators assert that the congregation engaged in quasi-Platonic or Stoic thought.\textsuperscript{43} These claims are often made on the basis of the scholars’ understanding of the presumed slogans in 6:12-20 and other chapters. Slogans are an excellent way to gain insight into the Corinthian congregation’s milieu, which is why the discernment of slogans is such a paramount subject. Slogans are often used to create a historical reconstruction of the Corinthian context, which is then in turn used as a lens through which to interpret the remainder of the epistle. Consequently, discerning possible slogans in 1 Cor has been one of the interpreter’s more important tasks, and due to its prominence it has perhaps not landed under the same scrutiny as other interpretative methods.

1.2.2 Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor 6:12-20

As Murphy-O’Connor writes in his well-read paper “Corinthian Slogans in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20”, the exegete’s interpretation of 1 Cor is in large part contingent upon his/her assessment of the Corinthian context, since many of Paul’s words shift in meaning depending on which background they are read against.\textsuperscript{44} As we mentioned previously, discerning and interpreting slogans have played an important role in creating this historical reconstruction of the Corinthian community. There are three commonly suggested slogans in 1 Cor 6:12-20: v.12a, v. 13, and v.18. Below I will account for the research history of each respective slogan.

1.2.2.1 1 Cor 6:12

There is great scholarly agreement concerning the rhetorical structure of v.12. The following outline forms the consensus:

\begin{quote}
Corinthian Slogan (12a): All things are lawful for me, \\
Paul (12b): but not all things are beneficial. \\
Corinthian Slogan (12c): All things are lawful for me, \\
Paul (12d): but I will not be dominated by anything.\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{42} Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 14-15. Barrett, A Commentary, 145.
\textsuperscript{43} Thiselton, The First Epistle, 462. Fee, The First Epistle, 252 (Fee identifies the assumed slogan in v.13 as adiaphora, following Conzelmann [see Conzelmann, First Corinthians, 110]).
\textsuperscript{44} Murphy-O’Connor. “Corinthian Slogans”. CBQ, 391.
As is illustrated above, the majority consensus is that v.12a is a Corinthian slogan. Thiselton points out that the translation “all things are lawful for me” does not mean that all things are sanctioned by the Law, but rather that the Law no longer prohibits certain things.\(^{46}\) Therefore, it could be said that the Corinthians are referring to the Pauline idea that Gentile Christ-believers are no longer bound by the Jewish Law (Gal 3:13).\(^{47}\) Indeed, prior to Weiss’s suggestion that v.12a was a Corinthian citation,\(^{48}\) the majority of interpreters understood the phrase to be Pauline.\(^{49}\) Robertson and Plummer find a middle ground between these views in their assertion that the phrase represented Paul’s own words, but that these words may have been current among the Corinthians as a maxim.\(^{50}\) This is a fair point, since the phrase fits very well with other Pauline statements concerning Law and Gentiles (cf. Rom 2:13, 6:15), and due to its repetition in 10:23.\(^{51}\)

Fee argues along a similar line, claiming that v.12a is in all likelihood a Corinthian slogan, but that it may very well be a Pauline position turned into a slogan for Corinthian’s own purposes.\(^{52}\) Barrett, similarly inclined to the belief that v.12a is a slogan, points out that Paul gives “qualified agreement to the words themselves but not to the conclusions drawn from them”.\(^{53}\) The idea that v.12a represents a belief that may as well have originated with Paul himself is, in my view, problematic, especially since there is not a great deal of textual evidence differentiating v.12a from its surrounding Pauline material.\(^{54}\) If the material cannot

\(^{46}\) Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 461.

\(^{47}\) Ibid.

\(^{48}\) Johannes Weiss was among the first to suggest that v.12a could be a citation. He based his assertion on his belief that the lack of the article *touto de* marked the verse as a citation (see Brian J. Dodd, “Paul’s Paradigmatic ‘I’ and 1 Corinthians 6:12”. *JSNT* no 59 [1995], 39-58. See esp. 40).

\(^{49}\) Dodd, “Paul’s Paradigmatic ‘I’,” 40.

\(^{50}\) Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (London: T&T Clark, 1911), 121.

\(^{51}\) Scholars are divided as to why the phrase is repeated in 10:23. Robertson and Plummer see this as evidence that 12a is in fact Pauline (Robertson and Plummer, *A Critical Exegetical Commentary*, 121-2), and Dodd sees 10:23 as forming an *inclusio* with 6:12, which he interprets as proof that 6:12 is not a slogan. Many commentators, however, see 10:23 as a repetition of the presumed slogan of 6:12 (Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 781. Barrett, *A Commentary*, 239. Fee, *The First Epistle*, 478).

\(^{52}\) Fee, *The First Epistle*, 252.

\(^{53}\) Barrett, *A Commentary*, 144.

\(^{54}\) Dodd, “Paul’s Paradigmatic ‘I’,”43-4. Dodd argues that Weiss’ argument is an argument from silence and that Paul introduces his citations with verbal markers in the vast majority of cases, forcing the burden of proof on those claiming that v.12a is not Pauline. Although Dodd has accurately identified the weaknesses in the slogan theory (that there is no clear method of discernment), his argument does not account for the possibility that 1 Cor 6:12-20 could be a diatribe; that is, there could be a hypothetical interlocutor, in which case Paul would not need to mark his citations in the way Dodd requires (see Burk, “Discerning Corinthian Slogans”, *BBR*, 99-121).
be identified as non-Pauline by virtue of its content and there are no textual indications marking it out as a citation, how can one justify the claim that it is a slogan?

Murphy-O’Connor and Denny Burk have both argued in favour of the claim that v.12a is one of three slogans in the 6:12-20 section, and that all three slogans (vv.12a, 13, 18) argue for the same, non-Pauline worldview; namely, that the body is morally irrelevant. Burk does admit that v.12a could be a Corinthian adaptation of something Paul had previously told them concerning their relationship to the Jewish Law. Burk solves the problem of discernment by arguing that 6:12-20 exhibits diatribal features, and that the slogans represent the voice of a real interlocutor. Murphy-O’Connor solves the problem by arguing that v.12a does not represent a Pauline notion at all; it is simply a citation of a Corinthian maxim. The problem with this is the way v.12a seems to echo other Pauline assertions concerning Gentiles and Law, especially Rom 6:15. It seems to me that the two most methodologically sound conclusions one can reach about the rhetorical function of v.12a is one of the following: (a) it is not a slogan; rather it represents Pauline material worked into a longer argumentative sequence, or (b) 6:12-20 is, as Burk argues, an adapted diatribe where v.12a, 13, and 18 represent the voice of a real interlocutor; in other words, Corinthian slogans. Option (b) does not discount the possibility that v.12a could have had Pauline origin, since the features of the diatribe gives the interpreter a manner with which to differentiate v.12a from its surrounding material other than by virtue of content, which, as we have seen, is unreliable.

1.2.2.2 1 Cor 6:13

There is more controversy and debate surrounding the discernment of a possible Corinthian slogan in v.13. Although v.13a is commonly thought to be a citation of a Corinthian maxim, v.13b is contested and there is no clear scholarly consensus concerning the overall message of the verse or its function in the pericope. Conzelmann asserts that v.13a, τὰ βρῶματα τῆς κοιλίας και ἡ κοιλία τοῖς βρῶμασιν, is a Corinthian slogan that Paul proceeds to argue against in the remainder of the verse (13b-d). Robertson and Plummer attribute the entirety of v.13

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57 Ibid., 110, 112.
58 Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinthians Slogans”, 396.
59 Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinthian Slogans,” 394.
60 Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 110. Conzelmann argues that v.13a reflects a Stoic philosophical view that adiaphora, that is, matters of indifference, are not relevant from a spiritual perspective. This is similar to Murphy-O’Connor’s claim that v.13 highlights that the Corinthians believed the body to be morally irrelevant (Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinthians Slogans”, 395).
to Paul, claiming that the aim of the verse is to show that the relationship between σῶμα and πορνεία cannot be equated to the relationship between κοιλία and βρῶμα.61

Murphy-O’Connor, perhaps the most well known supporter of the theory that vv.13a and 13b are slogans, argues along a surprisingly similar line, albeit with the difference that the statements about κοιλία and βρῶμα are derived from the Corinthians, and that the description of the relationship between σῶμα and πορνεία represents Paul’s counter-claim.62 Barrett sees vv.13a-b as a Corinthian position, albeit one which Paul agrees with. He argues that the statements about κοιλία and βρῶμα imply that there is no food which is forbidden to the Christ-believer.63 This, of course, is something Paul would fundamentally agree with (1 Cor 8:1-8). In essence what this means is that there is no food which can defile the Gentile Christ-believer, since the Jewish food laws are meant only for Jews, and Gentile Christ-believers are not bound by them. Paul then proceeds to argue that this is not the case with σῶμα and πορνεία, since the body (σῶμα) is directly united with Christ, unlike κοιλία, and consequently different rules apply.64 Thiselton agrees with Murphy-O’Connor that both vv.13a and 13b should be seen as Corinthian slogans, on the basis of content: if v.13b were removed from the slogan, it looses its force of meaning; namely, that the food and the stomach belong in the transient physical sphere, and are therefore morally irrelevant.65 According to this view, σῶμα is not seen as something transient, on the basis of its role in the resurrection (c.f 1 Cor 15:12-17, which would indicate that there were members in the Corinthian congregation who did believe that the body was transient, i.e. would not be resurrected).66 Perhaps the most convincing argument against differentiating v.13a from 13b is put forth by Murphy-O’Connor, when he reveals the existence of a number of parallelisms within the verse indicating that v.13a and b together constitute one part of the verse, which is then echoed in v.13c and d.67 In terms of rhetorical indications that v.13 is not Pauline material, Burk’s analysis of the diatribal features of 1 Cor 6:12-20 provides the best support.68

61 Robertson and Pummer, A Critical Exegetical Commentary, 123.
63 Barrett, A Commentary, 147.
64 Barrett, A Commentary, 149-50.
65 Thiselton, The First Epistle, 463.
67 Ibid., 394.
68 Burk, “Discerning Corinthian Slogans”, 110.
Murphy-O’Connor has argued that the “most natural” meaning of v.18 is that the body is morally irrelevant.⁶⁹ He then uses this interpretation of the verse’s content as support for the theory that all three assumed slogans in the pericope represent the Corinthian position of bodily irrelevance.⁷⁰ This theory harkens back to Conzelmann’s assertion that the slogan in v.13 represents a Stoic worldview (adiaphora), where physical matters were spiritually irrelevant.⁷¹ As we have previously observed, this reconstruction of the Corinthian’s conceptual world is very common. The identification of v.18 as a slogan is, however, more controversial. C.F.D Moule was among the first to cautiously suggest that v.18 could be a Corinthian slogan,⁷² but before the work of Murphy-O’Connor this was not a popular hypothesis. Barrett brings up Moule’s suggestion as a possibility, but states that it is not a completely satisfactory solution since Paul’s reply apparently accepts the proposition; ergo, there is no counter-claim.⁷³ He also entertains the Calvinistic notion that v.18 is expressing a comparative judgment; namely that πορνεία is comparatively more connected to the body than other sins.⁷⁴ Robertson and Plummer, who hold the verse to be Pauline, also assert that the language has to be seen as comparative, if the verse is not be become a paradox (especially with regards to 6:9-10).⁷⁵ Consequently, the verse is claiming that πορνεία is comparatively more corporeal than other sins, not that all sins other than πορνεία are incorporeal. The appeal of this theory is obvious but it lacks grammatical support,⁷⁶ and the need for it disappears if v.18 is identified as a slogan. If the verse is viewed as a slogan, the risk of it becoming a paradox with regards to vv.9-10 disappears, since the voice behind the verses would not be the same. Fee argues that if v.18b is seen as a Corinthian slogan and v.18c is seen as the Pauline retort, the structure of the verse would look something like this:

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⁶⁹ Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinthian Slogans”, CBQ, 393.
⁷⁰ Ibid.
⁷¹ Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 110.
⁷³ Barrett, A Commentary, 150.
⁷⁴ Ibid., 151.
⁷⁵ Robertson and Plummer, A Critical Exegetical Commentary, 128.
⁷⁶ Robertson and Plummer’s attempts to find grammatical support for a comparative reading is admirable, but in the end not convincing. See Robertson and Plummer, A Critical Exegetical Commentary, 128.
Paul: Flee πορνεία!

Corinthians: Every sin that a person commits is outside the body

Paul: On the contrary, the πορνεύων sins against the body itself

This is an attractive option for a particularly challenging verse in that it renders the apparent paradox of the v. 18 obsolete, but, as Byrne has pointed out, if one were to re-define σῶμα in terms of Käsemann’s assertion that it represents a vehicle of communication, the paradox also disappears. According to this perspective, the different nuances of the word σῶμα support a comparative judgment of the verse, in that if the physical body were seen as an aspect of personal self-communication, the fornicator would be perverting the faculty within himself/herself that is meant to be the most intimate form of communication between people. Consequently, πορνεία would indeed differentiate itself from other corporeal sins, since no other corporeal sin perverts the particular function of communication that πορνεία does. As we have previously discussed, however, Byrne’s interpretation of σῶμα is not wholly justified by the text itself. Käsemann’s definition of the body as a vehicle of communication is, however, a historically viable option, especially with regards to the Second Temple Jewish interpretation of the body as a receptacle of purity or a transmitter of impurity – or, in other words, holy communication. Subsequently, while it is perhaps not justified to see v.18 as a reflection of two different meanings of σῶμα, as Byrne does, it may be defensible to assert that πορνεία corrupts the ability of the σῶμα to function as a tool for communication between the human and the divine. This interpretation would also solve the issue of vv.9-10 contradicting v.18, without needing to introduce the idea of v.18b representing a Corinthian position.

It should be noted that many of the more influential recent studies in favour of viewing v.13 and 18 as Corinthian slogans are based on Murphy-O’Connor’s work, and Murphy-O’Connor states explicitly that his manner of discerning the slogans in v.13a-b and v.18 is based on his understanding of their content as non-Pauline. Consequently, if one could show

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77 Fee, *The First Epistle*, 261. This structure is based on Murphy-O’Connor’s theory concerning slogans in 1 Cor 6:12-20. See Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinthians Slogans, 393.

78 Byrne, “Sinning Against One’s Own Body”, 613.

79 Ibid.

80 The body as a receptacle of purity of a transmitter of impurity is a form of holy communication since the purity status of the individual’s body determines his/her ability to communicate with God.


82 Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinthian Slogans”, 393.
that the content of v.13a-b and v.18 are indeed congruent with other Pauline statements and arguments, his theory, and that of those following him, could be shown to contain a considerable weakness. Because of this, I have chosen to mainly interact with Burk’s theory of slogan discernment, since it is the only theory of discernment that does not pre-suppose the content of vv.12, 13, and 18 to be non-Pauline.

1.3 Method and Theory

Rhetorical criticism will form the basis of this thesis. In order to establish that the rhetorical aim of 1 Cor 6:12-20 is to convince Gentile Christ-believers to follow Jewish sexuality laws despite not being ‘under the Law’, I will have to illustrate two things: (a) that the rhetorical aim of the passage is not to argue against a number of Corinthian slogans, and (b) that ἔξεστιν (v.12) is a reference to the Jewish law. In pursuit of (a), I will be applying the lens of a rhetorical analysis to 1 Cor 6:12-20. I have chosen to interact with Burk’s theory of slogan discernment, since it is the only theory of discernment that is not based on identifying the content of vv.12, 13, and 18 as non-Pauline. Consequently, I will be attempting to show that the diatribal pattern present in 1 Cor 6:12-20 does not support the discernment of Corinthian slogans in vv.12, 13, and 18. In order to do this, I will be using the work of Rudolf Bultmann and Stanley K. Stowers, as well as excerpts from Epictetus and other ancient authors who used diatribes. Bultmann and Stowers have more or less defined how NT scholarship approaches the issue of diatribal literature in the Pauline letters, and, as we will see, Bultmann’s dissertation forms the basis for Burk’s theory of slogan discernment.

In order to establish that vv.13 and 18 are not ‘Corinthian slogans,’ I will be attempting to use Stower’s analysis of ancient diatribes in pursuit of illustrating that it is not historically plausible to identify vv.13 and 18 as the objections of a real interlocutor. By comparing 1 Cor 6:12-20 with other ancient diatribal texts, I wish to show that diatribes were not strict compositions, but were rather characterized by a feigned dialogue carried out in front of an audience, rather than a direct interaction with an audience. This dialogue could be carried out in different grammatical and stylistic forms, and therefore the main identifier of diatribes was the concept of feigned dialogue, rather than other, stricter, stylistic and grammatical markers. After reconstructing a more historically plausible approach to understanding what a diatribe was, I will subsequently argue that the aspects of 1 Cor 6:12-20 that resemble a direct
interaction with the audience can actually be identified as the stylistic tools of deliberative *inventio* (invention).

The idea of using ancient rhetorical methods in order to better understand the Pauline letters is a comparatively new phenomenon within Pauline studies. Hans Dieter Betz initiated the concept at the 29th general meeting of the SNTS in 1974 with his paper entitled “The Literary Composition and Functions of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians.” The innovation of using ancient Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks and texts as comparative material in order to better understand the literary composition of Paul’s letters created a new approach in NT scholarship, and it has only grown in popularity since its initial introduction. The study of ancient rhetoric in Pauline texts, has, however, raised a number of follow-up questions. Carl Joachim Classen raises the relevant question of whether the aim of Betz’s method was to demonstrate how familiar Paul was with ancient categories of rhetoric or whether it was meant to help modern exegetes better understand the letters themselves. This is a pertinent inquiry, especially with regards to the fact that many biblical interpreters applying a rhetorical lens to their work also use the method in order to culturally situate Paul. This is, in my opinion, a problematic approach since, more often than not, this is not combined with a more nuanced understanding of Diasporic Judaism, and the extent to which it had already been Hellenized by the time of Paul’s composition. With this in mind, the discovery of ancient rhetorical categories in Paul’s letters should not be used as evidence to situate him in a non-Jewish cultural context. In this thesis, I will be using the tools of ancient rhetorical criticism with the focal aim of textual analysis. In order to establish (b), I will be engaging in a routine linguistic analysis of ἔξεστιν, as well as exploring its usage in other NT texts.

Ancient rhetorical methods were often connected to specific institutional contexts. Therefore, the institutional context of a text can be used as a clue when the interpreter is trying to identify the rhetorical genre of a passage. In light of this, I will be using institution criticism as a theoretical framework for this thesis. The aim of institution criticism is to use institutional realities as explanatory categories. Because rhetorical genre can often be identified based on the institutional setting of a text, this is a natural theoretical framework to

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84 Ibid., 2.
85 Different rhetorical genres were developed based on the institutional setting into which they would be delivered (George A. Kennedy, “The Genres of Rhetoric” (43-50) in Stanley E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C.-AD. 400* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 46.). As an example, Stowers has identified the philosophical school as the institutional context from which the diatribe grew. See Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Atlanta:SBL, 1981), 76.
combine with rhetorical criticism. Institution criticism will also allow me to draw conclusions concerning the likelihood of Paul using certain rhetorical categories based on assessments of which kind of institutions the early Christ-believers frequented. The application of institution criticism will also allow me to religio-culturally situate Paul without using rhetorical criticism to do so.

1.4 Mode of Procedure

In pursuit of establishing that the rhetorical aim of 1 Cor 6:12-20 is to convince a Gentile Christ-believing audience that they should follow Jewish rules regulating sexuality, I will commence by illustrating that the rhetorical methods employed by Paul in the passage supports this assertion. In order to do this, I will begin by identifying the rhetorical genre of the letter in its entirety. This analysis will conclude that 1 Cor should be identified as a deliberative text. Once the subordinate genre has been established, I will proceed to discuss Burk’s claim that the diatribal pattern in the passage can be used to support the existence of Corinthian slogans in vv.12, 13, and 18. In order to show that this is not the case, I will attempt to deconstruct Burk’s portrayal of what a diatribal pattern looked like in Antiquity, and, using the work of Stowers, show that it is not a reliable portrayal of how diatribal texts were actually composed during this time. Using Stower’s portrayal of diatribes as feigned dialogue with a hypothetical interlocutor, I will endeavor to demonstrate that a more historically accurate understanding of diatribes leaves little choice but to identify vv.12 and 15 as the objections of a hypothetical interlocutor. Verses 13 and 18 do not fit into the pattern for objections. Following this conclusion, I will also try to show that Burk’s claim that Paul adapted the diatribal format to replace the objections of a hypothetical interlocutor with the voice of a real, Corinthian interlocutor is untenable.

Having demonstrated that using the diatribal pattern in 1 Cor 6:12-20 to identify Corinthian slogans is not a reliable method of slogan discernment, I will turn my attention to the conclusions that can be drawn from a more historically reliable rhetorical reading of the passage. If the existence of *adiaphoric* Corinthian slogans in vv.12, 13, and 18 cannot be presupposed from a rhetorical perspective, how does this change our interpretation of the text? To answer this question, I will argue that ἔξεστιν can be used as a key to unlock the aim of the passage. I will explore the possibility that ἔξεστιν should be understood as a reference to the Jewish Law, and, having demonstrated that this is in fact plausible, I will proceed to discuss
the rhetorical implications of this for the remainder of the passage. If ἔξεστιν is seen as a reference to what is or is not permitted by the Jewish Law, then the remainder of the passage could be seen as a deliberative invention that argues for the beneficial nature of the Jewish sexuality laws, using a diatribal pattern in order to make this argument more pedagogical.

2. The Rhetorical Method of 1 Cor 6:12-20

2.1 Paul’s Rhetorical Strategies

As we have demonstrated in chapter 1.2, the most reliable method of slogan discernment in 1 Cor 6:12-20 has proven to be Burk’s application of a diatribal pattern to the text. This is the only method of discernment that is not based on the content of the slogans. The presumed slogans in the passage are, in turn, used by a plethora of scholars to argue that the aim of 1 Cor 6:12-20 is to argue against a theology of corporeal moral irrelevance. If one wishes to argue that the aim of 1 Cor 6:12-20 is instead to argue in favour of Gentile Christ-believers adhering to Jewish sexuality laws, one must first prove that the presumed slogans in the text either (a) do not exist, or (b) cannot be interpreted as the voice of an interlocutor who believes the body to be morally irrelevant. Since Burk’s theory is the most substantial theory in favour of adiaphoric slogans in 1 Cor 6:12-20, I will be approaching the text from a rhetorical perspective in an attempt to establish that a more careful rhetorical analysis of 1 Cor 6:12-20 will, in fact, yield quite a different result.

2.1.1 Rhetorical Genre

In the following section, I will attempt to identify the rhetorical methods employed by Paul in 1 Cor 6:12-20. In pursuit of this, I will be looking for correlations between Paul’s writings and ancient Greek rhetoric. The flexibility of the epistolary genre allowed for amalgamations of different rhetorical classes and genres. This means that ancient letters did not adhere strictly to any specific rhetorical genre, often resulting in a mixing together of different rhetorical methods. This can make the process of establishing rhetorical methods in epistolary texts challenging. George Kennedy notes that authorial intent and original social situation are

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two of the most important clues when identifying the rhetorical genre of an ancient text. In light of this, I will begin our analysis with a brief discussion of Paul’s intent in 1 Cor 6:12-20, and the institutional reality of the Corinthian *ekklesia*.

As I have shown in the chapter above, the majority of scholars use v.12 in order to ascertain the intent of the discussion in vv.12-20. This means that the point of departure for many interpreters is the tension between what is ‘ἔξεστιν’ and what is ‘συμφέρει.’ This has resulted in the common claim that Paul’s intention in 1 Cor 6:12-20 is to discuss ‘Christian freedom’ and its limitations, as opposed to the Corinthian’s claims that their sexual freedom is not immoral. Although this is a sound interpretation in that it highlights the tension between that which is lawful and that which is beneficial, I do not think that enough attention is given to this last issue, namely the issue of what is beneficial (συμφέρω). As the Greek indicates, the tension is actually between that which is lawful and that which *brings together*. Consequently, it becomes clear that Paul is intending to explain what kind of behaviour will bring the congregation together. Therefore, it could be said that the subordinate intention is, in congruence with Mitchell’s theory, unity and re-unification.

Because the subordinate intention of the passage is to present arguments in favour of the lifestyle that Paul feels will be the most beneficial for the congregation’s ‘togetherness’, or unity, the rhetorical genre is most likely *deliberative rhetoric*. This is likely for a number of reasons. First, one of the hallmarks of deliberative rhetoric is the question: “is it more beneficial to do this or that?” Our passage clearly fits this description. Second, Mitchell has argued convincingly that the *deliberative letter* was an epistolary genre in antiquity, and that it corresponded to the *deliberative oratory*. Subsequently, we have support for the assertion that a letter could be written in deliberative rhetorical form, even though, as Stanley Porter has pointed out, this may not have been a common practice. Third, the concept of παραδείγμα was a common method applied in deliberative texts. 1 Cor 6:12-20 includes a


89 Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinthian Slogans,” 393.


93 Porter criticizes Mitchell’s claim that there was such a thing as a ‘deliberative letter’ on the basis of lack of sufficient comparative material (see Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, 551-2.

number of proofs by example. This method was also very common in diatribes,\textsuperscript{95} thus causing the genres to overlap. It is clear that 1 Cor 6:12-20 could be described as a diatribe, or at least a text with diatribal features.\textsuperscript{96} The dialogical aspect of the texts is obvious, and is the main reason many scholars have seen Corinthian slogans dispersed among the Pauline verse. The diatribe originated as a pedagogical method within philosophical schools,\textsuperscript{97} and was an argumentative method wherein the voice of a hypothetical interlocutor was inserted to highlight aspects of the narrative that the speaker wished to emphasize. Although the interlocutor was hypothetical, his/her voice often represented real ideas and relevant counter-theories.\textsuperscript{98}

The original socio-institutional setting for the Corinthians congregation also supports the classification of 1 Corinthians as deliberative rhetoric. The \textit{ekklesia} can be described as both a Diaspora Association Synagogue,\textsuperscript{99} and as a Greco-Roman association (\textit{collegium}).\textsuperscript{100} Richard Ascough has convincingly argued that making any distinction between these two institutions is to create a false dichotomy, since there is not enough evidence to mark them out as two separate institutions.\textsuperscript{101} In fact, as Ascough illustrates, there is substantial evidence against any claims that the Diaspora synagogue in some way differentiated itself from other associations. For example, the argument that Diaspora synagogues could not have been viewed as associations due to their ethnic membership component promptly falls when one is faced with the ancient sources clearly indicating that there were many associations during the Hellenistic period that had restricted membership in some way.\textsuperscript{102} In addition to this, it is also clear that there were other associations that based their membership on ethnic identity. For example, we find a number of ethnic associations on Delos.\textsuperscript{103} Ascough also points out that if we take the possible existence of so-called ‘God-fearers’ into account, it would seem that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{95} Stowers, \textit{The Diatribe}, 76.
\item \textsuperscript{96} Will Deming’s article on 1 Cor 7:21-22 exemplifies what a text with ‘diatribal features’ looks like. See Will Deming, “A Diatribe Pattern in 1 Cor 7:21-22: A New Perspective on Paul’s Directions to Slaves.” \textit{Novum Testamentum} 37 no. 2 (1995), 130-137. See esp. 130-1.
\item \textsuperscript{97} Dover, \textit{Ancient Greek Literature} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 116.
\item \textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{99} Ralph Korner, “\textit{Ekklesia} as a Jewish Synagogue Term: Some Implications for Paul’s Socio-Religious Location”. \textit{JMJJS} No. 2 (2015): 53-78.
\item \textsuperscript{100} Philip A. Harland, “Associations and the Economics of Group Life: A Preliminary Case Study of Asia Minor and the Aegean Islands.” \textit{SEA} no. 80 (2015), 1-37.
\item \textsuperscript{101} Richard S. Ascough, “Paul, Synagogues, and Associations: reframing the Question of Models for Pauline Christ Groups.” \textit{JMJJS} no. 2 (2015): 27-52. See esp. 29-30.
\item \textsuperscript{102} Ascough, “Paul, Synagogues, and Associations,” 34.
\item \textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 34.
\end{itemize}
Diaspora synagogues did not restrict membership or participation based on ethnic identity. In light of the striking similarity between Diaspora synagogues and association, I will be working from the perspective that Christ Groups in fact belonged to an institutional category encompassing both of these institutions.

With this in mind, the original social setting for 1 Corinthians can be identified as a political assembly, since Greco-Roman associations were not politically neutral. Ascough notes that associations included civic officials and patrons, that they organized civic events, and that they were generally involved in the work of the polis in such a way that they even held places of prominence at civic events. This indicates that associations were indeed a kind of political assembly. This is supported by the fact that Roman emperors restricted the activities of associations during times of political unrest. Consequently, because Christ Groups can be placed in the same institutional category as Greco-Roman associations (and Diaspora Association Synagogues), and because these were political assemblies, the identification of the Corinthian congregation as a kind of political assembly is both reasonable and justified. Kennedy notes that deliberative rhetoric was often employed in political assemblies, since one of the purposes of a political assembly was to establish which course of action was most beneficial. Consequently, both the authorial intent of 1 Cor 6:12-20 and the original social setting in which it was performed speak in favour of the passage being identified as deliberative rhetoric.

2.1.2 The Diatribe

Now that we have established that the rhetorical genre of 1 Cor 6:12-20 is in all likelihood deliberative, I will proceed to discuss the specific rhetorical methods employed in the passage. I will argue that 1 Cor 6:12-20 makes use of a diatribe pattern. In pursuit of this, I will be analyzing the shape diatribes took in ancient texts and comparing this to the patterns found in 1 Cor 6:12-20. I will come to the conclusion that the diatribal pattern suggested by Burk is not historically plausible, and that a more nuanced understanding of diatribes actually supports a very different reading of the passage. Before we delve any further into our analysis, let us take a closer look at the passage in question.

104 Ibid.
105 Ibid., 35.
(12) All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial (bring together). All things are lawful for me, but I will not be under the authority of anything. (13) Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food and God will destroy (leave idle, unemployed) both the one and the other. The body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord and the Lord is for the body. (14) And God raised up the Lord and will also raise us through his powers. (15) Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! (16) Do you not know that the one joined to a prostitute is one body [with her]? “The two will become,” it is written, “one flesh.” (17) But the one who is joined to the Lord is one spirit [with him]. (18) Flee from sexual immorality! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body but the fornicator sins against his own body. (19) Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit inside you, that you have from God, and that you are not your own? (20) For you were bought with a price; so glorify God in your body.

This passage can be understood in a number of ways. There are very few scholars who have tried to identify a diatribe pattern within its margins, and consequently our secondary source material is somewhat scarce. While most scholars have focused on the discernment of possible slogans, and have consequently not paid much attention to the other rhetorical
patterns in the text, Burk has used the diatribe pattern in order to argue for the existence of slogans in vv.12, 13, and 18. As I have previously noted, there is no set method for discerning slogans in 1 Cor 6:12-20. In light of this, Burk’s theory that a diatribe pattern in 1 Cor 6:12-20 could indicate which verses are slogans is one of the most convincing attempts to create a method for slogan discernment. Such a method is crucial, since it is problematic to identify non-Pauline material simply based on content, because this identification will consequently be made on the basis of our pre-suppositions about Pauline theology. Burk’s attempts to identify a diatribal pattern in the passage can also aid us in our attempts to establish which rhetorical methods Paul is using. In pursuit of using the diatribe pattern to identify slogans, Burk points out the existence of the following diatribal pattern in the text:

- Objection: All things are lawful for me
- Rejection phrase: but
- Supporting phrase: not all things are beneficial

The objection constitutes the slogan. Burk bases this pattern on Abraham Malherbe’s exposition of the diatribal pattern in relation to the rejection phrase μὴ γένοιτο. Malherbe in his turn bases his exposition on Rudolf Bultmann’s dissertation Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe. In his exposition, Malherbe notes that Paul and Epictetus are the only examples we have of μὴ γένοιτο being used as a rejection phrase in a diatribe, despite Bultmann’s claims that μὴ γένοιτο was a common feature of diatribal

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109 Since, as Dodd notes (following Omanson), there are no verbal markers in the passage, one could argue that the burden of proof lies with those asserting the existence of slogans, especially since Paul usually introduced citations (see Dodd, “Paul’s Paradigmatic ‘I’”, 44). Burk agrees with Dodd and Omanson that there is no method for discerning slogans, and that this constitutes a problem, but argues that the diatribe pattern in 1 Cor 6:12-20 is just as significant as a verbal introduction (see Burk, “Discerning Corinthian Slogans,” 100). Therefore, the possibility of a diatribe pattern in 1 Cor 6:12-20 becomes the only concrete method of discerning slogans in 1 Cor 6:12-20 that I have come across. All other advocates base their arguments simply on the content of the assumed slogans, which, as I have previously discussed, is problematic (see Murphy-Connor, “Corinthians Slogans”, Jay Smith “The Roots of a Libertine Slogan”, Goulder, “Libertines?”, Byrne, “Sinning Against One’s Own Body.”). In fact, Bultmann himself notes that the objections of the hypothetical interlocutor are usually introduced by Paul (see Rudolf Bultmann, Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynische-stoische Diatribe (Göttingen: Vanderboeck and Ruprecht, 1910, 10), lending more authority to Dodd and Omanson’s objection to the tendency of scholars to assume the existence of slogans in 1 Cor 6:12-20 without any set method for discerning them.
110 Ibid., 110.
literature. This is problematic for Burk’s thesis, because it seems clear that Bultmann’s pattern ([a] Objection [b] rejection phrase [µὴ γένοιτο], [c] supporting phrase) is based on an assumption that the patterns he saw in Epictetus and Paul could be generalized, since he uses a pattern only found in two ancient sources to sketch a general rhetorical pattern. Burk states clearly that v.15-18a, where the pattern follows Bultmann’s structural theory (including µὴ γένοιτο), are the only verses where the diatribe takes its ‘customary form.’ This is problematic since, as Malherbe points out, Bultmann’s theory of µὴ γένοιτο as a rejection phrase is based on only two ancient sources, one of which is Paul. Consequently, Epictetus is the only non-Pauline source being used to establish what the ‘customary’ form of a diatribe looks like. Therefore, Burk’s argument that 1 Cor 6:12-20 represents an adapted version of the diatribe form described by Malherbe (who is actually critiquing Bultmann’s description of the diatribal form) needs to be reconsidered in light of the fact that the very strict diatribal pattern which he relies on cannot be assumed to be generalizable.

2.1.2.1 Literary Characteristics of the Ancient Diatribe

What then are the literary characteristics of the diatribal form? First and foremost, the form has to be understood as being derived from the dialogue-based pedagogical activity of the philosophical schools. The origin of the diatribe is therefore actual dialogue between teacher and students. This is interesting because, as Demosthenes writes, ancient letters were supposed to simulate the characteristics of dialogue and real conversation. Since Paul occupied the role of teacher in the ekklesia, it is reasonable to claim that he would simulate the pedagogical conversation style of his day when dictating his letter to the Corinthian congregation. Stanley K. Stowers writes that there is no typical structure to a diatribe. The main characteristic, however, is that authors of diatribes simulate direct address by creating an imaginary discussion partner, or a hypothetical interlocutor.

112 Ibid., 25.
113 Burk, “Discerning Corinthian Slogans,” 112.
114 Ibid., 110.
115 In fact, Malherbe points out that Paul’s use of µὴ γένοιτο does not have a counterpart in Hellenistic diatribes in general, but only in Epictetus. See Malherbe, Paul and the Popular Philosophers, 32.
117 Reed, “The Epistle,” 185.
118 As indicated in 1 Cor 4:15.
119 Stowers, “The Diatribe,” 75.
120 Ibid.
The dialogue between the author and the hypothetical interlocutor can take many different forms, and it varies from author to author. One method, common in Teles, Epictetus, and Dio Chrysostom, is a short exchange of questions and answers, where the teacher leads the hypothetical interlocutor with a series of sharp questions. Another technique that Stowers describes is the stringing together of a series of objections and false conclusions made by the interlocutor. The objections and false conclusions of the interlocutor are rejected by the author using strong negatives or oath-formulas, like μη γένοτο. 1 Cor 6:12-20 clearly falls into the second method described by Stowers. This means that when we are looking for correlations between 1 Cor 6:12-20 and other texts, we should be looking for diatribes with a series of objections and false conclusions.

In his excellent summary of the research history of the diatribe, Stowers comes to the conclusion that the following ancient authors are among those that best represent what is meant by a ‘diatribe’: Teles, Epictetus, Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, Seneca, and Philo (although Philo’s use of the diatribe is still debated). Although it has proven difficult to single out the typical structure of a diatribe, the fact remains that there are significant similarities between the dialogical writings of the above listed authors, to the extent that one can speak in terms of shared stylistic elements and forms of argumentation. What then are these shared stylistic elements and forms of argumentation? Stowers’ analysis shows that the shared features of diatrial texts are due to their origin, namely, the context of philosophical schools. With this as a point of departure, the main uniting feature of a diatribe is a feigned dialogue with a hypothetical interlocutor. The rhetorical method exemplified in a diatribe was a pedagogical tool used by teachers, and the feigned dialogue was meant to lend added strength to their arguments. This forms the backdrop for the remainder of the shared stylistic features, which include the following:

(a) Conversational style with parataxis and elliptical expressions
(b) Short sentences with simple conversational syntax
(c) Rhetorical figures such as isocola, parallelism and antithesis
(d) Rhetorical questions

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121 Ibid.
122 Ibid. Note the discussion and critique above of Bultmann’s claims that μη γένοτο was a hallmark of the diatribe genre. It clearly appeared in diatribe settings, but it can be questioned whether or not it was a universally acknowledged hallmark of the genre.
123 Stowers, The Diatribe, 48.
124 Ibid., 29.
125 Ibid., 76.
126 Stowers, The Diatribe, 76.
(e) Overall didactic and hortatory style
(f) Citations from authoritative sources are often incorporated
(g) Irony and sarcasm
(h) Virtue and vice lists are common
(i) Personification of abstract ideas
(j) Objections and false conclusions
(k) The use of the vocative, or more generally the second person singular, to address an individual other than the audience (hypothetical interlocutor)

As the reader will notice, these stylistic elements are significantly more vague than the precise patterns suggested by Bultmann and adopted by Burk. When viewed together, however, they do create a very distinct dialogical rhetoric that distinguishes it from other rhetorical methods. Let us take a closer look at how these stylistic features can identify texts as diatribes. The following text from Epictetus’ *Discourses* exemplifies the role of a non-polemical hypothetical interlocutor:

> What aid, then, must we have ready in hand in such circumstances? Why, what else than the knowledge of what is mine and what is not mine, what is permitted me and what is not permitted me.

The first sentence, introduced by the typical τι οὖν, represents the voice of an interlocutor who helps Epictetus make a more convincing argument by allowing him to respond to possible counter-arguments before they are actually posed by a real audience. The interlocutor therefore represents the voice of Epictetus himself, since he is the one constructing his own dialogue partner in order to highlight certain aspects of his own teaching. A similar usage of an interlocutor can be observed in 1 Cor 6:15b-16a:

> Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them the members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one flesh with her?

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127 Stowers, “The Diatribe,” 76.
128 Stowers, The Diatribe, 119.
129 Ibid., 85.
130 Stowers points out that the idea of the diatribe being a fixed form was abandoned in more recent scholarship in favour of the view that the main uniting feature of what the sources after all prove to be rather diverse diatribes is their dialogical nature. This feature is related to the institutional origin of the diatribe, namely the philosophical schools. See Ibid., 75.
131 Epictetus, Discourses, Book 1, 1:21-22 (LCL, W.A. Oldfather).
The interlocutor’s voice in v.15b allows Paul to concretely exemplify what he hints at in v.15a, where he writes “do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?” The interlocutor, indicated by the inclusion of the word οὖν in the same manner as Epictetus’ interlocutor,132 allows Paul to pin-point exactly which behavior needs to stop due to the congregation member’s corporeal connection to Christ. The interlocutor is therefore a reflection of both the author and the audience. The author constructs the voice of the interlocutor as an aid to his/her specific rhetorical goals, which is ultimately to convince the audience of their cause. Therefore, the interlocutor is meant to pre-emptively represent the voice of the audience. The key here is the word pre-emptively. The interlocutor is not actually the voice of the audience, but rather is constructed by the author for the benefit of the audience’s comprehension. This is what is meant by the term ‘hypothetical interlocutor.’ In fact, the presence of a hypothetical interlocutor is often indicated in the text by a switch to the second person singular,133 illustrating that the author is now turning away from the audience, and instead simulating dialogue with another party, a dialogue carried out in front of the audience, for the audience’s benefit. The question that this raises concerning Burk’s theory is the following: if this is the role of the hypothetical interlocutor, can a real interlocutor, representing the actual voice of the audience, replace it? Does not the core purpose and grammatical function of the diatribal interlocutor indicate that the dialogue is supposed to be performed in front of the audience, and not include the audience as active participants? Indeed, since the main identifier of diatribes is feigned dialogue performed in front of the audience, is it still a diatribe if the dialogue is carried out with the audience?

Romans 3:1-9 illustrates the stylistic features of ‘objections and false conclusions’ in Pauline diatribal literature. The passage also indicates that a feigned dialogue is being carried out by Paul and a hypothetical interlocutor – in front of the audience rather than with the audience. It is relevant for us to briefly look to Romans for comparative material since Stowers bases most of his conclusions about Pauline diatribes on Romans. In addition, it can be useful for us to gain a greater appreciation of how Paul uses this rhetorical tool in other literary contexts. Let us therefore take a closer look at the text in question, through the lens of Stower’s analysis:134

132 For further examples of this usage of οὖν and τί οὖν for both the interlocutor and rhetorical questions to drive the diatribe forward, see Epictetus, Discourses, Book I. VI. 12, IV. 28, VIII, 11. See also Stowers, The Diatribe, 119.
133 Stowers, The Diatribe, 85.
134 See Stowers, The Diatribe, 120.
Objections (false conclusion/question): Tί oὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου ἢ τίς ἡ ὕφελεα τῆς περιτομῆς;

Answer: πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον. πρῶτον μὲν [γὰρ] ὅτι ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ.

Objection (question): τί γὰρ; εἰ ἡπιστήσασαν τινες, μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήθησει;

Rejection: μὴ γένοιτο

Reason for Rejection: γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθῆς, πάς δὲ ἀνθρωπος ψεύστης, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὅπως ἄν δικαιοθῆτε ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου καὶ νικήσεις ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαι σε.

Objection (rhetorical question): εἰ δὲ ἡ ἁδικία ἡμῶν θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην συνίστησιν, τί ἐροῦμεν; μὴ ἁδικος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν; κατὰ ἀνθρωπον λέγω.

Rejection: μὴ γένοιτο

Reason for rejection: ἐπεὶ πῶς κρινεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον;

Objection (question): εἰ δὲ ἡ ἁλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, τί ἔτι κἀγὼ ὡς ἀμαρτωλός κρίνομαι;

Objection (false conclusion/ad hominem retort): καὶ μὴ καθὼς βλασφημούμεθα καὶ καθὼς φασίν τινες ἡμᾶς λέγειν ὅτι ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακά, ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἁγαθά; ὅν τὸ κρίμα ἐνδικόν ἔστιν.

False Conclusion: Tί oὖν; προεχόμεθα;

Rejection: oὐ πάντως;

Reason for Rejection: προητιασάμεθα γὰρ Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἐλλήνας πάντας ψεῦδος ἀμαρτίαν εἶναι

In the break-down of the rhetorical structure of Rom 3:1-9 above, the reader should especially make note of the bolded words, which are indicative of the rhetorical function of the proceeding phrases. For example, Tί oὖν indicates an objection, μὴ γένοιτο and oὐ πάντως indicate a rejection, and εἰ δὲ indicates a rhetorical question. This shows us that 1 Cor 6:13 and 18 do not include any of the markers of an objection that Paul normally made use of. In addition, this passage shows us that the objections and false conclusions of the hypothetical interlocutor does not represent the actual voice of a real interlocutor in the Roman congregation. Stowers’ writes that historically, the objections and false conclusions in diatribes are just as likely to be the voice of the author as they are to be the voice of the interlocutor.135 Indeed, since the basic function of the diatribe is pedagogical, the interlocutor

135 Stowers, The Diatribe, 128.
should never be seen as a polemical, real opponent. However, the objections and false conclusions very often directly reflect the audience. This comparison with Rom 3:1-9 has shown us three very important things: (a) Paul uses specific, if somewhat diverse, phrases and words in order to indicate objections, false conclusions, and rejection phrases, (b) a series of objections and false conclusions does not necessarily indicate direct interaction with a real audience, and (c) Paul’s use of the diatribe does not adhere to Burk’s strict schema.

Returning to 1 Cor 6:12-20, there are many stylistic correlations between 1 Cor 6:12-20 and ancient diatribes. If the reader refers back to the previously discussed list of stylistic features, s/he will notice that many of these features can be found in our Pauline passage. For example, v.18a and b feature parataxis, and vv.14, 17, and 20 are unusually short sentences. V. 13 features a parallelism, as Murphy-O’Connor has convincingly argued. Rhetorical questions can be found in vv.15b, 16, and 19. V. 16b features a citation from an authoritative source, the Torah, and v.15b is so extreme and unthinkable that it could perhaps be identified as irony. The temple metaphor in vv.19-20 represents a personification of the Temple and the holiness connected to it, and objections and false conclusions can be found in v.12 and v.15b. Consequently, many of the stylistic features associated with the feigned dialogue of ancient diatribes can be found in 1 Cor 6:12-20. But where is the feigned dialogue?

Feigned dialogue can be identified by the objections and false conclusions of the interlocutor, as well as the author’s rejections of these. The interlocutor’s objections are typically introduced with a rhetorical question or the words τί οὖν. Rejection phrases include μὴ γένοιτο, ἀλλά, and οὐ πάντως. Burk argues that δὲ was used to reject objections and false conclusions in the same way as ἀλλά was. I have not found any evidence in favour of this claim, nor any ancient diatribes that use δὲ as a rejection phrase. Consequently, I will work with the assumption that the two rejection phrases which can be found in 1 Cor 6:12-20 are μὴ γένοιτο and ἀλλά. Rhetorical questions are the most common feature of objection-introduction visible in the passage, although v.15b does use the word οὖν, perhaps to signal an objection. With this in mind, can we identify a hypothetical interlocutor in 1 Cor 6:12-20? There are only two verses that fit into the scheme for objections and false conclusions provided by Stowers: v.12 and v.15:

136 Ibid., 129.
137 Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinthian Slogans,” 394. You can accept Murphy-O’Connor’s parallelism without accepting that it argues in favour of v.13 as a Corinthian slogan. I will return to this later.
138 Stowers, The Diatribe, 75.
139 Stowers, The Diatribe, 119-120 See also Epictetus, Discourses, 2. 9. 18; 1.1. 19.
140 Burk, “Discerning Corinthian Slogans,” 111.
12. Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν ἀλλ᾽ οὐ πάντα συμφέρει· πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθῆσομαι ὑπὸ τίνος.

15. οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι τὰ σώματα υμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἔστιν; ἄρας οὖν τὰ μέλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποιήσω πόρνης μέλη; μὴ γένοιτο.

Unlike v.15, v.12 does not include any introductory words to identify v.12a as the objections of a hypothetical interlocutor. I would, however, argue that v.12a could nevertheless be seen as an objection to vv. 9-11, for reasons of content and context. In v.9, Paul claims that wrong-doers will not inherit the Kingdom of God, followed by a vice list (another common stylistic feature of diatribes) and the conclusion that the congregation in Corinth have been “washed” and “sanctified” (v.11). The vices listed in vv.9-10 seem to be connected to the Gentile lifestyle that the Christ-believers had before they were baptized (v.11a). Consequently, their baptism seems to have somehow removed them from the sins associated with their non-Christ-believing lifestyle. A considerable number of the vices listed in vv.9-10 include sins prohibited by the Jewish Law. Therefore, it would seem that Paul is telling the congregation that even though they are exempt from the Jewish Law, they still have to adhere to certain aspects of it after their baptism. Objections often precede or follow vice lists in diatribes, and the interlocutor generally speaks as one guilty of the listed vices.\footnote{Stowers, “The Diatribe,” 76.}

Seen from this perspective, v.12a could represent the objection of a hypothetical interlocutor:

\textit{Paul (vv.9-11):} You cannot inherit the Kingdom of God if you do not adhere to certain rules of the Jewish Law, which you are obliged to keep once your baptism has sanctified you.  
\textit{Hypothetical Interlocutor (v.12a):} But everything is lawful for us (we are not bound by the Jewish Law, because we are Gentiles).  
\textit{Paul (v.12b):} Yes, but not everything is beneficial for you (keeping certain aspects of the Law is beneficial [συμφέρω] for the greater good of the community.

Consequently, we only find two places in 1 Cor 6:12-20 where a feigned dialogue occurs. Only one of these places (v.12) correlates with the various theories of Corinthian slogans in
the passage. There are no indications that v.13 or v.18 occupy the rhetorical function of an interlocutor’s objections.

2.1.2.2 Bultmann or Stowers?

It is interesting to note at this point that the majority of NT scholarship concerning diatribes in Paul is based on either the work of Bultmann or Stowers. Bultmann and Stowers’ respective research represent ancient diatribes in quite different ways. Stowers points out a number of reasons why Bultmann’s study is today more or less “obsolete.” First, Bultmann’s view of the diatribe as a form of street preaching was based on a theory first presented by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff in 1881. Stowers points out that this assertion has to be problematized in light of more recent Classics scholarship, which instead indicate that the diatribe was a pedagogical method used in philosophical schools. This is an important distinction, since Wilamowitz comes to the conclusion that ‘street-preached diatribes’ were by necessity polemical texts and that the hypothetical interlocutor was always an opponent, whereas Stowers maintains that Pauline diatribes, in particular those in Romans, are not polemical in nature, but rather pedagogical. Consequently, Stowers argues against both Bultmann and Wilamowitz in his assertion that the objections and false conclusions in Pauline diatribal passages were didactic dialogues rather than polemic rants against an interlocutor who was always an active opponent. Second, Stowers points out that Bultmann’s study is based on Adolph Deissmann’s theory that Paul’s letters were “artless” and “informal”. Recent scholarship has clearly shifted away from such a view of the Pauline epistles.

In light of this brief exposition, it seems clear that Bultmann’s representation of the ancient diatribe is not as reliable or historically plausible as Stower’s. Consequently, we have to ask ourselves whether Burk’s study of the diatribe in 1 Cor 6:12-20, which is in

142 Stowers, The Diatribe, 4.
143 Ibid., 4, 7.
144 Ibid., 4 and Stowers, “The Diatribe,” 74.
145 Stowers, The Diatribe, 8. It should also be noted that Wilamowitz never used the word ‘diatribe’ to describe the genus he was dealing with. Nevertheless, it is the same rhetorical construction being discussed.
146 Ibid., 153.
147 Ibid., 152-3.
148 Ibid., 4.
149 The sort of literary analyses carried out by Murphy-O’Connor, Burk, and Smith all indicate that Paul is believed to employ and intentional literary style and artful rhetorical methods in his letters.
150 For further discussion of Bultmann’s dissertation and why it should be problematized, see Stowers, The Diatribe, 175-184.
practice based on a pattern originating with Bultmann, is still reliable. To disregard Burk’s study simply due his reliance on Bultmann’s diatribe pattern is perhaps a bit hasty. 1 Cor 6:12-20 does exhibit several features of diatribal literature, as we have seen. The issue that arises in Burk’s study is the following: if, as Stowers asserts, dialogue with a hypothetical interlocutor is the most prominent feature of diatribes, and we have little evidence of diatrabal authors in dialogue with a non-indicated, real interlocutor, can we align ourselves with Burk’s theory that Paul adapts the diatrible pattern to incorporate a real interlocutor in the place of a hypothetical one? In addition to this qualm, it is difficult to accept Burk’s representation of a strict diatrible pattern as a point of departure for Paul’s supposed adaptation. Diatribes were free texts, unbound by strict, traceable phraseological patterns. The stylistic feature that can be traced is the dialogical nature of the texts, a dialogue almost always carried out with a hypothetical interlocutor. As I hope I have illustrated, there are only two verses in 1 Cor 6:12-20 which correlate with how authors of ancient diatribes introduced the objections of their hypothetical interlocutor: v.12 and v.15.

I have established two things in this section. First, 1 Cor 6:12-20 should be seen as incorporating a diatrible pattern in its rhetoric. Second, Burk’s theory that vv. 12, 13, and 18 could be seen as occupying the rhetorical function of a real interlocutor’s objections is untenable. I would like to conclude this chapter with an important reminder from Stowers: because the interlocutors in diatribes were hypothetical, or imaginary as he refers to them, their objections do not tell us anything specific about the situation, ideology, or theology of the audience.\textsuperscript{151} The words of the hypothetical interlocutors in v.12 and v.15 were in all likelihood dictated by Paul himself, in an attempt to further explain his own argument. They certainly relate to the audience, but they should not be used to reconstruct the audience.

3. Re-Evaluating the Aim of Paul’s Rhetoric

3.1 ἔξεστιν As a Rhetorical Key

If the existence of a diatrible pattern in 1 Cor 6:12-20 does not allow for slogans in v.13 and v.18, then our understanding of the passage changes drastically. As we discussed in chapter 1.2, the recent research history of 1 Cor 6:12-20 has more or less revolved around the idea that Paul is arguing against pseudo-gnostic, stoic-cynical groups in the Corinthian

\textsuperscript{151} Stowers, \textit{The Diatribe}, 116-17.
congregation. These groups supposedly believe that the body is morally irrelevant. But, if the entire passage is more or less Pauline (the objections of the hypothetical interlocutor in vv.12 and 15 reflect the audience, but do not originate from the audience directly), we have to reconsider the overall purpose and aim of the text. I will argue here that ἔξεστιν can be seen as a rhetorical key to unlocking the aim of the argumentation present in the passage. I will begin with a linguistic analysis of the word, where I will argue that it should be understood as a reference to the Jewish Law. After establishing that the most plausible interpretation of ἔξεστιν is as a reference to the Jewish Law, I will proceed to discuss how this changes our understanding of the rhetorical methods of 1 Cor 6:12-20. I will conclude that even though there is a diatribal pattern in the passage, the aims of the text indicate that it should first and foremost be understood as a deliberative invention about moral purity outside the Law, which makes use of a pedagogical diatribal pattern.

3.1.1 ἔξεστιν as a Reference to the Jewish Law

A number of commentators have suggested that ἔξεστιν could have something to do with the Jewish Law. Barrett notes that a possible understanding of v.12 is as a dispute with what he calls “Jewish legalism.”¹⁵² He combines this interpretation with the hypothesis of a gnostic congregation adhering to a belief of corporeal irrelevance.¹⁵³ Thiselton argues that ἔξεστιν refers to the belief that the Corinthian congregation have been “granted liberty from the law.”¹⁵⁴ It is clear from the context that Thiselton is here referring to the Jewish Law. Being a staunch supporter of seeing v.12 as a Corinthian slogan, Thiselton also chooses to combine this assessment with a gnostic understanding of the body,¹⁵⁵ ultimately giving precedence to this theory.

What were to happen if we translated ἔξεστιν as a reference to the Jewish Law, and did not combine this observation with the theory of a gnostic slogan? As I hope to have previously illustrated, it is untenable to use v.12 to reconstruct the Corinthian congregation. We can, however, use the verse to reconstruct the historical Paul – and we can say with a great degree of certainty that Paul did not adhere to gnostic philosophies. What he did adhere to, or at least used to adhere to, was the Jewish Law. Consequently, if we choose to focus on

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¹⁵² Barrett, A Commentary, 145. The phrase “Jewish legalism” is, of course, long since passé.
¹⁵³ Ibid.
¹⁵⁴ Thiselton, The First Epistle, 461.
¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 460-1.
the theory that ἔξεστιν is a reference to the Jewish Law without the added theory that it was used in a context of gnostic philosophy, what would we discover? First and foremost, we would have to establish the likelihood of ἔξεστιν being used as a reference to the Jewish Law in particular. To do so, I have compiled the chart below, which outlines the usage of ἔξεστιν in other NT texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Reference to Jewish Law</th>
<th>References to Roman Law</th>
<th>Other Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>12:2, 4, 10, 12; 14:4; 19:3; 22:17, 6</td>
<td>20:15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>2:24, 26; 3:4; 6:18; 10:2; 12:14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>6:2, 4, 9; 14:3; 20:22</td>
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<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>5:10</td>
<td>18:31</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Cor</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:4</td>
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The reader will notice that every time ἔξεστιν is used in the NT, with the exception of Matt 20:15, and Acts 2:29, 21:37, it refers to what is permitted or not permitted by either the Jewish Law or the Roman Law. Either way, ἔξεστιν is clearly most commonly used in reference to concrete laws. It is comparatively rare to see the word used in a more general context. In addition, 1 Cor 6:12 does not use ἔξεστιν the same way as it is used in Acts 2:29 or 21:37, where it can be translated with the more general “may I.” The only possible correlation v.12 could have with a non-law connected text is Matt 20:15 and 2 Cor 12:4. Matt 20:15 is not applicable as a correlate, since ἔξεστιν is used in a parable, in which God (landowner) is the speaker. God is not under the Law, God is the creator of the Law and thus is unbound by it. Consequently, we cannot equate the way God uses ἔξεστιν here to the way Paul uses it in 1 Cor 6:12-20. 2 Cor 12:4 is not a clear reference to what the Jewish Law in particular does not permit, but since the passage deals with an individual being taken up into heaven, one could be justified in the assumption that it is according to the laws of this heaven that the individual is not permitted to speak of what s/he experienced there. Consequently, although 2 Cor 12:4 is by no means a clear reference to the Jewish Law, it could be interpreted as such. Nevertheless, we can say with a great degree of certainty that when the word ἔξεστιν was used in the NT texts, it tended to be used as a reference to what was permitted or not permitted by the Jewish Law. This is not illogical; when speaking of the
measure used to determine what was permitted or not permitted for its members, it would be natural for members of what was after all a Jewish group, to use the Jewish Law. Even if they decided that members of their group were permitted things that the Jewish Law did not permit, the Jewish Law is still the measure that was used to determine this.\footnote{The fact that Paul does not quote the LXX directly in 1 Cor 6:16 does not necessarily constitute a problem for this theory. Paul often quotes the LXX freely, and it can be difficult to identify which texts he was relying on. Not quoting the Law directly does not mean that Paul is negating the Law’s authority. Jewish authors during this period tended to quote the Law quite freely, sometimes changing word order and context (see Edwin M. Yamauchi, “Josephus and Scripture.” Fides et Historia, 13 no. 3 (1980), 42-63. See also Matt 2:15). In addition, the change Paul makes to Gen 2:24 is not significant – it is more like a summary than a change (from “therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh” to “for it is said, “the two shall be one flesh.”) Summarizing the Law was not unusual during this time (Hillel’s and Jesus’ ‘summary’ of the Law as ‘you shall love your neighbour’ exemplifies this.)}

What happens, then, if we re-read 1 Cor 6:12-20 with the understanding that ἔξεστιν is a reference to the Jewish Law? First of all, if we wish to see v.12 as the objection of a hypothetical interlocutor, we must view vv.9-11 as a diatribal vice list (otherwise we would have no textual indication supporting the theory that v.12 is indeed the diatribal objection of a hypothetical interlocutor). After such an exhaustive list of illicit behaviors, could Paul really have agreed with the assertion that ‘all things are permitted me?’ As the vice list in vv.9-10 makes abundantly clear, ‘all things’ were clearly not permitted anyone, whether Jew or Gentile.\footnote{Some scholars (see Thiselton, The First Epistle, 460 and Robertson and Plummer, I Corinthians, 127-8.) have argued that the vices listed in vv.9-10 are all sins that involve the body somehow, and that a gnostic, pseudo-stoic Gentile Christ believing sloganeer could therefore have argued that against Paul on this account, since this sloganeer believed the body to be morally irrelevant. However, if we take a closer look at the sins listed in the vice list, we will find that not all these sins can be concretely tied to sins carried out purely in the body. The sexual sins listed in v.9 certainly can be, but is idolatry a sin only connected to the body? Is a reviler only sinning with his body? Is a thief, a greedy person, or a robber only sinning with their bodies? The answer is simple: the sins listed in vv.9-10 are not all bodily sins, and therefore this theory does not hold.\footnote{συμφέρω can be literally translated to ‘that which brings together.’ This means that by ‘beneficial,’ Paul means that which ‘brings together.’ In light of Mitchell’s overarching theory that the rhetorical aim of the entire passage is to ‘make together,’ this means that Paul is saying that not all things are beneficial, but only those that bring together or ‘make together.’} If, however, we take v.12a to mean ‘all things are lawful for me (according to the Jewish Law [implied])’, then Paul would not be able to disagree with that objection, since he had previously asserted that Gentiles were not bound by the Jewish Law. If he wished to argue against the hypothetical interlocutor, he would have to do so on other grounds than simply a straight negation of the objection, and this is what he does in v.12b: ἀλλ’ οὕτω πάντα συμφέρει. He never claims that the objection is false, but he negates its value by overriding ‘that which is lawful’ with ‘that which is beneficial.’ If ἔξεστιν here is a reference to the Jewish Law, this means that Paul is claiming that while Gentile Christ-believers are indeed unbound by the Law of the Jews, it is still beneficial for the greater good of the congregation\footnote{συμφέρω} if they followed certain aspects of this law. As is made clear in the proceeding verses, this aspect of the Jewish Law pertains to the rules and regulations regarding sexuality.
Why would Paul apply certain parts of the Jewish Law to gentile Christ-believers? He has indubitably written very vividly about the folly of following certain parts of the Law without accepting it in its entirety (Gal 5:2-4). The answer to this lies in the fact that certain parts of the Law were seen to naturally apply to Gentiles as well as Jews. In her compelling article “Judaizing the Nations: The Ritual Demands of Paul’s Gospel”, Paula Fredriksen writes that texts like Lev 18:24 should be understood as a reference to the fact that Gentiles could also become morally impure. Ritual impurity only affected Jews, since it was an issue relating to Temple proximity, whereas moral impurity also could affect non-Jews, as evidenced by the fact that they are on many occasions described as being made impure by behaviors which result in moral impurity. Moral impurity was not contagious in the same way as ritual impurity, which is indicated by the Court of the Nations in the Jerusalem Temple. Jews would not have been able to walk through this courtyard if there was a chance that the moral, functional impurity of the gentiles could, so to speak, rub off on them. Based on this, the laws concerning idolatry, illicit sexuality, and other morally ‘impurifying’ behaviors seems to have naturally applied to Gentiles. The Gentiles to whom the rules applied were not, of course, bound by the Jewish Law in its entirety, but nonetheless, they seem to have been subject to certain parts of it. Under normal circumstances, this would not have mattered much, since Jews and non-Jews typically did not share the same sanctuary space (Gentiles could not progress further into the Temple than the Court of the Nations). But what were to happen if Jews and Gentiles suddenly started sharing sacred sanctuary space?

3.1.2 Sacred Sanctuary Space and Corporeal Connections

Paul makes it abundantly clear in his letters that he considers Christ-believing congregations to constitute some sort of sacred space. This is specifically indicated in 1 Corinthians on a number of occasions, not least in the temple metaphors of 3:16 and 6:19. In 3:16-17, Paul writes: “do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s spirit dwells in you?”

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160 See pg. 246.
161 Ibid. Fredriksen calls this kind of impurity “functional impurity,” since gentiles were not intrinsically impure. They were rendered impure when they engaged in morally impure behaviors, such as idolatry and illicit sexuality.
162 Ibid.
163 Ibid.
Significantly, the temple metaphor in 6:19 (within the confines of our passage of interest) also directly implies that the congregation constitutes a sort of sacred space. It is important to note that the word for ‘temple’ employed here is ναός. ναός was, in ancient Jewish sources, exclusively used in reference to the Jerusalem sanctuary space. Consequently, Paul has chosen an extremely loaded word to describe the Corinthian congregation. He could have made use of much more common synagogue terms also denoting holiness, like προσευκή or ἱερόν, but he does not. Since ναός was not among the more common words used to denote Jewish associations in the Diaspora, we can assume that this is intentional. Paul is intentionally describing the Christ-believing association as a sacred sanctuary space, or, in other words, the dwelling place of God.

What, then, does this mean? First and foremost, it should indicate to us that Paul believed that the communal space shared by Christ-believers, namely their association synagogues, was a sort of sacred sanctuary space, comparable to the Jerusalem Temple. There are a number of other indications, apart from the temple metaphors, that this was the case. For example, in 1 Cor 5:11, Paul says that the congregation members should not even eat with sexual immoral persons. This separation between the sexually pure and the sexually impure is reminiscent of the separation required for temple proximity. In addition, Paul describes gospel-preachers and apostles in priestly terms on a number of occasions, including 1 Cor 9:13-14, and Rom 15:16. This indicates that Paul saw a correlation between Christ-

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164 See Josephus, B.J. 7.44-45 (Marcus, LCL) for an example of the differentiation between ναός and other words used to describe Jewish space, like synagogue space.

165 For examples of usages of this term in ancient sources describing association synagogues, see Donald D. Binder, Into the Temple Courts (Atlanta: SBL, 2000) 91-154.

166 See Runesson, “Paul and Sacred Space,” 33, 50-54.

167 Here I refer the reader back to chapter 2.1, where I discuss Richard Ascough’s excellent critique of distinguishing between synagogues and other ancient associations. If we can say with certainty that Christ-believing congregations were a sort of collegium, we can also refer to them as association synagogues, since these too can be classified as collegia.

168 Paula Fredriksen writes that Paul’s temple metaphors are complex and unclear (Fredriksen, “Judaizing the Nations, 247), but, if one actually takes the temple diction at face value, it is not inconsistent with other Pauline thoughts. For example, if we assume that Paul believed his congregations to be sacred in the same way as the Jerusalem Temple was sacred, then the ritual demands that he makes of them would make sense, since keeping ritual laws was a prerequisite for temple proximity. The problem in Fredriksen’s argument is that she does not see moral impurity as contagious (Ibid., 245). Of course, one could not argue that moral impurity was contagious in the same way as ritual impurity was (via touch, for example), but nevertheless, the HB is littered with passages where sexual and/or cultic sins affect temple proximity/Land defilement (ex. Deut 22:21-24), and this indicates that they were contagious in a more diluted manner. For example, why would you have to stone adulterers if God is to stay in the Land (ergo Temple), if the sexual impurity they brought upon themselves also did not affect the Land/People as a whole? Why would Paul claim that the Corinthian congregation should not even eat with sexual sinners, if they did not somehow pollute the association as a whole (1 Cor 5:11)?

169 For an insightful investigation into Paul’s priestly language and Temple diction and how it relates to a theology which views the Christ-believing congregation as extensions of the Jerusalem Temple, see Kathleen Troost-Cramer, “De-Centralizing the Temple: A Rereading of Romans 15:16.” JMJJS no.3 (2016), 72-101.
believing groups and the activities connected to them and the Jerusalem Temple and its services. The origins of this belief may have been that Paul saw a connection between Jesus’ death and the sacrifices carried out in the Temple. 1 Cor 5:7 is indicative of this, if somewhat vaguely.¹⁷⁰ In any case, it would be difficult to assert that Paul saw no connection between Christ-believing associations and the Jerusalem Temple, regardless of how one explains the precise nature of that connection.

If we return to the issue of Jews and Gentiles sharing sacred sanctuary space, the following question will guide the proceeding discussion: if Paul believed that Christ-believing congregations constituted sacred sanctuary space, how did this affect his demands on non-Jewish Christ-believers? If Paul saw the congregations as Jewish sacred space (the Temple can, after all, not be classified as anything else), how did he reconcile the fact that Gentiles were allowed the same level of access to them? Gentiles were not typically allowed equal access into Jewish sanctuary spaces.

A possible answer to this question lies in the concept of moral purity. We have already pointed out that moral impurity was seen to affect non-Jews.¹⁷¹ The two main causes of moral impurity were sexual and cultic sin – cultic sin being a reference to idolatry.¹⁷² Paul often mentions these negative behaviours in the same breath. For example, in Rom 1:22-27, Paul uses both idolatry and sexual immorality to negatively characterize Gentiles. These two categories of sin seem to be connected in Paul’s mind. 1 Corinthians 6:9 also mentions idolatry and sexual immorality in the same breath, which is significant because of its proximity to our passage of interest. If Paul sees the Gentile lifestyle as incurring moral impurity over its participants, in particular through sexual immorality and idolatry, then it would make sense that he would require Gentile Christ-believers to adopt a more Judaized lifestyle (one that kept them morally pure) in order to participate in the sacred sanctuary space of the Christ-believing ekklesia.

We find evidence for this in 1 Cor 6:13-16. These verses illustrate how intimate the corporeal connection is between Christ and Christ-believers. Verse 13-14 can be interpreted in a number of different ways. Murphy-O’Connor has argued that the verses exhibit a

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¹⁷⁰ Fredriksen accurately notes that the context of 5:7 is hortatory rather than Christological (Fredriksen, “Judaizing the Nations,” 247), and therefore it is difficult to use this verse to reconstruct a Pauline Christology. Nevertheless, the verse should not be bypassed in a reconstruction of said Christology.

¹⁷¹ See also Cecilia Wassen, “Do You Have to be Pure in a Metaphorical Temple?” in Carl S. Ehrlich, Anders Runesson, and Eileen Schuller (ed.), Purity, Holiness, and Identity in Judaism and Christianity (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 55-86, see esp. 77.

¹⁷² Fredriksen, “Judaizing the Nations,” 245.
parallelistic structure. This is in many ways a justified observance, especially with regards to the antithetical parallelistic tension between καταργήσει and ἐξεγερεῖ. Murphy-O’Connor maintained that this parallelism was indicative of a ‘slogan-response’ pattern, the slogan being v.13a-b and the response being v.13c-14. The Pauline response in v.13c-14 was supposed to mirror the grammar and structure of v.13a-b, down to the last δὲ. This observation is astute, and even though it is used by Murphy-O’Connor to argue in favour of vv.13a-b being a Corinthian slogan, which we have shown is rhetorically unlikely, we should not discard the theory because of this. The parallelism is a trope of the diatribe genre, and therefore it is important to approach the verses as one would a pedagogical text. If v.13a-b is not assumed to be a slogan, what is then is the message of the passage?

Keeping the parallelism in mind, a possible interpretation is that Paul is providing his audience with a didactic example to explain the corporeal connection between their bodies and Christ’s. The relationship between the stomach and food constitutes this didactic example: Paul uses their inter-connectedness in order to explain to his audience how their bodies are related to Christ’s. καταργήσει is a key word for this interpretation, since it is primarily translated as “leave unemployed, make barren.” Thus, καταργήσει does not only imply ‘destruction,’ but also ‘unemployment.’ That is, when God destroys food, the stomach is ‘unemployed,’ or looses its function, and vice versa. Ergo, the object (stomach) and that which is meant for the object (food) are related by function, and cannot exist without each other. Paul then equates this to the relationship between Christ and Christ-believers: ὁ δὲ σῶμα οὐ τῇ πορνείᾳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σῶματι. The body is related to Christ in function, and therefore, what applies to Christ (ἐξεγερεῖ) also applies to the body of the Christ-believer. The grammatical parallelism in the passage strengthens the relationship between the analogy (stomach-food) and the subject (Christ-Christ-believer). If interpreted in this fashion, the passage indicates that the body of the Christ-believer and Christ are connected in such a way that if the body of the Christ-believer is destroyed or defiled, this would affect Christ, and if Christ is raised up, this would affect the body of the Christ-believer. The relationship is symbiotic.

The existence of this symbiotic relationship is further strengthened by vv.15-16. Here, Paul follows up on his didactic analogy in vv.13-14 by bluntly stating “οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι τὰ

\[173\] Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinthian Slogans,” 394.
\[174\] Ibid., 395.
\[175\] Ibid, 394. Murphy-O’Connor argues that the mirroring of v.13a-c is responsible for the proliferation of δὲ throughout the passage, as well as the verse καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σῶματι, which would otherwise appear out of place.
\[176\] Lidell and Scott, Greek English Lexicon (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 359.
σώματα ὑμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἐστίν;”. The phrase οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι is typically used by Paul in order to introduce support material for previously stated assertions. Consequently, it is reasonable to suggest that v.15a is support material for vv.13-14, meaning that the aim of vV.13-14 must have been to explain that the Christ-believer’s body was intimately connected to Christ’s. Verse 15b-17 indicates that this connection constitutes a symbiotic relationship, where the actions and functions of the Christ-believers body have a direct affect on Christ’s body. This is why Christ-believers must Φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν (v.18)! Because the sexual immorality committed in their bodies is contagious, and Christ’s body is the subject of this contamination.

3.1.3 A Judaizing Theology of Sexuality

If Jews were the only religio-cultural group in Antiquity who observed the moral purity rules that Paul describes, and applied them to Gentiles in the way that Paul does, then it follows that by asking his Gentile audience to adhere to these purity rules, Paul is making a Judaizing demand. Paul uses the LXX in order to support his claims about sexual purity (1 Cor 6:16), thereby indicating that the Jewish Law is what he uses to measure and determine moral purity in relation to Temple (or ekklesia) proximity. In our world today, quoting the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in order to support an argumentation does not necessarily locate the author in a specifically Jewish setting. The wide circulation of the text has uprooted it as a purely Jewish text in our minds. However, during the time of Paul, the Hebrew Bible/LXX contained the Law and Traditions of the Jews, and no one else. Applying its rules and regulations on non-Jews could only be seen as a Judaizing demand. The scholarly consensus that Paul spends a great deal of his letters arguing against Judaizing factions within the early Christ-believing ekklesia has defined Pauline studies for such a long time that sometimes the pre-supposition that Paul is in direct conflict with ‘Judaizers’ obscures more historically plausible readings of his texts. I think that the scholarly consensus of 1 Cor 6:12-20 is an example of precisely this – interpreters assume that Paul would not place Judaizing demands on his Gentile audience, and therefore other explanations of the passage must be found. These explanations are not always historically plausible, as I hope I have illustrated with my analysis of diatribes. In such cases, it is worthwhile to take another look at the passage and see if approaching it from another perspective, one that does

177 Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 316.
178 Fredriksen, “Judaizing the Nations,” 239.
not pre-suppose Paul to be the ultimate adversary of Judaizing Christ-believers, can shed some new light. It is also important to remember that much previous scholarship was based on what we now know to be the faulty understanding that Judaizing was by necessity always connected to circumcision. There are a number of sources that speak of Jewish missions to Gentiles that do not include demands of circumcision.\footnote{See Mark Nano’s analysis of Josephan passages indicating that Gentiles could be Judaized without circumcision: Mark Nanos, “Paul’s Non-Jews Do Not Become ‘Jews,’ But They Become ‘Jewish?’: Re-reading Romans 2:25-29 Within Judaism, Alongside Josephus.” JMMJS no. 1 (2014), 26-53. See esp. 32-39. See also Josephus, \textit{Ant.} 20.17-96. For further discussion on this subject, see Terence Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)} (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 306-7. For an interesting new perspective on circumcision and conversion, see Matthew Theissen, \textit{Contesting Conversion: Genealogy, Circumcision, and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Christianity} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).} A Gentile could be considered Judaized while being un-circumcised,\footnote{As indicated by Josephus. See Josephus, \textit{War}, 2:454 (LCL).} although, as Fredriksen notes, “judaizing was a slippery slope.”\footnote{Fredriksen, “Judaizing the Nations”, 239.}

If $\varepsilon\xi\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ is understood as a reference to the Jewish Law, then the remainder of the passage should be seen as an argumentation in favour of an essentially Judaizing theology of sexuality. Paul’s theological beliefs concerning Christ and sacred space are seen to necessitate the moral purity of Gentile Christ-believers – that is, abstention from $\lambda\alpha\tau\rho\varepsilon\iota\alpha$ and $\pi\omicron\rho\omicron\nu\epsilon\iota\alpha$ (cultic and sexual sin). The fact that Paul repeatedly makes this demand of his Gentile congregation members is significant, since, as Fredriksen has noted, “the insistence that none other than the god of Israel be worshipped ultimately came from the first table of the Law. It was defining: non-negotiable; it was uniquely Jewish.”\footnote{Ibid., 252.} Fredriksen is speaking about $\lambda\alpha\tau\rho\varepsilon\iota\alpha$ here, but her astute observation is also applicable to $\pi\omicron\rho\omicron\nu\epsilon\iota\alpha$, as we have seen. These two sins go together, and so do their respective cures. The ‘cure’ for $\lambda\alpha\tau\rho\varepsilon\iota\alpha$ is to only worship the god of Israel – a specifically Judaizing demand, and the ‘cure’ for $\pi\omicron\rho\omicron\nu\epsilon\iota\alpha$ is to adhere to Jewish sexuality regulations – another Judaizing demand. In fact, the whole concept of moral purity among Gentiles is an issue of Judaizing, since Gentiles are being held accountable to specifically Jewish measures of purity that relate to specifically Jewish understandings of sacred space and divine proximity.

3.2 Re-Reading 1 Cor 6:12-20 as a Deliberative Invention About Purity Outside the Law

In light of our analysis, the classification of 1 Cor 6:12-20 as a diatribe seems lacking. Since we were only able to find two verses that fit into the pattern for the objections of a hypothetical interlocutor (vv.12 and 15), the passage in its entirety does not seem to be a
diatribe as much as it makes use of a diatribal pattern. It is perhaps more helpful to think about the passage in terms of its subordinate rhetorical genre, that is, as a piece of deliberative rhetoric. As we discussed in chapter 2.1, 1 Cor 6:12-20 fits into the textual and institutional parameters of deliberative texts in Antiquity. This means that the aim of the text is to establish that which is most beneficial for the entirety of the audience to which it is applicable. As Mitchell points out, the deliberative nature of 1 Corinthians helps explain why the theme of unity characterizes the letter as a whole.\(^\text{183}\) Paul is arguing that unity among the congregation members is the most beneficial path. He does this from a number of different perspectives. He speaks of spiritual unity, and the danger of dividing the congregation according to teachers and apostles (1:11-17, 3:4-9); of unifying against sexual immorality in the congregation (5:7-11.); of keeping to their own courts (6:1-2ff); of corporeal unity with Christ (6:12-20); of corporeal unity between man and wife (7:3-6); and so on. Due to this, and several rhetorical markers discussed in further detail by Mitchell,\(^\text{184}\) the deliberative nature of the text can be connected to its focus on the beneficial nature of unity. Therefore, the issue being deliberated by Paul is which practices and behaviors are most beneficial for the unity and greater good of the congregation. This is where the concept of rhetorical invention (inventio) comes in. Malcolm Heath defines invention as the “discovery of the resources for discursive persuasion latent in any given rhetorical problem.”\(^\text{185}\) Put in simpler terms, invention refers to the construction of persuasive arguments. The construction, or invention, of these arguments was highly theorized by ancient rhetoricians,\(^\text{186}\) and therefore we have a fairly clear understanding of how invention was applied in ancient texts.

One of the strategies of invention was the refutation of the ‘other’ narrative.\(^\text{187}\) This could be done in a number of ways, including the discrediting of the source.\(^\text{188}\) If we take 1 Cor 6:12-20 as an example of invention, the ‘other narrative’ would be represented by the objections of the hypothetical interlocutor. In fact, feigned dialogue is an effective manner of arguments construction, since it allows the author a pedagogical, pre-emptive strike. Verse 12 and v.15 would then represent the opposing narrative, the sum of which could be said to be “sexual immorality is lawful for us (non-Jews)”. Consequently, the remainder of the passage


\(^{184}\) Mitchell, *The Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 24-64.


\(^{186}\) Ibid.

\(^{187}\) Heath, “Invention,” 93.

\(^{188}\) Ibid.
would then be a refutation of this counter-narrative. If we actually apply this to the text at hand, it makes sense. In order to refute the counter-narrative, Paul must first introduce it, which he does using feigned dialogue with a hypothetical interlocutor. Having done this already at the head of the passage (v.12), he then constructs a series of arguments meant to refute and discredit the counter-narrative. The following illustrates how this would look in v.12:

Counter-Narrative: πορνεία is lawful for us (v.12a)
Paul: that which is beneficial overrides that which is lawful (v.12b)

Counter-narrative: πορνεία is lawful for us (v.12c)
Paul: that which would dominate you overrides that which is lawful (v.12d)

As the reader will note, the diatribal pattern of the passage supports the author’s invention. In addition, the pattern of the invention looks similar to the pattern argued for by Burk, leading me to question if perhaps the invention pattern was mistaken for Corinthian slogans. Indeed, one could argue that Paul spends the remainder of the passage attempting to refute and discredit the counter-narrative introduced by the objections of the hypothetical interlocutor in v.12a. As we have seen, vv.13-14 employs a complex system of parallelisms in order to explain and analogize the body’s relationship to Christ, and vv.15-17 explore the inconceivability of corporeal connection with sexually immoral persons. All these arguments could very well be seen as refutations of the statement that ‘all things (πορνεία included) are lawful.’ Verses 18-20 uphold these refutations by presenting an explanation for Paul’s narrative: namely that πορνεία is worst than other sins, and therefore should be avoided, even by those not obliged to avoid it by the Jewish Law. The reason provided is the sacrality of the Christ-believer’s body (vv.19-20). I want to emphasize that this pattern of invention cannot be used to reconstruct the audience, but it can be used to understand what sort of counter-narrative Paul wished to refute. This counter-narrative is impossible to separate from Paul, just like the voice of the hypothetical interlocutor is a reflection of the audience, rather than constituting the actual audience itself.

What we see in 1 Cor 6:12-20 could therefore be explained as a deliberative invention about sexual purity outside the Law. Paul is constructing arguments in a deliberative rhetorical setting in order to strengthen the narrative he views as appropriate and truthful. The arguments he conjures up support the assertion that Gentiles should be morally pure in order to share sacred sanctuary space with Jews. In order to re-visit the importance of moral purity in relation to sacred space, I wish to remind the reader of our discussion about the definition
of σῶμα in chapter 1.2.1.2 above. If we adopt Käsemann’s view of the σῶμα as a vehicle of communication between humans, and also between the human and the divine, then the purity of the body becomes a key element in the ability of the divine to interact with the human on a corporeal level. Paul clearly believes this corporeal communication to be both important and corruptible (vv.16-17). In order to solve the potential problem of morally impure Gentiles defiling sacred space shared by Christ-believers – their ekklesia – Paul encourages them to follow specifically Jewish regulations meant to keep them morally pure. Consequently, 1 Cor 6:12-20 could be seen as a number of arguments constructed in order to keep the sacred space shared by Christ-believers un-defiled and receptive to divine presence.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Summary

In this essay, I have argued that the rhetorical aim of 1 Cor 6:12-20 is to create an argumentation that will convince non-Jewish Christ-believers that adhering to Jewish rules regulating sexuality is in the benefit of their congregation as a whole. In order to illustrate the validity of this claim, I set out to prove that the rhetorical methods employed in the passage supported the hypothesized aim. In my analysis of prior research, I found that the most substantial counter-theory was represented by Burk’s argument that the diatribal pattern in 1 Cor 6:12-20 supported the existence of adiaphoric slogans in the text. In order to problematize this argument, I then proceeded to analyze the historical diatribe, and the different forms it took. My analysis yielded the result that only vv.12 and 15 could be considered as objections of a hypothetical interlocutor. None of the verses could be seen as the objections of a real interlocutor. Consequently, I concluded that the diatribal pattern in 1 Cor 6:12-20 did not support the existence of adiaphoric slogans in vv.13 and 18.

Once we concluded that there was no rhetorical evidence in favour of vv.13 and 18 being categorized as adiaphoric slogans, I set about trying to present a re-reading of the passage. I argued that ἔξεστιν should be understood as a reference to what is and is not permitted by the Jewish Law. With this as my point of departure, I came to the conclusion that the remainder of the passage could be interpreted as a deliberative invention, making use of a diatribal pattern, arguing in favour of Gentiles remaining morally pure – as determined by Jewish standards - in order to not defile their shared sacred space; the Christ-believing ekklesia.
4.2 Implications

The conclusions reached in this essay remind us of the many problems that arise when we understand Paul as categorically opposed to the Judaizing of Gentile Christ-believers. The miss-representation of circumcision as the only means of Judaizing the nations has created a problematic pre-supposition that Paul did not want the Gentile Christ-believers in his congregations to adopt a Jewish lifestyle with Jewish ritual demands. As we have seen in the course of this investigation, Paul’s demands of his Gentile audience to abandon both λατρεία and πορνεία indicate that he did place specifically Jewish ritual demands on his Gentile audience. The question that remains is just how many of our consensuses about Paul need to be taken out for a dusting and reconsidered in the light of a more historically nuanced understanding of what it really meant to Judaize Gentiles in the First Century CE.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


Appendix

1. The Rhetorical Structure of 1 Cor 6:12-20 as a Deliberative Invention with a Diatribal Pattern

Objection of Hypothetical Interlocutor: Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν
Paul’s Response: ἀλλ’ οὐ πάντα συμφέρει.
Objection of Hypothetical Interlocutor: πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν
Paul’s Response: ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐγὼ ἔξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπὸ τινός.

Analogy: τὰ βρῶματα τῇ κοιλίᾳ καὶ ἡ κοιλία τοῖς βρῶμασιν, ὁ δὲ θεός καὶ ταύτην καὶ ταύτα καταργήσει.
Subject of Analogy: τὸ δὲ σῶμα οὐ τῇ πορνείᾳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σώματι ὁ δὲ θεός καὶ τὸν κύριον ἤγειρεν καὶ ἤμας ἔξεστε διὰ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ.
Support Material: οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι τὰ σώματα ύμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἔστιν;

Objection of Hypothetical Interlocutor: ἄρας οὖν τὰ μέλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποιῆσο πόρνης μέλη;
Paul’s Response: μὴ γένοιτο.
Support Material: [ἡ] οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ὁ κολλώμενος τῇ πόρνῃ ἐν σῶμα ἔστιν; ἔσονται γὰρ, φησίν, οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. ὁ δὲ κολλώμενος τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν πνεῦμα ἔστιν.

Imperative Demand: Φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν.
Exposition of Demands: πάντα ἁμάρτημα ὅ ἐὰν ποιήσῃ ἀνθρωπος ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματός ἔστιν· ὁ δὲ πορνεύων εἰς τὸ ἑαυτὸ σῶμα ἁμαρτάνει.
Support Material: ἥ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι τὸ σῶμα ύμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἄγιον πνεύματος ἔστιν οὗ ἔχετε ἀπὸ θεοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἑαυτῶν; ἤγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμής· δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ύμῶν.

* The objections of the hypothetical interlocutor divide the passage into two main sections of argumentation. The first section attempts to construct arguments to convince the audience that their corporeal connection with Christ necessitates them to forego πορνεία. The second section constructs arguments to explain the implications of this corporeal connection.