

Discerning Corinthian Slogans through Paul's Use of the Diatribe in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20

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Commentators continue to disagree over the presence of Corinthian slogans in 1 Cor 6:12–20. Yet the context and form of 6:12–20 suggest that at least some of these words should be read as interjections from real Corinthian interlocutors. In order to verify this thesis, I argue for (1) the presence of diatribal features in 6:12–20 and (2) the features that indicate that Paul has made a special adaptation of the diatribal form to address real Corinthian interlocutors. The structure of Paul's diatribe suggests the presence of Corinthian slogans in vv. 12, 13, and 18.

Key Words: Paul, 1 Corinthians, diatribe, slogans

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern commentators on 1 Corinthians have had to wrestle with the question of whether 6:12–20 contain Corinthian slogans to which Paul is responding. A cursory look at the commentaries reveals that the presence or absence of slogans of this sort has a dramatic effect on the exegesis of this passage. If slogans are present in this text, then some of the words that would otherwise appear to be Paul's actually belong to the Corinthians. More and more, scholars are concluding that at least some of these verses reflect slogans that were being bandied about in the Corinthian church.¹ Yet there are many who remain skeptical. Because the resolution of this problem is indispensable to a proper interpretation of the passage, it is hoped that this study will move the discussion forward at least a little bit.

Commentators have been all over the place in setting forth which parts of these verses comprise slogans and in establishing what criteria should be used for identifying slogans of this sort. As Roger Omanson has argued, at least four items present a challenge in any study of possible slogans in the book of 1 Corinthians:

1. For a summary of scholarly opinion from the late 19th century through 1965, see the helpful chart in John Coolidge Hurd Jr., *The Origin of I Corinthians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 68.

(1) interpreters usually do not state clearly how they have determined that Paul is quoting someone else's words; (2) there is no agreement among translators and commentators on which verses are quotations, nor is there agreement on where each quotation begins and ends; (3) translators do not agree on the sources of the quotations; and (4) there is no agreement on how to translate key words in several of the quotations.²

Of Omanson's four challenges, no doubt the most critical problem is the first: "interpreters usually do not state clearly how they have determined that Paul is quoting someone else's words." In other words, commentators routinely assume portions of 1 Corinthians to be slogans, but they do not give the reasons that they think texts of this sort should be construed as quotations. This oversight has proven to be particularly problematic in 1 Cor 6:12–20, in which none of the potential slogans are clearly introduced as quoted material (as in 1 Cor 1:12 and 7:1). Brian Dodd, therefore, has argued that if there is no marking at all, we must start with the assumption that there is no quotation. In the absence of clear markers of quoted material, the burden of proof falls on individuals who want to identify parts of the text as slogans.³

Yet I will argue that the burden of proof actually falls on those who would argue that there are no slogans in this text. Statements such as Dodd's erroneously assume that the conventions for marking quoted material in Greek are always explicit and verbal (such as we find 1:12 and 7:1).⁴ Sometimes speakers and writers can signal quoted material in extremely subtle ways without losing the clear reference to a quoted source. For instance, we see this principle demonstrated in English usage every time a person repeats the phrase *We the people*. The phrase is an unambiguous quotation of the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution and requires no introductory formula for native English speakers in the U.S. to understand it as such. In this instance, the indicators of quoted material do not include an explicit signal such as, "The Preamble of the Constitution says."

Likewise, it is very likely that the native hearer and reader of Greek could have picked up on a wide variety of subtle, inexplicit signals of quoted material. I will show that signals of this sort exist in 1 Cor 6:12–20. Specifically, Paul uses a special adaptation of diatribal form to signal the presence of quoted material. Paul adapts this form in a unique way to address the particular situation at Corinth. Because the chief characteristic of

2. Roger L. Omanson, "Acknowledging Paul's Quotations" *BT* 43 (1992): 201.

3. Brian J. Dodd, "Paul's Paradigmatic 'I' and 1 Corinthians 6:12" *JSNT* 59 (1995): 44: "Paul usually introduces his citations in 1 Corinthians, leaving the burden of proof on those who want to identify parts of his text as quotations which he does not identify as such. . . . M. V. Fox's observation applies: 'If there is no marking at all, we must start with the assumption that there is no quotation.'" Yet Dodd's critique applies rather strictly to 6:12. It is difficult to see how his approach could make sense of 6:13ff without a very strained exegesis.

4. Brian J. Dodd, "Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'" 39: "Verbal markers of a citation are absent."

the diatribe style is *dialogue* and because Paul addresses a real situation in Corinth, the burden of proof lies on the interpreters who wish to attribute all of these words to Paul while allowing none to have originated with the Corinthians (contra Brian Dodd and, more recently, David Garland).⁵ I will show that the context and form of 6:12–20 suggest that we should read at least some of these words as interjections from real Corinthian interlocutors. In order to verify this thesis, I will need to demonstrate two things: (1) the presence of diatribal features in 6:12–20 and (2) the features that indicate that Paul has made a special adaptation of the diatribal form to address real Corinthian interlocutors.

Even though there is a growing consensus among commentators that slogans appear in vv. 12 and 13, the verdict is still out on v. 18.⁶ Jerome Murphy-O'Connor has given what is perhaps the most thorough exposition and defense of understanding part of v. 18 as a Corinthian slogan.⁷ Murphy-O'Connor has proposed the following dialogue in v. 18, part of which is a Corinthian slogan.

Paul: "Shun immorality."

Corinthians: "Every sin which a man may commit is outside the body."

Paul: "On the contrary, the immoral man sins against his own body."⁸

I do not intend to give a final judgment on Murphy-O'Connor's proposal. But I do intend to show that the presence of diatribal features in 6:12–20 increases the likelihood that his reconstruction of the dialogue between Paul and the Corinthians is correct. By the end of this short article, therefore, I

5. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003).

6. Conzelmann, Fee, and Thiselton are typical among individuals who do not read a slogan in v. 18b (Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* [trans. James W. Leitch; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975], 112; Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 262; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 471–73).

7. Apparently, the first to argue that 6:18 is a slogan were W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (new ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 392. For a full summary of the history of this interpretation until the pivotal work of Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, see Murphy-O'Connor's "Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor 6:12–20," *CBQ* 40 (1978): 391–96. O'Connor gave what has become the best argument for interpreting 6:18b as a Corinthian slogan. Jay Smith's summary of the current state of the discussion is apt: "The reception of Murphy-O'Connor's proposal has been mixed. On the one hand, David Garland, Andreas Lindemann, Wolfgang Schrage, Christophe Senft, Anthony Thiselton, and Christian Wolff are not persuaded. On the other hand, Raymond Collins, Richard Hays, Richard Horsley, and Charles Talbert consider it the most satisfactory solution to date. Somewhere in between are C. K. Barrett, Gordon Fee, and Marion Soards, who find the proposal attractive but in the end remain unconvinced" ("The Roots of a Libertine Slogan in 1 Cor 6:18" [paper presented at the British NT Conference 2005: Social World of the NT Seminar, Liverpool, Eng.: 1–3 September 2005], 2).

8. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *1 Corinthians* (New Testament Message; Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1979), 51; cf. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor 6:12–20," 393.

hope to have increased the plausibility of the thesis that slogans occur in vv. 12, 13, and 18.⁹

If 6:12–20 comprises a diatribe, then the form would suggest at least part of v. 18 to be a Corinthian slogan. So the argument of this article will proceed in three stages. First, I will show that certain formal features in this text belong to the diatribe style. Second, I will show that Paul adapts the diatribe form in a unique way to address the particular situation at Corinth. Thus, Paul's interlocutors are not rhetorical or imaginary but represent real voices in the Corinthian church. Third, I will set forth a brief exegesis of this text based on the presence of three slogans.

2. FORMAL FEATURES OF DIATRIBE IN 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12–20

Many commentators have noted the presence of diatribal features in 1 Cor 6:12–20, yet very few have discussed the specifics of these features and what they imply about the so-called slogans. Stanley K. Stowers has produced what is perhaps the definitive work on the diatribal form.¹⁰ His description of the diatribe has garnered a wide following (virtually a consensus) and has replaced that of Rudolf Bultmann.¹¹ Subsequent treat-

9. I am following Jay Smith in what I hope to accomplish in this paper. This article will not establish Murphy-O'Connor's thesis, but I think it will increase its likelihood (Jay Smith, "Roots of a Libertine Slogan in 1 Cor 6:18," 2).

10. This is not to discount the outstanding work of Thomas Schmeller (*Paulus und die "Diatribe": Eine vergleichende Stilinterpretation* [NTAbh; Münster: Aschendorff, 1987]), who argues for a wider context for the Greek diatribe. As R. Dean Anderson notes, though Schmeller agrees with Stowers that the term διατριβή was not used to describe a particular literary genre in antiquity, Schmeller criticizes Stowers's restriction of these writings to a school situation (*Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* [rev. ed.; Leuven: Peeters, 1999], 243). This may be a helpful refinement, but it does not overturn the basic thrust of Stowers's proposal.

11. Rudolf Bultmann showed that Paul's letters shared stylistic traits with the Greco-Roman diatribe. Bultmann further argued that the diatribe was a form of popular philosophical preaching to the masses. Thus he came to the conclusion that the diatribe style of Paul's letters reflects Paul's style and method of oral preaching: "Wir schließen daraus: die Predigt des Paulus hat sich zum Teil in ähnlichen Ausdrucksformen bewegt wie die Predigt der kynisch-stoischen Popularphilosophen, wie die Diatribe" (Rudolf Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* [FRLANT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910], 107; see the concise discussion in Stanley K. Stowers, "The Diatribe," in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres* [ed. D. E. Aune; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988], 73; idem, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* [SBLDS; ed. William Baird; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981], 17–26). Stowers demonstrates (contra Bultmann) that the diatribe form did not belong to the polemical style of the Cynic-Stoic street teachers but instead "the style evokes the student-teacher relationship and the situation of the philosophical school" (Stowers, "Diatribe," 73). "Above all, it is an unfortunate misuse to equate diatribe with 'popular-philosophical' literature in general. . . . This only obscures and confuses the issues of definition. 'Diatribe' can only be a useful concept if we use it in a way which approximates ancient usage: A term for teaching activity in schools, literary imitations of that activity, or for writings which employ the rhetorical and pedagogical style typical of diatribes in the schools" (Stowers, "Diatribe," 73; cf. Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 175). Stowers's thesis has shown that Paul's dialogues in Romans tell us nothing about the situation in Rome because his "interlocutors"

ments that have built on Stowers's work have shown that the following elements occur in the Greco-Roman diatribe: vivid dialogue mode, imaginary second-person interlocutors, objections/false conclusions, characteristic rejection phrases (especially μή γένοιτο), and vocative apostrophes such as ὦ ἄνθρωπε.¹² All of these features need not be present in every diatribe, but we can identify at least four of them in 1 Cor 6:12–20.

First there is the presence of the phrase μή γένοιτο in v. 15. In only one instance in the NT is μή γένοιτο used outside of diatribal texts (Luke 20:16). Every other instance occurs in Paul's writings (mostly Romans) and features as a part of his diatribe.¹³

- Rom 3:4: *May it never be!* Rather, let God be found true, though every man [be found] a liar, as it is written,
- Rom 3:6: *May it never be!* For otherwise how will God judge the world?
- Rom 3:31: Do we then nullify the Law through faith? *May it never be!*
- Rom 6:2: *May it never be!* How shall we who died to sin still live in it?
- Rom 6:15: What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? *May it never be!*
- Rom 7:7: What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? *May it never be!*
- Rom 7:13: Therefore did that which is good become death for me? *May it never be!*
- Rom 9:14: What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? *May it never be!*
- Rom 11:1: I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? *May it never be!*
- Rom 11:11: I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? *May it never be!*
- Gal 2:17: But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? *May it never be!*
- Gal 3:21: Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? *May it never be!*

are fictitious. Stowers writes, "It is crucial to understand that the imaginary interlocutor in the diatribe and Romans is not an opponent but a student or fellow discussion partner. The mode of discourse is not polemic, where one tries to do damage to an opponent and his credibility, but rather indictment (ἐλεγχος), where a person exposes error in order to lead someone to the truth. Thus, the apostrophes in 2:1–5 and 17–24 should not be understood as part of a supposed Pauline polemic against Judaism or judaizers" (Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 117).

12. Changwon Song, *Reading Romans as Diatribe* (Studies in Biblical Literature; ed. Hemchand Gossai; New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 260–61.

13. Rom 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1 Cor 6:15; Gal 2:17; 3:21. One possible exception is Gal 6:14: "But *may it never be* (μή γένοιτο) that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

As these verses illustrate, *μὴ γένοιτο* is the watchword of the diatribal mode in Paul's writings. Because of Paul's (and Epictetus's)¹⁴ almost exclusive use of this phrase in diatribe elsewhere, the presence of this phrase is by itself enough to warrant the strong prejudice that Paul has entered into his diatribe mode in 1 Cor 6:15.

Second, v. 15 also shows an objection/false conclusion. This is, of course, closely related to the former point because *μὴ γένοιτο* appears in order to reject objections/false conclusions of this sort. Abraham Malherbe has shown that *μὴ γένοιτο* is part of a larger form that includes objections/false conclusions that are introduced by particles such as *οὖν* or *τί οὖν*.¹⁵ This part of the form appears in Paul's statement, "Shall I *then* [οὖν] take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot?" (*ἄρα οὖν τὰ μέλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποιήσω πόρνης μέλη*).

Third, Malherbe has also shown that statements such as "Do you not know" (*οὐκ οἴδατε*) frequently follow the *μὴ γένοιτο* (cf. Rom 6:3, 16).¹⁶ The "do you not know" formula occurs three times in 1 Cor 6:12–20:

- (15) *Do you not know* that your bodies are members of Christ? . . .
 (16) Or *do you not know* that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body? . . . (19) Or *do you not know* that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (1 Cor 6:15, 16, 19).

In each instance, *οὐκ οἴδατε* signals a rhetorical question that functions as a supporting statement for Paul's rejection of the interlocutor's false inference.

Fourth, the final formal feature of the diatribe in this text is the second-person address. A typical expression of this form in Romans is Paul's address to the interlocutor in Rom 2:1–5:

- (1) Therefore *you are* (εἶ) without excuse, every man who passes judgment, for in that *you judge* (κρίνεις) another, *you condemn yourself* (σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις); for *you* who judge *practice* (πράσσεις) the same things. (2) And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. (3) And *do you suppose* (λογίζῃ) this, O man, who passes judgment upon those who practice such things and does the same things, that *you will escape* (σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ) the judgment of God? (4) Or *do you think lightly* (καταφρονεῖς) of the riches of

14. Abraham Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 32: "Paul's use of *mē genoito* does not have a counterpart in the pagan diatribe in general but does in Epictetus."

15. Abraham Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, 27: "Like Epictetus, Paul uses *ti oun*, but does so only once (Rom. 6:15). *Ti eroumen* (Rom. 3:5) and *ti oun eroumen* ('What then shall we say?'; Rom. 6:1; 7:7; 9:14) are not part of the objections themselves, while *oun* (Rom. 3:31; 7:13; 1 Cor. 6:15; Gal. 3:21), *lēgo oun* ('Am I saying, then,' Rom. 11:1, 11) and *ara* ('then,' Gal. 2:17) are part of the objections. *Ti gar* ('What then?') is used once (Rom. 3:3)." Malherbe's essay was originally published in *HTR* 73 (1980): 231–40.

16. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, 29–30.

His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads *you* (σε) to repentance? (5) But because of *your* (σου) stubbornness and unrepentant heart *you are storing up* (θησαυρίζεις) wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

In 1 Cor 6:12–20, there are at least ten addresses in the second person.

(15) *Do you not know* (οὐκ οἴδατε) that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? May it never be! (16) Or *do you not know* (οὐκ οἴδατε) that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body [with her]? For He says, “The two will become one flesh.” (17) But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit [with Him]. (18) Flee immorality. Every sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. (19) Or *do you not know* (οὐκ οἴδατε) that *your* (ὑμῶν) body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in *you* (ὑμῖν), whom *you have* (ἔχετε) from God, and that *you are not* (οὐκ ἐστέ) your own? (20) For *you have been bought* (ἠγοράσθητε) with a price: therefore *glorify* (δοξάσατε) God in *your* (ὑμῶν) body.

Of course, the presence of the second person by itself does not necessarily mean that the diatribal form is being used. But the second-person address in rhetorical questions that are in combination with these other features does.

If these characteristics do in fact point to the presence of a diatribe in 1 Cor 6:12–20, then we must acknowledge that what we have before us is *dialogical*, not *monological*. In other words, Paul is having a back-and-forth conversation with an interlocutor. This text, therefore, is not reflecting a merely one-way exposition on the part of the Apostle Paul. Diatribe implies dialogue. In fact, the chief feature of the diatribe form *is* dialogue. The expectation that we bring to this text, therefore, is that we will be hearing not just Paul’s voice but also the voice of a conversation partner (whether imaginary or real). Thus, Brian Dodd’s argument that says *where there is no marking, there is no quotation* does not apply to this text. The original hearers would have picked up on these formal features of the diatribe and would have been alerted to the presence of dialogue. Thus, it is no surprise that we hear not just Paul but someone else’s voice in this text. The question is whether the other voice that we hear will be the voice of an imaginary interlocutor or a real one.

3. FEATURES THAT INDICATE A SPECIAL ADAPTATION OF THE DIATRIBAL FORM

There are clear indications in this text that Paul is making a special adaptation of the diatribal mode such that his second-person addressees and interlocutors reflect real voices in the Corinthian community. In the typical Pauline diatribe, as one would read in the book of Romans, the interlocutor

is clearly imaginary—a rhetorical “voice” brought in to advance Paul’s argument. What we find in the wider context of 1 Corinthians, however, is that Paul’s dialogue partners are anything but imaginary. In fact, it is widely known that 1 Corinthians may well be the most “occasional” of Paul’s “occasional” letters. That is, the whole structure of the book is dictated by the situation in the Corinthian church. In fact, we see that there are many “situations” in the Corinthian church of which Paul has caught wind. Paul gives numerous indications throughout the letter that his writing is a direct response to the oral (1:11; 5:1; 11:18) and written (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12)¹⁷ reports that he has received since his founding visit to Corinth.

ORAL REPORTS:

1:11: For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s [people,] that there are quarrels among you.

5:1: It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father’s wife.

11:18: For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part, I believe it.

WRITTEN REPORTS:

7:1: Now concerning (περί δέ) the things about which you wrote, “it is good for a man not to touch a woman.”

Thus, when we come across a diatribal text like 1 Cor 6:12–20, the wider context of the book compels us not to anticipate *imaginary* interlocutors but very real ones. It is for this reason that David Aune writes, “Diatribal style occurs only occasionally in 1 Corinthians and Galatians because [Paul] is more familiar with the local situation and tailors his advice more directly to the epistolary situation.”¹⁸ Duane F. Watson agrees, saying that “teaching through diatribe does not preclude addressing a concrete situation. . . . This is certainly true of Galatians and 1 Corinthians, where diatribal elements address the situations of respective congregations.”¹⁹ Or, as Richard Hays has put it, even though the diatribal form is by nature evok-

17. Though it is clear in 7:1 that περί δέ introduces Paul’s response to an issue raised in a previous letter Paul had received from Corinth, Margaret Mitchell has argued that περί δέ may not be referring to this letter in subsequent instances (see 7:25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12). Nevertheless, she has shown that “περί δέ does provide a clue to the composition of 1 Corinthians in that it is one of the ways in which Paul introduces the topic of the next argument or sub-argument . . . it is our most important clue to understand how Paul, on his own terms, chose to respond to the multi-faceted situation at Corinth of which he had been informed” (Margaret M. Mitchell, “Concerning περί δε in 1 Corinthians,” *NovT* 31 [1989]: 256). Thus, περί δέ does seem to indicate a response on Paul’s part to what he has learned is happening in the Corinthian church.

18. David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, Library of Early Christianity, ed. Wayne A. Meeks (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 201–2.

19. Duane F. Watson, “Diatribal,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1993), 214. Watson lists 1 Cor 6:12–20, 15:29–41, Gal 3:1–9, and 19–22 as texts that exhibit diatribal elements.

ing an “imaginary conversation,” the different “voices” in the conversation reflect real “voices” in the Corinthian community.²⁰

The immediate context of 6:12–20 also confirms that Paul addresses concrete situations in the Corinthian church. In chap. 5, he confronts the man sleeping with his stepmother, and then he follows by rebuking the Corinthians for taking each other to court in 6:1–11. In 7:1, he introduces a section of the letter that addresses the issues that the Corinthians themselves had raised in a previous letter. Throughout, the letter exudes Paul’s concern for specific issues within the Corinthian congregation. Given Paul’s strategy in the letter, it would be strange indeed to construe 6:12–20 as anything but an address to a live issue within the Corinthian community.²¹

In addition to the wider context of 1 Corinthians, there is another reason within the verses themselves that indicates that Paul is speaking to a real situation in the Corinthian church. To begin with, all of Paul’s second-person references in this text are plural—a fact that does not always come across clearly in English translation. So if one is only looking at an English translation, he or she might mistake the plural “you” of 1 Cor 6:12–20 with the singular “you” of Paul’s other diatribal texts.²² Rom 9:19–20 and 2:17–25 are typical of Paul’s use of the second-person singular in his diatribe.

Rom 9:19: You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?” (20) On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this,” will it?

20. Richard Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997), 101: “Paul here adopts the *diatribe* style, in which he constructs an imaginary dialogue between himself and his Corinthian hearers. To understand the line of argument, we must reconstruct the different voices in this imaginary conversation.”

21. Yet some are not convinced of this. For instance, Hurd argues that in this passage, Paul “does not refer to any specific action of the Corinthians” (Hurd, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 86). Hurd believes that there is no new subject in this text but that 6:12–20 is just a continuation of 5:1–13 (*ibid.*, n. 5). Gordon Fee notes that the standard view of some older commentaries was that after an aside about lawsuits in 6:1–11, Paul comes back to the issue of sexual immorality in 6:12–20. In these older treatments, Paul is giving a “general theological argument” that develops out of the specific situation of 5:1–13 (Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 250 n. 10). Yet Fee correctly argues that the presence of Corinthian slogans in vv. 12–13 and the explicit mention of prostitutes in vv. 15–16 make this view unlikely (*ibid.*, n. 11; contra Will Deming, “The Unity of 1 Corinthians 5–6,” *JBL* 115 (1996): 289–312; Ruth Kempthorne, “Incest and the Body of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians VI.12–20,” *NTS* 14 [1967/68]: 568–69). Brian Rosner provides an overview of the different historical settings that scholars have proposed and correctly argues for the following setting: “Paul is opposing the use of prostitutes, not, strictly speaking, of either the sacred or the secular variety, but rather the prostitutes who offered their services after festive occasions in pagan temples” (“Temple Prostitution in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20,” *NovT* 60 [1998]: 337).

22. For some reason, Stanley Stowers makes this mistake when he refers to Paul’s interlocutors in 1 Cor 6:12–20 as a singular “imaginary opponent,” even though Paul unambiguously puts his addresses in the second-person plural (Stanley K. Stowers, “A ‘Debate’ over Freedom: 1 Corinthians 6:12–20,” in *Christian Teaching: Studies in Honor of LeMoine G. Lewis* [ed. E. Ferguson; Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Bookstore, 1981], 68).

Rom 2:17–25: But if you bear the name “Jew,” and rely upon the Law, and boast in God, (18) and know [His] will, and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, (19) and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, (20) a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, (21) you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one should not steal, do you steal? (22) You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? (23) You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? (24) For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” just as it is written. (25) For indeed circumcision is of value, if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

In these verses, the second-person references are singular in the Greek text. Yet in 1 Cor 6:12–20, the second person references are all plural. This is in keeping with Paul’s diatribal form elsewhere, in which Paul never uses μή γένοιτο with the second-person singular.²³ The use of the second-person plural obviously suits his purpose of addressing a concrete situation that involves more than one person in the Corinthian community.

But do the overall strategy of 1 Corinthians and the use of the second-person-plural form really require that Paul’s speech be understood as a dialogue with real interlocutors as opposed to imaginary ones? In his watershed work on the diatribe in Romans, Stanley Stowers writes concerning the role of the “fictitious Objector”:

It is sometimes difficult to determine whether the author intended for his objection or false conclusions to be the words of an imaginary interlocutor. In the sources which record oral speech much has been lost which was communicated through intonation and gesture. There are a few instances where real objections from the audience seem to occur in Epictetus and Dio, but again, it is very difficult to determine this with certainty.²⁴

In other words, some of the markers of direct quotation (such as markers that Dodd says are required) are lost to us as nonnative readers of a dead version of the Greek language. Some of the markers of quoted material would have been expressed through articulation since these texts were

23. Changwon Song, *Reading Romans as Diatribe*, 268. According to Stowers, there are two subforms in Paul’s diatribe: (1) address to the imaginary interlocutor, and (2) objections and false conclusions. In the first subform, the address typically includes an apostrophic address to a person. Thus, the second-person references are singular. In the second subform, the objections and false conclusions are never in the second-person singular. Thus, μή γένοιτο is expected in contexts in which the second-person plural is used (*ibid.*).

24. Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 128. Stowers cites the following texts in which the interlocutor possibly represents “real objections from the audience”: Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.2.26, 30; 1.14.11; (1.17.4, 5, 6, 10?); 3.7.29, 32; 3.22.76; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 14.11, 12, 13; 23.9.

originally meant to be read aloud. Modern readers often fail to recognize this fact. The proliferation of printed Bibles in our own day makes it difficult for modern readers to relate to the oral culture that existed two millennia ago. Yet we know that both Jews and Christians of the 1st century relied on the spoken word for their scriptural training, not the written (e.g., Luke 4:16; Acts 13:15, 27; 15:21, 30–31; 2 Cor 3:14–15; Eph 3:4; Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27; 1 Tim 4:13; Rev 1:3).²⁵

Nevertheless, the textual clues as to how the original public *reader* was to read the text in the assembly would have been necessary. Even though Stowers admits the difficulty of determining whether interlocutors are real or imaginary, he does recognize the textual clues that suggest the presence of the diatribe form in 1 Cor 6:12–20.

A full perspective on what Paul is doing in 6:12–20 can only be obtained through a consideration of the form of the passage. Paul employs the style of diatribe. Our text is a short dialogue between Paul and an imaginary opponent who probably represents the position of some in the Corinthian church. Using this style, Paul debates with himself and builds an argument against what he perceives as the Corinthian position.²⁶

Stowers is certainly correct in recognizing the presence of diatribe and in noting that the interlocutor represents the Corinthian position. His statement that Paul is in dialogue with an “imaginary opponent” (singular!) does not give heed to the second person plurals that occur throughout the text. Nevertheless, his basic conclusion is correct: “Paul dialogues with a sloganeering interlocutor.”²⁷

If Stowers is correct in detecting the presence of diatribal features in 6:12–20, is it not likely, therefore, that the original readers²⁸ of this text would also have picked up on these features? If the original readers could discern features of this sort, then they would have been alerted to the presence of dialogue at this stage of Paul’s argument. Moreover, they would have been keenly aware that Paul’s dialogue presented a confrontation not to an imaginary opponent but to the Corinthian position.

25. Robert Stein has recently reminded NT scholars of the importance of remembering that the NT materials were written with the knowledge that they were to be read aloud in the Christian assembly: “Another important implication that flows out of the presupposition that Mark thought of his ‘readers’ as ‘hearers’ having his Gospel read to them, is that he wrote clearly enough that his hearers would be able to understand what he said *as the Gospel was being read to them*. . . . Thus Mark, and even Paul’s letters, should be interpreted in light of the ability of their hearing audiences to process the information being read to them, *as it was being read*” (Robert H. Stein, “Our Reading of the Bible vs. the Original Audience’s Hearing It,” *JETS* 46 [2003]: 73–74).

26. Stanley K. Stowers, “A ‘Debate’ over Freedom: 1 Corinthians 6:12–20,” in *Christian Teaching: Studies in Honor of LeMoine G. Lewis* (ed. E. Ferguson; Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Bookstore, 1981), 68.

27. Stanley K. Stowers, “The Diatribe,” 81.

28. By “original readers,” I mean the public readers who read Paul’s letter aloud to the Corinthian church.

So if I am correct, Paul's special adaptation of the diatribe in this text consists in his replacing imaginary dialogue partners with real ones. Except for v. 15, the use of interlocutors in this text is not just a rhetorical device; the "sloganeering interlocutors" represent real voices within the Corinthian community. But if we are going to see how Paul transforms imaginary interlocutors into real ones, we have to view the more typical form of the diatribe that appears in vv. 15–18a as a template for mapping the rest of 6:12–20. In vv. 15–18a, in which we have seen the highest concentration of diatribal features, the form follows Abraham Malherbe's description of the structure of diatribes that use the rejection phrase *μη γένοιτο*.²⁹ Notice the three-part arrangement in fig. 1.³⁰

FIGURE 1. *Usual Form of Diatribe (6:15b–18a)*

1. Objection from an Interlocutor	Rhetorical Question: "Shall I therefore take away the members of Christ . . . ?"
2. Rejection phrase from Paul	Negation: "May it never be!"
3. Supporting statement from Paul	Second Person Address: "Do you not know that he who unites . . ."

Paul adapts this usual form so that he can dialogue with the erroneous Corinthian slogans. In Paul's adaptation of the diatribe, the slogans replace the rhetorical question posed by the imaginary interlocutor in the usual form. Paul then negates the slogan through the use of an adversative particle, which is then followed by a counterassertion. Thus, Paul is adapting the typical form of the diatribe to address directly the situation in the Corinthian church by quoting their slogans. Fig. 2 illustrates the adaptation of the form for the first half of v. 12.

FIGURE 2. *Special Adaptation of the Diatribe Form (6:12)*

1. Objection from an Interlocutor	Corinthian Slogan: "All things are lawful for me"
2. Rejection phrase from Paul	Adversative Particle: "but"
3. Supporting statement from Paul	Counterassertion: "not all things are profitable."

29. Abraham Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, 26.

30. Malherbe's essay expands on the formal features of each of these three: (1) the objection, (2) the rejection, and (3) the supporting statement. Malherbe says that the objection is often introduced with characteristic words and phrases such as *τι οὐν*, *τι οὐν ἐροῦμεν*, or a simple *οὐν*. The objections followed by *μη γένοιτο* in Epictetus and Paul "are always in the form of rhetorical questions" (Abraham Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, 28).

FIGURE 3. *The Diatribe Form in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20*

(objection)→	12 "All things are lawful for me."
(rejection phrase)→	but
(supporting statement)→	not all things are profitable.
(objection)→	"All things are lawful for me."
(rejection phrase)→	but
(supporting statement)→	I will not be enslaved by anything.
(objection)→	13 "Foods are for the stomach, and the stomach is for foods
(objection)→	and God will destroy both the one and the other."
(rejection phrase)→	But ^a
(supporting statement)→	the body is not for immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body
(supporting statement)→	14 and God both raised the Lord and will raise us by His power.
(supporting statement)→	15a Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?
(objection)→	15b Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute?
(rejection phrase)→	May it never be!
(supporting statement)→	16 Do you not know that he who unites with a prostitute is one body [with her]? For it says, "The two shall become one flesh." 17 But the one who is united to the Lord is one spirit. 18a Flee immorality!
(objection)→	18b "Every sin, whatever a person may do, is outside of the body."
(rejection phrase)→	But
(supporting statement)→	the one who commits immorality sins against his own body.
(supporting statement)→	19 OR do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body.

a. Fee points out that the interpretation of the three occurrences of $\delta\epsilon$ in vv. 13–14 has given much trouble to translators. I have followed Fee's rationale for translating the first and third uses of $\delta\epsilon$ as "and" (consecutive) while translating the second/middle occurrence as "but" (adversative). This translation relies in part on observing the chiasmic structure of the clauses and on interpreting the middle " $\delta\epsilon$ " as separating two propositions (Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 253–54).

I would like to suggest that this adaptation of a three-part diatribal form is carried throughout the rest of 6:12–20 in the way illustrated by fig. 3. Fig. 3 shows that Paul's quotation of Corinthian slogans has the same

rhetorical function that an imaginary interlocutor has. In vv. 12, 13, and 18, the Corinthian slogans comprise an objection that Paul has to reject. Only in vv. 15b–18a does the diatribe appear in the customary form reflected in fig. 1 (an objection in the form of a rhetorical question, a rejection with the characteristic *μη γένοιτο*, and a supporting statement introduced by *οὐκ οἴδατε*). In vv. 12, 13, and 18, the objection comes in the form of a Corinthian slogan, not in the form of a rhetorical question. Following the slogans, the rejection is implied by adversative particles: *ἀλλά* (v. 12), *δέ* (v. 13), and *δέ* (v. 18). Each of these particles is followed by various supporting statements, only one of which is introduced by the characteristic *οὐκ οἴδατε*. All of this suggests that Paul uses a special adaptation of the diatribe that substitutes Corinthian slogans for imaginary interlocutors in vv. 12, 13, and 18.

As I mentioned above, vv. 15b–18a are the only lines in this passage where the diatribe takes its customary form: an objection in the form of a rhetorical question, a rejection with the characteristic *μη γένοιτο*, and a supporting statement introduced by *οὐκ οἴδατε*. No person in the Corinthian church was actually sloganeering to the effect that the “members of Christ” should be made “the members of a harlot,” and this is why Paul puts the objection of v. 15b in the form of a rhetorical question: “Shall I therefore take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot?” For Paul, this is the logical conclusion of the position reflected in the slogans of vv. 12 and 13, but not one that the Corinthians themselves have advocated explicitly. So Paul makes use of a rhetorical question at this point in the dialogue and breaks from quoting and responding to slogans.

The important thing to note is that in vv. 12, 13, and 18, Paul inserts Corinthian slogans where we would normally expect to see rhetorical questions. Whether Paul uses a rhetorical question (v. 15b) or a Corinthian slogan (vv. 12, 13, and 18), in either case the words function as an *objection* to the argument within the diatribe form. The *objection* is from an imaginary interlocutor in v. 15b but from real ones in vv. 12, 13, and 18.

What I have shown so far is that Paul’s use of the diatribe form makes the presence of slogans not only likely but expected. Moreover, the diatribe form suggests that the slogans would appear not only in vv. 12 and 13 but also in v. 18. If this text does in fact comprise a special adaptation of the diatribe, then the phrase “Every sin, whatever a person may do, is outside of the body” appears in precisely the place where we would expect Paul to introduce another objection. Since Paul has used slogans to form an objection in vv. 12 and 13, it is not unlikely that he would do so again in v. 18. Thus, the form of the diatribe in 6:12–20 suggests that v. 18 should also be understood as a Corinthian slogan.

4. EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12–20

If we accept that Paul has entered into the diatribe mode in 6:12–20, then Jerome Murphy-O’Connor’s outline of the dialogue between Paul and the

FIGURE 4. *Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's Outline of the Dialogue*

Sloganeering Interlocutor	Pauline Rebuttal
(12) "All things are lawful for me" "All things are lawful for me"	but not all things bring together. but I will not be enslaved by anything.
(13) "Foods are for the stomach and the stomach is for foods but God both one and the other will destroy"	But the body is not for immorality but for the Lord and the Lord is for the body (14) but God both raised the Lord and will raise us by His power. (15) DO YOU NOT KNOW that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! (16) DO YOU NOT KNOW that he who unites with a prostitute is one body [with her]? For it/he says, "The two shall become one flesh." (17) But the one who is united to the Lord is one spirit [with Him]. (18a) Flee immorality!
(18b) "Every sin, whatever a person may do, is outside of the body."	But, the one who commits immorality sins against his own body. (19) OR DO YOU NOT KNOW that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God and you are not your own? (20) For you were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body.

sloganeering Corinthians becomes all the more plausible. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Murphy-O'Connor³¹ outlines the dialogue as depicted in fig. 4. Murphy-O'Connor's chart shows how Paul answers Corinthian objections point by point. Paul confronts the practice of *immorality* (πορνεία) in the Corinthian church by attacking the theology that is used to

31. Murphy-O'Connor, *1 Corinthians*, 50–51; cf. Stanley Stowers, "A 'Debate' over Freedom," 68–69.

justify the behavior. The theology that he is attacking is reflected in the slogans that are current among the Corinthian Christians. So Paul's procedure is to quote the slogans and then to refute them. What is important to note is the obvious rhetorical strategy of Paul to state the opposing position and then to refute it.

Though this cannot be taken for granted anymore, I agree with commentators who believe Paul is confronting some variety of Hellenistic dualism³² and overrealized eschatology.³³ The result of these aberrant points of view in Corinth was the proliferation of slogans that the Corinthians used to justify immoral behavior (*πορνεία*). Paul takes up each of these three slogans in order to refute them with the gospel of the resurrected Lord, and he uses the structure of the slogans to form his own response.³⁴ Murphy-O'Connor's chart above shows that Paul's argument proceeds in three stages that correspond to the erroneous slogans of the Corinthians. His response shows that the gospel itself is at stake and not simply the resolution of an ethical question.³⁵ Therefore, he uses the gospel to argue directly against their false premises.

A. Exegesis of 6:12

In 6:12, Paul confronts the libertine notion that "all things are permissible"³⁶ with two lines that begin with *ἀλλά*, and he thus emphasizes the

32. So what is the nature of the dualism that existed in the Corinthian church? There are indications within the letter that "the Corinthians held on to that part of the Hellenistic body/soul or material/immaterial dualism which disdained the physical world for the 'higher' knowledge and wisdom of spiritual existence" (Scott J. Hafemann, "Corinthians, Letters to the," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* [ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993], 174). Paul refers to the Corinthian preoccupation with "knowledge" (*γνῶσις*) on several occasions throughout the letter (1:5; 8:1, 7, 10, 11; 12:8; 13:2, 8; 14:6) and names it as the source of some of the abuses of liberty that were taking place (8:1–13). This *knowledge* is immaterial and is more important than the temporal, physical issues of life. Therefore, the resurrection, immorality, and other corporeal matters of this sort can be dismissed as of little importance in the Christian life (6:13; 15:12).

33. This dualism provided the conceptual support for the Corinthians' overrealized eschatology (Haffemann, "Corinthians," 175). The Corinthians' emphasis on the present reveals their failure to accept that a gap still existed between what they were and what they would become at the resurrection. Therefore, Paul chastises them saying, "You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us [apostles]" (4:8). They think that because they have the Spirit they are participating in all the blessings of the eschaton. The only "not yet" of God's blessing is the shuffling off of the mortal coil of their spiritual existence, "they regarded their present spiritual existence as an assumption of that which is to be, minus the physical body" (Fee, *Corinthians*, 12). Thus, the doctrine of the bodily resurrection of believers has no place in the Corinthian mindset (15:12–18). What will become clear in the following section is that this dualism and overrealized eschatology find expression in the slogans that the Corinthians used to justify immoral behavior.

34. Murphy-O'Connor, "Slogans," 394.

35. Fee, *Corinthians*, 251.

36. BDAG notes that *ἕξεσθαι* usually carries with it a legal connotation, "all things are lawful for me" ("*ἕξεσθαι*," BDAG, 348). However, it is difficult to tell in this context if Paul is referring specifically to the law. Fee notes the possibility that these slogans may "be closely related to the issue of idol food in chaps. 8–10. It has especially close affinities with 8:8, which also

contrast that he wants to draw between his own position and theirs. First of all, whatever one believes about Christian freedom, it should not be perverted into a license to do things that do not edify spiritually.³⁷ Secondly, Paul uses a wordplay³⁸ to make the point that one must not let one's freedom become a means of bondage. Paul will not be mastered by anything but Christ.³⁹ As Murphy-O'Connor writes, "Paul does not deny the statement 'All things are lawful to me' (v. 12). He may even have said something like that himself when explaining the believer's freedom from the multiple prohibitions of Jewish law.⁴⁰ What he does is to attach two restrictions which bring it into line with his understanding of Christian community."⁴¹

B. Exegesis of 6:13–18a

Having answered the libertine slogan of v. 12, Paul now turns his attack to its foundational principle, the moral irrelevance of the body (6:13). The Corinthians contend that, "Foods are for the stomach, and the stomach is for foods."⁴² Paul contradicts the false implication of this creed with, "but the body⁴³ is not for sexual immorality⁴⁴ but for the Lord, and the Lord is

seems to reflect a Corinthian position. Whether Paul is himself bringing that argument of theirs to bear here, or whether they had used the same argument for both food and sex, cannot be known. Probably the latter" (Fee, *Corinthians*, 254).

37. *συμφέρω* connotes the idea of *being profitable*, "all things do not profit" ("*συμφέρω*," BDAG, 960). This usage is likely similar to the usage of 10:23, in which *συμφέρω* is parallel to *οικοδομέω* and is used to talk about the spiritual edification of fellow believers.

38. *ἔξεστιν* and *ἐξουσιάζω* are etymologically connected, and Paul uses this relationship to enhance the rhetorical force of his position.

39. "I will not be mastered by anything," ("*ἐξουσιάζω*," BDAG, 354). Liddell-Scott-Jones renders the passive with the genitive as, "to be held under authority" ("*ἐξουσιάζω*," LSJ, 599). Similarly, "I will allow nothing to win power over me" (Werner Foerster, "*ἔξεστιν, ἐξουσία, ἐξουσιάζω, κατεξουσιάζω*," TDNT 2:575).

40. When one thinks of texts like Rom 6:14 and 7:4–6, it is not difficult to imagine how Paul's law-free gospel might have been twisted into the antinomianism represented by this Corinthian slogan.

41. Murphy-O'Connor, *Corinthians*, 52.

42. Each of these two clauses present datives of interest/advantage and so do the parallel clauses that follow in the rest of the verse (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 144). Or they may be *dativus commodi* (F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [trans. and rev. Robert W. Funk; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961], 101).

43. I agree with Gundry's balanced assessment of the meaning of *σῶμα*:

We conclude that in neither the Pauline epistles, nor the literature of the NT outside those epistles, nor the LXX, nor extra-Biblical ancient Greek literature does the definition "whole person" find convincing support. This is not to deny that (outside Platonic tradition) emphasis falls on the unity of man's being. But it is a unity of parts, inner and outer, rather than a monadic unity. Ancient writers do not usually treat *sōma* in isolation. Rather, apart from its use for a corpse, *sōma* refers to the physical body in its proper and intended union with the soul/spirit. The body and its counterpart are portrayed as united but distinct—and separable, though unnaturally and unwantedly separated. The *sōma* may represent the whole person simply because the *sōma* lives in union with the soul/spirit. But *sōma* does not mean "whole person," because its use is designed to call attention to the physical object which is

for the body." How is it that the Lord is *for* the body? Paul answers this question in his rebuttal to the second half of the Corinthians' slogan, "but God will destroy both the stomach and the foods." The Corinthians argued that because God allows the destruction of the physical body, it follows that the physical body is morally irrelevant. As Ben Witherington has observed, "Many Corinthian Christians apparently thought that salvation did not involve the body."⁴⁵ But Paul attacks this logic in v. 14 with the gospel truth that death is not the ultimate end of the believer's body; *resurrection* is the ultimate end for the believer.⁴⁶ For Paul, as surely as the Lord was bodily resurrected, so shall his people be bodily resurrected in the *eschaton*. The efficient cause of both of these resurrections is God's power.⁴⁷ The Lord is *for* the body in that he will raise it up on the last day.

In 6:15, Paul asks, "Do you not know that your bodies are members⁴⁸ of Christ⁴⁹?" In this case, the οὐκ οἴδατε signals a rhetorical question that functions as a supporting statement for what he has been arguing up to this point. In other words, Paul argues that the believer's physical body comprises Christ's *members* or *limbs*. When the believer engages his *body* in sexual immorality, he or she is involving Christ's own *members* in the illicit act. This is why he asks, "Therefore,⁵⁰ shall I take up⁵¹ the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute?"⁵² This question is hypothetical because Paul wishes to expose the real meaning of a libertarian willingness to sleep with a prostitute, even though the Corinthians have not reached this conclusion yet for themselves. Sleeping with a prostitute has the unconscionable result of involving Christ's body in a sinful act. So Paul answers his own rhetorical question with the emphatic "μὴ γένοιτο,"

the body of the person rather than to the whole personality. Where used of whole people, *sōma* directs attention to their bodies, not to the wholeness of their being.

(Robert H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976], 79–80).

44. I take *πορνεία* as any form of "unlawful sexual intercourse" ("*πορνεία*," BDAG, 854), although it may in this instance be a specific reference to having sex with a prostitute.

45. Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 164 n. 11.

46. Of course, *ἐγείρω* and *ἐξεγείρω* both refer in this context to the raising up in resurrection from physical death to physical life ("*ἐγείρω*," BDAG, 271; "*ἐξεγείρω*," 346).

47. In this verse, *δία* with the genitive is a marker of instrumentality that signals the means by which bodily resurrection is effected ("*δία*," BDAG, 224). Paul elsewhere identifies the "power" of God as the efficient cause of bodily resurrection (e.g., Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 15:43; 2 Cor 4:7; 13:4; Phil 3:10).

48. *μέλος* is typically used to refer to the *limbs* or *parts* of the human body. However, this term is used metaphorically to refer to a *part* as a *member* of a whole. Figuratively speaking, the individual Christians are *members* of Christ, and together they form his body ("*μέλος*," BDAG, 628).

49. *Χριστοῦ* is a partitive genitive. The genitive noun denotes the whole of which the head noun is a part (BDF, §164, 90; Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 84).

50. Inferential οὖν (BDF, §451, 234; Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 673).

51. I have translated this verbal as a participle of attendant circumstance (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 640–43).

52. This is another partitive genitive.

the strongest possible way to reject a proposition and a sure marker of the diatribe style.

1 Cor 6:15–17 explains how it could be that Christ's members could be made to become the appendages of a prostitute: "Do you not know that the one who joins⁵³ himself to a prostitute is one⁵⁴ body [with her]?" This union of bodies and thus the union of Christ's members with the members of a prostitute is grounded in the declaration of Gen 2:24, "For⁵⁵ he/it says, 'the two shall become one flesh'" (6:16b). Moral or immoral, according to Genesis, sexual intercourse effects a union between two people. Therefore, it is unthinkable to Paul that a Christian should unite his own body, a member of Christ, to a harlot. After all, "the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit [with Him]" (6:17).⁵⁶ Therefore, Paul issues the solemn command, "Flee immorality" (6:18a).⁵⁷

C. *Exegesis of 6:18b–20*

The last slogan Paul deals with in his diatribe occurs in 6:18b, "Every sin, whatever a person may commit, is outside⁵⁸ of the body." Many translators and commentators add the word "other," because without a qualification of this sort, the next part of the verse seems to contradict the first. These commentators do not identify a slogan in 18b, and they understand Paul to be speaking of *πορνεία* as a sin different from all others.⁵⁹

The only problem with this translation is that there is absolutely no exegetical justification for adding the word "other" except that commentators have difficulty explaining the meaning of the verse without it. Without adding "other" to the translation, the phrase becomes an impenetrable mystery if construed literally as Paul's words. Gordon Fee tries to justify

53. "Join oneself to, join, cling to, associate with" ("κολλάω," BDAG, 555–56).

54. "One" in contrast to the parts of which a whole is made up ("εἷς, μία, ἓν," BDAG, 291).

55. This γάρ is a causal conjunction, and it gives the ground or reason for the preceding clause (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 674).

56. "In light of vv. 19–20, Paul probably is referring to the work of the Spirit, whereby through the 'one Spirit' the believer's 'spirit' has been joined indissolubly with Christ. The believer is united to the Lord and thereby has become one S/spirit with him" (Fee, *Corinthians*, 260).

57. The verb is a present imperative, which is used to commend general precepts concerning attitude and conduct; it has a durative force (BDF, §335; §336, 172). "The traditional distinction of general precept versus specific command goes a long way towards explaining aspectual usage in New Testament commands and prohibitions. Thus, present imperatives are the most common usage in New Testament epistles and discourses, where 'rules for life' or 'whenever'-type commands are given. . . . In narrative it is more common to find aorists, since the sense is often 'do this act on this occasion', but without intention to govern behavior more broadly. A number of exceptions to this do occur but the exceptions fall into predictable patterns" (Fanning, "Approaches to Verbal Aspect," in *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics* [ed. Stanley E. Porter and D. A. Carson; JSOTSup 80; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993], 55).

58. The adverb ἔκτος functions as a preposition with the genitive ("ἐκτός," BDAG, 311).

59. See, for instance, Will Deming, who hypothesizes the ideological roots of a position of this sort: "Paul's contention that *porneia* is not like other sins may reflect the Stoic dispute over the equality of sins. . . . Paul, like some Stoics, may be arguing that all sins are not equal" (Will Deming, "The Unity of 1 Corinthians 5–6," *JBL* 115 [1996]: 304 n. 55).

his adding the word *other* by arguing that, “the *de* (‘but’) is exceptive, qualifying ‘every sin’ to mean ‘every other sin’ except the one spoken of in this clause.”⁶⁰ Yet I have surveyed all the major grammars for information about the so-called exceptive use of *δέ*, and I have yet to find any that speak of it.⁶¹ Most of the grammars simply confirm the usage outlined in BDAG, “one of the most common Gk. particles, used to connect one clause to another, either to express *contrast* or simple *continuation*.”⁶² Thus, if one is going to argue that Paul intended “other” to be understood, then we are forced to agree with Richard Hays that Paul is using language imprecisely,⁶³ because to insert “other” is to posit a meaning that falls outside the norms of language for the terms and the syntax of this verse.

As I discussed above, the Corinthians contend in this slogan that the physical body is morally insignificant and cannot be used as an instrument of sin. This reading is confirmed when we compare the phrase *ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος* to Paul’s use of the same phrase in 2 Cor 12:2, in which it is likely that *ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος* is synonymous with the phrase *χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος* (“apart from the body”) in the following verse. Thus, the Corinthians apparently believed that sin was “apart from the body” in the sense that the physical body is morally irrelevant in the divine reckoning of things. As Jerome Murphy-O’Connor has so aptly put it, “This is not to say that the Corinthians denied the possibility of sin. Sin was possible but only on the level of motive and intention, and they refused to concede that these could be evaluated on the basis of the actions in which they were embodied. Hence, ‘every sin which a man may commit is outside the body.’”⁶⁴

60. Fee, *Corinthians*, 262.

61. Fee may be following Robert Gundry’s “exceptive contrast” interpretation of *δέ* (Robert H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology*, 73–74). This is picked up by other writers such as Bruce Fisk, “ΠΙΟΠΝΕΥΕΙΝ as Body Violation: The Unique Nature of Sexual Sin in 1 Corinthians 6:18,” *NTS* 42 (1996): 544. Fisk appeals to BDF §480, 1, and §306, 5, to support the interpretation that *ἄλλος* has been omitted by ellipsis and that “other” should be added (*ibid.*, n. 8). Thus, Fisk argues that the omission is a “specifically Greek” idiom and “syntactically predictable,” leaving no grounds for taking 1 Cor 6:18 as anything other than Paul’s words (*ibid.*, 544). Whatever one thinks about the possibility of an elliptical “other” in other NT contexts, J. William Johnston has completely overturned the possibility of this interpretation for 1 Cor 6:18. Johnston’s massive study of *πάς* in the NT has shown that there can be no “exceptions” implied in 1 Cor 6:18 (*The Use of Πᾶς in the New Testament* [Studies in Biblical Greek 11; ed. D. A. Carson; New York: Peter Lang, 2004], 148–57). Johnston writes, “To imply ‘other’ calls for a reading of *πάς* in 1 Cor 6:18b in the summative rather than implicative sense. The syntax of the present passage suggests a distributive sense with implicative scope” (*ibid.*, 152). Or to put it in layman’s terms, in 1 Cor 6:18, “all” means “all without exception.”

62. “*δέ*,” BDAG, 213, italics mine.

63. Richard Hays, *First Corinthians*, 105: “There are two ways to interpret this puzzling remark. The first way is to take it as the first half of a comparison that asserts fornication to be somehow worse than all other sins, or at least more body-related. This is the option adopted by the NIV: ‘All *other* sins a man commits are outside the body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.’ The word *other* is not in the Greek text; this interpretation assumes that Paul has expressed himself imprecisely. The other possible interpretation is to take this sentence as one more quotation of a Corinthian slogan in the imagined diatribal dialogue.”

64. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *1 Corinthians*, 51.

Paul's answer to this slogan is direct: "but the one who commits immorality sins against⁶⁵ his own body." In other words, the Corinthians are wrong about the moral value of the physical body. The body does matter both now and in the age to come. Verse 14 has already shown how the resurrection makes the body matter for the age to come, but v. 19 shows why the body is morally relevant in the present. The reason is that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. "Or do you not know that your body⁶⁶ is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, whom⁶⁷ you have from God, and [do you not know] that you are not your own?"⁶⁸

Paul argues that the Holy Spirit dwells within the believer's body, and this fact makes the physical body of utmost importance in the present age. Because the Holy Spirit resides within the temple of the believer's body, the believer has no ultimate claim to ownership over his body. Verse 20 gives the ground of this statement: "For⁶⁹ you were bought at a price."⁷⁰ Paul reminds the Corinthians that they do not own themselves. God owns them because he bought them at the cost of His Son. And God's indwelling Spirit dwells in the Corinthians as a guarantee of final redemption. As Paul has argued elsewhere, the presence of the indwelling Spirit is the ground of the believer's hope that God will resurrect his/her body.⁷¹ Therefore, Paul concludes with the emphatic imperative, "Therefore,⁷² glorify God with your body." In other words, "do not use your body for immorality, but for the Lord." As Gordon Fee summarizes, "Paul's point is that the physical union of a believer with a prostitute is not possible because the believer's body already belongs to the Lord, through whose resurrection one's body has become a 'member' of Christ by his Spirit."⁷³

65. εἰς can be taken one of three ways here: (1) as a marker of instrumentality, "by" or "with," (2) as a marker of a specific point of reference, "for," "to," "with respect to," "with reference to," or (3) as referring to actions or feelings directed in someone's direction in a friendly or hostile sense, "for," or "against" ("εἰς," BDAG, 290–91). However one takes it, the important thing to remember is that the *body* is indeed involved in the sin of sexual immorality, contrary to what the Corinthians held.

66. σῶμα appears here in the distributed singular—something belonging to each person in a group of people is placed in the singular (Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3: *Syntax* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963], 23).

67. The relative pronoun ὅς appears in the genitive instead of the accusative because of attraction to the case of its antecedent ("ὅς," BDAG, 726).

68. οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐαυτῶν is a part of the question because it is coordinated with the previous clause by καί.

69. Causal conjunction.

70. τιμή refers to the amount at which something is valued, "price, value" ("τιμή," BDAG, 1005).

71. Rom 8:11: "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you."

72. δὴ is a marker that invites attention to what is being said. With exhortations or commands, it gives a sense of greater urgency, "now," "then," "therefore" ("δὴ," BDAG, 222).

73. Fee, *Corinthians*, 260.

In summary, 15:12 makes clear that there were apparently some in the Corinthian community who were denying the future resurrection of the body.⁷⁴ The slogans in 6:12–20, therefore, reflect a desire on the part of some in the Corinthian community who wanted to justify their immorality based on a belief that the physical body is morally irrelevant and does not figure into Christ's redemptive work in the present or in the eschaton. So with the citation of each slogan, Paul refutes the false doctrine with the gospel. For Paul, Christ's resurrection guarantees and grounds the believer's own resurrection at the end of the age. Or, in Paul's words, "Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power" (6:14). This breaking up of the resurrection into the *already* of Jesus' bodily resurrection and the *not yet* of the believer's resurrection grounds present bodily existence in the expectation of a better bodily existence that is to come.⁷⁵ The end result is that Paul uses his diatribe to give the reader a foretaste of what he will expound in full in chap. 15—the certainty of bodily resurrection. But in this text, Paul appeals to this hope of bodily resurrection to confront the bodily sin of *πορνεία*.

5. CONCLUSION

I have attempted to show three things in this article. First, I have argued that certain formal features in 1 Cor 6:12–20 belong to the diatribe style. Second, I have maintained that Paul has adapted the diatribe form in a unique way to address the particular situation at Corinth. This special adaptation of the form means that Paul's interlocutors are not rhetorical or imaginary but represent real voices in the Corinthian church. Third, I have set forth a brief exegesis of the text based on the presence of slogans in vv. 12, 13, and 18. Reading 6:12–20 as a diatribe increases the likelihood of Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's reconstruction of Paul's dialogue with the Corinthians.

One final note regards the translation of this passage. If scholarly consensus does move in the direction of Murphy-O'Connor's proposal, then Bible translations need to reflect an interpretation of this sort. Because the original readers would have picked up on the subtle indicators of quoted material, the modern translator has the responsibility to include indicators that Paul is quoting the Corinthians. The best way for the translator to represent the presence of Corinthian slogans is through the use of English quotation marks. Thus, I suggest a translation along the following lines:

- (12) "All things are lawful for me." But not all things bring together.
 "All things are lawful for me." But I will not be enslaved by anything.
 (13) "The foods are for the stomach, and the stomach is for the foods.

74. 1 Cor 15:12: "How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?"

75. N. T. Wright makes precisely this point in his comments on this passage, even though he misses the Corinthian slogan in v. 18 (*Christian Origins and the Question of God*, vol. 3: *The Resurrection of the Son of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003], 289–90).

And God will destroy both the one and the other.” But the body is not for immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. (14) And God both raised the Lord and will raise us by His power. (15a) Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

(15b) Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! (16) Do you not know that he who unites with a prostitute is one body [with her]? For it/he says, “The two shall become one flesh.” (17) But the one who is united to the Lord is one spirit [with Him]. (18a) Flee immorality!

(18b) “Every sin, whatever a person may do, is outside of the body.” But, the one who commits immorality sins against his own body. (19) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God and you are not your own? (20) For you were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body.