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CHAPTER 7

Natural and Unnatural Use in Romans 1:24-27: Paul and the Philosophic Critique of Eros

DAVID E. FREDRICKSON

Wherefore God delivered them to the desires of their hearts for the purpose of impurity, for their bodies to be dishonored among them — they who exchanged the truth of God for a lie and revered and worshiped the creation rather than the creator, who is blessed for ever, amen. Because of this, God delivered them to dishonoring passions. Their females exchanged natural use for that which is beyond nature. Likewise, the males left off the natural use of the female and were inflamed for one another in their appetite, males among males producing disgrace and receiving back in themselves the punishment which was necessary from their error.

Romans 1:24-27

Or do you not know that the unjust will not inherit the kingly rule of God? Do not be led astray. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who lack self-control, nor the arrogant who penetrate boys, nor thieves, nor those who get more than their fair share, nor dissolute and rowdy drinkers, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingly rule of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

A. Introduction

To say there is no uniformity in the ways of studying the topic of sex in ancient texts is an understatement. Some scholars have insisted on the transhistorical validity of homosexuality and heterosexuality. They believe that ancient texts share the modern interest in knowing, classifying, and evaluating sexual orientation.¹ Other scholars have amplified and refined the basic insights of Kenneth Dover and Michel Foucault, summarized by Mark Golden, "that forms of sexual activity were not a major concern, that homosexual and heterosexual desire were regarded as identical, that excess (failing to control oneself) and passivity (falling under another's control) were the main forms of sexual immorality for men."²

The Dover/Foucault framework informs this paper, which first treats Romans 1:24-27 at considerable length, moving at the end to a brief examination of 1 Corinthians 6:9.³ My guiding question is this: How do the ways of

1. Authors with divergent opinions about the morality of same-sex love still share these assumptions. For example, it is interesting to compare the work of J. Boswell with J. De Young, "The Source and NT Meaning of ARSENOKOITAI, with Implications for Christian Ethics and Ministry," *Master's Seminary Journal* 3 (1992): 191-215.

2. Mark Golden, "Thirteen Years of Homosexuality (and Other Recent Work on Sex, Gender and the Body in Ancient Greece)," *Echos du Monde Classique* 35 (1991): 334. For a statement of the Dover/Foucault trajectory by one of its best representatives, see D. Halperin, "Historicizing the Sexual Body: Sexual Preferences and Erotic Identities in the Pseudo-Lucianic *Erôtes*," in *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to AIDS*, ed. D. Stanton (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 236-61. The most significant refinements are found in D. Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Cohen, "Sexuality, Violence, and the Athenian Law of Hubris," *Greece and Rome* 38 (1991): 171-88; and A. Richlin, "Not before Homosexuality: The Materiality of the *Cinaedus* and the Roman Law against Love between Men," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3 (1993): 523-73. They raise doubts about the first point, that the form of sexual activity was not a matter of concern. Given the accuracy of the third point, the first had inevitably to come under scrutiny. The second point (the unity of desire) was recognized early on by J. Henderson (*The Maculate Muse: Obscene Language in Attic Comedy* [New York: Yale University Press, 1975], pp. 52-53) and has stood the test of time.

3. D. Martin ("Heterosexism and the Interpretation of Romans 1:18-32," *Biblical Interpretation* 3 [1995]: 332-55) has anticipated some of the arguments below. Martin's legitimate concern for "ideological analysis of modern scholarship on Rom. 1:18-32" does not, however, allow him the opportunity to develop the philosophic background in as great detail as offered here. Nevertheless, his critique (pp. 333-39) of the traditional interpretation that the creation story in Genesis is the proper background of Paul's argument is brilliant and complements my attempt to place Paul in his contemporary intellectual environment. J. Fitzmyer (*Romans*, Anchor Bible 33 [New York: Doubleday,

conceptualizing sexual matters in Paul's philosophic and literary environment help us make sense of his argument? I will conclude that these Pauline texts are not about the condemnation of homosexuality. Rather, in Romans 1:24-27 Paul points to the problem of passion without introducing the modern dichotomy of homo/heterosexuality. In 1 Corinthians 6:9 the term "soft" refers to lack of self-control (not the boy prostitute) and ἀρσενικοίτης is the hybristic pederast whose vice is not misplaced desire but injustice. Obviously, these are not new conclusions about these texts. What I hope to offer are additional reasons to believe that they are true.

B. What Does "Natural Use" Mean?

My guiding question presumes that Paul's language about sex has much in common with the erotic discourse of his contemporaries and that interpreters must take this overlap seriously. One important point of contact between Paul and his intellectual environment is the notion of sexual activity as use (χρησις).⁴ Interpreters of Romans 1:24-27 have been remarkably incurious about this term. Most assume that it means "relation" or "intercourse" and quickly pass it by on the way to more interesting terminology such as "nature." This is unfortunate, because "relation" imports the modern notion that sex is (or should be) a matter of mutuality. The texts collected and discussed below will demonstrate that χρησις does not refer to a relation carried out in the medium of sexual pleasure but the activity of the desiring subject, usually male, performed on the desired object, female or male.⁵

The fact that sexual desire and hunger were thought to be analogous alerts us to the way that the very concept of relation distorts Paul's argu-

1993], pp. 274-77) is also critical of reading too much of Genesis into Rom. 1:18-32, but he fails to carry through on this insight and makes the mistake of regarding 1:24-27 as the reason for God's wrath.

4. Sex as use is a building block in Foucault's description of the Greek "moral problematization of sexual conduct." See *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), pp. 53-62.

5. The only exception I have been able to discover is Chariton, *Chareas and Callirhoe* 2.8.4. For the new idea in the romances of both partners enjoying sex, see D. Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). For enjoyment (ἀπόλαυσις) — a term sometimes coordinated with χρησις — shared between male and female lovers and asserted not to be possible in pederasty, see Ps.-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 27.

ment.⁶ This analogy becomes even more significant when texts are taken into account which assert a similarity between the use of sex and the use of food.⁷ Aristippus, whose sexual activity with Laïs occurred without her loving (φιλοῦσης) him, is paraphrased by Plutarch: “He didn’t imagine, he said, that wine or fish loved him either, yet he used both with pleasure (ἡδέως ἑκατέρω χρήται).”⁸ This remark reflects more than an errant philosopher’s machismo. In it we see the pervasive interpretation of sexual activity as use.⁹ The analogy of sex with food furthermore helped to define sexual norms, since the pleasure of sex, it was argued, needs to be limited by satisfaction just as a full stomach limits eating.¹⁰

In order to distinguish modern and ancient ways of thinking about sex, it is worth underscoring that neither the gender of the subject nor that of the object is material to the concept of use. Frequently, as in the case of Romans 1:27, the term refers to the husband’s sexual activity with respect to the wife,¹¹ though this does not mean that χρῆσις is invariably associated with a husband/wife or, for that matter, a male/female pairing.¹² Epictetus’s advice

6. For ἔρωσ as an appetite like hunger or thirst, see D. Halperin, “Platonic *Erôs* and What Men Call Love,” *Ancient Philosophy* 5 (1985): 164-66, and D. Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex: A Commentary on “De Rerum Natura” IV, with Prolegomena, Text, and Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), pp. 231-33.

7. Henderson, p. 47.

8. Plutarch, *Amatorius* 750D-E. (Unless otherwise indicated, translations are from the Loeb Classical Library; translation modified in this instance). For the concept of use in Aristippus’s treatment of pleasure, see Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.17.17; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.75.

9. For the correlation of using food and using sex, see Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.9.46; Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 16; Epictetus, *Discourse* 2.8.12; Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* 5.7.21-25.

10. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.10.90.2-3 (translation is S. P. Wood, *Clement of Alexandria: Christ the Educator*, FC 23 [New York: Fathers of the Church, 1954], p. 169): “We should consider boys as our sons, and the wives of other men as our daughters. We must keep a firm control over the pleasures of the stomach, and an absolutely uncompromising control over the organs beneath the stomach. . . . In lawful wedlock, as with eating, nature permits whatever is conformable to nature and helpful and decent; it allows us to desire the act of procreation. However, whoever is guilty of excess (ὑβερβολήν) sins against nature and, by violating the laws regulating intercourse, harms himself.” Cf. Xenophon, *Symposium* 8.15; Philo, *Special Laws* 3.9; Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well* 124E-125A; *On the Eating of Flesh*, II, 997B.

11. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 3.11.71.4: σωφρόνως ἐβούλετο ταῖς γαμεταῖς χρῆσθαι τοὺς ἀνδρας ὁ νόμος καὶ ἐπὶ μόνῃ παιδοποιῶν; Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudaeo* 110: μόνῃ τῇ γαμετῇ γυναικὶ ἕκαστος χρώμενοι; Athenagoras, *Legatio* 32.1: γυναικὶ δὲ τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἀδελφῇ χρώμενον.

12. K. Preston, *Studies in the Diction of the Sermo Amatorius in Roman Comedy*

about casual affairs illustrates male use of the female outside of marriage: “In your sex-life preserve purity, as far as you can, before marriage, and, if you indulge, take only those privileges which are lawful. However, do not make yourself offensive, or censorious, to those who do indulge (χρωμένοις), and do not make frequent mention of the fact that you yourself do not indulge (χρηῖ).”¹³ Rarer than the male’s use of the female are instances of the wife’s use of the husband,¹⁴ to which Paul most likely alludes in Romans 1:26: “their females exchanged natural use for that which is against nature (τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν).”¹⁵ The paucity of examples of the female’s use of the male can be explained in part by the lack of attention paid by male authors to female sexual experience and also by their reluctance to think of women as users, a male social role.

The metaphor of use in sexual matters does not in itself raise the issue of the gender of the persons involved. Thus, parallel to the husband’s use of the wife, we find that pederasty was routinely conceptualized in terms of the use to which ὁ ἐραστής (the lover) put ὁ ἐρώμενος (the boy loved).¹⁶ Peder-

(Chicago: University of Chicago Libraries, 1916), p. 30: “These two verbs [*utor* and *fruor*] are practically interchangeable, as are their Greek equivalents [*χρῶμαι* and *ἀπολάω*], though in the case of *fruor* and *ἀπολάω* more zest is perhaps implied. *Utor* is in effect rather neutral, formal, and reminiscent of legal phraseology.” Cf. Seneca, *On the Happy Life* 10.3. See also J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 189, 198; Brown, pp. 219, 234, 239. For the sexual sense of *χρησις* in medical writers, see L. Dean-Jones, “The Politics of Pleasure: Female Sexual Appetite in the Hippocratic Corpus,” in *Discourses of Sexuality*, p. 57.

13. Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 33.8. Cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.74; 7.131; Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 54.16.3-5; Plutarch, *Amatorius* 751B; *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 376; Ps.-Lucian, *The Ass* 51.

14. Plutarch, *Advice to Bride and Groom* 144B. See also Brown, p. 308.

15. I have been unable to discover any examples of “use” in descriptions of female sexual activity with females. This suggests that Paul is not alluding to lesbianism in 1:26, as many exegetes assume; rather the reference is to inordinate desire within marriage. Other insights confirm this. B. Brooten (“Patristic Interpretations of Romans 1:26,” in *Studia Patristica XVIII*, vol. 1 [Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1985], pp. 287-91) cites patristic readings which do not assume lesbianism, and J. Miller (“The Practices of Romans 1:26: Homosexual or Heterosexual?” *NovT* 37 [1995]: 4-8, 10) argues persuasively that only when the categories of homo/heterosexuality are assumed does 1:26 appear to speak of females having sex with females.

16. Aristippus (in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.99): “The wise man will use boys (τοῖς ἐρωμένοις χρῆσασθαι) openly and without any regard to circumstance.” On this passage, see G. Gerhard, *Phoinix von Kolophon* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1909), pp. 145-46. Similar terminology is attributed to Zeno at *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 1.59.30: καὶ τοῖς παιδικοῖς χρῆσθαι ἀκωλύτως. See also Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 13.604D-E; Fronto, *Epist. Graecae* 8.7.

asty was spoken of as “using the male as a woman.”¹⁷ This indicates the earlier place of the metaphor in the husband’s sexual use of the wife, but such priority did not imply male/female pairing as a norm. Indifference to gender is seen most clearly when *χρῆσις* (or its cognates) refers in the same passage to the male’s use of males and females. Reporting on the dissolute life of Sardanapallus, Diodorus of Sicily points to the king’s pursuit of “the delights of love with men as well as with women, for he practiced sexual indulgence of both kinds without restraint (*ἐχρήτο γὰρ ταῖς ἐπ’ ἀμφοτέρα συνουσίαις ἀνέδην*).”¹⁸ From Diodorus’s perspective, Sardanapallus’s fault was not his choice of sexual objects but the unrestrained manner in which he pursued his desires.

So far we have seen that *χρῆσις* emphasizes the instrumentality of the object of sexual desire and does not draw particular attention to the gender of the persons involved. Where does this conceptualization of sexual activity, so foreign to modern thinking about sex as a relation, originate? We have seen above that the analogy between eating and having sex was widespread. This is one possible source. Another important background is the topic of household management (*οἰκονομία*).¹⁹ Use of possessions is a practical task for the head of the household.²⁰ One theorist aligns use with acquiring, preserving, and improving property.²¹ The more common division of the topic is simply possession (*κτησις*) and use (*χρησις*) of property.²² The Pythagorean Callicratidas employs this division: “But of the parts of a family there are two first and greatest divisions: viz. man and possessions (*κτᾶσις*), the latter of which is a thing governed, and affords utility (*χρᾶσιν*). Thus, also, the first and greatest parts of an animal are soul and body; and soul, indeed, is that

17. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.1.30: *γυναίξι τοῖς ἀνδράσι χρωμένη*. Cf. Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 62.28.3; Lucian, *A True Story* 1.22.3-4; Ps.-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 27.

18. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 2.23.2. Cf. Xenophon, *Symposium* 8.28-29; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 10.132; Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 10; Ps.-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 25.

19. Foucault has drawn attention to male sexual practice as a problem of household management. See especially *The Use of Pleasure*, pp. 141-84.

20. See, for example, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3.159.6.

21. Ps.-Aristotle, *Oeconomica* 1.6.1: “There are four qualities which the head of a household must possess in dealing with his property . . . acquiring (*κτᾶσθαι*) . . . preserving (*φυλάττειν*) . . . how to improve (*κοσμητικόν*), and how to make use of it (*χρηστικόν*).” For the last in this list, see S. Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), pp. 219-20.

22. Plato, *Euthydemus* 280E; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.3.38.4-3.8.41.3; *Stromateis* 6.12.100.1; Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* 37. For a fuller collection of philosophic texts displaying this organization of the topic, see Gerhard, pp. 113-15.

which governs and uses (χρεόμενον), but the body is that which is governed and imparts utility (χρᾶσιν).”²³ Wives fall within the category of things to be used, though sexual use specifically is not mentioned by these authors.²⁴

A significant issue in household management was the matter of correct use (ὀρθή χρῆσις).²⁵ It depended on employing ἀδιάφορα (matters of indifference) without passion, as Clement of Alexandria emphasized in his discussion of the Christian’s relation to wealth: “So let a man do away, not with possessions, but rather with the passions of the soul, which do not consent to the better use (τὴν ἀμεινὴν χρῆσιν) of what he has; in order that, by becoming noble and good, he may be able to use these possessions also in a noble manner (τοῖς κτήμασι χρῆσθαι δυνηθῆῖ καλῶς).”²⁶ Control of passions, if not their complete eradication for some authors, is the path to correct use of possessions.²⁷

Broadening the investigation beyond the limits of the topos on household management, we discover a drive, particularly among Stoics (by no means limited to them, however), to articulate the correct use of externals in all areas of life. Correct use is a component in the chief doctrine of the philosophers according to Epictetus’s understanding of Zeno’s maxim: “To follow the gods is man’s end, and the essence of the good is the correct use (χρῆσις οἷα δεῖ) of external impressions.”²⁸ In Stoic doctrine the happiness of the

23. Text is H. Thesleff, *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period*, Acta Academiae Aboensis, Ser. A, vol. 30 (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1965), 104.7-11. Translation is T. Taylor, *Political Fragments of Archytas, Charondas, Zaleucus, and Other Ancient Pythagoreans* (Chiswick: Taylor, 1822), p. 51.

24. Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 3.10; *Symposium* 2.10; Philo, *On Virtues* 30.

25. Plato, *Euthydemus* 280E; *Republic* 451C: “right possession and use of children and wives (ὀρθή παίδων τε καὶ γυναικῶν κτήσις τε καὶ χρῆσις).” See also Ps.-Plato, *Eryxias* 403B. In a summary of Aristotelian ethical doctrine (Ps.-Aristotle, *De virtutibus et vitiis*) preserved in Stobaeus, one of the “works of prudence” is “to use well all existing goods (τὸ χρῆσθαι καλῶς πᾶσι τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.140.3-4).” On the other hand, a characteristic work of foolishness is “to use existing goods in a bad way (τὸ χρῆσθαι κακῶς τοῖς παρούσιν ἀγαθοῖς, Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.143, 19-20).” See further Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.264.12-265.4; Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* 25-28. For “just use (δικαία χρῆσις),” see Theano, *Epistle* 6.2 (Thesleff, 197.34).

26. Clement of Alexandria, *Quis dives salvetur* 14. Cf. *Stromateis* 3.1.4.2; *Paedagogus* 2.1.9.2; Seneca, *Epistle* 74.18.

27. Clement of Alexandria, *Quis dives salvetur* 15: “A man must say good-bye, then, to the injurious things he has, not to those that can actually contribute to his advantage if he knows the right use of them (τὴν ὀρθὴν χρῆσιν); and advantage comes from those that are managed (οἰκονομούμενα) with wisdom, moderation and piety.”

28. Epictetus, *Discourse* 1.20.15-16. For Zeno on χρῆσις, see also *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 1.57.17-24. For Epictetus’s sustained interest in the moral problem of using externals, see *Discourses* 1.28.6-7, 12; 2.16.28; 4.5.23; *Fragment* 4; *Encheiridion* 6.

sage could be attributed to the use of matters of indifference for benefit — not for pleasure.²⁹ While the sage “consistently uses (χρῶμενος συνεχῶς)” the experiences of life “prudently, with self-control, decently, and orderly (φρονίμως καὶ ἐγκρατῶς καὶ κοσμίως καὶ εὐτάκτως),” the bad person fails to understand ὀρθὴ χρῆσις and necessarily lives a life of regret.³⁰ Correct use of any object requires the control of passion. The wise man will “feel no attraction or confusion in treating (χρησεται) the things from which the passions spring, like wealth and poverty, glory and ingloriousness, health and disease, life and death, trouble and pleasure. To use indifferently things which are matters of ethical indifference (ἀδιαφόρος τοῖς ἀδιαφόραις χρησώμεθα) we need considerable powers of discrimination. . . .”³¹ Correct use is measured use of objects necessary for life and the strict avoidance of luxury.³² The use of sexual objects was similarly evaluated in terms of control of passion.³³ Using sex sparingly was the ideal.³⁴

We have now come to the point where the philosophic view of correct use points the way to an interpretation of Romans 1:26-27. The philosophers had one more synonym of correct use; it was the very phrase which Paul employs — natural use (φυσικὴ χρῆσις). Natural use is characterized by an avoidance of luxury and the control of passion.³⁵ According to Epictetus, “the

29. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.104. Note here the Stoic formula εὖ καὶ κακῶς χρῆσθαι; good use makes something indifferent good: see *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3.20.6; 3.29.28; 3.29.41-42; 3.49.23-29. This notion is reflected in Epictetus (*Discourse* 2.6.2): “Although life is a matter of indifference, the use which you make of it is not a matter of indifference (οὕτως τὸ ζῆν ἄδιάφορον, ἡ χρῆσις οὐκ ἀδιάφορος).” Cf. 3.3.2. For use aiming in benefit rather than in pleasure, see Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* 4.2.42 (text and translation is P. De Lacy, *Galen on the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, 2nd ed. [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981], pp. 246-47): “When a person is led by reason alone to the experience (χρήσιν) of pleasant things, such a person is called temperate (σώφρων), for he has made his aim in choosing them not the enjoyment (ἀπόλαυσιν) but the benefit (ὠφέλιον).”

30. Stobaeus, *Anthology* 2.102.20-25. Cf. Ps.-Crates, *Epistle* 10; Plutarch, *On Tranquility of Mind* 466C.

31. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 2.109.3-4 (translation is J. Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria: “Stromateis” Books One to Three*, FC 85 [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1991], p. 229). Cf. *Paedagogus* 2.12.121.1: χωρὶς προσπάθειας καὶ διαφορᾶς χρώμεθα αὐτοῖς.

32. Stobaeus, *Anthology* 2.127.11-25; 135.5-10; 136.3-8; Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 18B; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.1.12.1; 2.12.120.5-6.

33. Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.360.6-21.

34. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 4.23.147.1; Ocellus, *On the Nature of the Universe* 54-55; Aristoxenus (in Stobaeus, *Anthology* 4.879.8).

35. Seneca, *On the Happy Life* 17.2: *naturalis usus*.

function of the good and excellent man is to deal with his impressions in accordance with nature (τὸ χρῆσθαι ταῖς φαντασίαις κατὰ φύσιν).³⁶ On the other hand, careless use of externals, that is, when passion is present, is παρὰ φύσιν.³⁷

So far we have located the Pauline argument within the ethical problem of the correct, or natural, use of externals. Paul is not condemning homosexual relations as such; the notion of sexual relation is itself foreign to his way of thinking. We have seen that χρῆσις, properly understood as use, entails a completely different moral problem than the one implied by χρῆσις mistakenly translated as relation. χρῆσις does not make gender thematic. Rather, the problem becomes the psychological significance of the act for the subject of sexual desire. We are able to confirm this interpretation when we turn from an analysis of use and explore further the concept of nature in the philosophic treatments of passion in general and sexual desire in particular. We will find a connection between “against nature” and the notion of the normal, acquisitive aspect of the self’s relation to the world given over to excess.

On this point I am in agreement with Dale Martin, who has suggested that what Paul meant by παρὰ φύσιν was not “disoriented desire” but “inordinate desire.”³⁸ Martin’s work has made it clear that we need a more differentiated sense of what “according to nature” meant in the ancient world when it came to matters of sex. Natural sex was understood in three distinct ways: sex for the sake of procreation (thus only male with female);³⁹ sex which symbolizes and preserves male social superiority to the female (males penetrate/females are penetrated);⁴⁰ and sex in which passion is absent or at least held to a

36. Epictetus, *Discourse* 3.3.2. Cf. *Discourses* 3.16.15; 4.5.23; 4.10.26; *Fragment* 4; *Encheiridion* 6.

37. Epictetus, *Discourse* 3.3.2, 3, 6, 24.

38. Martin, p. 342 (emphasis Martin’s).

39. Plato, *Laws* 838D-839A; Ocellus, *On the Nature of the Universe* 44-45, 55; Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 12; Philo, *Special Laws* 3.34-36; Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 7.136; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.10.87.1-4. The naturalness of sex for procreation is rejected in Ps.-Diogenes, *Epistle* 21. For an attempt to read “against nature” as nonvaginal sex into Rom. 1:24-27, see Miller, pp. 8-11.

40. Philo, *Abraham* 135-36; *Special Laws* 1.325; 2.50; 3.39; *On the Contemplative Life* 59; Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 7.149; Plutarch, *Amatorius* 750D-E; 751C-D; Ps.-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 19-20 (on which see S. Goldhill, *Foucault’s Virginity: Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], p. 105); Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.10.90.2-3; 3.3.23.1; *Greek Anthology* 11.272; Seneca, *Epistle* 95.20-21. Discussion of sex as symbolic of social power must begin with K. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 100-109. Artemidorus’s dream analysis has been highly prized as a way into Greco-Roman attitudes toward sex. For

minimum. Significant for our interpretation of Romans 1:24-27 is the fact that only the last of these is coordinated in ancient texts with the concept of use.⁴¹ By combining “use” with “natural,” Paul follows a pattern established by the moral philosophers whose concern was to make passion and its control the core ethical problem in all matters of life.

The mutual implication of passion and “against nature” is basic to the Stoic evaluation of action. Diogenes Laertius reports that “passion, or emotion, is defined by Zeno as an irrational and unnatural movement in the soul, or again as impulse in excess.”⁴² What makes an action wrong and against nature is the presence of passion in the agent.⁴³ Musonius Rufus, Epictetus, and Seneca provide copious references to nature in descriptions of the ideal life spent in pursuing necessities without indulging passion.⁴⁴ The association of the unnatural with passion is not limited to Stoics.⁴⁵

his understanding of natural sex as symbolic of male domination of the female, see J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: Essays in the Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 36-37. This approach, which highlights the dimension of power in sexuality, has been employed fruitfully in the explanation of Jewish and rabbinic condemnation of male-with-male sexual activity. See M. Satlow, “‘They Abused Him Like a Woman’: Homoeroticism, Gender Blurring, and the Rabbis in Late Antiquity,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (1994): 1-25; D. Boyarin, “Are There Any Jews in ‘The History of Sexuality?’” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (1995): 333-55.

41. The only possible exception I have discovered is Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 13.605D: “So beware, you philosophers who indulge in passion contrary to nature (οἱ παρὰ φύσιν τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ χρώμενοι).” Yet this is a difficult text. The context is certain philosophers’ pederastic practice. In 13.605E the philosophers’ problem is not knowing that desire is transitory. Similarly, the boy’s beauty comes to an end, while the philosophers’ passion does not cease. Might “against nature” here mean the impossibility of fulfilling desires?

42. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.110. πάθος is by definition against nature. That which makes it so is excess of rational impulse toward objects. See the convenient collection of texts in A. Glibert-Thierry, *Pseudo-Andronicus de Rhodes: ΠΕΡΙ ΠΑΘΩΝ*, Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum, Suppl. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), pp. 273-74. For an illuminating discussion of this topic, see B. Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), pp. 154-73.

43. Representative is Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 2.109.1. See G. B. Kerford, “The Origin of Evil in Stoic Thought,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 60 (1978): 488-92.

44. See, for example, Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 17; Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.4.15; 3.7.24-28; Seneca, *Epistle* 122.5-19; *On the Happy Life* 13.4-5: natural desires are ones which are neither excessive nor insatiable.

45. Plutarch, *On Moral Virtue* 450E: “But he who permits the better part to follow and be in subjection to the intemperate and irrational part of his soul is called worse than himself and incontinent (ἀκράτης) and in a state contrary to Nature (παρὰ φύσιν).”

Building on the equivalence of “without passion” and “according to nature,” a basic distinction between two types of sexual desire took shape, not only among the Stoics but among other philosophical schools, with adaptations in terminology appropriate to each school.⁴⁶ The first type is natural desire (φυσική ἐπιθυμία), put forward by Aristotle in analogy with the consumption of food; continuing on with the analogy, the second type of sexual desire is understood as if it were an excess in the quantity consumed.⁴⁷ Epicurus proposed a more complex categorization of pleasures: the natural and necessary, the natural but unnecessary, the empty or unnatural and unnecessary. Sexual desire was placed in the second category, yet when this desire becomes excessive it moves into the third.⁴⁸ For a broad range of thinkers, since Eros is insatiable, it is “against nature.”⁴⁹

C. The Problem of Eros in Romans 1:24-27

Our investigation of the philosophic background of Paul’s term *χρῆσις* leads us to consider the possibility that Romans 1:24-27 highlights the problem of passion and its consequences rather than the violation of a divinely instituted norm of male and female intercourse. Additionally, we have seen that although “the natural” has a range of meaning in ancient writers, the most likely parallel to Paul’s usage is the philosophic interest in the problem of self-control in the face of erotic love. Unnatural use, from this perspective, has less to do with the gender of the persons having sex and more with the loss of self-control experienced by the user of another’s body.

46. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3.98.20-21: natural needs, including marriage, can be pursued without passion. Panaetius (in Seneca, *Epistle* 116.5) hints at the possibility of the wise man becoming a lover while preserving his rationality because of his prior victory over passion. Cf. Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 34, 41. See G. Luck, “Panaetius and Menander,” *American Journal of Philology* 96 (1975): 257-62. For the distinction between passionate love and harmless love, see M. Pohlenz, “Das dritte und vierte Buch der Tusculanen,” *Hermes* 41 (1906): 349-51.

47. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.11.1-3.

48. Brown, p. 105; M. Nussbaum, “Beyond Obsession and Disgust: Lucretius’ Genealogy of Love,” *Apeiron* 22 (1989): 13; J. Annas, “Epicurean Emotions,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 30 (1989): 147-53. Cf. Plutarch, *Beasts Are Rational* 989C-990F; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 2.20.118.7; 3.1.3.2; *Paedagogus* 2.10.94.2.

49. See S. Lilja, *Homosexuality in Republican and Augustan Rome*, *Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum* 74 (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1982), pp. 124-25; Brown, pp. 107, 229-31.

This interpretation is confirmed once the case has been made that key points of Paul's argument are informed by a psychology of erotic love known to the ancient world.⁵⁰ Although Paul does not explicitly name ἔρωσ as the culprit in the human condition described in 1:24-27,⁵¹ a string of terms points in its direction:

ἐπιθυμία (desire, 1:24)
πάθος (passion, 1:26)
ἐκκαίω (inflame, 1:27)
ὄρεξις (appetite, 1:27)
πλάνη (error, 1:27)

Each term by itself can be shown to have a key role in the ancient discussion of erotic love; taken together we have a rough outline of the philosophic critique of ἔρωσ. Romans 1:24-27 is not an attack on homosexuality as a violation of divine law but a description of the human condition informed by the philosophic rejection of passionate love.

The first indication that Paul is going to build an argument around the topic of ἔρωσ comes in 1:24: "the desires of their hearts (ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδίων αὐτῶν)." Desire (ἐπιθυμία) was one of the four major types of passion, along with grief, fear, and pleasure.⁵² Although it is necessary to distinguish ἐπιθυμία and ἔρωσ, since the latter was a "more exclusive passion involving emotional and psychological commitment beyond the consummation of any desire,"⁵³ erotic love was nevertheless thought to be a kind of ἐπιθυμία.⁵⁴ It began in ἐπιθυμία,⁵⁵ and could be characterized as the "runaway movement of the desiderative power (ἐπιθυμητικῆς δυνάμεως)."⁵⁶ Love's object was the body of

50. For a concise history of Eros, which correctly emphasizes the issue of self-control, see Konstan, pp. 178-85.

51. For Paul's familiarity with literary conventions pertaining to ἔρωσ, see C. Smith, "Ἐκκληῖσαι in Galatians 4:17: The Motif of the Excluded Lover as a Metaphor of Manipulation," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 58 (1996): 480-99. Consider also the cliché "love as slavery" in 1 Cor. 6:12; see S. Lilja, *The Roman Elegists' Attitude to Women* (New York: Garland, 1978), pp. 76-89.

52. See the collection of texts in Glibert-Thirry, 223.3-10; pp. 274-76.

53. Dean-Jones, p. 57 n. 18. Cf. Halperin, "Platonic Eros," pp. 171-76.

54. Glibert-Thirry, 229.76; A. C. van Geytenbeek, *Musonius Rufus and Greek Dialect* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1962), p. 76; M. Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 30 n. 17.

55. Plato, *Phaedrus* 237D; 238BC; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.9.7; *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3.96.43; Plutarch, *Amatorius* 767C.

56. Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* 4.1.16. Cf. Plutarch, *Fragment*

another, with no specification of gender.⁵⁷ Also, as in Paul, philosophic and literary discourse associated the heart with matters erotic.⁵⁸

In 1:26 Paul employs another term borrowed from philosophy's treatment of erotic love: "passion" (πάθος).⁵⁹ The fact that ἐπιθυμία and πάθος stand in parallel phrases in 1:24 and 26 ("God handed them over . . .") justifies our attempt to interpret them together under the theme of excessive sexual desire.⁶⁰ The connection between dishonor and the experience of passion to which Paul's phrase "dishonorable passions (πάθη ἀτιμίας)" alludes will be discussed below. For now it is only necessary to take note of Paul's use of πάθος as a reflection of the discussion of ἔρωσ in philosophic and literary contexts. We see in these sources that it was the unbridled character of erotic love that was expressed with the help of πάθος.⁶¹ We should also note that in sexual matters πάθος is employed without regard to the gender of either the subject or the object of desire.⁶²

135. Along these same lines, the Stoics placed two types of excessive sexual passion under the category of ἐπιθυμία: ἔρωτες σφοδροί and ἔρωτομανία. See Preston, pp. 8-9.

57. Xenophon, *Symposium* 8.2, 13.

58. Zeno, for example, placed ἐπιθυμία and θυμός in the heart. See Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* 3.2.7. Cf. 4.1.17 for Chrysippus's similar view. See also Achilles Tattius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 3.37.6-10. For "hearts on fire," a notion discussed below in connection with Rom. 1:27, see *Greek Anthology* 5.260; 9.627; 12.130. For the heart's place in speech about ἔρωσ, see Preston, p. 49; D. H. Garrison, *Mild Frenzy: A Reading of the Hellenistic Love Epigram* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1978), pp. 75-77.

59. For the definition of πάθος, see n. 42 above.

60. In 1 Thess. 4:5 Paul's exhortation implies the possibility of sex without passion: μὴ ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας. For the notion of passionless sex, see Brown, pp. 216-18. Within the context of marriage, see Philo, *Special Laws* 3.9; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.10.92.2; Ps.-Phocylides, *Sentences* 193-94; 4 Maccabees 2:11. For discussion of these texts, see I. Heinemann, *Philons griechische und jüdische Bildung: Kulturvergleichende Untersuchungen zu Philons Darstellung der jüdische Gesetze* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1962), pp. 276-77; van Geytenbeek, pp. 72-73. Passionless sex may also be what Paul has in mind when he exhorts his male readers in 1 Thess. 4:4: τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκευὸς κτᾶσθαι ἐν ἀγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ. For "having a wife in honor" and its connection to the passion of the husband, see M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 3, *The Care of the Self* (New York: Random House, 1988), p. 174.

61. See Lilja, *Roman Elegists' Attitude*, pp. 89-109; A. Allen, "Propertius I, 1," *Yale Classical Studies* 11 (1950): 258-64; Brown, p. 197. Cf. Ps.-Phocylides, *Sentences* 194: "For 'eros' is not a god, but a passion destructive of all" (translation is P. W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* [Leiden: Brill, 1978], p. 240).

62. Plutarch, *Amatorius* 751F: "Excitement (πάθος) about boys and women is one and the same thing: Love." See also Ps.-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 4. Plutarch's observation is a lesson learned easily from reading erotic epigrams. See *Greek Anthology* 5.19, 65, 116, 278, 302; 12.31, 41, 86, 90.

Paul's familiarity with the literary and philosophical ways of speaking about ἔρωσ becomes even more evident when we consider the phrase "they were inflamed for one another (ἐξεκαύθησαν εἰς ἀλλήλους)" in 1:27.⁶³ Fire was the principal metaphor of sexual love in a broad range of literary genres and in philosophy.⁶⁴ The metaphor emphasized the misery of the lover, his perpetually unsatisfied state, and the loss of self-control. Fire imagery makes vivid the philosophic description of the perennial battle between reason and passion in sexual matters.⁶⁵ Significantly, there is no restriction on the gender of the beloved who has inflamed the lover. One and the same ἔρωσ inflames males for males, males for females, females for males, and females for females.⁶⁶

The experience of erotic love as fire was given a physiological foundation by some authors. Hot blood in young men causes "desire (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν)" to be "at its height."⁶⁷ Heat had a crucial role to play in the production of semen, which, when expelled, quenched the fire of love.⁶⁸ It is important to observe that when the fire of love is explained in physiological

63. For Paul's familiarity with fire imagery for excessive sexual desire in 1 Cor. 7:9, see W. Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7*, SNTS 83 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 130-31.

64. Henderson, pp. 177-78; E. Fantham, *Comparative Studies in Republican Latin Imagery* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 8-12, 83-88. Fire imagery (with giddiness, distraction, turning pale, and the like) is almost always present in descriptions of persons who have fallen under the spell of ἔρωσ: Plutarch, *Amatorius* 763A; *Fragment* 137; Philo, *On the Decalogue* 122; Chariton, *Chareas and Callirhoe* 4.2.4-5; Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 1.11, 13, 14, 18, 23; 2.7, 8; *Greek Anthology* 5.264.

65. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3.179.20-26; Plutarch, *On Moral Virtue* 448B; 4 Maccabees 3:17. This philosophic cliché shows up in literary contexts as well: Ovid, *Remedies for Love* 115-34; Chariton, *Chareas and Callirhoe* 2.4.4-5.

66. The metaphor's indifference to gender is well illustrated in the opening of the following epigram (*Greek Anthology* 12.90) spoken by a male: "No longer do I love (ἐρῶ). I have wrestled with three passions that burn (ἔκαυσε): one for a courtesan, one for a maiden, and one for a lad." Males on fire for males: *Greek Anthology* 5.6; 12.74; Chariton, *Chareas and Callirhoe* 4.16-17; Maximus of Tyre, *Discourse* 20.5D; males on fire for females: Virgil, *Eclogues* 8.80-83; Ps.-Hippocrates, *Epistle* 17.42; female desire for males: Plutarch, *Amatorius* 753A-B; Ovid, *Remedies for Love* 267, 287-88; Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.37.9; female for female: Plutarch, *Amatorius* 762F.

67. Ps.-Plutarch, *Desire and Grief* 9; Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.2.20.3-21.1. For the role of warmth in the generation of desire, see Brown, pp. 182-83. In addition, see Plutarch, *Amatorius* 765B; Philo, *Special Laws* 3.10. The physiological basis of sexual desire did not, however, make it exempt from moral reflection and control. See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.17; Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.428.1-429.8 (Hierocles).

68. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 3.1.2.1-2.

terms, the causes of the heat are located within the individual's body. This should be contrasted with the overwhelming majority of cases in which fire imagery emphasizes the external source of erotic passion. Here, I believe, is the background for understanding Paul's use of the image. Fire imagery most often reinforced the notion that sexual passion is a force which invades the lover from the outside.⁶⁹

Fire imagery thus accents the passive character of the desiring subject.⁷⁰ Paul's use of ἔκκαίω in the passive voice reflects the idea bemoaned by philosophers and reluctantly celebrated by poets that the passion of love invades and overwhelms the individual.⁷¹ Like an arrow dipped in fire, ἔρωσ penetrates the heart.⁷² Erotic madness seizes its victims and sets them on fire.⁷³ Just how fire is kindled by the beloved may have remained a mystery to some.⁷⁴ Yet it was often suggested that the eyes of the lover are the medium to the outside world, and through them fire enters the soul.⁷⁵ To see or imagine the beloved kindles fire.⁷⁶ One of the most common clichés in the love epigram, that a beautiful form "casts fire" on the lover, expresses well his passive role.⁷⁷ Thus, while modern thinking about sexuality posits erotic desire as the externalization of a deep, internal disposition, the imagery of fire employed by the ancients reveals a movement in just the opposite direction. Our interpretation of Paul's use of fire imagery in 1:27 will need to take into account this difference. Paul is not speaking of the externalization of sexual orientation deep in the individual's personality. Rather, he expresses the philosophic view that passion invades from outside and overwhelms the subject. As we will see below, this latter interpretation fits best with the overall rhetorical purpose of Romans 1:18-32.

Fire imagery also communicated ideas of frustration and insatiability.

69. K. Dover, "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour," *Arethusa* 6 (1973): 272.

70. *Greek Anthology* 5.10, 75; 11.36; 12.46, 48, 63, 79, 99, 178; Alciphron, *Epistle* 3.31; Ovid, *Affairs of the Heart* 1.2.9-17.

71. For the complex meaning of the images which reverse the role of the lover from the one who penetrates to the one penetrated by passion, see Garrison, pp. 26-27.

72. *Greek Anthology* 9.443; 12.76.

73. Plutarch, *Amatorius* 759B-C.

74. *Greek Anthology* 5.131.

75. Xenophon, *Symposium* 4.24-25; Plutarch, *Amatorius* 759C; *Fragment* 138; *Greek Anthology* 12.81, 83, 87, 93, 99, 151; Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 1.24; Philostratus, *Epistles* 8, 11, 12. On this theme, see A. Walker, "Eros and the Eye in the Love-Letters of Philostratus," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 38 (1992): 132-48.

76. Plutarch, *Advice to Bride and Groom* 138F; Chariton, *Chareas and Callirhoe* 6.4.5-7.

77. *Greek Anthology* 12.81, 82, 86, 87, 109. See also the texts in Brown, p. 195.

With respect to the former, any impediment to the lover's possession of the beloved, whether it be refusal of advances or unforeseen circumstances, inflamed the soul.⁷⁸ More significant for our interpretation of the Pauline argument, however, is the association of fire with the perpetuation of erotic desire after the sexual act.⁷⁹ As Chariton reminds his readers, ἔρωσ in its very nature is always looking for something new (φιλόκαινος): "that is why poets and sculptors depict him with bow and arrows and associate him with fire, the most insubstantial, mutable of attributes."⁸⁰ Under the influence of erotic desire, the lover is inflamed by consummation of sex itself to seek more and novel loves.⁸¹ Epictetus compares passionate love to a feverish thirst which is intensified by drinking water.⁸² Dio Chrysostom's depiction of the person devoted to pleasure brings together the themes of fire, insatiability, and, as in Paul's argument, the resulting movement from females to males as objects of male sexual desire: "He is of many hues and shapes, insatiable (ἀπλήρωτος) as to things that tickle nostril and palate. . . ." Dio continues:

He is passionately devoted to all these things [pleasures of the five senses], but especially and unrestrainedly to the poignant and burning madness (ὄξειαν καὶ διάπυρον μανίαν) of sexual indulgence, through intercourse both with females and with males, and through still other unspeakable and nameless obscenities; after all such indiscriminately he rushes and also leads others, abjuring no form of lust and leaving none untried.⁸³

78. Seneca, *On Benefits* 4.14.1; Philo, *On the Contemplative Life* 61; *Greek Anthology* 5.255, 279; Philostratus, *Epistle* 13.

79. Brown, pp. 236, 238-39.

80. Chariton, *Chareas and Callirhoe* 4.7.6. Cf. Ps.-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 2: "For, almost from the time I left off being a boy and was accounted a young man, I have been beguiled by one passion after another. One Love has succeeded another, and almost before I've ended earlier ones later Loves begin. . . . For one flame is not extinguished by another. There dwells in my eyes so nimble a gadfly that it pounces on any and every beauty as its prey and is never sated enough to stop."

81. Philo, *Special Laws* 3.9-10: "Now even natural pleasure (ἡ κατὰ φύσιν ἡδονή) is often greatly to blame when the craving for it is immoderate and insatiable (ἀμέτρως καὶ ἀκορέστως χρήται τις αὐτῇ), as for instance when it takes the form of voracious gluttony . . . or again the passionate desire for women shewn by those who in their craze for sexual intercourse behave unchastely, not with the wives of others, but with their own. But the blame in most of these cases rests less with the soul than with the body, which contains a great amount of fire and moisture; the fire as it consumes the material set before it quickly demands a second supply. . . ." Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.10.102.1-2; *Quis dives salvetur* 25.

82. Epictetus, *Discourse* 4.9.3-5. See above, n. 29.

83. Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 4.101-102.

The ancient psychology of Eros pictured the fire of love springing up in the ὄρεξις (appetite), a word which Paul employs in Romans 1:27. This was a fundamental term in the Stoic analysis of human action and was often coordinated with πάθος and ἐπιθυμία in broader philosophic discussions of sexual desire. The Stoics defined ὄρεξις as an impulse toward that which the agent thinks is good.⁸⁴ Ancient writers sharpened the meaning of ὄρεξις by comparing it with ἐπιθυμία. Clement of Alexandria, for example, alludes to a common distinction: "They who are skilled in such matters distinguish propension (ὄρεξις) from lust (ἐπιθυμία); and assign the latter, as being irrational, to pleasures and licentiousness; and propension, as being a rational movement, they assign to the necessities of nature."⁸⁵ Discussions of erotic passion generally assume ὄρεξις as a neutral term, a structured way humans appropriate parts of the external world; ἔρωξ is ὄρεξις which has become irrational and excessive.⁸⁶

Epictetus is an important source for understanding the role ὄρεξις plays in the Stoic analysis of human action and ultimately in Paul's argument.⁸⁷ According to Epictetus, three fields constitute human activity: desire (ὄρεξις), choice (ὀρμή), and assent (συγκατάθεσις).⁸⁸ Each has to do with the agent's activity of selecting and acquiring objects in the external world.⁸⁹ ὄρεξις depicts the agent's movement toward the object; its opposite is aversion (ἔκκλισις).⁹⁰ For Epictetus, ὄρεξις was natural when its object could be ob-

84. M. Reesor, *The Nature of Man in Early Stoic Philosophy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 91, 97. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.116; *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3.42.20; 3.94.10; Stobaeus, *Anthology* 2.97.15–98.6; Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* 4.4.2; 5.7.29. Brad Inwood's paraphrase of the Stoic definitions is helpful: "Any action whose object is the good or what the agent takes to be good will be caused and defined by the form of impulse known as orexis" (Inwood, p. 114). Cf. pp. 115, 227–37.

85. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 4.18.117.5 (translation is *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 2:431). For ἐπιθυμία as irrational appetite (ἄλογος ὄρεξις), see texts collected in Glibert-Thirry, 223.16–17; pp. 278–79. For the definition of legitimate sexual practice in terms of this distinction, see Foucault, *Care of the Self*, p. 200. Cf. Ocellus, *On the Nature of the Universe* 44.

86. Plutarch, *Amatorius* 750D. This was emphasized particularly by Epicureans; see *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3.181.22, 27–28 and the texts discussed in Brown, pp. 113, 277, and Nussbaum, pp. 11–17. Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 2.20.118.7–119.6.

87. For Epictetus's teaching on ὄρεξις in relation to the Old Stoa, see Inwood, pp. 116–26.

88. For the three fields of human activity, see P. More, *Hellenistic Philosophies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1923), pp. 108–13. In Epictetus, see *Discourses* 2.8.29; 2.17.15–16; 3.2.1–4; 3.12.1–12; 3.22.42–44; 4.4.14–18; 4.6.18, 26.

89. Epictetus, *Discourse* 4.6.26.

90. Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.17.24; 2.24.19.

tained with certainty and without hindrance.⁹¹ Desire for objects which might not come into the subject's acquisition and yield satisfaction, Epictetus labels "unnatural."⁹²

Examination of an individual's ὄρεξις and its objects could reveal whether he was happy or miserable, self-respecting or full of shame, since this analysis discovered whether the person was effectual in his desires or continually wanting things over which he had no control.⁹³ Now, with respect to this inner connection of ὄρεξις and satiability, we find an illuminating parallel between Paul and Epictetus. Both use fire imagery, which calls forth the idea of insatiability, to depict the ὄρεξις in a bad state. Paul's phrase "they were inflamed in their desire (ἐξεκαούθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει)" in Romans 1:27 echoes Epictetus's use of fire imagery to depict the impulse toward the perceived good that through passion has oriented itself to objects over which it does not have control.⁹⁴ Calling upon the three fields of human activity, Epictetus outlines the philosopher's diagnosis of an individual in such a state: "Your desires are feverish (αἱ ὀρέξεις σου φλεγμαίνουσιν), your attempts to avoid things (ἐκκλίσεις) are humiliating, your purposes (ἐπιβολαί) are inconsistent, your choices (ὀρμαί) are out of harmony with your nature, your conceptions (ὑπολήψεις) are hit-or-miss and false."⁹⁵ In-

91. Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.4.1; 1.19.2; 2.8.29; 2.14.8; 2.17.15-18; 3.9.22, 104; 3.23.9, 12; 4.1.1, 4; 4.10.4-7. Cf. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3.88.42-44.

92. Epictetus, *Discourse* 1.21.2. Cf. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3.6.30.

93. Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.22.61; 3.26.14; 4.4.35; 4.5.27; 4.4.6; *Encheiridion* 1.1-3; 2.1-2.

94. "Inflamed desire" designates the sudden transformation of the normal appetite for necessary things and their natural use into πάθος; *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3.124.38-125.1: τῆς φλεγμονῆς τῶν παθῶν; Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* 4.7.27-28: παθετική φλεγμονή; Plutarch, *Fragment* 137: φλεγμονή ἐπιθυμίας; Philo, *On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile* 71: φλεγούσης τῆς ἐπιθυμίας; *On the Giants* 34-35: "For there are some things which we must admit, as, for instance, the actual necessities of life, the use of which (χρώμενοι) will enable us to live in health and free from sickness. But we must reject with scorn the superfluities which kindle the lusts (ἐξαπτόμεναι αἱ ἐπιθυμίας) that with a single flame burst consume (καταφλέγουσι) every good thing. Let not our appetites (αἱ ὀρέξεις), then, be whetted and incited towards anything dear to the flesh." See also Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.4.42.1; *Quis dives salvetur* 15. See Inwood, p. 152.

95. Epictetus, *Discourse* 2.14.21. Plutarch (*On Moral Virtue* 450E-F) also knows the inflamed ὄρεξις; his Platonism, however, leads him to conceptualize the root problem as the ill effects of embodied existence rather than the Stoic emphasis on erroneous choice: "For, in accordance with Nature, it is proper that reason, which is divine, should lead and rule the irrational, which derives its origin directly from the body to which Nature has designed that it should bear a resemblance and share in the body's passions and be contami-

flammation in the ὄρεξις is desire for an object which does not bring satiation. Again Paul follows the philosophic critique of Eros by highlighting the problem of passion.

Our exploration of the psychology and critique of erotic desire behind Paul's argument moves to its final term in 1:27: πλάνη (error). Here again Paul makes use of a commonplace in literary treatments of ἔρωσ. The Latin equivalent of πλάνη, *error*, was synonymous with *furor* and *insania*, and for those writers who distinguished between sex with passion and sex without, *error* designated the former.⁹⁶ A similar idea is found in Testament of Reuben where the spirit of error marks the transition from sex for the sake of begetting children to sex for pleasure.⁹⁷ The source for this image of wandering from the path is most likely the philosophic notion of losing one's way on the road of life.⁹⁸ As Seneca testifies, *error* is introduced when natural desire is exceeded and passion enters into the way objects are possessed.⁹⁹

This examination of the philosophic critique of Eros which stands behind Romans 1:24-27 has helped us to confirm the earlier conclusion that it is not Paul's interest to condemn homosexuality but to highlight sexual passion (ἐπιθυμία, πάθος), which is uniform with respect to the gender of the desired object. Paul tells the story of humans who have been overwhelmed by passion. The capacity (ὄρεξις) for acquiring what they believe to be good has been inflamed, and so they are in a constant state of frustration, unable to be sated. Their error (πλάνη) was to exchange normal use for erotic love.

nated by it, since it has entered into the body and become merged with it; that this is so is shown by our impulses (αἱ ὄρμαί), which arise and set in motion toward corporeal objects and become violent or relax in keeping with the changes of the body. For this reason young men are swift and impetuous and fiery in their appetites (τάς ὄρέξεις διάπυροι), and stung by madness, as it were, through the abundance of and heat of their blood; but in old men the source of desire (ἀρχὴ τοῦ ἐπιθυμήτικου), which is seated in the liver, is in the process of being extinguished (κατασβέννυται) and becoming small and weak. . . ." Further examples of inflamed ὄρεξις: Clement of Alexandria, *Quis dives salvetur* 25; Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 1.26.

96. Preston, p. 10. For πλάνη/*error* in erotic contexts, see Plato, *Phaedo* 81A; Plutarch, *On the Eating of Flesh*, II, 997B; Ovid, *Amores* 1.2.35; Virgil, *Eclogues* 8.41. These and other texts are discussed by Lilja (*Roman Elegists' Attitude*, pp. 93, 108, and *Homosexuality*, p. 63 n. 55) and Brown (pp. 221-23, 239).

97. Testament of Reuben 2:1, 8; 3:2; 4:6.

98. *Tabula of Cebes* 5.2-6.6. See the helpful note in J. Fitzgerald and L. White, *The Tabula of Cebes*, Texts and Translations 24, Graeco-Roman Series 7 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), p. 139 n. 16. See also Epictetus, *Discourse* 1.18.3-6; Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.233.8-11; 3.235.4-5.

99. Seneca, *Epistle* 16.9.

D. Punishment and the Result of Erotic Passion

We will conclude our study of Romans 1:24-27 by attempting to make clear why Paul highlights passion. According to 1:18-32, passion and the dishonor it brings is the divine punishment for ingratitude and failure to glorify God. The topic of 1:18-32 is the anger of God, its provocation, and its consequences. As for the cause of God's anger, a relation between anger and injustice is established in 1:18: "For the anger of God is being revealed from heaven against all irreverence and injustice of humans who are suppressing the truth of God in injustice." Paul states that God's anger comes from injustice intentionally committed against his person.¹⁰⁰ Irreverence was widely recognized as the form injustice took in the relation of the human to the divine.¹⁰¹

In 1:21 we discover the nature of the wrong committed against God. It is the refusal to give God what is God's due: glory and gratitude.¹⁰² This refusal is inexcusable since God's divinity and eternal power can be read off of the arrangement of the universe.¹⁰³ Receiving neither honor nor thanksgiving, God is wronged and dishonored.¹⁰⁴ Paul thus treats idolatry as a personal affront to God; it robs him of honor.¹⁰⁵ The consequence of God's anger is punishment of those who have treated him unjustly. This fits well with the definition of anger which sees in it a desire for punishment so that the wrongdoer suffers dishonor on par with the one wronged.¹⁰⁶ How does "handing over" generate dishonor among those who have wronged God?

The commonplace notion that erotic passion brings the lover into dishonor underlies Paul's argument in 1:24-27. In 1:24 we read that God handed idolaters "into impurity in order that their bodies might be dishonored among them (εις ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς)."

100. For the definition of anger, see Glibert-Thirry, 231.81-82; p. 290.

101. Glibert-Thirry, 267.37.

102. For gratitude and reverence as types of δικαιοσύνη, see Glibert-Thirry, 255.34-36; 257.43-52; pp. 313-14. For gratitude as the proper response to the divine, see Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 12.43.

103. Testament of Naphtali 3:1-5; Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 12.27-34, 39. Note especially *Discourse* 12.35 where divine "will and power (γνώμη καὶ δύναμις)" are "very clear (ἐναργής) and evident (πρόδηλος)," and the proper response is to "recognize and honour (τιμᾶν) the god and desire to live according to his ordinance." See also *Discourse* 12.70.

104. Cf. Rom. 2:23: τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις.

105. Philo (*On Drunkenness* 110) similarly regards idolatry as dishonoring God: "God's honor (θεοῦ τιμῆς) is set at naught by those who deify the mortal." Cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 12.36: ὑπερφρονοῦσι τὰ θεῖα.

106. See n. 100 above.

Excessive passion (ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν) is the means by which this handing over occurred.¹⁰⁷ In 1:26 Paul reiterates the connection between punishment, passion, and dishonor: “God handed them over into passions of dishonor (παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας).” Here again punishment consists of being handed over to passion — itself dishonorable to have.¹⁰⁸

In 1:27 Paul speaks of “the punishment which was necessary from their error (τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν).” The striking aspect of this formulation is the necessity which links punishment (ἀντιμισθία) to error (πλάνη). Punishment was a central metaphor for the ill effects on the lover of his own passionate love.¹⁰⁹ Punishment following the consummation of erotic desire was part of a larger configuration of ideas in which Eros was a destructive passion, taking its toll on the finances, mental equilibrium, and the honor of the lover.¹¹⁰

Finally, in 1:27 the term ἀσχημοσύνη (unseemly conduct) accentuates the theme that erotic passion brings dishonor in its wake.¹¹¹ Its antonym,

107. The notion of dishonor is obvious in the term ἀτιμάζεσθαι, but ἀκαθαρσία requires some clarification. For the notion of sexual offenses as “metaphorical moral pollutions” and the connection between degradation and defilement, see R. Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), pp. 94-100, 146-53; Adams, pp. 198-99. Other examples are found in Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.8.14; 4.11.5; Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 7.134; Ps.-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 22; and especially Plutarch, *Fragment* 47. For this development in Jewish sources, see van der Horst, pp. 258-60. See further Testament of Joseph 4:6; Testament of Benjamin 6:5; 8:2; Epistle of Aristeas 152.

108. For the theme of sexual passion bringing dishonor (ἀτιμία), see N. R. E. Fisher, *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1992), p. 14; Lilja, *Roman Elegists' Attitude*, pp. 89-96; van der Horst, pp. 158-59. See also Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.10.100.1; Ps.-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 20: “a little pleasure at the cost of great disgrace (μεγάλην ἀδοξίαν).” Cf. *Affairs of the Heart* 24: “honourable names to dishonourable passions (πάθεισιν αἰσχροῖς).”

109. Brown, pp. 216-19, 227. In addition to the texts cited by Brown, see Philo, *On the Contemplative Life* 61; Clement of Alexandria, *Quis dives salvetur* 25.

110. See Brown, pp. 111-13, 248-51. See also Epictetus, *Discourse* 4.1.15-23; Plutarch, *Fragment* 136; Seneca, *Epistle* 116.5.

111. It is difficult to see this idea in modern translations. NRSV: “Men committed shameless acts with men.” NIV: “Men committed indecent acts with other men.” The problem here is thinking of ἀσχημοσύνη as an act, since the social dimension (present in a word containing the σχημ- root) is lost. Furthermore, a word ending with -συνη tends not to refer to an act but to a state of being. Thus, “producing dishonor” might better catch the sense. Phrases similar to Paul’s do not accentuate the deed so much as the dishonor arising from the passion which propels the deed: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.6.7: ἀσχημοσύνην φέρη; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 13.607B-C: τὴν πᾶσαν ἀσχημοσύνην ἐπιδεικνυται; Dio

εὐσημοσύνη (decorum), denoted the respectable appearance of the person who displayed control over the passions.¹¹² ἀσημοσύνη, on the other hand, pointed to the public perception of failure to control passion.¹¹³ Overindulgence in the pleasures which might otherwise be used with moderation produces ἀσημοσύνη.¹¹⁴ This is especially true of erotic pleasure.¹¹⁵

E. Loss of Self-Control and Hybris in 1 Corinthians 6:9

In the context of a vice list (1 Cor. 6:9-10) meant to amplify the notion of injustice, Paul calls upon the terms μαλακός (soft) and ἀρσενικοίτης.¹¹⁶ The meaning of each term has been hotly contested, but there seems to be some agreement on viewing the terms as the passive and active partners in male-with-male sexual activity.¹¹⁷ Another way to understand these two terms is

Chrysostom, *Discourse* 7.110: ἀσημοσύνην τε καὶ ἀνελευθερίαν ἐντίκτουσι. As for κατεργάζομαι, is it fanciful to think that Paul is punning on a common euphemism for sexual effort, "work (ἔργον)"? For ἔργον in erotic contexts, see Preston, pp. 15-16, 33-34; D. F. Kennedy, *The Arts of Love: Five Studies in the Discourse of Roman Love Elegy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 59-60, 62. Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.37.5; Strabo, *Geographica* 10.4.21: κατεργάζονται τοὺς ἐρωμένους.

112. In Stoicism it is coordinated with the important concept of τὸ πρέπον (that which is fitting). See P. A. Brunt, "Aspects of the Social Thought of Dio Chrysostom and the Stoics," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 19 (1979): 19-20. For good examples of εὐσημοσύνη as moderation for the sake of public perception, see Musonius Rufus, *Fragments* 8, 18B; Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.5.23; 4.9.9-12. Public perception is important in 1 Thess. 4:12.

113. The public aspect is stressed by Epictetus (*Discourse* 3.22.2, 8, 15, 52); see M. Billerbeck, *Epiktet: Vom Kynismus*, *Philosophia Antiqua* 34 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), p. 47.

114. Ps.-Crates, *Epistle* 10.2; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.103; 3.39.

115. Recognized by Paul; see Deming, pp. 206-7. For εὐσημοσύνη as self-control in erotic contexts, see Ps.-Musonius, *Epistle* 1.4; Theano, *Epistle* 5.3 (Thesleff, 199.14). For ἀσημοσύνη in erotic contexts, see Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 12 (cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.10.97.2); Epictetus, *Discourse* 4.9.5; Philo, *On the Decalogue* 168-69; Ps.-Phocylides, *Sentences* 67; Plutarch, *Amatorius* 751E; Ps.-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 28.

116. Since translation of ἀρσενικοίτης is its interpretation, I shall leave it untranslated for now.

117. R. Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality: Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), pp. 40-42, 62-65, 108. This interpretation is anticipated by Origen (*Fragmenta ex commentariis*); text is C. Jenkins, "Documents: The Commentary of Origen on 1 Corinthians," *Journal of Theological Studies* 9-10 (1908): 369.

possible, however, if we put them in the context of Greco-Roman ethical reflection on the problem of ἀκράτεια (lack of self-control) leading to ὕβρις (outrage).¹¹⁸

First, the issue of loss of self-control. Although μαλακός frequently designated the sexually passive, penetrated male (and did so in a highly derogatory way), we should not simply assume that this is the only way a first-century audience could have made sense of the term.¹¹⁹ Recent investigations of gender markers in the Roman world have emphasized that “softness” includes much more than the passive role in male/male sexual activity.¹²⁰ Even men who are too interested in having sex with women, their wives included, were deemed soft, as also were adulterers.¹²¹ So too were males who used males.¹²² It is therefore a legitimate question whether Paul’s first hearers would necessarily have thought of the passive object of desire when hearing the word μαλακός, especially in a list of *active* deeds of injustice like theft, adultery, and the like listed in verses 9-10. Furthermore, vice lists similar to Paul’s which mention μαλακία do not condemn the male allowing himself to be sexually penetrated. Rather, they point more generally to the evils of excess or greed and lack of self-control.¹²³

118. ὕβρις, as Fisher, p. 1, has amply documented, is more than an inner attitude; it “is essentially the serious assault on the honour of another, which is likely to cause shame.” For ὕβρις mediated through the pleasures of the body, see Fisher, pp. 13-14, 28-33, 109-11.

119. For “soft” as a term of abuse which did its work by making a man (active/penetrating) appear as a woman (passive/penetrated), see M. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 58-81; Kennedy, pp. 31-34. For historical reconstruction of the men who chose to be penetrated by other men and forced to bear this term of abuse, see Richlin, pp. 523-73. Richlin helps us understand the scorn communicated when this term was applied to the passive sexual partner.

120. The accusation of softness must be understood in a framework broader than sex. See C. Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 68-78; Dean-Jones, p. 53.

121. Edwards, pp. 65, 75, 81-85, 93. In addition to the texts she cites, see Plutarch, *On Moral Virtue* 447B; *Amatorius* 750B.

122. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 2.23.1-4. See Gleason, p. 42.

123. Epictetus, *Discourse* 2.16.45: φιλαργυρία, μαλακία, ἀκρασία. For this and similarly constructed lists, see Preston, pp. 10-11. Paul’s list typifies the male who cannot control his desires and who is, in Samuel Goldhill’s description of Longus’s portrayal of Gnathon, “the negation of the *sophron* citizen” (Goldhill, p. 48). Cf. Lysis, *Epistle to Hipparchus* 4-5 (Thesleff, 113.8-16). Some of the vices are reminiscent of parodies of the Greek symposium (e.g., Philo, *On the Cherubim* 91-93). Drunkenness especially needs to be understood as a metonymy of the dissolute life. See Testament of Judah 16:1; Brown, p. 263. For softness related to avarice and drunkenness, see Edwards, pp. 85 n. 79, 188-90.

The association of *μαλακία* with lack of self-control had a long history in ancient moral philosophy and widespread acceptance in the schools. Discussing the problem of self-restraint with respect to bodily pleasures (food and sex),¹²⁴ Aristotle observes that “men are self-restrained (*ἐγκρατεῖς*) and enduring (*καρτερικοί*), unrestrained (*ἀκρατεῖς*) and soft (*μαλακοί*), in regard to Pleasures and Pains.”¹²⁵ He goes on to connect *μαλακία* with excess or luxury, establishing a pattern of thought for future moralists.¹²⁶ This broad sense of *μαλακός* is the correct background for interpreting 1 Corinthians 6:9. This term, in association with “greedy ones” and “carousers,” communicates the notion of lack of self-control. The unjust (*ἄδικοι*) who run the law courts are anything but the ideal of the temperate citizen who is able to pass out just judgments. Paul thus deconstructs the moral legitimacy of the elite who run the law courts.

So far we have considered the way the vice list speaks about lack of self-control. There is another moral dimension to the list, that of injustice and *hybris*, and it is against this background that we should understand the other term which figures so prominently in debates concerning Paul’s attitude toward homosexuality: *ἀρσενοκοίτης*. Translation of this term is a notorious problem not only because no occurrence before Paul has been discovered but also because such a lexical void tempts modern readers to import the category of sexual orientation into the text. Another approach, which asserts that Hellenistic Judaism “under marked Levitical inspiration” coined the term, is able to provide only speculation as evidence.¹²⁷ That Paul invented the term himself is of course possible but not likely, since it occurs in a vice list whose rhetorical force would have relied on the language of moral failure already known to the audience. We are thus left with an examination of the word’s post-Pauline history. From this approach, we learn that *ἀρσενοκοίτης* means “one who has a boy as an *ἐρόμενος*.”¹²⁸ We also see that *ἀρσενοκοιτία* is

124. For the notion of “necessary pleasure,” see n. 48 above.

125. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.4.2. Cf. 7.4.4. For the continuation of juxtaposing *μαλακία* to pleasure and pain, see Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.145.6-12; Glibert-Thirry, pp. 265-67; Hippodamus, *Republic* 4 (Thesleff, 101.2-7); Theano, *Epistle* 1.1 (Thesleff, 196.7); Ps.-Crates, *Epistles* 19, 29; Ps.-Diogenes, *Epistles* 12, 29.2; 36.5.

126. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.7.4-5. Cf. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 1.65.34-39; Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 4.101-115; Seneca, *Epistle* 114; Musonius Rufus, *Fragments* 1, 11, 46; Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead* 10.6.

127. D. Wright, “Homosexuals or Prostitutes? The Meaning of ΑΡΣΕΝΟΚΟΙΤΑΙ (1 Cor 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10),” *VC* 38 (1984): 138.

128. Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 5.26.22-23. Cf. Eusebius, *Preparatio evangelica* 6.10.25.

treated as an example of unjust, violent behavior of the person lacking self-control, and it has a hybristic intent.¹²⁹

It seems likely that with this term Paul is picking up a thread of Greek and Jewish tradition which regarded pederasty as an illegitimate form of erotic love not only because of the lover's loss of self-control but also because of the younger male's disgrace in being penetrated.¹³⁰ Stock arguments against the practice of pederasty turned inevitably to the ὕβρις inflicted on the boy.¹³¹ Vice lists like Paul's often included violent, hybristic love of boys in association with other unjust acts, such as adultery, theft, slander, and avarice.¹³²

129. Wright ("Homosexuals or Prostitutes?") fails to recognize the emphasis on *hybris* in the texts that he cites to dispute Boswell's claim for the meaning of the term as active male prostitutes. Furthermore, he distorts the ancient texts by assuming they speak of the modern concept of homosexuality; for the problem of anachronism in Wright's work, see W. Petersen ("Can ΑΡΣΕΝΟΚΟΙΤΑΙ Be Translated by 'Homosexuals?'" *VC* 40 [1986]: 187-91). For the association of ἀρσενοκοίτης with ἀκράτεια and ἀδικία, see 1 Tim. 1:8-11; *Acta Joannis* 36.7; Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolyicum* 1.14; Eusebius, *Demonstratio evangelica* 1.6.67. For the explicit connection to ὕβρις, see Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolyicum* 1.2.25. Macarius (*Homiliae spirituales* 49.5.6) treats ἀρσενοκοιτία in Sodom as a bold and reckless act (τόλμημα) against the angels. For the τολμ- root in the condemnation of male sexual designs on males, see Plato, *Laws* 636C; Ps.-Demosthenes, *Eroticus* 20; Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 12; Ps.-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 16. See further Preston, p. 29; Goldhill, p. 54.

130. For loss of self-control, see Gerhard, pp. 152-53. Recent scholarship has emphasized the public disgrace of being penetrated. See Cohen, "Athenian Law of Hubris," pp. 171-88; E. Fantham, "Stuprum: Public Attitudes and Penalties for Sexual Offenses in Republican Rome," *Echos du Monde Classique* 35 (1991): 267-91; Richlin, pp. 561-66. For the *hybris* inflicted upon the penetrated male, see Sibylline Oracles 3.180-187; 4.33; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 16.4.1-3; *Greek Anthology* 12.228. In the Greek ethical tradition, a distinction between "just love" and "love with ὕβρις" was often made. See Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, pp. 45-46; Brown, p. 116.

131. Plutarch, *Amatorius* 768E; Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 7.149-152; Ps.-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 27; Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.37.3; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.10.89.2. See Konstan, pp. 119-20.

132. Testament of Levi 17:11; Ps.-Phocylides, *Sentences* 3-6; Philo, *Special Laws* 2.49-50; Ps.-Heraclitus, *Epistle* 7.3-8; Ps.-Hippocrates, *Epistle* 17.48; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 3.12.89.1. See especially Epictetus, *Discourse* 2.22.26-29: "For it is no judgement of human sort which makes them bite (that is revile [λοιδορεῖσθαι]) one another, and take to the desert (that is, to the market-place) as wild beasts take to the mountains, and in courts of law act the part of brigands; nor is it a judgement of human sort which makes them profligates (ἀκρατεῖς) and adulterers (μοιχοῦς) and corrupters (φθορεῖς)." Cf. *Discourse* 3.3.12: κλέπτῃς . . . μοιχός . . . περὶ παιδάρια ἐσπούδακεν. See also Gleason, pp. 41-42.

F. Conclusion

We have seen that in Romans 1:24-27 Paul borrows two things from the philosophic discourse on erotic love:

1. "natural use" as a standard for legitimate sexual practice, and
2. a psychology of erotic love that makes intelligible the detrimental effects of passion.

An important consequence follows from this insight into the overlap of Paul's argument with the erotic discourse of his contemporaries. Neither the standard nor the psychology operates with the modern notions of sexual orientation and sexual relation. Therefore, it is anachronistic and inappropriate to think that Paul condemns homosexuality as unnatural and praises heterosexuality as a reflection of the God-given order of things. Sexual activity between males is not portrayed as the violation of a male-female norm given with creation but as an example of passion into which God has handed over persons who have dishonored him. The immediate problem is passion, not the gender of the persons having sex. The argument of Romans 1:18-27 rests on the conception familiar to Paul's audience that passion itself is dishonorable. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 6:9 Paul draws from the philosophic tradition's aversion to passion. In this instance he uses the concept of softness to portray persons who lack self-control. He then mentions the figure of the hybristic pederast known in antiquity as one who through loss of self-control demeans others. The moral issue is not sexual orientation but the connection between passion and injustice.