

## Melody, Imagery and Memory in the Moral Persuasion of Paul

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In recent times New Testament scholarship has moved away from the view that there is a clear demarcation and disjunction between “theology” and “ethics,” between “doctrinal” and “paraenetic,” or between kerygma and didachē in the letters of Paul.<sup>1</sup> Many by now see such distinctions as artificial and have worked to demonstrate the coherence between what is incorrectly termed the “theological” and “ethical” parts of the texts. Those who engage in rhetorical and socio-rhetorical readings are leading the way in the discussion.<sup>2</sup> Study of the words of Paul’s letters requires far more than grammatical, syntactical and lexical analysis, concern for sources of the apostle’s ideas and for categorization of his themes. Paul’s language creates a world that audiences are invited to enter where ways of hearing, seeing, visualizing, remembering and understanding the world, life, salvation and even heaven are opened up for examination.<sup>3</sup> The words evoke powerful ideologies that have persuaded audiences to take points of view, to believe or to continue to believe, and to engage in behaviours seen to be appropriate to the ideologies. Paul’s moral reasoning and his moral persuasion must not only be described, analyzed and replayed based on schemata and programs that amount, in effect, to merely computational processes. Rather, since humans employ and are moved by “...the richly visionary, dramatic and musical quality of experience,” it is therefore important to “...conceive of a level of cerebral scripts and scores” that Paul, as a writer of pastoral letters, would have employed.<sup>4</sup> Paul had religious reasons for writing and aimed to stir the movement of the soul through his use of language.<sup>5</sup> He was interested in affecting the faith, attitudes and behaviours of his audiences and thus had a moral purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 98-111; Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 17-18.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Stanley K. Stowers. *A Rereading of Romans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> On this, particularly as it relates to the gospel of Mark, see Joanna Dewey, “The Gospel of Mark as Oral—Aural Event” in E.S. Malbon and E.V. McKnight, eds., *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994 145-163), 152.

<sup>4</sup> These quotes are from neurologist Oliver Sacks, as cited by Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories, Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 604.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Carol Poster, “The Affections of the Soul: *Pathos*, Protreptic and Preaching in Hellenistic Thought” in Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney, eds., *Paul and Pathos* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001, 23-37), 23.

While many of the foundations for the study of features in Paul's letters are found in the ancient "art of rhetoric" and in the handbooks of rhetoric from classical antiquity, we have been reminded of the question of how much Paul himself knew about or whether he had been instructed in rhetorical theory.<sup>6</sup> Even if Paul knew of the formal rhetorical conventions of his own and previous times he makes no mention of it, and he does present his own rhetoric, that is, he uses his own considered choice of language to convey his ideas and to persuade his audiences.<sup>7</sup> As Classen and Kraftchick have recently pointed out,<sup>8</sup> and as socio-rhetorical<sup>9</sup> and other interpretive approaches are demonstrating, it is important to take into account not only the work of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian and other ancients, but also to consider the rhetorical features and effects observed in other times and cultures. Interpreters must engage in a kind of interdisciplinary "multiple accounts evaluation" that, while taking due notice of the history of and behind the texts, examines what they *do* to people, to their audiences, to communities of believers and non-believers, to persons of diverse cultures and faiths in evoking certain behaviours. This essay aims to give attention to some of the ideas about rhetoric discussed by twentieth century poet and literary critic Ezra Pound, and to suggest how they may be helpful for understanding some aspects of Paul's moral persuasion.

### **The Rhetorical Ideas of Ezra Pound**

In 1927 Ezra Pound wrote an essay titled "How to Read"<sup>10</sup> in which he described his understanding of how language is "charged" or "energized" in three fundamental, rhetorical ways. Pound called these features *melopoeia*, *phanopoeia* and *logopoeia*.<sup>11</sup> Pound was, in his very acerbic, satirical (indeed rather self-centred and arrogant) way,

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<sup>6</sup> See, in particular, Carl Joachim Classen, *Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament*. (WUNT 128 Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 4-6, 28, 44, and Stephen J. Kraftchick, "Paqh in Paul: The Emotional Logic of 'Original Argument'." in Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney, eds., *Paul and Pathos* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001, 39-68), 39-43.

<sup>7</sup> See Kraftchick, "Paqh in Paul" 40-43.

<sup>8</sup> As in footnotes 6 and 7.

<sup>9</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse* (London: Routledge, 1996), 1-17.

<sup>10</sup> The exact date of writing is uncertain. According to a footnote in a volume edited by T.S. Eliot (*Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, New York: New Directions, 1954, 15) it was first published by the *New York Herald* in 1927 or 1928. It has been republished a number of times. The text used here is Ezra Pound. *How to Read*. (New York: Haskell House, 1971).

<sup>11</sup> Pound, *How to Read* 25-26. See also Ezra Pound, *The ABC of Reading* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), 37.

strongly critical of those whom he thought did not know how to read literature properly.<sup>12</sup> He believed that “Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree”<sup>13</sup> and that to understand it one should “chuck out the classifications which apply to the outer shape of the work, or to its occasion” and “look at what actually happens”.<sup>14</sup> *Melopoeia* is musical or sound orchestration that directs the flow of meaning by the appeal of sound. *Phanopoeia* is “the casting of images upon the visual imagination.” *Logopoeia* is the implicit meanings or allusions of words that exist in audience members memories.<sup>15</sup> *Melopoeia* and *phanopoeia* have sensory effects on audiences and Pound claimed that they could evoke a psychological event in audience minds where meaning is grasped and a mindset or way of seeing things (“to give people new eyes”) is produced.<sup>16</sup> *Melopoeia* can arouse the “aural imagination” to expect the rhythmic sounds to continue and to direct meaning.<sup>17</sup> *Phanopoeia*, according to Pound, is not meant only to provide a word picture or representation, but is the employment of evocative imagery that can “create a flash of understanding,” “an affective psychological event,” that provides growth and helps audiences move ahead.<sup>18</sup> *Logopoeia*, in contrast to *melopoeia* and *phanopoeia*, has a contextual and intertextual effect. It depends upon the audience’s recognition of words previously heard or read, on the knowledge of rhetorical usage and reading experience in a text.<sup>19</sup> The appearance of previously known words and ideas will bring out the memories and comparisons with the memories in people’s minds.

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<sup>12</sup> See especially *How to Read* 5-11, 21, 49-50. Pound (1885-1972) had a reputation for being a strongly opinionated and difficult person. During World War 2 he made pro-fascist radio broadcasts in Italy, was later charged in the US and imprisoned for a number of years in a psychiatric facility. He was accused of being a charlatan and praised as a master of epic.

<sup>13</sup> Pound, *How to Read* 21.

<sup>14</sup> Pound, *How to Read* 25.

<sup>15</sup> Pound, *How to Read* 25-26.

<sup>16</sup> Marianne Korn, *Ezra Pound: Purpose, Form, Meaning* (London: Pembrige Press, 1983), 91-92.

<sup>17</sup> Korn, *Ezra Pound* 68-69. Cf. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 243-244, “literature...appeals to the ear, and so partakes of the nature of music....” John Harvey, *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 56 *et passim*, writes of the “acoustic resonances” heard by audiences. Much more study needs to be devoted to the “melody” in NT texts. Suggestive is the bibliography on “Music and Rhetoric” in J. David Hester Amador, *Academic Constraints in Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament*. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 347-348.

<sup>18</sup> Korn, *Ezra Pound* 78.

<sup>19</sup> Korn, *Ezra Pound* 93.

Pound's concern was with the question of how language functions. He decried what he termed the "loose use" of "bloated" words that do not add to meaning.<sup>20</sup> He seems to have believed that literature has a moral purpose:

It appears to me to be quite tenable that the function of literature as a generated prize-worthy force is precisely that it does incite humanity to continue living; that it eases the mind of strain, and feeds it, I mean definitely as a nutrition of impulse.<sup>21</sup>

He claimed, too strongly, that all writing is made up of *melopoeia*, *phanopoeia* and *logopoeia*, along with the form of an entire work.<sup>22</sup> However, his basic concern was "the art of getting meaning into words."<sup>23</sup>

Links between Pound's three energizers of language and Aristotelean rhetoric can be observed. While Aristotle uses the word *melopoiia* in regard to tragedy and epic poetry (e.g., *Poetics* 6.9-20, 24.2), the idea of rhythm as an important part of delivery is discussed in *Rhetoric* 3.1 and 3.8.<sup>24</sup> Rhythm along with volume and tone are powerful and Aristotle was concerned for its effective use, although he was careful to separate rhythm from continuous meter and thus from poetry.<sup>25</sup> This raises the question of whether Pound's notion of *melopoeia* should be applied only to poetry. But, rather than poetic meter in a text, Pound had in mind the orchestration of sound, that is, the way in which sound, particularly in inflected languages,<sup>26</sup> moves audiences along with a text by inducing emotional associations in the mind.<sup>27</sup> Finnegan has indicated that the distinction between poetry and prose in any literature is only "approximate" since both use such features as rhythm, metaphor, repetitions, alliterations and parallelisms.<sup>28</sup> It is, in any

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<sup>20</sup> Pound, *How to Read* 18.

<sup>21</sup> Pound, *How to Read* 16.

<sup>22</sup> Pound, *How to Read* 28. Although Pound was primarily concerned with poetry, he recognized that *melopoeia*, *phanopoeia* and *logopoeia* occur in prose and spoken language, but require a greater amount of language to convey the same power (*How to Read* 27-28).

<sup>23</sup> Pound, *How to Read* 39.

<sup>24</sup> The possibly spurious *Problems*, 19.38 asks, "Why do all delight in rhythm and melody and concords in general?" "...we delight in rhythm because it contains a familiar and ordered number and moves us in a regular manner."

<sup>25</sup> See Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 282.

<sup>26</sup> Pound, *How to Read* 54-55.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Margaret Dean, "Textured Criticism" (*JSNT* 70 1998 79-91), 86-88.

<sup>28</sup> Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 25-27. Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, *passim*, has added to the view that rhetoric developed out of political and judicial discourse by describing the origins of rhetoric in poetry. Cf. Walker, 55, on the relationship between prose and poetry.

case, clear that rhythmic, *melopoeic* patterns occur in prose and, indeed, in Paul's letters. *Phanopoeia*, casting images on the imagination, is reminiscent of Aristotle's description of metaphors "which set things before the eyes," thus creating a sense of reality in audience minds (*Rhet.* 3.11.1-3). These visual images come alive in the imagination and bring clarity and coherence to the ideas being expressed. *Logopoeia*, which Pound used to refer to memories stirred up in audience minds,<sup>29</sup> relies on the words and images that have been previously placed in the minds of audience members. The memory of something heard or read brings the reality of the thing to mind that can, in turn, move one to some belief or behaviour relative to the memory.<sup>30</sup> When one reads, for example, a letter of Paul, one will be reminded of passages and ideas found earlier in the letter or in another letter.<sup>31</sup> This is similar to Aristotle's concept of the power of memories to arouse pleasure or pain in the imagination (*Rhet.* 1.11.6-9). The mind thus becomes adapted to the memory.

Pound's ideas do not get by without criticism.<sup>32</sup> His three classifications of how language is charged with meaning are limited and limiting if they alone are used for analysis. The categories ignore all other aspects of language, speaking and writing that play into a speech or text. There is, for example, no concern for argumentation, socio-cultural features, characterization or plot. However, the virtue of *melopoeia*, *phanopoeia* and *logopoeia* is that they demonstrate ways in which sound patterns and rhythms of speech, physical imagery, and expectations of what words mean induce an emotional response that can move people toward understanding and action. The *ethos* of the energized language aims to elicit a *pathos* response. This is suggestive for the analysis of some aspects of Paul's moral persuasion.<sup>33</sup> The melodies, images and memories that appear in Paul's language generate an emotional disposition of mind in audiences that

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<sup>29</sup> The verb *logopoiēw* refers to writing or composing, while the noun *logopoiia* means "tale telling" or "newsmongering" (Liddell and Scott, 1056).

<sup>30</sup> This notion of memory is, obviously, not the speaker's practice of memory (memorization, mnemonics) for the purpose of delivery that was one of the five parts of rhetoric described by Cicero (*De Oratore*, 1.31.142-143; 2.350-2.360). On the idea memory more broadly in antiquity see Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories*.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories* 82-83.

<sup>32</sup> See Korn, *Ezra Pound* 66.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas H. Olbricht, "Pathos as Proof in Greco-Roman Rhetoric" in Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney, eds., *Paul and Pathos* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001 7-22), 7, has pointed out that there is very little available from scholars on how *pathos* may be analyzed. Perhaps Pound's ideas will be helpful in the discussion.

leads them to recognize and, it would seem likely, rouses them to practice the behaviours he encourages.<sup>34</sup>

While there would seem to be some obvious places to observe melody (e.g., Phil. 2:1-11), imagery (e.g., 1 Cor. 12:12-26) and memory (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 1 Thess. 2:9-12), in what follows I have chosen to look at Paul's moral persuasion in Romans 12. Much syntactical, lexical/semantical, source and redactional material may be found in the commentaries. The point here is to attempt to identify some<sup>35</sup> of the melody, imagery and memory in the passage in order to see how it functions as part of the persuasive effect.

### **Melody: Sound Orchestration**

Romans 11:33-36 flows with obvious rhythmic language that leaves the notion of worship on audience minds. No one can know the depth of God, and “all things” are “from him,” “through him” and “to Him” (11:36). As Paul moves, in 12:1-2, to more direct moral persuasion, the *melopoeic* orchestration of sound continues in his flow of ideas. The initial Παράκαλ w/ οὐμ̄ αμαῖ( ἀδελ̄ φοι( while a conventional and widely studied introduction to paraenesis,<sup>36</sup> is not merely formulaic, but gives the sound of address, of a call, to the audience Paul now wishes to encourage toward specific behaviours. The clause calls listeners to attention and thereby sets the psychological and moral tone for listening to what will follow. This is followed by two coordinated statements,

dia. tw̄h oiktirmw̄h tou/ qeou/  
parasth̄sai ta. sw̄mata uimw̄h)))tw̄/ qew̄(

where the mercies that come from God (tou/ qeoū) are the motive for presenting “your bodies” to God (tw̄/ qew̄). This language is orchestrated together intentionally to shape thinking and behaviour. It captures attention (“Therefore I exhort you, brothers”), reminds (“by the mercies of God”), and gives personal instruction (“to present your

<sup>34</sup> This is the sort of thing that Aristotle discussed in *Rhet.* 2.1.3-4, 8-9 and 2.2.27. Audiences need to be led to take on a frame of mind that is part of what persuades them to take a particular point of view or decision and to act on it.

<sup>35</sup> Attempting an exhaustive description seems daunting, but getting some of it in view will be helpful.

bodies...to God”). Following and concluding these statements, in turn, is an appositional<sup>37</sup> explanation of the call and instruction given, *thn logikhn latreian umwh*. The sound of reason being added to the sound of instruction induces the emotional association that presenting bodies to God would be the right, logical, rational thing to do. Set within the clause *parasthsai ta swmata umwh))tw/ qew/* is a different sound quality that indicates the nature of the presentation of bodies to God: *qusian zwsan agian euareston*. Here the rhythmic sound endings of the accusative noun *qusian*, the accusative participle *zwsan*, and the accusative adjectives *agian* and *euareston* (“a living, holy, pleasing sacrifice”) work together<sup>38</sup> to emphasize that the presentation of bodies to God is a highly sacred activity.

Romans 12:2 follows as part of the initial exhortation, tied to 12:1 by the conjunction *kai*. Here the melody starts out in a contrastive way: *mh. suschmatizesqe tw/ aiwhi tou tw/ al la. metamorfousqe th/ anakainwsei tou/ nooj*, where a “not this, but that” coordination of sounds is heard in the *mh/al la*, contrast tied to the imperative verb endings (-*sqe*) and the dative phrases. The sound brings out the importance of the transformation of the mind while showing the negative connotation of conformity “to this age.” This is a kind of point/counterpoint melody that impresses the mind with the notion of correct thinking. The sound of contrast is followed by the sound of the purpose statement that takes up the rest of 12:2,

*eij to dokimazein umaj  
ti,  
to. qe/ hma tou/ qeou/  
to. agaqon kai. euareston kai. te/leionA*

The description of two consequences of transformed minds is shaped together following the *ti*, by very similar sounding, verbless,<sup>39</sup> appositional declarations. The sound orchestration is obvious in the use of the neuter articles and nouns. The second *to*,

<sup>36</sup> See Rom. 15:30; 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; 4:16; Eph. 4:1.

<sup>37</sup> James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38B Dallas: Word, 1988), 711; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 751.

<sup>38</sup> *Homoeoptoton*.

<sup>39</sup> Pound was very interested in enhancing language by making statements without any predication because he believed avoiding verbs could intensify metaphors. See Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* 123.

statement reinforces the first by explaining the content of the will of God.<sup>40</sup>

Orchestrating the two lines together without verbs provides a kind of “this is that” tone that creates an impression on the mind.

The rhythmic style of 12:3-5 has been noted by some,<sup>41</sup> but with little discussion of its rhetorical force. There are two sets of four lines joined by *gar*.

Legw gar dia. thj caritoj thj doqeishj moi panti. tw|onti en umih  
 mh. upefroneih parv o| dei/ froneih  
 all a. froneih eij to. swfroneih(  
 ekastw|wj o` qeoj emerisen metron pistewjA

kaqaper gar en eni. swmati pol la. me|h ecomen(  
 ta. de. me|h panta ouw thn authn ecei prakin(  
 ou|twj oi` polloi. eh swma, esmen en Cristw|

to. de. kaq| eij al lh|wn me|hA

The *melopoeic* effect is indicated in several ways. As in verse two, 12:3 has a mh/all a, “not this, but that” contrasting sound, but now tied to a series of repetitions focused on the sound of the root *fron-*. An over literal and wooden English translation brings out something of both the sound coordination and the idea being conveyed: “not to over think beyond what is necessary to think, but to think with right thinking.” Both mh, and all a, lines have nine syllables. The flow of sound in the first set is completed by the final line of 12:3 which closes the contrast and ties the idea of correct thinking back to the first line by claiming it is a gift of faith given by God (o` qeoj emerisen metron pistewj), just as Paul himself had been given grace. In the second set of four lines kaqaper and ou|twj stand with each other in a crescendo of argument: “just as...so also.” The orchestration builds with repetitions of words in all four lines (eni. swmati pol la/eh swma; pol la/polloi; me|h/ta. de. me|h/to. de. me|h) and in the parallelism of first and third and second and fourth lines.

Verses 6 to 8 have a sharp acoustic pattern employed to describe the way that differing gifts are to be used. The seven statements describing particular gifts (four of them

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<sup>40</sup> Moo, *Romans* 757 with fn 72.

introduced by *eite*, three without) appear without verbs<sup>42</sup> and the coordination of sound among them (*eite*))*en th̄ ou..en*) quite obviously leads listeners along to agreement about the gifts.

*econtej de. carismata kata. thn carin thn doxeisan hmiñ diafora(  
 eite profhteian kata. thn analogian thj pistewj(  
 eite diakonian en thj diakonia(  
 eite o didaskwn en thj didaskalia(  
 eite o parakalwh en thj paraklhsei\  
 o metadidouj en aplothti(  
 o proištamenoj en spoudh(  
 o ewh en ilarothtiA*

The absence of verbs in 12:6b-8 is what actually provides the *melopoetic* effect and must be intentional. The sound rhythm itself reinforces the idea on the mind. It is as if Paul were saying, as part of his conversation, “Do you see? Do you get it? Whether this gift, or this one, or this one....” Understanding is assumed through the way the ideas of prophecy, service, the teacher, the encourager, the giver, the leader, and the compassionate are presented. The ellipsis, that is, the absence of imperative forms indicating that the audience should practice these behaviours, need not merely be assumed.<sup>43</sup> It shouts itself out through the melody of language. This is an example of Pound’s psychological moment where the melodic shape of the language conveys an understanding to be grasped. When the use of *eite* is dropped in 8b the melody is altered, changing the tone slightly, but the sense of *eite* is still to be understood, although no longer necessary to convey the same meaning.

In 12:9-13 there is a series of staccato-like injunctions that do not use finite verbs, conjunctions or particles to connect ideas.<sup>44</sup> The absence of a connector between 12:8 and 12:9 suggests a pause<sup>45</sup> or that a shift is taking place, and the nature of the rhythm, in particular, points out the change. The sound effect is produced beginning with the

<sup>41</sup> E.g., Dunn, *Romans* 720.

<sup>42</sup> Although probably relying on the participle *econtej* at the beginning of 12:6.

<sup>43</sup> See Moo, *Romans* 764.

<sup>44</sup> Scholars have suggested a variety of structural arrangements for these verses, along with 12:14-21. Cf. Dunn, *Romans* 737-738; Moo, *Romans* 771-774; Harvey, *Listening to the Text* 151-152. David Alan Black, “The Pauline Love Command: Structure, Style, and Ethics in Romans 12.9-21,” (*Filología Neotestamentaria* 1 1989), 3-21, has proposed a chiasmic hortatory structure for all of 12:9-21. The sound patterns, in any case, change as the text moves along.

nominative directive and participial clauses of 12:9.<sup>46</sup> These exhortations balance each other with three words each having nine, nine and eight syllables respectively. This is followed by the flow of nine statements beginning with dative articles (12:10-13).

-H agaph anupokritojā apostougouhtej to. ponhron( kol lwmenoi tw| agaqw(  
 th| fil adel fia| eij al lh| ouj filostorgoi(  
 th| timh| al lh| ouj prohgomounoi(  
 th| spoudh| mh. oknhroi(  
 tw| pneumatī zeontej(  
 tw| kuriw| douleuontej(  
 th| elpidi cairontej(  
 th| qlīyei upomenontej(  
 th| proseuch| proskarterouhtej(  
 taij creiaij twh agiwn koinwnouhtej( thn filoxenian diwkontejā

The datives in 12:10 are both followed by the similar-sounding plurals al lh| ouj filostorgoi and al lh| ouj prohgomounoi. In 12:11-12 the datives are followed, with the exception of th| spoudh| (which follows the pattern of 12:10), by nominative plural participles, all having the same ending. Each injunction is comprised of seven, eight or nine syllables. Thematic connection occurs in the *melopoeic* presentation more than or perhaps rather than in a theological, ethical or behavioral topic. The melody produced by this construction leaves no doubt about what Paul had in mind: he wanted to press home, in this sharp and emphatic sounding, punching way, the view that the behaviours described are important and are to be practiced by the audience.<sup>47</sup> This style is likely to produce a psychological effect, a *pathos* that would invoke acceptance and even practice of the behaviours.<sup>48</sup>

Imperatives finally appear in 12:14. Exactly why Paul switches from the chain of datives employed in the previous verses to direct imperatives is difficult to say.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps the participle diwkontej in verse 13 has elicited the use of a known melodic exhortation using

<sup>45</sup> Dunn, *Romans* 739.

<sup>46</sup> There nature of their use has been widely debated. See Moo, *Romans* 775-776 with fns 27 and 28.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Brendan Byrne, *Romans* (Sacra Pagina Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 375, who thinks that “The sequence does not show a tight flow of thought, though the clustering of associated motifs and catchwords suggests a certain pattern.”

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 183, who points out that “...dissection of the individual items is possible but not necessarily instructive for a sense of the list’s function as a whole, which is to provide a certain kind of moral impression.”

the same word (eul ogeite touj diwkontaj lumaʃʰ) in the next line.<sup>50</sup> In any case, the tone changes, but *melopoeic* effect continues. The repetition of the imperative sound of eul ogeite doubles the emphasis on blessing those who pursue. The two parts of verse 14, eul ogeite touj diwkontaj lumaʃʰ and eul ogeite kai. mh. katarasqe<sup>51</sup> stand antithetically with each other with the sound of the imperative katarasqe adding more stress to the psychological idea: “Bless, bless and do not curse.” The synchronization of sounds next occurs in the couplet cairrein meta. cairontwn( klaiēin meta. klaiōntwn, where the cair- and klai- roots, the imperitival infinitives, assonance in the ai diphthongs, and the genitive participle endings shape the force of language. In verse 16, a word play on the root fron- reappears (cf. 12:3), once again sounding the importance of thinking by juxtaposing proper thoughts (to. auto. eij al l h| ouj fronouhtej) with improper (mh. ta. uyhl a. fronouhtej), followed by the exhortation against becoming those who think beyond themselves (mh. ginesqe fronimoi parv eautoij).

The negative sounds presented in 12:14 and 16 (mh. katarasqe, mh. ta. uyhl a. fronouhtej, mh. ginesqe fronimoi parv eautoij) are continued in 12:17 (mhdeni. kakon anti. kakou/ apodidontej). Similar sounding word and phrases are employed to impress the mind: kakon anti. kakou, the juxtaposition of kakon, kakou. and kal a, and, in verses 17-18, the repetition of pantwn anqrwpwn following prepositions. The audience is being pushed to think carefully about their relationships with people and the organization of the language is meant to encourage them to “buy into it” emotionally and behaviorally. In 12:19 the mh/al l a, “not this, but that,” contrast sound recurs, supported by the impressive, religious sounding gegraptai, which, in usages in Romans and elsewhere, lends the notion of authority to statements by means of its allusion to scripture (e.g., Rom. 1:17; 2:24; 3:4; 4:17; 8:36; etc.). The majestic recitation VE moi. ekdikhsij( egw. antapodwsu( legei kurioj (cf. Dt. 32:35) gives first person power to God alone. The mh/al l a, “not this, but that,” connection is extended by al l a, into verse 20 with the sound repetition of “if this,

<sup>49</sup> Black, “The Pauline Love Command...” 18-19, suggests 12:14-16 hold an independent place in the middle of 12:9-21.

<sup>50</sup> Reminiscent of the words of Mt. 5:44, agapate touj ecqrouj umwh kai. proseucesqe uper twh diwkontwn umaj) See also Lk. 6:27-28.

<sup>51</sup> A hendiadys.

do that” (εἰς πείνα...ὥμῖζε αὐτόν; εἰς δίψα...ποτίζε αὐτόν). The movement closes, in 12:21, with a final melody: μή. νικῶ/ ὑπο. τοῦ/ κακοῦ/ ἀλλὰ. νικά ἐν τῷ/ ἀγαθῷ/ τοῦ. κακοῦ. Once again the μή/ἀλλὰ, “not this, but that,” contrast sound, now together with the chiasmic oppositions of the passive νικῶ/against the active νικά, and of τοῦ/ κακοῦ/ and τοῦ. κακοῦ, drive home the emotional point that victory is to be found in what is good.

The *melopoeia* of the exhortations of Romans 12 would, of course, be more powerfully understood if we could hear Paul’s own tone of voice or that of the person who read the words aloud to their first audience in Rome. But the orchestration of sounds is hardly mistakeable. Paul has chosen and positioned his words, heightening the perceptions of the moral possibilities as he goes along, taking the audience members toward a deep sense of agreement with the behaviours described. The audience is led to Pound’s notion of a “psychological moment” that can evoke a profound “Yes, this is the right way to behave!” If we imagine the oral and *melopoeic* nature of the exhortations it may be possible to see at least part of their organizing principle.<sup>52</sup> Surely the exhortations, particularly 12:9-21, are strung together, but they are organized around Paul’s wish to persuade his audience to be moved toward practicing the actual behaviour described.<sup>53</sup> The organizing principle has as much to do with Paul’s manner of presentation as with any more theological or practical concerns. They are given as they are to stir the emotions, to obtain agreement through, in part, their composition. The text is charged with meaning and encourages its audiences to be brought along to the actual practice of transformed thinking (12:2) through its sound features.

### **Imagery: Visual Metaphors and the Imagination**

If language is, as Pound claims, charged with *phanopoeic* meaning, then Romans 12 is highly energized. The chapter contains a range of visual images that do much more than illustrate. The images evoke sensory responses that can move audiences to practice the

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<sup>52</sup> Many (e.g., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33 New York: Doubleday, 1993), 638; Byrne, *Romans* 362) note the apparent lack of organization to the exhortations.

<sup>53</sup> And so 12:9-21 is not “haphazard” as Moo, *Romans* 771-772 suggests. The exhortations are straightforward, individual pieces. Adding more verbal explanation would destroy the orchestration of sound and ruin the effect.

behaviours encouraged. The first line of 12:1 has Paul addressing his audience as *adel foi*. This term, which Paul has already used a number of times in Romans (1:13; 7:1, 4; 8:12; 10:1; 11:25), presents the image of relationship, of a kind of family connection between Paul and his audience. It is likely to spark off feelings of personal closeness in audience minds. The next phrase, *dia twh oiktirmwh tou qeou*, provides an image of the way God has been described throughout Romans, most recently in 11:30-32. A deeply profound and moving image occurs in the clause *parasthsai ta swmata umwh qusan zwsan agian euareston tw qew*. The suggestion of sacrifice as a religious activity is graphic, even if immediately understood by audiences because of their familiarity with it. But here the living, holy, pleasing sacrifice of audience members' own bodies is striking. It suggests the emotionally charged notion of total life commitment to the gospel described already in Romans.<sup>54</sup> The religious audiences are made to think that this sacrificial way of life is correct by the following image of worship (*thn logikhn latreian umwh*). The Roman Christians would understand themselves to be a worshipping community, so the explication of the presentation of their bodies as sacrifices as being "worship" would set the point in their minds.

By using the images of "this age," transformation, renewal of the mind and discernment of the will of God in 12:2, Paul brings out a foundational vision of how he supposes Christian existence should be shaped. Conformity *tw aiwhi toutw* pictures life aligned with sin and death, with the time when the gospel was held in secret (16:25-26; cf. 1 Cor. 2:6, 8). This negative image is meant to push people away from inappropriate behaviour toward the renewed minds noted in the next clause. The exhortation *metamorfousqe th anakainwsei tou nooj* presents a vision of what should guide appropriate behaviour. The vision is not of mere change, but of changed form or shape, thus of a different appearance or kind of existence.<sup>55</sup> The changed form of the renewed mind has a view toward a new consciousness of morality that is clearly not of the present evil age, but can grasp and practice the will of God. These images invite the audience to visualize in its imagination a Christian existence where the focus is on doing the right thing. They are setting up a

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<sup>54</sup> *Swmata* here has in mind not only physical bodies, but the entire person.

<sup>55</sup> See Dunn, *Romans* 713.

condition of right praxis, of a moral and emotional world where what is perceived to be correct behaviour—the will of God (eij to dokimazein uma] ti, to qe]hma tou/ qeou)—is known and realized. Pressing these images home by describing the will of God as that which is “good and pleasing and complete” is powerful, since most audiences of Romans will want to practice such things.

In 12:3-8 the leading *phanopoeic* feature is the image of body.<sup>56</sup> This image was widely employed in antiquity, but Paul takes it up as a means of describing the nature of and relationship among people in the church. Audiences are meant to imagine themselves as members of one body in Christ who nevertheless function individually, yet for the good of the entire body (12:4-5). They are to visualize themselves as a physical unit that intentionally works together, the various body parts doing what they are given to do, and recognizing that, as this unity, each part is equally important and no part may consider itself to be more important than another (12:3). It is the body imagery that makes the ethical point. While Paul might in a few words have encouraged his audience to be humble relative to each other and to use their gifts, the visualization of Christ’s body and themselves as the various members of it provides an intellectual and emotional grasp of something of which people who are known to each other are functioning parts. Thus the *phanopoeia*, the charging of the language with the body metaphor, gives life to the exhortation. Encouraging audiences to think or even say “We are a body, working together” produces the psychological moment, the connection with ideas, that will lead them to praxis. The imagery has the ability to bring about a limit to negative behaviour (thinking too highly of oneself, 12:3) and to extend positive behaviour where people use their gifts for the benefit of all (12:6-8).

Another *phanopoeic* feature of 12:3-8 resides in the listing of seven gifts (verses 6-8). The process of naming these gifts casts images on the imagination through the allusions made to their practice. Audience members will be persuaded to think about performing the gifts they possess individually as parts of the body. This clearly places them in an emotional frame of mind leading to actual performance. In addition, Paul changes from

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<sup>56</sup> Strongly reminiscent of 1 Cor. 12:12-27.

his use of the abstract accusative nouns *profheteian* and *diakonian* to the participles *o' didaskwn*, *o' parakalwh*, *o' metadidouj*, *o' proi'stamenoj*, and *o' el'ewh*, thereby personalizing the imagery. The gifts change from being activities to being persons. The imagination becomes impressed with people who practice gifts, not the practice alone.<sup>57</sup>

The exhortations of 12:9-21 present many pictures of action. Throwing out images of love, hate, goodness, honour, diligence, devotion, joy, steadfastness, sharing, and hospitality pushes listeners to take on the qualities. This will be true for all of the actions mentioned. The more abstract images such as blessing, rejoicing, weeping and peaceableness (12:9-18) give way to the picture of God as avenger in 12:19. The Christians (“beloved ones,” *agaphtoi*) are not to see themselves as those who take vengeance. This is emphasized by the physical imagery of providing food and drink for the hunger and thirst of enemies, rather than repayment for evil. This exhortation is loaded with *pathos*. Rather than the anticipated revenge against enemies, one can “heap burning coals on their heads” (12:20; cf. LXX Prov. 25:21-22).<sup>58</sup> The emotional desire, Paul knows, will most often be to seek revenge. He calls for a more appropriate approach from his Christian audience. God is left to take action. The final image is that of obtaining victory (*nikaw* 12:21). Victory is obtained by means of good practice. The emotional high of winning is, in the moral realm Paul has in mind, attained through doing the right thing rather than through the exertion of power over other people.

The *phanopeia* of Romans 12 is a significant part of the persuasive effect. Audiences are nearly overwhelmed with imagery that shapes how they are expected to see the realities of living out the gospel. There is a great deal of emotional “buy in” expected in the casting of images. If audiences engage not only intellectually but also emotionally in the imagery they will imagine themselves as participants in the behaviour described. This is surely what Paul wanted.

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<sup>57</sup> This personalization seems to be leading up to the use of imperative forms that appear, finally, in 12:14. The imagery moves from “us” (*hmi/h*) in 12:6 toward “you” in 12:14ff.

## Memory: Expectations of What Words Mean

The force of *logopoeia* depends on the information previously placed in audience minds. When words are spoken and heard they are either understood or not. If they are understood then speaker and listener “are recalling an implicitly known truth.”<sup>59</sup> When people read, say, a letter of Paul, the memory of God or Christ or belief or salvation is recalled by the reading of the words. Readers are thereby oriented toward the memories and, consequently, toward actions that accord with the memories.<sup>60</sup> *Logopoeia* is this kind of association of words with memories.

Romans 12 certainly brings to memory passages from various biblical and extra-biblical texts.<sup>61</sup> There are parallels in Jewish and Greek moral teaching. There are allusions to the Hebrew Bible in the imagery of sacrifice (12:1), to the apocalyptic notion of “this age,” presumably in contrast to the coming age (12:2), to widespread usage of the image of the human body (12:4-5), to the teaching of Jesus (12:14), to other letters of Paul (12:4-5; cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-30; 12:17; cf. 1 Thess. 5:15), and there is direct reference to the Hebrew scriptures (12:19; cf. Dt. 32:35; 12:20; cf. Prov. 25:21-22). It is not possible to know how many of these or other things were recognized by the first audiences of Romans. Certainly some of them were in the memories of some people. The specific behaviours that are encouraged would have been recognizable and appropriate links would have been made. However, for most, the more immediate *logopoeic* effect would likely be found within Romans itself.

Careful auditors would recall Romans 1:18-3:20, where Paul described the condition of humanity due to sin. He claimed that no person of wholly righteous behaviour exists. In 1:18-32, in particular, Paul pointed out that those who ignore and dishonour God “became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened” (21). They

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<sup>58</sup> The dispute about the meaning of “heap burning coals on their heads” extends back to ancient times. See Dunn, *Romans* 750-751. Whatever its provenance or implications of meaning, it probably suggests that both the enemy and the Christian will know that the likelihood further enmity has been decreased.

<sup>59</sup> Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories* 82, describing the thought of Augustine on memory.

<sup>60</sup> Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories* 82-83.

<sup>61</sup> For discussion and examples see the commentaries, particularly Dunn.

“degraded their bodies (σώματα) among themselves” (24) and “worshiped (λατρεῖν) and served the creature rather than the creator...” (25), resulting in “worthless minds” (ἀδοκίμον νοῦν, 28). Romans 12:1-2 responds to that situation with a reversal of behaviour where believers’ bodies are presented as sacrifices to God (παράσθῃσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν ὡς θυσίαν ἁγίαν εὐαρέστον τῷ θεῷ) as an act of logical worship (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν), with a call for the renewal of the mind (μεταμορφώσεθ τὴν ἀνακainώσει του/νοῦ) rather than conformity “to this age,” to empty, dark thinking, and to discernment of the will of God (εἰς τὸ δοκιμαζεῖν ὑμᾶς τί, τὸ θελήματα του/θεοῦ) rather than service of one’s own desires. The *logopoetic* connections between 1:18-32 and 12:1-2 are apparent in the use of the same words in both passages and in the antithetical behavioral situations. The audience has been invited to remember through the comparison of words and ideas encountered before, with the result that the value of the practice of the “renewed” life in contrast to the bankrupt life of Romans 1 will be clear.<sup>62</sup>

Listeners to Romans 12 will also recall previous occurrences of the verb παρίσθῃμι §infinitive παράσθῃσαι in 12:1) in 6:13, 16 and 19, where they were encouraged to present themselves to God as those who are now alive to practice righteousness. Use of σώματα in 12:1 echoes employment of forms of σώμα in 6:6, 12; 7:14, 24 and 8:10, 11, 23. Bodies are now for the worship of God and for life, no longer for the practice of sin. The renewed mind (νοῦν) of 12:2 will bring to memory and stand in contrast to 7:23, 25, where the mind is described as wishing to do good, but is influenced by sin. The new mind of 12:2 seeks to know the will of God. The warning against thinking more highly of self than is proper recalls 11:13-24, where Paul has pointed out the danger of Gentile Christians becoming over-proud of their place in faith relative to Israel. These recollections serve to reinforce the exhortations.

The transformation through the renewing of the mind leading to discernment of the good, acceptable and perfect will of God described in 12:2 draws out memories of what Paul said earlier in Romans about the gospel placing people beyond the power and penalty of

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<sup>62</sup> See Stowers, *Rereading Romans* 318; Leander E. Keck, “Pathos in Romans? Mostly Preliminary Remarks” in Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney, eds., *Paul and Pathos* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001 71-96),

sin and corruption.<sup>63</sup> Through the gospel humans are no longer slaves who should live in fear, but adopted children of God who, with the entire creation (ktisij), await the completion of glory (8:12-25). They stand with the new Adam who has provided the free gift of justification (5:12-20). They have been united with Christ in a death like his, with the hope of a resurrection like his (6:3-11) and are no longer bound by sin (6:12-23). The exhortation to transformation reminds audiences of these realities and calls for them to be put into practice.<sup>64</sup> Paul is drawing on audience memory of the gospel itself, in accord with the way he proclaimed it and with the way Roman Christians remembered it. The *logopoeic* force occurs in how the memories evoked in the exhortation lead to their acceptance.

The words *dia. twh oiktirmwh tou/qeou/* (12:1), *legw gar dia. thj caritoj thj doqeshj moi* (12:4) and *ekastw| wj o` qeoj emerisen metron pistewj* (12:3) push the audience to recall things Paul discussed in Romans 1-11.<sup>65</sup> That God has shown mercy (*oiktirmoj*, compassion), and given grace and faith has been indicated throughout Romans. This mercy, grace and faith has been demonstrated most significantly through Christ, the faithful one who “pioneered a mode of life that God has enabled the readers to share.”<sup>66</sup> The language calls these things to mind once more, strengthening the ideas and supplying reason to live out the exhortations.

The exhortations of 12:9-21 use words and combinations of words that will have been well-known by the audience. The occurrences of the words themselves will bring to mind the behaviours implied by them because the actions will be known from experience and observation. This is recognition of meaning that points to and encourages practice.

The *logopoeia* of Romans 12 is part of the rhetorical effect that drives home the moral exhortations. The word associations developed in the minds of audience members are persuasive because they reinforce recognizable ideas on the mind. They demonstrate that

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<sup>63</sup> On this see Mark D. Given, *Paul's True Rhetoric: Ambiguity, Cunning, and Deception in Greece and Rome*. (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001) 154.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Furnish, *Theology and Ethics* 105-106.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Stowers, *Rereading Romans* 318. 12:3 also recalls 1:5-6 where Paul states that he had received grace and apostleship on behalf of the audience of the letter.

<sup>66</sup> Stowers, *Rereading Romans* 318.

the new situation brought about by the gospel leads to, calls believers to, fitting community and individual behaviour.

## Conclusion

There is, of course, very much more to Paul's moral persuasion, and much more than Pound's take on how language is charged with meaning.<sup>67</sup> Obviously the rhetoric of moral persuasion must not be reduced to Pound's categories. But what Pound suggested is a helpful angle from which to see *some* of what goes on in Paul's effort to persuade his audiences toward what he perceived to be appropriate Christian behaviour. Paul shaped his language so that the sounds, images and memories that exist in words would work to elicit a reaction. His usage of words is itself an invitation to interact with them, pushing things along to help convey his message.

Paul did not have to write the way he did. He could have been dull and pedantic.<sup>68</sup> But it is clear that he wanted to evoke *pathos*, to arouse the imagination, encouraging his audience to have a passion for the gospel like his own.<sup>69</sup> Generating not only intellectual understanding but also faith and exuberant feelings serves the purpose he had in mind. Romans 12 is one example of a text that invites its audience to enter a realm of ideas, to participate in the melodies of sound orchestration, to see the images, and to be reminded of things tacit in memories. The audience in these ways participates in the movement of the exhortations, becoming psychologically involved and so persuaded to engage in the behaviours. Participating in the "event" of hearing, seeing and remembering is part of the persuasiveness. Paul sets up an emotional and moral world where God's will is known and practiced. The audience is moved toward a shared understanding of thought with the author. Words are aimed at shaping thinking and, consequently, at shaping living. The language stirs up a new mind and a new heart, orienting people toward doing good things.

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<sup>67</sup> Pound himself, in *How to Read 7*, wrote acerbically, "One was asked to remember what some critic (deceased) had said, scarcely to consider whether his views were still valid, or ever had been very intelligent."

<sup>68</sup> See Keck, "*Pathos* in Romans?" 94.

<sup>69</sup> See Frye, *Anatomy* 328. When authors are emotionally involved with their subject matter their exhortations are projections of their own emotional life.