

“PRODDING WITH PROSODY”: PERSUASION AND SOCIAL
INFLUENCE THROUGH THE LENS OF APPRAISAL THEORY

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Abstract: This article approaches the topic of persuasion from a social perspective rather than rhetorical or socio-rhetorical. This is because, at heart, persuasion—of others or of self—is ultimately a social action in which values are negotiated. Dvorak argues that to analyze the persuasiveness of a discourse requires a sociolinguistic model, and the model that is best suited for the job is Appraisal Theory, which is built upon the theoretical foundation of Systemic Functional Linguistics. (Article)

Keywords: persuasion, appraisal, evaluation, 1 Corinthians, values, power, discourse analysis.

1. *Introduction*

As the literature bears out, one may engage her- or himself in researching persuasion and social influence in a variety of ways from a variety of perspectives. Common perspectives on the topic come from a broad range of disciplines including, but certainly not limited to, communication, psychology, and neuroscience. The researches from these disciplines have produced a cache of useful information and insights, much of it, perhaps not surprisingly, being focused on the mind and the brain. The major research questions in these areas of inquiry appear to be concerned primarily with (1) how a person’s mind processes persuasive messages and (2) what key neurological and physiological reflexes occur in the brain when a person receives messages that the sender(s) intended to be persuasive.

However, my inquiry differs from these researches in that I am more interested in persuasion as a social action and how persuasion is accomplished (or is at least attempted) with language. In this article, I want to address two basic research questions. First, what makes a “persuasive message” *persuasive*? Second, in what way(s) do these messages apply social pressure on people either to adopt a particular point of view or to solidify their adherence to a particular point of view they have already taken up? In what follows, I will address these questions from a sociolinguistic point of view, particularly with a model of appraisal that is firmly nestled in the paradigm of Systemic Functional Linguistics.¹ I focus my investigation on the linguistics of reader or hearer positioning; that is, I analyze text for the discursive features that point to how a person uses language both to take up value positions (i.e., “stances”) toward themselves, others, things, ideas, etc., and how a person “prods” others to align with the value position(s) they have adopted and are promoting. I argue that this kind of persuasive prodding is a form of interpersonal meaning that is made through the evaluations or appraisals that one makes and expresses with language.² Additionally, I argue that the relative strength of persuasive prodding correlates with the prosodic structure of interpersonal meaning,³ which adds “a continuous motif or

1. In order to avoid anachronism, I also draw upon, where applicable, the work of social-scientific critics, particularly those that focus on the social and cultural factors that would likely have influenced and constrained social interaction.

2. Following Lemke (“Semantics and Social Values,” 39), I presume that people do not use language “simply to organize or to describe (or even create) events and their relations. *Language is also a resource for the creation and maintenance of social relations and value systems.* Every discourse voice, embodied in text, constructs a stance toward itself and other discourse voices. It *evaluates*, explicitly or implicitly, what it has to say and the relation of what it has to say to what *others* do say or may say. Its evaluative orientation includes but is not limited to, certitude of truth value. It can define any value orientation toward what it says and/or toward what others say: appropriateness, usefulness, morality, pleurability; all the forms of ‘rightness’ and ‘goodness.’” See also Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 62–100.

3. See Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 21–22 (available online at

coloring”⁴ that builds over a stretch of text and ultimately reveals the language user’s “stance.”⁵

My attempt at answering the research questions I have laid out will involve three basic moves. First, I will introduce a working definition of persuasion and will emphasize the point that persuasion is fundamentally social in nature. Then I will sketch the linguistic model that I believe is most suitable for analyzing the persuasiveness of a text. Finally, I will apply the model to 1 Cor 1:26–31 both to demonstrate how the model works and to reveal the linguistic features of persuasion Paul puts to work in order to prod his readers⁶ toward unity.

2. *What is Meant by Persuasion?*

From the works of ancient philosophers like Aristotle⁷ to those of modern rhetorical theorists such as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca,⁸ the vast literature on the topics of rhetoric, argumentation, and, more specifically, persuasion demonstrates that defining persuasion is not without its difficulties. Typically, disagreements arise regarding issues such as determining whether or not intention matters; whether or not someone is actually persuaded and how such can be known; whether or not coercion should count as persuasion; whether or not persuasion requires synchronous linguistic communication; whether or not the nature and type of communication media involved affect persuasion, and if so, the extent of their impact; and the ways and extent to which sociocultural factors come to bear on

<http://bit.ly/1Cor1-4>); Halliday, “Modes of Meaning,” 205; Martin, *English Text*, 11; Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 18–19; Hood, “Persuasive Power of Prosodies,” 38.

4. Halliday, “Modes of Meaning,” 205; Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 18–19.

5. See Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 163–4.

6. Throughout this paper, I refer to writers and readers; however, the principles presented also apply to speakers and hearers.

7. See, e.g., Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.2.1 (LCL) for a definition of persuasion. See also his connection of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* to persuasion (1.2.3–7).

8. See, e.g., Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, XX.

persuasion.⁹ Although debate continues over these and related issues, one is still able to distill from the literature a generally agreed upon core description of persuasion. Gass and Seiter state it well:

. . . persuasion involves one or more persons who are engaged in the activity of creating, reinforcing, modifying, or extinguishing beliefs, attitudes, intentions, motivations, and/or behaviors within the constraints of a given communication context.¹⁰

This description provides a solid working definition and leaping-off point for the current study, but several presumptions need to be made explicit for us to see the fundamentally social nature of persuasion.

2.1 *Power and Solidarity*

First, every attempt at persuasion among human beings is at once enabled and constrained by two key dimensions of social relations: *power* and *solidarity*.¹¹ *Power* or, in Martin's terms, *status*¹² describes one's ability to exercise control over and to gain compliance¹³ from another with regard to the other's beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, etc.¹⁴ *Power relations* range from equal to unequal,¹⁵ and the basis of one's power derives typically from

9. See Gass and Seiter, *Persuasion, Social Influence, and Compliance Gaining*, 22–33.

10. Gass and Seiter, *Persuasion, Social Influence, and Compliance Gaining*, 34.

11. See Poynton, *Language and Gender*, 76–86; Eggins, *Introduction*, 99–102; Goatly, *Critical Reading and Writing*, 85–86.

12. Martin and Rose, *Genre Relations*, 12.

13. Compliance refers to the act of conforming one's beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, etc., to the wishes or desires of another (see McVann, "Compliance," 33).

14. See Pilch, "Power," 158.

15. See the system network diagram for tenor in Poynton, *Language and Gender*, 77 and Goatly, *Critical Reading and Writing*, 86. Fairclough (*Language and Power*, 26–27) makes an important point about power that is worth noting here: "Power is not in itself bad. On the contrary, the power of people to do things is generally a social good. We need to distinguish between the 'power to' do things and 'power over' other people, though we need to see this binary (and others) in a dialectical way: having power over people

more than one of the following factors: force, authority, status, and expertise.¹⁶ *Force* (physical or otherwise) is related to assertiveness; i.e., “qualities related to boldness, openness, frankness, self-confidence.”¹⁷ *Authority* is the “socially recognized and approved ability to control the behavior of others.”¹⁸ *Status* refers to the relative social rank of a person “with respect to a socially-desirable object or standing or achievement.”¹⁹ *Expertise* “is a matter of the extent to which an individual possesses knowledge or skill.”²⁰

Solidarity or, in Poynton’s scheme, *contact*²¹ describes the social distance²² or strength of relatedness between the members of a group, the measure of which is how strongly they adhere to the group’s core values.²³ *Solidarity relations* range from cohesive (i.e., stronger adherence) to dis cohesive (i.e., weaker

increases power to do things; power to do things is conditional (in some cases at least) on having power over people. But ‘power over’ is not inherently bad either, as long as it is legitimate; we vote in elections for governments or councils which have various forms of legitimate power over the rest of us, and when we go to a doctor or to a school or university, we recognize that the doctor or teacher has certain legitimate powers over us. Having and exercising power over other people becomes open to critique when it is not legitimate, or when it has bad effects, for instance when it results in unacceptable and unjustifiable damage to people or to social life.”

16. Poynton, *Language and Gender*, 76–77.

17. See Reese, “Assertiveness,” 10. See also Goatly, *Critical Reading and Writing*, 90–93.

18. Malina, “Authoritarianism,” 12.

19. Poynton, *Language and Gender*, 76–77.

20. Poynton, *Language and Gender*, 77.

21. Poynton, *Language and Gender*, 76.

22. See Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 57.

23. See Brown and Gilman, “Pronouns of Power and Solidarity,” 252–82; Hudson, *Sociolinguistics*, 122. See also Osiek, “Relatedness,” 176. The term *value* “describes some general quality and direction in life that human beings are expected to embody in their behavior. A value is a general, normative orientation of action in a social system. It is an emotional anchored commitment to pursue and support certain directions or types of action” (Pilch and Malina, eds., *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, xv; see also Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, 93–94 [under “legitimation”] and Anderson and Taylor, *Sociology*, 33).

adherence).²⁴ These relations wax and wane in correlation with both the amount and the kinds of contact group members have with one another (resulting in varying degrees of familiarity), as well as the “emotional charge” of these relations.²⁵

Of course, some configuration of these dimensions is activated in every social interaction, but they are often foregrounded and more obvious in contexts of persuasion. For example, in most societies (if not all), teachers have more power than students because (a) the role of “teacher” has been granted authority in the social system; (b) teachers generally have greater expertise than students; and (c) teachers have achieved higher social status than students, usually by having earned credentials that are valued in the social system. The teacher will utilize this unequal power relationship—especially expertise—to convince her students of this or that point of view. In doing so, she puts the solidarity of the group at some level of risk, depending upon the extent to which it challenges the students’ current beliefs and attitudes on the subject matter.

Even in instances where the power distance between participants is negligible, for example between two siblings who are arguing about who is the greatest quarterback in the history of the NFL, part of vying for their individual points of view involves vying for power. This may result in spouting statistics (an expression of expertise), arguing on the basis of prior experience playing football (an expression of status), or perhaps even name calling and other forms of “friendly” berating (expressions of force). Solidarity is still put at risk, and the closer one or the other of these brothers gets to “crossing the line” in any of these three areas, the greater the threat to solidarity.

24. Poynton (*Language and Gender*, 77–78) prefers to measure solidarity in terms of frequency of contact, proliferation, and contraction. The basic idea is that the stronger the relatedness between group members the more meanings those members have available to exchange with one another and the less linguistic “work” it takes to exchange them. See Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 30; Martin, *English Text*, 526, 528–32; Eggins, *Introduction*, 100; Dvorak, “Interpersonal Meaning,” 28–30.

25. Martin and Rose, *Genre Relations*, 12.

2.2 Social Action

Second, persuasion is a form of social action that is intended to solidify, to modify, or to eliminate one's own or another's values.²⁶ As mentioned above, people generally bond and create community around some shared set of core values.²⁷ This occurs as they adopt particular evaluative stances, points of view, or feelings about the world around them.²⁸ It is in this "investiture of attitude in activity, the resonance of attitude with events and things (abstract or concrete), around which . . . [people] align into communing sympathies of kinship, friendship, collegiality and other of the many kinds of affinity and affiliation."²⁹ The main social activity involved in generating values-based communities is the construction of axiological paradigms.³⁰ These are the preferred ways of understanding and evaluating reality from which derive what is normal and deviant, beneficial and harmful, praiseworthy and blameworthy, and so on.³¹ In order to win the adherence of the other to the value position(s) being put forward, persuasion plays a pivotal role in naturalizing these models or portraying them as "common sense" (or consensual knowledge) thus making it socially difficult to argue against them.³²

It is important to remember that solidarity will vary with reference to members' strength of commitment to the group's core values. Thus, one can expect members' value positions to be

26. Fairclough (*Discourse and Social Change*, 63) reminds us that language use is more than a "purely individual activity or mere reflex of situational variables"; it is a means of acting upon the world and upon each other.

27. See Dvorak, "Interpersonal Metafunction," 3; Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 211.

28. See Thompson and Hunston, "Evaluation: An Introduction," 5.

29. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 211.

30. Axiology is "the study of things with regard to their value dimension" (Neville, *Reconstruction of Thinking*, 12).

31. See Dvorak, "Interpersonal Metafunction," 4. See also White, "Evaluative Semantics," 38.

32. See Dvorak, "Interpersonal Meaning," 42–44; Goatly, *Critical Reading and Writing*, 50, 147–60; Martin, "Reading Positions/Positioning Readers," 22–37.

plotted at varying distances from the “center.” Moreover, because people (including the ancients) typically are members of more than one group, and because they regularly come into contact with members of other groups, they are open to pressures to conform to the values of the others and their group(s). This, as a result, creates a more or less agonistic context that has a multi-voiced, or in Bakhtinian terms, heteroglossic backdrop “. . . made up of contradictory opinions, points of view and value judgments . . . pregnant with responses and objections.”³³ Each of these voices vies for attention and adherence, so that to some degree every person is involved both in convincing themselves that the value position(s) they have taken up should be maintained and in persuading others to adopt it as well. This is where the social actions of “creating, reinforcing, modifying, or extinguishing” beliefs and behaviors, as emphasized in our working definition above, come into play as part of the constant churn of values negotiation.

2.3 Semantics of Persuasion

Finally, persuasion obviously involves communication. Of course, language is not the only means of exchanging persuasive messages, but it is the primary means of doing so.³⁴ The important point here is not so much *that* language is used to persuade but *how* it is used. Since persuasion is a social action that construes and reconstrues power and solidarity role structures, both of which are tenor variables in register, the semantics of persuasion get expressed as interpersonal meanings.³⁵ These are the meanings people make “to approve or disapprove; to express belief, opinion, doubt; to include in the social group, or exclude from it; to ask and answer; to express personal feelings; . . .”³⁶ and so on. These have in common the

33. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 281; Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction, 40–41.

34. See Gass and Seiter, *Persuasion, Social Influence, and Compliance Gaining*, 30–31. See Halliday, *Social Semiotic*, 9.

35. See Halliday, “Functional Basis,” 316–17.

36. Halliday, “Functional Basis,” 316.

expression of *evaluation*, that is, a person's stance toward the entities or propositions that are at risk in the negotiation of values.³⁷ It is through evaluation—or appraisal,³⁸ as I refer to it—that, on the one hand, people confirm and defend their own values and, on the other hand, present those values to others with varying degrees of force for the purpose of generating adherence and solidarity or, perhaps, intentionally to create a separation between “us” and “them” (e.g., 3 John).

2.4 *Summary*

Thus far, I have argued that persuasion is a social action that is both enabled and constrained by the contextual features of power and solidarity; that its purpose is either to solidify or to modify one's own or another's value positions; and that it accomplishes this purpose by positioning oneself or others through the taking up of stance which is, itself, done through expressions of appraisal. I turn now to a brief description of the model to be deployed for the purpose of interpreting the relative persuasiveness of a text.

3. *Model and Method: Appraisal*³⁹

Since persuasion occurs through the semantics of evaluation, it seems most appropriate to use a model of discourse analysis⁴⁰ that is designed to analyze evaluation, viz. Appraisal Theory.⁴¹

37. See Thompson and Hunston, “Evaluation: An Introduction,” 5; also, Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 3.

38. “Appraisal” used here and throughout “refers inclusively to all the evaluative resources of language that a person may use to adopt particular stances or value positions and to negotiate these stances with potential and/or actual respondents” (Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 4; see White, “Overview,” 2).

39. This section of the paper draws heavily on my dissertation (Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 50–104).

40. “Discourse analysis” refers to text-oriented linguistic analysis. See Porter, *Linguistic Analysis*, 133–43.

41. This sort of analysis has traditionally been the work of rhetorical critics, both of the classical (Betz and Kennedy) and “new” (Perelman and

The model describes appraisal as a major discourse semantic resource from which language users make selections in order to make and exchange evaluative meanings. This resource is depicted visually in Fig. 1 as a system network.⁴²

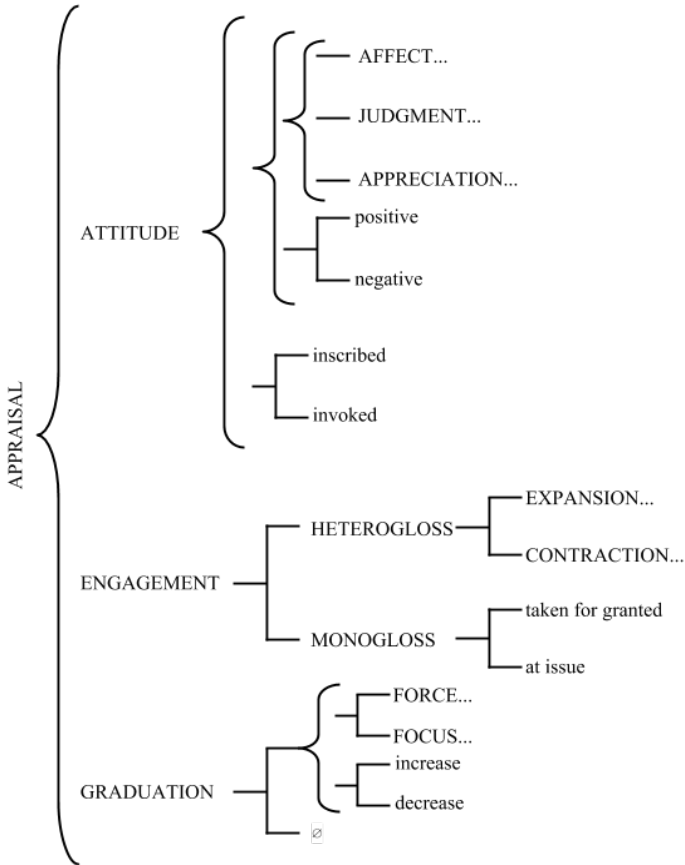


Fig. 1 An Overview of the APPRAISAL System Network⁴³

Olbrechts-Tyteca) varieties. Although both of these approaches *may* help interpreters determine *that* a given text is supposed to be persuasive or convincing, in the end they lack the heuristic ability to explain *why* and/or *how* a text is persuasive or convincing (Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 50–51).

42. See Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 3.

43. Revised and expanded from Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,”

Reading the diagram from left to right, the entry condition of the outermost system, APPRAISAL, is the language user's choice to evaluate someone or something in the context of situation or colloquy. The rounded bracket that opens to the subsystems of ATTITUDE, ENGAGEMENT, and GRADUATION, each of which I define below, indicates that the language user may make selections from any or all of these subsystems in the formulation of her or his evaluation. As more delicate selections are made within each subsystem, the options become binary, which is represented in Fig. 1 by squared brackets. For example, when a language user makes selections from ATTITUDE, she or he has the option of stating those evaluations either explicitly (inscribed) or implicitly (invoked) but not both. More delicate selections may be made from three additional subsystems, AFFECT, JUDGMENT, and APPRECIATION, but these selections are limited in terms of polarity to either positive or negative. Selections from the ENGAGEMENT system are more limited in that the language user must decide whether to assume and portray in the colloquy the existence of other voices/value positions (HETEROGLOSS) or not (MONOGLOSS), and if the former, whether to dialogue with those voices (EXPANSION) or to squelch them (CONTRACTION), but not both.

3.1 *ATTITUDE*

The first of the subsystems of APPRAISAL that is represented in Fig. 1 is ATTITUDE. Broadly speaking, this sub-system describes the resources for expressing the kinds of feelings that have traditionally been discussed under the rubrics of emotion, ethics, and aesthetics.⁴⁴ These are the features that language users call upon to encode positive or negative feelings, emotions, and attitudes (including judgments and appreciations) about some entity, proposition, or proposal.⁴⁵ Appraisal Theory posits that,

51. See also Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 38, 134, and 154. For more on system networks, see Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 7–16.

44. Dvorak, "Interpersonal Metafunction," 52.

45. See Ochs and Schiefflen, "Language Has a Heart," 7–25.

interpersonally, selections of ATTITUDE have a rhetorical or instrumental effect on readers or hearers. Generally speaking, expressions of ATTITUDE function as invitations to or demands upon readers (depending on the power relationship in the situation) to form sympathetic bonds with the writer and the writer's value position. If readers accept this invitation and adopt the same feelings as the writer, then some level of solidarity is generated⁴⁶ and persuasion (or convincing) is entailed to some degree. This is referred to as "attitudinal positioning."⁴⁷ The model also accounts for both inscribed realizations of affect as well as invoked realizations. The former are those realizations of a more explicit, direct nature such as ἀγαπῶ τὸν πατέρα ('I love the Father' [John 15:31]), which directly inscribes the speaker's feeling of love and loyalty toward the Father. The latter are less direct or implied realizations, often expressing the attitude through descriptions of affective behaviors such as ἱκανὸς δὲ κλαυθμὸς ἐγένετο πάντων ('But considerable weeping began among them all' [Acts 20:37]), where the weeping that ensued among the Ephesian elders implies a feeling of sadness or sorrow.

3.2 AFFECT

ATTITUDE is, itself, comprised of three additional subsystems: AFFECT, JUDGMENT, and APPRECIATION. AFFECT describes the resources for encoding positive or negative feelings

46. See Dvorak, "Interpersonal Metafunction," 55–56. This rhetorical effect varies slightly depending on two factors. The first factor is related to the source of the attitudinal evaluation. In first-person (authorial) attitudinal evaluations, the writer assumes responsibility for the feeling, and thereby asks the reader to feel the same way. Second-person and third-person (non-authorial) attitudinal evaluations function slightly differently. These locutions make it appear as though the writer merely reports the attitudinal evaluations of others. However, the attributed evaluators function as "surrogate evaluators" for the writer (White, "Attitude/Affect," 6). That is, the writer indicates positive or negative attitudinal appraisals by having some reported source respond to the phenomenon under consideration.

47. See Dvorak, "Interpersonal Metafunction," 5.

as they pertain to people, things, processes, or states of affair. These include:

- “moods of happy or sad and the possibility of directing these feelings at a Trigger by liking or disliking it”⁴⁸
- psycho-social feelings including fear, anxiety, confidence, and trust relative to a person’s world and others with whom they share it⁴⁹
- feelings of achievement and frustration in relation to social activities in which one is actively or passively involved⁵⁰

For example, at Phil. 4:11 Paul writes: *ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον ἐν οἷς εἰμι ἀυτάρκης εἶναι* (‘For I learned to be *content* in whatever circumstances’). This text expresses Paul’s feeling of security whether he has plenty or is in need. Not only does it reveal his stance toward trusting in God’s provision through the hands of the Philippians in situations of plenty or need, it also nudges the readers to adopt the same trusting attitude as they, themselves, may experience plenty or need.

3.3 JUDGMENT

JUDGMENT pertains to the resources with which people positively or negatively appraise behavior in relation to group boundaries and norms. Judgments are of two major types. Judgments of *sanction* generally have to do with veracity (i.e., how truthful someone is) or with propriety (i.e., how ethical someone is), while judgments of *esteem* have to do with normality (i.e., how usual or unusual someone is), with capacity (i.e., how able or capable someone is), or with tenacity (i.e., how resolute or dependable a person is).⁵¹ Hebrews 3:19 provides an illustration of both kinds of judgments. The writer says that the ancients ‘were not able to enter [God’s rest] on account of unbelief’ (οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν εἰσελθεῖν δι’ ἀπιστίαν). ‘Unable’ (ἠδυνήθησαν) implies a negative judgment of esteem regarding the ancients’ capacity to act, and ‘unbelief’ (ἀπιστίαν), which is

48. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 49.

49. Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 62.

50. Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 63.

51. See Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 65.

given as the reason for their incapacity and which is tied very closely to disobedience in the context, is a negative judgment of sanction with regard to propriety. This “double whammy” makes absolutely clear that the writer values trust and obedience, and that the Christian community being addressed should adopt and demonstrate those values in their own situation.

3.4 APPRECIATION

The third subsystem of ATTITUDE is APPRECIATION, which maps the resources people use to appraise positively or negatively such things as form, appearance, composition, impact, and significance, as well as to assign value or honor to things, ideas, and people. Thus, appreciations revolve around one’s reactions to the beauty, orderliness, balance, or detail of things, as well as to their social significance.⁵² A clear example of APPRECIATION occurs at 1 Tim 1:15: πιστὸς ὁ λόγος καὶ πάσης ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιος (‘This saying is *trustworthy* and *worthy of full acceptance*’). The λόγος (‘saying/message’) referred to here is twice appreciated positively. Expressing that it is both ‘trustworthy’ and ‘worthy of full acceptance’ powerfully indicates the very high value the author ascribes to the text and the value position it promotes, and it nudges readers to appreciate it likewise. Another example occurs at Col 2:5 where expressions of AFFECT and APPRECIATION occur together. Here, Paul expresses feelings of joy (χαίρων) as he considers the orderliness and firmness (τὴν τάξιν καὶ τὸ στερέωμα) of the readers’ faith. Χαίρων realizes a selection from AFFECT and both τάξιν and στερέωμα realize selections from APPRECIATION. The latter two terms realize positive appreciation of the readers’ faith. The former not only signifies Paul’s happy feelings about the orderliness and firmness of the Colossians’ faith but also invites them to feel the same way about it and, thus, to be convinced that their faith is legitimate and

52. This is important because aesthetic achievements are often used as “weapons of justification and legitimation” for various value positions (cf. Malina, *Christian Origins*, 50).

needs not to be amended by the hollow teachings of others (see Col 2:8).

3.5 ENGAGEMENT

The second major piece of the APPRAISAL system alongside ATTITUDE is ENGAGEMENT.⁵³ The meanings made through choices from this area of semiosis traditionally have been dealt with under the headings of “modality,” “epistemic modality,” and “evidentiality.”⁵⁴ The model extends the traditional approach by attending not only to writer certainty, commitment, and knowledge with regard to what is spoken or written about but also to the matter of how the writer or speaker engages and positions her or his own voice vis-à-vis other voices and value positions that are referenced in the text.⁵⁵ In other words, this subsystem offers choices for mapping how one presents herself or himself “as recognizing, answering, ignoring, challenging, rejecting, fending off, anticipating, or accommodating actual or potential interlocutors and the value positions they represent.”⁵⁶ These actions turn on whether a writer wishes to expand or contract dialogue in relation to the alternative voices comprising the heteroglossic backdrop of the text.

3.5.1 *Dialogic Contraction: Proclamation and Disclamation.*

Dialogic *contraction* is accomplished through making either proclamations or disclamations. *Proclamations* are expressed in one of three ways. First, a writer may *concur* with their addressees. These are “formulations which announce the addresser as agreeing with, or having the same knowledge as, some projected dialogic partner.”⁵⁷ Second, proclamations may

53. See Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 77–93.

54. See Lyons, *Semantics*, 2:787–849; Palmer, *Mood and Modality*; Chafe, “Evidentiality,” 261–72.

55. See Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 2; White, “Beyond Modality and Hedging,” 259–84; White, “Dialogue and Inter-Subjectivity,” 67–80.

56. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 2. See Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 5.

57. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 122.

be expressed through the *endorsement* of some externally sourced proposition that the writer construes as being correct, valid, or undeniable.⁵⁸ Third, proclamations may be expressed as *pronouncements*. These are formulations involving “authorial emphases or explicit interventions or interpolations”⁵⁹ that intend to overpower any contrary voice.

As an example of dialogic contraction, consider *endorsement*. In these locutions, writers exploit the grammar of reported speech to ground the proposition or proposal in some external source,⁶⁰ yet—and this is key—they do not completely dissociate their own voices from those of the external sources. Endorsements often occur in the New Testament as so-called “indirect speech” and some direct quotations. However, direct quotations that are set apart with the introductory formula *γέγραπται* (‘it is written’) are typically classed as attributions (discussed below) since in those locutions the writer’s own voice is replaced by that of the external voice. An example of endorsement is found at 1 Pet 5:5: πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε, ὅτι [Ο] θεὸς ὑπερηφάνους ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν (‘Now all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for *God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble*’). In this instance, Peter quotes a text from Prov 3:34 LXX, but it is portrayed as his own voice and not explicitly as the voice of God or tradition.

As mentioned, writers may also contract dialogue by means of *disclamation*.⁶¹ This happens when a language user invokes an alternative point of view only to explicitly reject, replace, or show it to be unsustainable.⁶² There are two ways to do this: one may outright *deny* an alternative value position or one may *counter* it with another.⁶³ Expressions of countering are fairly

58. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 126. See Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 79.

59. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 127. See Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 81–82.

60. See Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 126.

61. See Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 82–84.

62. Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 82.

63. See Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 83–84.

common in the New Testament. One example is found at 1 Cor 3:6, where Paul states that he planted the gospel and Apollos watered it, but lest the readers think on the basis of these actions that Paul or Apollos are anything more than mere servants of God, Paul counters with ‘but God gave the increase’ (ἀλλ’ ὁ θεὸς αὐξάνειν).

3.5.2 *Dialogic Expansion: Consideration and Attribution.* The alternative to dialogic contraction is dialogic *expansion*, which actively creates and often leaves open semiotic “space” for other points of view. There are two ways to expand dialogue in text: by *consideration*⁶⁴ or by *attribution*. Considerations are commonly realized by expository or open questions, verbal mood, modal adjuncts, and certain mental process projections.⁶⁵ *Attributions*, like endorsements, make reference to some external source. However, whereas in endorsements writers adopt reported speech as their own, in attribution they let the sourced texts speak for themselves to comment on the proposition or proposal at issue.

Attribution is common in the New Testament, often expressed through direct quotations where the introductory formula ‘it is written’ is used. For example, at Galatians 3:10 Paul asserts, ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν (‘For those who rely on works of the law are under a curse’). Immediately following this proclamation, he adds, γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά (‘For it is written, “Everyone who does not carefully observe everything written in the book of the Law in order to do these things is cursed”). Paul, thus, garners support for his assertion from the voice of the Torah itself. This is rhetorically powerful because it positions any alternative point of

64. Martin and White call this “entertain(ment),” as did I in my dissertation (see Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 85–87). I have since changed the term to “consideration” in order to communicate that the alternative position is up for consideration in the colloquy.

65. See Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 104–45; Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 85.

view as standing opposed not necessarily to Paul but to scripture, tradition, and the teachings of God.⁶⁶

3.6 GRADUATION

Finally, the third major subsystem of APPRAISAL is GRADUATION,⁶⁷ which traditionally has been discussed under such headings as “intensification,” “vague language,” and “hedging.”⁶⁸ Resources in this system allow language users to grade or scale meanings made from the other systems. As Martin and White note,

. . . a defining property of all attitudinal meanings is their gradability. It is a general property of values of affect, judgment, and appreciation that they construe greater or lesser degrees of positivity or negativity. . . . Gradability is also generally a feature of the engagement system [where meaning scales] more broadly for the degree of the [writer’s] intensity or the degree of investment in the utterance.⁶⁹

Although the model of GRADUATION is quite delicate, it will suffice to point out its two major options: (1) sharpening or blurring focus or (2) increasing or decreasing force. Focus allows for scaling things in terms of prototypicality, as in, for example, Paul’s address of Timothy as his ‘true/genuine son in the faith’ (*γνησίῳ τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει*) at 1 Tim 1:2. Rhetorically, sharpening focus indicates that a writer is maximally invested in the value position being advanced, while softening focus indicates that a writer is less than fully invested in the value position.⁷⁰

Force describes the resources for up-scaling or down-scaling the intensity of propositions or proposals. Increased force construes a writer as highly committed to the value position being advanced as well as strongly attempting to align readers to that value position.⁷¹ Alternatively, downscaling force tends to

66. See Lemke, *Textual Politics*, 49–57, on the function of intertextual thematic formations.

67. See Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 84–104.

68. See Labov, “Intensity,” 43–70; Channell, *Vague Language*, 1–22; and Lakoff, “Hedges,” 183–228.

69. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 135–36.

70. Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 95.

71. Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 95.

construe a writer as less than fully committed to a value position.⁷² The scaling force gets realized in quite a number of ways, but common expressions in the New Testament include repetition, the “piling up” of semantically related words, and the “piling up” of attitude (e.g., *κλαύσετε και θρηνήσετε* ὑμεῖς [‘You will weep and you will wail’ (John 16:20)]); the use of adverbial or adjectival modifiers of scale (e.g., οἱ μαθηταὶ ἐξεπλήσσοντο *σφόδρα* [‘The disciples were exceedingly perplexed’ (Matt 19:25)]); and the use of lexical items that are infused with greater or lesser degrees of force (compare, e.g., φόβος [pertaining to being afraid] with ἔκφοβος [pertaining to being terrified]).⁷³

3.7 *Prosody*

Having outlined the basic resources of the APPRAISAL system, a word needs to be said about how Appraisal Theory articulates prosody. So far what has been described is the system of APPRAISAL and its primary subsystems, which emphasizes the notion that language is a vast system of networks that comprise meaning potential,⁷⁴ and that specific meanings are made when language users make selections from these networks. However, Systemic Functional Linguistics puts forward a structural perspective that is complementary to this systemic perspective. The structural perspective “foregrounds the inherent temporality of semiotic processes—they unfold through time, and phases of this process enter into interdependent relations with one another by way of signaling the meanings that are being made” via selections from the system.⁷⁵ Pike is usually credited as the first linguist to acknowledge different kinds of text structuring principles when he noted the following:

72. Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 96.

73. On φόβος see LN 25.251 and on ἔκφοβος see LN 25.256.

74. Meaning potential is defined in terms of culture, not in terms of the mind as in the Chomskyan notion of competence. See Halliday, *Explorations in the Functions of Language*, 52.

75. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 17.

Within tagmemic theory there is an assertion that at least three perspectives are utilized by Homo sapiens. On the one hand, he often acts as if he were cutting up sequences into chunks—into segments or *particles* . . . On the other hand, he often senses things are somehow flowing together as ripples on the tide, merging into one another in the form of a hierarchy of little *waves* of experience on still bigger waves. These two perspectives, in turn, are supplemented by a third—the concept of *field* in which intersecting properties of experience cluster into bundles of simultaneous characteristics which together make up the patterns of his experience.⁷⁶

Halliday and his followers extend this notion by associating kinds of structure with kinds of meaning. Using Martin’s terms, ideational or presentational⁷⁷ meaning is configured segmentally into a *particulate structure* typically consisting of a nucleus (i.e., a Process and Medium), margin (i.e., Agent), and periphery (i.e., circumstances) (Fig. 2).

οὗτος He	προσκαλεσάμενος Βαρναβᾶν καὶ Σαῦλον having summoned Barnabas and Saul	ἐπεζήτησεν sought	ἀκοῦσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ to hear the word of God
Margin (Agent)	Periphery (Circumstance Role)	Nucleus (Process)	Periphery (Circumstance Role)

Fig. 2 Example of Particulate Structure (Acts 13:7)

Textual or organizational⁷⁸ meaning, according to Martin, exhibits *periodic structure* which is configured in “waves of information”⁷⁹ that establish “peaks of prominence”⁸⁰ in the clause. In Hellenistic Greek, this information is organized by position in the clause, where the first position, the Prime, is used to highlight who or what the clause is about, and the remainder

76. Pike, *Linguistic Concepts*, 12–13. See also Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 17–18.

77. “Presentational meaning” comes from Lemke, *Textual Politics*, 41.

78. “Organizational meaning” comes from Lemke, *Textual Politics*, 41.

79. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 19.

80. Martin, “Text and Clause,” 26.

of the clause, the Subsequent, is used to develop the Prime (Fig. 3).⁸¹

ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων αὐτῶν Διοτρέφης The one who loves to be first among them, Diotrefes,	οὐκ (does) not	ἐπιδέχεται receive	ἡμᾶς us
Prime	Subsequent		

Fig. 3 Example of Prime and Subsequent Analysis (3 John 9)

Most important for the current study is the characterization of interpersonal or orientational⁸² meaning as *prosodic structure*.⁸³ The notion of prosody stems from phonology, where prosody describes how tone rises and falls in a continuous movement throughout an entire tone group as it unfolds.⁸⁴ Halliday perceived an analogous connection to interpersonal/orientational semantics:

The interpersonal component of meaning is the speaker's ongoing intrusion into the speech situation. It is his perspective on the exchange, his assigning and acting out of speech roles. Interpersonal meanings cannot be easily expressed as configurations of discrete elements [as with ideational meanings] . . . The essence of the meaning potential of this part of the semantic system is that most of the options are associated with the action of meaning as a whole . . . this interpersonal meaning . . . is strung throughout the clause as a continuous motif or coloring . . . the effect is cumulative . . . we shall refer to this type of realization as "prosodic," since the meaning is distributed like a prosody through a continuous stretch of discourse.⁸⁵

There are three types of prosodic realization. The first is *saturation*, which is generated most commonly in the New Testament when a particular choice of ATTITUDE manifests itself wherever it can at clause level or beyond. For example, at Acts 13:10, when Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit and having

81. See now Dvorak, "Thematization," 20 and Dvorak and Walton, "Clause as Message," 42–45.

82. "Orientational meaning" is from Lemke, *Textual Politics*, 41.

83. Martin, "Text and Clause," 10.

84. Martin, "Text and Clause," 10.

85. Halliday, "Modes of Meaning," 206.

just learned that Elymas was trying to divert the proconsul from the faith, unleashes a severely negative judgment of Elymas all in a lengthy address formula: ὦ πλήρης παντὸς δόλου καὶ πάσης ῥαδιουργίας, υἱὲ διαβόλου, ἐχθρὲ πάσης δικαιοσύνης (‘O son of the devil who is full of every kind of deceit and all wickedness, enemy of every righteous thing’).⁸⁶ What’s more, this chain of negative judgment is followed by the leading question, οὐ παύσῃ διαστρέφων τὰς ὁδοὺς τοῦ κυρίου τὰς εὐθείας; (‘will you not cease making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?’), which creates a *concurrency* in the text on the point that Elymas will, indeed, *not* stop twisting the paths of the Lord—a token of negative judgment. This stretch of text is clearly saturated with negative judgment and it generates a negative prosody that reverberates to the reader and positions her or him to join in the negative judgment of Elymas.

A second kind of prosodic realization is *intensification*. This type of prosody results from selections from the system of GRADUATION that amplify force. As Martin and White put it, this kind of prosody “creates a bigger splash which reverberates through the surrounding discourse.”⁸⁷ For example, at Matt 2:10 when the *magoi* saw that the star they were following came to rest over the place where Jesus was, Matthew writes that they ἐχάρησαν χαρὰν μεγάλην σφόδρα (‘they rejoiced exceedingly a great joy’). Here the uses of the verb χαίρω and cognate noun χαρά as well as the two modifiers that up-scale force, μεγάλη and σφόδρα, generate an intense positive prosody that radiates through the surrounding discourse and outward to the reader positioning her or him to join in the same joyful response.

The third kind of prosodic realization is *domination*. As the label suggests, this kind of prosody is associated with “meanings that have other meanings under their scope.”⁸⁸ Realizations of this kind of prosody occur in clause complexes where the dominant clause somehow “colors” (e.g., modalization) the content of the dependent clause or, perhaps more common in the

86. See Dvorak, “Positioning Readers with Perspective.”

87. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 20.

88. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 20.

New Testament, where Adjuncts (e.g., adverbial participle clauses) color the proposition or proposal of the main process of the clause. For example, at Matt 1:19, Matthew records, Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς, δίκαιος ὢν καὶ μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν δειγματίσαι, ἐβουλήθη λάθρα ἀπολῦσαι αὐτήν ('Now, her husband Joseph, *being just and not wanting to publicly disgrace her*, wished to divorce her privately'). In this instance, Matthew's editorial comment 'being just and not wanting to disgrace her' puts a positive "spin" on his desire to divorce Mary. This is an important move in light of the fact that Matthew generally portrays divorce negatively (cf. Matt 5 and 19).⁸⁹ Here, however, readers are positioned to view Joseph and his inclination to divorce Mary as at least merciful if not even honorable.

3.8 Summary

Although this section has provided only a brief description of the model, it should be enough to provide a sense of its utility. Essentially, the model of appraisal presented above offers a framework for analyzing the persuasive intent of a text. This is based on the premise that persuasion is concerned with positioning others to adopt certain value positions and to eschew others, and that appraisal or evaluation is a key means of accomplishing this kind of reader positioning. Positive or negative expressions of ATTITUDE (i.e., AFFECT, JUDGMENT, and APPRECIATION) reverberate prosodically through portions of text sometimes inviting and sometimes invoking readers to adopt the same feeling and the perspective on the person or topic at hand that such a feeling requires. Additionally, persuaders, by making selections from the ENGAGEMENT system, can utilize various means of expanding or contracting dialogue with alternative value positions. In this way, they can potentially cause a shift in the readers' perspective with regard to those alternative points of view, assuming a compliant reading or hearing. Further, language users can call upon the system of GRADUATION to manage both FORCE and FOCUS such that certain points of view might be foregrounded and others

89. See Keener, *Matthew*, 189–92 and 462–72.

backgrounded as values are negotiated. In short, the model provides a way for discourse analysts to identify what value positions are at stake in a given colloquy and how a writer positions her or his intended audience to adopt the ones that she or he thinks should be adopted.

In the final section of this paper, I will apply the model to 1 Cor 1:26–31, in which I will highlight examples of both ATTITUDE and ENGAGEMENT that Paul employs for persuasive purposes. I will also draw attention to realizations of GRADUATION where they appear to contribute significantly to the semantics of the unit of text under discussion.

4. The Model Applied: 1 Corinthians 1:26–31

David deSilva rightly observes that “an especially critical issue for Paul in the Corinthian correspondence is detaching the believers there from their tendency to evaluate a person’s worth by the values of the Greco-Roman culture in which they lived.”⁹⁰ Having heard the report of the envy-driven conflict among them (cf. 1:11), Paul set out to convince (again) the Corinthian Christians that what they were doing was inappropriate in the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ. This message is no more apparent than in 1 Cor 1:26–31. Prior to this text, Paul has quite ably argued (1) that judging by the world’s standards destroys solidarity/unity among the believers (wholeness is the value put at risk), and (2) that Jesus’ death was actually God’s way of rendering the world’s value system obsolete and void of any power (cf. 1:10–25). In 1:26–31, Paul makes a strong move to bring this point home to the readers. In what follows, I will highlight a number of key persuasive features using the model described above. As will be pointed out, Paul’s selections from the systems of ATTITUDE and ENGAGEMENT play a significant role in his attempt at persuading the readers to think, believe, and act in a way Paul believes is consonant with the values taught in scripture and lived out by Jesus Christ.

90. deSilva, *Honor*, 74–75.

4.1 Attitudinal Analysis⁹¹

The unit begins with a command issued to the readers to consider (βλέπετε) their own station in life (κλήσις).⁹² Immediately following this command, Paul, apparently applies the world's standards to the readers (note *κατὰ σάρκα* ['according to the flesh']), supplies the vision of themselves they are to see: 'many are not wise' (οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοί), 'many are not influential' (οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί), and 'many are not of high status' (οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς). A few observations are in order.⁹³ First, the three appraisals are parallel in clause structure, and the adjectives Paul uses all overlap in the semantic domain of social status (cf. LN domain 87). Second, in each clause the negative particle οὐ occupies the prime, emphatic position, which realizes a selection from GRADUATION so as to signal prominently negative appraisal. Third, each appraisal is a negative *appreciation* rather than negative judgment. That is, Paul is not here judging the readers' behavior but their social status or worth in society as the world would see them. Taken all together, these features generate a negative prosody both by saturation and by intensification, with the result that the text packs a relatively powerful interpersonal/orientational semiotic punch. The point is to position the readers to conclude that if they were to judge themselves by the world's standards, as they, apparently, are doing to others, they would find they, themselves, are not socially extraordinary in any way. There is, thus, no foundation for boasting (v. 29).

But at v. 27, things change. Paul continues to make selections from APPRECIATION; however, it is no longer Paul who appraises but God, and his appraisals are betokened by his

91. In this section, I use a number of notations that need explanation: "t" stands for token, which identifies invoked or implied realizations of attitude; -ve stands for negative; +ve stands for positive.

92. It is not likely that κλήσις bears the sense of "(divine) calling" here (LN domain 33). It is more likely to mean "station in life" here (LN domain 87), since the series of adjectives with which it collocates are from LN 87 (i.e., σοφοί, δυνατοί, and εὐγενεῖς).

93. These are from Dvorak, "Interpersonal Metafunction," 147–48.

actions, which are presented in a series of three cause-condition⁹⁴ clause complexes:

- (1) ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός,
ἵνα κατασχῶνῃ τοὺς σοφοὺς

But God chose the foolish of the world
in order to shame the wise
- (2) καὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός,
ἵνα κατασχῶνῃ τὰ ἰσχυρά

and God chose the non-influential of the world,
in order to shame the influential
- (3) καὶ τὰ ἀγενῆ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὰ ἐξουθενημένα ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, τὰ
μὴ ὄντα, ἵνα τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ

and God chose the insignificant of the world and the despised, the
nobodies, in order to render powerless the somebodies.

This threefold structure corresponds to Paul's three evaluations in v. 26;⁹⁵ however, here the prosody is not solely negative but alternates between positive and negative. In each of the main clauses, the desiderative/volitional process ἐξελέξατο ('he chose') operates as a token of God's positive appreciation toward the μωρὰ ('foolish'), ἀσθενῆ ('non-influential'), and ἀγενῆ ('insignificant') respectively.⁹⁶ By choosing those who inhabit these social categories,⁹⁷ God bestows honor upon them and

94. See Halliday and Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 418; Reed, "Discourse Analysis," 206–8.

95. The correspondence is not exact. In this set of clause complexes, the final complex varies slightly in length, lexical selection, and scope (though it has the same basic structure). Whereas the previous two clauses have single complements (τὰ μωρὰ and τὰ ἀσθενῆ respectively), this clause contains a double complement, the second of which is a frontgrounded substantival perfect passive participle (τὰ ἀγενῆ and τὰ ἐξουθενημένα). Moreover, the second complement is further defined by an additional substantival participle (τὰ μὴ ὄντα). For these reasons, the third complex should be seen as prominent. See OpenText.org for the clause and word group structures.

96. See LN 30.92. This connects back to εὐδόκησεν in v. 21, which shares the same semantic domain (see LN 30.97).

97. Although each epithet is neuter plural (τὰ μωρὰ, τὰ ἀσθενῆ, τὰ ἀγενῆ, τὰ ἐξουθενημένα, and τὰ μὴ ὄντα), they each refer to social categories and, thus, may be thought of personally. See Theissen, "Social Stratification," 70–

thereby demon-strates that he positively values them (t, +ve APPRECIATION: valuation). However, that God chooses the foolish, non-influential, and insignificant for the purpose of (ἵνα) shaming the wise and influential and rendering powerless the “somebodies” signifies his negative valuation of those inhabiting these latter categories and, by extension, the ideology by which they operate (t, -ve APPRECIATION: valuation).⁹⁸ This is represented by the processes *καταισχύνη* (‘he would shame’) and *καταργήση* (‘he would destroy’). Being shamed is clearly a negative action in the sociocultural context. It is the social process of status degradation in which one’s honor is stripped resulting in being seen as “less than valuable” by others.⁹⁹ Further, the sense of *καταργήση* is constrained by virtue of its collocation with *καταισχύνη*; here it signifies taking away the power/status and influence of the “somebodies.”

At v. 29 there is a marked shift from appreciation to judgment, which indicates that Paul now invokes the theme of reversal to appraise a behavior.¹⁰⁰ This clause portrays the reason why God exalted the humble and humbled the exalted: ‘so that all humanity should not boast in the presence of God’ (*ὅπως μὴ καυχῆσονται πάντα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ*). In light of the actions of God described in vv. 27–28, ‘should not boast’ speaks to the impropriety of staking a claim to honor on the basis of one’s own achievements or of using the benefactions from God for self-aggrandizing purposes (- JUDGMENT: propriety).¹⁰¹ The clause ‘the one who boasts is to boast in the Lord’ (v. 31), which forms something of an inclusio with v. 29, speaks to the propriety of

72; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 76; Engberg-Pedersen, “The Gospel and Social Practice,” 562; Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 173–76.

98. On glossing τὰ ὄντα as “somebodies” (and τὰ μὴ ὄντα as “nobodies”), see Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 185 (though he uses “somethings” and “nothings”).

99. See deSilva, *Honor*, 25; Malina and Neyrey, “Honor and Shame in Luke–Acts,” 45.

100. Tucker rightly says the ὅπως “encompasses the three previous ἵνα clauses” (*You Belong to Christ*, 175) and, thus, states the greater overall purpose of the three previous cause-condition complexes.

101. See deSilva, “Honor Discourse,” 67.

boasting but only ‘in the Lord’ (+ JUDGMENT: propriety), so as to give ‘the Lord’ due honor for his beneficence. Sandwiched between these verses is a poignant explanation as to why it is the Lord and not any human that deserves honor: ‘it is by him you are in Christ Jesus’ (v. 30). The readers, who earlier in this unit were appraised as less than remarkable, are now re-appraised positively but only because they are ‘in Christ’ (t, + APPRECIATION: valuation) and they are so only because God’s election of the despised and unworthy made it possible.

4.2 Engagement Analysis

In terms of ENGAGEMENT, this unit is largely dialogically contractive due to the use of a number of disclamations. These are realized as denials in each of the three paratactic content clauses in v. 26 and are signaled by the negative particle οὐ. In the first clause, Paul rejects the view that ‘many were wise according to the flesh’; in the second he rejects the view that ‘many were influential’; and in the third he rejects the view that ‘many were of high status.’ These denials potentially put writer-reader solidarity at risk since they reject positive assessments of the readers’ social status. However, ἀλλά signals to the readers that Paul is about to offer some kind of counter proposition. To do so, Paul utilizes antonymy to pair each of the denials with a corresponding counter in vv. 27–28 (σοφοί : μωρά :: δυνατοί : ἀσθενῆ :: εὐγενεῖς : ἀγενῆ). Each counter realigns the readers by supplanting the negative propositions with positive ones.

DENY	COUNTER-EXPECTANCY	COUNTER
οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ		τὰ μωρὰ . . . ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός
οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί	ἀλλά	τὰ ἀσθενῆ . . . ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός
οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς		τὰ ἀγενῆ . . . ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός

Fig. 4 Deny–Counter Counterexpectancies

The final clause of the unit, ‘so that—just as it is written—The one who boasts is to boast in the Lord’ is important. Paul quotes Jer 9:22–23 LXX, introducing it with the formula ‘it is

written,' thereby signaling an attribution. Thus, Paul squelches his own voice and allows the voice of scripture/tradition/God to comment on the matter. That voice monoglossically pronounces that all boasting is excluded, except boasting "in the Lord." This puts the readers in the position of either compliantly taking up the same point of view or resisting scripture, tradition, and/or God.

5. *Summary and Conclusion*

Even in just this brief analysis of a relatively short stretch of text, the model of appraisal has pointed out a number of features that are significant in Paul's attempt to persuade those seemingly powerful among his putative readers to stop judging their brothers and sisters by the standards of the world. First, the attitudinal analysis of v. 26 shows that those among the Corinthian believers who were making a claim to status/power by judging others in the assembly by the world's measuring stick would, themselves, not be able to live up to those standards. By those standards, they, too, would be judged "not wise," "not influential," and "not of high status." Assuming a compliant reading, the negative prosody generated through these three clauses would in the very least gain the attention of these people by challenging their honor.

A second feature identified by the attitudinal analysis is the alternation between positive and negative judgments in v. 27. It is significant that these judgments, as Paul portrays them, do not originate with Paul but with God, as is betokened by God's divine act of choosing. Yet, *that* God chose is *not* the most important point in this text; rather, it is *who* God chose that imbues this text with significant interpersonal/orientational meaning. The foolish, non-influential, and insignificant—those who are social "nobodies" according to the standards of the world (which, as Paul just pointed out, would also include those among the readers who are inappropriately judging their brothers and sisters)—are through God's choosing of them worthy of and invested with honor. What is more, God chose those inhabiting these social categories for the purpose of shaming those whom

the world would appraise as wise, influential, and noble—as “somebodies.” This means that God has undone the way the world typically measures and grants honor (see 1:18–25). Paul points out that the standards of the world no longer hold sway for those who are in Christ, and those who are in Christ are there solely by God’s doing (v. 30). Therefore, all human boasting is powerless and worthless. Those among the readers who claimed expertise in categorizing others and exercised the power to do so no longer have any foundation on which to stand. They are powerless, just like the standards they use to judge others. If the readers agree with God’s appraisals (as Paul portrays them), this would go a long way toward persuading them to change their beliefs and behaviors to something that aligns more closely with the core values of the *ἐκκλησία*, the assembly of Jesus followers.

Finally, the engagement analysis above pointed out the basic rhetorical structure of Paul’s argument. In v. 26 he denies that any of the readers were of any significant level of social status, which would potentially put solidarity with the readers at risk. However, he counters these denials with solidarity building proclamations that God chose people of low status—just like them—to be his people. This leads to the monoglossic statement that boasting is inappropriate, since it was by God’s doing through the cross of Christ that the readers are in Christ. This is followed by the quotation from scripture (once again God’s/tradition’s voice, not Paul’s) that the one who boasts should boast in the Lord. The use of denial-counter and monoglossic categorical statements virtually squelches all other value positions and points of view. All that is allowed, in the text at least, is the value positions that (a) human standards are supplanted by God’s standards; (b) judging fellow believers by the world’s standards is inappropriate for those in Christ; and (c) boasting in human accomplishment is inappropriate for those in Christ.

In the end, the core values of those who are part of the *ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ* that become evident in this text include: God’s standards of honor trump those of the world; boasting in the Lord is the only appropriate kind of boasting for believers; it is only by God’s gracious beneficence that believers gain life in

Christ. These are the things regarding which Paul wants to convince his readers.

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