

## **Appraisal in 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 and Examining Intertextual Relations to Jewish Mystic Texts**

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This essay is concerned with intertextual relations between Paul's account of the heavenly journey in 2 Cor 12:1–10 and its equivalents in Jewish literature. To achieve the goal, instead of a linear comparison of words and themes, the present study utilizes a linguistic theory, namely, the appraisal theory of systemic functional linguistics. Through the linguistic analysis, this study argues that though Paul's account in 2 Cor 12:1–10 presents structural, lexical, and formal affinities with these pericopes to Jewish literature, Paul's appraisal language, generated from its situational context, exhibits a different stance to the heavenly journey described in the Pauline text. Particularly, Paul mentions his esoteric experience while elaborating on his larger theme, the defense of his apostleship within the grace and power of God.

Keywords: intertextuality, 2 Corinthians, appraisal theory, systemic functional linguistics, semantics, heavenly journey

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### **Introduction**

Ever since Scholem's two major works<sup>1</sup> suggested a relationship between Jewish mysticism and New Testament studies, many have attempted to identify the relationship between Jewish mysticism and Paul's heavenly experience in 2 Cor 12:1–10.<sup>2</sup> Aligning

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<sup>1</sup> Scholem's third chapter of *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, entitled, "The Four Who Entered the Paradise and Paul's Ascension to Paradise," particularly stimulated debate about the relations between Jewish mysticism and Paul's accounts. See Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1960), 14–19; Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 3rd rev. ed. (New York: Schocken, 1954), 40–79.

<sup>2</sup> Bowker is one of the advocates of a connection between what have been called *merkabah* visions and the vision of Paul. Through a comparison between Paul's vision and Johanan ben Zakkai's vision, Bowker contends that there are sufficient similarities between the two traditions. John Bowker, "Merkabah Visions and the Visions of Paul," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 16, no. 2 (1971): 172. He suggests that "Paul practiced merkabah contemplation as an ordinary consequence of his highly extended Pharisaic training" (72). Not all scholars are supportive, of course. Schäfer criticizes Scholem, arguing that since no one can confirm an early date for the *merkabah* tradition, it would be misleading to label Paul's account as Jewish

Paul's account with the Jewish esoteric texts, Scholem contends that in 2 Cor 12:1–10 Paul is voicing an idea similar to that which the anecdote about “the four men who entered *pardes* [paradise]” in *hekhalot* literature exhibits.<sup>3</sup> The main support for this claim is the terminological and thematic similarity between the sets of texts.<sup>4</sup> Paul's account, the *merkabah* tradition, and *hekhalot* literature have similar terms and themes, such as

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mysticism. Peter Schäfer, “New Testament and Hekhalot Literature: The Journey into Heaven in Paul and in Merkavah Mysticism,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 35, no. 1 (1984): 19–35. By contrast, Alan Segal contends that, though 2 Cor 12:1–10 is not the same type of text as Jewish mysticism, Paul's account is aligned with an apocalyptic tradition that describes religious experiences. Segal explains that the motif of a heavenly person can be found in multiple Jewish mystical writings such as 2 Enoch, Ascension of Isaiah, 2 Baruch, and 3 Enoch. Alan F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 22–61. Morray-Jones, in his two articles, argues that *merkabah* mysticism is an indispensable feature of Paul's experience in 2 Cor 12:1–10. C. R. A. Morray-Jones, “Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1–12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate, Part 1: The Jewish Sources,” *Harvard Theological Review* 86, no. 2 (1993): 177–217; C. R. A. Morray-Jones, “Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1–12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate, Part 2: Paul's Heavenly Ascent and Its Significance,” *Harvard Theological Review* 86, no. 3 (1993): 256–92. Peerbolte also proposes a similar view. He contends that Jewish mysticism is not a marginal phenomenon but takes a central role to understand the gospel. Bert J. Lietaert Peerbolte, “Paul's Rapture: 2 Corinthians 12:2–4 and the Language of the Mystics,” in *Experientia: Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Frances Flannery, Colleen Shantz, and Rodney A. Werline (Boston: Brill, 2008), 159–76. An exhaustive investigation on this topic is given by James Buchanan Wallace, *Snatched into Paradise (2 Cor 12:1–10): Paul's Heavenly Journey in the Context of Early Christian Experience* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011). In his monograph, he explores three different types of literature: Hellenistic, Jewish, and Pauline literature. See also Lisa M. Bowens, *An Apostle in Battle: Paul and Spiritual Warfare in 2 Corinthians 12:1–10* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017). In her recent monograph, Bowens utilizes a comparative analysis of contemporaneous texts. She primarily pays attention to warfare language in Jewish literature, and she concludes that Paul's ascent exemplifies spiritual warfare between Satan and God. For more discussions, see Matthew Goff, “Heavenly Mysteries and Otherworldly Journeys: Interpreting 1 and 2 Corinthians in Relation to Jewish Apocalypticism,” in *Paul the Jew: Rereading the Apostle as a Figure of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Carlos A. Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016); Paula Gooder, *Only the Third Heaven? 2 Corinthians 12:1–10 and Heavenly Ascent* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2006); Robert M. Price, “Punished in Paradise: An Exegetical Theory on 2 Corinthians 12:1–10,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 2, no. 7 (1980/1981): 33–40. One of the fundamental questions one may raise concerns the criteria used to determine the relation between Paul's text and Jewish mysticism. John J. Collins contributed to an answer by suggesting the essential features for the genre of apocalypse through a comparison of Jewish texts in the Second Temple period. John J. Collins, “Introduction: Towards a Morphology of a Genre,” in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, ed. John J. Collins, Semeia 14 (Missoula: Scholars, 1979).

<sup>3</sup> Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 17.

<sup>4</sup> He provides three essential continuities between *hekhalot* writings and Jewish apocalypses, which are “the anonymous conventicles of the old apocalypses; the *merkabah* speculation of the Mishnaic teachers who are known to us by name; and the *merkabah* mysticism of late and post-Talmudic times (*Major Trends*, 43).” To substantiate his thesis, Scholem points to these features in *merkabah* mysticism, Song of Songs Rabbah, and *hekhalot* writings (e.g., Hekhalot Zutarti and Merkavah Rabbah). See Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 14–19.

*pardes*, temple, vision, and mysterious experiences.<sup>5</sup> Scholem concludes, “It is obvious that Paul, who wrote these lines about the year 58 CE, was speaking of the idea with which his readers were familiar, a Jewish conception that he, as well as his readers in Corinth, had brought over into the new Christian community.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore, through a comparison of words and ideas, Scholem maintains the continuity between Jewish apocalypse, Paul’s letters to the Corinthians, rabbinic literature, and *hekhlot* literature.

Though one should not dismiss the potential that comparative literary studies may produce seminal insights, a lexical and formal comparison of multiple texts would be insufficient to identify intertextual relations.<sup>7</sup> There are at least three reasons why such a comparative approach is insufficient. First, scholars who champion the continuity of Paul’s account with Jewish literature seem to neglect the genre of those texts.<sup>8</sup> The Jewish texts that they investigate are frequently labeled as different genres. The book of Enoch, for example, is an apocalypse, while the *hekhlot* literature is exemplary of Jewish

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<sup>5</sup> In a similar vein, looking at the same term *pardes* and the same ideas of rapture, ascent, and descent, Scholem alleges that other Jewish literature such as the Slavic Book of Enoch, the Life of Adam and Eve, and the Apocalypse of Moses also present the same ecstatic features. See Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 18.

<sup>6</sup> Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 17.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Schäfer notes that an arbitrary verbal comparison between Paul and Gnostic *merkabah* mystics could lead to an untenable result that these authors mean the same thing. Schäfer, “New Testament,” 32–33. Also see Peter Schäfer, “Merkavah Mysticism and Rabbinic Judaism,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104, no. 3 (1984): 537–41; Peter Schäfer, “Tradition and Redaction in Hekhalot Literature,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 14, no. 2 (1983): 172–81.

<sup>8</sup> This is not to say that scholars have never worked on this matter. One of the most significant works for the genre of apocalypse is John J. Collins’ edited collection of contributions, *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*. As Collins explains, if one is to define multiple works of literature as representative of the same genre, there must be “distinctive recurring characteristics which constitute a recognizable and coherent type of writing.” Collins, “Towards a Morphology,” 1. However, Collins admits paradigmatic variables in so-called apocalyptic literature, while insisting that there is an identifiable master paradigm. He asserts that “a particular combination of elements does not always constitute the entire independent work. Conversely, an apocalypse may include subsidiary literary forms which are independent of the genre” (“Towards a Morphology,” 8). But he concludes that “the common core of constant elements formulates a comprehensive definition of the genre” (“Towards a Morphology,” 9). Within the general definition of apocalypse, he proposes six types of sub-genres in accordance with configurations of their elements. Those sub-genres are 1) historical apocalypses with no otherworldly journey, 2) apocalypses with cosmic and/or political eschatology, 3) apocalypses with only personal eschatology, 4) historical apocalypses with an otherworldly journey, 5) otherworldly journeys with cosmic and/or political eschatology, and 6) otherworldly journeys with only personal eschatology. Collins, “Towards a Morphology,” 13–15. Likewise, Saldarini asserts that, though one may define both Jewish apocalypses and Jewish mystical literature as apocalyptic in a broad sense, there are variables between the two types of literature, and the variations come from historical and political changes throughout history. Anthony J. Saldarini, “Apocalypses and “Apocalyptic” in Rabbinic Literature and Mysticism,” in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, ed. John J. Collins, Semeia (Missoula: Scholars, 1979), 189–90.

esoteric texts. Thus, any case for the continuity and similarity of these texts, if it ignores the genre differences and only attends to similar content and structure, is highly suspect.

Second, semantic similarity is a necessary but insufficient ground on which to argue for intertextual relations. It is untenable to argue that the same word, phrase, or sentence presents the same semantic meaning regardless of how that item is used in different contexts. Even if two addressers use the same terms in their utterances, the semantics of the employed words may be different depending on the context. In a similar vein, even if both cite or allude to the same tradition, a different meaning could be produced in their different contexts. Thus, a semantic system is necessary in order to examine relations between multiple texts.

Third, though the same source text may be used in different texts, the employed source would function differently, depending on the social, cultural, and situational context of each later text. Put differently, if two or more texts have historical distance (i.e., 2 Cor 12, rabbinic literature, and *hekhalot* literature) and contextual divergences (i.e., cultural, social, and situational differences), a simple comparison of lexical terms may not be sufficient to demonstrate the interrelationship of the texts. Morray-Jones notes the difficulties that beset any study of the relevance of Paul's otherworldly journey to Jewish literature considered mystical:

Although several scholars have, in recent years, perceived the potential significance of Jewish mysticism for the study of Paul and other early Christian writers, uncertainty concerning the original meaning and tradition history of the *pardes* story has inhibited further exploration of its relevance to Paul's experience, as recorded in 2 Corinthians 12.<sup>9</sup>

Schäfer, too, cautions that “we cannot assess . . . [similarities] until the relevant literature as a whole is subjected to analysis . . . . In other words, even a comparison of individual motifs is only really strong enough for assertions to be made within a comparison of complete literary systems.”<sup>10</sup> Gottstein also rejects a simple comparison between Paul's account in 2 Cor 12:1–4 and Jewish literature, if the comparison disregards social and cultural context.<sup>11</sup> Any scholarly approach that neglects Paul's contemporary setting cannot be convincing. Therefore, to examine the intertextual relations of multiple forms of literature requires more than a comparison of words and expressions of texts. Instead, a more robust analysis including semantic systems and contextual assessment is required to identify the intertextual relations between multiple texts.

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<sup>9</sup> Morray-Jones, “Paradise Revisited,” 266.

<sup>10</sup> Schäfer, “New Testament,” 34.

<sup>11</sup> Alon Goshen Gottstein, “Four Entered Paradise Revisited,” *Harvard Theological Review* 88, no. 1 (1995): 71.

In this regard, this essay will utilize a linguistic theory, particularly the appraisal theory of systemic functional linguistics (henceforth, SFL), to examine the intertextual relations between Paul's heavenly experience in 2 Cor 12:1–10 and its equivalents in Jewish literature. Due to a plethora of Jewish texts, however, it is impossible to explore every text exhaustively. Therefore, this paper restricts the scope of the research to 1 Enoch and *hekhalot* literature, particularly Rabbati and Zutari.<sup>12</sup> Through the linguistic analysis of pericopes of those texts, this study argues as follows: Though Paul's account in 2 Cor 12:1–10 presents structural, lexical, and formal affinities with these pericopes to Jewish literature, Paul's appraisal language, generated from its situational context, exhibits a different stance to the heavenly journey described in the Pauline text. Particularly, Paul mentions his esoteric experience while elaborating on his larger theme, the defense of his apostleship. Whereas other accounts of ascents into heaven in Jewish texts promote the individual's righteousness, Paul shows off his weakness. Furthermore, unlike the other authorities in his time, Paul presents a negative stance toward those who exceedingly puff themselves up. What Paul instead elevates as admirable is the grace and the power of God. In this regard, Paul's language in 2 Cor 12:1–10 has less continuity and only a weak relation to Jewish texts concerning the evaluation of heavenly experiences.

### **Methodology: Appraisal Theory of SFL**

Appraisal theory is a model of discourse analysis that studies how language users make selections from the discourse semantic resource known as APPRAISAL in order to make and exchange evaluation meanings.<sup>13</sup> Put differently, appraisal theory is a system of semantic choice regarding the evaluation of social relations, such as the value of things, people's character, and people's feelings. This theory is mainly concerned with a writer/speaker's style of evaluative language through which that writer/speaker constructs characters' stances, emotions, and purported value of other things, characters,

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<sup>12</sup> There are many Jewish apocalypses such as 1 Enoch 1–36 (the Book of the Watchers), 1 Enoch 37–71 (the Parables of Enoch), 2 Enoch, the Testament of Levi 2–5, 3 Baruch, the Ascension of Isaiah, the Apocalypse of Abraham, the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, the Testament of Abraham, and the Apocalypse of Paul. Also, there are a number of Rabbinic esoteric traditions within Talmud and Rabbinic literature. Representative of such literature is Mishnah Megillah 4:10; Mishnah Hagigah 2:7; Tosefta Hagigah 2:1–7; Palestinian Talmud 77a–d; and Babylonian Talmud 11b–16a. In addition to all this, *hekhalot* writings include collections of *merkavah* mysticism, generally agreed to span from Talmudic times to the Middle Ages (200–800 CE). Such collections are *hekhalot* Zutartey, *hekhalot* Rabbati (Palaces Major), Maaseh *merkavah* (Account of the Chariot); *merkavah* Rabba (The Great Chariot), and Sepher *hekhalot* (3 Enoch). Lastly, Second Temple Judaism and rabbinic Judaism cover a huge span of time. Second Temple Judaism ranges from 515 BCE to 70 CE, and the wider sense of rabbinic Judaism includes the entirety of rabbinic writings throughout Jewish history, though most scholars agree that it refers more narrowly to the Tannaitic and Talmudic period until the fourth century CE.

<sup>13</sup> James D. Dvorak, "Prodding with Prosody": Persuasion and Social Influence Through the Lens of Appraisal Theory," *Biblical and Ancient Greek Linguistics* 4, (2015): 94.

phenomena, ideologies, societies, and so on. Thus, through appraisal theory, one may be able to construe who presents certain kinds of attitudes, to whom, and to what degree.

Appraisal theory further enables scholars to identify the intertextual relation of multiple texts that may have much the same content. The theory allows a nuanced consideration of solidarity in the social context in question for two or more texts. Martin and White rightly explain that appraisal theory “is concerned with the construction by texts of communities of shared feelings and values, and with the linguistic mechanisms for the sharing of emotions, tastes and normative assessments.”<sup>14</sup> If multiple people have the same point of view and evaluation of a particular substance or phenomenon, a case for a degree of solidarity could be made.<sup>15</sup> By contrast, if a person presents different viewpoints or evaluations than others do, there would be a discontinuity between that person and the rest of the group under examination. Dvorak explains this solidarity or discontinuity with reference to ideological values: “The author’s textual voice attempts either to expand or to contract the semiotic space between their own ideologically-based value position(s) and those of others that are referenced in text.”<sup>16</sup> In this regard, by comparing the evaluative language in Paul and Jewish literature concerning the motif of a heavenly journey, one may identify the congruence or incongruence between the beliefs and values of Paul and those of Jewish literature.<sup>17</sup>

Using appraisal theory, what kinds of semantic differences can be observed? In such appraisals, there are three axes: ATTITUDE, ENGAGEMENT, and GRADUATION. In ATTITUDE, there are another three sub-systems: AFFECT, JUDGEMENT, and APPRECIATION. AFFECT describes the resources expressing feeling, such as emotion, ethics, and aesthetics.<sup>18</sup> JUDGEMENT “pertains to the resources with which people

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<sup>14</sup> J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White, *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Dvorak also presents such a view in Dvorak, “Prodding,” 96.

<sup>16</sup> James D. Dvorak, “The Tenor of Toughness: The Interpersonal Metafunction in 1 Corinthians 1–4” (McMaster Divinity College, 2012), 42. Also see James D. Dvorak, “Ask and Ye Shall Position the Readers: James’s Use of Questions to (Re-)Align His Readers,” in *The Epistle of James: Linguistic Exegesis of an Early Christian Letter*, ed. James D. Dvorak and Zachary K. Dawson, *Linguistic Exegesis of the New Testament 1* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019), 196–203.

<sup>17</sup> Zachary K. Dawson proposes a relationship between an individual’s evaluative language and ideology in the book of James, for example. See Zachary K. Dawson, “Language as Negotiation: Toward a Functional Linguistic Model for Ideological Criticism with Application to James 2:1–13,” in *Modeling Biblical Language: Selected Papers from the McMaster Divinity College Linguistics Circle*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Gregory P. Fewster, and Christopher D. Land (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 363–69; Zachary K. Dawson, “The Rules of ‘Engagement’: Assessing the Role of the Diatribe in James 2:14–26 Using Critical Discourse Analysis,” in *The Epistle of James: Linguistic Exegesis of an Early Christian Letter*, ed. James D. Dvorak and Zachary K. Dawson (Eugene: Pickwick, 2019), 155–95.

<sup>18</sup> Dvorak, “Prodding,” 95; J. R. Martin and David Rose, *Working with Discourse: Meaning Beyond the Clause*, 2nd. ed. (London: Continuum, 2007), 29.

positively or negatively appraise behavior in relation to group boundaries and norms.”<sup>19</sup> Whereas AFFECT is the expression of an individual’s emotion, JUDGEMENT is about personal evaluation, either positive or negative, toward people’s behavior according to social norms. APPRECIATION is concerned with the evaluation of “form, appearance, composition, impact, idea and significance.”<sup>20</sup> And while JUDGEMENT is an evaluation of behaviors according to social norms and virtues, APPRECIATION is an appraisal of things and phenomena of the given society.

Another axis of appraisal theory is ENGAGEMENT. It is the matter of “how a writer/speaker engages and positions her/his own voice vis-à-vis other voices and value positions that are referenced in the text.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, ENGAGEMENT is about the writer/speaker’s language choice of interacting with and expressing the evaluations of a particular entity with her/his potential interlocutors.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, through analysis of ENGAGEMENT, one may see “various ways to construe a heteroglossic backdrop of prior utterances, alternative viewpoints and anticipated responses.”<sup>23</sup> ENGAGEMENT can be expressed in the text through the writer’s contracting and expanding of the dialogue.<sup>24</sup> Put briefly, dialogic contraction occurs when an utterance restricts the scope of alternative positions or voices, while dialogic expansion actively generates such alternatives.<sup>25</sup> Dialogic contraction is accomplished through proclamation (concurrence, endorsement, or pronouncement) and disclamation, while dialogic expansion is accomplished through consideration and attribution.<sup>26</sup>

These first two axes of appraisal theory are intertwined with the last one, which is GRADUATION. In short, GRADUATION is concerned with the scale of degree.<sup>27</sup> Though ATTITUDE and ENGAGEMENT may be systemized for the choice of categorical opposition, they are clines as well. For instance, in terms of ATTITUDE, a writer/speaker might express her/his evaluation toward a particular participant as “a kind of good person.” The evaluation is not negative, but in the cline of positive–negative, it is less

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<sup>19</sup> Dvorak, “Prodding,” 97.

<sup>20</sup> Dvorak, “Prodding,” 98.

<sup>21</sup> Dvorak, “Prodding,” 99.

<sup>22</sup> As Martin and White explain, both spoken and written languages are dialogic in that to speak/write is necessarily to “reveal the influence of, refer to, or to take up in some way, what has been said/written before, and simultaneously to anticipate the responses of actual, potential or imagined readers/listeners (*Language of Evaluation*, 92).”

<sup>23</sup> Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 97.

<sup>24</sup> Dvorak, “Prodding,” 99.

<sup>25</sup> Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 102.

<sup>26</sup> For further explanation and examples, see Dvorak, “Prodding,” 99–102.

<sup>27</sup> Martin and White assert that appraisal theory is a system rather than a scale. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 15. Halliday similarly expounds it as a system, not a scale. Even so, the scale of degree should not be neglected.

positive than the evaluation of “an extremely good person.” Martin and White also explain this as follows:

It is a general property of values of affect, judgement and appreciation that they construe greater or lesser degrees of positivity or negativity. Gradability is also generally a feature of the engagement system. Here the meaning which is scaled will vary from sub-system to sub-system, though, more broadly, engagement values scale for the degree of the speaker/writer’s intensity, or the degree of their investment in the utterance.<sup>28</sup>

GRADUATION plays an important role in appraisal theory, because through the scale, a writer/speaker can emphasize her/his standpoint toward a particular entity. GRADUATION operates across the other two axes, ATTITUDE and ENGAGEMENT, so that language users make attitudes or value positions either prominent or inconspicuous.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, the sub-systems of ATTITUDE and ENGAGEMENT need to be examined in regard to clines such as negative–positive, explicitness (directness)–implicitness (indirectness or implied), objectivity–subjectivity, probability–improbability, and so forth.<sup>30</sup>

That being said, how can scholars actually examine a writer/speaker’s stance toward other characters and things in the text? Appraisal, viewed as a determination of interpersonal meaning of discourse semantics, is realized by lexico-grammar. ATTITUDE and GRADUATION are identified by lexis and modal adjuncts. ENGAGEMENT is realized through speech functions and modality. For those familiar with this approach to linguistics, it is true that Halliday’s framing of speech functions that are constructed around the English mood system does not provide a comprehensive interpretative tool, because it cannot solve the issue of interpersonal metaphor, the incongruence between form (expression) and function (semantic).<sup>31</sup> Thus, instead of taking up Halliday’s four categories of speech functions,<sup>32</sup> this paper will adopt Porter’s model of speech functions below, formulated by the Greek mood choice rather than Halliday’s English-centered framework.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 135–36.

<sup>29</sup> Dvorak, “The Tenor,” 6.

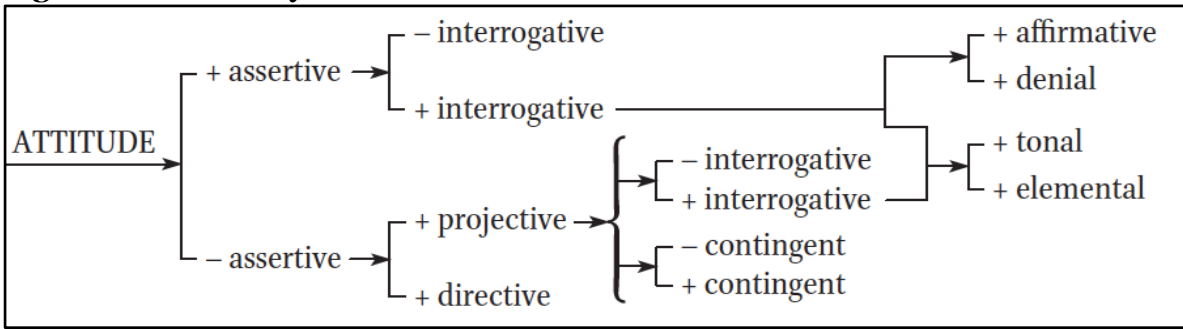
<sup>30</sup> I am aware of the potential criticism of viewing appraisal theory as a scale rather than a system. Thus, I argue that appraisal theory is still a system in terms of language choice, but at the same time, it is a cline, since the division of categorical opposition is not clear-cut.

<sup>31</sup> Martin and Rose, *Working with Discourse*, 24–25, 230. For instance, one may choose an interrogative form in order to command, not in order to ask a question to obtain information.

<sup>32</sup> Unlike Halliday, Martin and Rose propose fourteen English speech functions. Martin and Rose, *Working with Discourse*, 226.

<sup>33</sup> For further explanation of this model, see Stanley E. Porter, “Systemic Functional Linguistics and the Greek Language: The Need for Further Modeling,” in *Modeling Biblical Language: Selected Papers from the McMaster Divinity College Linguistics Circle*, ed. Stanley E. Porter et al., Linguistic Biblical Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 27–29.



**Figure 1: Porter's System Network of ATTITUDE<sup>34</sup>**

As figure 1 indicates, Porter's attitude system is a binary system network, realized through the Greek lexicogrammar, particularly by the Greek verbal mood system. The different choice of lexicogrammar denotes various clause types. The initial semantic differentiation can be made between assertive and non-assertive, expressed by the indicative and non-indicative mood forms, respectively. However, Porter's model does not provide a detailed semantics. Even after identifying whether the initial function is assertive or non-assertive, the secondary binary system needs to be determined. Through this system, Porter argues that "one may be able to link the semantics and expressions."<sup>35</sup> Porter elaborates on the binary system of ATTITUDE as follows:

- +assertive: -interrogative >> declarative statement (assertive clause with indicative mood form)
- +assertive: +interrogative: +affirmative >> positive question (assertive clause question formulated so as to expect a positive answer, with indicative mood form)
- +assertive: +interrogative: +denial >> negative question (assertive clause question formulated so as to expect a negative answer, with indicative mood form)
- +assertive: +interrogative: +tonal >> open question (assertive clause, with question tonally indicated)
- +assertive: +interrogative: +elemental >> τ-question (assertive clause, with question with one of the question words, with indicative mood form)
- assertive: +projective: -interrogative: -contingent >> projective statement (non-contingent projective clause, with subjunctive mood form, as in hortatory or prohibitive use when negated)
- assertive: +projective: -interrogative; +contingent >> projective contingent statement (contingent projective clause, with optative mood form, as in volitive use)
- assertive: +projective: +interrogative: +tonal; -contingent >> projective question (non-contingent projective clause, with subjunctive mood form, as in deliberative use)
- assertive: +projective: +interrogative: +elemental; -contingent >> projective τ-question (non-contingent projective clause, with question with one of the question words, with subjunctive mood form)

<sup>34</sup> Porter, "Systemic Functional Linguistics," 27.

<sup>35</sup> Porter, "Systemic Functional Linguistics," 28.

- assertive: +projective: +interrogative: +tonal; +contingent >> projective contingent question (contingent projective clause, with optative mood form, as in deliberative use)
- assertive: +projective: +interrogative: +elemental; +contingent >> projective contingent τ-question (contingent projective clause, with question with one of the question words, with optative mood form)
- assertive: +directive >> command (imperative mood form)<sup>36</sup>

Through the different clause types, then, one may identify Greek speech functions as the figure below illustrates. In other words, instead of the direct relation from a particular form of the grammar to speech functions, Porter suggests an ATTITUDINAL system to determine the relationship between the semantics/functions and the expression/form.

**Figure 2: Porter’s Greek Speech Functions<sup>37</sup>**

<i>Exchange role</i>	<i>Goods and services</i>	<i>Information</i>
<i>Giving</i>	open question	declaration
<i>Projecting</i>	projective question	projective statement
<i>Wishing</i>	projective cont. statement	positive/negative question
<i>Demanding</i>	command	τ-question
<i>Enquiring</i>	projective cont. question (?)	projective (cont.) τ-question (?)

Another analytic issue of appraisal is the matter of degree. Even though one can hardly dispute the fact that there is a degree of cline regarding ATTITUDE and ENGAGEMENT, it is hard to propose systemic parameters to detect the differences of degree. The system of cline is opaque in the sense that it barely provides formalized criteria. For instance, the question of how one can determine the degree of affect is difficult to answer. In the social context, the degree of affect would be intuitively determined, to some extent, because the reader interprets and decides the degree of appraisal according to their own sense.<sup>38</sup> Thus, this paper will pay attention to modal adjuncts, modifiers, and function words to grade the degree of evaluation. For instance, one person might say, “It is a lie,” and another might say, “It’s a dirty rotten stinking lousy bloody low filthy two-faced lie.”<sup>39</sup> The latter likely positions their statement at a higher

<sup>36</sup> Porter, “Systemic Functional Linguistics,” 28.

<sup>37</sup> Porter, “Systemic Functional Linguistics,” 29.

<sup>38</sup> For instance, when a writer/speaker employs multiple lexis indicating similar evaluation, such as beautiful, wonderful, fantastic, fabulous, and so on, it is hard to grade each of them within the cline of positive.

<sup>39</sup> These two examples are from Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 20.

degree than the former one in the cline of ATTITUDE. These sorts of modifiers generate a larger and longer wave of prosody to intensify the evaluation.<sup>40</sup>

To summarize, linguistic analysis of appraisal can be implemented through three sub-categories, ATTITUDE, ENGAGEMENT, and GRADUATION. Those sub-categories can be identified through the analysis of the lexicogrammar, particularly through investigating finite elements and modal adjuncts. The finite element circumscribes the time of speaking and the judgment of the speaker.<sup>41</sup> The former can be expressed by the tense form, and the latter can be expressed by modality. The modal adjunct can be expressed by modifiers that have an adjectival or adverbial function in the clause. In other words, lexical semantics and the verbal mood system are essential for the analysis. In this regard, to analyze the appraisal, this essay will pay attention to the lexical choice and the mood of the verbs in each text.

### Structural and Componential Analysis

This section briefly presents terminological and structural resemblances between the target texts, specifically from 2 Cor 12:1–4, 1 Enoch, and some *hekhalot* literature. However, showing the similarities does not necessarily prove significant continuity between Jewish mystical texts and Paul's account. Rather, this section is a preliminary discussion that enables the main findings of this paper: though one may find similarities between the texts, Paul's evaluation and appraisal language is very different from the appraisals in the other texts.

#### 2 Corinthians 12:1–4

In 2 Cor 12:1–4, Paul is talking about a vision and revelation from the Lord (ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου). Structurally, Paul opens his description by means of an introductory statement. Then, Paul moves to the manner of experiencing the vision, while allowing for his uncertainty on whether it was an embodied experience or out of body experience (εἴτε ἐν σώματι οὐκ οἶδα εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα). Next, he expounds the way the visionary enters the heavenly realm, that is, by being snatched up there (ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ). Paul also mentions the place to which the visionary is snatched up: the third heaven. Paul repeats the form of the presence. Finally, a description of what the visionary heard occurs (ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι).<sup>42</sup> Thus, in this brief description, Paul delineates the place where the vision and

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<sup>40</sup> Martin and White label this as intensification. Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 20. Also see Dvorak, "Prodding," 106.

<sup>41</sup> M. A. K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (London: E. Arnold, 1985), 75.

<sup>42</sup> Peerbolte investigates the use of ἄρρητος in a comparison with Jewish and Hellenistic texts and argues that the epithet ἄρρητος is a standard vocabulary for a mystical experience in Paul's time. Peerbolte,

revelation took place, the way the witness entered said place, and the means of receiving the vision and revelation in a verbal format.

### **The Book of Enoch (1 Enoch)**

The first book of Enoch is composed of five major sections: the book of Watchers (chaps. 1–36), the book of Parables (chaps. 37–71), the book of the Luminaries (chaps. 72–82), the Dream Visions (chaps. 83–90), and the Epistle of Enoch (chaps. 91–105).<sup>43</sup> Though all five major sections are part of one coherent and apocalyptic text, the first two books are the only ones relevant to the heavenly journey.<sup>44</sup>

The first depiction regarding the heavenly journey appears in 1 Enoch 14:8–23. According to 1 Enoch 14, the heavenly world is composed of three parts: from the entrance of heaven to the wall, a house beyond the first wall, and another house beyond the first house.<sup>45</sup> Enoch enters the heavens, and he faces a wall built of hailstones (14:9). Beyond the wall, there is a great house also built of hailstones. The ceiling of the house is like shooting stars and lightning flashes (14:11). Passing through the door, Enoch encounters another door. Beyond the door, there is another house which is described as greater than the former one, and this second house is built of tongues of fire (14:15). In the second house, there is a lofty throne that Enoch is not able to see, and not even an angel may enter into the house and look at the face of The Great Glory (14:18–21). All the parts of heaven are glorious and majestic, but God’s dwelling place is the holiest place. From that place, Enoch hears the oracle of God (15:2–16:4), and the content of the oracle is the judgment that he should reiterate to the watchers. With regard to the three parts of heaven and the verbal revelation, one could say that Enoch’s depiction of the heavenly world is similar to Paul’s account in 2 Cor 12. However, whereas Paul hears an

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“Paul’s Rapture,” 167.

<sup>43</sup> There are technically two more small sections, The Birth of Noah (chaps. 106–107) and Another Book by Enoch (chap. 108), but they are short appendices and deemed as a later addition. See E. Isaac, “1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse) Enoch (Second Century B.C.–First Century A.D.),” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 5–12; J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 4–107; George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation: Based on the Hermeneia Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 1.

<sup>44</sup> Though this entire text is coherent as an apocalypse in terms of its genre, not all sub-sections were written or discovered at the same time. There is an ongoing debate concerning the date of the sections of 1 Enoch. See Milik, *The Books*, 4–7; Michael A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 12; Stephen J. Pfann et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4: 20: Cryptic Texts and Miscellanea Part. 1*, DJD 36 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 3–171; Emile Puech, *Qumrân grotte 4. XXII: Textes Araméens Première Partie. 4Q529-549* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 9–115.

<sup>45</sup> Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 34–36.

indescribable sound that no humans can reiterate, Enoch hears words from God that he can and should repeat to the (angelic) watchers—and ultimately to the human readers of the text.

The book of Parables also includes an account concerning a rapture, a snatching up to heaven, much as Paul writes that he was snatched up to heaven. In the heavens, Enoch saw another vision concerning the dwelling place of the holy ones and the resting place of the righteousness (39:1–5). Enoch furthermore saw the place of God and his four archangels (39:6–40:10). After seeing holy places, Enoch describes the secrets of the cosmos (41:3–44:1) and the beginning of iniquities (41:1–3). An eschatological account appears afterwards (50:1–69:29). This section includes the final judgment upon the righteous and wicked, the glory of God, and the final war between forces of good and evil. Interestingly, here in this section, what Enoch saw is similar to Daniel’s accounts in the Bible. Enoch saw six mountains composed of different materials such as gold, silver, bronze, and iron, indicative of authorities of the earth (52:1–9), whereas Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in which the statue of the dream was composed of four different materials such as gold, silver, bronze, and iron, symbolizing four successive empires. There are no similarities to 2 Cor 12 in the eschatological section (1 Enoch 52:1–9). In the last part of the book of Parables in Enoch, however, there is another account of a heavenly journey. In this description, Enoch went up to heaven like the prophet Ezekiel. Enoch was lifted up on a chariot of the wind (70:1–2). Like other ascensions, Enoch experienced holy places and saw the secrets of heaven and earth (71:1–4). However, here one noticeable feature is that Enoch is identified as the Son of Man figure (71:13–17).<sup>46</sup> He is not just a visitor to the heavens but executes divine judgment on God’s behalf, like the four archangels do.

### ***Hekhalot Literature***

Two *hekhalot* compilations contain the story of four men who entered *pardes*. These are *hekhalot Rabbati* (henceforth HR) and *hekhalot Zutarti* (henceforth HZ).<sup>47</sup> Compared together, the two texts contain the following information about these four men and their heavenly journeys:

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<sup>46</sup> Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 95.

<sup>47</sup> For the Hebrew text, see Peter Schäfer, Margarete Schlüter, and Hans-Georg von Mutius, eds., *Synopse Zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 2 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1981), §§81b–93, §§348–52. For English translations, see Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 176–83; Morray-Jones, “Paradise Revisited,” 196–98, 275–80; Peter Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism*, trans. Aubrey Pomerance (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 43–45. This paper adopts Morray-Jones’ translation, since it is based on a textual critical comparison between manuscripts of HR and HZ. Halperin also provides textual critical work. David J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel’s Vision* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1988), 202–4.

[A1a] R. Akiba said:

[A1b] We were four who went into *pardes*. One looked and died, one looked and was stricken, one looked and cut the shoots, and I went in in peace and came out in peace.

[A2a] Why did I go in in peace and come out in peace? [HZ(N) and MR(N) omit A2a]

[A2b] Not because I am greater than my fellows, but my deeds [MR(N) and HZ(N): they] have caused me to fulfill the teaching that the sages have taught in their Mishnah: “Your deeds will bring you near and your deeds will keep you afar.”

[B1a] And these are they that went into *pardes*: Ben Azzai and Ben Zoma and Aher and R. Akiba.

[B1b] {R. Akiba said to them: Beware! When you approach the pure marble stones, do not say, “Water! Water!”—according to what is written: “The speaker of lies shall not endure before my sight.”}

[B2a] Ben Azzai [MR(O): Ben Zoma] looked <into the sixth palace and saw the brilliance of the air of the marble stones with which the palace was paved, and his body could not bear it, and he opened his mouth and asked them: “These waters—what is the nature of them?”> and died. Of him, scripture says: “Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

[B2b] Ben Zoma [MR(O): Ben Azzai] looked <at the brilliance in the marble stones and thought that they were water, and his body could bear that he did not ask them, but his mind could not bear it> and was stricken <— he went out of his mind>. Of him scripture says: “Have you found honey? Eat what is enough for you,” etc.

[B2c] Elisha b. Abuyah (Aher) looked [HZ(N): went down] and cut the shoots. <In what way did he cut the shoots? They say that whenever he went into the synagogues and study-houses and saw children succeeding in Torah-study, he used to speak over them and they would be silenced, and> of him, scripture says: “Do not let your mouth lead your flesh into sin!”

[B2d] {They say that when Elisha went down to the Merkabah he saw Metatron to whom permission had been given to sit for one hour in the day to write down the merits of Israel. He said, “The sages have taught: On high there is neither standing nor sitting, neither rivalry nor contention, neither division nor affliction.” He entertained the thought that there might perhaps be two powers in heaven. At once, they led Metatron outside the curtain and punished him with sixty lashes of fire, and permission was given to Metatron to burn the merits of Aher. A heavenly voice came forth and they [sic] said: “Return, backsliding children (Jer 3:22)—except for Aher!”}

[B2e] R. Akiba went in [HZ(N) and MR(N): went up] in peace and came out [HZ(N) and MR(S): came down] in peace. Of him, scripture says: “Draw me, we will run after you.”

[C1] R. Akiba said:

[C2a] At that time, when I went up to the heavenly height, I made more signs in the entrances of firmament than in the entrances of my house,

[C2b] and when I arrived at the curtain, angels of destruction came forth to do me violence. The Holy One, blessed be he, said to them: “Leave this elder alone, for he is worthy to behold my glory” [MR (N): to behold me].<sup>48</sup>

Concerning the text from HR and HZ above, one may find a couple of componential and structural features. First, through the story of entering *pardes*, one may find some ideational features identifiable through the language components. These features reflect similar elements that are found in Enoch and 2 Cor 12:1–10. Such features are the description of the heavenly world as a composite of several layers (B2a), entering the heaven (A1b), the location of God’s throne, and the marvelous appearance of the heavenly world (B2a). One subtle difference between HR and HZ is, whereas HR describes God as the most beautiful one, so glorious that no one is able to observe God’s beauty and countenance directly, HZ allows that visionaries may see God in the seventh heaven, giving three supporting scriptures (Ex 33:20; Dt 5:21–24; Is 6:1).<sup>49</sup>

Second, compared to 2 Cor 12:1–10, the description of *hekhalot* literature provides some details of events occurring in the heavenly world. The incident is recounted by Rabbi Akiba, one of the participants of the text. What happens in the heavenly world results in judgments for or against the individuals who experience that realm. All participants are judged according to their behaviors by principles based on written Scripture. Interestingly, three of the participants who experienced the heavenly world spoke or thought more than they should have. They all failed to restrain their thoughts or mouths, and as the consequence, they either died, went crazy, or became harsh toward students. Only Rabbi Akiba refrains from speaking or prying into the heavenly mysteries, and he survives “in peace.” This is similar to how Paul evaluates his arrogant rivals and how Paul restrains himself from sharing the contents of his heavenly experience (2 Cor 12:6).

To make a comparison between Paul’s account and the accounts in other Jewish literature, one may note the following structural and componential commonalities:

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<sup>48</sup> Morray-Jones, “Paradise Revisited,” 196–98. According to Morray-Jones, “Paradise Revisited,” 195, the abbreviations are as follows: “Hekhalot Zutarti (HZ), preserved in MSS Munich 22 (M) and New York (N); and Merkabah Rabbah (MR), preserved in MSS New York (N) and Oxford (O).” For the textual variations, Morray-Jones provides instructions that “significant variations being noted within square brackets, [. . .]. Material unique to MR(N) is shown in normal print within braces, { . . . }. Material unique to HZ(N) is shown in normal print, within angled brackets and underlined, < . . . >” (“Paradise Revisited,” 196).

<sup>49</sup> Schäfer, Schlüter, and von Mutius, *Synopse*, §§159, §§169, §§350; Schäfer, *The Hidden*, 16–18, 58.

**Figure 3: Structure and Components of Heavenly Journey Texts**

	1 Enoch	<i>Hekhalot</i> (HR & HZ)	2 Cor 12:1–10
Way of Entering the Heavens	Rapture	Entered	Rapture
Form of the Presence	Both	Bodily	Not known
Number of Heavens	Three	Seven	Three
God's dwelling place	The highest heaven	The highest heaven	The third heaven
Receiving Mysteries	Vision and sound	Vision	Vision and sound

All three texts include at least one episode of a heavenly journey. The heavenly world has multiple layers, and God dwells in the highest layer or place there. All humans who journey to the heavens experience a vision and hear a voice from God. Therefore, it is possible that this type of text, relating the heavenly journey and mystical experiences, contains a similar structure and components—at least at first glance. Should one then conclude, as Scholem did, that Paul's account in 2 Cor 12:1–10 is a case of Jewish mysticism? The question cannot be answered unless we get past the structure and content to examine the evaluative appraisals made in each text. This is an important aspect, because the act of appraisal is related to discourse semantics, informing the meaning of each text. If the evaluation of a particular entity or heavenly traveler were different in two texts, then there would be less semantic congruence between the texts, and only a weak solidarity could be argued. The following section will therefore analyze each text using appraisal theory to determine the amount of congruence or lack of congruence between these texts.

### Appraisal in 1 Enoch 14:1–16:4<sup>50</sup>

As described in the methodology section above, the evaluative language of the author/speaker can be determined from the finite elements and modal adjuncts. Overall, in the discourse of 1 Enoch, the indicative verb is used, a form which has a descriptive and assertive function. In addition to this, the aorist tense form is most prevalent. The subjunctive form is employed only when Enoch speaks on behalf of God to reprimand the

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<sup>50</sup> Though the entire book of 1 Enoch is apocalyptic, particularly in its first two books, the present analysis only considers 1 Enoch 14:1–16:4. There are three reasons for this selection of text for study. First, it is impossible to analyze the entire book in this short essay. Second, 1 Enoch 14:1–16:4 has a similar content to 2 Cor 12:1–4, including the ascension of a human to heaven and the structure of the heavenly realm. Third and the most importantly, while most of the manuscripts of 1 Enoch are Ethiopic and Aramaic, there is a Greek manuscript containing 1 Enoch 1–32 (Codex Panopolitanus). This paper will investigate the Greek version of 1 Enoch 14:1–16:4, because this allows for a better comparison with Greek texts in the New Testament. For Greek text of 1 Enoch, this essay uses R. H. Charles, ed., *The Book of Enoch: Translated From Professor Dillmann's Ethiopic Text Emended and Revised in Accordance With Hitherto Uncollated Ethiopic Mss. and with the Gizeh and Other Greek and Latin Fragments Which Are Here Published in Full* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1893), 344–51.



watchers (14:4–7). The subjunctive form is used to grammaticalize the projection of the writer and speaker’s mind for consideration.<sup>51</sup> In terms of speech function, 1 Enoch 14:4–7 has [-assertive +projective -interrogative - contingent] type clauses, indicating projective statements for the speech functions. However, except for this short section, 1 Enoch 14:1–16:4 as a whole presents the clause type of [+assertive -interrogative], which is a type for making declarative statements most of the time. The combination of the aorist tense form and indicative mood suggests that this discourse is descriptive and declarative, giving information to the reader.

A noticeable feature of this discourse is the appearance of the consecutive complements and adjuncts in Enoch’s description of the heavens. For instance, in 1 Enoch 14:8, Enoch recounts “shooting stars and lightning flashes”<sup>52</sup> instead of stars and flashes, and in 14:16, Enoch employs three consecutive adjuncts: “All of it so excelled in glory (δόξα) and splendor (τιμή) and majesty (μεγαλοσύνη).”<sup>53</sup> This linguistic feature (i.e., verbosity) contributes to Enoch’s evaluation of the heavenly world (+GRADUATION). Also, in 14:8–9 Enoch states that “winds in my vision made me fly up and lifted me upward and brought me to heaven (καὶ ἄνεμοι ἐν τῇ ὁράσει μου ἀνεπτέρωσάν με καὶ ἐπῆράν με ἄνω καὶ εἰσήνεκάν με εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν)”<sup>54</sup> instead of simply mentioning that winds brought him to heaven.

Another notable feature is modality. In his description of the heavenly world and of God, Enoch employs modality and polarity (μὴ δύνασθαι) to express his evaluation of the glory and excellence of God:

All of it so excelled in glory and splendor and majesty that I am *unable* (μὴ δύνασθαι) to describe for you its glory and majesty (14:16).

And I was unable to see (καὶ οὐκ ἐδύνασθην ἰδεῖν, 14:19).

*No angel could enter* (καὶ οὐκ ἐδύνατο πᾶς ἄγγελος παρελθεῖν) into this house and look at his face because of the splendor and glory, and *no human could* (καὶ οὐκ ἐδύνατο πᾶσα σὰρξ) look at him (14:21).<sup>55</sup>

The combination of modality and polarity exhibits Enoch’s ENGAGEMENT in his appraisal of God and the heavenly experience.

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<sup>51</sup> Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995) 56–57; Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament: With Reference to Tense and Mood* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 323–34.

<sup>52</sup> Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 34.

<sup>53</sup> Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 35.

<sup>54</sup> The English translation is from Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 34. The Greek text is from Charles, *Enoch*, 345.

<sup>55</sup> Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 35. Italics are not original.

The textual author's appraisal of Enoch himself is also given. In 1 Enoch 15:1, there are nominal groups that describe God's evaluation to Enoch: "But he answered and said to me—and I heard his voice—Fear not, Enoch, *righteous man and scribe of truth* (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἀληθινὸς ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀληθείας ὁ γραμματεὺς); come here, and hear my voice (15:1)."<sup>56</sup> This also appears in 12:4, where the divine voice commands the visionary: "Enoch, *righteous scribe* (ὁ γραμματεὺς τῆς δικαιοσύνης), go and say to the watchers of heaven—who forsook the highest heaven, the sanctuary of the(ir) eternal station, and defiled themselves with women."<sup>57</sup> Moreover, Enoch identifies himself as destined to reprimand the watchers.<sup>58</sup> In this first-person statement, Enoch utilizes a passive form with an infinitive of purpose. This may exhibit an interpersonal relation between Enoch and the watchers and also between Enoch and God (+ENGAGEMENT).

In summary, we may conclude that the Book of Watchers, which is a similar text to Paul's account in 2 Cor 12:1–10, contains Enoch's apocalyptic experiences including learning about the secrets of the cosmos, eschatological judgment, and the depiction of the heavens. Enoch ascended to the heavens and was assigned to declare judgment on the wicked. He is depicted as the righteous one, the Son of Man. Unlike Paul, Enoch clearly knew that he was snatched up to the heaven not only spiritually but also bodily. Whereas Paul states that he heard indescribable sounds, Enoch clearly hears the voice of God and understands it—and is willing to share the verbal revelation. Moreover, Enoch's mystical experiences enhance his authority to announce judgment to the watchers and blessings to the righteous. Enoch is depicted as the one who is authorized through his supernatural experiences to pronounce eternal judgment on the watchers and eternal blessings on the righteous.

### **Appraisal in *Hekhalot***

Like 1 Enoch, the anecdote of four men in paradise (*pardes*) mostly uses the past tense form of the verb.<sup>59</sup> The introduction of the anecdote begins with the narration of

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<sup>56</sup> Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 36. Italics are not original.

<sup>57</sup> Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 31.

<sup>58</sup> 1 Enoch 14:1 puts it this way: "In this vision I saw in my dream what I now speak with a human tongue and with the breath of my mouth, which the Great One has given to humans, to speak with them and to understand with the heart. As he created and destined humans to understand the words of knowledge, so *he created and destined me to reprimand the watchers*, the sons of heaven." Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 33.

<sup>59</sup> I am aware that there is a debate about the temporal versus aspectual nature of the Hebrew verbal system. However, this paper is not involved in the debate but uses the English translation given by Morray-Jones, "Paradise Revisited," 195. Therefore, to analyze the appraisal in *hekhalot* English translation, this section utilizes the English model of appraisal given by Martin, White, and Halliday. For the Hebrew text, see Schäfer, Schlüter, and Mutius, *Synopse*, §§81b–93, §§348–52. For the debate of the Hebrew tense form, see David Toshio Tsumura, "Tense and Aspect of Hebrew Verbs in 2 Samuel 7:8–16 From the Point of View

Rabbi Akiba using the first person plural form. Then, in A2a and A2b, the text employs the interrogative and indicative forms to provide information as to why Rabbi Akiba alone went to heaven and came out in peace. The manuscripts HR and HZ delineate that Akiba was safe due to his faithful deeds to Torah.<sup>60</sup> In A2b, the lexical choices (e.g., “greater” and “fulfill”), and the polarity (e.g., “not because”) show JUDGMENT to provide the rabbi’s personal evaluation that, although he is not ontologically greater than the others who entered the heavenly realm, his deeds fulfilled the teaching of the past sages.

The middle of the *pardes* narrative exhibits what the first three visionaries did and the result of their behavior according to the biblical scriptures. This is ENGAGEMENT. Also, the modality in the middle of the anecdote denotes JUDGMENT. The text recounts that when Ben Azzai and Ben Zoma looked into the sixth palace and saw the brilliance of the marble stones, they could not [modality + polarity] bear it.

Lastly, the evaluative language which occurs at the end (C2b) of the account is remarkable. Whereas the middle of the account from B1a to B2d is about the incident that happened in the heavens, the beginning and the end of the account are about the evaluation of Rabbi Akiba. Indeed, at the end of the story, a positive evaluation of Akiba is given by a holy one, saying that this human is worthy to behold the glory of God, quite a rare assessment in Jewish literature. Thus, one may infer that in *hekhlot* literature, using the first-person voice, Akiba evaluates himself as one who did not regard Torah as literature about which to speculate foolishly but as divine guidance to be followed and lived out. Also, using the third-person voice, Akiba was elevated in the text as one who was worthy to be with the Holy One.

### Appraisal in 2 Corinthians 12:1–10

*Attitude Analysis.* In the beginning of the address, the clause *καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ* is a combination of terms expressing Paul’s evaluation, using an ideational metaphor (*καυχᾶσθαι*),<sup>61</sup> modality (*δεῖ*, expressing a “must” or necessity),<sup>62</sup> and a declarative speech

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of Discourse Grammar,” *Vetus testamentum* 60, no. 4 (2010): 641–54; Eep Talstra, “Tense, mood, aspect and clause connections in Biblical Hebrew: a textual approach,” *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 23, no. 2 (1997): 81–103; Ken M. Penner, *The Verbal System of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Tense, Aspect, and Modality in Qumran Hebrew Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); John A. Cook, *Time and the Biblical Hebrew Verb: The Expression of Tense, Aspect, and Modality in Biblical Hebrew* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012).

<sup>60</sup> For a rabbinic source, see b. T. Hag 14a. Schäfer also notices the feature in HR that emphasizes Torah and its observance. He proposes that this is a decisive factor, such that one may see in HR a stronger accordance with Midrash. Schäfer, *The Hidden*, 51–53.

<sup>61</sup> Ideational metaphor, a so-called grammatical metaphor, is concerned with the change and transformation of the function of each element through grammatical choice. Put differently, instead of using a verb which entails a process, a writer/speaker nominalizes the process and transforms it into a thing.

<sup>62</sup> See Jeffrey T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate Over Literary Integrity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 83–84. Reed lists Greek modal adjuncts, and

function. In terms of the ideational metaphor, as Martin and Rose explain, “the strategy of ideational metaphor is to enable writers to generalize about social processes and to describe, classify, and evaluate them.”<sup>63</sup> Thus, it is conceivable that by homing in on the quality of a thing, the infinitive verb *καυχᾶσθαι* provides a general social process of boasting, and Paul’s interlocutors may understand it as an information package, though Paul does not specify everything precisely.<sup>64</sup> Alongside this, the declarative speech function and necessity-focused modality of *δεῖ* may provide Paul’s perception (+JUDGEMENT) of the social reality of boasting.<sup>65</sup>

In the following clauses, however, another instance of evaluative language appears, and it seems to contrast with what Paul says in the first clause. Paul says *οὐ συμφέρον μὲν* (on the one hand, it is not profitable). It is noticeable that, whereas the first clause presents JUDGEMENT via nominalization, such that it appraises people’s behaviors in relation to group boundaries and norms,<sup>66</sup> in the next clause, a personal appraisal of things and phenomena of social action (+APPRECIATION) is employed. Thus, through the initial statement, one may propose Paul’s stance toward boasting. Paul does not denigrate the act of boasting itself, but he does not deem the act of boasting of unusual experiences, such as supernatural visions, to be beneficial.<sup>67</sup>

2 Corinthians 12:9–10 is another source through which we can grasp Paul’s attitude toward his boasting—and toward his weakness. By using a modal adjunct *ἡδέως* to intensify (+GRADUATION) his affect, Paul explains that he is so glad (*ἡδέως*) to show off his weakness. Whereas in 2 Cor 12:1 Paul reveals his lack of appreciation of boasting of unusual experiences, here Paul says that he gladly boasts of his weaknesses. In 2 Cor 12:10, Paul lists several negative words such as weak, shame, distress, persecution, and trouble. But he says that he is happy to be in those negative situations for Christ, because when he is weak, the power of Christ remains in him. Thus, Paul does not deny or reject the social act of boasting, but he does not appreciate the act of boasting of mystical experiences as an appeal for his apostleship, as perhaps the reader might conventionally

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in his classification, the adjunct *δεῖ* plays a role in the interpersonal functions of discourse as Obligation.

<sup>63</sup> Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 112.

<sup>64</sup> This could be related to the qualification to be recognized as an apostle. Ernst Käsemann, “Die Legitimität des Apostels: Eine Untersuchung zu 2 Korinther 10–13,” *ZNW* 41 (1942): 62; Price, “Punished,” 34. Land also explains that “people do at times experience unusual, inexplicable and even non-verifiable experiences,” though he refutes the argument that Paul’s critics were familiar with visionary experiences. Christopher D. Land, *The Integrity of 2 Corinthians and Paul’s Aggravating Absence* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2015), 219.

<sup>65</sup> In Greek, the indicative mood is a basic or default choice when there is no special need to use another mode, and the “indicative mood grammaticalizes simple assertions about what the writer/speaker sees as reality.” Porter, *Idioms*, 51.

<sup>66</sup> Dvorak, “Prodding,” 97.

<sup>67</sup> Also see 2 Cor 10:8, 17. Here, Paul does not seem to devalue the act of boasting itself.

expect.<sup>68</sup> This is even more unconventional and striking when seen in the larger context of 2 Cor 10–11, as described below.

One of the prominent features in 2 Cor 10–11 is Paul's attitude toward weakness and boasting in relation to his rivals. In particular, Paul uses indefinite pronouns (τις 10:2), adjectives (ἄλλος 11:4; οἱ τοιοῦτοι 11:13; πολὺς 11:18), and nominal groups (τῶν ὑπὲρ λίαν ἀπόστολων 11:5) to refer to his rivals. By employing contrasts and comparisons with his rivals, Paul reveals his unique viewpoint on boasting.

In 2 Cor 10, we find the evaluation of Paul's rivals in regard to Paul and his response to their evaluations in turn. Paul's rivals (τις in 2 Cor 10:2) evaluate (λογίζομαι) or consider that Paul and his colleagues are behaving (περιπατέω) according to the flesh. In response, Paul states that the weapons of his warfare are not derived from the flesh (i.e., human ability) but from the power of God (οὐ σαρκικά, ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ: ENGAGEMENT, Disclamation; 2 Cor 10:4-5). In addition to this, Paul expounds that everything (πᾶς: GRADUATION, Intensification), every opposing hindrance, is subject to God's power. Thus, to his rivals who criticize Paul and his colleagues, Paul answers that he and his colleagues situate themselves under the authority of God, which gives legitimate power to refute and discipline others.

In 2 Cor 10:12, another ATTITUDE appears. Paul here uses pronouns such as τις and αὐτός to point to his rivals. Then Paul displays his personal evaluation (+APPRECIATION) toward them. Paul says that since they measure themselves, they are not wise. Unlike those people, Paul and his colleagues refrain from bragging about themselves beyond a given measure (οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα, limitless or immeasurable) assigned by God (2 Cor 10:13). To Paul, therefore, the act of boasting is legitimate only in the Lord (2 Cor 10:17). Furthermore, Paul appraises his rivals (+JUDGEMENT) as false apostles and deceitful workers according to their behaviors (2 Cor 11:13). Employing a contrast (οὐ . . . ἀλλ') in 2 Cor 11:17, Paul evaluates (+JUDGEMENT) those who boast of themselves, not of the Lord's power, as foolish (ἄφρων; cf. 2 Cor 11:16–18).

In a similar vein, when Paul addresses his esoteric experience in 2 Cor 12, he situates himself under the power of Christ and the grace of God.<sup>69</sup> He evidently received many revelations, but at the same time he received a thorn in the flesh in order not to exalt (ὑπεραίρω) himself (2 Cor 12:7). Notwithstanding, he is happy (+AFFECT) to be weak, for the power of Christ remains in him.

Alongside this, Paul speaks of this experience in the context of a dialogic situation. In 2 Cor 11:22–23, bringing up other teachers and their supposed apostolic credentials, Paul uses the open question speech function (+Assertive +Interrogative +Tonal) to project the legitimacy of his apostleship. Interestingly, what Paul highlights the most is

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<sup>68</sup> Dieter Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 280–82.

<sup>69</sup> Land, *The Integrity*, 221.

the frequent suffering and persecution he experienced during his ministry. Then, at the end of his defense, Paul states that he will boast of his weakness (2 Cor 11:30).

To summarize, in 2 Cor 12:1–10 and its context within 2 Cor 10–11, Paul exposes his attitude to the act of boasting and mysterious experiences. Especially, his evaluation of boasting of esoteric experiences is related to his interpersonal evaluation of his rivals.<sup>70</sup> In terms of the social norm, Paul does not slander the other visionaries' esoteric experiences or denigrate the act of boasting in and of itself (+JUDGEMENT). Nevertheless, Paul does not appreciate people who puff themselves up more than they should.<sup>71</sup> Paul regards them as fools (+APPRECIATION), and unlike others, he refrains from the act of boasting about positive things.<sup>72</sup> Finally, Paul shows off his weakness to amplify the grace of God, and he is happy (+AFFECT) to be weak in order to display that the power of Christ remains in him (2 Cor 12:9). Therefore, Paul's attitudinal language in 2 Cor 12:1–10 is concerned with the relationship with his rivals. Paul does not evaluate esoteric experiences as the most important qualification to establish apostolic authority. Rather, the power and grace of God displayed in human weakness and suffering are the true signs of apostleship.<sup>73</sup>

*Engagement and Graduation Analysis.* In terms of ENGAGEMENT, Paul's language in this unit is dialogically contrastive. Here, many instances of contrast appear through several disclamations. 2 Corinthians 12:2–4 contains Paul's description of what happened. Paul uses a grammatically first-person perspective to depict a third-person experience, even if this ultimately refers back to Paul's own experience of a heavenly

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<sup>70</sup> Betz similarly views Paul's mystical account in 2 Cor 12:1–10 within the larger unit of 2 Cor 10–13. Though Betz argues that Paul is not describing a real experience, he proposes that Paul employs the motif of heavenly ascent purely as rhetoric in order to ridicule his critics. Hans Dieter Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus und die sokratische Tradition: Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu seiner Apologie 2 Korinther 10–13* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1972), 84–96. Since Betz's monograph, many scholars have viewed 2 Cor 10–13 as the relevant literary discourse unit necessary in order to understand 2 Cor 12:1–10, and thus such scholars contend that Paul is being polemical there. For a succinct summary of these rhetorical approaches, see Wallace, *Snatched*, 20–23.

<sup>71</sup> Land, *The Integrity*, 218.

<sup>72</sup> Jerry W. McCant, *2 Corinthians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 157–72.

<sup>73</sup> Many previous commentators agree with this conclusion. Though they did not use the same method that the present paper utilizes, they arrived at the conclusion that Paul's account is related to his opponents, and that Paul does not deem esoteric experiences as the essential elements of apostolic authority. Cf. Ferdinand C. Baur, *Paul, The Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teachings* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:291; Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915), 339; Käsemann, "Die Legitimität," 48–50; Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 312; Georgi, *The Opponents*, 280–82; W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 197–98; William Baird, "Visions, Revelation, and Ministry: Reflections on 2 Cor 12:1–5 and Gal 1:11–17," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104, no. 4 (1985): 653–54; Victor Paul Furnish, *2 Corinthians* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984), 524–46.

journey.<sup>74</sup> Here, Paul repeats the description of the incident—a man was snatched up to heaven and heard inexpressible words—and his evaluation: what he knows and what he does not know. In other words, while explaining what happened to this man, Paul’s first-person voice interjects, disclaiming knowledge of whether it was a bodily experience or not. Here is a figure to show this more clearly:

**Figure 4: Engagement in 1 Cor 12:2–4**

Disclaim (contrast)	οἶδα . . . ἐν Χριστῷ	← →	ἐν σώματι οὐκ οἶδα
Experience	ἄρπαγέντα . . . ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ		
Disclaim (contrast)	οἶδα . . .	← →	ἐν σώματι . . . οὐκ οἶδα
Experience	ἤρπάγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον καὶ ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα		

In addition, in this prosody, when Paul pictures what happened to the man, Paul uses the past tense form to delineate the experience. But, when Paul adds his personal perspective, he uses other tense forms, particularly the perfect tense form.<sup>75</sup> The use of the perfect tense, in terms of the Greek verbal aspect, has a semantical significance.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Much ink has spilled on the issue of whether Paul is describing his own experience. Since the present article primarily pays attention to Paul’s evaluative language, I will not address the debate, as it is not the primary concern of this article. Briefly covering the positions, however, Betz argues that the whole pericope is not a real experience but a parody. Thus, to him, Paul’s description does not refer to an actual, mystical journey. Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus*, 72–74. Smith suggests the “man” is Jesus. Morton Smith, “Ascent to the Heavens and the Beginning of Christianity,” *Eranos* 50 (1981): 403–29. Michael Goulder claims that the visionaries were Jewish Christians who forced the Gentiles to observe Torah. In this view, Paul would be claiming that the only true visionary of the heavenly realm is Christ himself. Michael D. Goulder, “Vision and Knowledge,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 17, no. 56 (1995): 53–71; Michael D. Goulder, “The Visionaries of Laodicea,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14, no. 43 (1991): 15–39. However, most scholars conclude that Paul describes his own experience. Cf. Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 2:776–78; Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 390–91; Peerbolte, “Paul’s Rapture,” 159–76.

<sup>75</sup> He says, “I know (οἶδα) a man who is in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ), but I do not know (οἶδα) whether he is in body (ἐν σώματι).” A particular debate regarding the verbs οἶδα and γινώσκω is dealt with in Porter’s book. Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 281–87. Porter argues that two verbs are semantically synonymous but that an important difference can remain in both voice and aspect.

<sup>76</sup> Verbal aspect is a semantic system of categorical opposition such that the writer chooses the tense form to present a subjective perspective on an action (Porter, *Idioms*, 21). According to McKay’s definition, the Greek verbal aspect is “that category of the verb system by means of which an author (or speaker) shows how he views each event or activity he mentions in relation to its context” (K. L. McKay, *A New Syntax of the Verb in New Testament Greek: An Aspectual Approach* [New York: Peter Lang, 1994], 27). Porter explains that the “formulation of the aspect shows that the stative is distanced from the action itself in its conception of the event, unlike the perfective and imperfective. This distancing of action from the ‘sprecksituase’ (‘conversation situation,’ as he calls it) brings the verbal aspect into focus as the one concerned with an entire state. The result is that the Perfect [produces results] . . . more emphatic than the aorist . . . [and is thus] more prominent” (*Verbal Aspect*, 257–58.).

After exhaustive research of the perfect tense in the New Testament, Porter concludes that the “majority of cases where the transitive Perfect occurs the emphasis appears to be on the subject.”<sup>77</sup> Therefore, as he explains the heavenly journey, Paul engages by employing a counter perception and by using the stative aspect to contrast two things: in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ) and in (the) body (ἐν σώματι).

Paul’s stance toward the boasting is another instance of contrastive engagement. In 2 Cor 12:5, Paul uses a contrast such that he boasts on behalf of such a man, but on his own behalf he does not boast except in his weakness. In the following verse (2 Cor 12:6), Paul also reveals his evaluation of the act of boasting and himself. In the protasis, Paul projects a hypothetical process of boasting through employing the subjunctive mood with the aorist tense form.<sup>78</sup> Then, in the apodosis, Paul uses the indicative mood with the future tense form to present his perspective of reality. What Paul is doing here is contrasting himself with other authorities or rivals, saying that he brags only about his weakness, but even though he was willing to boast (ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι), and even though, unlike other authorities/rivals, he would not be a fool (οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων) because he speaks truth (ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἔρω; 2 Cor 11:16–19). Moreover, Paul refrains from bragging about himself (φειδομαι, indicative mood with present tense form) in order to prevent someone from considering (λογίζομαι) him to be more than what that someone might see and hear from Paul on the surface alone. Paul uses the speech function of projective statement (-assertive +projective -interrogative -contingent) with the subjunctive mood and the aorist tense form. Thus, what Paul is doing is abstaining from showing off in order to avoid a potential overvaluing of himself.

In terms of GRADUATION, there are repetitions in this unit. In 2 Cor 12:2–4, the uncertainty of the heavenly visitor’s bodily presence is repeated. In 2 Cor 12:7, Paul repeats two times the purpose of his affliction—that he would not exalt himself. This kind of repetition functions as an intensification that amplifies what the writer/speaker wants to say.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, through the contrast between his weakness and God’s strength, Paul diminishes his exploits but enhances God’s power that makes him complete (τελέω).

To conclude, the appraisal-based analysis in 2 Cor 12:1–10 may yield Paul’s evaluation toward boasting, mysterious experiences, and weakness. First, in terms of ATTITUDE, Paul does not denigrate the act of boasting itself but argues that boasting about mysterious experiences as the source of someone’s strength or authority is not to be (or should not be) highly valued. Instead, Paul is pleased by the fact that he can boast about his weakness in order to demonstrate that the power of Christ remains in him.

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<sup>77</sup> Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 280.

<sup>78</sup> “A third class conditional with ἐάν and the subjunctive, in distinction to a first class conditional, is more tentative and simply projects some action or event for hypothetical consideration” (Porter, *Idioms*, 262).

<sup>79</sup> Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 20.



Second, in terms of ENGAGEMENT, Paul utilizes disclamation (negation) to effectively convey his message. Most of the disclamation is connected to the act of boasting or being arrogant. On the contrary, as a counter to the negation, Paul engages affirmation (positiveness) through being weak and even boasts of his weakness. Through this analysis, it is plausible to propose the following: Paul affirms that mysterious experiences are not negative, but he argues that to regard those experiences as strength is non-profitable. Instead of lifting himself up more than he should, Paul boasts of things normally evaluated as negative in order to testify to the power of Christ that remains in him.

### **Conclusion**

The present study examined the intertextual relations between 2 Cor 12:1–10 and other Jewish texts via linguistic approaches. There are certainly some shared elements between the texts. Common structural elements include the means of entering the heavens, the form of the visitor's presence, the number of heavens, the place where God dwells, the method of receiving divine or cosmic mysteries, and the evaluation of visitors. These similarities are significant. Both Paul and the other excerpts from Jewish literature narrate the way visionaries enter the heavens. All of the texts considered in depth in this study also agree that the heavenly world is not monolithic but hierarchic in its structure. God is depicted as the one who is the Most High, and God is accordingly portrayed as dwelling in the highest part of heaven. From that highest place, the visionaries receive visions and hear words from God. Minimally, one may argue that Paul's esoteric experience is not a unique event but is at least a recognized kind of experience at that time of history and even throughout the history of Jewish literature.

Nevertheless, we should not conclude that these similarities alone establish that Paul retains the same perspective as Jewish mystics. There are two overt differences between the three texts, namely the form of the presence and the evaluation of the visitors to heaven. In other words, though 2 Cor 12:1–10 shares a similar structure with Jewish apocalyptic and mystic texts, Paul's attitude toward visionaries is noticeably different. Whereas other ascents highlight and promote the righteousness of the visionary, namely, how visionaries are righteous and worthy (or not) of surviving the heavenly journey, Paul's elation is at his weakness and the power of Christ. Paul does not brag of his personal experience to promote himself over others. Rather, in a polemic context, Paul presents a negative stance toward those who puff themselves up. On the contrary, unlike the other apparent authorities, what Paul shows off is his weakness, and what Paul elevates is the grace and the power of God.

Therefore, even if it is undeniable that Paul's reported experience in 2 Cor 12 has structural similarities with literature of Jewish mysticism, Paul's evaluation of the heavenly experience (and of visionaries who experience them) is crucially different. In light of the larger textual context, 2 Cor 10–12, the difference of evaluation would be caused by the dialogical situation with his readers and the polemic situation of his

apostolic legitimacy. This situational context is reflected in his language, and with the present appraisal of Paul's textual appraisal, the interpersonal meaning in the text and Paul's stance toward other authorities and the act of boasting become clearer. In the end, Paul's language in 2 Cor 12:1–10 has less solidarity with Jewish texts concerning the evaluation of heavenly experiences. Instead, Paul is addressing his esoteric experience while elaborating on his larger theme, the defense of his apostleship.

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