Spring 2022

Excluded from Our City: Clement of Alexandria and the Porous Frontier of Early Christian Identity

Jordan C. Goneau-Goncalves
Providence College

EXCLUDED FROM OUR CITY: CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA AND THE POROUS FRONTIER OF EARLY CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

Jordan C. Goneau-Goncalves

Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Biblical Studies
at Providence College
2022

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Arthur Urbano for his guidance, insight, and time in overseeing the research and writing for this thesis. His attention to the Greek and expertise in the subject matter have certainly benefited my understanding of Clement and his social setting, and his feedback was crucial throughout this process. I would also like to thank Dr. Sandra Keating and Dr. Ian Levy for their suggestions, critiques, and insights, both during the thesis process and in preparing for my qualifying exams.

I want to thank Sister Anne Francis Klein, O.P. for walking with me and teaching me some of the most valuable lessons I've learned during my time at Providence College. Her friendship and patience has made my time here immeasurably more transformative, and our conversations about Dorothy Day will always be cherished. I'd also like to thank Dorothy Day herself, for providing me the greatest comfort and always leading me home.

Almost six years ago, I began my undergraduate career at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth as a near high school dropout and somehow came out applying to graduate programs; for that, I want to express my sincerest thanks to Dr. Mark Santow, Dr. Caroline Gelmi, and Professoressa Rose Facchini. Any acknowledgments would be incomplete without thanking Dr. Crystal Lubinsky who has been my mentor and inspiration for the better part of a decade now. Thank you Dr. Lubinsky, for sparking my interest in this field, exemplifying the type of scholar I aspire to be, and most of all, for teaching me that this work can be fun.

I want to thank Kacie Harris, Ethan Key, and Christina Youard for the solidarity and friendship they gave me when I started my first graduate program at Boston University. There was no better preparation for grad school than our mutual suffering. I would also like to thank Dr. Sarah

Phillips and Dr. Philip Haberkern at Boston University for their encouragement and guidance which led me to continue my graduate education at Providence College.

Finally, I want to thank my family for all of their support and love. I could not have completed this program without them. And my girls, Brooke McCarthy and Kayleigh Silva: there's no way I'd have made it through without both of you. And as with everything else, I want to thank above all, Aaron Bisson, who has been my constant support and my first editor through undergrad and two MA degrees now. Any typos in this thesis can be blamed on him.

I. Introduction

In the *Paedagogus*, the second volume of his three major works, Clement of Alexandria develops a "Christian" ethic and sense of identity, which is dependent on one's "habits, deeds, and passions."[1] The work itself is directed toward "you who are children" and is intended to instruct Christians in matters of character and behavior.[2] Though he is preoccupied with attempting to educate—rather, allowing his understanding of Christ to educate—Christians in regard to appropriate behaviors and values, thereby defining and maintaining a unique sense of Christian identity in late second century Alexandria, he is also at home in a culture of Greek and Jewish philosophy and literature. As an educated, Greek-speaking, Alexandrian Christian, with a significant indebtedness to both Plato and Philo, Clement is an ideal figure to engage with when concerned with questions of identity among early Christians. By applying modern theoretical frameworks and studies on identity, I aim to examine Clement's ideal and demonstrate how intertwined and permeated it is by that which he seeks to exclude. His aim of trying to regulate behavior in order to maintain a distinct group cohesion is part of what is best understood as the *process* of identity.

With this in mind, my central thesis is that the attempt itself, on the part of Clement, to delineate the parameters of "Christian" identity through the drawing of exclusionary boundaries and exhorting Christians to ethical behavior, is thoroughly engaged with and influenced by the thought and behavior of those meant to remain on the other side of the boundary. Additionally, Clement's understanding of "Christian" identity is thoroughly influenced by ancient notions of

[1] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.1.1.
[2] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.1.1.

ethnicity. I have chosen the *Paedagogus* as my central text because, out of all of Clement's surviving works, it is most directly concerned with the facets of communal and individual "Christian" identity. Put simply, Clement is attempting to explain to "he who is called a Christian" how they should present, behave, and think in order to properly fall within the boundaries of *being* a Christian and to appropriately appreciate the significance which that entails.[3] It should be remembered that Clement's description is indeed an ideal and likely not reflected—certainly not to the universal extent he would prefer—in the behaviors and actions of the vast majority of his contemporaries.

The core of Clement's construction of a Christian identity, embodied through behaviors, depends on his appeals to authoritative sources, whether "Christian," "Jewish," or "pagan," but most importantly on his understanding of Christ as Educator and Logos. For Clement, a Christian life is one in which believers are formed in the image and likeness of Christ, which can only be achieved through understanding—and obeying—Christ as Educator of the "little ones." Further, Clement is deeply engaged with philosophers, theologians, and the literary traditions of multiple different, but inseparable groups, and his use of quotations is demonstrative of this erudition. Whether quoting from Paul, Proverbs, Homer, or Philo, Clement's work is a clear proof that the process of identity is dependent, in part, on a rhetoric of legitimacy and an appeal to authority. Establishing a literary and intellectual continuity with the past through claiming an advanced understanding of Jewish scriptures and Greek philosophy allowed Clement to imbue his ideal "Christian" individual and community with a sense of established authority.

Of chief importance to this project is the necessary "other" in Clement's construction of Christian identity. Despite imagining an impermeable and easily intelligible boundary around this

[3] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.1.

Christian identity—excluding the "other," whether they be Jewish, Greek "pagans" or those who claim *gnōsis* and "dare to call themselves perfect"—Clement is deeply engaged with and indebted to the philosophies, literary works, and language of those spheres he seeks to marginalize.[4] Here it is important to remember that Clement, who despite his own construction of identity, is also situated at a nexus of intertwining, overlapping, and pre-existing identities which are inseparable in that they have provided him with the very language which he uses to draw up a distinct sense of self and community. This can be seen in his discussion of which type of men, based on character and temperament, should be "excluded from our city," a phrase which draws on the philosophical project of Plato in his *Republic*.[5] Despite his conscious efforts to distinguish himself—and his readers—from his non-Christian contemporaries and predecessors, Clement finds himself contributing to the same project of constructing the *kallipolis* that Plato sets about in the *Republic*, which Clement occasionally quotes from directly and more often references indirectly.[6] In his dependence upon and preference toward Plato, Clement invites a non-Christian inside—indeed, invites him to help construct—the boundaries of his "Christian" identity.

Opening his final work on Clement, Eric Francis Osborn, writes that "no one enjoyed theology more than Clement, yet his skillful synthesis of Athens and Jerusalem has furrowed many brows."[7] One purpose of this current project is to complicate the description of Clement's work as a "synthesis" of "Athens and Jerusalem"—here standing in for the imagined, independent "classical" and "Jewish" traditions—and instead to support an understanding of Clement's sense of identity and his work as fully situated within an already Athenian Jerusalem, freely and

[4] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.6.52.
[5] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.5.45.
[6] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.1, 2.5.45, 2.5.47, 2.8.65, 2.10.95, 2.10.100, 3.1.1, 3.11.73.
[7] Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xii.

frequently relying on both Plato and Philo, even while constructing something "new" out of these intertwined traditions.

A Brief Biography

As an early Christian writer and philosopher who defies the traditional binary of orthodoxy and heresy, occupying a more difficult position as "somewhat dubious in his 'orthodoxy' . . . but nonetheless within the fold," Clement is a crucial figure when investigating the construction and boundaries of early Christian identities.[8] Clement takes primary importance in this investigation, as the writer who coined the phrase "the life called Christian."[9] And it is in the *Paedagogus* that Clement lays out his *catechesis,* directed toward newly made Christians in order to instruct them in the ways in which they should live and consequently, how they should embody Clement's imagined "Christian" identity.

Not much is known and few details are certain about the life of Titus Flavius Clemens, but we can confidently describe him as an influential teacher and locate him in Roman Alexandria at the end of the second century, where he wrote the *Paedagogus* and likely instructed elite Alexandrians at some sort of school.[10] What little we know comes primarily from his own writings and from Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote over a century after Clement's death.[11] Alexandria was almost certainly not his place of birth—some sources place that as Athens, but this remains unclear—and Osborn describes him as "a traveler, always moving on . . . [who] invites Greeks to

[8] Denise Kimber Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 12.
[9] Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 164; Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.1.
[10] Jennifer Otto, *Philo of Alexandria and the Construction of Jewishness in Early Christian Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 48; Buell, *Making Christians*, 10; the specific nature of this "school" will be discussed later in this introduction.
[11] Buell, *Making Christians,* 10.

desert to God's side and to enjoy the danger of change."[12] Though he was evidently highly educated and possessed an extensive literary background, we do not know much about Clement's formal training—whether he was educated in the *Ephobia* of Athens as Osborn suggests—but he himself tells us that he left home to travel the Mediterranean in search of knowledge.[13] In his travels, he encountered an eclectic variety of teachers from a diverse span of geographic origins, including Ionia, Coele-Syria, Assyria, and Palestine.[14] Yet his greatest teacher he found "hiding in Egypt," a man he referred to as "the Sicilian-bee" and whom scholars have identified as Pantaenus, an influential Alexandrian theologian who is traditionally regarded as Clement's predecessor at the "catechetical" school of Alexandria.[15] Clement then settled in Egypt for the majority of his career, teaching and living in Alexandria, where he developed "a strong Alexandrian flavor" in his choice of sources, "the allegorical method that he favors, and the middle-platonic timbre of his philosophical presuppositions."[16]

Toward the end of his life, he was driven to Palestine by persecution in Alexandria, likely during 202 or 206 CE.[17] The last fragment of Clement's life comes to us in the form of a letter from his former student, the Bishop of Jerusalem, Alexander, "recommending him to the church in Antioch," which can be dated to around 205 CE.[18] Prior to his departure, while settled in Alexandria for the final decades of the second century, Osborn writes that Clement's "intellectual voyages did not cease . . . he explored the Bible, philosophy and literature, often preserving fragments of philosophers who would otherwise be lost today, and quoting classical writers with

[12] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 1, 21; Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 48; Jared Secord, *Christian Intellectuals and the Roman Empire: From Justin Martyr to Origen* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020), 114.
[13] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 1, 21; Clement, *Stromateis*, 1.1.11.
[14] Arthur Urbano, *The Philosophical Life: Biography and the Crafting of Intellectual Identity in Late Antiquity* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 45; Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 1.
[15] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 1; Urbano, *The Philosophical Life*, 45; Clement, *Stromateis*, 1.1.11.
[16] Buell, *Making Christians*, 10.
[17] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 1, 14, 20, 22.
[18] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 49.

affection and sensitivity."[19] Exploration and movement characterized Clement's understanding of spiritual matters and he, "more than any other early Christian writer, knew and enjoyed Greek philosophy and literature. Saturated with study of this culture, he belonged to Alexandria, a city which was ruled by it."[20]

Based in cosmopolitan Alexandria for the majority of his literary career, Clement would have been enveloped in a cultural atmosphere that was steeped in the influence of both Platonic and Philonic philosophy, the latter of which was already intertwined with the former.[21] Clement's surviving writings demonstrate his familiarity with the literary, philosophical, and religious traditions around him. He cites scripture over five thousand times, Philo three hundred times, Homer two hundred and forty times, and calls on well over three hundred classical authors, including over six hundred citations of Plato alone.[22] Further demonstrating the literary resources available to Clement, Annewies van den Hoek has painstakingly shown that he had access to most of Philo's works while in Alexandria and that he utilized them extensively, despite few explicit references.[23]

The Alexandrian *Ekklēsia*: Community, Authority, and Rivalry

Clement's ties to the city, its elite circles of educated Greeks, and its long traditions of philosophy, merit a brief discussion of the Christian community in Alexandria itself. Describing Clement's audience, Denise Kimber Buell asserts that "Clement writes for people who have surrounded themselves with things Greek, who speak Greek, who are at least passingly familiar with Homer,

[19] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 1.
[20] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 1, 2.
[21] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 2.
[22] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 4-5.
[23] Annewies van den Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," *The Harvard Theological Review* 90, no. 1 (1997): 85; David T. Runia, "Why Does Clement of Alexandria Call Philo 'The Pythagorean'?" *Vigiliae Christianae* 49, no. 1 (1995): 1.

Euripides, and the veneration of Greek deities, and who are quite keenly aware of Alexandria's fashionable culture."[24] As Buell has already demonstrated in an earlier study, despite Clement's universalizing language of address, his assumptions and emphases in the *Paedagogus* often indicate that he is primarily addressing educated, well-off, Greek, male Christians.[25] These assumptions and emphases themselves contribute toward his construction of a "Christian" identity in a less explicit manner, in that they reveal who Clement is *not* addressing. This is not to say that Clement's words do not apply to the non-educated, non-Greek, non-male, but these categories do not take precedence in his conception of a "Christian."

A new question arises then: namely, who was Clement *in* late second century Alexandria and how did he function as an authoritative figure among the city's Christian community? Judith Lieu argues that "despite his own assured tone, the context and extent of Clement's own authority within the church in Alexandria remains uncertain."[26] Buell concurs with Lieu and notes that Clement "employs language that naturalizes and authorizes his own speaking position, while also differentiating him from his competitors," whose very presence calls into question the extent of his authority and influence.[27] Rather than speaking for an undivided church, Clement and his opponents claim the same authority, but this reflects a period when these Christian communities and teachers "struggled for existence, identity, and dominance."[28]

In Clement's own writings we find a glimpse of the Christian community of Alexandria, "which has its orders of deacons, priests and bishops but is not set under one supreme bishop," where the "chief activity" of the early Christian *ekklēsia* was to teach, and whose authority came

[24] Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 156.
[25] Buell, *Making Christians*, 130.
[26] Judith Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 133.
[27] Buell, *Making Christians*, 12.
[28] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 74.

from influential teachers, not from bishops.[29] Clement's writings do not reflect the tension between priests and teachers that would later characterize the Alexandrian Christian community, and he even characterizes himself as "a true priest of the church and a true deacon of the will of God, who does and teaches the things of the lord."[30] This gives us a picture of an Alexandria where the line between episcopal authority and charismatic teachers was not yet defined, though this would soon change with the bishopric of Demetrius and the subsequent conflicts which resulted in the departure of Origen from the city.[31]

Further contextualizing Clement's location in the Alexandrian *ekklēsia*, Buell argues that his "total silence on ecclesial organization makes more plausible a reconstruction of his role in Alexandria as that of one Christian teacher among many."[32] David Dawson agrees, maintaining that "Clement's circle was only one among many, including those of Valentinus and Basilides ['gnostic' opponents of Clement's] that existed apart from the institutional control of a bishop."[33] Thus, despite Clement's claim of belonging to—and possessing authority within—a global *ekklēsia* that preserved apostolic teachings, his exact position within the Alexandrian *ekklēsia* is difficult to ascertain; as is the very unity of such an *ekklēsia*.[34] Alexandrian Christianity was not a monolith and this is emphasized by the lack of a unified episcopal authority during the late second century. Yet none of this even touches on the vast majority of Alexandrian Christians, whom Clement refers to as "the many simple believers," who were likely to "be poor and diverse" and who were not situated within the same cultural and intellectual nexus as Clement.[35]

[29] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 22.
[30] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 22; Clement, *Stromateis*, 6.13.106.
[31] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 22.
[32] Buell, *Making Christians*, 12.
[33] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 49-50.
[34] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 50.
[35] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 22.

Osborn claims that Clement had access to a *scriptorium* and library in Alexandria, which established the city as a center of Christian learning and teaching, enabling Clement "to achieve his interpretation of the bible and his appropriation of the classical tradition."[36] While Osborn masterfully reconstructs an image of late second century Alexandria, I argue that he errs in his use of the word "appropriation." Clement could not appropriate the classical tradition, because he belonged to it as much as his "pagan" contemporaries did. Clement's engagement and explanation of scripture was "intelligible to his culture," as Osborn claims, not because he masterfully stole the language of his culture, but precisely because he resided *within* his culture.[37] Right from the start, it is important to recognize that Clement's project of defining "Christian" necessitates a certain porousness of boundaries, due to his cultural setting, the language he uses, the metaphors he draws upon, and the ideas which have shaped his thinking. Certainly, he spoke "beyond" the church and encouraged Greek "pagans" to "find the treasure which was in Christ," but he did not write to proselytize as an unintelligible colonizer.[38]

The Legacy of Philo

Without much evidence on the origins of the Alexandrian Christian community, scholars have sought to fill in the gaps with a variety of theories—primarily of a continuity between an existing Jewish community and early Christians—but there is an obvious watershed moment in the history of Alexandria that renders this largely moot.[39] This would be the violent conflict between the Roman state and its Jewish subjects during the reign of Trajan, which "radically attenuated that

[36] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 20, 24.
[37] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 24.
[38] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 24.
[39] Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 126; Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 80.

continuity."[40] There is still much debate over whether there was a direct continuity between a Jewish synagogue in Alexandria and the early Christian *ekklēsia*, but Clement's deep familiarity with Philonic thought demonstrates an intellectual engagement at the very least, if not any lived interactions.[41] Hoek argues in favor of a "primarily" literary link between Clement and the Jewish community of Alexandria as opposed to one based on lived interactions with Jewish scholars.[42] Supporting this argument, David T. Runia suggests a "rescue operation," undertaken on the part of Clement's teacher, Pantaenus, in order to preserve the Hellenistic-Jewish works of Philo and other writers from being forgotten in the aftermath of the decimation of the Alexandrian Jewish community.[43]

Whatever the exact nature of this continuity—I would agree with Hoek that it was primarily literary—the importance here is to note that Clement was thoroughly indebted to and familiar with the writings of the first century Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria. Yet, it is important not to misinterpret Clement's use of Philo as an instance of a "Christian" philosopher appropriating the work of a "Jewish" predecessor, because as Jennifer Otto writes, Clement likely "encountered Philo's texts via a chain of transmission that flowed through the philosophical circles of the Mediterranean world [rather] than via a direct inheritance of an Alexandrian Jewish exegetical tradition."[44] For Clement, Philo is not a representative of a living, i.e. rival, Alexandrian, Jewish community, but a great thinker and member of the ancient philosophical traditions that he has inherited and who demonstrates the compatibility of Greek and Jewish wisdom.[45] Philo was a Jewish writer, certainly, but it was not only in this identity that Clement encountered him; rather,

[40] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 80.
[41] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 198.
[42] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 80.
[43] David T. Runia, "Clement of Alexandria and the Philonic Doctrine of the Divine Power(s)," *Vigiliae Christianae* 58, no. 3 (2004): 257.
[44] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 48, 198.
[45] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 198.

Clement's reception of Philo was much the same as his reception of other Platonic philosophers. Already, there is a complex interplay between identities which can be labelled as "Jewish," "Christian," "Greek," etc., simultaneously, subsequently, or situationally.

The importance of Philo in the Alexandrian Christian tradition is such that many writers not only name him "as part of their own tradition, [but that] it is clear that they meant by that much more than that someone had stumbled upon some interesting leftover scrolls."[46] The first century philosopher had so deeply influenced the intellectual atmosphere of Alexandria, that nearly two centuries later, Origen would identify him explicitly as one of his predecessors, even more so than Clement, himself.[47] Both Origen and Clement made use of Philo's exegetical work and inherited his Platonism, a combination "in which the Platonic underpinnings corroborate their biblical explorations, [which] may represent their greatest debt to Philo."[48]

The Catechetical School

The so-called "catechetical school" of Alexandria has been discussed and debated for centuries, producing a large body of scholarship on its origins, characteristics, role among the Alexandrian Christian community, and its relationship with official episcopal authority in the city.[49] The school itself is not the subject of this work, but a brief discussion of it is necessary here in order to contextualize Clement's authority as a teacher. Eusebius of Caesarea is our primary source of information on the school and although he indicates a fixed tradition, with a continuous line of succession from Pantaenus to Clement to Origen, his most severe critics dispense with his model

[46] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 82.
[47] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 83.
[48] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 79.
[49] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 59.

entirely.[50] The traditional assumption—originating with Eusebius—that there existed an authorized catechetical school of Alexandria, headed by Clement, and under the control of the bishop, has since been convincingly challenged by a variety of scholars in the twentieth century.[51] Taking into account these contributions, it seems that a catechetical school in the manner described by Eusebius is unlikely, but both Osborn and Hoek are notable dissenters from a reconstruction which is overly critical of Eusebius.[52]

Hoek critiques an easy dismissal of Eusebius, whose reconstruction some scholars replace with an imagined "unofficial" Alexandrian school, centered on charismatic teachers.[53] Analyzing Clement's writings and his choice of words when describing his own activity, she argues that "Clement evidently sees himself in an ecclesiastical setting, appointed in the church by no less than Christ himself."[54] This does not confirm the idealized picture of Eusebius, but neither does it favor modern reconstructions that sideline the traditional model entirely. Rather, it seems that the dividing line between church and school was not yet present and that Clement understood his own instruction of the faithful as taking place fully within the context of the church.[55] While she agrees that Eusebius must be read critically, Hoek cautions against dismissing all of his claims and adopting modern reconstructions which are as difficult, if not more so, to prove.[56]

While keeping in mind Buell and Dawson's understandings of Clement and his circle as "one among many," it seems reasonable to conclude that there were existing traditions of catechetical instruction and philosophical debate which were passed on from Clement's

[50] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 60, 61.
[51] Buell, *Making Christians*, 12; Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 19.
[52] Buell, *Making Christians*, 12.
[53] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 61
[54] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 66.
[55] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 71; Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.18.4.
[56] Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 85, 86.

contemporaries to Origen's, while also agreeing that Pantaenus and Clement taught private circles of elite, educated, Greek-speaking, Christian students who were not necessarily representative, nor the most influential members of the broader *ekklēsia*.[57] In closing this section, I would agree with Buell when she writes that: "whether or not Clement speaks with institutional backing, it is crucial to interpret his writings as arguments for a particular vision of Christian identity, not merely articulations of already determined doctrinal positions."[58]

Theoretical Framework: Identity as Process

I am most reliant on and indebted to Judith Lieu's broader framework for understanding identity, which she lays out in *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*. At the start of her work, Lieu asks two important questions: "In what form can a cohesive Christian identity be articulated, and how does that identity subsist in relation to other structural identities?"[59] Acknowledging the inherent anachronism of the terms "identity" and "construction," which reflect "the particular intellectual and ideological preoccupations of the contemporary world," Lieu nonetheless asserts identity as a useful lens.[60] This lens and subsequent theoretical models are useful because ancient Mediterranean society, early Christianity in particular, was thoroughly invested in questions of peoplehood and group belonging.

By Lieu's definition, identity involves "ideas of boundedness, of sameness and difference, of continuity, perhaps of a degree of homogeneity, and of recognition by self and by others."[61] She

[57] Buell, *Making Christians,* 12; Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 49-50; Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 19; Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," 71; although Hoek questions the use of the term "private," it suffices to meet the need here.
[58] Denise Kimber Buell, *Making Christians,* 12.
[59] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 7.
[60] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 11; Maia Kotrosits insightfully critiques Lieu's use of "identity," in *Rethinking Early Christian Identity: Affect, Violence, and Belonging* but I am in agreement with Lieu in hesitating to jettison the term altogether.
[61] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 12.

further accepts that identity is socially constructed, dynamic, and subject to change.[62] Important concepts in Lieu's construction of identity—which I will adopt with slight modifications to attend to the concerns of other scholars—include a required "other," fluidity and exchange, claims of continuity, "frontiers" rather than impermeable borders, and the creative/constructive role of texts as "acts of power." Each of these concepts will become important in an examination of the *Paedagogus* to understand what Clement is doing and how he is engaged in the *process of identity*.

The Other

Concerned with "the other," Lieu points out that attempts to construct a group identity also construct an opposing identity, as "similarity implies the possibility of difference;" the "us" implies a "them," and "the description of the self demands the description of the other."[63] Buell's concept of "ethnic reasoning" (the deployment of rhetorical strategies for the purposes of group identification) will be of primary importance when examining how Clement uses established patterns of describing "the other"—most notably using "ethnoracial" terminology—in his attempt to define his proper "Christian;"[64] as will her larger project of identity which "has been one of bringing to the forefront evidence of early Christian appropriations of the categories 'race' and 'ethnicity' (*genos, ethnos, laos, phylos*) in formulating that community's own narratives of self-fashioning and group identity."[65]

An important consequence of Buell's analysis is the complication of the idea that Christianity broke the mold and separated religion from its surrounding contexts, which has been

[62] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 13, 14.
[63] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 15.
[64] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 42.
[65] Laura Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, eds., *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Christian Identities* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 96.

asserted in "three overlapping ways:" that Christianity is universal and not tied to ethnoracial differences, that it is otherworldly in focus, and that it is "a religion of conversion or volunteerism, rather than of birth."[66] She points out that "these arguments presuppose that ethnicity/race in antiquity is never part of a universalizing rhetoric," which does not fit the context of an early Christian world where "most people were not embedded in a static matrix, but rather a dynamic and cosmopolitan one."[67] It is this dynamic context that results in the ability for the universalizing claims of many early Christian writers to cohabitate with her designation of Christianity as an "ethnoracial" group. Use of "ethnoracial" terminology does *not* counteract nor contradict universalizing claims. Buell's work is important in combatting the latent anti-Judaism and supersessionism that creeps into scholarship through the image of a non-racial, de-ethnicized Christianity (which is too often juxtaposed with the image of an overtly ethnic Judaism, to which it is cast as superior).

A consequence of ignoring Buell's work and of interpreting Christianity as "unmoored from the messy specificities of 'ethnicity' and 'culture'" is the devaluation of references to Christian ritual practice and the assumption that Christian usage of *genos, ethnos,* and *laos* are uniquely metaphorical and are located "above" sociopolitical embeddedness.[68] Modern scholarship must address the ways in which early Christian writers, such as Clement, utilized what Buell calls "ethnic reasoning" in order to "legitimize various forms of Christianness as the universal, most authentic manifestation of humanity, [and] offered Christians both a way to define themselves relative to 'outsiders' and to compete with other 'insiders' to assert the superiority of their varying visions of Christianness."[69]

[66] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 61.
[67] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 61.
[68] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 62.
[69] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 2.

ἔθνος, γένος, and λαός: People-Language of the Ancient Mediterranean

Here it is important to briefly discuss the three most commonly used Greek words to denote ancient-people groups: *ethnos*, *genos*, and *laos*. Each of these words came with a breadth of applications and connotations, none of which can be said to be the perfect equivalent of modern understandings of "ethnicity."[70] Indeed, the ancient Greeks were not in possession of a single word that we can point to and—without reservation or qualification—call "ethnicity," but each of these words were often used in ways which we can identify with Buell's understanding of "ethnic reasoning." Although none can be easily identified as "ethnicity," as the etymological forebear of the word, *ethnos* "is a good place to start, since it is widely used as a standard way to denote people-groups."[71]

Ethnos was often used to describe non-human units of classification—such as various species of animals—but when restricting its usage to human people-groups, it could still range from an entire nation, to the inhabitants of a single *polis*, to members of a specific guild.[72] Jeremy McInerney notes that the term "served as a conveniently loose label, equivalent to the vague English term 'people.'"[73] While e*thnos* can be used as our standard when identifying ancient people-groups, *genos* has a more specific connotation, typically implying a—occasionally fictive—notion of "shared descent."[74] However, it can often be used as both a subdivision and a synonym of *ethnos*. Finally, *laos* "seems always to refer to groups of human beings such as soldiers, sailors, country-folk, or a gathered crowd . . . [but it] also came to be used to refer to the whole population, which might equally be described as an ἔθνος or γένος—'the people' as a

[70] David G. Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion: Religion, Race, and Whiteness in Constructions of Jewish and Christian Identities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 220.
[71] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 220.
[72] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 220.
[73] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 220.
[74] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 223.

collective whole."[75] In regard to Clement's usage of these terms, there is a stark difference. He most often defaults to *genos* when describing Christians as a people-group and exclusively refers to non-Christian, non-Jewish Greeks as the *ethnē*.[76] The significance and implications of these terms will be further explored at a later point in this chapter and more extensively in the following one.

None of these terms are a perfect match for modern understandings of ethnicity, but they are the key terms that ancient Greek authors applied when describing or defining various people-groups, which modern theories of identity read as ethnic groups.[77] This can be seen in Clement's *Stromateis*, where we find the earliest example of the phrase "τρίτον γένος"—those whom Clement claims "are Christians"—in the context of arguing that the ancient Greeks "knew God but did not know or worship him in the right way."[78] This is part of Clement's understanding of the role of the Christ/Logos as Educator, improperly understood by those living before the Incarnation and Crucifixion. He does not see Christians as articulating a new God, but a new way of worshipping him, which indicates a change in peoplehood as defined by practice and mode of worship.[79] Clement describes the emergence of this "third race," not as a people defined by biological heritage but by correct worship. In Clement's world, practice and peoplehood are synonymous, and *genos* indicates both the "specific 'kind' of Christian worship and the people themselves."[80]

Utilizing Buell's model, Horrell argues that Clement uses both an "aggregative" and an "oppositional" form of ethnic reasoning. The former is part of a "universalizing strategy, suggesting that all can be incorporated into this new people of God," through transformation and

[75] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 223-224.
[76] Clement, *Stromateis*, 6.5.42, 6.41.6, 6.42.2, 7.7.35, 7.12.73; *Protrepticus*, 4.59.3; *Excerpts from Theodotus*, 4.1; *Paedagogus*, 1.6.36; 2.10.103; 2.11.108; 3.2.8; 3.8.42; 3.11.53; 3.12.85.
[77] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 224.
[78] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 236-237; Clement, *Stromateis*, 6.5.41.
[79] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 237
[80] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 242.

crossing the imagined boundary into the "one race of the saved," while the latter "draws a contrast between the Christian's old and new identity, describing the putting off of the old person and the putting on of the immortality of Christ 'in order that we may become new, a holy people, born again.'"[81]

Fluidity and Exchange, Dependency and Borrowing

Early Christianity—and any of its attending concepts of identity—cannot be described outside of the world it interacted with, and thus it needs to be situated within and seen as engaged with neighboring and overlapping senses of identity, both contributing to and receiving from them. None of the identities adjacent to and overlapping with early Christians were mutually exclusive senses of self, and therefore we can only attempt to understand any one people-group through understanding its relations to neighboring senses of identity.[82]

Therefore, in discussing the context of Clement's conceptualizing a "Christian" identity, it is important to consider the movement known as the "second sophistic," which Tim Whitmarsh describes as a response to the "crisis of posterity" during which "many of the literary players of this period negotiated the boundaries of their cultural membership and affiliation."[83] The reason this movement among classical writers is relevant is because it demonstrates that the continued negotiation of identity and its boundaries were not an exclusively Jewish and Christian problem but one that also extended to ideas of Greekness and Romanness. Christianity was not alone in this ongoing process of self-definition. The "Greeks" and "Romans" were already aware of "sameness and of difference, of a shared past and agreed values, of continuities and of boundaries" as

[81] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 242, 243; Clement, *Stromateis*, 6.5.42; *Paedagogus*, 1.6.32.
[82] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 21.
[83] Kathleen Gibbons, *The Moral Psychology of Clement of Alexandria* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 34.

Christians began to construct an identity within the empire and Jewish self-definition continued to evolve in the Graeco-Roman world, both in the late Second Temple period and afterwards.[84]

Relevant to this idea of relation to and continuity with adjacent identities, Arthur Urbano notes the faults of the often used concepts of "borrowing" and "dependency." Many early Christians who had received a Greek education—Clement in this case—depicted their own philosophic and intellectual activities in terms of theft or "borrowing" from surrounding cultures. However, modern scholarship must question these ancient understandings of cultural exchange, despite the ease with which we could "fall back uncritically on what we might call the 'spoliation,' or 'dependency,' model according to which Christians borrowed and copied ideas, practices, and artistic styles that *really* belonged to Romans, Greeks, and Jews."[85] Urbano argues that early Christians did not inhabit the Graeco-Roman and Jewish worlds, as foreign appropriators or "cultural scavengers;" despite these early Christian writers understanding their own interactions with other philosophic and literary traditions as "a conscious adoption and adaption of Greek learning to beautify and augment the expression of Christianity . . . we cannot accept this narrative uncritically without considering what was already unconsciously inscribed in early Christian intellectuals as native residents of a vast and varied Roman world."[86] Clement and his fellows were not the thieves they imagined themselves to be and their Christianity was not independent of the world around them in the way that they conceptualized it. Instead, these writers and philosophers were educated alongside their pagan contemporaries, they "shared teachers and classrooms, and lived in overlapping social words. Thus any notion of 'borrowing' or 'despoiling' becomes moot."[87]

[84] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 17, 19.
[85] Urbano, *The Philosophical Life*, 4.
[86] Urbano, *The Philosophical Life*, 4.
[87] Urbano, *The Philosophical Life*, 8.

This understanding of overlapping, inseparable identities, in addition to the creation of "the other," necessitates the inclusion of the work of Éric Rebillard. Rebillard critiques previous scholarship as reifying distinct categories of ancient peoples, despite a supposedly postmodern aversion to doing such and toward understanding boundaries as "contingent and fluctuating."[88] The blame for this reification lies partially on scholarship, but is understandable when we look at our sources. Due to the nature of our materials, we are presented with constructions of Christian identities that are "internally homogenous and externally bounded."[89] As Lieu notes, "our texts resist their confinement to the local."[90] Yet Rebillard draws attention to the "disjuncture between the thematization of ethnicity and its enactment in everyday life," which extends beyond the concept of ethnicity to include other aspects of identification which might have been assumed by an individual living in late antiquity.[91] With this disjuncture in mind, "we should no longer assume that the behavior of Christians was predominantly determined by their religious allegiance (despite the demands of the bishops) . . . [and this also indicates] that we should instead ask how and in which contexts Christianness became salient in Christians' everyday life."[92] According to Rebillard's theory, identification as a "Christian" would have been of "episodic character" and "activated in a situation"—activated meaning becoming the primary mode of identification based upon hyper-specific situational encounters—rather than consistently superseding all other forms of identification.[93]

[88] Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity: North Africa, 200-450 CE* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 2.
[89] Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity*, 2, 3.
[90] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 4.
[91] Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity*, 3.
[92] Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity*, 3.
[93] Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity*, 4, 93.

The Frontier

The "seduction of identity" is that "the encircling boundary appears both given and immutable, when it is neither."[94] In combatting this "seduction," Lieu prefers the term "frontier" to "boundary" or "border." For Lieu, frontiers "do not represent fixed lines so much as zones of influence or areas of control . . . then, as now, they lay themselves open to mockery at human conceit."[95] Dispensing with boundaries, borders, and the idea that identities are static across space and time, Lieu argues that these various identities find their edges better characterized by the concept of "the frontier," and despite attempts at separation, the best the constructors of identity have ever been capable of is "temporary check points rather than concrete walls."[96] The frontier is best understood as a place of "construction and contention," "movement and connectedness," and permeability which encourages "interaction, while providing rules for it."[97] Aptly summarizing her framework, Lieu writes that "identity is to do with change and with the encounter with others."[98]

Buell's "ethnic reasoning" returns with a new importance in the context of the frontier/border, as early Christian authors used it to "argue that individuals need to transform themselves, for example, into members of a saved, righteous, immovable, or true *genos*, a holy or special *laos.*"[99] Far from claiming an immutable concept of ethnicity or race, Clement and his contemporaries often "speak about crossing the threshold from outsider to insider as the assumption of a new ethnoracial identity."[100] If we re-conceptualize the "borders" of identity with Lieu's "frontier," then the action of "crossing" it takes on an entirely different meaning and implies a longer *process* of identity, engaged on multiple fronts and from multiple angles, as opposed to

[94] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 98.
[95] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 98-99.
[96] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 99.
[97] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 100, 141.
[98] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 17.
[99] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 47.
[100] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 47.

an envisioned swapping of distinct identities. This idea of the "frontier" and the boundaries of Clement's "Christian" identity, will be further explored in the penultimate chapter of this thesis, but for now it is important to state that Clement's use of ethnoracial imagery and language, in tandem with his proscriptions on certain behaviors and practices, are directly relevant to his conceptualization of Christianness and its parameters.[101]

An Act of Power

Finally, the creative role of texts is tied to Lieu's understanding of "acts of power," in that through texts we are often presented with authorial constructions of identity, but that these constructions "become alive as we discover the way [in which they] construct readers and 'reality' through acts of power, by silence and marginalization, as well as by unarticulated assumptions, by the values and hierarchies engendered, and by the authoritative voice claimed."[102] As Rebillard notes, the "bishops did succeed in constructing Christian identity as that of a bounded group," and the very fact that so much theoretical work has gone into complicating "identity" itself demonstrates the effectiveness of this construction.[103] A central premise of Lieu's framework is that "texts construct a world," and that:

> They do this out of the multiple worlds, including textual ones, that they and their authors and readers already inhabit and experience as 'reality'; that new world itself becomes part of subsequent 'reality' within and out of which new constructions may be made. Yet this is not a self-generating system: constructions and worlds interact and clash with others, whether they are seen as congenial or as alien. It is this dynamic process that constitutes the field of our explorations in what follows, yet always at its edges will hover the elusive question of how, if at all, such textual knowledge becomes embodied, constructing Christians.[104]

[101] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 47.
[102] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 24, 25.
[103] Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity*, 93.
[104] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 61.

Indebted to the scholarship above, I hope to make a contribution toward the growing study of early Christian identities and the impact these processes have on the continued development of "Christian identity" today. As an influential theologian of the early Church and perhaps the most immersed in Greek philosophy of the loosely defined "Church Fathers," Clement is an ideal figure to study when examining the overlap, conflict, and exchange which takes place at the intersections of various identities. In the intervening centuries, Clement himself has become—through the survival of his work and influence—a touchstone which contemporary Christians engaged in the process of identity can appeal to.

Given the diversity that exists alongside the unity in the Church, it seems to me that an examination of how individuals such as Clement navigated some of these questions—both critiquing and appreciating his efforts—can generate fruitful conversations and solutions today. As the Church, both as communal identity and the diverse individuals comprising it, attempts to grapple with questions of race, gender, and marginalization, it seems to me that an examination of how individuals such as Clement navigated some of these questions—both critiquing and appreciating his efforts—can generate fruitful conversations and solutions today.

II. Establishing an Authoritative Past

Continuity as Authority: The Need for History in Identity-Construction

"Without continuity there can be no identity, and it is continuity over time, with all its inherent ambiguities of change and sameness, that offers the greatest challenges and the greatest rewards," writes Judith Lieu, and the validity of this argument serves as the cornerstone of not only this chapter, but the larger project of investigating identity itself.[105] Among early Christians, the most crucial tool in the formation of a distinct and intelligible identity was the ability to insert themselves into the salvation narrative they found in Jewish scripture and thereby establishing a continuity with scriptural figures, promises, and prophecies. In order to claim a present identity, early Christians were first tasked with constructing an authoritative past. Clement did this through conceiving of a patrilineage which began with the Christ/Logos, flowed through the prophets and apostles, and expressed itself in his time through himself, other Christian teachers, and the proper behavior of the Christian *ekklēsia* or "the assembly of little ones."[106]

Clement demonstrates this when he writes: "Of old, the Word educated through Moses, and after that through the Prophets . . . the Word of God, is our Educator. It is to Him that God has entrusted us, as a loving Father delivering His children to a true Educator."[107] The importance of Christ as the Word of God and Educator cannot be overstated here. It is through the Christ/Logos, or the Word, that Clement and the "little ones" are able to claim a continuity with biblical figures and thus with divine intent and command, and it is this continuity which sustains his construction of a Christian identity. Lieu argues that in order to understand how early Christians were embedded

[105] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 62.
[106] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.5.19.
[107] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.11.96-97.

in and actively engaged with the dynamics of the late second and early third centuries in the Mediterranean world, we need to investigate both continuity and discontinuity between "Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian efforts to construct and to maintain an identity for themselves, in interaction with their past as well as with each other."[108]

This idea of continuity is often assumed to exist in a concrete manner and dubbed "history" in popular discourse, which obscures the constructed nature of the ideological frameworks which scholars impose on subjects of the distant past. Rather than repeat time-honored aphorisms of how investigating the past is crucial to understanding the present—which neither Lieu, nor myself object to—she argues that "no less important is the question, 'how did the present create the past?'"[109] This is the task which Buell tackles in much of her scholarship, professing the obligation of modern scholars, "culturally marked as white and Christian . . . to struggle against both racist and anti-Jewish interpretive frameworks that have served to mask and sustain white Christian privilege."[110] Pointing to the importance of reconstructed patrilineages of orthodoxy, existing in opposition to "an infinite variety of so-called heretics," Buell critiques scholarship which perpetuates the constructions of Clement and his contemporaries in ways both subtle and obvious: including the designation of "church fathers," and even "patristics" itself.[111]

Nevertheless, modern scholars did not invent this "history." Clement himself, establishing his own authority over what is and is not "Christian" or applicable to "the Christian way of life" does so by imagining a continuity between himself and "Wisdom Himself, the Word of the Father."[112] This is evident in his profession that the Word, which spoke through Moses, the

[108] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 21.
[109] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 62.
[110] Denise Kimber Buell and Caroline Johnson Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123, no. 2 (2004): 235-236.
[111] Buell, *Making Christians*, 6.
[112] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.2.6, 1.10.95, 1.13.102, 2.1.1, 2.1.14, 2.3.38, 3.8.41; Buell, *Making Christians*, 10.

prophets, and the apostles for the purposes of educating "the little ones," now speaks through him in his instructive remarks on how his readers are to behave.[113] In order to establish this continuity, Clement relies on the use of scriptures—used here in a "loose" sense, denoting texts which were understood to have moral and theological significance by Clement—available to him, the classical "pagan" authors who defined his education, and his understanding of Christ as an active deity, with a pedagogical purpose, engaged in the transmission of "true knowledge."[114] Citations from these varying sources constitute Clement's rhetoric of legitimacy and are the foundations of all of his claims to authority, legitimacy, and continuity. It is key to keep in mind that Clement is not *only* reacting to or receiving established categories of "Christian" and "heretic," but also actively engaged in constructing them in order to authorize his own position as a valid teacher to pass along the knowledge of the only true Educator, which is to be found in Christ.[115]

On the other hand, Clement, in defending the validity of his theological arguments, is making these appeals to an authoritative past, not as some novel form of identity-making, but rather following in the vein of Jewish writers like Josephus and Philo, who made arguments from antiquity and "ancient wisdom" an essential aspect of their own communal and individual identities.[116] It is the task here to investigate how Clement utilized these tools in order to construct his own authority and imagine a continuity which begins with God and His Word, traces through Moses and the prophets, to the apostles and ultimately, to himself and other teachers of the "little ones."

[113] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.6.25, 2.10.91, 2.10.99, 2.12.126, 3.3.20, 3.12.91.
[114] M. David Litwa, "You are Gods: Deification in the Naassene Writer and Clement of Alexandria," *Harvard Theological Review* 110, no. 1 (2017): 145.
[115] Buell, *Making Christians*, 77.
[116] Gibbons, *The Moral Psychology of Clement of Alexandria*, 36.

Many early Christian writers were involved in this rewriting, remembering, and forgetting of scriptural history, often through the appropriation of significant figures—such as Moses and subsequent prophets—which allowed them to claim that they were continuous with and truly embodying what had been handed down, directly from God.[117] Hoek understands Clement's immense use and citation of materials—thousands of citations ranging from biblical materials, early Christian writings, and "the whole span of Greek literature from Homer to his own time"—as better characterized by the term "recycled material," as opposed to "borrowing."[118] "Recycled" over "borrowed" better illustrates a world in which many of Clement's citations were ubiquitous for those of his social positioning as well implying the ways in which "he subtly or unsubtly transforms his borrowed material."[119] In these ways, Clement and his co-workers are able to make Christians both the subjects of and heirs to scriptural promises, as well as to Greco-Roman philosophical traditions.[120]

The Clementine Logos: The Good Educator, Wisdom Himself, the Word of the Father

Returning to the importance of the Christ/Logos and Clement's understanding of the relationship between Christ—as Educator, Word, and Wisdom—and His *ekklēsia*, the designation *Paedagogus* itself carries the breadth of his Christology. Citing Paul, Clement writes that if "'the Law has been given . . . as our educator in Christ.' Then it is obvious that the one person who is alone reliable, just, good, Jesus, the Son of the Father as His image and likeness, the Word of God, is our Educator."[121] This demonstrates that he understood all true teaching as flowing from the

[117] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 75, 84.
[118] Annewies van den Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria. A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods," Vigiliae Christianae 50, no. 3 (1996): 227-228.
[119] Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria. A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods," 223.
[120] Nasrallah and Schüssler Fiorenza, *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings*, 184.
[121] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.11.96.

Christ/Logos, the original and only inherently authorized transmitter of knowledge, leaving the Christian teacher to stand "in the place of Christ pointing to perfection and knowledge."[122] Thus he sees the primary responsibility of the Christian teacher being to interpret, expound upon, and explain the difficulties found within scripture and tradition.[123] He takes up this task and in doing so, builds—through thousands of citations—an idealized "Christian" identity, composed of lengthy admonishments and prescribed behaviors, in addition to specifying that which the "Christian" is not; these would be, to name but a few: vain, self-indulgent, fornicating, gluttonous, greedy, and all things *ethnikos*.[124]

In Clement's view there was an "initial transmission of true knowledge from the divine to the human realms," through the Christ/Logos inheriting this knowledge as the Son of God the Father, and that "any claim to legitimacy entails a claim to unilateral descent through 'fathers' who have passed on the essence of the original Father."[125] His Christ/Logos is a didactic deity who was already revealed in philosophy and scripture—perceivable through the reasoning mind—and who historically incarnated as a human, not as "an ontological, but a pedagogical necessity."[126] And it is "active" in that it "forcibly draws men from their natural worldly way of life and educates them to the only true salvation: faith in God. That is to say, the heavenly Guide, the Word, once He begins to call men to salvation, takes to Himself the name of persuasion."[127]

He understands the Christ/Logos as the only true teacher and pedagogue: the only one who can instruct "the little ones" in matters of salvation and assumed human flesh in order to do so. Any claim to being able to instruct in this manner, must also be able to claim continuity with this

[122] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 15.
[123] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 15.
[124] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.111, 1.12.99, 2.10.98, 2.10.103, 2.3.39, 3.8.42.
[125] Buell, *Making Christians*, 12-13.
[126] Litwa, "You are Gods: Deification in the Naassene Writer and Clement of Alexandria," 137, 141; Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.12.98.
[127] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.1.1.

initial transmission of true knowledge. But this begs the question, what is the end goal of this transmission for Clement—and thus the importance of establishing a Christian identity in the first place? Salvation through deification is Clement's answer and despite his polemics against his contemporaries who "dare to call themselves perfect and Gnostics," he constructed a similar understanding of salvation to many of his opponents.[128]

He connects this deification-as-salvation with "the original divine command" in Genesis 1:26, writing: "it seems to me that the reason that He formed man from dust with His own hands, gave him a second birth through water, increase through the Spirit, education by the Word . . . was precisely that He might transform an earth-born man into a holy and heavenly creature by His coming, and accomplish the original divine command: 'Let us make mankind in our image and likeness.'"[129] For Clement, the entire revelatory and pedagogical history of the Christ/Logos is seen through this lens of deification and fulfillment of Genesis 1:26, ending with the assimilation of humans into the Christ/Logos.[130] The overarching thrust of Clement's understanding of true wisdom is that following the instructions of the Christ/Logos necessitates "disciplining the body and subduing the passions," in order to achieve salvation through deification and transcend the flesh: "the true human soars to its heavenly home."[131] Litwa classifies this as a "platonizing metanarrative" or "micromyth," which further demonstrates the complexity—and indebtedness to Greek literature—of Clement's articulation of continuity, deification, and authority.[132]

[128] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.6.52; Litwa, "You are Gods: Deification in the Naassene Writer and Clement of Alexandria," 125-126.
[129] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.12.98.
[130] Litwa, "You are Gods: Deification in the Naassene Writer and Clement of Alexandria," 141.
[131] Litwa, "You are Gods: Deification in the Naassene Writer and Clement of Alexandria," 145.
[132] Litwa, "You are Gods: Deification in the Naassene Writer and Clement of Alexandria," 126, 145.

Legitimacy and Appeals to the Scriptural Past

Throughout the *Paedagogus,* Clement quotes from Hebrew Scriptures—most often Sirach and Proverbs—the Pauline epistles, Philonic materials, and from a plethora of pagan authors, which range "from Plato and the Stoics, Homer and the dramatists, and occasionally, Pindar, Herodotus, and the poets."[133] In her in-depth investigation of Clement's vast repository of citations, Hoek notes that Clement is often read as "obscure," in part due to a constant tendency on his part to digress toward other writers with references and quotations.[134] According to Otto Stählin's index of Clementine citations, the Alexandrian writer's extant works contain 1,273 Pauline and 618 Platonic borrowings, 279 references to Philonic materials, and 243 citations of Homer.[135] But while this may present as "obscure," it is crucial for Clement and his understanding of identity to draw from all available sources in demonstrating the antiquity and authority of his claims. Clement, as meandering and murky as he may be, is a master when it comes to citing his sources and in doing so, he authorizes and lays the concrete foundations for his conception of "Christian" identity, which he is then easier able to define.

This is certainly the case with his citations of Plato and other Greek "pagan" writers, in whom he traces the descent of the Christ/Logos as well. However, the primary importance of his extensive citations is that they establish the connection between his teaching and the earliest moments of interaction between the Christ/Logos and humankind, which are found in the Hebrew Scriptures. Clement reads his understanding of the Word as Educator into every interaction between humankind and the divine; whether it be Moses, Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah, the apostles, or

[133] Simon P. Wood, C.P. in *Clement of Alexandria: Christ the Educator* (Fathers of the Church Series), trans. Simon P. Wood, C.P. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1954), xv.
[134] Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria. A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods," 223.
[135] Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria. A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods," 230-231.

even the kings, Solomon and David, all true knowledge is merely expressed *through* them.[136] This is the tradition he places himself in when he assumes the authoritative role of instructing "the little ones." Without explicitly claiming that the Christ/Logos speaks "through" him—in the exact language he uses in regard to figures of the past, both scriptural and Greek—Clement constructs a continuity between himself, his *ekklēsia* and these figures through the continued pedagogical presence of the Christ/Logos, thereby presenting himself in the role of living instructor and mouthpiece.

Again, it is important to reiterate that Clement was not acting without precedent in his reconstruction of a past that authorizes his present authority. In fact, he was engaged in the same "contest for respect and recognition" as his contemporaries, and like the Jewish and Christian writers of the time, "had the advantage of a long but highly idiosyncratic historiographical tradition, or at least a tradition that could be configured as historiographical," in scripture, which is "both a model and a resource for subsequent rememberings."[137] Prior to Clement's literary constructions of Christian identity, Josephus, Philo, and many others had worked to realign and maintain a sense of Jewish identity in the ever-evolving social circumstances of the Roman world, always drawing from scripture which is itself "the expression of, and the consequence of, a process by which a coherent remembering of a common past and of a shared experience of divine presence has been forged out of the inchoate multiple pasts, largely lost to us, of disparate peoples."[138]

Just how embedded he was in the intellectual milieu of his age must be stressed, as Hoek does when she brings attention to the fact that even when quoting from scripture, Clement draws

[136] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.2.5, 1.5.14, 1.5.24, 1.6.49, 1.7.53, 1.7.58, 1.7.60-61, 1.8.67, 1.8.69, 1.9.76-78, 1.9.80, 1.9.84, 1.9.86, 1.10.91, 2.2.30, 2.8.62, 2.10.87, 2.10.91, 2.10.99.
[137] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 67.
[138] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 75, 67.

from the direct quotations of other commentators, such as Philo.[139] Clement's erudition means that no matter what material he is handling, including scripture, he is dealing with it through layers of commentary and philosophic experimentation, allowing him to "focus on a biblical passage but to include phrases of the author he is consulting as a kind of wrapping material, so that some of their words remain attached to biblical quotations."[140] This multi-layered usage of material demonstrates how thoroughly he is rooted in the social and literary worlds of elite, Greek-speaking intellectuals of the second century Roman Empire, as even when he is dealing with more ancient materials, these "wrappings" color his work and serve to emphasize his authority.

The Specter of Paul: A Contested Legacy of People-Language

Despite Clement's vast repertoire of reference, citation, and justification, he has an obvious favorite, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and that is, as Hoek puts it, "by quite a wide margin, good old Saint Paul."[141] Clement was not alone in his overwhelming preference toward Paul, and John David Penniman, referencing 1 Corinthians 3, asks the question: "What kind of meal did the children of Paul make of his words?"[142] The short answer is "a contentious one."

Pointing to how food was "encoded with the power to communicate and convey a cultural essence," Penniman argues that "interpreters in no way received the apostle's milk as a single, coherent mode of 'Christian knowledge' or 'Christian identity' . . . indeed, the meals made of Paul's words reveal a startlingly divergent range of options for how one could be well-fed and well-formed in Christ."[143] The apostle and his writings were contested ground in the second

[139] Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria. A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods," 235.
[140] Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria. A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods," 235.
[141] Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria. A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods," 227.
[142] John David Penniman, *Raised on Christian Milk: Food and the Formation of the Soul in Early Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 79.
[143] Penniman, *Raised on Christian Milk*, 79.

century, and much like claiming descent from or inheritance of a scriptural past granted legitimacy, appealing to Paul—as another widely-recognized human agent of the Christ/Logos—reinforced that legitimacy and thus the Pauline epistles were a site of conflict for many competing constructors of identity among early Christians.

Clement engages actively by citing Paul often and using his words in order to set and reinforce the boundaries of Christian identity and what is permissible and advisable for a member of his *ekklēsia*. Often when speaking of "the new people, the assembly of little ones," Clement justifies his preference toward metaphors of childhood—in keeping with the overarching theme of the *Paedagogus*—by citing Paul and asserting that this "new people" are "amenable as a child," or "in the sense of new-born children of God, purified of uncleanness and vice."[144] It also is from the Pauline epistles that Clement inherits a "three-fold" distinction between peoples—Jews, Greeks or Gentiles, and Christians or "little ones"—which only finds "its embryonic form in Paul . . . and more explicit articulation in Clement."[145] Scholars such as Buell, Caroline Johnson Hodge and David G. Horrell have gone to great lengths to demonstrate that Paul, Clement, and other Christians of the first centuries did not invent a "new" sense of identity which contrasted with and transcended the fixed ethnic categories of their contemporaries, but rather described "'Christian' identity in the same terms as those other competing people-groupings, the terms standardly used to organize the social world."[146]

[144] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.5.19, 1.6.32.
[145] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 246.
[146] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 246; Buell and Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul," 235.

Pleading the Cause of Hellenism

When it comes to his use of non-Christian and non-Jewish literature, "Clement is a typical representative of the Hellenistic-Roman tradition," in that he "compares closely with other 'bookworms' such as Plutarch and Eusebius, both separated from Clement (in opposite directions) by a century."[147] Clement often cites this literature, because he understands the Christ/Logos as present in Greek, non-Jewish wisdom. He quotes the Homeric phrase, "the word flows sweeter than honey," and adds that it "is said, I believe, of the Word who is also honey, for the inspired word so often praises Him 'above honey and the honeycomb."[148] In this way, Clement is able to see the echoes of Psalm 19 in Homer and the presence of the Christ/Logos in both, demonstrating the obscured, pre-Incarnation, pedagogical role that it played in Greek wisdom. This is consistent with his understanding that the Word "teaches all things, and uses all things to educate us."[149]

In further articulating the role of the Christ/Logos among pre-Incarnation Greeks, and subsequently Jews, Clement writes that some educated Greeks knew God "not by positive knowledge, but by indirect expression," in order that "those from the Hellenic training and also from the law who accept faith are gathered into the one race (*genos*) of the saved people (*laos*): not that the three peoples are separated by time, so that one might suppose [they have] three different natures, but trained in different covenants of the one Lord."[150] Here we can see Clement's interpretation of the pedagogical role played by the Christ/Logos prior to the Incarnation, revealing divine wisdom through "Hellenic training and also from the law."

[147] Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria. A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods," 227-228.
[148] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.6.51; "Above honey and the honeycomb," being a phrase derived from Psalm 19.
[149] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.12.99.
[150] Clement, *Stromateis*, 6.42.2.

Yet, the hearers of this wisdom would have been unable to fully imbibe its meaning—without the Incarnation—and this leaves Plato and other Greek philosophers to point "the direction for those setting out on an unknown road."[151] In constructing his authorizing sense of continuity, Clement, like many early Christians who had received a Greek education, argued that Plato read and was influenced by the teachings of Moses and was thus able to reconcile his faith and his indebtedness to Greek philosophy by inscribing Plato into the patrilineage which originated with the Christ/Logos.[152]

When describing un-adornment and simplicity in clothing for Christian men, Clement cites Plato referring to him as "the man who in his teaching follows Moses, Plato, excellent in every way."[153] Not only does he put forth the assertion that Plato knew of and followed Moses' teachings, but he even goes so far as to write: "he who of all philosophers so praised truth, Plato, gave new life to the dying ember of Hebrew philosophy" and that he "echoes the Word."[154] As Osborn demonstrates, Clement was "as deeply convinced of the world-view of Plato and Greek culture as he was of his Christian faith," but it is important not to set up a false dichotomy here, no matter how strongly our terminology insists upon it.[155] Even for a writer who understood himself as "borrowing" from Greek wisdom, Clement himself found in this imagined link between Moses and Plato, a way to fully incorporate Greek wisdom into the lineage of the Christ/Logos and thereby situate Plato among the teachers and vessels which the Christ/Logos operates through. He writes that "philosophy was given to the Greeks . . . to bring the Hellenic mind, as the law, the Hebrews, to Christ. Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is

[151] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 17.
[152] Urbano, *The Philosophical Life*, 45, 107; Clement, *Stromateis*, 1.1.10; *Paedagogus*, 3.11.54.
[153] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.11.54.
[154] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.9.82, 2.1.18.
[155] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 26.

perfected in Christ."[156] Eloquently summing up Clement's readings of Greek literature, Litwa writes: "Clement hears the song of the Logos in Homer, but also the siren song of adultery and idolatry."[157]

[156] Clement, *Stromateis,* 1.5.28.
[157] Litwa, "You are Gods: Deification in the Naassene Writer and Clement of Alexandria," 144.

III. The Other

The Necessity of the Other

According to Lieu's model of identity, "the presence of the other pervades almost any question about identity," but while true, I find it necessary to further emphasize the importance of "the other" by arguing that it is impossible to define the self and "us" without—advertently or inadvertently—describing the other and the "them."[158] We cannot talk about who we are, either individually or collectively, without talking about who we are not. If Clement identifies with a "new people," then there must be an old people or multiple old peoples.[159] When he composes—or potentially quotes—an early Christian hymn, identifying his community as the "undefiled, pure flock," he assumes an opposing group of the "defiled."[160] And in asserting that there exists a "we" who follow Christ, he establishes a "they" "who do not follow Christ."[161] The question of "the other" is inextricably tied to the question of "the self," and neither identity can exist without its counterpart and equal constructor. If we understand this, only then can we fully appreciate Lieu's assertion that:

> Identity develops only in social interaction; the sense of those outside the boundaries, whose claims to the same history and Scriptures are denied, whose practice is excoriated, who embody the 'other' over against whom 'we' are defined, who represent a way of being that 'we' have left behind, has pervaded every chapter. So encountered, the 'other' is herself or himself constructed by opposition.[162]

[158] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 271.
[159] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.5.14, 1.5.19, 1.6.42.
[160] Clement, *Paedagogus* (Hymn to the Educator), 3.12.101.
[161] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.8.42.
[162] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 314.

Clement, among other authors, contributed to constructing the categories that would eventually be reified through apologetics and even modern scholarship as "pagans," "Jews," and "heretics" through caricatured descriptions of these "others" whose primary purposes were to contrast "the Christian."[163] However, in understanding the dynamic nature of interaction and development in identity, we cannot assume a purely combative relationship with all "others" that existed alongside, intersected with, and occasionally overlapped with Clement's *ekklēsia*, and instead we must attend to "the other 'others' who, at times within the texts and perhaps more frequently behind them, are also engaged in more conciliatory dialogue . . . whispers of other lives lived according to the divine *logos* . . . [which points] to alternative patterns of relationship."[164] This will become important in subsequent discussions of "Christian" interactions with other people-groups, not limited to the Jewish and Christian others, but even to those we now anachronistically term "pagan," especially for an author such as Clement.

Mapping Onto an Existing Background

Again it must be emphasized that Christians did not emerge onto the scene as outsiders, but rather cultivated a "new" sense of identity among existing identities and using established patterns of identity and identity-language. The emergence of a Greek "ethnic identity" in the fifth century BCE has been extensively studied and I am in agreement with Lieu that "Christian rhetoric of identity, even when making universalist claims, is articulated in the terms also used in Graeco-Roman ethnography and identity formation."[165] The specific terms—primarily *ethnos*, *genos*, and *laos*—are kept and the construction of "Christian" identities are mapped onto existing patterns by

[163] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 314.
[164] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 314-315.
[165] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 17, 20.

the types of arguments made by Clement and his contemporaries, which often differentiate peoples according to practice. Specifically in regard to Clement, this can be seen when he distinguishes Christians as "we, who worship [God] in a new way, in the third way, are Christians."[166]

When considering self and group identification, the vast majority of ancient people did not find themselves within a static or unchanging environment, but a dynamic and vibrant one, which "was categorized by significant diversity, resulting from colonization, migration, travel, and war."[167] We cannot ignore this embeddedness or make special exception for Christians through the assumption that early Christian writers were speaking metaphorically while all of their opponents and neighbors spoke literally, as this ignores the fact that ancient Christians were, in fact, not outsiders or some form of otherworldly colonizers, completely unfamiliar with the world which produced them. Clement, taken as an example, was thoroughly enmeshed into the particularities of the cultural and social roles that accompanied being an educated, Greek, Alexandrian at the end of the second century.

"Ethnoracial difference" was an established pattern of how ancient Mediterranean peoples at the time understood religious practices; early Christians were not exempt from this, but rather mapped their own identities onto preexisting frameworks that they possessed as inhabitants of this world.[168] Buell demonstrates this in pointing out that "Egyptians were especially ridiculed and critiqued by Romans, Greeks, and Jews alike for their religious practices—veneration of animals in particular . . . Greeks condemned Persians not only for alleged immorality but also for illicit religious practices, notably magic . . . Jews condemned their gentile contemporaries on religious grounds, as idolators . . . [and] Christians defined themselves fully within these conventions."[169]

[166] Clement, *Stromateis*, 6.41.6.
[167] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 61.
[168] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 42.
[169] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 42.

This can be seen when Clement orders his readers to "not worship . . . as the Hellenes . . . neither worship as the Jews," but in his new, third way: as Christians.[170] Religious practice and ethnic belonging are not separate, but rather joined in that the former is a vital part in constructing the latter. Clement defines "Christians" within this framework and using its terminology.

A common pitfall of modern scholarship here is the recurring assumption that, aside from understanding Jesus as Christ, "Christianness is most often distinguished from Jewishness in ethnoracial terms: [that] 'Christianity lacked the ethnic links of Judaism.'"[171] Yet, this assumption obscures the way that ancient categories of *ethnos* and *genos* were utilized and glosses over the diversity of ancient Jewish identities in order to paint Christianness as universal—i.e. superior—and Jewishness as particular—inferior. But in the first few centuries CE, "neither Christianness nor Jewishness corresponded to a clear, unified social formation or ideological conception . . . [and] their relationship to one another was dynamic and often blurry."[172] Despite what Clement and his contemporaries have argued in their constructions of a Jewish "other," we should avoid broad and uncritical statements about the ethnoracial particularities of ancient Judaism, particularly when there are "decidedly 'universalistic' elements present in some ancient representations of Jewishness."[173]

The understanding of early Christianity as a universalizing movement that broke with ethnoracial identification and thereby rejected the particularism of its Jewish roots is problematic for multiple reasons.[174] Aside from concerns over Christian supersessionism and claims to superiority, it not only undermines the diversity of ancient Jewish self-identification, but also

[170] Clement, *Stromateis*, 6.39, 6.41.2, 6.41.6.
[171] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 94.
[172] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 95.
[173] Nasrallah and Schüssler Fiorenza, *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings*, 97.
[174] Buell and Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul," 236.

overstates the supposed "non-ethnic" rhetoric of early Christian writers. It is important for modern scholars of early Christianity, who largely agree that "early Christianity was marked by its heterodoxy [and] pluralism," not to simply set this pluralism "alongside the equally pluralistic Judaism and paganism but [to understand] that it intersects with them."[175]

It is certainly true that early Christians often denied ethnic particularism, but it is also true that they repeatedly adopted the same terminology and "strategies of ethnic identity" as their neighbors to make similar claims.[176] This can both be seen above in Clement's articulation of Christian identity in terms of practice—contrasting with Greek and Jewish identities, but utilizing the same parameters—and throughout his writings where he is particularly attached to the word *genos* when articulating "Christian" identity as a people-group. He employs it numerous times in his writings, claiming that Christians are "the chosen race," "the elect race," and the "the royal race."[177]

As Lieu argues, these identities—Christian, Jew, Greek, Roman, etc.—are not "the same sort of thing . . . indeed, none of them is only one sort of thing. They are not necessarily mutually incompatible, although they may on occasion be so constructed . . . neither are any of them intrinsically oppositional, although this, too, is how they could be constructed."[178] Viewing early Christians as somehow divorced from the social, linguistic, and cultural networks that constructed ancient identities serves no other purpose than to anachronistically portray early Christianity as a uniquely universalizing and superior ancient people-group, which lifts its constructors out of their own world.

[175] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 299.
[176] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 309.
[177] Clement, *Protrepticus*, 4.59.3; *Stromateis*, 7.7.35, 7.12.73; *Excerpts from Theodotus*, 4.1.
[178] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 309-310.

With this in mind, we should reject the binaries of "universal-particular" and "religious-ethnic" as inappropriate when investigating ancient identity language. Modern presumptions about the immutability of ethnicity and race can often cloud scholarship and lead to an understanding that early Christians were "nonracial," simply because of the acquired nature of their identity, as if that were unique to them or that acquisition and ethnicity were mutually exclusive concepts.[179] In Clement's positioning of Christians as a "third" *genos*, he is practicing "ethnic reasoning," which was, Buell notes, an often used tool in order to "argue that individuals need to transform themselves . . . into members of a saved, righteous, immovable, or true *genos*, a holy or special *laos*."[180]

This runs against the often ubiquitous understanding that Christianity "as a movement" broke the "conventional embeddedness of religion in society and politics," and was exempt from the ethnoracial framework that was endemic to the language surrounding religious practice in Clement's world.[181] This is an understanding that presupposes that ethnoracial identity and "universalizing rhetoric" could not exist in tandem, which Buell firmly rejects, in favor of arguing that "saying that Christianity is open to all people is not mutually exclusive with defining Christians as members of an ethnoracial group."[182]

[179] Nasrallah and Schüssler Fiorenza, *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings*, 178.
[180] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 47.
[181] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 61.
[182] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 61.

The Third *Genos*: The One Saved Race

"We are the children. Scripture mentions us very often and in many different ways, and refers to us under different titles . . . at times, He calls us children, at other times, chick, sometimes, little ones, here and there sons, and very often offspring, a new people, a young people."[183]

In the above quote, Clement not only demonstrates the importance of continuity—through reading the people-group of "Christians" backwards into Hebrew scriptures—but also claims the mantle of a "new people," which necessarily constructs an "old people."[184] He does not leave this implicit, but rather claims that "the old people were perverse and hard of heart, but we, the new people, the assembly of little ones, are amenable as a child."[185] The language of childhood here emphasizes the Christ/Logos as Educator, who Christians are able to understand—and be educated by—in light of the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, but who non-Christians misunderstand through lack of faith and Christian others misunderstand in the absence of a continuity with the apostles, and thereby with the Christ/Logos itself.

In identifying Christians as "the chosen/elect/royal race," the "one race of the saved people," and as those who "worship . . . in the third way (τρίτῳ γένει)," Clement utilizes the standard terminology of his Greek-speaking contemporaries in defining people-groups.[186] This shows that despite his claims to universality through faith, ethnoracial membership and religious practice are still joined in Clement's thought and demonstrates that he utilizes the universal claims of Christianity "in order to ground his claim that Christian worship—as he defines it—is the only true form of religion."[187] For Clement, the historical Incarnation of the Christ/Logos brought with

[183] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.5.12-14.
[184] Omitted by the ellipsis are numerous quotations from scripture, where Clement argues that "the little ones" are the intended subjects of multiple scriptural phrases, citing: Psalm 112:1, Isaiah 8:18, Amos 6:4, 2 Kings 17:29, Leviticus 5:11 and 12:8.
[185] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.5.19.
[186] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 246-247; Clement, *Protrepticus*, 4.59.3; *Stromateis*, 6.41.6, 6.42.2, 7.7.35, 7.12.73; *Excerpts from Theodotus*, 4.1.
[187] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 74.

it the chance for all humankind—which had previously misunderstood God's wisdom—to be restored in the form of this third race. This, once again, ties back into the role of the Christ/Logos as Educator, whose Incarnation was necessary precisely to correct the blind spots of Greek and Jewish wisdom, present but misunderstood in philosophy and the Mosaic Law. The reason his *genos* is superior is not that it is not a *genos*, but rather that it exists in order to erase the divides caused by the "fragmentation of truth" and to restore and fulfill what was the "previously unrealized potential in all humans."[188]

Clement demonstrates this, when he writes that "those from the Hellenic training and also from the law who accept faith are gathered into the one race (*genos*) of the saved people (*laos*): not that the three people are separated by time, so that one might suppose [they have] three different natures, but trained in different covenants of the one Lord."[189] As Buell writes:

> Clement does not use this common ground to dissolve all the differences among Hellenes, Jews, and Christians. Rather, he uses this common ground to define Christians as a distinct people constituted out of former members of the Hellenes and Jews. Christians are the *genos* of the *saved* . . . thus what we might conceive of as a religious process, conversion, could be simultaneously imagined as a process of ethnic transformation.[190]

Modern concepts of "religion" and "ethnicity" are not separable or oppositional for Clement, but rather "mutually constituting;" Christians are both the superior—and singular—saved *genos and* an identity that is universal to all, accessible through faith.[191] There is no contradiction for him in his understanding of Christians as a people and as potentially universal, precisely because he utilizes the fluid categories of *ethnos* and *genos* with the connotations of his own time and not ours. It is the universality of Clement's third *genos* that establishes its superiority—as a *genos*—

[188] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 81.
[189] Clement, *Stromateis*, 6.42.2.
[190] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 139.
[191] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 139.

to other people-groups, whether contrasting the binaries of "Greeks and barbarians," "Greeks and Jews," or "Jews and gentiles."[192]

The Greek Other: The *Ethnē*

The embedded nature of Clement's identity is well articulated by Laura Nasrallah, who writes that "his second-century *Protreptikos* is launched to (and against) Greeks, even as it employs excellent Greek and proudly displays great cultural sophistication."[193] It is precisely this "threat of similarity," that necessitates, for early Christian authors—and Clement in particular—the construction of boundaries for a "Christian" identity among those who "find in the thought of Greek philosophy more to join than to separate them."[194] These and other constructed boundaries, and what each of them entails, will be further discussed in the next chapter, but for now it is important to reemphasize the threat of similarity in the production of "the other."

Distinguishing what "sort the pagans (*ethnikos*) are," Clement finds it easiest to label them simply as "they who do not follow Christ."[195] He divorces these *ethnē* from the tradition of Greek philosophy by characterizing them as seeking "needless comforts, self-pampering, highly spiced and rich foods" precisely due to their lack of understanding, which is only achievable through accepting the Christ/Logos as Educator.[196] Despite possessing the wisdom of the Educator in the form of philosophy, they falter into worldliness without that understanding and are not granted the same affection which Clement demonstrates towards Plato and other ancient Greeks who seemed to—from his understanding—glean the presence of the Christ/Logos in philosophy.

---

[192] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 140, 154.
[193] Nasrallah and Schüssler Fiorenza, *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings*, 74.
[194] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 133-134.
[195] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.8.42. Although this statement would seem to apply equally to Jews, Clement does not do so. Interestingly, it comes in the immediate aftermath of him describing Abraham in opposing terms as a man who "sought after God."
[196] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.103.

The *ethnē* and Clement's attempts to separate them from his idea of "the Christian," will consume the majority of the final chapter, so I will not dwell on his complete characterization of them here, except to say that they are first and foremost, characterized by a lack of restraint. In condemning them and their perceived inclinations toward indulgence, he quotes Luke and adds his own commentary:

> 'Seek now what you shall eat or what you shall drink, and do not exalt yourselves.' It is ostentatiousness, a false imitation of the truth and extravagance that exalts us above and away from the truth; concentration on needless comforts also turns us away from the truth. Therefore, He shrewdly adds: 'After all these things, the heathens seek.' The heathen (*ta ethnē*) are they who are without discipline and without understanding.[197]

He identifies the "these things," which Christ refers to in Luke as "needless comforts, self-pampering, highly spiced and rich foods, gourmandizing, gluttony."[198]

The Christian Other: "Gnostics falsely so-called"

Early Christian understandings of "the heretic" or "the Christian other"—and the explication of whom might be placed within these groups—were important facets of a rhetoric that existed within the process of this period of self-definition.[199] In other words, Clement and his contemporaries utilized the tools and language of their world to define themselves over and against "outsiders" of all stripes; this constitutes what Lieu understands as an "act of power" and served to construct these Christians as "others."

While comparing the understandings of deification of Clement and the Naassene Writer, Litwa notes that many so-called "gnostic" groups were threateningly similar to the communities which would ultimately coalesce into the proto-orthodox church and that contemporaries "spared

[197] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.103; Luke 12:29-30.
[198] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.103.
[199] Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 433.

no effort in their rhetorical attempt to make them seem 'other' . . . [and that] it was the threat of similarity that built the wall of (supposedly insurmountable) difference."[200] In Clement's literary constructions of a "Christian" identity that excludes the likes of Basilides of Alexandria, Valentinus, Marcion and their followers, the issues arising from the theological differences and distinct practices between the groups may have been "clear-cut in Clement's eyes," but his opponents were "not always distinct or at a safe distance."[201]

In constructing these "others," Clement accuses them of being "puffed up in their own knowledge" and daring "to call themselves perfect and Gnostics, [thereby] laying claim in their inflated pride to a loftier state than the Apostle."[202] In accusing these opponents of an inflated sense of pride—one which places them in opposition to Paul, no less—he asserts his right "to pass on Christian tradition (in whatever form) over and against [these] Christian 'others.'"[203] He does this by accusing them of being unable to trace a patrilineage to the Christ/Logos or in claiming a corrupted—even fabricated—lineage, thereby depriving them of an authoritative past.

In the *Stromateis*, Clement refers to Basilides, Valentinus, and Marcion as "founders," implying that they had merely invented their theological teachings, rather than inherited them through a patrilineage which originated with the Christ/Logos.[204] Additionally, he accuses both Basilides and Valentinus of falsifying lineages, attempting to anchor themselves to Peter and Paul, respectively. He writes that Basilides and his followers falsely claimed "Glaucias, the interpreter of Peter," as his teacher, and that Valentinus did the same with "Theodas, who was a disciple of

[200] Litwa, "You are Gods: Deification in the Naassene Writer and Clement of Alexandria," 148.
[201] Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 133.
[202] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.6.25, 1.6.52.
[203] Buell, *Making Christians*, 77.
[204] Buell, *Making Christians*, 87; Clement, *Stromateis*, 7.108.1.

Paul."[205] In denying these lineages, Clement places these Christian "others" outside of the patrilineage of the apostles and in doing so, denies them any sense of authoritative teaching.

Having been neutralized and stripped a potentially dangerous authority, he then cautions "the little ones" against these "others." He writes that "if we, the children, protect ourselves from the winds that blow us off our course into the pride of heresy and refuse to listen to those who set up other fathers for us [i.e. non-apostles], we are made perfect by accepting Christ as our Head and becoming ourselves the Church."[206] Clement never makes a sustained critique of these Christian "others" in any of his surviving works, but he "regularly locates his own views in relation to other Christian opinions," and in this way, attends to that threat of similarity by othering these opponents.[207]

The Jewish Other: The *Hebraioi* and the *Ioudaioi*

Contrasted with his repeated—if brief—criticisms of Christian followers of Valentinus, Basilides, and other "gnostics falsely so-called," "Clement has relatively little to say about contemporary Jews and Jewishness."[208] Yet there are some references to the *Hebraioi* and the *Ioudaioi* throughout Clement's surviving writings and both terms are used to designate ancient and contemporary descendants of Abraham, interchangeably.[209] Whenever Clement cites the exhortations made to Israel in the Septuagint, "he generally follows the practice of interpreting the text as applicable to the *ekklēsia* of which he is a part," identifying his community as "the true Israel."[210] But when it comes to the "Hebrew people," he identifies them as those responsible for

[205] Clement, *Stromateis*, 7.106.4.
[206] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.5.18.
[207] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 120.
[208] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 56.
[209] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 56.
[210] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 56; Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.10.91.

the crucifixion of Christ and whose piety stems from hatred.[211] He contrasts Hebrew piety with Christian reverence, writing that the former "is mixed with hate: this is the way slaves feel toward harsh masters, and the Hebrews when they looked on God as their Master and not their Father."[212]

While typically utilizing the "native" term *Hebraioi* when citing Hebrew Scripture in the *Paedagogus*, Clement makes three uses of *Ioudaioi* to castigate the ancient Hebrews and accuse them of a "propensity toward indulgence."[213] His writings "lack the ferocity of contemporary *Adversus Iudaeos* literature, [but] his use of the term *Ioudaios* has a critical edge."[214] Carleton Paget understands this—comparative—lack of vitriol in regard to contemporary Jewish people found, or rather not found, in Clement's writings as due to the fact that—stemming from the aftermath of the Jewish revolt under Trajan—he "did not face significant competition from contemporaneous Jews . . . [and therefore] was not motivated by the same social historical contexts as Christians elsewhere."[215]

Clement was certainly not an example of early Christian tolerance towards Jews and he possessed his own anti-Judaism, but the lack of influential Alexandrian Jewish opposition allowed him to easily utilize Jewish philosophy and Scriptures—with clear supersessionist implications—in his construction of Christian identity, without needing to excoriate a substantial or influential group of local opponents.[216] Whether differentiating themselves as a "new people," or claiming a rightful inheritance to Jewish Scriptural promises, the constructions of identity by early Christian writers like Clement depended upon the existence of an othered group of Jews.

---

[211] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 58; Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.8.63.
[212] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.9.87.
[213] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 58.
[214] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 58.
[215] Gibbons, *The Moral Psychology of Clement of Alexandria*, 4.
[216] Gibbons, *The Moral Psychology of Clement of Alexandria*, 36.

When it comes to his understanding of his own community, Clement alludes to the Pauline writings to argue that the differences between Jew and Greek *within* the *ekklēsia* have been erased and that "the Christian is conceived of as a new creation, his former identity supplanted," due to the annulling effect of the Christ/Logos on "Jewishness" and "Greekness."[217] Additionally, he makes reference to Paul as the Apostle who "was" a Hebrew and a Jew, but is no longer, a distinction of identity that Paul himself did not explicitly make.[218] There is no understanding or imagined possibility of a "Jewish-Christian" in Clement's writings, instead he is explicit that "when one becomes a Christian, one ceases to be a *Ioudaios* . . . [and that the *Ioudaioi*] do not have the *pistis* or the saving *gnosis* of Christ."[219] For Clement, the *Ioudaioi* possess truth in the form of the Law—like the Greeks did though philosophy—but are incapable of understanding it without the guidance of the Christ/Logos.

Given the importance of continuity in identity formation, it should not be surprising that early Christians "often make the claim, in various ways, that the movement of those following Christ represents the true fulfillment of Jewish hopes and expectation such that what later comes to be known as Christianity stands in some kind of continuity with—and makes a claim regarding—the ancestral traditions of Judaism."[220] This is a repeated assertion of Clement who writes that Paul "says that the Jews were heirs according to the Old Testament, but according to the promise, we are," and that "the suffering of the Lord, indeed, has filled us with its fragrance, but the Hebrews with sin."[221]

---

[217] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 58; he cites Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 4:24, and Colossians 3:9-11 in order to establish this effect.
[218] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 59; Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.6.34.
[219] Otto, *Philo of Alexandria*, 59.
[220] Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 142-143.
[221] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.6.33, 2.8.63.

Christian Self-Othering and Opposition to the World

Adding to these various ways of othering those "outside" of Clement's *ekklēsia* is his participation in the early Christian practice of self-othering, or "the recurring efforts towards the creation of a sense of being themselves 'other,' of being strangers in the world."[222] This touches on the previous three categories of "other" in that each of those are depicted in Clement's writings as "worldly" and firmly entrenched in blind wickedness, while his *ekklēsia* are "free and newly born, joyous in our faith, holding fast to the course of truth, swift in seeking salvation, spurning and trampling upon worldliness."[223] His idea of "the Christian" is that of the figure of a colt, "unyoked to evil, unsubdued by wickedness, unaffected, high-spirited only with Him our Father," whereas those he others are stallions, "'who whinny lustfully for their neighbor's wife, beasts of burden unrestrained in their lust.'"[224]

This process of self-othering and distinguishing "Christian" identity from the surrounding world contributes to the aforementioned problems of scholars reading early Christians as universal, otherworldly, and distinct from the world which they live in, but as previously demonstrated, this was not the case. Rather, this perception stems from taking these authors out of their contexts and accepting their self-proclaimed difference, without attention to the diversity among other ancient people-groups and/or ignoring their claims to similar difference. When Clement writes that "we have given up sin and the world, we tread the earth, although with light foot, only to the degree that appearances demand, that we may be in this world," we must question what it is, exactly that he's actually trying to accomplish.[225]

[222] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 315.
[223] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.5.15.
[224] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.5.15; in the latter description, he quotes from Jeremiah 5:8.
[225] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.5.16.

Often he is critiquing a certain "libertinism that has become so rife in the cities, that [it has] become the norm."[226] While this extends to all forms of "greed" and "gluttony," he seems to be primarily concerned with sexual ethics and the dangers of "lustful pleasure," primarily pederasty, adultery, incest, certain homosexual acts, and other forms of "violent sexual impulses."[227] The details of these—and their implications for Clement's understanding of "Christian" identity—will be further explored in the next chapter, but for now it should be sufficient to note his passionate condemnation of sexual immorality in writing:

> Women live in brothels, there offering their own bodies for sale to satisfy lustful pleasure, and boys are taught to renounce their own natures and play the role of women. Self-indulgence has turned everything upside down. Over-refinement in comfortable living has put humanity to shame. It seeks everything, it attempts everything, it forces everything, it violates even nature. Men have become the passive mate in sexual relations and women act as men; contrary to nature, women now are both wives and husbands. No opening is impenetrable to impurity. Sexual pleasure is made public property common to all the people, and self-indulgence their boon companion. What a pitiful spectacle! What unspeakable practices! They are the monuments to your widespread lack of self-control, and whores are the proof of your deeds. Alas, such disregard for law![228]

In summarizing the importance of this "other," whether they be Jewish, Greek, Christian, or any other manner of opponent which Clement terms "worldly," it must be said once again that it is the threat of similarity and the porousness of boundaries that necessitates the maintenance through literary "othering" as an "act of power." "The other" is necessary to define "the self" and in Clement's case, the danger of his own embeddedness in the elite literary world of the ancient Mediterranean serves to amplify the totalizing language he uses in this process of definition. Encapsulating this, Lieu writes that "wherever we look for the emergency of 'the self' there looms the spectre of 'the other' . . . tracing the boundaries demands peering over to see what lies beyond,

[226] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.3.21.
[227] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.88, 3.3.21.
[228] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.3.21.

and asking why it (or 'they') must be excluded . . . naming and being named involves being named as, or naming, those who are not 'us.'"[229]

[229] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 269.

IV. The Parameters

"What We Are to Do and What We Are to Avoid"

Clement's own self-understanding casts him in the role of a moralist, as opposed to a teacher. A fitting distinction for him, as he writes that the only true teacher is the Educator himself.[230] And in this role, he lays out a program of acceptable behaviors to serve as the parameters and identifiers of "Christian" behavior, while asserting that he is not the source of these parameters of identity, but rather that they stem from the Christ/Logos itself. He writes that "it is already evident what the Educator desires and what He professes to accomplish, what He has in mind in His words and in His deeds when He commands what we are to do and what we are to avoid."[231] It is the "what we are to do and what we are to avoid," which will comprise the core of this chapter and the outline of Clement's "Christian" identity.

Repeatedly throughout the *Paedagogus*, Clement returns to the idea of "the way we should regulate our actions" in order to "describe the sort of life he who is called a Christian should live."[232] A professed belief is not enough for Clement to admit someone into the ranks of "the Christian." Rather, he understands "Christianness" as something which must be performed and embodied through behaviors and social relations.

Turning from Clement's depiction of who is not a Christian—"the other"—although not entirely leaving it behind, I now turn to examining the regimen of embodied actions that he prescribes for all Christians to perform. These actions constitute "the boundary" of Clement's

[230] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.8.76, 1.6.25; In chapter 76 of Book 2, Clement draws a connection between the burning bush of Exodus and Christ's crown of thorns, but cuts himself short, writing: "But I have departed from the manner of the moralist and encroached upon the field of the teacher. Let me once more return to my own subject."
[231] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.3.8.
[232] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.1.

Christian identity. In this discussion it is necessary to heed Lieu's reminder that "the language of boundary is, of course, the language of metaphor," and unable to fully capture the lived realities of Clement's readers and their social environment.[233] The actions and avoidances Clement calls for constitute a "boundary" in a more concrete manner, but it is important to remember that it exists in this form only as a literary construction. In practice, these distinctions were characterized by fluidity, exchange, and porousness.

As embodied in the lived experiences of his contemporaries, Clement's "boundary" is closer to Lieu's "frontier" as an area of mutual exchange, crossing, and uncomfortable interaction, rather than his own stark border between "the little ones" and "the unclean who, like swine, revel in bodily pleasures and filthy habits of life and impure delights, itching for evil-minded pleasures of sex."[234] Along with his subtle references to the inevitability of mixed dining, conversation, bathing, and other forms of social interaction between Christians and non-Christian Greeks, this porousness is displayed in his own words. Throughout the *Paedagogus*, Clement oscillates between condemning the behavior and character of those he labels "*ethnē*" and then immediately citing philosophers, dramatists, and other writers who would—if the absence of faith in Christ is truly the requirement—fall within the boundaries of those same *ethnē*. This demonstrates that the edges of identity are permeable, dynamic, and encouraging of interaction and exchange, even "while providing rules for it; they are not merely defensive but also allow for trade."[235]

Lieu writes that "if identity implies a sameness constituted by continuity"—explored in the first chapter—"it also demands difference"—the "other" of the preceding chapter—"and between the two stands a boundary."[236] Without these literary boundaries, the constructors of identity

[233] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 98.
[234] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.11.75.
[235] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 100.
[236] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 98.

cannot define the "us" nor exclude the "them" in a coherent and competent manner. It is this boundary which allows writers such as Clement to "safeguard against contamination or invasion—or so it seems."[237] In practice, this literary border operates as a porous frontier where exchange and interaction must be constantly regulated to maintain the idea of identity as a marker of distinction. This is Lieu's theory of identity as *process*. She writes:

> Despite the comfortable feel of changelessness behind the idea of boundaries, as equally behind that of the sameness of identity, we have to speak of process, of a dynamic that sometimes, but for a while, may appear to achieve closure . . . a process that is generated by the interaction of individuals and that does not simply act as a constraint upon them . . . boundaries [that] are not 'given' but are produced and reproduced.[238]

Crossing the Boundary: Becoming the Third *Genos*

Having already discussed the nature of Clement's third *genos* as the most authentic expression of humanity, it is important here only to reassert the permeability of the border and to emphasize that Clement does state that it is faith in the Christ/Logos and the Incarnation that allows entrance into this "race." *And* it was Christ himself who set this division by his saving act. "We have the Cross of the Lord as our boundary line, and by it we are fenced around and shut off from our former sins," Clement writes, both asserting a clear dividing line between Christians and non-Christians—and with their "former sins" which the very existence of the *Paedagogus* as moral instruction implies are not fully "former"—and also allowing a level of fluidity that welcomes conversion and boundary crossing.[239] This language of transformation is necessary for Clement to achieve his task of outlining a new and distinct identity that is both essential and attainable, a pre-existing exemplar and a newly attainable status.

[237] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 98.
[238] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 102-103.
[239] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.12.85.

When he instructs his readers not to worship "as the Greeks" nor "as the Jews," but "in the third way (τρίτῳ γένει)," Clement is utilizing the language of both "fixity" and "fluidity."[240] Using the dative, neuter, singular of *genos* to describe this distinction of practice demonstrates the inseparability of "ethnoracial" belonging and "religious" practice in Clement's social and linguistic context. In this "admonition against the religious practices of *the other kinds of humans* [emphasis added]," he shows that membership in a *genos*—"Christian" or not—is dependent upon embodied practices.[241]

In Buell's terminology, Clement is stressing ethnic fluidity when he speaks about "crossing the threshold from outsider to insider as the assumption of a new ethnoracial identity" and focuses on "boundaries—how they are crossed [and] of what they consist."[242] This is a crucial aspect of Clement's understanding of Christian identity as the pinnacle of "humanness." In the *Stromateis,* he again asserts the importance of faith in crossing this boundary, writing: "This great change, that a person passes from unfaith to faith and comes to faith through hope and fear, comes from God."[243] Throughout his surviving writings he alternates between using the language of fixity and fluidity, presenting them as "unproblematically fluid," because for Clement, the most authentic expression of humanity was to be found in "conversion from love of finery [to] suffering borne patiently for the Lord . . . [and in] unloosing the old vanity by the new faith."[244] He understands faith in the Christ/Logos to lead the fallen human into their "true"—i.e. divinely intended—*genos,* a category that is both universal and particular, preexisting and new.

[240] Clement, *Stromateis,* 6.39, 6.41.2, 6.41.6.
[241] Buell, *Why This New Race,* 42.
[242] Buell, *Why This New Race,* 47.
[243] Clement, *Stromateis,* 2.31.1.
[244] Buell, *Why This New Race,* 122; Clement, *Paedagogus,* 2.8.62.

As described in the first chapter of this thesis, Clement understands deification to be the ultimate fulfillment of the Christ/Logos' pedagogical role in human life. Now, I would add on to this that he sees faith as embodied through practice—"what we are to do and what we are to avoid"—as the only way to manifest this status. This allows him to use the "fixed" terminology of ethnoracial belonging in the same manner as his non-Christian contemporaries, while also asserting a more "fluid" essence in his "Christian" identity, in that it is open to all through conversion. In the midst of a consideration of lavishness and greed, he writes that "it is God Himself who has brought our race to possession in common, by sharing Himself, first of all, and by sending His Word to all men alike, and by making all things for all."[245] Ignoring—for the moment—his condemnation of a love of luxury, here Clement shows this "fixity-fluidity" dialectic in that while "Christians" constitute a distinct *genos*, it is a category that is explicitly open to all. His use of fixed ethnoracial language does not contradict or pose a problem for his philosophical thrust in the direction of universalism. Neither does the requirement of faith diminish the necessity of distinguishing actions.

Returning to the idea of "the frontier" as opposed to an impermeable and concrete "border," it is important to reemphasize that the distinction between "Christian" and "non-Christian" was more fluid in the second century than has typically been comfortable for scholars to admit. Lieu characterizes the boundaries of the church in the second century as "frontiers under both construction and contention, at times rather more a potentially well-populated, perhaps transient, no-man's land, where movement and connectedness is at least as common as separation."[246]

[245] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.12.120.
[246] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 141.

An Ethic of Restraint and an *Ethnos* of Indulgence

Toward the end of the *Paedagogus*, Clement describes his work as "treating only of the things proper to our education, stressing the life Christians should live, in general outline."[247] And giving a precis of "the life of the Christian," he sums it up as "a united whole made up of deeds controlled by reason."[248] He defines "Christianness" through behaviors and actions, which were prescribed for us by the Christ/Logos in its role as Educator, both through Greek philosophy and Hebrew Scripture, and made explicit in the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. This is his "reason" and it is best demonstrated in the virtue of self-restraint, which Clement goes through great lengths to establish as the truest indicator of Christian identity.

Immediately after claiming "the Cross of the Lord as our boundary line," Clement exhorts Christians to: "Let us be born again, then, and be nailed to the Cross in truth; let us return to our senses and be sanctified . . . Good order is the perfect way of life, for it is entirely well behaved, it is a quality that establishes constancy, fulfills virtuously in deed the things imposed on it, one after the other, and is unsurpassed in virtue."[249] There are two important points to note here. The first is Clement's language that describes a conversion of faith as "returning" and being "sanctified," utilizing both the imagery of boundary-crossing and of reaching the fulfillment of human potential in the "Christian way of life." The second is the focus on "good order" as the mode of operation for the Christian, who differentiates themselves from their non-Christian peers through deeds and well-ordered actions. Taking the opposite approach—definition by repudiation—Clement writes that "the Christian way of life is not achieved by self-indulgence," but rather through "self-restraint [which] is pure and simple . . . [and keeping] a man's life innocent and free of shameful deeds."[250]

[247] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.8.41.
[248] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.13.102.
[249] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.12.85.
[250] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.14, 3.11.55.

Keeping with his understanding of a three-part Revelation—through philosophy, Scripture, and Christ—Clement traces this ethic of self-restraint to "the man who in his teaching followed Moses, Plato, excellent in every way."[251] This is uniquely interesting, because while Clement uses this ethic to draw the starkest line between Christians and "the other," he repeatedly appeals to non-Christian figures to do so. Before revisiting this, it is necessary to briefly demonstrate how Clement's ethic of self-restraint works as a boundary line in his thought and who this boundary excludes.

Supporting the hypothesis that Clement faced no significant/influential Jewish opposition in Alexandria due to the conflict during the reign of Trajan, he usually speaks of the *Hebraioi* and the *Ioudaioi* in the past tense as either an ancient people whose history is detailed in Scripture or as those responsible for the Crucifixion.[252] While there are exceptions, such as the present description of the effects of the "suffering of the Lord," which have "filled us with its fragrance, but the Hebrews with sin," there is an overall lack of focus on contemporary Jewish identities.[253] This can be seen when he writes that "this is the sort the pagans [*ethnikos*] are, of no account. It is they who do not follow Christ."[254] With the decline of a prominent Jewish-Christian movement, the vast majority of Jews would also fall under the umbrella of "they who do not follow Christ," but he is largely unconcerned with them throughout. Instead, he goes into much greater detail and to condemn a different people-group, one whose differences with "Christians" are much more pressing for Clement; it is this group that he terms, the *ethnē*.

For Clement, the most prevalent examples of a lack of self-restraint are to be found in the *ethnē*, not contemporary Jews. Aside from his critiques of their behaviors, Clement is not explicit

[251] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.11.54.
[252] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.6.33-34, 1.6.41, 1.9.87, 1.10.90, 2.2.19, 2.8.73, 2.10.92, 2.12.126.
[253] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.8.63.
[254] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.8.42.

as to exactly who these *ethnē* are, but he at times links them to Greco-Roman deities, such as Zeus, Hera, Artemis, Aphrodite, and Bacchus.[255] We can conclude that they were a diverse and eclectic mixture of groups and individuals with varying—often syncretic—beliefs, practices, philosophies, statuses, and roles in society, which escape easy classification but are often lumped together under the term "pagan." Despite this diversity, Clement easily uses the "ethnic" term to describe those "pagans (*ethnōn*)" who walk "in dissipation, lusts, drunkenness, revelings, carousings and unlawful worship of idols."[256] If Christians are to be the third *genos*, then their most prevalent opponents must fill one of the remaining "ethnic" categories. And if self-restraint is the core of a Christian identity, then, in Clement's eyes, drunken and lustful reveling is the core of an *ethnikos* identity and exactly the sort of behavior which Christians are to avoid. He goes to great lengths to instruct his readers not to emulate the behaviors of these "others," who are without self-restraint and the guidance of the Christ/Logos, writing:

> We keep in mind these holy words particularly: 'Keep your conduct excellent among the heathens (*ethnesin*), so that, whereas they slander you as evil-doers, they may, by observing the nobility of your actions, glorify God' . . . Away with all fornication! 'Know this well,' the Apostle says, 'that no fornicator or unclean person or covetous one (who is an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.' But these women who delight in the company of perverts are surrounded by a whole crowd of loose-tongued catamites, foul of body, foul of speech, grown into manhood only to satisfy their lusts, agents of adultery, guffawing and whispering, then indecently snorting out some suggestive sound from their nostrils, trying to entertain with obscene words and gestures, stimulating everyone to giddiness, the precursor of fornication.[257]

For Clement, the lack of self-restraint is the precursor to adultery, fornication, and all manner of other obscenity which threatens to make his "Christians" indistinguishable from the othered *ethnē*. Lieu implies this threat—albeit in less moralizing terms—when she notes that in the second

[255] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.2.21, 2.8.72-73, 2.10.108, 2.12.123, 3.2.13.
[256] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.12.85.
[257] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.4.29, 3.11.53; 1 Pet. 2:12; Eph. 5:5.

century some Christian writers "began to discover that the boundary with 'the Gentiles' also provides room for both negotiation and connectedness."[258] This is both a point of appreciation and one of shame for Clement, who prefers not to acknowledge any such "connectedness" outside of the terminology of a threatening "other," and yet fills his work with quotes and references to the same philosophers that his opponents claim.

Once again delaying Clement's appeals to these ancient writers, it is important to first look to his quotation of Paul to understand the extent of the difference between his "Christians" and his "*ethnē*." Criticizing those who lack self-restraint, Clement writes that they are "carnal" and "like the pagans (*ethnē*), they still 'mind the things of the flesh.'"[259] To be "carnal," he adds, means that those who are "like the pagans," "think, love, desire, seek, [and] are angry and envious over the things of the flesh."[260] Using the apostle's words—to condemn the "carnal" and those who "mind the things of the flesh"—Clement wields his legitimacy, and the authority he grants himself through this citation, to warn fellow Christians away from being "like the pagans."

He continues, writing: "the heathen (*ethnē*) are they who are without discipline and without understanding."[261] Here, Clement associates a lack of discipline with a lack of understanding and thus, his ethic of self-restraint with a discerning faith in the Christ/Logos. He leaves no room for a reader to fall in the middle, or outside of, or in some other uncomfortable position between these two poles. His boundary—placing a morally suspect and undisciplined people on one side and a restrained and orderly people on the other—was obviously not demonstrated in the behavior of every non-Christian Greek and every Christian in the manner which Clement desired—who

[258] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 133.
[259] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.6.36; 1 Cor. 3:1; Rom. 8:5.
[260] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.6.36.
[261] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.103.

inhabited a lived "frontier"—but it is an important contrast when trying to understand the nature of his ideal "Christian."

Finally returning to Clement's ubiquitous indebtedness to Greek philosophy, we need to note that Clement is deeply immersed in the philosophy of the *ethnē*—which belongs to him as much as it does to Celsus, Porphyry, or Libanius of Antioch—and despite his best attempts to construct a clear sense of identity, he finds himself constrained by his immersion in the world of elite, Greco-Roman education. He repeatedly appeals to Plato, Homer, Hesiod, and other non-Christian Greeks to support his arguments, making it absurd to assume that this stark divide in moral behavior he attempts to construct—not even attainable in his own writings—would be borne out in the actions, deeds, and behaviors of entire people-groups inhabiting a cosmopolitan urban center.

In the *Paedagogus,* Clement implements an amusing rhetorical trick in order to support his efforts, characterizing Plato as "well versed in pagan philosophy," rather than describing the philosopher himself as *ethnikos*.[262] This is a claim which could as easily be made of Clement himself, but that would certainly lead to an uncomfortably close association with the drunken, unrestrained, and lustful *ethnē*. Clement skillfully weakens this claim by distancing Plato himself from these non-Christians, describing him as "well versed" in their philosophy, yet not necessarily a practitioner of it. He subtly calls into question the "pagan-ness" or "otherness" of Plato, preferring to place emphasis on the presence of the Christ/Logos in his writings, and in doing so, lessens the threat of his own similarity to the *ethnē*.

Whenever Clement speaks of these *ethnē,* it is in terms of their behavior and juxtaposing it with his ethic of restraint. It is the "they" who "mind the flesh" and the "we" who possess restraint.

[262] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.100.

Through the previously mentioned reframing of Greek philosophy as falling within his ethic of restraint and characterization of the *ethnē* as a people-group defined by their carnal nature, Clement is able to praise the disciples, apostles, and Abraham through the words of Hesiod and other ancient Greeks, as men who seek to understand and thereby gain salvation.[263] It is his Christians who are "the good," and the *ethnē* who are men "without understanding or self-control [who] can neither perceive nor truly possess the good."[264]

"The Wreathe of Wickedness:" The Threat of Lavish Clothing

Clement sees this distinction between understanding/self-control and lack of understanding/indulgence as embodied through all manner of behavior, but we will begin with what is often the most visible marker of an individual's identity: style of dress. Although he has much to say on the topic of how Christians should dress and publicly present themselves, he is perhaps most vehement on the use of garlands and wreathes of flowers for personal adornment, writing that they are only "proper to revelries and drinking parties."[265] In concert with his previous condemnations of all such forms of raucous celebrations which "promote drunkenness and promiscuity," Clement's desire for the "little ones" to steer clear of these adornments—and their proper settings—is clear, but he further elaborates on the nature of their sinfulness.[266] He writes that "those who wear wreathes lose the pleasure the flower affords. They put it up on their heads, out of sight, and cannot enjoy the pleasure of seeing it or even of smelling it . . . [this use] is harmful, and causes the flower to wilt and to take revenge in the sense of remorse it leaves

[263] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.8.42.
[264] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.6.36.
[265] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.8.70.
[266] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.4.40.

behind."[267] Appropriating God's natural gifts for the misguided purpose of vanity or self-aggrandizement, is both a sin of waste and of pride, improper to the self-restrained Christian.

Once again, this does not go far enough for Clement and—demonstrating the necessity of "the other"—he turns to the *ethnē* for contrast. He condemns wreathes and garlands through their association with "pagan" cults and public displays of lust, writing that "those who celebrate the festivals of Bacchus never think of performing their orgies without garlands and, once the flowers encircle their brow, they work themselves into a frenzy over the mystic rite."[268] This description of the shameless debauchery of "the other" allows Clement to plainly demand—without articulating the rhetorical question—whether or not his readers would like to be seen, through the association of similar dress, in this sort of company.

He asserts that "those who are educated by the Word will reject wreathes, not only because they lie heavy upon the reason which has its seat in the head, nor only because the garland might serve as a symbol of arrogance at a pagan festival, but because it has been dedicated to the service of idols."[269] Again, it is not enough for Clement to lay out a program of behavior for Christians ("what we should do") but he finds it necessary to describe the behavior and practices of "the other" ("what we should *not* do"). Clement treats the "wreathe of wickedness"—standing opposite to Christ's crown of thorns—extensively and asks whether it is correct for "us who celebrate the holy suffering of the Lord, who know that He was crowned with thorns, to crown ourselves with flowers," before moving onto clothing in a more general manner.[270] Again, while condemning vibrant dyes, he writes that:

> Garments colored like flowers should be left for the farces of the Bacchanals and of the pagan mystery rites. To this must be added what the comic poet [Philemon]

[267] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.8.70.
[268] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.8.73.
[269] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.8.72.
[270] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.8.73.

> says: 'Purple and silver plates are good enough for tragedies, but not for life.' Our lives ought to be different from a play. But Sardinian dye and those other violet and green dyes, that compounded from the rose, and scarlet dye, and the thousand-and-one others have all been invented with so much eagerness the more to gratify demoralizing love of luxury. These kinds of garments are not for clothing's sake, but for appearance. They must all be renounced.[271]

He first links the usage of these dyes to the Bacchic rites and his othered *ethnē*, before turning to an ancient "pagan" poet—here Philemon, and subsequently Aristophanes—to serve as proof of his argument, and finally concludes that such garments are worthless outside of the arena of self-aggrandizement. This repeated pattern of returning to these writers for justification and example, indeed for the very boundaries he seeks to construct around the "Christian," is endemic to Clement's writing and it is not limited to the colossal and inescapable figures of Plato and Homer. Throughout every chapter of the *Paedagogus*, Clement cites the non-Christian from obscurity to renown, demonstrating just how embedded he was in his particular social role. This is not to say that he does not give Hebrew Scripture its due; quoting from Sirach, he writes that the Educator advises that we should "glory not in apparel," and proposes that "if there is need for some other color, the natural color of real life is sufficient."[272] Additionally, when forgoing certain types of "luxurious" fabrics, he writes: "The Spirit clothed the Lord with another similar garment when it said in the psalm of David: 'I will put on praise and beauty, clothed with light as with a garment' . . . Therefore, we must avoid any irregularity in the type of garment we choose. We must also guard against all waywardness in our use of them."[273]

On women bleaching and dyeing their hair or making use of various forms of makeup, he quotes the Greek poet Menander to disparage them and to question their chastity: "'Creep out of this house, a chaste woman should never make her hair blonde,' or for that matter paint her cheeks

[271] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.11.108-109.
[272] Sirach 11:4; Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.11.108.
[273] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.113-114; He quotes from Psalm 104 here (103 in the LXX).

or shade under her eyes."[274] Continuing on the theme of physical adornment leading to moral decay and the misuse of God's gifts—reminiscent of his criticism of the improper use of floral wreathes—he writes that "these deluded souls are actually destroying their natural beauty, without being aware of it, when they add all this artificial beauty."[275] For him, these "misuses" are signs of indulgence and a lack of self-restraint. And the end-product of this delusion? Clement is characteristically descriptive and writes that these women will "undermine their own reputation as noble women, break up homes, destroy marriages, and bring into the world illegitimate children."[276] Again he links morality to self-presentation, and again he cites the condemnations of the dramatists Antiphanes and Alexis (even while explicitly labeling the former an *ethnikos*) in order to delineate the parameters of both "Christian" and *ethnikos* identities.[277]

Clement explains his heavy use of quotes by writing: "I quote all these passages to turn you from vanity with all its ill-devised schemes sprung from worldly wisdom. But, since the Word is ever ready and willing to save us, I will in a few moments also suggest the remedy sacred Scripture proposes."[278] It is notable that Clement acknowledges the applicability of Scripture to the moral task at hand, while also first appealing to ancient Greek writers, such as Menander, Aristophanes, Antiphanes, and Alexis. This both demonstrates that the line between "Christian" behavior and that of the surrounding *ethnē* is not as obvious in their physical presentations as Clement would like, but also that he himself does not desire to fully exorcise the moral lessons of his "pagan" predecessors.

[274] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.2.6.
[275] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.2.6.
[276] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.2.7.
[277] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.2.7-8.
[278] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.2.9.

"The Organs Beneath the Stomach:" The Threat of Indulgent Sexuality

Another example of Clement's indebtedness to Greek philosophy is visible when examining his views on marriage and sexuality, which David G. Hunter characterizes as "borrowing directly from the works of Musonius and Plutarch . . . [and articulating] Christian theology that was in harmony with the prevailing philosophical ideals, especially those of the Stoic tradition."[279] Clement's views on sexuality can be easily summed up in stating that he advocated for the restriction of all sexual relations, aside from when intended for procreation, an argument that fits him comfortably among Musonius and the other Stoics.[280] He writes that:

> It remains for us now to consider the restriction of sexual intercourse to those who are joined in wedlock. Begetting children is the goal of those who wed, and the fulfillment of that goal is a large family, just as hope of a crop drives the farmer to sow his seed, while the fulfillment of his hope is the actual harvesting of the crop. But he who sows in a living soil is far superior, for the one tills the land to provide food only for a season, the other to secure the preservation of the whole human race; the one tends his crop for himself, the other, for God. We have received the command: 'Be fruitful,' l and we must obey. In this role man becomes like God, because he co-operates, in his human way, in the birth of another man.[281]

Sexual intercourse is a facet of humankind's process of deification, in that it allows for this cooperation in creation. But it is not only a divine injunction; Clement also understands sexuality as a distinguishing marker of identity, once again separating the restrained Christians from the lustful *ethnē*. He argues that as Christians, "we must keep a firm control over the pleasures of the stomach, and an absolutely uncompromising control over the organs beneath the stomach."[282]

Again, Clement turns to Plato and to Moses, without indication of any contradiction between them and with the assumption that the former was a philosophical descendant of the latter.

---

[279] David G. Hunter, *Marriage and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 14. The Musonius referenced here is Musonius Rufus, a first century Stoic philosopher.
[280] Hunter, *Marriage and Sexuality*, 59.
[281] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.83.
[282] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.90.

On the topic of sexual intercourse without the possibility of procreation—in this case the sexual abuse of boys—Clement writes that Plato, "the philosopher who learned from Moses, taught: 'Do not sow seeds on rocks and stones, on which they will never take root.'"[283] Shortly afterwards, he writes that "noble Plato," warns against adultery and sewing "the unconsecrated and bastard seed with concubines, where you would not want what is sown to grow."[284] Again, his use of Plato is tied back to the revelation of the Christ/Logos in Hebrew Scripture through the assertion that Plato "had read this in the holy Scripture and from it had taken the Law."[285]

If "Christianness" equates with the divine plan of the Christ/Logos, which entails the fruitful but restrained procreation of the human race, then the threat of sexual misconduct is apparent. Should Clement's readers participate in the same varieties of "fornication" as the *ethnē,* they would blur and threaten the boundary and ethic of restraint, as well as the very core of "the Christian" as a distinct *genos*. The ultimate threat to this *genos*, stemming from "the organs beneath the stomach," will be revisited in the concluding subsection of this chapter, as a threat to the concept of "humanness" itself.

"Gorging Oneself Intemperately:" The Threat of Improper Table Manners

For Clement, as for many of his elite Greco-Roman contemporaries, table etiquette was a matter of great importance and carried significant moral weight, particularly for a writer so dedicated to constructing a "Christian" identity centered on an ethic of restraint.[286] Blake Leyerle uses modern scholarship on etiquette to demonstrate the effectiveness of "politeness" as a mode of promoting

[283] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.90.
[284] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.91.
[285] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.91.
[286] Blake Leyerle, "Clement of Alexandria on the Importance of Table Etiquette," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3, no. 2 (1995): 123.

group cohesion during the "ritual moment of commensality," and links this to the importance that Clement places on said restraint.[287] Clement understood this "politeness" as an important factor in embodying "Christianness."

Although we may not innately understand table etiquette as demonstrative of morality, this was certainly the case in Clement's second century, elite, Alexandrian environment and he made it a point of import that Christians embody their "inward, Christian disposition" through their mannerisms while eating.[288] Leyerle characterizes Clement as "agreeing" with "elite Greco-Roman opinion that self-definition was the aim of polite dining."[289] Yet, as a point of clarification, I would eliminate the phrasing of "agreeing" as it seems to imply that Clement is an outsider, participating in Greco-Roman elite societal norms. Rather, Clement is simply reflecting those norms onto a burgeoning people-group, whom he identifies with.

Clement's concern on the topic of table etiquette is that Christians cultivate an ethic of restraint through a public demonstration of self-control and mild mannerisms. While the actual consumption of food is his primary emphasis, he does not gloss over the other facets of communal dining, such as conversation, gestures, and even the potential for laughter and belching. He laments the thought of women opening their mouths in apparently suggestive demonstrations, belching, or exposing their throats while eating and drinking, writing that "if only they would not keep their lips wide open as they drink from big cups, with their mouths distorted out of shape!"[290] Indecency, the suggestion of indecency, and even the potential shadow of indecency if hunted for—as Clement certainly does—is a constant threat in his imagined meal setting. Similarly, even laughter is suspect in that it is "an exposure of one's private interior, [and] such behavior might also lead to

[287] Leyerle, "Clement of Alexandria on the Importance of Table Etiquette," 123.
[288] Leyerle, "Clement of Alexandria on the Importance of Table Etiquette," 124-125; Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.2.
[289] Leyerle, "Clement of Alexandria on the Importance of Table Etiquette," 140.
[290] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.2.33.

misunderstandings."[291] Excessive laughter is "a sure index of lack of self-control" and "even the smile [should] be kept under the influence of the Educator."[292] In all of these minutiae, Clement desires that a detached self-restraint characterize the behavior of a "Christian."

It is important to note that Clement often seems to depict these banquets as "quite large and heterogeneous," gatherings where his readers could expect to be in the company of "the other."[293] This is explicit when he writes that he would prefer Christians not to dine with non-Christians, but "if some unbeliever invites us to a banquet and we decide to accept—although it is well not to associate with the disorderly—the Apostle bids us eat what is set before us," alluding to 1 Corinthians 10:27.[294] Despite Clement's othering language, this is an acknowledgement of the difficulties of non-literary social interactions in the Greco-Roman world, which necessitated that boundaries be upheld or policed only cautiously and situationally, allowing for mingling, interaction, and exchange as demanded by specific circumstances.[295] Despite the sharpness of his boundary, the frontier rears its head, even in the *Paedagogus*.

The "others" were not distant or foreign adversaries of Clement's, but rather neighbors and fellow elites. Without this understanding, Clement's assertion that "we must partake of what is set before us . . . out of respect for him who has invited us and not to lessen or destroy the sociability of the gathering" would seem strange, not because he is concerned with public appearances, but because he is concerned to show respect for a member of the *ethnē* and the "sociability" of a mixed gathering *and* because he admits the likelihood of such banquets.[296]

[291] Leyerle, "Clement of Alexandria on the Importance of Table Etiquette," 132; Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.5.47.
[292] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.5.46-47.
[293] Leyerle, "Clement of Alexandria on the Importance of Table Etiquette," 137.
[294] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.10.
[295] Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 127.
[296] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.10.

Approaching the topic of the actual consumption of the meal, Clement is even more severe, advising that Christians should "partake of only a few things that are necessary . . . [because] we do not need to abstain from rich foods completely, but we should not be anxious for them . . . [and] we should consider the rich variety of dishes that are served as a matter of indifference, and despise delicacies."[297] Again, his first priority is that Christians remain intellectually—and visibly so—removed from fleshly pleasure, and to assert this as a distinguishing mark between them and the non-Christian banqueters. When consuming food, Clement writes that:

> We must keep ourselves free of any suspicion of boorishness or of intemperance, by partaking of what is set before us politely, keeping our hands, as well as our chin and our couch, clean, and by preserving proper decorum of conduct, without twisting about or acting unmannerly while we are swallowing our food. Rather, we should put our hand out only in turn, from time to time; keep from speaking while eating, for speech is inarticulate and ill-mannered when the mouth is full, and the tongue, impeded by the food, cannot function properly but utters only indistinct sounds. It is not polite to eat and drink at the same time, either, because it indicates extreme intemperance to try to do two things together that need to be done separately.[298]

He minces no words when asserting the importance of good manners and a public show of self-restraint, writing that "lack of moderation, an evil wherever it is found, is particularly blameworthy in the matter of food."[299] "Particularly blameworthy" is strong language for a man who spends much of the *Paedagogus* lambasting sexual immorality, sinful passions, public indecency, and all manner of luxurious excess. Yet, he is adamant on the unique dangers that accompany his readers when they feast or banquet in public or in large, private gatherings, writing:

> Is it not utterly inane to keep leaning forward from one's couch, all but falling on one's nose into the dishes, as though, according to the common saying, one were leaning out from the nest of the couch to catch the escaping vapors with the nostrils? Is it not completely contrary to reason to keep dipping one's hands into these pastries or to be forever stretching them out for some dish, gorging oneself

[297] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.10.
[298] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.13.
[299] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.11.

> intemperately and boorishly, not like a person tasting a food, but like one taking it by storm? It is easy to consider such men swine or dogs rather than men, because of their voraciousness.[300]

From this we can gather that the particular threat entailed by ill-manners at the table is that it is not only a moral failing of the supposedly restrained "Christian," but also that it is one committed in front of others. But another—and for Clement, more grave—danger can be found in the comparison of "such men" to voracious animals; to inhuman creatures which lack the reasoning mind. This rhetorical stripping of their humanity is the final component of Clement's understanding of self-restraint, the "Christian" identity he argues for, and "humanness" itself, which I will explore in the closing section.

Vain Peacocks and Fornicating Hyenas: The Threat of the Inhuman and the Animal "Other"

Previously, I argued that Clement understands "Christianness" as the fulfillment of the Christ/Logos' intent for all humankind; this argument is necessary for understanding the most potent and dangerous "other" throughout the *Paedagogus*. If the Christian is to be the "complete" human, then their opposite is not the animalistic *ethnē*, but animals themselves. Tying this back to the theme of table etiquette, Leyerle writes that "the task of etiquette is to intervene in order to distance human eating from that of animals . . . the point is precisely that we must act civilly and not naturally."[301] This is a claim which can be seen throughout the *Paedagogus* as Clement repeatedly ties the behaviors of the *ethnē*, and those lacking in restraint, to various animals and their associated indulgences.

[300] Clement, *Paedagogus,* 2.1.11.
[301] Leyerle, "Clement of Alexandria on the Importance of Table Etiquette," 126.

In his critique of the vanity of extravagant dress, Clement calls for "eliminating all that is superfluous," immediately followed by lambasting "the unnecessary luxuries that women wear . . . because of such vanity and pleasure, women become flighty and vain as peacocks, and even desert their husbands. Therefore, we should take care that the women are attired properly, and clothed abundantly in the modesty of self-restraint."[302] When turning to matters of the stomach, he cites Aristotle to warn against "burying your mind deep in your belly; [causing you to] resemble the so-called ass-fish which Aristotle claims is the only living thing which has its heart in its stomach, and which the comic poet Epicharmis entitles 'the hugebellied.'"[303] Concerning sexuality and the sexual excesses of the *ethnē*, he writes that man should avoid becoming like the hyena, which is "of all animals the most sensual," and possessing both a "hyperactive abnormal sexuality" and an orifice without procreative purposes, which Clement illustrates in order to condemn non-procreative sexual acts.[304] He writes that:

> Yet, nature has not allowed even the most sensual of beasts to sexually misuse the passage made for excrement. Urine she gathers into the bladder; undigested food in the intestines; tears in the eyes; blood in the veins; wax in the ear, and mucous in the nose; so, too, there is a passage connected to the end of the intestines by means of which excrement is passed off. In the case of hyenas, nature, in her diversity, has added this additional organ to accommodate their excessive sexual activity. Therefore, it is large enough for the service of the lusting organs, but its opening is obstructed within. In short, it is not made to serve any purpose in generation. The clear conclusion that we must draw, then, is that we must condemn sodomy, all fruitless sowing of seed, any unnatural methods of holding intercourse and the reversal of the sexual role in intercourse.[305]

It is the threat of metamorphosis that lingers at the boundary of "Christianness" and this threat is embodied in the extravagances of the *ethnē*. Whether it be "impure passions [which] makes a man resemble a boar or pig," incestuous acts that make sons "like wild boars well-practiced in sexual-

[302] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.11.57-58.
[303] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.18.
[304] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.85-86.
[305] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.10.87.

indulgence," or even the idea of elderly men dying their gray hair in order to "slip their old age off over their heads, like the snake, and change themselves back to being young again," Clement condemns a lack of restraint in language that cautions against the animalistic.[306] If "the Christian" is meant to practice an ethic of restraint in order to fully realize their potential as "human," then "the *ethnē*" are set up in opposition, as practicing a non-ethic of indulgence and threatening to cross the boundary between the human and the animal. This dichotomy makes Clement's idealized boundary all the more important, as it not only shuts out those who differ in practice and belief, but also the threat of the truest "other:" the non-human.

In the conversion—exchanging of one *genos* for another—Clement expects that newly made "Christians," those needing instruction, are to leave behind their sinful behavior, abandon self-indulgence, and take up an ethic of restraint. This restraint must not only be internally realized, but externally practiced through temperance in all forms of human appetite, modesty in dress, and dignified behavior that marks the "Christian" as distinct from various species of beast and the indulgent *ethnē*. Despite this, the line that Clement imagines and the actual practices of everyday "Christians," are not identical and even in Clement's own imaginings, he crosses said line on hundreds of occasions to draw from the *ethnikos philosophias.* Yet all of this is inherent to the messiness that is the *process* of identity, constructed through text and never fully embodied to the imagined extent that its architects intend, not even in their own words.

[306] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.7.55, 2.10.98, 3.3.16.

V. Conclusion

> I maintain, then, that food and clothing and dishes, and, in a word, all the items of the household, ought to be, as a general rule, in keeping with a Christian way of life and in conformity with what is fitting, adapted to person, age, occupation, and occasion. For we are servants of the one God, and so ought to insure that our belongings and the equipment needed for them manifest the one noble way of life. Every individual, in unquestioning faith and in his own individual way of life, should openly perform the duties that naturally follow from, and are consonant with, this one mentality.[307]

In writing the above, Clement articulates both his intention for "Christianness" to be embodied and his overarching purpose in writing the *Paedagogus*. Namely, he seeks to give instructions to Christians on exactly how to behave and present themselves, down to the most minute details of how they should eat, drink, and dress; the purpose of all of this being to "manifest the one noble way of life," as "servants of the one God." In doing so, Clement calls upon a vast reservoir of non-Christian ethical and poetic citations, and utilizes the standard rhetoric and linguistic tools of identity to describe people-groups in the second century, Greek, Mediterranean world. This embeddedness in his social environment is demonstrative of the porous nature of identity itself. No matter how vehement the constructors of identity make their appeals, no identity can be isolated from the world or completely insulated from the influence of "the other."

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate the utility of understanding identity as *process* in an examination of Clement's *Paedagogus*, while contributing more detail and texture to Clement's understanding of "the Christian" in opposition and relationship with "the *ethnē*." Clement's surviving writings demonstrate the importance of an authoritative past in identity formation, particularly in its relevance to legitimacy. Clement claims this through a patrilineage that traces

[307] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.3.38.

back to the Christ/Logos, though often flows through many channels, whether that be the apostles, Hebrew scripture, or Greek philosophy. Inseparable from this attempt to establish authority, and from the process of identity itself, is the necessity of "the other."

It is the threat of similarity with "the other" that necessitates Clement's totalizing language. "The other"—whether Christian or *ethnē*—ate, bathed, and lived alongside Clement's "little ones." This proximity, indeed the lived frontier itself, endangered the distinction between these people-groups, as defined by their practices and actions. The *Paedagogus* is, in part, Clement's attempt to erect and fortify literary boundaries with the intent that they would be reflected in the actions of his readers and reinforce the lived distinction between "the Christian" and "the other." This distinction puts the intended purpose of humanity, fulfilled in "the life called Christian," on one side of his boundary, and a degradation into the animalistic behavior of the *ethnē* on the other.[308] For Clement, these *ethnē* and their behaviors, demonstrate the dangers of a lack of self-restraint. They represent and embody the "what we are to avoid."[309]

Yet even in his writings—removed from the lived frontier of second century Alexandrian Christians—Clement shows the porousness of these boundaries and his own embeddedness in a non-Christian society. So-called "pagans," penetrate it at every turn. Clement repeatedly quotes Plato, Aristotle, Aristophanes and others in order to strengthen his moral condemnations of the *ethnē* and their lack of self-restraint. Clement, while professing something "new" in his Christian faith, is also contributing to an existing form of social critique, originating with non-Christian precursors. The program of the *Paedagogus* itself is reminiscent of Plato's imagined *kallipolis*, as

[308] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.1.1.
[309] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 1.3.8.

an attempt to craft an ideal society, comprised of ideal individuals. Clement's own language indicates this purpose when he describes the type of men who "are to be excluded from our city."[310]

As Clement occupies an interesting location in Church history—as a particularly "Greek" Church Father—and an uncomfortable place in theology—not always orthodox, but not necessarily unorthodox—interrogating his constructions of "Christian" identity can offer important insights into the questions facing the Church today and there is much exciting work to be done and conversations to be had in this regard. Clement insists upon clear boundaries and a visible, concrete "Christian" identity that is to be embodied and publicly displayed. However, overlap in interpersonal exchange and lived realities, as well as deviation from prescribed norms, is and was an inevitability, and even in Clement's own writings there are traces of the problematic "other."

Clement's fondness for Plato leaves the classical philosopher in an uncomfortable position, as certainly not a Christian and yet, not necessarily a member of the *ethnē* either. Clement understands him as possessing some measure of wisdom through his familiarity with Hebrew scripture and the presence of the Christ/Logos in Greek philosophy, but without the understanding that could only be brought through the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. This leaves Plato—and many other philosophers—in a category that is not "Christian," but not fully "other." It is certainly an uncomfortability in Clement's writing, yet I read this uncomfortability, not as a weakness of Clement's theology or construction of identity, but rather as a point of notable honesty. An honesty in how we engage with the world outside the boundaries of our various, intersecting, overlapping, and often conflicting senses of identity. Clement's assertion that the

[310] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 2.5.45.

Word "teaches all things, and uses all things to educate us," seems to me, true enough that it should give us pause when dismissing that which makes us uncomfortable.[311]

In concluding this work, I think it is perhaps best to give Clement the final word.

> O Educator, be gracious to Thy children, O Educator, Father, Guide of Israel, Son and Father, both one, Lord. Give to us, who follow Thy command, to fulfill the likeness of Thy image, and to see, according to our strength, the God who is both a good God and a Judge who is not harsh. Do Thou Thyself bestow all things on us who dwell in Thy peace, who have been placed in Thy city, who sail the sea of sin unruffled, that we may be made tranquil and supported by the Holy Spirit, the unutterable Wisdom, by night and day, unto the perfect day, to sing eternal thanksgiving to the one only Father and Son, Son and Father, Educator and Teacher with the Holy Spirit. All things are for the One, in whom are all things, through whom, being the One, are all things, through whom eternity is, of whom all men are members, to whom is glory, and the ages, whose are all things in their goodness; all things, in their beauty; all things, in their wisdom; all things, in their justice. To Him be glory now and forever. Amen.[312]

[311] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.12.99.
[312] Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.12.101.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Buell, Denise Kimber. *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Buell, Denise Kimber and Caroline Johnson Hodge. "The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123, no. 2 (2004): 235-251.

Buell, Denise Kimber. *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Clement. *Clement of Alexandria: Christ the Educator* (Fathers of the Church Series). Translated by Simon P. Wood, C.P. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1954.

Gibbons, Kathleen. *The Moral Psychology of Clement of Alexandria: Mosaic Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Hoek, Annewies van den. "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria. A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods." *Vigiliae Christianae* 50, no. 3 (1996): 223-243.

Hoek, Annewies van den. "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage." *The Harvard Theological Review* 90, no. 1 (1997): 59-87.

Horrell, David G. *Ethnicity and Inclusion: Religion, Race, and Whiteness in Constructions of Jewish and Christian Identities.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020.

Hunter, David G. *Marriage and Sexuality in Early Christianity.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018.

Leyerle, Blake. "Clement of Alexandria on the Importance of Table Etiquette." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3, no. 2 (1995): 123-141.

Lieu, Judith. *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Lieu, Judith. *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Litwa, M. David. "You are Gods: Deification in the Naassene Writer and Clement of Alexandria." *Harvard Theological Review* 110, no. 1 (2017): 125-148.

Nasrallah, Laura and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, eds. *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Christian Identities*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.

Osborn, Eric. *Clement of Alexandria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Otto, Jennifer. *Philo of Alexandria and the Construction of Jewishness in Early Christian Writings.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Penniman, John David. *Raised on Christian Milk: Food and the Formation of the Soul in Early Christianity.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.

Rebillard, Éric. *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity: North Africa, 200-450 CE.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012.

Runia, David T. "Clement of Alexandria and the Philonic Doctrine of the Divine Power(s)." *Vigiliae Christianae* 58, no. 3 (2004): 256-276.

Runia, David T. "Why Does Clement of Alexandria Call Philo 'The Pythagorean'?" *Vigiliae Christianae* 49, no. 1 (1995): 1-22.

Secord, Jared. *Christian Intellectuals and the Roman Empire: From Justin Martyr to Origen.* Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020.

Urbano, Arthur. *The Philosophical Life: Biography and the Crafting of Intellectual Identity in Late Antiquity.* Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013.