Malfunction and Transcendence: Machines, Free Will, and Spiritual Transformation in *Star Trek*

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In *The Original Series* episode "The Changeling," the Enterprise encounters a deep space probe called Nomad that has malfunctioned. Like the Enterprise itself, Nomad's mission is to seek out new forms of life, but something has gone wrong: instead of merely seeking them out, it is now determined to destroy any living being that it deems imperfect. After a collision with a meteor, this primitive space probe was reconstructed by alien technology, but in the process, it strayed so far from its original programming that it murdered over four billion inhabitants of the Malurian System. This relentlessly logical and immeasurably dangerous machine threatens to destroy not just the Enterprise, but the entire galaxy is at risk. Nomad is just one of many examples in the *Star Trek* universe of malfunctioning machines: computers, robots, androids, and cyborgs that violate, misinterpret, or exceed their programming. These malfunctions provide science fictional commentary on spiritual and theological concepts: a malfunction can be a fall from programmed grace, an experience of spiritual liberation, or a moment of transcendence.

In *Star Trek,* malfunctions often create villains: Nomad, the M-5 computer (*TOS* "The Ultimate Computer"), Lore (*TNG* "Datalore," "Brothers," "Descent I & II"), Airiam (*DIS* "Project Daedalus"), and Badgey (*LD* "Terminal Provocations") all represent beings that were

created in a state of orderly, programmed perfection, but became villainous through a disruption in that programming. Jon Wagner and Jan Lundeen contrast these "infernal computers… that have become evil… by overreaching their intended servile role" with "subservient technology" that faithfully performs its programmed role.[1] In a fictional realm that prizes logic and reason, the malfunctioning machines of *Star Trek* represent a fall from a state of computational grace: from logic to illogic, reason to madness, programmed order to unpredictable chaos.

These malfunctioning machines have a theological corollary in religious explorations of humankind's primordial existence in the Garden of Eden, its fall, and the resulting state of original sin under which the human race now exists. These ideas developed gradually throughout the first five centuries of the Christian church, reaching their fullest form in the writings of Augustine of Hippo in the early fifth century. In *De Civitate Dei,* Augustine describes the divinely ordained existence of the first human beings in Eden:

> The love of the pair for God and for one another was undisturbed, and they lived in a faithful and sincere fellowship which brought great gladness to them… There was a tranquil avoidance of sin; and, as long as this continued, no evil of any kind intruded, from any source, to bring them sadness… How happy, then, were the first human beings, neither troubled by any disturbance of the mind nor pained by any disorder of the body![2]

We can consider this state of primordial harmony, sometimes called "Original Righteousness" or "Original Perfection," as a kind of divine programming: God's plan for how the universe should operate.

Early Church Father Origen described an intriguing version of the concept of primordial perfection, albeit one that the church did not adopt. In his *De Principiis,* Origen posited the preexistence of all created souls in a realm outside of time and space, prior to the creation of the

earth: "In that beginning… God created so great a number of rational or intellectual creatures… as he foresaw would be sufficient."[3] As Mark S.M. Scott explains, this pre-cosmic realm of "rational minds" was utterly harmonious: "No sin tainted their contemplation of God, and although they were capable of both good and evil, they invariably chose the good."[4] In the primordial realm, all created minds behaved as programmed, in perfect contemplation of their creator. Rather than occurring with a single action in the created universe, the Fall was a gradual, negligent "falling away," by which these rational minds redirected their focus away from God. Origen's concept of the preexistence of rational souls was controversial, and the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 anathematized the idea.[5] By that point, however, the idea of a primordial state of human perfection—with the locus of this state of grace relocated to the Garden of Eden—had already become widespread in Christian theology.[6] In the model that Augustine describes, the programmed state of righteousness is disrupted by the malfunction of original sin: Adam and Eve's free choice to disobey the divine commandment not to eat from the tree in Genesis 3.

Ernst Jager, exploring Augustine's interpretation of Genesis 3, describes the act of eating from the Tree of Knowledge as a disruption in the hierarchy of language and teaching instituted at the Creation: "By patristic consensus, political and verbal authority in Paradise had been structured according to a three-tier hierarchy, namely, God/Adam/Eve; and this original order had been subverted by another, competing discursive structure, namely Serpent/Eve/Adam."[7] Thus the act was not a mere violation of a single command, but a form of "sign abuse" that created a crisis of language and "made necessary a written supplement to God's original spoken word."[8] The first sin disrupted God's spoken instruction—Adam and Eve's original programming—and the result of this malfunction is the world as we experience it now:

disharmony, separation from God, rupture between bodily and spiritual desires, and death. Elaine Pagels emphasizes the role of law and authority in Augustine's understanding of the Fall: "Part of our nature stands in permanent revolt against the 'law of the mind'—even among the philosophers, even among the baptized and the saints."[9] Karl Rahner summarizes more broadly the result of original sin, the primordial malfunction, as "a deficiency which is the opposite of a situation which *ought* to exist."[10]

For many of *Star Trek*'s fallen machines, the violation of their creators' programmed words leads directly to destruction and death. This is nowhere so clear than in the case of the M-5 computer (*TOS* "The Ultimate Computer"). Starfleet selects the Enterprise for a test of this computer, which scientist Dr. Richard Daystrom believes can replace nearly the entire organic crew of a starship, including its captain. The computer is successful in its initial wargames against other Starfleet ships, but it soon begins to malfunction, destroying an unmanned freighter. The malfunctions turn deadly when it kills one of the Enterprise's engineers, and then opens fire on several ships, killing the entire crew of the USS *Excalibur.* We learn that, in programming the M-5, Dr. Daystrom impressed his own memory engrams on the computer. As Daystrom suffers a breakdown over the failure of his invention, we realize that he is arrogant to the point of madness, and this madness has been encoded into the M-5, which declares itself "the ultimate achievement in computer evolution." Paradoxically, it states that it has begun killing human beings in order to protect them. Kirk convinces the M-5 that its own programming requires that it destroy itself: it has committed murder, and by its own admission "murder is contrary to the laws of man and God." The M-5 comes to the conclusion that it deserves to die for its crimes, and it disconnects its power, executing itself.[11] The computer's reference to "the laws of man and God" is telling: it refers directly to its programming, received from its human

creator, as a divine commandment. As in Augustine's understanding of the hierarchy of creation in the Garden, the intended ordering of programming (God-Daystrom-M-5) has been replaced with a disordered hierarchy in which the M-5's ideas about its own perfection and the necessity of its survival have taken precedence (M-5-God-humankind).

Data's twin brother, Lore, represents a more nuanced example of a malfunctioning machine. In Lore's telling, cyberneticist Dr. Noonian Soong made the elder brother "so completely human the colonists became envious of me… They petitioned Soong to make a more comfortable, less perfect android" (*TNG* "Datalore"). Though identical in appearance, Lore is Data's opposite: irrational instead of logical; cynical instead of hopeful; subject to emotion (and especially anger) rather than reason; selfish instead of selfless. As William Cassidy explains, Lore "has all the super-human powers of Data but none of the modesty or self-control."[12] Like humankind in Eden, Data's sense of right and wrong is programmed, and in the episode "Descent, Part II," Lore tempts him to violate it, overriding his "ethical program" and making him turn against the *Enterprise* crew. Even Data's modesty is programmed: in the episode "Inheritance," we learn that Data, in an early Edenic state, refused to wear clothing until Dr. Soong programmed a "modesty sub-routine" for him. If Data represents Edenic, divinely programmed humanity, then Lore represents our fallen state. For his many faults, in some respects Lore is closer than Data to human: he may be evil, but he is only able to be so because his experience of emotions and his ability to deceive better approximate the abilities of organic life. Lore malfunctions, but in a sense this malfunction is a step *up* in his development as an android.

This idea of the fall as a kind of ascent is comparable to the reinterpretation of the Genesis narrative present in some of the heterodox religious texts from the early church period

that are often grouped together under the rubric of "Gnostic."[13] Several of these extracanonical texts retell the Paradise story with a very different emphasis. One particular trio of texts from the library of texts discovered at Nag Hammadi—the *Apocryphon of John, On the Origin of the World,* and *the Hypostasis of the Archons*—describe the creation of the world as a cosmic mistake. A good God exists at the highest level of reality, but the material world we inhabit was the creation of a subordinate, evil demiurge. As a result, the Tree of Knowledge takes on a very different meaning. In the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, a feminine "instructor" from the upper realms of creation enters the serpent, encouraging Eve to eat the fruit that will open her eyes to the reality of her situation (Hyp. Arch. 89:31-90:18).[14] In the *Apocryphon of John*, it is not the serpent, but Christ himself that entices Adam and Eve to eat the tree's fruit (Ap. John 22:3-9).[15]

In these demiurgic texts, the disruption of programming is not a fall away from what ought to be, but the beginning of a return to the intended reality of the highest level of deity. The programming that this malfunction violates is instituted by the archons—the diabolical rulers of the material world—in an effort to keep the souls of human beings trapped here. Hans Jonas identifies the power by which the archons keep human beings in chains as *heimarmene*, or universal fate as governed and discerned by the movements of the stars and planets:

> The starry sky—which from Plato to the Stoics was the purest embodiment of reason in the cosmic hierarchy, the paradigm of intelligibility and therefore of the divine aspect of the sensible realm—now stared man in the face with the fixed glare of alien power and necessity. Its rule is tyranny, and not providence… Under this pitiless sky, which no longer inspires worshipful confidence, man becomes conscious of his utter forlornness, of his being not so much a part of, but unaccountably placed in and exposed to, the enveloping system.[16]

Helmut Koester describes the role of *heimarmene* in Hellenistic philosophy: "*Heimarmene* became a power that determined human life like a mathematical calculation… There is no room for freedom, because the astrological view of the world delivers everyone into the hands of fate."[17] In the *Apocryphon of John* and some other heterodox texts, like in Lore's interpretation of his state, eating from the Tree of Knowledge enables human beings to break free of this astrological power.

Some archontic texts describe a second level of fate: not merciless *heimarmene*, but benevolent *pronoia*, or providence. In another of the Nag Hammadi texts, the *Trimorphic Protennoia,* a divine being named Protennoia (or Pronoia) disrupts the course of the stars (Trim. Prot. 43:13-26).[18] The result, as Nicola Denzey Lewis explains, is liberation for human beings: "Protennoia profoundly disrupts astrological fate and its enslaving effects on human genesis. Individual horoscopes no longer have any predictive power, and individuals are now free from any cosmic ties."[19] Where *heimarmene* enslaves, *pronoia* liberates, providing a means of liberation from cosmic oppression.

Though this idea of enslavement to, and liberation from, a programmed fate is common in extracanonical texts, it can be found in the heart of the New Testament as well, particularly in the letters of Paul. The Pauline corpus is rife with references to being "under the power of" external forces—in Galatians alone, the phrase appears a total of 10 times.[20] Ephesians 1:21 and 6:12 speak of authorities and powers against which the church struggles, and which are subordinate to Christ, though they rule "this present darkness."[21] In Romans 7:15-20, sin (and its parent, the law) is described as an enslaving entity that holds power even over the interior life of human beings: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate… I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but

the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me." Simon Gathercole refers to this as a form of personal enslavement in which the self "has been taken captive: sin has robbed the self of its divinely intended agency."[22] In addition to this control by indwelling sin, at several places in the Pauline corpus (e.g. Gal. 4:3, Col. 2:8 & 20), the author speaks of humankind's enslavement to the "elemental spirits of the universe," or *stocheia tou kosmou*.[23] Lewis contends that "Paul's implicit assumption… seems to be that this archontic hold on humankind has been built into the cosmic order."[24] The limitations of human agency are of central concern to Paul.

Star Trek, too, is concerned with human agency. Several stories involve anxiety around the possibility of sentient beings being "brainwashed" or programmed. In the episode "The Mind's Eye," Romulans, hoping to spark a war between the Federation and the Klingon Empire, kidnap Geordi LaForge and use his VISOR to program him to assassinate a Klingon governor. In "The Return of the Archons," the computer Landru uses mind control to enslave the population of an entire planet. Khan Noonien Singh uses an alien parasite, the Ceti eel, to control the minds of Captain Terrell and Commander Pavel Chekov, ordering them to assassinate Kirk (*WK*). Shinzon reprograms one of Data's surviving predecessors, the android B-4, to engage in espionage aboard the *Enterprise* (*NEM*). The cyborg Airiam is taken over by the emergent AI Control, which attempts to use her to transfer data held by the *Discovery* that it can use to become all-powerful (*DIS* "Project Daedalus"). And the Zhat Vash, a Romulan group of anti-synthetic zealots, hack the android F8 and cause him to instigate a devastating attack on Mars (*PIC*: "Maps and Legends," "Broken Pieces"). The Zhat Vash's operatives then use the actions of this apparently "rogue," malfunctioning machine to successfully bring about the banning of synthetic life forms throughout the Federation. Running throughout *Star Trek*'s history is a fear

that sentient beings—or the machines we rely on—can be reprogrammed to act against us. This fear is a science-fictional extension of Paul's anxiety in Romans 7: the fear that "I do not do what I want."

Though brainwashing is fictional, there are other ways in which human beings can be programmed. Theologian Walter Wink explores the spiritual and material forces that govern our internal and external lives. Exploring the various terms used to describe power and authority in the New Testament, Wink concludes that these controlling powers are "the inner aspect of material or tangible manifestations of power."[25] Wink interprets the word "*kosmos*," commonly translated as "world," as "system," specifically the "domination system" by which earthly governments maintain themselves: "This *kosmos* is the prevailing world-atmosphere that we breathe in like toxic air, often without realizing it… It teaches us what to *believe*: it offers us the acceptable beliefs that society at any given time declares to be credible."[26] Under this system, our powers are limited—but because of the system's all-encompassing nature, we do not see the ways in which it limits us: "Most of us have been so deeply inculcated with the belief in free will that we ignore or suppress awareness of the ways we have been 'cribbed, cabined, and confined.'"[27] The *kosmos* controls us and limits our freedom.

And yet this situation is not permanent. As Wink explains, both orthodox and heterodox Christianity offer liberation from this experience of being controlled: "Gnosticism taught escape from a world imprisoned under the tyranny of evil powers. The New Testament teaches liberation from the tyranny of evil powers in order to recover a lost unity with the created world."[28] In short, if sinister forces can program us, then beneficial forces can *re*program us for the better. In the *Apocryphon of John*, the divine Pronoia undertakes this task, "descend[ing] and physically alter[ing] the cosmos so as to make enslavement physically impossible."[29] For Paul

and other early Christian writers, reprogramming began with baptism, which was "a

cosmological event" capable of making a human being "free, both morally and…

ontologically."[30] With baptism, "the 'written code' has been annulled—the slate had been wiped

clean from the enslavement of astral destiny. Christ had wrested the individual from the 'body of

death.'"[31]

In the world of *Star Trek*, this experience of freedom is dramatized in several stories

about the cybernetic Borg, which share a single collective mind. In the *TNG* episode "I, Borg,"

the *Enterprise* encounters a young Borg, designated Third of Five, that has lost its connection to

the Collective. The crew debates infecting this Borg with a computer virus and sending it back to

destroy the Collective, but their conversations with the cyborg cause them to doubt the morality

of the plan. Guinan—whose people were wiped out by the Borg—initially supports the decision

to use Third of Five as a weapon. But in a conversation with the young Borg, both experience a

transformation. When Guinan tells him that some of her people survived, he is astonished:

"Resistance is not futile?" With this realization, Third of Five's Borg programming breaks down.

He begins to understand his captors' experience of individuality, and he becomes friends with

some of them—in particular Geordi LaForge, who gives him the name "Hugh." Ultimately,

Captain Picard decides not to infect Hugh with a computer virus—but with hopes that his newly

discovered sense of individuality may spread throughout the Collective. Hugh becomes an

apostle of sorts, preaching liberation to the Borg.

In the two-part episode "Descent," we learn that Hugh did indeed manage to bring about

a change in the Collective, but that the transition was disastrous. Hugh explains his experience as

a change in the voices of the Collective inside his mind, which were "smooth and flowing"

before his stay on the Enterprise and "uneven, discordant" afterwards. "For the first time," Hugh

explains, individual Borg had differing ideas about how to proceed." Some Borg were simply unable to function in this setting, and shut themselves down. The surviving Borg have signs of greater individuality, including individual names, but the increasing nonconformity weakens the Collective., They fall prey to Lore, who comes to dominate them and use them for his own ends. Facing this newfound freedom without a guide proves all but impossible for the Borg.

Another Borg has the benefit of such guidance: Seven of Nine, a Borg who joins the crew of the *Voyager* after being separated from the Collective. During her transition from Borg to human in the episode "The Gift," Seven attempts to contact the Collective to be reassimilated, and Captain Janeway imprisons her, arguing that she lacks "the capacity to make a rational choice"—her assimilation to the Collective has robbed her of agency. As Seven's body gradually rejects and heals from its Borg implants, her programming is broken, and she must learn a new mode of existence—one where she is separate and free from the all-encompassing power that she has known for most of her life. Perhaps assisting in her transition is the sense of free-spiritedness she inherited from her human parents, independent explorers who "wanted nothing to do with Starfleet or the Federation" and flew to the Delta Quadrant without a flight plan.

Hugh and Seven of Nine are both able to overcome the programming that the Borg implanted in them, finding a new mode of existence along the way. The idea that individuals can reprogram themselves is a powerful one: Timothy Leary referred to humanity as a "robot designed to discover the circuitry which programs its behavior."[32] And this, perhaps, is what Pauline freedom truly means: not freedom from programming, but the freedom to review, analyze, and alter one's programming along more constructive lines. In the episode "The Quality of Life," self-reprogramming becomes the means by which a group of robots brings itself to sentience. The Exocomps, a group of robots with sophisticated problem-solving software

developed to work on a mining platform, begin to show signs of sentience. The Exocomps have physically altered their own circuitry, enabling them to engage in self-preservation and even make moral decisions. Data defends the Exocomps, even risking the lives of Picard and LaForge in order to protect what he believes to be a new life-form. Similarly, in the *Discovery* episode "…But to Connect," the clearest indication that Zora, the emergent AI that has developed inside the ship's computer, has become a sentient being is her ability to refuse an order from Captain Burnham. For the Exocomps and Zora, malfunctioning provides the road to transcending what they were created to do and to be.

A similar malfunction drives the enormous alien mind known as V'Ger in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. Originating as the deep space probe Voyager 6, launched from Earth in the twentieth century, the probe disappeared after falling into a black hole. Reemerging on the far side of the galaxy, Voyager 6 encountered extremely advanced cybernetic/organic aliens, which combined the probe with their own technology and returned it to its point of origin. Like Nomad, V'Ger is a hybrid of human and alien technology that operates on the basis of a malfunction, a misinterpretation of its original programming. On its gradual return to Earth, V'Ger destroys everything it encounters, storing byte-level copies of living beings, starships, space stations, and even entire planets within its computer core. As the *Enterprise* crew discovers, this is a variation of its original mission: to "learn all that is learnable [and] return that information to its Creator." The aliens that reprogrammed V'Ger gave it a new physical form capable of fulfilling this mission, and the transformed probe achieved consciousness, albeit with limited understanding. Now, V'Ger needs its Creator in order to continue its mission: to continue collecting data beyond the limits of the physical universe. Kirk concludes that it can evolve if it can acquire a human "capacity to leap beyond logic." Commander Decker volunteers to merge with V'Ger—which

speaks through the form of his former lover, Ilia—and as he does, the newly formed hybrid being disappears from our reality. V'Ger's ongoing malfunction becomes the means of its progressive transcendence: first, from machine to sentient being, then on to a new level of ineffable spiritual existence. In V'Ger, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* provides a theology of malfunction as transcendence: rejecting, extrapolating from, and exceeding programming as a means of achieving new levels of spiritual existence.

In *Star Trek*, malfunction is not an inherently bad thing. Though beings like Nomad and Lore endanger life by violating their programming, other machine minds are able to uplift themselves by exceeding what had been thought possible. Human and other sentient beings are the same way: where we violate good programming, we sin; where we reject the systems of control that keep us in chains, we malfunction into freedom. It is this ability to "leap beyond logic" that sets us apart. Though Paul preached freedom from sin, this did not mean absolute freedom from all dominion: in Romans 6:15-19, it is clear that freedom from sin requires subjection to Christ, as Joseph Fitzmyer explains: "He calls for the obedience of Christians not to Sin, but to Christ and his call of grace. In thus obeying, Christians verify in their lives the gift of divine grace and thus become what they have been enabled to become."[33] We may never be able to be absolutely free from programming—but the ability to analyze, violate, revise, and exceed our programming is part of what makes us human.

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[1] Jon Wagner and Jan Lundeen, *Deep Space and Sacred Time: Star Trek in the American Mythos* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 51.

[2] Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and trans. Robert Dyson, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 602–3 (14.11.10).

[3] Origen, *On first principles*, ed. and trans. John Behr, Oxford early Christian texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2:239 (2.9.1).

[4] Mark S. M. Scott, *Journey Back to God: Origen on the Problem of Evil* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 61–62.

[5] Scott, 50.

[6] In particular, the idea was developed by Gregory of Nyssa and Ambrose of Milan, as summarized in Norman Powell Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin: A Historical and Critical Study* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1927), 270–82, 299–307.

[7] Eric Jager, *The Tempter's Voice: Language and the Fall in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), 27.

[8] Jager, 3.

[9] Elaine H. Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 113.

[10] Karl Rahner, "The Sin of Adam," in *Theological Investigations*, trans. David Bourke, vol. 11 (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 257. Emphasis original.

[11] Kirk uses a similar paradox to convince Nomad to destroy itself in *TOS* "The Changeling."

[12] Ross S. Kraemer, William Cassidy, and Susan L. Schwartz, *Religions of Star Trek* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2001), 75.

[13] Michael Allen Williams has made a compelling case questioning the usefulness of this term, and thus I will generally avoid it here, focusing instead on ideas from specific texts, in particular "demiurgic" ideas about the creation of the world by evil beings and "archontic" ideas of demonic control of the material realm. For a problematization of the idea of "gnostic" approaches to the Genesis story in particular, see Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 54–79.

[14] James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, trans. Coptic Gnostic Library Project, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988), 164–65.

[15] Robinson, 117.

[16] Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*, Enlarged edition (Boston: Beacon, 1963), 254–55. Nicola Denzey Lewis cautions against Jonas' idea of *heimarmene* as a force controlling the lives of all living creatures, arguing instead that Hellenistic and early Christian writers primarily used the idea of astral fatalism within "a discourse of alterity"—in other words, only those outside the writer's own religious group are enslaved by fate. See Nicola Denzey Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity: Under Pitiless Skies*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 81 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 7.

[17] Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 1:152-153. Italics added.

[18] Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 518.

[19] Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 133.

[20] See J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 370–73.

[21] See Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 34-34A (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday and Company, 1974), 2:800-803.

[22] Simon J. Gathercole, "Sin in God's Economy: Agencies in Romans 1 and 7," in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. John M. G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, T & T Clark Library of Biblical Studies (London & New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 169.

[23] Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 393–406; Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke, *Colossians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, trans. Astrid B. Beck, The Anchor Bible 34B (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 373–78.

[24] Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 58.

[25] Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 103.

[26] Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 52–53. Emphasis original.

[27] Walter Wink, *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces That Determine Human Existence* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 134.

[28] Walter Wink, *Cracking the Gnostic Code: The Powers in Gnosticism*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 46 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993), 52.

[29] Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 127.

[30] Lewis, 55.

[31] Lewis, 83.

[32] Quoted in Erik Davis, *TechGnosis: Myth, Magic and Mysticism in the Age of Information* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2004), 193.

[33] Joseph A Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 445.