

## CHAPTER EIGHT

ENTHYMEME AND PICTURE IN THE  
*GOSPEL OF THOMAS*

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In many sections of early Christian writings, assertions do not simply stand alongside other assertions. Either rationales support them or conclusions follow them. In rhetorical terms, this can appropriately be called rhetology, namely, expressible (*rhētos*)<sup>1</sup> reasoning (*logos*). The presence of rationales and conclusions indicates that the speaker/author is engaged in some kind of reasoning about the world and the things and processes in it. Aristotle used the term “enthymeme” for this kind of reasoning, giving the example: “There is no man who is really free, for he is the slave of either wealth or fortune” (*Rhet.* 2.21.6 [1394B]).

A special challenge for interpretation of enthymemes is to interpret the function of pictures in them. Pictorial narration on its own can appropriately be called rhetography, expressible graphic images.<sup>2</sup> In rhetography, rationales regularly function as “explanations” rather than “arguments.” An instance of this is present in *Gos. Thom.* 57:1–4:

Jesus said, “The kingdom of the Father is like a person who had [good] seed. <sup>2</sup>His enemy came at night and sowed weeds among the good seed. <sup>3</sup>The person did not let the workers pull up the weeds, but said to them, ‘No, lest you go to pull up the weeds and pull up the wheat along with them.’ <sup>4</sup>For on the day of the harvest the weeds will be conspicuous, and will be pulled up and burned.”

The assertion in v. 1 creates two pictures: (1) a picture waiting to be clarified (the kingdom of the Father) and (2) a well-known picture (a person with good seed). The well-known picture continues with a

<sup>1</sup> See the “*rhē-*” words in Polybius, *Hist.* 32.6.7 (to give a stated [*rhēton*] answer); Plato, *Theaet.* 205d, 205e (syllables are expressible [*rhētai*]); *Epistles* 341c (subject matter that admits of verbal expression [*rhēton*]), 341d (things which can be stated [*rhēta*]).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the term “theography” in Jack Miles, *God: A Biography* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996), 12.

pictorial sequence that makes it a narrative: after the person sows good seed, an enemy comes and sows weeds, etc. The rationale in v. 4 of this logion explains an action in the narrative sequence: “why” the person did not let the workers pull up the weeds. The rationale, then, is an “explanation” in the context of a description, rather than a major or minor premise in a syllogistic argument. In other words, the rhetorology is explanatory rather than argumentative. “The day of the harvest” in the explanation, however, is a topos.<sup>3</sup> This means that it is a social, cultural, and/or ideological “location of thought.” As a social, cultural, and/or ideological phenomenon, it is intertwined with multiple networks of meanings. In early Christianity, this topos exists interactively with concepts of the “end of time.”

An assertion and a rationale present argumentative rhetorology only if the rationale attempts to prove “that” something is the case.<sup>4</sup> The rationale in *Gos. Thom.* 57:4 does not attempt to prove that the person did not let the workers pull up the weeds; it only explains why. When a rationale is an explanation,<sup>5</sup> it regularly is a constituent in the presentation of conventional wisdom. The explanatory rationale provides a context or location of thought that may contribute to an argument that tries to convince someone to draw a specific conclusion.

In contrast to *Gos. Thom.* 57, the parable in *Gos. Thom.* 20:2–4 is a description without an explanation:

The disciples said to Jesus, “Tell us what the kingdom of heaven is like.”<sup>2</sup> He said to them, “It is like a mustard seed.<sup>3</sup> <It> is the tiniest of all seeds,<sup>4</sup> but when it falls on prepared soil, it produces a large plant and becomes a shelter for birds of heaven.”

“A description consists of one or more statements that, taken together, cause a certain picture to appear in the mind of a reader or listener.”<sup>6</sup> While a description is neither an explanation nor an argument, it may also present well-known information that can function as grounds

<sup>3</sup> For basic insights into a socio-rhetorical approach to topoi (plural of topos), see Vernon K. Robbins, “The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the Gospel of Mark,” in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament* (ed. Duane F. Watson; SBLSymS 14; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 11–15.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick J. Hurley, *A Concise Introduction to Logic* (2d ed.; Belmont: Wadsworth, 1985), 17.

<sup>5</sup> An explanation contains two distinct components: the explanandum and the explanans. “The explanandum is the statement that describes the event or phenomenon to be explained, and the explanans is the statement or group of statements that purport to do the explaining” (Hurley, *Logic*, 17).

<sup>6</sup> Hurley, *Logic*, 12.

(a case/minor premise) for drawing a particular conclusion. As in *Gos. Thom.* 57:1–4, so in 20:1–4, the argument lies in the assertion of rhetographical similarity between the kingdom of heaven and the narrative description.

Much early Christian discourse moves beyond a presentation of descriptions and explanations into a presentation of arguments. *Gos. Thom.* 54 is an instance of an assertion with a rationale that presents an argument: “Jesus said, ‘Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.’”

In this instance the rationale presents grounds for believing the claim that the poor are blessed. In other words, the saying contains argumentative rhetology. At the same time, the rhetography is general rather than specific. The kingdom of heaven, a generalized picture, belongs to the generalized picture of the poor. The assertion and the rationale use generalized pictures to argue for a conviction that most people would not usually hold (that the poor possess a special benefit in the form of the kingdom of heaven).<sup>7</sup> An interpreter may begin to wonder, then, if argumentative rationales that occur in the context of general pictures and explanatory rationales more naturally occur with specific pictures.

When argumentative rationales occur in discourse, they can be displayed as syllogisms and are regularly called “enthymemes.” The Greek noun “enthymeme” has a substantive relation to “thinking,” “reasoning,” “pondering,” “imagining,” and “holding a conviction.”<sup>8</sup> The dynamic function of enthymemes recently has been explained by Jeffrey Walker:

An “enthymeme” is, on the one hand, a complex, quasi-syllogistic structure of inference and affect that constitutes the substance and persuasive force of an argument *as perceived by an audience*. On the other hand, an “enthymeme” will typically and perhaps most forcefully appear in *discourse* as an emphatic, structural/stylistic turn that caps an *exetasis*,<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, “Pragmatic Relations as a Criterion for Authentic Sayings,” *Forum* 1:3 (1985): 35–63.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Matt 1:20; 9:4; 12:25; Acts 10:19; 17:29; Heb 4:12; see Anders Eriksson, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof: Pauline Argumentation in 1 Corinthians* (ConBNT 29; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1998), 41–43.

<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 134 (cf. 176–77), defines *exetasis* as “the skeptical ‘examination’ of fissures, contradictions, and inconsistencies in any discourse, in order to refute it, argue its opposite, or to open an alternative position.”

gives the inferential/affective substance of a particular realization with a particular salience within a particular discursive moment, and thereby shapes its audience's perception of (and responses to) just what "the argument" is. Ultimately, the enthymeme is both these things at once and as such is the "body of persuasion."<sup>10</sup>

It is important to notice the repetition of the term "particular" in this definition: "an 'enthymeme' . . . gives the inferential/affective substance of a particular realization with a particular salience within a particular discursive moment." Enthymemes, it would appear, interrelate the general, the specific, the argumentative, and the explanatory in very particular ways for very particular purposes. In the present essay, sayings in early Christian gospels that contain assertions accompanied by argumentative rationales are called "enthymematic logia." These logia exhibit social, cultural, ideological, eschatological, christological, and theological argumentation by early Christians.<sup>11</sup>

The *Gospel of Thomas* contains an inner network of enthymematic logia built upon conventional Mediterranean wisdom. This means that some enthymematic logia in *Thomas* contain descriptions and/or explanations as cases or grounds for arguments. Many logia that contain descriptions or explanations are part of the "bedrock of tradition" in the variant forms of Q, synoptic, and Thomasine tradition.<sup>12</sup> One of the characteristics of this tradition is to present pictorial explanations and descriptions in a negative form, either as negative assertions or as questions expecting a negative answer. In other words, instead of presenting Jesus as saying "Whoever lights a lamp puts it on a lampstand," the tradition presents Jesus as saying either "No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel, but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light" (Luke 11:33 par.)

<sup>10</sup> Walker, *Rhetoric*, 184.

<sup>11</sup> Burton L. Mack and Vernon K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (FF: Literary Facets; Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1989); Robbins, "Pragmatic Relations"; *idem*, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996); *idem*, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996); *idem*, "From Enthymeme to Theology in Luke 11:1–13," in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson* (ed. R. P. Thompson and T. E. Phillips; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 191–214; *idem*, "Argumentative Textures in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation," in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts* (ed. A. Eriksson, T. H. Olbricht, and W. Übelacker; Emory Studies in Early Christianity; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002), 27–65.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (FF: Reference Series; Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1993), 225.

or “Is a lamp brought in to be put under a bushel, or under a bed, and not on a stand?” (Mark 4:21). One of the goals of these specific pictorial descriptions or explanations is to introduce either a positive or negative “implication.” In the realm of logic, an implication is a conclusion implied from premises.<sup>13</sup> In rhetorical terms, an implication regularly takes the form of exhortation toward a certain kind of action or an appeal not to engage in a certain kind of action. A positive implication, then, takes the form of persuasion to do something (protrepsis) and a negative implication takes the form of dissuasion from doing something (apotrepsis).<sup>14</sup> *Gos. Thom.* 33 uses two specific pictures to present a positive implication (protrepsis) in its presentation about the lamp:

Jesus said, [Implication] “What you will hear in your ear, in the other ear proclaim from your rooftops. [Explanation (Case/Grounds)] <sup>2</sup>For no one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, nor does one put it in a hidden place. <sup>3</sup>Rather, one puts it on a stand so that all who come and go will see its light.”

Jesus’ statement to his disciples that they should proclaim from their rooftops what they will hear in their ear is an initial positive picture that contains an implication grounded in the explanation about the lamp. The reasoning here is inductive, from case to implication and from specific picture to specific picture. The explanation presents conventional wisdom in a negative form that gives it rhetorical force. There is nothing counter to conventional wisdom in the saying. Its formulation in a negative manner provides an opportunity to introduce various negative alternatives<sup>15</sup> in a manner that invites elaboration of the concepts it articulates.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Hurley, *Logic*, 306.

<sup>14</sup> Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.3.5; George A. Kennedy, *Aristotle On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991), 49.

<sup>15</sup> E.g., not under a jar (Luke 8:16) or bed (Mark 4:21/Luke 8:16) or in a cellar (Luke 11:33). For a discussion of negative alternatives, see Vernon K. Robbins, “A Comparison of Mishnah Gittin 1:1–2:2 and James 2:1–13 from a Perspective of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Elaboration,” in *Mishnah and the Social Formation of the Early Rabbinic Guild: A Socio-Rhetorical Approach* (ed. Jack N. Lightstone; Studies in Christianity and Judaism/Études sur le christianisme et le judaïsme 11; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press for the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion/Corporation Canadienne des Sciences Religieuses, 2002), 201–16.

<sup>16</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, “Rhetorical Argument about Lamps and Light in Early Christian Gospels,” in *Context: Festschrift til Peder Johan Borgen* (ed. P. W. Bökman and R. E. Kristiansen; Relief: Publikasjoner Utgitt av Religionsvitenskapelig Institutt, Universitetet i Trondheim 24; Trondheim: Tapir, 1987), 177–95.

In the midst of negative formulations that present conventional wisdom, Q, synoptic tradition, and the *Gospel of Thomas* contain generalized assertions that invert and divert conventional wisdom. An example is the assertion that “nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known” (Q 12:2). Here the pictures are general, rather than specific. Conventional wisdom asserts that some things that are hidden will be lost and never found. This saying inverts conventional wisdom, perhaps through analogy with a person’s inability to hide his or her deceptions or evildoing, which has given rise to sayings like, “Your sins will find you out.” The things hidden, therefore, may not be specific, concrete objects like money or pearls, but intentions or desires. In this essay, wisdom that inverts conventional wisdom is called “contrawisdom.” With certain topics, Q, synoptic tradition, and *Thomas* move away from conventional wisdom into contrawisdom. At these points an interpreter sees aspects of the ideological texture of this tradition that set it in opposition to conventional Mediterranean wisdom.

For all the gospels, whether their enthymematic formulations are presented in positive terms, negative terms, or in terms of contrawisdom, they become productive by means of interaction among deductive, inductive, and abductive social, cultural, and ideological reasoning.<sup>17</sup> Most people are familiar with deductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning proceeds according to a standard that “an argument is good only if the conclusion follows *necessarily* from the premises.”<sup>18</sup> Contrary to Aristotle, who argued that deductive arguments only proceed from the general to the particular, “there are deductive arguments that proceed from the general to the general, from the particular to the particular, and from the particular to the general, as well as from the general to the particular.”<sup>19</sup> The key is that in deductive arguments “the conclusion follows necessarily and with complete certainty from the premises.”<sup>20</sup> This means that the general premise (“rule” or “warrant”) in a deductive argument contains, implicitly or explicitly, the assertions made both in the minor premise (“case” or “grounds”) and

<sup>17</sup> Richard L. Lanigan, “From Enthymeme to Abduction: The Classical Law of Logic and the Postmodern Rule of Rhetoric,” in *Recovering Pragmatism’s Voice: The Classical Tradition, Rorty, and the Philosophy of Communication* (eds. L. Langsdorf and A. R. Smith; Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1995), 49–70; Robbins, “Enthymeme.”

<sup>18</sup> Hurley, *Logic*, 25.

<sup>19</sup> Hurley, *Logic*, 30.

<sup>20</sup> Hurley, *Logic*, 29.

the conclusion (“result” or “claim”).<sup>21</sup> Thus, deduction does not generate any new information; it simply clarifies or helps one to find information accurately.

In contrast to deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning is a means by which we get new knowledge. Inductive reasoning moves to new knowledge by following a standard of probability rather than certainty; therefore, the inductive standard is that “an argument is good only if the conclusion follows *probably* from the premises.”<sup>22</sup> An initial way to think about induction is reasoning from specific pictures to a general statement. An inductive argument presents claims (results) that enlarge upon and go beyond the evidence. Nancey Murphy presents the following example:

Fox number 1 is red; fox number 2 is red; fox number 3 is red. . . . Therefore all foxes are red. This is induction at its simplest. . . . Inductive reasoning is essential for expanding our knowledge. Its drawback is that it does so at the expense of the comforting certitude of deductive reasoning—we can never be sure that the next fox will not be grey.<sup>23</sup>

While Hurley discusses only four kinds of deductive syllogisms (see n. 18), he discusses six kinds of inductive syllogisms: (1) prediction; (2) argument from analogy; (3) inductive generalization; (4) argument from authority; (5) argument based on signs; and (6) causal inference.<sup>24</sup> In each instance, the standard is “probability”: the conclusion in some way moves beyond the premises, which are somehow specific, to something that is less familiar or that little is known about. In induction, the reasoning has specific warrants and grounds that make it reasonable to think that the conclusion is probable.

Still another means of moving toward new knowledge is through abductive reasoning, “that form of reasoning in which a recognizable similarity between A and B proposes the possibility of further similarity.”<sup>25</sup> Abductive reasoning draws an insight in the context of

<sup>21</sup> Nancey C. Murphy, *Reasoning & Rhetoric in Religion* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 35; Hurley, *Logic*, 26–27, presents four kinds of deductive syllogisms: (1) argument from definition; (2) categorical syllogisms (all . . . no . . .); (3) hypothetical syllogisms (if . . . then . . .); and (4) disjunctive syllogisms (either . . . or . . .).

<sup>22</sup> Hurley, *Logic*, 25.

<sup>23</sup> Murphy, *Reasoning*, 35.

<sup>24</sup> Hurley, *Logic*, 28–29.

<sup>25</sup> Gregory Bateson and Mary C. Bateson, *Angels Fear: Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1987), 206; cf. Lanigan, “Enthymeme,” 60.

similarity a person observes among phenomena in different fields. There is disagreement among interpreters whether the rhetor or inquirer “invents” or “discovers” similarity. Richard L. Lanigan proposes that “by shock, question, puzzlement, surprise, and the like, the rhetor or inquirer *discovers similarity*” in a context of deductive and inductive reasoning.<sup>26</sup> In the words of C. S. Peirce:

The abductive suggestion comes to us like a flash. It is an act of insight, although of extremely fallible insight. It is true that the different elements of the hypothesis were in our minds before; but it is the idea of putting together [metonymy] what we had never before dreamed of putting together which flashes the new suggestion [metaphor] before our contemplation.<sup>27</sup>

“Putting together what we had never before dreamed of putting together” is in many ways a key to understanding abductive reasoning. When the context of reasoning is a deductive-inductive cycle of argumentation, abduction regularly is a matter of putting the case (grounds or minor premise) together with the result (claim or conclusion) in a way that discovers a new insight. This new combination of case and result becomes a case (grounds or minor premise) that creates a new result (claim or conclusion).<sup>28</sup> We will see instances of this in the enthymematic logia that stand among the first nineteen logia in

<sup>26</sup> Lanigan, “Enthymeme,” 59. For an alternative approach to abduction, see L. Gregory Bloomquist, “A Possible Direction for Providing Programmatic Correlation of Textures in Socio-Rhetorical Analysis,” in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible* (ed. S. E. Porter and D. L. Stamps; JSNTSS 195; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press), 74–95.

<sup>27</sup> C. S. Peirce in Lanigan, “Enthymeme,” 66 [Lanigan’s insertions].

<sup>28</sup> See Lanigan, “Enthymeme,” 61: “On Sabre’s account . . . , the abduction creates as its conclusion (1: claim) a hypothesis [All S are M], which supplies [→] the *minor premise* (2: data) in a rhetor’s deduction. This judgment is based upon the *major premise* (3: warrant) of the rhetor’s deduction supplied [←] by the conclusion [All M are P] of an induction (4: backing). The deductive *conclusion* [All S are P] is susceptible to material error (5: reservation) since (a) it has already functioned as the all important minor premise in the abduction—a premise [All S are P] intuitively (non-logically) generated in shock, question, puzzlement or assertion (6: qualifier), and (b) since the major premise of the deduction and the abduction are *identical* [All M are P]. Note that the deduction relies on the claim that M and P are *identical*, hence the hypothesis that P *either* explains the meaning of S *or* not. By contrast, the abduction relies on the claim that M and P are *similar*, hence the hypothesis that M explains the meaning of *both S and P*, as Sabre correctly notes for the wrong reasons. The right reasons involve a contemporary understanding of *tropic logic* as it emerges in rhetoric, not science” (referring to Ru Michael Sabre, “Peirce’s Abductive Argument and the Enthymeme,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 36 [1990]: 365–69).



the *Gospel of Thomas*. Since the abductive process is perhaps the most difficult aspect of this essay to grasp, we will postpone trying to explain it further until we have explored some other logia that present deductive-inductive reasoning. When we analyze abductive reasoning, we will see that it does not simply follow an inductive-deductive cycle of argumentation but “leaps” imaginatively to distinctive insights by perceiving or inventing similarity among data in a number of fields. In the context of reasoning from conventional wisdom about hosts and guests, friends, fathers and sons, patrons and clients, plants, animals, and good people and bad people, abductive reasoning discovers and invents special insights that create a rich system of transcendent understanding about the nature of God, God’s son, God’s world, and the joys and responsibilities of being a child of God in the world.<sup>29</sup>

Interwoven into the conventional social and cultural wisdom in the *Gospel of Thomas* is a thick network of enthymematic logia that exhibit not only abductive reasoning but contrawisdom. Using pictorial images from conventional Mediterranean society and culture, these enthymematic logia invert and divert conventional wisdom in ways that are mysterious, unusual, or even bizarre to the ordinary reader. This is not accidental. The purpose of the sayings is to create an environment that takes people on a search for meanings that lie beyond conventional understanding into a realm that produces wonder and inducts people into a special kingdom of knowledge that makes them royalty among other people of understanding. *Gos. Thom.* 2:1–4 straightforwardly presents the program for this activity:

Jesus said, “Let one who seeks not stop seeking until one finds. <sup>2</sup>When one finds, one will be disturbed. <sup>3</sup>When one is disturbed, one will marvel, <sup>4</sup>and will reign over all.”

This logion refers directly to the shock, question, puzzlement, and surprise referred to in the discussion of abductive reasoning. In fact, the *Gospel of Thomas* introduces a sequence of pictures: (1) finding, (2) being disturbed, (3) marveling, (4) reigning over all. Seeking to understand leads one not simply to conventional wisdom based on deductive-inductive reasoning but to a special narrative sequence that leads to secret, hidden knowledge and power. The narrative sequence

<sup>29</sup> Robbins, “Enthymeme”; *idem*, “Argumentative Textures.”

presupposes abductive reasoning, namely leaps of insight that disturb conventional wisdom and introduce unusual knowledge known only by certain people—those who are members of a “royal” circle who, because of their special understanding, rule over all other people.

The procedure of this essay is first to examine two enthymematic logia in the *Gospel of Thomas* that build upon conventional social and cultural wisdom in the Mediterranean world. These logia are variants of Q and synoptic tradition. After the analysis of logia containing conventional enthymematic reasoning, the essay displays eight enthymematic logia that occur in the context of the first nineteen logia in *Thomas*. These logia in the opening progressive texture of *Thomas* exhibit in an especially dramatic manner how Thomasine tradition builds its point of view on contrawisdom. Many of them use abductive reasoning in addition to deductive and inductive reasoning.

### 1. *Enthymematic Logia Exhibiting Conventional Wisdom*

This section contains an analysis of two enthymematic logia in *Thomas* oriented theoretically, at least, toward all people in the world. The purpose of this section is to introduce a procedure for analyzing and interpreting enthymematic logia that contain negative formulations. In the overall text of the *Gospel of Thomas*, universal enthymemes establish primary polarities within the Thomasine view of the world: good plant/bad plant, good person/bad person, good seed/bad seed, one/two. The term “universal” is used here in the sense of reasoning that purports to apply to every person everywhere. In other words, these logia do not contain “you” or some other formulation that directs the reasoning toward a limited group of people. In addition, these logia are pictorial in a manner that allows almost any person to envision them.

Universal enthymemes in the *Gospel of Thomas* are part of the enthymematic network of wisdom that *Thomas* shares with Q and synoptic material. These enthymemes do not contain startling information or inverted modes of reasoning. Rather, they contain negative formulations that use conventional Mediterranean wisdom forcefully toward their rhetorical goals.

*Gospel of Thomas 45:1–4*

This logion argues that grapes and figs are analogous to good people, and thorn trees and thistles are analogous to bad people. Here the pictures of the vegetation are specific enough to be powerful and clear, but general enough to be effectively universal. Any region in the world with viticulture as part of its food source is ready for the pictorial reasoning in this logion. The reasoning moves from plants with some particular specificity to more generalized people. Bad people are like thorn trees and thistles. They do not produce nourishing fruit but evil actions and speech. Good people are like grapes and figs; they produce nourishing actions and speech. There is no attempt to present reasoning about more specific people, like slaves, rulers, householders, or the like. Rather, the logion moves from generally specific vegetation to people in two generalized categories (bad/good):

Jesus said, “Grapes are not harvested from thorn trees, nor are figs gathered from thistles, for they yield no fruit. <sup>2</sup>A good person brings forth good from the storehouse; <sup>3</sup>a bad person brings forth evil things from the corrupt storehouse in the heart, and says evil things. <sup>4</sup>For from the abundance of the heart this person brings forth evil things.”

The reasoning in this logion works inductively from the pictorial case that thorn trees and thistles yield no fruit (but grapevines and fig trees do), and this inductive reasoning is applied by analogy to people who bring good or bad things from a storehouse (where food, twigs, etc. can be kept until they are used). An inductive display of the reasoning in the logion looks as follows:

*Explanation (Case/Ground/Minor Premise):* Grapes are not harvested from thorn trees, nor are figs gathered from thistles, for they yield no fruit.

*Analogy (Result/Claim):* A good person brings forth good from the storehouse; a bad person brings forth evil things from the corrupt storehouse in the heart, and says evil things. For from the abundance of the heart the evil person brings forth evil things.

[*Major Premise (Rule/Warrant):* (Unexpressed)]

[*Protrepis/Apotrepis (Implication):* (Unexpressed)]

The reasoning from analogy in this logion is inductive,<sup>30</sup> since it requires reasoning beyond viticulture to human culture in a manner

<sup>30</sup> Hurley, *Logic*, 28.

that is probable but not certain. Since nourishing fruit is gathered from plants like grapevines and fig trees, rather than thorns and thistles which yield no fruit, by analogy (induction) good people are like grapevines and fig trees and bad people are like thorn trees and thistles. Bad people produce evil rather than good things from the abundance of their hearts, much like thorn trees and thistles produce thorns and thistles rather than fruit. The *Thomas* logion does not express either a warrant (major premise or rule) or an implication (protrepsis or apotrepsis). Rather, it expresses two explanations in support of the reasoning: (1) for they yield no fruit; (2) for from the abundance of the hearth the evil person brings forth evil things.

The reasoning about grapes and figs in *Gos. Thom.* 45 comes directly out of the environment of *Q* sayings. The variation between *Gos. Thom.* 45:1, Luke 6:44b and Matt 7:16b displays well the oral variation that exists among *Q/Thomas* sayings that express this conventional wisdom in some kind of negative formulation:<sup>31</sup>

<i>Gos. Thom.</i> 45:1	Luke 6:44b	Matthew 7:16b
Grapes are not harvested from thorn trees, nor are figs gathered from thistles.	Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.	Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles?

*Gos. Thom.* 45:1 arranges the relation of grapes, thorns, figs, and thistles like the saying in Matt 7:16b, but its form is not interrogative but declarative, like Luke 6:44b. This is a natural relationship of sayings to one another in a context of oral transmission. It is noticeable that none of them simply contains a straightforward assertion that grapes are harvested from grapevines and figs from fig trees. Rather, the sayings gain their rhetorical force and their potential for expansion and elaboration through their use of the negative topic of thorns and thistles. A display of the full versions of the *Thomas/Luke/Matthew* reasoning looks as follows, and here we see an interactive oral/written environment of relationships:

<sup>31</sup> Risto Uro, “‘Secondary Orality’ in the *Gospel of Thomas*? Logion 14 as a Test Case,” *Forum* 9:3–4 (1993): 305–29 (reprinted in *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* [ed. Risto Uro; Studies of the New Testament and Its World; Edinburgh: Clark, 1998], 8–32); Vernon K. Robbins, “Rhetorical Composition and Sources in the *Gospel of Thomas*,” *SBL Seminar Papers, 1997* (SBLSP 36; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 86–114.

<i>Gos. Thom.</i> 45:1–4	Luke 6:43–45	Matthew 7:16–20	Matthew 12:33–35
	<p><i>Explanation (Rule):</i>  <sup>43</sup> No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit,  <sup>44a</sup> for each tree is known by its own fruit.</p>	<p><i>Warning (Implication):</i>  <sup>15</sup> Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.  <sup>16a</sup> You will know them by their fruit.  <sup>20</sup> Thus you will know them by their fruits.</p>	<p><i>Explanation (Implication):</i>  <sup>33</sup> Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.</p>
<p><i>Explanation (Case):</i>  <sup>1</sup> Grapes are not harvested from thorn trees, nor are figs gathered from thistles, for they yield no fruit.</p>	<p><i>Description (Case):</i>  <sup>44b</sup> Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.</p>	<p><i>Analogy (Case):</i>  <sup>16b</sup> Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles?  <sup>17</sup> In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.  <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.</p>	<p><i>Analogous Explanation (Case):</i>  <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup> The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure.</p>
<p><i>Analogous Explanation (Result):</i>  <sup>2</sup> A good person brings forth good from the storehouse; <sup>3</sup> a bad person brings forth evil things from the corrupt storehouse in the heart, and says evil things.  <sup>4</sup> For from the abundance of the heart a bad person brings forth evil things.</p>	<p><i>Analogous Explanation (Result):</i>  <sup>45</sup> The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.</p>	<p><i>Description (Result):</i>  <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.</p>	<p><i>Explanation (Result):</i>  <sup>36</sup> I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.</p>

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*Gos. Thom.* 45:1–4    Luke 6:43–45    Matthew 7:16–20    Matthew 12:33–35

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*Illustration**(Implication):*

<sup>46</sup> Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I tell you? <sup>47</sup> I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. <sup>48</sup> That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. <sup>49</sup> But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house.

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First, this display shows how a variety of rules and implications may be generated from or attracted to a negative inductive case. Luke 6:43, Matt 7:15–16, 20, 46–49, and Matt 12:33 display rules and implications. The generation or attraction of variant positive and negative rules and implications leads naturally to different emphases within the elaboration of the reasoning. Second, the Matthew 7 version contains aspects of both the Lukan and Thomasine version. Matt 7:16b, 18 combines a variant version of *Gos. Thom.* 45:1a with

a variant version of Luke 6:43. This must have occurred through use by Luke, *Thomas*, and Matthew of Q material in an interactive oral/written environment. Third, each gospel develops the reasoning in a variant manner. Luke develops the reasoning in a christological manner: in Luke 6:46–47, 49 Jesus speaks as the authoritative Lord whose words must be obeyed or else calamity will come. Matthew develops the reasoning agonistically in an environment of the end-time: on the one hand in relation to false prophets (7:15–20) and on the other hand through challenge-riposte (12:24, 34, 36–37) that uses the day of judgment as a special means of shaming Pharisees (12:36). *Thomas*, in contrast, places the logion in a section that begins with the disciples asking Jesus, “Who are you to say these things to us?” (43:1) and ends with Jesus telling them, “If they ask you, ‘What is the evidence of your Father in you?’ say to them, ‘It is motion and rest.’” (49:3). In other words, Jesus answers their question by diverting the discussion from himself to them and people they are like (Jews [43:3], people who blaspheme [44], bad people [45], people from Adam to John the Baptist [46], people who try to serve two masters [47], people who make peace with each other [48], people who are alone and chosen [49], and people who ask them where they come from [50]). The entire section in *Thomas*, then, engages the reader in a series of comparisons of various people with disciples who wonder who Jesus is to say these things to them. In the midst of the comparisons, reasoning about grapes, figs, thorns, and thistles is part of an argument from analogy that explains the nature not only of good and bad people but of disciples who do and do not understand who Jesus is. But this understanding of Jesus is not so much christological or eschatological as it is cosmological and epistemological. As we will see below, in *Thomas* Jesus knows he is from the place of light. The disciples also are from the place of light, but they do not understand this. Jesus’ coming from the place of light, then, is not exceptional. Only his knowledge of it is.

*Gospel of Thomas 47:1–5*

The second logion after *Gos. Thom.* 45 contains a series of six instances of pictorial, conventional wisdom:

Jesus said, “A person cannot mount two horses or bend two bows.  
<sup>2</sup>And a servant cannot serve two masters, or that servant will honor

the one and offend the other. <sup>3</sup>No person drinks aged wine and immediately desires to drink new wine. <sup>4</sup>New wine is not poured into aged wineskins, lest they break, and aged wine is not poured into a new wineskin, lest it spoil. <sup>5</sup>An old patch is not sewn onto a new garment, for there would be a tear.”

The reasoning in this logion is based on unsuccessful experiences in the world. Again, the pictures are specific enough to be powerful, but general enough to be effectively universal. The pictures present descriptions and explanations in a negative mode. Like *Gos. Thom.* 45, the reasoning presents negative statements, some of which are supported by rationales and some of which are not. In the inductive reasoning in *Gos. Thom.* 47, some negative cases are descriptions with no supportive statement, and some are explanations with rationales. Four of the six instances in *Gos. Thom.* 47 are explanations: (2) serving two masters; (4) putting new wine in old wineskins; (5) putting old wine in new wineskins; and (6) putting an old patch on a new garment. The instances of the two horses and bows (1) and the person not desiring new wine (3) are simply descriptions. A noticeable feature of the progression is the absence of argumentation that evokes implications. We noticed in the analysis of *Gos. Thom.* 45 and its parallels that negative cases regularly generate or attract rules and implications. In fact, in all instances parallel to *Gos. Thom.* 45 rules and implications play an important role in the amplification or elaboration of the unit. In *Gos. Thom.* 47 the initial negative description about two horses and two bows provides the context for four negative explanations and one more negative description. It is noticeable that the descriptions and explanations in *Gos. Thom.* 47 do not generate amplification or elaboration of the topics. The reason may be that the topic of new and old does not have special importance for Thomasine tradition. That which is new and that which is old is important to redemptive wisdom only if people consider the sequence of history to be run by redemptive forces. Within a context of redemptive history, either that which is old is better because it was not yet corrupted by certain events, or that which is new is better because it replaces certain imperfect things in the past. If redemptive wisdom is more interested in cosmological and epistemological issues than the sequence of history, the categories of new and old simply are ways of talking about two different kinds of things. This seems to be the case in *Gos. Thom.* 47. The new and the old do not hold the potential for special insights into the process of redemption; thus the logion progresses through the entire series without generating



any rules (warrants) or implications that give rise to amplification and elaboration of the new and the old.

As the topic of two incompatible things unfolds in *Gos. Thom.* 47 beyond the first instance, which is distinctive to *Thomas*, the reasoning about serving two masters exists in variant form in Q tradition:

<i>Gos. Thom.</i> 47:2	Luke 16:13	Matthew 6:24
<i>1st Explanation (Negative Case):</i> A servant cannot serve two masters, or that servant will honor the one and offend the other.	<i>Explanation (Negative Case):</i> No slave can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other.  <i>Analogy (Result):</i> You cannot serve God and wealth.	<i>Rule (Warrant):</i> No one can serve two masters;  <i>Description (Case):</i> for a slave will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other.  <i>Analogy (Result):</i> You cannot serve God and wealth.

In Q, the tradition either in the form of an explanation or a rule and description about slaves and masters becomes the basis for an inductive argument from analogy about serving God and wealth (mammon). The Thomasine logion appears to be an oral variant of the Q tradition without the argument from analogy. Since *Gos. Thom.* 47 also is part of *Gos. Thom.* 43–50 discussed above, the context is a comparison of the disciples with a series of people and things in an attempt to get them to focus on who they themselves are and what they must do to enter the kingdom, rather than questioning who Jesus is to say what he does say to them. In this context, wealth does not come into the discussion, as a result of its absence from this saying. For *Thomas*, it appears that wealth would be only one minor symptom of a much larger challenge—understanding the nature of the world itself, the nature of people in the world, and the nature of the search that can lead to redemption.

The four remaining cases about wine and cloth present a variation in sequence in a context of overall agreement concerning the polarities. It is noticeable that all three synoptic gospels contain positive cases or results, which *Thomas* does not. The positive formulations in the synoptic gospels show an interest in the new and the old that simply is not shared by the *Gospel of Thomas*:

<i>Gos. Thom.</i> 47:3–5	Mark 2:21–22	Matthew 9:16–17	Luke 5:36–39
<p><i>2nd Description</i> (<i>Negative Case</i>): <sup>3</sup> No person drinks aged wine and immediately desires to drink new wine.</p>			<p><i>3rd Explanation</i> (<i>Negative Case</i>): <sup>39</sup> And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, “The old is good.”</p>
<p><i>2nd Explanation</i> (<i>Negative Case</i>): <sup>4a</sup> New wine is not poured into aged wineskins, lest they break.</p>	<p><i>2nd Explanation</i> (<i>Negative Case</i>): <sup>22a–b</sup> And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins.</p>	<p><i>2nd Explanation</i> (<i>Negative Case</i>): <sup>17a–b</sup> Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. Otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed.</p>	<p><i>2nd Explanation</i> (<i>Negative Case</i>): <sup>37</sup> And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed.</p>
<p><i>3rd Explanation</i> (<i>Negative Case</i>): <sup>4b</sup> And aged wine is not poured into a new wineskin, lest it spoil.</p>	<p><i>Description</i> (<i>Positive Case</i>): <sup>22c</sup> But one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.</p>	<p><i>3rd Explanation</i> (<i>Positive Case</i>): <sup>17c–d</sup> New wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.</p>	<p><i>Belief</i> (<i>Positive Case</i>): <sup>38</sup> But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.</p>
<p><i>4th Explanation</i> (<i>Negative Case</i>): <sup>5</sup> An old patch is not sewn onto a new garment, for there would be a tear.</p>	<p><i>1st Explanation</i> (<i>Negative Case</i>): <sup>21</sup> No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak. Otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made.</p>	<p><i>1st Explanation</i> (<i>Negative Case</i>): <sup>16</sup> No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made.</p>	<p><i>1st Explanation</i> (<i>Negative Case</i>): <sup>36</sup> No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment. Otherwise the new will be torn, and the piece from the new will not match the old.</p>

Instead of beginning with the case of sewing a new, unshrunk piece of cloth on an old garment, *Gos. Thom.* 47:3 begins with a focus on the manner in which people desire the old rather than the new. The emphasis is on the nature of people rather than on the nature of that which is old and that which is new. In contrast to the synoptic tradition, *Gos. Thom.* 47 does not say either that the old wine is good (Luke 5:39) or that new wine is put into fresh wineskins so that both

the new wine and the new wineskins are preserved (Matt 9:17). Rather, *Gos. Thom.* 47 emphasizes that desire for the old creates a conflict with desire for the new, and there is no preference indicated for the new or the old as the logion progresses. Richard Valantasis surely is right that the topic is the redemptive subjectivity and identity available to the person who chooses the interpretation of these sayings as the avenue to a spiritual life that stores up good things in one's heart. It is not clear, however, that "[t]he aged wine presumably refers to the richness of the spiritual life presented to those who interpret these sayings, while the young wine refers to the lesser things of the world."<sup>32</sup> As noted above, the *Gospel of Thomas* neither has Jesus say that the old wine is good nor that having everything new preserves that which is new. In contrast to the synoptic gospels where historical events create patterns in which the new and the old vie with one another for superiority, the *Gospel of Thomas* simply distinguishes between a mode of life that seeks understanding and a mode of life that proceeds without knowledge of the kingdom. In *Thomas*, the new and old garments, wine, and wineskins simply are ways of talking about things that are incompatible with one another.<sup>33</sup> The issue is whether a person lives in a bifurcated state that spoils one's life and tears it apart or in a unified state that seeks and finds understanding. In other words, specific pictorial images of spoiling, spilling, or tearing apart are used to create a generalized, or even abstract, opposite image of a person as buoyant wine or a newly restored garment. It is noticeable that the logion in *Thomas* generates no positive rule, case, or implication. The force of the logion is to create pictures that demonstrate that people cannot have things two ways at once. Either people will seek to understand the redemptive wisdom offered by these sayings or they will not.

## 2. *The First Eight Enthymematic Logia*

Among the first nineteen logia in the *Gospel of Thomas*, a section that forms an extended introduction to the work, eight (forty-two percent) contain explicit rationales. While some of these rationales simply

<sup>32</sup> Richard Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (New Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 1997), 124.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. John Dominic Crossan, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1983), 124–27.

function as explanations, others are premises (rules/warrants/major premises or cases/grounds/minor premises) in arguments. In contrast to the logia analyzed above, the enthymematic logia in the introduction feature contrawisdom and abductive reasoning. These logia invert and divert conventional wisdom to direct a person toward important inner reasonings and presuppositions in Thomasine culture. Some of these logia have a close relation to logia in the canonical gospels; others do not.

(a) *Gospel of Thomas 4:1–3*

A person who reads the *Gospel of Thomas* in sequence from the beginning encounters three enthymematic logia in a row in *Gos. Thom.* 4–6. In contrast to *Gos. Thom.* 45 and 47, these logia present contrawisdom. *Gos. Thom.* 4–5 are enthymematic logia addressed to anyone who reads the *Gospel of Thomas*. They set the stage for the discussion Jesus has with his disciples in logion 6. *Gos. Thom.* 4 reads as follows:

Jesus said, “The person old in days will not hesitate to ask a little child seven days old about the place of life, and that person will live.  
<sup>2</sup>For many of the first will be last, <sup>3</sup>and will become a single one.”

This logion contains a potential case where the person who acts on the basis of a particular kind of contrawisdom will attain life. Inspiration for the contrawisdom appears to have come from the tradition in Q 10:21 about hidden things being revealed to infants. A well-known saying in gospel tradition about first and last provides a rule or warrant for the contrawisdom:

<i>Gos. Thom.</i> 4:1–3	Luke 10:21–22	Matt 11:25–27
<i>Contrawisdom Belief (Rule):</i> <sup>4:2</sup> For many of the first will be last.	<i>Explanation (Rule):</i> <sup>21</sup> I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.	<i>Explanation (Rule):</i> <sup>25</sup> I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

<i>Gos. Thom.</i> 4:1–3	Luke 10:21–22	Matt 11:25–27
<i>Contrawisdom Description (Case):</i> <sup>4:1a</sup> The person old in days will not hesitate to ask a little child seven days old about the place of life,	<i>Description (Case):</i> <sup>22</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father;	<i>Description (Case):</i> <sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father;
<i>Description (Result):</i> <sup>4:1b</sup> and that person will live. <sup>4:3</sup> And will become a single one.	<i>Description (Result):</i> and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.	<i>Description (Result):</i> and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Q material (Luke 10:21–22/Matt 11:25–27) christologizes the tradition by making Jesus the son who receives the knowledge of all hidden things from God the father. This approach develops the tradition according to conventional, pictorial wisdom about fathers teaching their sons. The Thomasine logion, in contrast, neither builds on the conventional wisdom that fathers teach sons nor christologizes the tradition. Rather, it inverts conventional reasoning about the necessity for old people to teach infants. The age of seven days old appears to be related to the day of circumcision on the eighth day. Prior to the eighth day, a child was not considered a viable living being on earth. If the child made it to the eighth day, it had become a viable earthly being. If an old person asks a seven day old child about the place of life, that person is asking a full-term pre-earthly being who has, from the perspective of Thomasine culture, recently come from the place of life. *Gos. Thom.* 4:2 provides a warrant for the inversion between the role of the young with the dictum that “many of the first will be last.” *Gos. Thom.* 4:3 is an additional result that is appended to the warrant. The result of the old man’s asking the seven day old child is that the old person will live and will become a single one. This again is part of Thomasine belief. While on earth a person becomes two (male and female is one of these forms of two). When people return to the place of life, once again they become one. In contrast to enthymematic reasoning that grounds its assertions in conventional

reasoning, every step of this reasoning is contrawisdom: (a) many of the first will be last; (b) the old person will become wise through instruction by a seven day old child; and (c) people who know this contrawisdom will live and overcome their duality to become a single one. While *Gos. Thom.* 5 has the form of inductive-deductive argumentation, its reasoning will persuade only those who are willing to enter its contrawisdom and reason on its basis.

*Gospel of Thomas 5:1–2; 6:1–6*

The next two logia present a sequence concerning hidden things being revealed:

*Gos. Thom.* 5:1–2: Jesus said, “Know what is before your face, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you. <sup>2</sup> For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed.”

*Gos. Thom.* 6:1–6: His disciples asked him and said to him, “Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray? Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe?” <sup>2</sup> Jesus said, “Do not lie, <sup>3</sup> and do not do what you hate, <sup>4</sup> because all things are disclosed before heaven. <sup>5</sup> For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, <sup>6</sup> and there is nothing covered that will remain without being disclosed.”

*Gos. Thom.* 5 presents a deductive line of reasoning that provides a basis for abductive reasoning in the next logion. *Gos. Thom.* 5 contains the following argumentation:

*Contrawisdom Belief (Rule/Major Premise):* (5:2) There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed.

*Case/Minor Premise:* (5:1a) (If you) know what is before your face,  
Result: (5:1b) (then) what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you.

The statement that nothing is hidden that will not be revealed functions as a major premise, rule, or warrant for deductive reasoning. The conditional assertion about knowing what is before your face functions as a case that produces the result that what is hidden will be disclosed to you. The reasoning in the major premise is contrawisdom, so most people probably would not consider the reasoning in this logion to meet the standard either of deductive or inductive reasoning. If a person grants the truth of the warrant, however, the logic is straightforward: If everything has an inclination to reveal rather than hide itself, then if people know what is before their face, what is hidden from them will be disclosed to them. The reasoning is contra-

wisdom, but its logic could be persuasive to people who believe the major premise or rule.

The next logion, *Gos. Thom.* 6, applies the reasoning about hiddenness in *Gos. Thom.* 5 to an inquiry by the disciples concerning what diet they should observe and if they should fast, pray, and give alms. Jesus' response is that they should not lie and do what they hate, because all things are disclosed before heaven. Conventional religious wisdom in the Mediterranean world probably would say that fasting, praying, giving alms, and observing a special diet would disclose a special religious person who will receive the benefits of heaven. Thus, if people would grant the initial premise, they probably would construct the reasoning as follows:

*Contrawisdom Explanation (Rule):* (6:5) There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, (6:6) and there is nothing covered that will remain without being disclosed, (6:4) because all things are disclosed before heaven.

[*Case:* Fasting, praying, giving alms, and observing a special diet discloses a devoted religious person.]

[*Result:* A person who fasts, prays, gives alms, and follows a special diet will receive the benefits of heaven.]

Instead of this reasoning, the logion contains abductive reasoning:

*Contrawisdom Explanation (Rule):* (6:5) There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, (6:6) and there is nothing covered that will remain without being disclosed, (6:4) because all things are disclosed before heaven.

*Case put together with Result from previous logion:* Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray? Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe? What is hidden from you will be disclosed to you [as unimportant]!

[*Abductive Result:* Fasting, praying, giving alms, and following a special diet hides from people what they must do to live and become a single one.]

*Apotrepis (Implication):* (6:2–3) Do not lie, and do not do what you hate.

Building on the major premise in the reasoning, the logion joins the minor premise (the case of fasting, praying, giving alms, and observing a special diet) with the result (what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you). When this happens, there is a “discovery” that fasting, praying, giving alms, and observing a special diet are disclosed as “unimportant” (activities that hide), and this discovery uncovers the activities people actually should be engaging in to seek life (seeking the understanding of these logia). One suddenly becomes aware,

then, that the phenomenal world, the world we see, regularly deceives us. It hides what we should truly see until we look at it long enough that it reveals itself as secondary and unimportant. This produces the result that fasting, praying, giving alms, and following a special diet hide rather than reveal the important things a person should do. In enthymematic fashion, this logion does not state this result. Rather, it states the implication of the unstated result: one should not lie to oneself about the things that matter and one should not do the things one hates to do. In other words, one should not deceive oneself by thinking that religious rites and dietary practices can truly achieve life. What they seem to achieve is really a lie; they are a matter of doing what one hates. Rather, one must devote oneself to seeking understanding that lies in and through the things in the phenomenal world that hide. Regular rituals that seek to understand Jesus' sayings are the practices that really matter, for they are the means for bringing that which is hidden forth into understanding.

In Mark 4:21–22 and Luke 8:16–17, conventional wisdom about lamps is interwoven with the conviction that all things hidden will be revealed. There is no such link in *Thomas*. In *Gos. Thom.* 5–6, the insight about hiddenness being revealed is treated like a true statement that should be convincing in and of itself. The problem, as mentioned above, is that conventional wisdom suggests that some things that are hidden remain hidden and lost forever. Contrawisdom in *Thomas* holds an opposite view as a conviction that functions as a proposition (major premise/warrant/rule) both for deductive and abductive reasoning. The underlying contrawisdom is present in Q and synoptic tradition. The *Gospel of Thomas* accepts the contrawisdom of this environment of reasoning and makes the abductive “discovery” that the entire phenomenal world hides true understanding from us until we look it in the face and invite it to reveal itself to us. When we do this, the logion states, fasting, praying, giving alms, and following a special diet reveal themselves as ways of telling lies about the religious practices that really matter. Rather than being activities that enact love, they are activities, the logion says, that enact hate both for oneself and for others.

*Gospel of Thomas 14:1–5*

We observed that, in characteristic enthymematic manner, the result was unexpressed in *Gos. Thom.* 6. The logion expresses the implication



without stating the result. *Gos. Thom.* 14:1–4 contains the result of the reasoning in a series of statements to the disciples:

Jesus said to them, “If you fast, you will bring sin upon yourselves,<sup>2</sup> and if you pray, you will be condemned,<sup>3</sup> and if you give alms, you will harm your spirits.<sup>4</sup> When you go into any country and walk from place to place, when the people receive you, eat what they serve you and heal the sick among them.<sup>5</sup> For what goes into your mouth will not defile you; rather, it is what comes out of your mouth that will defile you.”

This logion, *Gos. Thom.* 14, presents the result of the reasoning in *Gos. Thom.* 6 in the form of three descriptions and an explanation that answer the four questions the disciples asked:

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<i>Description (Result):</i> If you fast, you will bring sin upon yourselves.	<i>Description (Result):</i> <sup>2</sup> if you pray, you will be condemned.	<i>Description (Result):</i> <sup>3</sup> if you give alms, you will harm your spirits.	<i>Explanation (Result):</i> <sup>4</sup> When you go into any country and walk from place to place, when the people receive you, eat what they serve you and heal the sick among them. <sup>5</sup> For what goes into your mouth will not defile you; rather, it is what comes out of your mouth that will defile you.
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If regular religious rituals deceive people into thinking they are really what matters, people will bring sin upon themselves, be condemned, and harm their spirits. These descriptions quickly answer the first three questions about fasting, praying, and giving alms. The question about observing a diet calls forth two pictorial traditions well-known from the synoptic gospels: eating what is set before you when people receive you in their house and it is what comes out of your mouth that defiles you. The interesting thing is that no synoptic gospel brings these two traditions together. As we know from the discussion above, a key to abductive reasoning is putting together things that we had never before dreamed of putting together. *Gos. Thom.* 14:4–5 displays

precisely this process. In a context where deductive reasoning has produced a result that one should not fast, pray, or give alms lest they bring about a harmful result, the result lies ready at hand that one should eat whatever one is given to eat, rather than observing a diet. In the context of this result, the rhetor “discovers” a further insight that provides the reason why: it is what comes out of the mouth rather than what goes in that defiles a person. But what is the importance of this conclusion to *Gos. Thom.* 14? In order to see this, we must turn to *Gos. Thom.* 13, which occurs just before it.

*Gospel of Thomas 13:1–8*

In addition to leaving premises and results unexpressed in logia, it is characteristic of the *Gospel of Thomas* either to delay answers to questions the disciples ask or never to give direct answers to the questions. As we have just seen, the answers to the disciples’ questions in *Gos. Thom.* 6 are delayed until *Gos. Thom.* 14. Readers engaged in linear reading of the sayings, therefore, hold enthymematic, abductive reasoning in their minds as they read through *Gos. Thom.* 7–13 until they find the results expressed in *Gos. Thom.* 14. The question, then, is what the reader encounters in the intervening span of text.

Just prior to the logion where Jesus presents the answers to the disciples’ questions, Jesus asks the disciples to compare him to something and to tell him what he is like:

Jesus said to his disciples, “Compare me to something and tell me what I am like.”<sup>2</sup> Simon Peter said to him, “You are like a just angel.”<sup>3</sup> Matthew said to him, “You are like a wise philosopher.”<sup>4</sup> Thomas said to him, “Teacher, my mouth is utterly unable to say what you are like.”<sup>5</sup> Jesus said, “I am not your teacher. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring that I have tended.”<sup>6</sup> And he took him, and withdrew, and spoke three sayings to him.<sup>7</sup> When Thomas came back to his friends, they asked him, “What did Jesus say to you?”<sup>8</sup> Thomas said to them, “If I tell you one of the sayings he spoke to me, you will pick up rocks and stone me, and fire will come from the rocks and devour you.”

The enthymematic reasoning in this logion works abductively from contrawisdom that functions as a rule/warrant/major premise for the reasoning that follows. Conventional wisdom suggests that Jesus teaches his disciples throughout the *Gospel of Thomas*. Jesus, however, introduces as a rule/warrant/major premise the contrawisdom that he is not their teacher. This contrawisdom establishes an environment

for abductive reasoning in Jesus' reply. Conventional reasoning could fill out the sequence as follows:

*Contrawisdom Belief (Rule):* I am not your teacher.

*Case:* [Thomas's] mouth is unable to say what Jesus is like.

[*Result:* Thomas has had some other teacher not wise enough to teach him what Jesus is like.]

Instead of this reasoning, the process has worked abductively. Working from the major premise, which has arisen because Thomas has unwittingly called Jesus "teacher" when he replied to him, the reasoning joins the case and the result in a manner that produces a discovery about Thomas' inability to say who Jesus is like. Thomas is not simply without knowledge; he has drunk from a source of wisdom that tells him that Jesus is not simply like an angel (Simon Peter) or a wise philosopher (Matthew). This produces a different result as follows:

*Contrawisdom Belief (Rule):* I am not your teacher.

*Case put together with Result producing a Discovery:* [Thomas's] mouth is unable to say what Jesus is like, because he has drunk (from some other source of wisdom)!

*Result:* You [Thomas] have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring that I have tended.

Thomas's inability to say what Jesus is like comes from his drinking deeply from the well of wisdom Jesus has made available to those who will listen and seek. Thomas's statement "that language cannot articulate the experience"<sup>34</sup> is better than Simon Peter's answer that Jesus is a just angel and Matthew's answer that Jesus is a wise philosopher. Again, this is not grounded in conventional wisdom. It may well be that the reasoning here is grounded in the point of view articulated in the Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth in the Nag Hammadi Library:

I have found the beginning of the power that is above all powers, the one that has no beginning. I see a fountain bubbling with life. I have said, my son, that I am Mind. I have seen! Language is not able to reveal this.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Valantasis, *Thomas*, 76.

<sup>35</sup> James M. Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library in English* (3rd completely revised ed.; San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1988), 324–25; quoted from Valantasis, *Thomas*, 76.

Thomas has said that he has no language to describe what Jesus is like. Jesus' response suggests that Thomas, through Jesus' words, has seen and drunk deeply from a fountain bubbling with life. Jesus' response suggests that Thomas's drinking of a deep draft from the bubbling spring has left him unable to speak. It is noticeable that the logion does not relate the speaking to the presence of spirit. Here, instead of the spirit providing what one will say (Mark 13:11), intoxication leaves Thomas without utterable words that can describe who Jesus is. Now we get a hint of the significance of the conclusion of the logion that immediately follows this one: what goes into your mouth will not defile you; rather, it is what comes out of your mouth that will defile you. One can answer far too quickly with one's mouth, and this answer will wed a person to ignorance. Drinking deeply from the fountain of wisdom Jesus makes available may produce an inability to state with certainty what something is like. This uncertainty is not ignorance. Rather, it is an initial kind of wisdom that creates within a person the possibility of receiving amazing wisdom from Jesus that most people (even other disciples) cannot even begin to fathom.

*Gospel of Thomas 16:1–4*

This logion also contains a statement by Jesus concerning who he is not. It also contains an argument about who he is:

Jesus said, "Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the world. <sup>2</sup>They do not know that I have come to cast conflicts upon the earth: fire, sword, war. <sup>3</sup>For there will be five in a house: there will be three against two and two against three, father against son and son against father, <sup>4</sup>and they will stand alone."

On the basis of conventional wisdom, most people think Jesus comes to bring peace. Jesus, instead, teaches pictorial contrawisdom: he has come to bring conflicts in the form of fire, sword, and war. This contrawisdom is present in Q tradition:

*Gos. Thom.* 16:1–4

Luke 12:51–53

Matt 10:34–49

*Conventional Wisdom:*

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the world.

*Conventional Wisdom:*

<sup>34a</sup> "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth;

<i>Gos. Thom.</i> 16:1–4	Luke 12:51–53	Matt 10:34–49
<p><i>Contrawisdom (Rule):</i>  <sup>2</sup> They do not know that I have come to cast conflicts upon the earth: fire, sword, war.</p>	<p><i>Contrawisdom (Rule):</i>  <sup>49</sup> “I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup> I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! <sup>51</sup> Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division!</p>	<p><i>Contrawisdom (Rule):</i> <sup>34b</sup> I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.</p>
<p>[<i>Unstated Case:</i> This conflict will have its effect on households.]</p>	<p>[<i>Unstated Case:</i> This conflict will have its effect on households.]</p>	<p>[<i>Unstated Case:</i> This conflict will have its effect on households.]</p>
<p><i>Description (Result):</i> <sup>3</sup> For there will be five in a house: three against two and two against three, father against son and son against father,</p>	<p><i>Description (Result):</i>  <sup>52</sup> From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; <sup>53</sup> they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her</p>	<p><i>Description (Result):</i>  <sup>35</sup> For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; <sup>36</sup> and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.</p>
<p><i>Implication:</i> <sup>4</sup> and they will stand alone.</p>	<p>daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”</p>	<p><i>Implication:</i> <sup>37</sup> Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; <sup>38</sup> and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup> Those who find their life will lose it, and who lose their life for my sake will find it.</p>

Both Luke and Matthew have an expanded form of the *Q/Thomas* tradition. Luke contains an amplification in the form of a soliloquy by Jesus on the baptism with which he has been baptized. Also it contains an amplified version of the divisions in the household, not only speaking of fathers and sons but speaking of mothers, daughters, mothers-in-law, and daughters-in-law. The Matthean version does not speak of fathers, mothers, and mothers-in-law being set against their sons, daughters, and daughters-in-law. In addition, Matthew contains an extended implication about people who love family members more than Jesus and are not willing to take up their cross and follow Jesus. The statement in *Thomas* that “they will stand alone” appears to be a Thomasine way of referring to the lack of relationship with Jesus that is also spoken about in Matt 10:37–39. Again we find the variation characteristic of *Q/Thomasine* tradition. In this instance, the contrawisdom exists in the *Q* tradition itself and the *Gospel of Thomas* simply includes it without amplification.

*Gospel of Thomas 18:1–3*

This enthymematic logion reasons further about the relation of disciples to Jesus, which is a topic in *Gos. Thom.* 16:4 and Matthew 10:37–39. In *Thomas*, instead of Jesus being the one who takes up a cross, he is the beginning. If disciples have discovered the beginning they will know their end, since their end is to return to the beginning.

The disciples said to Jesus, “Tell us how our end will be.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus said, “Have you discovered the beginning, then, that you are seeking after the end? For where the beginning is, the end will be.”<sup>3</sup> Blessed is one who stands at the beginning: That one will know the end and will not taste death.”

Once again the reader encounters contrawisdom in the *Gospel of Thomas*. The reasoning in the logion is as follows:

[*Unexpressed Wisdom*: The one who knows the end will not taste death.]  
 [*Contrawisdom (Warrant/Rule)*: Where the beginning is, the end will be.]

[*Abductive Description (Case joined with Result)*: Have you discovered the beginning, then, that you are seeking after the end? [If you have discovered the beginning, then you are standing where the end will be!]]

[*Explanation (Result)*: Blessed is one who stands at the beginning: That one will know the end and will not taste death.]

Once again the reader encounters abductive reasoning. Straightforward reasoning from the contrawisdom would suggest that (Case) if one has discovered the beginning, (Result) then one has discovered the end. When this case and result are joined together, the insight emerges that when they have found the beginning (in the presence of Jesus) they are standing at the end as well as the beginning! This produces a new result, namely that one is blessed who stands at the beginning, since that one also knows the end and will not taste death.

*Gospel of Thomas 19:1–4*

*Gos. Thom.* 19 also contains a beatitude, but this one occurs at the beginning of the logion:

Jesus said, “Blessed is one who came into being before coming into being. <sup>2</sup>If you become my disciples and hearken to my sayings, these stones will serve you. <sup>3</sup>For there are five trees in Paradise for you; they do not change, summer or winter, and their leaves do not fall. <sup>4</sup>Whoever knows them will not taste death.”

Again the reader encounters a logion built upon contrawisdom. The final statement in the logion suggests that *Gos. Thom.* 19 is building on the insight of *Gos. Thom.* 18. If it is accepted wisdom that the person who knows the beginning is blessed and will not taste death, then one can extend this reasoning even further to “coming into being before coming into being.” The reasoning in this logion appears to contain an inner mode of reasoning as follows:

*Rule:* Whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death (*Gos. Thom.* 1).

*Case:* If you become my disciples and hearken to my sayings,

*Result:* these stones will serve you!

This logion would appear to be the conclusion of a long introduction to the *Gospel of Thomas* that builds an argument on the basis of the initial logion about listening carefully to Jesus’ sayings (which means becoming his disciple), interpreting the sayings to find their meaning, and, as a result, not tasting death. This inner reasoning has become an environment for abductive discovery of information that extends far beyond conventional wisdom. If the reasoning in the logion is introducing the major premise in its initial statement, the reasoning proceeds as follows:

*Contrawisdom (Rule):* Blessed is one who came into being before coming into being.

*Joining of Case and Result from Gos. Thom. 1 and 19:* If you become my disciples and hearken to my sayings, you will discover the interpretation of these sayings and not taste death, and these stones will serve you.

*Result:* There are five trees in Paradise for you; they do not change, summer or winter, and their leaves do not fall. Whoever knows them will not taste death.

The reader now has entered fully into the domain of contrawisdom. The initial contrawisdom appears to be based on “a myth of an already existent being entering the mundane world.”<sup>36</sup> Jesus, an example of such a being, stands before disciples with sayings that can lead them to understand that they also are such beings. This leads to the case/result (abductive reasoning) that if they become Jesus’ disciples, they will discover the interpretation that leads them to this knowledge about themselves, and they will not taste death. “These stones will serve you” may mean that objects in the phenomenal world will become the things that at first hide true insight but then become the objects that (through searching and reflecting) lead a person into true knowledge. Perhaps the five trees in Paradise are a matter of finding both the pictorial beginning (Garden of Eden) and the pictorial end (Paradise). Since, as is stated in *Gos. Thom.* 18, true knowledge takes one both to the beginning and the end, one who becomes a true disciple comes to know “the five trees in Paradise.” One wonders if these trees are in some way related to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. Valantasis is perceptive when he says:

The knowledge of the mythology developed here that organizes a hierarchy of beings and posits the existence of a paradise with five unchanging trees confers the same benefit as the discovery of the interpretations of the sayings (Saying 1) and the standing at the beginning and knowing the end (Saying 18) since all of these sayings present the seeker as “not tast(ing) death.” The immortal status of the seeker may be achieved through a number of different enterprises (interpretative, intellectual, and mythological).<sup>37</sup>

*Gos. Thom.* 19 joins insights in the initial sayings in the *Gospel of Thomas* with interpretative, intellectual, and mythological knowledge that the seeking listener acquires through engagement with the first nineteen logia, which form an extended introduction. As we have seen above,

<sup>36</sup> Valantasis, *Thomas*, 88.

<sup>37</sup> Valantasis, *Thomas*, 89–90.



these sayings contain a combination of deductive, inductive, and abductive reasoning. In certain instances the reasoning builds on conventional, pictorial wisdom; in other instances the reasoning builds on contrawisdom in Q/synoptic tradition; in still other instances, like *Gos. Thom.* 18–19, the reader sees glimpses of a world that looks more like the world of the Gospel of John than the synoptic gospels.

### 3. *Concluding Remarks*

This essay has presented a beginning place for future analysis. Some sayings in the gospel tradition present conventional wisdom. Others present contrawisdom. It will be important in the future to identify the topics that various arenas of tradition develop according to conventional knowledge and contrawisdom. The preliminary analysis presented in this essay shows that Q/synoptic tradition contains both conventional wisdom and contrawisdom. Only future analysis can tell us the proportions of conventional and contrawisdom in this tradition. It appears that the *Gospel of Thomas* features more contrawisdom than conventional wisdom as it builds its system of thought through the logia attributed to Jesus. Future analysis also can display the proportions and kinds of deductive, inductive, and abductive reasoning in all the canonical gospels as well as throughout the *Gospel of Thomas*.<sup>38</sup> This initial study has given only a glimpse of an analysis of ten logia in the *Gospel of Thomas*.

There are many remaining tasks in this kind of study. One thinks of investigation of all the enthymematic logia in Q, the canonical gospels, and the *Gospel of Thomas*. One also thinks of interactive comparison of the enthymematic texture not only of all the gospels with one another but with other Mediterranean wisdom discourse and with wisdom discourse in other geographical and cultural regions of the world. The wisdom of this world is not confined simply to the Bible or to accepted and marginal Christians during the first centuries of the emergence of Christianity. It is important for us to develop practices of analysis and interpretation that can move not only beyond the confines of our treasured canons in our own religious traditions but beyond the confines of the Mediterranean world into other traditions throughout the world.

<sup>38</sup> See Vernon K. Robbins, "From Enthymeme to Theology," 191–214. Cf. *idem*, "Argumentative Textures," 27–65.