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CONFUSED RHETORIC:
ASSESSING AND CLARIFYING RHETORICAL CRITICISM(S)
OF THE PAULINE EPISTLES

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ABSTRACT

Confused Rhetoric:
Assessing and Clarifying Rhetorical Criticism(s) of the Pauline Epistles

By Zane B. McGee

Since the mid–twentieth century, the field of biblical studies has witnessed an explosive growth of critical methods that employ novel technique to the analysis of biblical texts. One such approach to emerge (or, re-emerge) is rhetorical criticism, which aims to assess the persuasive function of these religious writings. This method is particularly well–suited for the analysis of the Pauline epistles. With their impassioned tone, personal appeals, and persuasive force, these letters provide a prime specimen for examining Paul's rhetorical strategies. Difficulty arises, however, when one begins to speak of *the* rhetorical criticism of these letters and how the argumentation within can be examined. Some researchers propose utilizing the rhetorical standards established in ancient Greece as a pattern for Paul's persuasive tactics. Others appeal to content over form, finding the argumentative efficacy of Paul's writings in the imagery and allusions employed within. Still others examine Paul's arguments utilizing informal, rather than formal, persuasive techniques. Each of the above approaches, and others, find aegis under the term "rhetorical criticism," suggesting that it is more appropriate to speak of rhetorical criticisms in light of the above diversity in this discipline.

This study explores this diversity in two parts. First, the methods and theoretical assumptions of three common rhetorical approaches are examined in order to demonstrate the wide divergence present between these various approaches at the methodological level. Then, the study applies each of these methods to a common text (1 Cor 9) to demonstrate that these front end differences result in differing foci and conclusions when engaging in exegetical research. This two pronged approach will more fully illustrate the diversity of this field. Finally, the project concludes by offering suggestions for pursuing clarity when speaking of and practicing "rhetorical criticism" of the letters of Paul.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"We simply do not know enough yet about rhetorical discourse
to place our faith in systems, and it is only through
imaginative criticism that we are likely to learn more."
– Edwin Black [1]

For much of the 19th and 20th centuries, biblical criticism moved in waves driven by
influential schools of thought that would arrive with force, batter the moorings, disrupt
the calm, and gradually subside, soon surpassed by the next swell gathering momentum
just below the surface.[2] One such force emerged in the mid–19th century with the work
of F. C. Baur's historically driven "higher criticism," which through the influence of his
students led to a flood of *Leben Jesu* literature.[3] As the Tübingen school met criticism
and its influence began to wane, the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* led by Albert
Eichhorn and Hermann Gunkel, among others, rose to prominence while employing
historical quests of a different fashion. This school sought to situate Judaism and
Christianity within their respective historical *Sitzen im Leben*, and its influence reached

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[1] Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 177.

[2] Two book–length surveys of this period can be found in the works of Werner G. Kümmel (*Das Neue Testament: Geschichte der Erforschung seiner Probleme* (München: Karl Alber Freiburg, 1958) and John K. Riches (*A Century of New Testament Study* [Valley Forge, Pa: Trinity International, 1993]). For a brief overview of biblical criticism during this period see David S. Dockery, "New Testament Interpretation: A Historical Survey," in *New Testament Criticism & Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 50–60.

[3] See Kümmel, *Neue Testament*, 147–258; Dockery, "Survey," 50–53.

even to the early work of R. Bultmann.[4] In the early half of the 20th century, currents in biblical studies reacted against these historical approaches and moved toward theologically focused analysis, as seen in the works of Karl Barth.[5]

These movements were not monolithic, but they were dominant; others were either drawn to or propelled from from these positions. As biblical criticism entered into the latter half of the 20th century, a new trend emerged. This shift differed from the preceding, however, in that it was not driven by a singular new perspective, but by the cumulative disruptive effect of myriad methods rapidly diverging from one another in both approach and interests. Distinctive of this new trend was the inability to speak of *the* current method in biblical studies, but rather the emerging *methods* that sought to employ historical, literary, social, and behavioral interests in biblical criticism.

One such method to (re)emerge from this ever–broadening array was rhetorical criticism. James Muilenburg's 1968 SBL presidential address often is marked as a watershed moment for rhetorical analysis in biblical studies. Muilenburg urged the field to move beyond form criticism, which had proven persistently influential since Gunkel's earlier works, and to recognize that biblical texts had "been skillfully wrought in many different ways, often with consummate skill and artistry."[6] A study of how the biblical authors crafted these texts revealed apparent affinities with writings from neighboring peoples as well as structuring in line with contemporary rhetorical practices, raising

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[4] See Kümmel, *Neue Testament*, 261–414; Dockery, "Survey," 56; Riches, *Century*, 14–49.

[5] Archibald M. Hunter examines 20th century trends, giving special attention to the theological movements (*Interpreting the New Testament, 1900–1950.* [London: SCM Press, 1951], 124–40). See also Kümmel, *Neue Testament*, 417–520; Riches, *Century*, 50–88.

[6] James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88, no. 1 (1969): 18.

questions which biblical studies had not yet addressed.

The ensuing impact of rhetorical studies was felt perhaps most strongly in the Pauline epistles. Because these letters contained personal communications rather than narratives, history, or precepts, they more readily lent themselves to the study of persuasive tactics. Further, their argumentation more closely conformed to the structures employed in public discourse in the ancient world and their emotional—and sometimes volatile—nature resonated with the delivery of a skilled rhetorician. Paul's letters may finally be read fully for what they are—persuasive discourse aimed at influencing an audience.

Such a utopic vision for the field of rhetorical criticism, if such a unified vision existed at all, would prove to be short–lived as the fracturing forces that worked to disrupt biblical criticism at large acted similarly upon this subfield. It is the purpose of this project to examine this fracturing, the forces contributing to it, and the difficulties it creates when speaking of *a* "rhetorical criticism" of the New Testament (NT), and more specifically the Pauline letters. I will demonstrate not only that the common methods employed under the aegis of this term differ significantly in methodological principles, but that the concerns and aims with which researchers approach these texts drastically influence the interpretation of the Pauline letters, resulting in ever diverging conclusions. In light of these observations, it is problematic to speak of "rhetorical criticism" where rhetorical criticisms exist *in actu*.

A brief example may aid in demonstrating the present state of the field. In a short dictionary article defining the discipline of rhetorical criticism, Thomas H. Olbricht sketches the development of classical rhetoric before offering a summary of its

fundamental elements.[7] In the second half of the entry, he then outlines how this literature

is employed in the analysis of a biblical text. As explained here, rhetorical criticism is a

historical endeavor that finds its method and justification in the historical situation of the

text.[8] Compare this with Wilhelm Wuellner's influential article, "Where Is Rhetorical

Criticism Taking Us?", in which he argues that rhetorical analysis finally must overcome

the latent distinction between "'figures of thought' (*res*) and 'figures of speech' (*verba*) in

classical systems of rhetoric."[9] Wuellner's rhetorical criticism is a creative process that

leaves behind Aristotelian or neo–Aristotelian systems for a broadening of the fields,

engaging multiple disciplines in exploring the dialogical elements of a text. That these

two approaches are both labeled *rhetorical criticism* without distinction or qualification

demonstrates the breadth of approaches developing within a tight space.

Approach and Method

This project will proceed on two fronts. First, we will examine recent contributions to the

study of Paul's letters that give significant attention to the persuasive function of these

writings. Three criteria are used for this survey: (1) that the researcher specifically treats

the Pauline epistles or proposes methods employed in such treatments; (2) that the

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[7] Thomas H. Olbricht, "Rhetorical Criticism," *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* I:325–7.

[8] It is necessary to acknowledge that this does not reflect Olbricht's full understanding of the field of rhetorical studies, as clearly a brief dictionary entry requires concision and clarity. However, that the entry eschews all mention of other methodologies within this field, which Olbricht actively engages elsewhere, demonstrates precisely the inherent difficulty of the complex current state of this field. For an example of Olbricht's engagement with the work of Wuellner, see "Wuellner and the Promise of Rhetoric," in *Rhetorics and Hermeneutics: Wilhelm Wuellner and His Influence* (Eds. J. D. Hester, J. D. Hester (Amador); A&C Black, 2004), 78–104.

[9] Wilhelm H. Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" *CBQ* 49, no. 3 (1987): 462.

method has the primary focus of studying the persuasive function of these texts; and (3) that the author has contributed to this field in the last half century.

The hermeneutical theories of Hans–Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur contributed to the now widely–employed practice of speaking of three *worlds* of a text— that of *the world behind the text*, *the world of the text*, and *the world in front of the text*.[10] The present study will employ these terms as heuristic categories to aid in illustrating the concerns of each of the interpreter below, but it will not delve into the rich exploration of the function and interactions of these worlds as set out by Gadamer and Ricoeur. The *worlds* of the text will help us categorize these authors according to the features of the text with which they are most concerned. The world *behind the text* is reflected in the work of H. Dieter Betz and George A. Kennedy, who apply classical Greek rhetorical structures and devices to the Pauline epistles. These authors argue that Aristotelian rhetoric shaped Paul's writings as he set out to persuade his audiences. The world *of the text* focuses on elements within a writing and how these features contribute to its persuasive effect. Richard Hays explores the ways in which Paul employs allusions to the Hebrew Bible to enhance his argument while Vernon K. Robbins includes allusions to Greco–Roman literature and broader cultural influences and traditions. Finally, the world *in front of the text* gives attention to the readers, how discourse acts upon the audience, and the ways in which the receivers and encoded communicator interact. This concern is central in the *New Rhetoric* of Chaïm Perelman and has proven impactful for Pauline

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[10] Ricoeur's work most explicitly states the categories presented here (see, for example, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences : Essays on Language, Action, and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1983], 139–44.), but is suggestive of Gadamer's earlier exposition on the "fusion of horizons" that occurs in interpretation (*Truth and Method* [New York: Continuum, 1995], 306–7).

studies, as seen in the work of Wilhelm Wuellner.

The intent of this first section is not to offer a history of research but to give specific attention to the methodologies employed by these authors. What is the primary aim of the researcher in analyzing these writings? What considerations guide this approach? And lastly, what concerns are raised by these methods? The purpose of asking such questions is two–fold: (1) to demonstrate the differences among these methods and their ideological assumptions and (2) to establish a workable approach for each *world* of the text, which will then be employed in the analysis of a selected Pauline passage.

Having established a working methodology for each *world* as outlined above, we will proceed in the second half of the study to offer a rhetorical analysis of 1 Corinthians 9. The aim of this analysis is to demonstrate that these methods differ not only in practice but also in result. This application of each approach to the same text will demonstrate that the aims and concerns with which an interpreter assesses a text has a significant impact upon the resultant conclusions. Examining both the *methods* and *results* of these three approaches will more fully illustrate the present diversity of this field before we examining suggestions for a way forward.

CHAPTER 2

THE WORLD BEHIND THE TEXT:

CLASSICAL RHETORIC AND THE PAULINE EPISTLES

"The ultimate goal of rhetorical analysis, briefly put, is the
discovery of the author's intent and of how that is
transmitted through a text to an audience."

– *George A. Kennedy* [1]

The term *rhetoric* conjures associations with falsehood or deception. Insincere promises

from politicians are labeled "empty rhetoric" and overly elaborate speech is deemed

"rhetorical flourish." Yet, what some view with suspicion today, the ancient world

considered to be of central import to civic life. Students trained in the proper use of the

"art of persuasion" and many of the instructional materials from these teachings survive

even today, most notably Aristotle's *Rhetorica*, Cicero's *De inventione rhetorica,* and

Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*.[2] At its core the *art of persuasion* is simply "that quality in

discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish his purpose," and those who

wished to participate in the civic life of ancient Greece and Rome considered it a

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[1] George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984).

[2] Although the goal of this training was persuasion, not deceit, even in antiquity rhetoricians did not escape accusations of deception. Plato criticizes the rhetorician who can both convince a person that something is just and, at another time, unjust (*Phaedrus*, 262.). The Sophists, early teachers of rhetoric in ancient Greece, eventually became associated with cunning, deception, and selling their skills to persuade, and the negative connotations of *sophistry* still persist today.

fundamental skill.[3]

Over time, however, rhetoric diminished in importance and eventually came to be viewed as a dressing up of simple speech.[4] Over the past half century, however, the relevance of classical Greek rhetoric to the interpretation of the NT has been "rediscovered." In this chapter, we will examine the contributions of two researchers to this approach in the late 20th century, one a biblical scholar and the other a classicist. These scholars who give attention the the *world behind the text* by utilizing tools and writings developed in this milieu for analyzing these writings.

Hans Dieter Betz

Hans Dieter Betz's 1974 lecture on the literary composition of Galatians marked a turning point in NT rhetorical studies.[5] In an attempt to understand the structure of this letter, he finds in Greek rhetoric a framework for establishing the structural coherency of this letter. Betz was, in fact, mildly surprised that such an analysis had not previously been undertaken upon this text.[6] Employing rhetorical criticism, Betz argues for the

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[3] George A Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 3.

[4] As rhetorical training became less prominent so too did the application of rhetoric to biblical analysis. While a few authors continued some form of rhetorical criticism, such as the Venerable Bede (8th c.), Philip Melanchthon (16th c.), and Johann August Ernesti (18th c.), rhetorical features of a text were gradually seen as more ornamental and stylistic than substantive. For a brief look at the history of rhetorical criticism of the NT, see D. F. Watson, "The Influence of George Kennedy on Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament," in *Words Well Spoken: George Kennedy's Rhetoric of the New Testament* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 42–3; Olbricht, "Rhetorical Criticism," 325–6.

[5] The text of this speech was later published as "Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *NTS* 21, no. 3 (1975): 353–79.

[6] Betz notes that J. B. Lightfoot offers the closest approximation of such an analysis as he refers to the *narrative*, *argumentative*, and *hortatory* divisions of the letter, though he never connects his analysis explicitly with this field (*Literary*, 353). For Lightfoot's outline of Galatians see *St. Paul's Epistle to the*

coherence of the structure and the internal logic of the argument in light of its conformity to the genre of an *apologetic letter*. This genre "presupposes the real or fictitious situation of the court of law, with the jury, the accuser and the defendant," and as such, employs the language and tactics of the court—primarily rhetoric.[7] The situation demands that Paul rely on rhetorical devices and rational argument to present his defense before the Galatians, who act as the jury. In Betz's final assessment, both the demands of the genre and the apparent *fit* of rhetorical structures validates this method.[8]

This presentation offered preliminary results of Betz's analysis of Galatians, but it was with the publication of his commentary on Galatians that he fully developed this approach. In an eight–page structural outline he divides the letter into six rhetorical sections. Following the obligatory epistolary pre–script, Betz applies rhetorical labels to the letter, outlining the structure as the *exordium* (1:6–11), *narratio* (1:12–2:14), *propositio* (2:15–21), *probatio* (3:1–4:31), *parenesis* (5:1–6:10), and finally the *peroratio* (6:11–18).[9] This analysis is noteworthy for a few reasons. It was the first modern

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Galatians (London: Macmillan, 1892), 65–7. In his later *Hermeneia* commentary, Betz expands this comment to also include Luther and Melanchthon's comments upon the rhetorical elements of the letter (*Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979], 14.

[7] Betz, "Literary Composition," 377; see also his comments regarding the apologetic letter (376–8).

[8] Betz argues that the obligatory employment of rhetorical strategies served as a hindrance to Paul's argument because it hindered the authenticity of Paul's appeal ("Literary," 378). Betz finds in Paul's declaration ἀλλάξαι τὴν φωνήν μου (4:20) an acknowledgement that the current approach is less than ideal (377).

[9] The *probatio* is divided into the following proofs: (i) from undisputable evidence (3:1–5), (ii) from Scripture (3:6–14), (iii) from common human practice (3:15–18), (iv) from Christian tradition (3:26–4:11), (v) from friendship (4:12–20), and (vi) of allegory from Scripture (4:21–31). These arguments are interrupted by a brief excursus on the purpose of Torah (3:19–25). Betz would go on to employ similar strategies in his other commentaries and writings; most relevant for the current discussion is his work on 2 Corinthians 8–9 written again for the Hermeneia series some six years later (*2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985]).

treatment of a Pauline epistle that viewed rhetorical features as contributing significantly to the interpretation of the letter. More than simply form or style, rhetoric was understood to shape the very argument of the letter. Further, his analysis was extensive—comprehensive, even—accounting for the entire structure rather than smaller pericopes. While other commentators may have noted rhetorical elements of Paul's epistles, rarely was an attempt made to demonstrate how the form of an entire letter fit within the framework provided by ancient rhetoric.

Betz's analysis was groundbreaking for a new generation of NT scholars. His research led by example, demonstrating that classical rhetorical structures could be applied to large texts, even to entire letters. He argued that ancient handbooks provided a valuable tool for the analysis and interpretation of NT writings, beyond simply identifying manipulative gimmicky or literary flourish. Yet, Betz offered little by way of explicit methodology for those who sought to follow in his steps. His treatments presumed a high level of classical knowledge and the implications of his findings could prove difficult for the uninitiated to fully digest. It would, in fact, fall to a scholar not trained in biblical studies to provide a framework for applying rhetorical criticism to the NT and to further clear the way for the barrage of rhetorically–based studies that would soon inundate biblical studies.

George A. Kennedy

While Betz is a prominent author in the field of NT studies, the other major contributor to this approach has produced few works aimed at biblical studies. George A. Kennedy engaged primarily in the study of classical rhetoric with several of his early publications

focusing on the rhetorical works of the early Hellenistic period through the late Roman Empire.[10] This early research in classics was already recognized by some in biblical studies as helpful for understanding the environment in which the NT authors wrote.[11]

It was not, however, until the publication of his concise handbook, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, that Kennedy entered directly in the field of NT studies. Kennedy places his method in the space between form and literary criticism, arguing that his approach focuses upon the whole text as it is presented to modern readers and also has a historical goal of reading the text as a first–century reader.[12] Kennedy justifies this diachronic approach both historically and philosophically. Historically, rhetoric was a primary subject taught in formal education and as such would have permeated all levels of Mediterranean culture. Even those who had little or no formal education, Kennedy argues, would have been exposed to rhetoric in practice and thus it need not be argued that NT authors were formally trained in rhetorical practices to validate this rhetorical approach. [13]

Philosophically, this method finds justification in that rhetoric was not an

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[10] Many of these were later edited and compiled into *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[11] As Willem C. van Unnik noted, "In Dr. Kennedy's work one learns to see what Paul's audiences were accustomed to, what they expected; it gives an insight in the background against which the apostle was speaking and leads to a comparison between the ways in which Paul presented his message and the standards that were current in histories" (review of G. A. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece, Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, [1964]: 60).

[12] As he describes it, Kennedy's aim is "reading the Bible as it would be read by an early Christian, by an inhabitant of the Greek speaking world in which rhetoric was the core subject of formal education and in which even those without formal education necessarily developed cultural preconceptions about appropriate discourse" (*Interpretation*, 5).

[13] This influence cannot be solely limited to the heartlands of Greece either; Kennedy cites such rhetoricians as Theodorus, Caecilius, and Hermogenes as evidence of the widespread practice and importance of rhetoric in the Mediterranean region (*Interpretation*, 9).

invention of the Greeks; rather, they categorized patterns of persuasion inherent to human reasoning. The Greeks were simply the first to name and categorize theses argumentative techniques which had previously been learned by new generations through imitation. Kennedy's aim, against the accusations of later critics, is not to dogmatically force classical Greek rhetorical techniques onto ill–suited NT passages; rather, he works to recognize the universal methods of persuasion within these texts, most easily referenced using terminology established by the Greeks.[14] These two propositions offer the *historical* and *philosophical* justification for NT rhetorical criticism. Kennedy's greater contribution is providing a methodology for the rhetorical analysis of the NT. He offers a five–step process for appropriately applying these ancient methods to a text, consisting of determining (1) the rhetorical unit, (2) the rhetorical situation, (3) the rhetorical problem, (4) the arrangement of material, and finally, (5) examining the effectiveness of the argument. [15] This method will be utilized in ch. 5 below, so a fuller discussion of these steps will be presented there.

Kennedy's influence upon biblical studies may well be considered disproportionate to his few writings in the field, but several factors contributed to his lasting influence. First, his exhaustive knowledge of classical Greek rhetoric gave him the authority to argue for the relevance of this literature to NT studies over against those who saw the Greek influence as purely stylistic and extraneous. Further, as an outside expert,

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[14] On this note, Kennedy adds, "If fundamental and universal features of rhetoric are kept in mind and if we seek to use them in describing the logical and structural features of the text before us, rather than simply quarrying a text for examples of classical figures, we can significantly enhance our appreciation of its meaning without violence to the author's intent" (*Interpretation*, 12).

[15] Kennedy, *Interpretation,* 33–36. Clifton Black categorizes Kennedy's approach into six steps ("Rhetorical Criticism," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 261–3).

he contributed to the field without "appropriating" aspects of classical rhetoric, bringing

the full weight of his knowledge and expertise to bear on the text. Lastly, his concise

introduction appeared at a moment when the field was ripe for new critical methods and

his approach provided the necessary tools for this inchoate discipline. Kennedy's method

built upon the interest spurred by Betz's work and his expertise lent credence to the

relevance of classical rhetoric to this field.

Differences in Approach

While often categorized together, these two authors have quite different visions for how

and why classical texts should be utilized in NT criticism. As demonstrated in his

commentaries, Betz examines the *macro–rhetoric* present in the overall structure and

formatting of a letter. Paul simply did not incorporate rhetorical elements that were *in the

air,* but intentionally and deliberately crafted (some of) his writings in accordance with

specific rhetorical genres. For Betz, classical rhetoric provides a guide to the forms Paul

uses in his letters, and ancient handbooks offer modern audiences insight into the logic

behind these structures and argumentation.

Kennedy, however, believes classical Greek rhetoric is only a manifestation of an

underlying, universal *art of persuasion*. Kennedy credits the Greeks with being the first

to treat, classify, and teach such a system, but these techniques were long taught and

learned through imitation. For Kennedy, rhetoric is "a universal phenomenon which is

conditioned by basic workings of the human mind and heart and by the nature of all

human society."[16] While Kennedy classifies his argument as historical, it borders on the

philosophical. He posits that it is "perfectly possible" to apply rhetorical criticism

utilizing Aristotle's categories to other cultures or periods because the underlying

principles remain valid, independent of cultural or intellectual exchange.[17] The rhetorical

handbooks, then, offer the modern audience a glimpse into how this universal art of

persuasion was understood by the Greco–Roman mind.

Reception and Influence

Betz's commentary was well–received by many for presenting a coherent and unified

organizational structure for Galatians. While the structure proposed by Betz would be

critiqued and honed by later scholars, it marked a turn from approaching the text as an

angry outburst with no discernible fluidity or cohesion. The thoroughness with which

Betz approached the text, his structural thesis, and his knowledge of classical sources

yielded many fresh perspectives to this letter, leading Wayne Meeks to remark that this

work "is perhaps the most original commentary on Galatians that we have in any

language."[18] Betz's work did not go without critics, though. The most widespread critique

of his analysis was waged against his classification of the letter as an *apologetic letter*

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[16] Kennedy, *Interpretation*, 10.

[17] *Interpretation*, 10. Later, Kennedy develops this notion to argue that rhetoric is rooted in "biological necessity," even arguing that similar biological factors are at work in the non–verbal communications of animals, remarking, "The ultimate origins of rhetoric, it seems to me, lie in the instinct for self–preservation and survival of the genetic line. Even in animals without speech there exists a form of rhetoric of intimidation or appeasement" ("Reworking Aristotle's Rhetoric," in *Theory, Text, Context Issues in Greek Rhetoric and Oratory* [Albany: University of New York, 1996], 183). Kennedy more fully develops this notion in his article, "A Hoot in the Dark: The Evolution of General Rhetoric," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* (1992): 1–21.

[18] Wayne A. Meeks, Review of H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, *JBL* 100, no. 2 (1981): 304.

and the seemingly mixed methodology of applying rhetorical standards to an epistolary

genre.[19] Further, it was questioned if Galatians truly fit the applied structure as well as

Betz argued.[20]

Kennedy's work was similarly well–received by those seeking a clear path into

the field of rhetorical studies, though many took issue with this offered interpretations of

NT passages.[21] Kennedy attempted within his book to ward off methodological concerns

by arguing that rhetoric was essentially unavoidable in the ancient world.[22] Alternatively,

some asked if classical rhetoric is an early attempt to systematically treat a universal

phenomenon, does it remain the *best* system of analysis to dissect the arguments of these

authors?[23]

Not only did these authors receive some criticism from other scholars but,

illustrative of the differences addressed above, the two authors offer severe criticisms of

one another. Kennedy dedicates half of his chapter on the Pauline letters to a response of

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[19] Meeks offers both of these critiques, noting an appeal to the *apologetic letter* genre is an appeal to theory alone; it is a genre void of ancient specimens ("Ibid. These criticisms are shared by Richard B. Hays ("The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Paul's Theology in Galatians 3: 1–4: 11" [PhD Diss, Emory University, 1981], 243n92) and David E. Aune (Review of H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, *RSR* 7, no. 4 [1981]: 324).

[20] Most notably, two full chapters of the text fail to conform to the expectations of judiciary rhetoric (or *apologetic letters*, if one can appeal to such a category), which does not include *paraenesis*. As Betz acknowledges, paraenetic discourse is rarely addressed in the handbooks, noting, "It is rather puzzling to see that *paraenesis* plays only a marginal role in the ancient rhetorical handbooks, if not in rhetoric itself" (*Galatians*, 254).

[21] For early reviews of Kennedy's work see: H D. Betz (*JTS* 37, no. 1 [Apr 1986]: 166–67); Vernon Robbins (*Rhetorica* 3, no 1 [Spring 1985]: 145–49); Duane F. Watson (*CBQ* 47 [1985]: 553–54); Robert M. Fowler (*JBL* 105, no. 2 [June 1986]: 328–330).

[22] Kennedy notes that rhetorical handbooks were widely circulated in the NT world, that NT authors would have been exposed to rhetoric in practice if not in training, and that rhetoric was *in the air* of the ancient world (*Interpretation*, 8–10).

[23] For two expressions of this critique, see C. Joachim Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric," *Rhetorica* 10, no. 4 (1992): 343–4; Wilhelm H. Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us," *CBQ* 49, no. 3 (1987): 452–4, 460–3.

Betz's analysis of Galatians, challenging the *judicial* classification of the letter, which

results in the mislabeling of the rhetorical units.[24] This bellicose tone is picked up in

Betz's review of Kennedy, where he opens by noting, "we must state with regret that the

shortcomings of the work advise against its use as a tool for students of biblical

literature."[25] He shorts Kennedy's NT analysis for its brevity, lack of original insights,

and seeming unfamiliarity with current scholarship. These two brief interactions are

illustrative of the differences within the two methods of these authors and the danger of

grouping their approaches together as a single method, as often done in discussions of

rhetorical criticism.[26] Despite these concerns, the momentum of biblical rhetorical

criticism was not hampered and the field continues to see wide engagement even today.

Betz's trailblazing and Kennedy's methodology ushered in a new era of NT

rhetorical criticism. The number of articles, dissertations, and published works addressing

the rhetorical features of NT texts has swelled in the last several decades and shows no

sign of subsiding. To demonstrate the lasting influence of this movement, we offer here a

brief examination of those authors who continue in the "lineage" of these authors. The

influence of Betz is most readily seen in the work of his student Margaret Mitchell, who

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[24] Kennedy instead prefers a *deliberative* classification and remarks, "something can also be learned about the pitfalls of rhetorical criticism when not practiced in accordance with the method outlined in Chapter 1" (*Interpretation*, 144–52, here 144). Betz was well aware of the criticism a *judicial* determination would bring. In a personal letter nearly ten years prior to the publication of his commentary, Hendrikus Boers raised early concerns with classifying Galatians as apologetic, noting that his own analysis employing discourses theory led to the conclusion that, "the final result does indicate that only 1:10 through 2:21 is the apology" (Hendrichus Boers to Hans Dieter Betz, 15 Dec 1975, Box 1, Folder 7, Hendrikus Boers Papers 1963–1997, Pitts Theology Library Archives and Manuscripts, Emory University).

[25] Betz, "Review," 166.

[26] For a further discussion of these differences, see Philip H. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle* (New York: Cambridge University, 1998), 86–88.

modifies his approach in her analysis of 1 Corinthians.[27] Mitchell is less eager to prove

the rigid conformity of the text to handbooks than is Betz, instead seeking to demonstrate

how this letter compares to actual recorded speeches and letters.[28] This provides a more

realistic point of comparison between rhetoric in *practice* instead of the *ideals* of the

handbooks (this approach will be further engaged below in ch. 5). Likewise, Kennedy's

most faithful adherent is his former student Duane F. Watson, whose dissertation explored

the rhetorical composition of Jude and 2 Peter.[29] Watson continues to contribute to the

field with various articles and edited volumes and by maintaining an extensive

bibliography of rhetorical studies.[30] As interest in this field grew, other scholars made

significant contributions to the field. While their approaches and findings vary, Thomas

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[27] Margaret. M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Tübingen: Siebeck, 1991).

[28] For a brief discussion of the differences of Betz and Mitchell see Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians,* 60.

[29] Published as *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988). For a survey of Kennedy's impact upon NT studies, see Watson, "Influence," 41–61.

[30] A few of these works include "A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians and Its Implications for the Unity Question," *NovT* 30 (1988): 57–88; "A Rhetorical Analysis of 3 John: A Study in Epistolary Rhetoric," *CBQ* 51, no. 3 (1989): 479–501; "An Assessment of the Rhetoric and Rhetorical Analysis of the Letter of James," in *Reading James with New Eyes* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 99–120. Watson's bibliography is *The Rhetoric of the New Testament: A Bibliographic Survey* (Blandford Forum, UK: Deo Publishing, 2006).

Olbricht,[31] Joop F. M. Smit,[32] David Hellholm,[33] C. Joachim Classen,[34] and Lauri Thurén[35] are only a few who have contributed to the exploration of classical rhetoric and the NT.

Despite questions regarding the validity of historically based rhetorical criticism, it is clear that the strategies championed by Betz and Kennedy have had a lasting impact on the field of biblical studies. Even where there is dissent, the work of these two authors forced fruitful discourse. For the present, scholars who engage these techniques must continue refining methodologies to strengthen their analysis. The one feature of this historically oriented rhetorical criticism that can be stated definitively is that the movement will not quickly dissipate—it is a critical method that is becoming increasing employed or consulted in comprehensive treatments of many NT text.

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[31] Olbricht's influence on the field is pervasive and in addition to many published works he has also organized and edited volumes for numerous conferences covering rhetorical criticism, such as *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology: Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996).

[32] Smit give particular attention to 1 Corinthians: "The Rhetorical Disposition of First Corinthians 8:7–9:27," *CBQ* 59, no. 3 (1997): 476–91; "The Function of First Corinthians 10:23–30: A Rhetorical Anticipation," *Biblica* 78, no. 3 (1997): 377–88; "Epideictic Rhetoric in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 1–4," *Biblica* 84, no. 2 (2003): 184–201.

[33] Hellholm's early rhetorically oriented works center upon the arguementation of Romans; "Amplificatio in the Macro–Structure of Romans," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 123–51; "Enthymemic Argumentation in Paul: The Case of Romans 6," in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 119–79; "Die Argumentative Funktion von Römer 7:1–6," *NTS* 43, no. 3 (1997): 385–411.

[34] Classen's major contribution to the field is his work, *Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament* (Tübingen: Siebeck, 2000). In addition to "St. Paul's Epistles" cited in note 23 above, other articles and essays include, "Paulus Und Die Antike Rhetorik," *ZNW* 82, no. 1–2 (1991): 1–33; "Kann Die Rhetorische Theorie Helfen, Das Neue Testament, Vor Allem Die Briefe Des Paulus, Besser Zu Verstehen?," *ZNW* 100, no. 2 (2009): 145–72.

[35] In the field of Pauline studies, Thurén has focused on "derhetorizing" the text, that is, identifying the rhetorical features of a text in order to filter them out before interpreting. Some of his works include *Derhetorizing Paul: A Dynamic Perspective on Pauline Theology and the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); "Was Paul Angry: Derhetorizing Galatians," in *Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 302–20; "Rom 7 Avretoriserat," *SEÅ* 64 (1999): 89–100; "Fighting against Straw Men: Derhetorizing Theology and History in Paul," in *Nordic Paul: Finnish Approaches to Pauline Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 195–208.

CHAPTER 3

THE WORLD OF THE TEXT:

INTERTEXTUALITY AND THE TEXTURE OF PAUL'S LETTERS

> "A major goal of intertextual analysis is to ascertain the nature
> and result of processes of configuration and reconfiguration
> of phenomena in the world outside the text."
>
> – *Vernon K. Robbins* [1]

The work of Kennedy and Betz aims to understand better the text by examining the world

from which it emerged, employing the tools developed within that milieu to aid in the

interpretation of Paul's writings. The interpreters in this chapter look to the text itself to

understand the world that it creates within its own parameters. While this requires

engagement with external factors, the primary impetus for investigation begins with the

imagery or traditions invoked within before the exegete moves beyond these confines to

examine whence these allusions come and how they function within the text. Often, these

features are truly inter*textual*, employing previous writings, but they can also be cultural,

social, and religious references as well. The two authors below have advanced methods

for assessing such elements, and after an examination of their approaches, we will

analyze their impact upon the field of NT interpretation.

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[1] Vernon K Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Press International, 1996), 40.

Richard Hays

The influence of Richard Hays on the field of Pauline studies is undeniable. His thorough research and keen analysis have led to insightful contributions to a wide range of topics within this field though his works are not typically treated as *rhetorical criticism*. To appeal to Kennedy's earlier definition, if rhetoric is most simply, "that quality in discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish his purpose," then a significant feature of *that quality* in the Pauline epistles has to be the Jewish scriptures and their persuasive function. [2] In his 1989 book *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul,* Hays describes his approach to the intertextual elements within Paul's letters, though this method features strongly in his doctoral dissertation completed nine years previous.[3] While his dissertation advanced the *pistis christou* debate, it also contained the seminal elements of the method that would be fully developed in his later work. Hays grounds his interpretation in the *story–structure* that rests within Galatians, noting that interpreters must come to terms with "the centrality of *narrative* elements in [Paul's] thought."[4] He also recognizes the "strongly allusive" nature of the text and that the "foundation and framework are for the most part hidden from view, implicit rather than explicit."[5]

Echoes of Scripture deploys these same tactics but while appealing to *echoes* of the HB and the Israelite narrative embedded within Paul's letters. He borrows from John

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[2] Kennedy, *Interpretation*, 3.

[3] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). His dissertation, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, is cited on p. 15n19 above.

[4] Hays, *Faith*, 5; emphasis original.

[5] Hays, *Faith*, 234.

Hollander's theories of *intertextuality* and *metalepsis*, the latter occurring when a text

invokes themes or elements from an earlier text, thus linking the two.[6] Identification of

these allusions is facilitated when citations are made explicit, but difficulties arise when

these references are implicit, or even unintentional. While not systematic in his usage,

Hays uses the term *allusion* to refer to obvious HB references while *echo* denotes those

more difficult to identify.[7] Although the presence of an *echo* can never be certain, Hays

lays out seven parameters to gauge the feasibility of a proposed reading—though, even

with this guidance one is always working in "shades of certainty."[8]

How then does Hays's approach relate to Pauline rhetoric? Rather than formal

structures, Hays focuses on the persuasive potency of content. These *echoes* invoke

specific imagery in the minds of Paul's readers—images that will stir them to action or

convict them of truths. A brief example may aid here. Whereas Betz finds the middle

section of Galatians to be unwieldy and disjointed, Hays finds congruency through Paul's

invocation of the Abrahamic narrative.[9] Paul employs the *sacred–story* of Israel to

demonstrate that salvation for Gentiles was prefigured through the Abrahamic covenant

established by faith. In this maneuver, the rhetorical function of the text is clear as Paul

lays the foundation for his appeal to action by engrafting the Galatians into Israel's story

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[6] J. Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1984).

[7] Hays, *Echoes*, 29.

[8] Hays, *Echoes*, 32. His seven criteria entail: (1) availability; (2) volume; (3) recurrence; (4) thematic coherence; (5) historical plausibility; (6) history of interpretation; and (7) satisfaction (29–32). In *Faith,* Hays anticipates a criticism of his method may be, "that I am interpreting the text by positing a priori a narrative structure 'behind' the text and then forcing the interpretation of the text to fit this structure" (234). His preemptive response is to ground the narrative structure *in* the text itself, not *behind* it. The above enumeration can be seen as a refinement of this earlier claim.

[9] Betz remarks on this section that Paul has acted as a skilled rhetorician "in disguising his rhetorical strategy" (*Galatians*, 356).

through the invoking of the Abrahamic narrative.[10] As participants in a pre–Mosaic

covenant, there is no need for the Galatians to *digress* into Torah observance. The

Genesis account works to assure the Galatians of their proper standing before God, apart

from the Law, and thus, in spite of lacking formal rhetorical structuring, the persuasive

function of the text is clear. Paul's rhetoric, as assessed by Hays, employs the history of

Israel to provide theological motivation to urge on his Christian audience in their

convictions and new standard of living. While the structure differs from that of Betz and

Kennedy, the function of the text remains intact.

Vernon Robbins

Much as *Echoes* further developed Hays's methodology, Vernon Robbins's *The Tapestry*

of Early Christian Discourse offered a programmatic filling–out of his exegetical method

employed over a decade earlier.[11] Robbins seeks to foster dialogue within the highly

fragmented field of NT criticism while creating conversation with external disciplines.

Employing the imagery of weaving, he argues that a text viewed from different

perspectives yields distinct impressions and engaging these various *textures* produces a

thicker reading than achieved through a lone disciplinary lens. Robbins views this

approach as a "grand theory," which eliminates the isolationist tendencies of much

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[10] On this point, Hays remarks, "With this christological warrant firmly in place, Paul can proceed to read Israel's Scripture as a mysterious prefiguration of the church, a story in which Christ's Gentile adherents can find their own story prewritten" (*Echoes*, 121).

[11] Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society, and Ideology* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1996); *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio–Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984). Robbins's introductory handbook treating the socio–rhetorical method, *Exploring the Texture of Texts,* is cited above in note 1.

academic scholarship.[12]

Socio–rhetorical interpretation (SRI) provides an *interpretative analytics* that engages the five primary *textures* of a text—the *inner, inter, social and cultural, ideological,* and *sacred*.[13] SRI allows for selected textures to be engaged as needed to fit the passage and aims of the interpreter. Thus, the *inner* and *intertexture* will prove most fruitful for the present study. The *inner texture* concerns itself with "relationships among word–phrase and narrational patterns that produce argumentative and aesthetic patterns in texts."[14] In this way, it shares with Betz and Kennedy a concern for the tropes, figures, and structures of a passage and with Hays a concern for how the inner elements of a text affect its persuasive force.[15] The *intertexture* recognizes that a text stands "at all times in relation to other texts."[16] SRI, however, expands beyond literary interplay to include historical, social, and cultural interactions as they relate to the inner elements of the text. Two of these textures are relevant to the present discussion, the oral–scribal and the cultural. The oral–scribal texture most closely aligns with the common usage of the term *intertextuality* in NT studies.[17] The cultural texture examines the invocation of cultural

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[12] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 11.

[13] While Robbins addresses these five textures in *Texture*, in *Tapestry* he excludes the *sacred texture* from discussion. He also clarifies that this approach is not a *method* in the traditional sense and is still open to refinement as new textures are identified and further engaged (*Tapestry,* 12–3).

[14] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 46.

[15] Robbins notes that the employment of rhetorical theory is one of the primary distinctions between this *inner texture* and modern literary approaches (*Tapestry,* 45). Classical rhetoric is not the exclusive concern of SRI, however, as it analyzes even simpler patterns, such as repetition, progression, and narrative development.

[16] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 96.

[17] Robbins describes this as the "recitation, recontextualization and reconfiguration of other texts, both oral and scribal, in the foregrounded text" (Tapestry, 96). For two examples of the "traditional" use of this term see Dennis L. Stamp, "Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament as a Rhetorical Device.," in Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 19–20; Michael Labahn, "Deuteronomy in John's Gospel," in Deuteronomy in the New Testament

figures or narratives through either *reference* or *echo*.[18]

The distinct contribution of these textures lies in the expansion of traditional categories of analysis. The *inner texture* goes beyond formal rhetorical devices to examine overarching structure *and* individual elements. As an example, an analysis of the *repetitive–progressive texture* of Luke 1:26–56 highlights the narrative movement of the text as the repetition of characters reveals a progression from the messenger to Mary to Elizabeth with a final return to Mary, while God is present, yet passive, throughout the text.[19] The expanded sphere of *intertexture* yields similar benefits. The interpreter is able to consider a wider range of elements as SRI looks beyond literary allusions or quotations to identify cultural, social, and historical interplay. Such an approach is reflective of the multifaceted and overlapping influences with which individuals interact in a complex world.

The systematic nature of SRI is seen in the detailed *sub–textures* provided within each *texture* and the attention which Robbins gives to parsing out the nuanced differences between these subdivisions. Here, a major difference between the approaches of Robbins and Hays is revealed, as Robbins proposes systematic categories and processes, while Hays offers "serviceable rules of thumb" (these differences will be further discussed below).[20] This brief examination of only two *textures* illustrates how SRI encourages the

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(ed. M. J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise; Library of New Testament studies ; 358; London: T & T Clark, 2007), 82–84.

[18] For a discussion of these two phenomena see Robbins, *Tapestry*, 110–1.

[19] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 46–50.

[20] This is further revealed in Robbins's identification of Hays's method as a prime example of the misidentification and conflation of two separate *sub–textures*, the oral–scribal and cultural intertextures. For Robbins's full assessment of Hays, see *Tapestry*, 101–8.

reader to engage with the text in all of its social, cultural, and historical complexity. To

appreciate fully the depth of a passage, critics must explore the multiple dimensions of a

passage and how these dimensions interact to form meaning. As Robbins notes, his

approach "asks the interpreter to develop a conscious strategy of reading and rereading a

text from different angles." This multi-perspective approach aids in overcoming myopic

approaches by drawing upon the strengths of myriad interpretational tools and

methodologies.[21]

Differences in Approach

Both interpreters have made significant contributions to the study of the Pauline epistles

and share certain concerns in their approaches. First, both give priority to the content of a

text as well as its function, beginning from within the text before exploring the questions

or difficulties which arise.[22] Second, both authors give attention to the interaction of

Paul's letters with previous writings. Hays gives primary consideration to the Scriptures

of Israel, while Robbins remains open to a wider body of material.[23] As well–illustrated

by Robbins's maxim, "Every text is a rewriting of other texts," both authors recognize the

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[21] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 3.

[22] Robbins notes that the *inner texture* is a natural place for many NT scholars to begin because it parallels the concern of many exegetes to begin with the text itself as a guard against reading into the text, though SRI does not necessitate this starting point (*Texture,* 5).

[23] Hays gives attention to Jewish scriptures on the grounds that Paul was a devout Jew whose under–standing of the Christ event was fundamentally shaped by his Jewishness (*Echoes*, xi). Although Hays is criticized for this narrow focus (see *Tapestry*, 102), he does not proscribe the analysis of other allusions within Paul's letters. Robbins, conversely, argues that Paul was an inhabitant of the Mediterranean world and the boundaries of possible interactions should not be constricted beyond this broad worldview without reason (*Tapestry*, 30).

fundamental influences of previous writings (and traditions) upon Paul's letters.[24] The

differences in scope are not limited solely to types of literature either, as Robbins's

examination of *textures* extends far beyond literature, taking into account broader social

and cultural influences. The comprehensive nature of SRI dwarfs the comparatively

limited scope of Hays's approach, which aims to treat one specific subject (Paul's use of

Jewish scriptures) through one specific approach (literary allusion).

Further, as briefly mentioned above, the ideological underpinnings of each

author's methodology differ significantly. In SRI, terms such as *systematic, interpretative*

program, grand theory, programmatic, and *interpretative analytics* feature prominently.

Robbins views SRI as a "systematic approach that sets multiple contexts of interpretation

in dialogue with one another."[25] A crucial aspect of Robbins's success derives from the

special attention that he gives to systemizing his methodology. Hays, conversely, faced

early criticism for his lack of rigid methodology and constraints.[26] In spite of these

difference, both authors share that concern of identifying those external elements

embedded within a text that enhance the arguments persuasive. Such a focus departs from

the reliance on formal structures seen in the rhetorical criticism which preceded their

work, thereby granting some formerly neglected elements of the text new persuasive

force.

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[24] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 30.

[25] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 9, 13, respectively.

[26] The differences in these two approaches can partly be attributed to their intended aims. For Robbins, the attempt to bring together such disparate fields as rhetorical, historical, and social criticism requires structure. The enormity of the task demands a serviceable methodology for the uninitiated. Hays, however, has the aim of demon–strating how completely the HB permeated the mind of Paul, even to the extent that he was unaware of incorporating them into his writings. Such an aim requires flexibility and a degree of artistry to identify these illusive whispers.

Reception and Influence

Richard Hays

Hays's approach proved highly influential in the field of Pauline studies and was promptly recognized for the significant impact it would have upon the field. Early reviews recognized that *Echoes* would be "a work to use and to reckon with for every Pauline scholar," and significantly advanced the case that Paul's use of the HB was more "rhetorically meaningful than traditional exegesis has allowed."[27] It was not, however, without critics, as reviewers took issue with multiple aspects of Hays's methodology.[28] By way of an example, in his classifications of *citation*, *allusion*, and *echo* Hays proves elusive. What differentiates *allusion* from *quotation*? How subtle must an *allusion* be to become an *echo*? Hays's early definition but later inconsistent implementation of these terms proved confusing. J. Christiaan Beker exasperatedly asks, "How can 'echoes' serve as constraints, when they are muffled, subliminal, or 'latent'?," forcefully voicing the confusion incited by the cumulative effect of these methodological questions.[29]

Hays's work did not launch the intertextual study of the NT; nonetheless, it

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[27] Respectively, see the reviews of Carol L. Stockhausen, *JBL* 111, no. 1 (1992): 155–57; David M. Hay, *Interpretation* 45, no. 1 (1991): 89.

[28] An overview of some of the ambiguity in Hays's methodology which raised the ire of reviewers include his proposal to "hold [all five hermeneutics] together in creative tension" rather than specifically delineating a clear approach (*Echoes*, 27). In appropriating the methodology of Hollander he notes, "it is less a matter of method than of sensibility" (21) and in classifying his use of *echoes* and *allusions* he is, at best, indefinite (29). Finally, his delimiting criteria, he terms "serviceable rules of thumb" (32). For an analysis of the criticisms waged against each of the proposed criteria of identification, see David A. Shaw, "Converted Imaginations?: The Reception of Richard Hays's Intertextual Method," *Currents in Biblical Research.* 11, no. 2 (2013): 236–41.

[29] "Echoes and Intertextuality: On the Role of Scripture in Paul's Theology," in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 65. On the rise of intertextuality in biblical studies, see Ellen van Wolde, "Trendy Intertextuality," in *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings : Essays in Honour of Bas van Iersel* (Kampen: JHKok, 1989)

spurred interpreters to examine critically Paul's use of the HB.[30] Intertextual studies

remain prominent at academic conferences and meetings, a good sampling of which

Craig A. Evans has collected into numerous edited volumes.[31] Dissertations, produced

both under the direction of Hays and elsewhere, continue to explore new avenues of

intertextuality and to refine Hays's approach.[32] The extent of Hays's influence on the

field is perhaps most vividly illustrated by the *Festschrift* produced in his honor

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[30] The following studies are illustrative of the wide–ranging influence this approaches has had upon the field of NT studies. Early studies employing aspects of Hays's approach include Karen H. Jobes, "Jerusalem, our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4.21– 31", *WTJ* 55 (1993): 299–320; James M. Scott's two studies, "Paul's Use of Deuteronomic Tradition", *JBL* 112 (1993): 645–65 and "The Use of Scripture in 2 Corinthians 6.16c–18 and Paul's Restoration Theology," *JSNT* 56 (1994): 3–99; Christopher D. Stanley, "The Redeemer Will Come ἐκ Σιὼν: Romans 11.26–27 Revisited", in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (1993): 118–42.; Frank Thielman, "Unexpected Mercy: Echoes of a Biblical Motif in Romans 9–11", *SJT* 47 (1994): 169–81; Patricia K. Tull, "Intertextuality and the Hebrew Scriptures," *CurBS* 8:1 (2000): 59–90.

 The influence of this approach has not waned in subsequent years, as attested to by the continued popularity of intertextual studies in academic journals and compiled volumes. See for example, Gordon D. Fee, "Old Testament Intertextuality in Colossians: Reflections on Pauline Christology and Gentile Inclusion in God's Story", in *History and Exegesis* (London: T&T Clark, 2006): 201–21; Jeremy M. Hutton, "Isaiah 51:9–11 and the Rhetorical Appropriation and Subversion of Hostile Theologies," *JBL* 126 (2007): 271–303. Florian Wilk, "Paul as User, Interpreter, and Reader of the Book of Isaiah," in *Reading the Bible Intertextually*. (Waco, TX: Baylor, 2009), 83–100; John K. Goodrich, "Sold Under Sin: Echoes of Exile in Romans 7.14–25." *NTS* 59:4 (Oct 2013): 476–495; Leroy A. Huizenga, "The Old Testament in the New, Intertextuality and Allegory." *JSNT*, 38:1 (Sept 2015): 17–35.

[31] See Evans and Sanders, *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*; the two edited volumes of *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality* (Eds. C. A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias; London: T & T Clark, 2009); *"What Does the Scripture Say?: Studies in the Function of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Eds. C. A. Evans and H. D. Zacharias; New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2012); *Searching the Scriptures : Studies in Context and Intertextuality* (Eds, C. A. Evans and Jeremy M. Johnston; London ; New York: T&T Clark, 2015).

[32] A sample of dissertation directed by Hays includes Mary E. Hinkle, "Proclaiming Peace: The Use of Scripture in Ephesians" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1997); J. Ross Wagner, "'Who Has Believed Our Message?': Paul and Isaiah 'in Concert' in the Letter to the Romans" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1999); Susan G. Eastman, "Metaphor and Mimesis: Proclamation, Transformation, and the Staying Power of the Gospel in Galatians 4:12—5:1" (Ph.D. diss, Duke University, 2003); C. Kavin Rowe, "Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2005).

 Paul Foster offers the most recent critique of works employing Hays's methodology which includes several dissertations ("Echoes without Resonance: Critiquing Certain Aspects of Recent Scholarly Trends in the Study of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament," *JSNT* [2015], 96–111). While older than Foster's, Kenneth D. Litwak also examines works emerging subsequent to Hays's publication ("Echoes of Scripture? A Critical Survey of Recent Works on Paul's Use of the Old Testament," *Currents in Research* 6 [1998]: 260–88).

containing over 30 essays from an array of scholars in the field of NT and beyond.[33]

Hays's *Echoes* touched off an immediate and persistent interest in Paul's use of HB

citations and traditions, and his influence continues to be felt in all areas of NT studies to

this very day, leading one recent survey of Pauline research to characterize the book as

"not only influential but paradigm–changing."[34]

Vernon Robbins

Robbins's significant contribution to the field of NT criticism is not in the advancement

of any singular approach, but rather in providing a programmatic method that threads

together various techniques long employed in the field, albeit, independently. Neither

rhetorical criticism nor sociological approaches are new in their own right, "but

combined, in a *programmatic* way, into a *single* method—that is a relatively new idea."[35]

Robbins not only details a system for organizing such interdisciplinary studies, but

"makes sociorhetorical analysis practicable."[36] The multifaceted nature of this approach,

though, leads some to question if SRI succeeds in bringing together the various *textures*

to form the promised vision of the *tapestry*.[37] Still others have asked what such an

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[33] *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). Also of note is a volume edited by Hays titled, *Reading the Bible Intertextually* (Eds. R. B. Hays, S. Alkier, and L. A. Huizenga; Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2009).

[34] N. T. Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 98.

[35] Louis A Ruprecht, Jr., review of V. Robbins, *Tapestry*, *Literature and Theology* (1998) 12 (2): 225, emphasis original.

[36] Willi Braun, review of V. Robbins, *Tapestry*, *CBQ* 60, no. 2 (1998): 383.

[37] R. Alan Culpepper remarks, "I would encourage Robbins to take the next step and show how the method works, not just in the serial treatment of the various textures but in their correlation and in their critical dialogue" ("Mapping the Textures of New Testament Criticism: A Response to Socio–Rhetorical Criticism," *JSNT* 70 (1998): 76). Lionel Basney similarly observes, "there seems to be little cumulative or

approaches contributes beyond what is already pursued by *interdisciplinary studies* in the NT field?[38]

Despite these questions, SRI has proven to be a useful tool for many exploring the inherently multifaceted nature of NT texts. In addition to the work of Robbins, several scholars have worked extensively with this approach. Burton Mack worked closely with Robbins in the early stages, specifically with regard to rhetoric which would develop into the *inner texture*.[39] Together with Robbins, Duane F. Watson serves as editor for the *Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity Series* of commentaries, which applies SRI to NT and early Christian texts.[40] Independent of this endeavor, Ben Witherington III, Craig Keener, and David deSilva have all contributed socio–rhetorical commentaries treating several NT writings.[41] While Witherington is a figure often associated with SRI, it must be noted that there exist serious disagreements between Robbins and Witherington in regard to the implementation and final aims of socio–rhetorical interpretation.[42] Nevertheless,

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coherent gain" as the analysis moves from stage to stage (review of V. Robbins, *Tapestry*, *Christianity and Literature*, 46, no. 2 (1997): 188).

[38] Peter Lampe notes that the approach now labeled SRI has been on–going in biblical studies without such nomenclature or defined methodology for sometime ("Rhetorical Analysis of Pauline Texts—Quo Vadit?: Methodological Reflections," in *Paul and Rhetoric* (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 10).

[39] Burton L. Mack, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1989).

[40] The introductory volume of this series is written by Robbins (*The Invention of Christian Discourse* [Blandford Forum, England: Deo Pub, 2009]) and the first commentary of the series has recently been published, authored by Roy R. Jeal (*Exploring Philemon: Freedom, Brotherhood, and Partnership in the New Society* [Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015]). Forthcoming volumes are set to authored by Robbins (Luke), L. Gregory Bloomquist (John, Johannine epistles), D. F. Watson (Philippians), and David deSilva (1 Peter, Revelation).

[41] C. S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); D. A. DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio–Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); See below for a few of Witherington's commentaries in this vein.

[42] An examination of these differences lies beyond the scope of the present project; however, this difference is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in Robbins review of Witherington's *What's in the Word.* There he attacks Witherington's implementation of SRI as fostering many historically ill–founded claims, failing to truly engage with the *Progymnasmata,* and promoting isolationist tendencies within

Witherington has produced numerous works under the auspices of SRI both as introductions and commentaries.[43] The flexible and variegated approach of SRI makes it difficult to fully quantify its influence, but interested readers can find an extensive bibliography of over 450 writings pertinent to SRI maintained by Robbins.[44] While different scholars have worked with SRI, Robbins has certainly left an indelible mark upon the approach.[45]

Though the approaches of Hays and Robbins differ, they share several key concerns. Most prominently, they both recognize the important interplay present between a text and its predecessors—though the scope of these "predecessors" differs for each.

Christian scholarship that Robbins envisions SRI working to deconstruct (V. K. Robbins, review of B. Witherington, *What's In The Word*, *RBL* (2012): n.p.).

[43] On Witherington's works treating introductory matters related to SRI, see *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2009); *What's in the Word: Rethinking the Socio–Rhetorical Character of the New Testament* (Waco: Baylor University, 2009); *Paul's Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph* (Louisville: John Knox, 1994). A few of his SRI commentaries treating the Pauline corpus are *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio–Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004); *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio–Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). Lastly, of note is the *Festschrift* honoring Witherington, *Kingdom Rhetoric: New Testament Explorations in Honor of Ben Witherington III* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013).

[44] Robbins, "Bibliography of Socio–Rhetorical Interpretation," Emory University, http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/bib.cfm. Many of the studies provided in this bibliography serve as resources for SRI and are not explicitly socio–rhetorical studies proper. Additionally, a brief annotated bibliography of SRI resources is provided by Witherington in *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 48–67. Although the bibliography highlights resources pertinent to the study of the Corinthian correspondence, many of the works provide relevant background material for the Pauline corpus and NT at large.

[45] Bloomquist observes that SRI bears the imprint of Robbins's concern for achieving "inclusion through hearing" ("Rhetoric, Culture, and Ideology: Socio–Rhetorical Analysis in the Reading of New Testament Texts," in *Rhetorics in the New Millennium: Promise and Fulfillment* (ed. J. D. Hester and J. D. Hester; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 145–6). This concern for inclusion is reflected in Robbins's criticism of Witherington as he notes, "A major goal during the twenty–first century should be for Christians to find ways to responsibly interpret New Testament writings in ways that help us all to understand the nature of historical conflict and to find ways religious belief and understanding can help us move toward actions that can help us build a world that respects people of different cultures and religious traditions and engages in true concern for the bodies, minds, and spirits of all different kinds of people" (review of Withering, *What's in the Word*, n.p.).

Both authors encourage interpreters to begin with the text and then look beyond the inner elements to engage with a broader context in order to fully appreciate the persuasive function of these allusions. If the past serves as any indication, intertextual studies—and the influence of these two authors—will continue to flourish in biblical studies.

CHAPTER 4

THE WORLD IN FRONT OF THE TEXT:
PAUL'S LETTERS AND INFORMAL PERSUASION

"Rhetoric is recognized as inherent in all language usage,
whether it is written or spoke, poetic or ordinary.
Indeed, rhetoric is inherent in all use of signs
as forms and functions of discourse."

– Wilhelm Wuellner [1]

The previous two chapters examined approaches that grounded method and theory, to a greater or lesser extent, in the cultural milieu of Paul's writings. For Betz and Kennedy, the historical context furnished both the material and method while for Hays and Robbins it provides the cultural material which Paul draws from while the method employs modern theory. In this chapter we turn to survey those who treat the *world before the text*, that is, the world of the reader and how a writing interacts with its audience(s). The historical context of these writings is largely inconsequential to examining the persuasive effects of the text, as modern methods and theories of rhetoric are employed. We will first explore the New Rhetoric of Chaïm Perelman, which has proven most influential in the field of NT studies, before examining how these theories have been implemented in the Pauline literature through the work of Wilhelm Wuellner. We will then conclude the

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[1] Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism," 158.

present chapter by assessing the impact of this approach on the study of Paul's letters.

Chaïm Perelman

While much NT rhetorical criticism focuses upon historically oriented analyses, the publication of *La Nouvelle Rhétorique* in 1958 introduced an innovative method for analyzing the persuasive strategies of an argument.[2] This interest in rhetorical strategies developed concurrent with the works of Betz and Kennedy, though differed significantly in its approach. The treatise would not prove as widely influential in the field of NT studies as its contemporaries, but nonetheless, the work provided an alternative methodology for assessing Paul's argumentative tactics that gained strong adherence in some corners of the field.

Perelman's priorities are demonstrated in his defense of rhetoric against two long–held views that seek to devalue it. Against philosophically oriented approaches, he argues that rhetoric does not treat the apodictic but rather the opinionable; if it dealt in facts and logic then persuasion would be wholly unnecessary as "a study of the facts would impose themselves automatically on any reasonable mind."[3] Against other critics who see rhetoric as little more than structuring and elocutionary excellence, Perelman appeals to

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[2] C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts–Tyteca, *Traité de l'argumentation* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1958). The work was translated into English eleven years later by John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver as *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969).

[3] Perelman, *New Rhetoric*, 46. While Perelman counters many modern philosophers, such a critique of rhetoric can also be seen extending back to Plato (c.f. *New Rhetoric*, 319). For a brief discussion of the decline of rhetoric in the wake of deconstructionist thought see Wayne C. Booth, "Rhetorical Critics Old and New: The Case of Gerard Genette," in *Reconstructing Literature* (ed. L. Lerner; Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 130–33. See also Kennedy's treatment of the decline of rhetoric in *New History*, 271–4

the concern of ancient rhetoricians (primarily Aristotle) with the persuasive force of

speech. Because rhetoric seeks to "create or increase the adherence of minds to the theses

presented for their assent," it concerns argumentation more than deductive proofs or

formulaic techniques.[4] Perelman reclaims the realm of *persuasion* as the locus of true

rhetoric and any study of the matter must necessarily give primacy to the persuasive

effectiveness of an argument.

Such statements are not without precedent (i.e., understanding persuasion as the

core aim of rhetoric), but Perelman advances these claims by exploring non–formal

tactics used to gain the adherence of an audience. Rather than focusing on the speeches of

skilled rhetoricians, Perelman explores the mundane persuasive strategies present in daily

interactions, from "that of discussion around the family table" to "that of debate in a

highly specialized environment."[5] He gives little attention to the classification of formal

elements and to the structural crafting of a discourse, instead focusing upon the

"argumentative schemes" employed in persuasive endeavors.[6] A discussion of these

myriad argumentative schemes makes up the bulk of *The New Rhetoric* and are too

numerous and detailed to be summarized here.[7] Perelman is careful to note that this

extensive examination is not a definitive classification, but only begins to scratch the

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[4] Perelman, *New Rhetoric*, 45. See also, *The Realm of Rhetoric*, 21.

[5] Perelman, *New Rhetoric*, 7–8.

[6] See the introductory comments in *The New Rhetoric*, 9. This disregard for formulaic structuring does not mean that Perelman has no regard for the ordering of an argument, but rather that such ordering should be determined with the persuasive aim always in mind instead of in consideration of predetermined formulae. The order should then be influenced by three considerations (i) the argumentative situation, (ii) the conditioning of the audience, and (iii) the effect of the ordering upon the audience (491; see the encompassing section for the full consideration of order, 490–502).

[7] Andreas H. Snyman provides a broad discussion of the function and classifcation of these figures as the pertain to NT studies in the article, "On Studying the Figures (Schēmata) in the New Testament," *Biblica* 69, no. 1 (1988): 93–107.

surface of possible modes of persuasion.[8] Perelman rejects any oversimplified classification system because it increases the risk of giving focus to technique itself, instead of the more important specific context, the *rhetorical situation* as Perelman terms it.[9] It is less important to create universal applications for the figures and more fruitful to identify "how and in what respects the use of particular figures is explained by the requirements of argumentation."[10] A rhetorical element gains its potency not from its form alone but from its function *in situ.*

The New Rhetoric (NR) contributes to NT studies and the field of rhetoric writ large by recognizing that human interactions consist of an unremitting process of persuasion and negotiation, most of which occurs without significant foresight or preparation. In these banal interactions, how does one gain the adherence of another without engaging formal tropes or overarching structures? Perelman argues that *the art of persuasion* is both more commonplace and more diverse than traditionally thought, and there is seemingly no end to the argumentative figures that can be discovered. What is significant in an argument—for the present discussion, in the arguments of the Apostle— is the choice of argumentative modes in so far as it reveals how the author thought these tactics would convince the audience. A full examination of the implications of *The New Rhetoric* would occupy significant space, but this concise introduction establishes the necessary background for examining the application of NR to the Pauline studies.

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[8] Perelman, *New Rhetoric*, 509.

[9] Perelman's work here overlaps with that of Lloyd Bitzer, to be explored more fully in ch. 5 (see p. 49 below).

[10] Perelman, *New Rhetoric,* 168.

Wilhelm Wuellner

The earliest application of NR is found in the works of Wilhelm Wuellner. In a 1976

article titled "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans," Wuellner presents a way

forward in the contemporary debate of the classification of Romans.[11] Against the

prevailing opinions of the day, Wuellner argues that primacy should be given to the

argumentative force of the letter, which would provide "a more satisfactory way of

accounting not only for the dialectical and logical dimensions, and for the literary

dimensions in Paul's discourses, but also for the situational and social dimensions

presupposed in Paul's letters."[12] He appeals to Perelman's explication of how an author

increases audience adherence and further highlights the necessity of understanding the

rhetorical situation of the letter. But the influence of NR is most readily seen in his

thesis, "the study of Paul's letters generally, and of Romans specifically, requires a new

orientation in the priority of our methods of study. The argumentative nature of religious

literature—traditionally referred to as propaganda literature—calls for a methodology

that can account for the nature and effects of argumentation."[13] Here, the spirit of

Perelman is plainly evident as Wuellner considers argumentation as an aid to better

analyzing structure and content. However, while NR undergirds his argument, the

detailed analysis pulls heavily from classical rhetorical theory, seen by the heavy

footnoting of H. Lausberg's *Handbuch der Literarischen Rhetorik*. The actual

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[11] W. H. Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfried–Karris Debate over Romans," *CBQ* 38, no. 3 (1976): 330–51. Wuellner also references his presentation in that same year occurring at the SBL Pacific Coast Regional conference which address 1 Corinthians utilizing the New Rhetoric (see "Taking Us," 453.

[12] Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric," 331.

[13] Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric," 350.

examination of the text reads closer to that of Betz than Perelman, and so while this article presents an early appeal to the work of Perelman, it fails to offer a true NR analysis.

Wuellner more fully develops this approach a few years later as he treats the digressions of 1 Corinthians.[14] There, he extensively employs NR as he engages the ideas of argumentative situation, audience construction, and the interaction of argumentation and commitment. His thesis rests on Perelman's definition of *epideictic* discourse as aiming "to increase the intensity of adherence to certain values."[15] Wuellner argues that the digressions in 1 Corinthians (specifically, 1:19–3:21, 9:1–10:13, 13:1–3) aim to increase the audience's adherence to the preceding argument made by Paul rather than asserting a new point.

As a brief example, 1 Cor 13 is often treated as interrupting the larger argument, which proceeds from 12:31 to 14:1 without pause. Wuellner argues that these digressions serve a rhetorical function and must be viewed in light of their rhetorical situation and argumentative force. If the *digression* is granted argumentative heft rather than capriciously dismissed, the entire chapter works to strengthen audience adherence to the previous point, i.e., that the Corinthians should strive for the greater spiritual gifts. The benefit here is that the function of the text is not determined by stylistic or literary features, but rather by the rhetorical situation, so the digressions are seen as an integral part of Paul's argumentation. This merging of modern and ancient insights leads the interpreter to "an appreciation of the nature and function of Paul's 'most varied style' in

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[14] Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M Grant* (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1979), 177–88.

[15] Perelman, *The New Rhetoric*, 51.

communicating his gospel."[16]

Wuellner's implementation of the NR increased over the subsequent years and his advocacy helped advance this, and other, modern critical methods. In an aptly titled article published ten years later, Wuellner sought to clarify the question that many were asking of the field, "Where is rhetorical criticism taking us?"[17] There, he highlights the divided nature of the field of NT rhetorical studies and the seeming incompatibility of these differing approaches. He states that by the mid–1970's, rhetorical criticism had arrived at a crossroads between two approaches closely approximating literary criticism and practical criticism.[18] Against these, he highlights Kennedy's method, describing it as offering an adaptation of the rhetorical handbooks for "modern use."[19] Taking the modernization of rhetoric a step further, then, is Perelman's strategy, which proves "indispensable for the analysis of *practical* reasoning as *one* major component of religious texts (among other components)."[20] The NR approaches texts not as inert works, but as social discourse between the author, the audience, and even the reader. In response to the question posed in the title of this essay, Wuellner observes:

> [Rhetorical criticism] promises to take biblical exegetes at last out of the ghetto of an estheticizing preoccupation with biblical stylistics which has remained for centuries formalized, and functionless, and contextless. The fateful bifurcation of rhetoric into dialectics and stylistics (the legacy of the sixteenth–century iconoclastic Peter Ramus)—a split latent in the theoretical distinction between "figures of thought" *(res)* and "figures of speech" *(verba)* in classical systems of

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[16] Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric," 188.

[17] Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (1987): 448–63.

[18] Wuellner, "Taking Us," 453.

[19] Wuellner, "Taking Us," 454–5.

[20] Wuellner, "Taking Us," 460; emphasis original.

rhetoric—must at last be overcome.[21]

Wuellner believed that NR offered a path forward that avoided the overemphasis on form and style that plagued past rhetorical approaches to the biblical texts.

Two brief notes may be mentioned regarding Wuellner's method. First, Wuellner pulls from a vast array of methods and theories in his research. While Perelman influences his rhetorical approach to NT texts, the narrow focus of the present study does not do justice to the multifaceted influences acting upon his work.[22] This is attested by the agility with which he frequently weaves together various theories and methods in the course of his writings.[23]

This leads to the second observation that although Wuellner draws a clear distinction between their methodologies, the philosophical concerns of his approach at times resonate with those of Robbins. He argues that an interdisciplinary approach to rhetoric will provide, "a more satisfactory way of accounting not only for the dialectical and logical dimensions, and for the literary dimensions in Paul's discourses, but also for the situational and social dimensions presupposed in Paul's letters."[24] However, Wuellner

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[21] Wuellner, "Taking Us," 462.

[22] As J. D. Hester Amador notes that Wuellner's method and theory is "informed by a wide experience of exploration into such fields as history of hermeneutics, non–western rhetorics, classical rhetoric, postmodern literary theory and hermeneutics, structuralism, materiality of discourse, semiotics, reader–response, narrative poetics, speech–act theory, feminism, and ideological criticism, to name just a few" (*Academic Constraints in Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction to a Rhetoric of Power* [Sheffield, Eng: Sheffield Press, 1999], 87).

[23] See Wuellner's comments on the necessity of the engagement of rhetorical criticism with other interpretive communities in, "Rhetorical Criticism," in *The Postmodern Bible* (ed. George Aichele; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 167–8.

[24] Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric," 331. Years later, he mentions a similarly hopeful assessment of this approach, "The new rhetorical criticism is beginning to offer a means of mending the separation and of renegotiating the relation between the textual world inside the Bible and its extra–textual social history, text and context" ("Rhetorical Criticism," 174).

clearly differentiates between his own approach and that of Robbins, drawing a

distinction between his own emphasis upon persuasive force and that of Robbins, which

he describes as ending "in the service of the historian's interest in social description."[25]

While these two approaches are distinct in many ways, it is worth noting that there are

moments when their orbits bring them closer together.

Reception and Influence

The discussion of Perelman's broader influence must be truncated in order to give

primary focus to the influence of his theory on the field of Pauline studies. As a

philosopher and rhetorician, Perelman was concerned with understanding rhetoric proper,

and his work made a significant impact upon the realm of secular rhetorical studies and

beyond.[26] His theory was well–received within this field and was reviewed favorably in a

wide–range of journals.[27] It was seen as advancing rhetoric beyond the fossilized forms

of antiquity and providing a framework for returning persuasion to its former prominence

within rhetoric. The wide–ranging influence of Perelman's work is attested to by a 2008

conference organized in recognition of his lasting influence.[28] These papers cover a range

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[25] Wuellner, "Taking Us," 454

[26] For an analysis of this impact, see David A. Frank and Michelle K. Bolduc, "Chaim Perelman's 'First Philosophies and Regressive Philosophy': Commentary and Translation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 36, no. 3 (2003): 177–9.

[27] See Thomas M. Conley's survey of rhetoric, where he observes that Perelman's work "was reviewed favorably in almost every journal devoted to philosophy"(*Rhetoric in the European Tradition* [University of Chicago Press, 1990], 297).

[28] These papers were collected and edited by John T. Gage in *The Promise of Reason: Studies in The New Rhetoric* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2011).

of disciplines from philosophy, literature, ethics, film, law, and the sciences.[29] The NR

proved to be highly influential, leading Kennedy to note it as "perhaps the most

influential modern treatise on rhetoric," and its influence is felt well beyond the study of

rhetoric.[30] Two criticisms of Perelman's work may be briefly noted but must be left

unexplored at present. First, several critics found fault with Perelman's disassociation of

formal logic from argumentation.[31] A second, and more persistent criticism, questions

Perelman's constructed *universal audience* advanced by the NR.[32]

Influence in New Testament Studies

The true impact of NR upon Pauline studies is seen in the studies that employ his

methodology. As noted above, Wuellner was the earliest adopter of NR and employed it

widely in his work with the NT.[33] In addition to the application of NR he has also written

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[29] Perelman also provides a survey of the influence of NR on various fields in his volume, *The New Rhetoric and the Humanities: Essays on Rhetoric and Its Applications* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1979), 1–42. For a full bibliography of related works see David A. Frank and William Driscoll, "A Bibliography of the New Rhetoric Project," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 43, no. 4 (2010): 449–66.

[30] Kennedy, *Interpretation*, 29.

[31] See Hannah, review of Realm, 414. Though he ultimately accepts Perelman's claims, see Kozy's remarks to this end in his review (251–2).

[32] For an overview of the construction and interactions of audiences in Perelman's theory, see Richard Long, "The Role of Audience in Chaim Perelman's New Rhetoric," *Journal of Advanced Composition* (1983): 107–17. James Crosswhite provides a defense of Perelman's concept in, "Universality in Rhetoric: Perelman's Universal Audience," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* (1989): 157–73. For two more recent attempts at addressing a few of the difficulties of Perelman's universal audience see Scott F. Aikin's attempt to differentiate between the epistemic and pragmatic aspects ("Perelmanian Universal Audience and the Epistemic Aspirations of Argument," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 41, no. 3 [2008]: 238–59), and Antonio Raul de Velasco's re–working and extension of the universal audience ("Rethinking Perelman's Universal Audience: Political Dimensions of a Controversial Concept," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 35, no. 2 [2005]: 47–64). For Perelman's response to some of his critics see Perelman, "The New Rhetoric and the Rhetoricians: Remembrances and Comments." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. Vol. 70 (1984), 188–196.

[33] A complete bibliography of Wuellner's works is provided in J. D. Hester and J. D. Hester (Amador), eds., *Rhetorics and Hermeneutics* (New York: A&C Black, 2004), 241–247.

several articles outlining the place of NR within biblical studies.[34] F. Siegert's 1984

dissertation, *Argumentation bei Paulus,* provides the first book–length treatment of a

Pauline letter employing NR.[35] Many authors, however, selectively employ the most

relevant sections of NR. Robert Jewett and Neil Elliot give attention to the construction

and interaction of audiences as presented by Perelman.[36] G. Walter Hansen and Sam

Tsang utilize Perelman's classifications of rhetorical techniques.[37] In her examination of

the rhetoric of 1 Corinthians, Antoinette Clark Wire appeals to Perelman's concept of

dissociation in *The Corinthian Women Prophets*.[38] These works all offer monograph

length treatments of Pauline texts, but many have practiced a more narrow applications of

NR in articles and essays.[39]

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[34] In what may be a confusing maneuver, Wuellner does not label his approach as *New Rhetoric*, instead opting to label it simply "rhetorical criticism." Consequently, statements such as his bold claim that, "Rhetorical criticism is taking us beyond hermeneutics and structuralism to poststructuralist and posthermeneutics," further confuses the unclear distinction within this field ("Taking Us," 449). For his assessment of the field and the place of NR within it, see James D. Hester and David Hester (Amador), eds., *Rhetorics and Hermeneutics* (A&C Black, 2004). "Rhetorical Criticism in Biblical Studies," *Jian Dao* 4 (1995): 73–96; "Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?"

[35] F. Siegert, *Argumentation bei Paulus: gezeigt an Röm 9–11* (Tübingen: Mohr–Siebeck, 1985). For an assessment of the effectiveness of Siegert's implimentation of NR, see Wuellner's review (*JBL* 106, no. 3 [1987]: 553–55).

[36] R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 64–68; N. Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's "Dialogue with Judaism"* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990), 15–21.

[37] G. Walter Hansen analyzes Galatians according to fifteen of the rhetorical techniques highlighted in the NR (*Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989]*,* 79–93). Hansen also offers a defense for utilizing NR against claims of anachronism by observing that: (1) NR is a general description of common argumentation; (2) NR is a revival and development of classical techniques; and (3) previous applications to NT texts have proven fruitful (79). Tsang gives special attention to the NR definition of metaphor as the fusion of *theme* and *phoros* (*From Slaves to Sons: A New Rhetoric Analysis on Paul's Slave Metaphors in His Letter to the Galatians* [New York: Peter Lang, 2005], 12–20).

[38] A. C. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

[39] Two examples appeal to Perelman's definition of *epideictic* while employing either the *argumentative situation* (Hester) or the *rhetorical situation* (Fiorenza); J. D. Hester, "Placing the Blame: The Presence of Epideictic in Galatians 1 and 2," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A Kennedy* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr, 1991), 281–307; E. Schüssler Fiorenza,

As the forerunner of NR in biblical studies, Wuellner's work has received the most attention (and criticism). C. Clifton Black criticizes the NR, and specifically Wuellner's application, for its disregard for the historical dimensions of a text, noting that this analysis tends to "resemble an ahistorical, reader–response interpretation."[40] These concerns are similarly echoed by M. Mitchell, who describes Wuellner as having an "indifference or antagonism to historical issues."[41] She argues that the introduction of *redefined* genres and conventions only adds confusion to the field.[42] These two authors reflect two broad concerns raised against NR in NT studies.

The contributions of the NR to New Testament studies, as felt through its implementation by, *inter alios*, Wuellner is two–fold. First, it draws interpreters back to the content and purpose of the text. Against rigid form–criticism, Paul's argumentation becomes central over against the form in which it is argued, thus rhetorical techniques gain their meaning through how they function within an argument rather than from their form alone. Second, it sidesteps the persistent (and seemingly irresolvable) question of Paul's rhetorical education. Perelman posits a rhetoric that is not formally learned but rather universally present. This frees Paul's rhetoric from the classical handbooks and

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"Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians," *New Testament Studies* 33, no. 3 (1987): 386–403. While not explicitly citing Perelman's work, Watson's article on Acts 20 is reflective of the NR's classification of epideictic rhetoric ("Paul's Speech to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20.17–38): Epideictic Rhetoric of Farewell," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A Kennedy* [Sheffield: JSOT Pr, 1991], 190–1).

[40] C. C. Black, "Rhetorical Criticism," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Paternoster Pr, 1995), 264. Elsewhere, Black describes this approach as offering only vague suggestions for the implementation of rhetorical criticism to a text and as lacking any clear trajectory ("Rhetorical Criticism and the New Testament," Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies 8 [1988]: 77–92).

[41] Mitchell, *Reconciliation*, 8 n. 24.

[42] Mitchell specifically criticizes Perelman's modified definition of epideictic rhetoric, which she notes, "tells us nothing about the first century rhetorical genres and conventions" and which she ultimately labels as "a mistaken genre classification from an historical perspective" (*Reconciliation*, 7 n. 23).

allows his argumentation to be gauged by its persuasive force. The NR is not concerned with the *ideals* of persuasive argumentation, but with the actual *practice* of the art and places the Apostle's rhetoric in the realm of persuasion by giving priority to the purpose of his writings against their form.

CHAPTER 5

APPLICATION OF RHETORICAL METHODS

Having offered an examination of several prominent approaches employed in the rhetorical analysis of Paul's letters, it is necessary to answer the unstated question: why pursue an application of these methods? The above analysis demonstrated that each author approaches the text with differing methodologies and ideologies. Here, it will be demonstrated that these differing approaches yield divergent exegetical results. While we have demonstrated the difficulty in speaking of *a rhetorical criticism* (in the singular), this section will reveal the difficulty in speaking of *an outcome* (in the singular) of rhetorical criticism. The elements highlighted by each approach vary as greatly as the theoretical underpinnings of each method, and an analysis of a common text will substantiate this claim.

Four criteria were set in seeking a base text for analysis. The text must (a) be a self–contained unit with a clear beginning and end, with continued argumentation throughout. It must also (b) contain a clear *persuasive aim*, rather than simply observing or instructing. The text must (c) contain material that facilitates the deployment of each of the above methods (intertextual, rhetorical, and persuasive elements). Finally, the unit must (d) fit within the larger argumentation and context in order to act as a safeguard against pushing a text beyond a *fair* reading. Employing these criteria, 1 Cor 9 possesses all of the above features and a rich persuasive quality. The abundance of rhetorical

questions, persuasive figures, and literary structuring make it an ideal text to examine from these multiple perspectives.

One brief note should be offered here regarding the difficulty of applying three exegetical methods to a shared text while maintaining the compartmentalization of each analysis. Because of the current constraints of this project, a full application of each method to the entirety of 1 Cor 9 is prohibited. Instead, we will select a section of the passage that demonstrates the different concerns of each method in order to apply a "pure" exegesis of each method—*pure* meaning we will address only those features of the pericope that the method would demand, leaving all other elements unexplored. Rarely, however, is such an exclusionary approach practiced to the neglect of all other features of a passage.

A brief example may aid in demonstrate this dynamic. It is difficult to select a single "angle" from which to examine Paul's athletic metaphor offered at the conclusion of ch. 9. Should the exegete give primacy to the structural and literary elements, the inter–cultural allusions, or the exhortative tone? In actual practice, interpreters often engage many of these (and other) features, but for the present purpose we must limit this analysis to drawing out the implications of each method—in the present case, we will explore the inter–cultural elements while leaving aside other aspects.

The application of these methods will begin by applying the historically oriented approach of Betz and Kennedy, followed by an examination of intertextual elements as seen in Hays and Robbins, and lastly an application of the New Rhetoric as patterned by Wuellner. All critical reflections upon the individual methods will be held until the end of each respective application, and a final examination of the results of all three methods

will be offered in the conclusion of this chapter.

Framing the Passage

In his handbook to NT rhetorical analysis, Kenned proposed five steps for applying this approach to a passage, which include (1) determining the rhetorical unit, (2) identifying the rhetorical situation, (3) assessing the rhetorical problem, (4) analyzing the arrangement of the unit, and (5) assessing fit within the larger context.[1] While Kennedy intends these to function specifically for his style of rhetorical criticism, the first three steps are general enough as to be employed by any approach with a concern for understanding Paul's persuasive aims. Therefore, these steps will be employed to establish the general setting of 1 Cor 9 before applying an analysis based exclusively on classical materials beginning in step four.

The Rhetorical Unit

Kennedy recommends that a rhetorical unit be defined both by its function within a text and by examining signs of opening and closure. The beginning of our rhetorical unit is most easily demarcated by Paul's re–introduction of his apostleship in 9:1, an issue that

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[1] Wuellner proposes a modified version of this this method in *"Rhetorical Criticism,"* 150–56. Blake Shipp offers an assessment of Kennedy's method and its later modification by various authors (*Paul the Reluctant Witness: Power and Weakness in Luke's Portrayal* [Eugene, Or: Cascade Books, 2005], 24–6).

has not received attention since 4:9.[2] The *terminus ad quem* is less apparent. Paul's shift

to boasting in v. 16 may provide an early delimiter, but the repetition of the thesis in v. 19

indicates a continuation of the previous discussion. The athletic metaphor of vv. 24–27

appears disconnected from the present argument, but it clearly does not belong with the

stories of Israel that appear 10:1. As we will explore, once Paul's rhetoric purpose is

understood for this chapter, then the athletic metaphor functions as the capstone of the

argument, thereby setting the boundaries of the unit as 9:1–27.

The Rhetorical Situation

Any discussion of the rhetorical situation would benefit from a brief excursus on Lloyd

Bitzer's work. The *rhetorical situation* differs from the *meaning context* and *persuasive*

situation in that it consists of persons, events, objects, and relations that present an

exigence which can be affected through discourse by constraining action or decision.[3]

The rhetorical situation is determined by three factors, the *exigence* (the problem needing

to be fixed), the *audience* (those who are capable of being persuaded *and* able to affect

the exigence), and the *constraints* (limiting–factors upon the actions of the audience).[4]

The *exigence* of the letter *in toto* is Paul's receipt of correspondence from the

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[2] Two additional features support this division: (i) the conclusion of the previous discussion introduced by διόπερ (8:13) and (ii) the appearance of repeated rhetorical questions, which continues through v. 13.

[3] Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1, no. 1 (1968): 6 [this is an abridgement of Bitzer's definition]. He denotes the *meaning context* as the circumstances by which an utterance gains its specific meaning and the *persuasive situation* as the occasion in which an audience can be changed by discourse (3).

[4] Bitzer, "Rhetorical Situation," 6–8.

Corinthians seeking his opinion and, perhaps more urgent, verbal reports concerning additional problems within the church (1:11; 7:1). The specific *exigence* of ch. 9 is revealed in ch. 8, in which Paul addresses the eating of meat sacrificed to idols to the detriment of weaker believers. He urges them to "watch out that this right of yours does not become an obstacle to the weak" (8:9).[5] Thus, the *exigence* of ch. 9 is Paul's concern that the Corinthians are practicing their own liberties with disregard for others.[6]

With regard to the audience, it can be safely assumed that the letter was to be read at the public assembly of the church, as Paul himself expected (cf. 5:4; 1 Thes 5:27; Col 4:16), but the *rhetorical audience*, by Bitzer's standard, must be narrowed to those who are capable of acting to affect the exigence, thus the audience of ch. 9 may be limited to those who are abusing their freedoms. The *constraints* of the present situation are numerous, so we may address only the most significant. The physical distance between Paul and the Corinthians impacts both the availability of information to Paul and also the means by which he is able to respond. The *relational constraint* must also be considered. If Paul's apostleship, or more generally his authority as a teacher, is in doubt, then this restricts how Paul can fittingly respond to encourage action (4:3; 9:2; 2 Cor 10–13). Finally, the Corinthians' overconfidence (whether it be an over–realized eschatology, an obsession with *wisdom*, or religious competitiveness) is a further restrictor, possibly affecting their willingness to heed Paul's appeals. In short, the *rhetorical situation* which necessitates Paul's appeal in 1 Cor 9, is a response to the misuse of Christian liberty

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[5] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own based upon the NA[28] and BHS texts.

[6] The rhetorical situation is not a mirror–reading aimed at reconstructing the actual events or attitudes of the Corinthians. Paul's letters, instead, reveal the rhetorical situation to which he believes himself to be responding.

addressed to those who are lording their freedom over the "weaker," and requires

negotiating the complexities of communicating over distance, through a surrogate, to an

audience which may doubt his authority. This is the situation in which Paul writes.[7]

The Rhetorical Problem

Returning to Kennedy's methodology, the third step addresses the rhetorical problem,

which is the overriding issue that must be overcome by the author.[8] In many aspects, this

overlaps with Bitzer's *constraints* and in ch. 9 represents the hurdle of gaining the

adherence of the "strong" believers in Corinth who may doubt Paul's authority. Paul must

convince the Corinthians that the exercising of their freedoms—liberties he may have

formerly promoted—must be restricted in light of the faith of fellow believers.[9] The

second aspect of this step is determining the *stasis*, here a question of *quality*.[10] Paul's

question οὐκ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος; anticipates affirmative assent, so while some in Corinth

may entertain doubts regarding Paul's apostolic authority, the *facts* of the case are clear.[11]

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[7] In an analysis of 1 Cor 2, Gary S. Selby provides a reconstruction of the rhetorical situation of the correspondence. There, he highlights the difficult relationship between Paul and the Corinthians, attributed to their overemphasis upon the spiritual, Paul's lack of eloquence in speech, and his refusal to accept financial support ("Paul, the Seer: The Rhetorical Persona in 1 Corinthians 2:1–16," in *Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997], 361–2).

[8] Kennedy, *Interpretation,* 36.

[9] It is possible that the Corinthian slogan, πάντα ἔξεστιν, developed from a misinterpretation or faulty application of Paul's own teachings regarding Christian liberty (see 6:12; 10:23; cf. 9:1, 19; Rom 14:14; Gal 5:13; Tit 1:15). See also Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 101–2.

[10] For Kennedy's full discussion of stasis see *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 73–86.

[11] Herbert W. Smyth, *A Greek Grammar for Colleges* (New York: American Book Co, 1920), §2651.

Paul is free. He is an apostle. Nor is it a question of *definition*; Paul is not concerned with establishing who is, and is not, an apostle. The concern is one of *quality,* that is, *how* did Paul live and act among them in light of his apostolic privileges.

The final consideration in this step is the determination of the rhetorical *species*.[12] Because each genre has different aims and structures, the classification must be confirmed by both the purpose and the structure of an argument. Aristotle believed that arrangement makes "the speech appear of a certain character," and was of central importance to a speaker, as "it is not sufficient to know what one ought to say, but one must also know how to say it."[13] Paul's aim here is to offer an *apologia*, but not of his authority *qua* apostle but rather of his manner (*quality*) of living in light of his rights as an apostle (9:3). Since Paul's concern is with establishing the quality of his past actions, the species of the text may well be judicial. In light of the larger context, however, the case can be made that this chapter also possess a deliberative function. This difficulty has led one interpreter to note, "such a mixed rhetorical situation as Paul finds himself in calls for a mixed rhetorical genre."[14] The difficulty of determining the genre here will be more fully discussed in the summative remarks at the end of this chapter.

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[12] Like Kennedy, Mitchell recommends (read: insists upon) classifying the species of a text before assessing arrangement because form and content function interdependently (*Reconciliation*, 11–15). See also, Olbricht who makes the determination of species the principal step of analysis ("Rhetorical Criticism," 327).

[13] Aristotle, *Ars Rhetorica*, 3.1.2 (LCL).

[14] Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism," 152.

Arrangement in Light of Classical Rhetoric

From these preliminary considerations, the interpreter can turn to the arrangement of the text itself. It is here that our analysis relies upon classical rhetoric to gauge the conformity of the text with ancient handbooks. Although the rhetorical species is not firmly determined, judicial rhetoric has the fullest arrangement, so we will follow the expectations for that genre in the subsequent analysis, holding critical reflections until the end. A speech typically consisted of the presentation of the case to be considered (*exordium*), the necessary background information for the argument (*narratio*), the presentation of the division and progression of the speech (*partitio*), the argumentative proofs (*confirmatio*), followed by the concluding remarks (*peroratio*).[15] A proper judicial discourse is expected to have each of these features, while deliberative and epideictic speeches do not necessitate such elaborate structures.[16] In light of these suggestions, the rhetorical structure of ch. 9 may be considered as follows:

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[15] See Cicero's comments on the arrangement of an effective speech in *De Oratore*, 1.31.143.

[16] Aristotle addresses the arrangement of the various forms of speeches in *Ars Rhetorica*, highlighting there the differences that exist between the various speeches (see, for example, 3.13.3).

Exordium:	The case to be considered: Paul's Rights as Apostle (v. 1a)
Narratio:	The facts of Paul's credentials as an apostle (vv. 1b–2)
Partitio:	Here follows the *apologia* (v. 3)
Argument 1 (Logos):	Does Paul have an apostolic right to compensation?
Confirmatio A:	An Appeal to Precedent: Apostolic Practice (vv. 4–6)
Confirmatio B:	An Appeal to Analogy: Worldly Practice (v. 7)
Confirmatio C:	An Appeal to Authority: the Law (vv. 8–9)
Confirmatio D:	Three *a fortiori* appeals: – Is it for oxen…(vv. 9b–11) – If for material benefits…(v. 11) – If for others…(v. 12)
Thesis:	We have not used these rights (v. 12b)
Confirmatio E:	An Appeal to *In–Kind* Comparison (vv. 13–14)
Argument 2 (Ethos):	What reward did Paul actually seek for his labor?
Thesis (2x):	We have not used these rights/boasting (v. 15)
Confirmatio A:	My reward is that I am free to work without pay (vv. 16–18)
Thesis (3x):	I have not made use of my rights (v. 18b)
Confirmatio B:	An Appeal to Ethos: Paul's sacrifice of *self* (vv. 19–23)
Peroratio (Pathos):	Mimesis of the self–disciplined athlete.

After establishing the arrangement, Kennedy recommends a "line–by–line" analysis of the argument in order to identify individual tropes and figures.[17] In light of the current constraints, we will offer only a brief examination of Paul's argument to demonstrate the exegetical results of this approach. The most essential component of any persuasive feat is providing convincing proofs, and so it is most fitting to examine a few of the proofs Paul offers in support of his claims. We will limit the present analysis to what has been labeled *Confirmatio A* and *B* of *Argument 1* above (vv. 4–7).

As a structural–minimalist, Aristotle believed that a speech requires only two

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[17] It is in executing Kennedy's recommended line–by–line analysis that the limitations of his handbook as an introductory volume is felt most strongly. In sixteen pages he addresses the features of classical rhetoric from modes of proofs to rhetorical figures, addressing the arrangement of argumentation in a single paragraph(!). The uninitiated, as presumed by the style and content of his work, is left with few tools for pursuing the type of analysis suggested here, unless the reader appeals to the grab–bag of *figures* and *topoi* mentioned in the course of his explications.

parts, "to state the subject, and then to prove it," and that that proofs are the heart of true

rhetoric, noting "everything else is merely an accessory."[18] Cicero notes two effective

methods for proving one's argument, induction and syllogisms, with Paul making

significant use of the former.[19] Induction presents an accepted case to an audience from

which the speaker draws a general principle. The speaker then applies this principle to a

doubtful premise, thereby forcing the assent of an audience.[20] This method is considered

effective because the audience themselves form the ultimate conclusion—for this reason

it was the preferred method of Socrates.[21] The majority of Paul's proofs fall under this

category. In this initial section (vv. 4–14), he demonstrates his rights as an apostle by

appealing to specific examples from which general principles can be extracted, i.e., that

those who work have a right to wages. Following the recommendation for variety, Paul's

examples are diverse and come from all sectors of life—the practical, the religious, the

natural, and the legal.[22] Here, he offers five proofs that reinforce his central claim, of

which we will examine the first two.

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[18] Aristotle, *Ars Rhetorica*, 3.13.1; 1.1.3 (Freese, LCL).

[19] *De Inventione*, 1.31.51.

[20] Cicero, *De Inventione,* 1.31.51–1.32.54.

[21] On Socrates and the inductive method, Cicero notes, "Socrates used this conversational method a good deal, because he wished to present no arguments himself, but preferred to get a result from the material which the interlocutor had given him—a result which the interlocutor was bound to approve as following necessarily from what he had already granted" (*De Inventione*, 1.31.53 [Hubbell, LCL]).

[22] Cicero notes, "Variety in the treatment of the speech will be of great necessity. For in everything monotony is the mother of boredom. Variety can be secured if we do not always approach the argument in the same way" (*De Inventione*, 1.41.76).

An Appeal to Precedent (9:4–6)

Cicero recommends that the first proof offered "ought to be of such a kind that its truth must be granted," in order to gain the immediate assent of the audience.[23] Further, he advocates beginning with the most *similar* example, so that the audience can see the clear connection between the case being argued and the example; only then can the speaker introduce, in stages, less–similar examples. Thus, Paul begins with his strongest and most similar example, that of applying the general principles drawn from the behavior of other apostles to himself. It is his strongest because he has already asserted his rightful apostleship in the opening verses of the chapter (vv. 1–2), and the most similar because if Paul's introductory claims are accepted then the general principle requires no transference whatsoever to Paul's present situation.

As in the introduction (vv. 1–2), he opens with an interrogation of the audience, each question beginning with μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν. To paraphrase, he asks: do I, as an apostle, not share the same rights as other apostles? And do these apostles not indulge in their rights of food, drink, a faithful wife, and (presumably) wages (vv. 4–6)? Paul's not–entirely–rhetorical questions hang in the air forcing the readers to provide the necessary conclusions. Are only Barnabas and Paul excluded from these rights?[24] The anticipated response is, "No, the rights of an apostle are valid for all under that position," thus Paul

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[23] Cicero, *De Inventione,* 1.32.53 (LCL).

[24] The question, ἢ μόνος ἐγὼ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι; yields an awkward English question. The question indicates that the right being exercised by the other apostles is the privilege of not having to work *manual labor* in order to provide for themselves (and spouses). Paul's full question is then, "Do we not have the right not to work *with our own hands and instead receive support from you*?" Gordon Fee sees this as indicative of an underlying point of conflict (and embarrassment) between Paul and the Corinthians, that Paul degraded himself with manual labor rather than accepting patronage (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1987], 404) ; Joseph Fitzmeyer says the issue is less clear (*First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008], 360).

has won his first concession, that as an apostle, he has the same rights as others. This comparison then serves as the touchstone for the ensuing analogies, which stretch the comparisons further.

Three Appeals to Analogy (9:7)

Paul then moves from the direct comparison to more generalized and universal examples. He again poses three rhetorical questions introduced by τίς, "Who soldiers…Who plants…Who shepherds…?" All three questions demand the same response: no one who works is denied proper compensation. Each question is posed without introduction and without awaiting a response. The rapid–fire, asyndetonic nature of the questions indicates that it is not the individual cases that are important, but the general principle that emerges from the cumulative reasoning of the three.[25] The serializing of the three looks forward to the climactic conclusion rather than dwelling upon each question individually.[26] They are merely examples from which Paul draws a universal principle: those who work receive compensation.

Paul continues in this line of thought for three additional proofs, stretching the comparison to its furthest with the analogy to a laboring animal (vv. 8–9)—a stretch

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[25] Preventing these sentences from being a true *asyndeton* is the introductory ἤ of the final question, which some manuscripts omit. Cicero notes on this tactic, "This figure has animation and great force, and is suited to concision." (*Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, 4.30.41 [Caplan, LCL]). Notably, Paul introduces each of the previous sections (and the following) with dual rhetorical questions lacking coordinating conjunctions, cf. v. 1a (οὐκ εἰμί/οὐκ εἰμί); v. 1b (οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν/οὐ τὸ ἔργον); vv. 4–5a (μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν/μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν); v. 7 (τίς στρατεύεται/τίς φυτεύει).

[26] Of asyndeton, Bullinger notes, "We are not detained over the separate statements, and asked to consider each in detail, but we are hurried on over the various matters that are mentioned, as though they were of no account, in comparison with the great climax to which they lead up, and which alone we are thus asked by this figure to emphasize" (E. William Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible,* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968], 137).

requiring a formal *refutatio* in v. 9b. He then offers three *a fortiori* appeals before concluding with his strongest proof yet, the very words of Christ (v. 14). As noted above, Cicero suggests that a speaker begin and end with the strongest proofs, offering in the middle those "which are weak if presented separately and individually, but become strong and plausible when conjoined with the others."[27] Paul's structuring follows this pattern, as he opens with a comparison to fellow apostles, closes with a command from Jesus, and draws his less–firm analogies in the middle.

The Rhetorical Effectiveness

After analyzing the text, Kennedy's final stage is to take a broad–view of the text to evaluate how well the text functions persuasively. In light of the rhetorical situation above, this section urges the Corinthians to abandon their personal liberties when necessary for the benefit of others. In ch. 9, Paul set himself before the Corinthians as a paradigmatic exemplar of self–sacrifice by demonstrating that although he had the full rights of an apostle (vv. 4–14) he refused to engage those privileges out of fear of harming the Gospel (vv. 15–23). This assessment of the function of the passage is significantly strengthened when read within the larger argument of chs. 8–10. Although some have seen Paul's *apologia* here as a digression, ch. 9 functions as an integral part of Paul's rhetorical strategy.[28] Chapters 8–10 progress as follows: In responding to the

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[27] Cicero, *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, 3.10.18.

[28] Anders Eriksson views ch. 9 as a digression that further develops the idea of 8:13 with the aim of softening the harsh conclusion he has drawn in the preceding section ("Special Topics in 1 Corinthians 8–10," in *Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999], 292; also 282). See also Charles K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: A&C Black, 1971), 219. However, ch. 9 functions poorly as an apologetic

Corinthian concern of eating meat sacrificed to idols, Paul affirms this action is not

inherently sinful (8:2–8), however, he appeals to them to relinquish these rights for the

sake of the weaker among them (8:9–12). In a *transitus*, he explains to them how he

would behave in their situation (8:13), before proceeding to demonstrate that he has, in

fact, already sacrificed his own rights for them (ch. 9)! He then provides a negative

example from the history of Israel and concludes his argument with summative

comments that reflect the exact theme of ch. 9 (10:33–11:1; cf. 9:19–23). The assessment

of the passage as deliberative, then, not only provides coherence to the arrangement of

ch. 9, but also its placement within the greater argument of chs. 8–10.[29]

Exegetical Considerations

A few observations may be offered concerning the exegetical implications of the above

approach and a few of the difficulties encountered. First, though much of the argument

divides neatly into rhetorical units, some resist such facile classification. Two noteworthy

examples are the introductory remarks and the boasting section of vv. 15b–18. That vv.

1–2 serve as some form of introductory remarks is clear, although dividing these remarks

into an *exordium* and *narratio* proves knotty. If they function as a proper argumentative

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defense of Paul's apostleship. The introductory rhetorical questions and the closing concern of being
"disqualified" aside, Paul proofs have little relevance to his identification as an apostle. Rather, he assumes
such a status with his questions, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος; οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἑόρακα; (v. 1).

[29] We may briefly note a few variances found among practitioners of this historically oriented
approach. Olbricht provides eight steps of analysis that differ somewhat from those proposed by Kennedy
("Rhetorical Criticism," 326–7). Although Betz fails to offer a detailed methodology, his influence is
heavily felt in Mitchell's analysis of this letter, where she provides five methodological assumptions that
guide her work (*Reconciliation*, 6–19). Finally, Burton Mack's assessment of this chapter demonstrates
how the determination of species affects the structural assessment, as his organization of the text differs
from that presented here (*Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 60–4.

introduction at all, they serve as a *prolegomena* of sorts, in which Paul establishes what needs to said before discussing his rights *as* an apostle.[30] From here the argument progresses smoothly until v. 15b where this clarity breaks down. Although the general theme of these verses (15b–18) can be made to fit within the present discussion, the logic lacks the clear, syllogistic quality of the preceding discussion. While the sentiment is not incongruous with the context, the exegete longs for the clarity of the preceding section or the symmetry of the following.

What then emerges from a "classical" rhetorical analysis of Paul's letter? First, Paul's argument, both here and in the larger section, is shown to be consistent. Against those who see ch. 9 as a digression, demonstrating the contours of Paul's larger argument permits one to follow the Apostle's thought and grants him a level of coherence. Second, this analysis highlights the function of the individual units within the framework. Each element is analyzed for how it advances the persuasive strategy of the author.

For advocates of this approach, this analysis may hint at some level of rhetorical training or exposure for Paul. That these rhetorical structures easily map onto Paul's letters makes such a claim self–evident; to borrow a colloquialism, the proof of Paul's rhetorical training "is in the eating." This reasoning, however, verges on circular, and in light of the conclusions of Perelman, Wuellner, and even Kennedy is his later works, the presence of a well–formed argument does not necessarily evince formal training. Finally, this approach highlights the historical context of the original writing and reading of the text. One of the goals of using classical texts for analysis is to help modern interpreters

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[30] However, this may not be such a difficulty in the end. Mitchell notes that the introductory sections are rare and function quite differently in actual *epideictic* or *deliberative* rhetoric from the τάξις recommended for the *forensic* species in the handbooks (*Reconciliation*, 10n33).

better grasp how the original author may have intended the text to function and how a first–century audience may have understood its rhetorical strategy. It is believed that classic rhetorical materials provide a window into the workings of the ancient mind and how persuasion functioned in this context.

The Rhetorical Function of Allusions

Having laid the exegetical groundwork above, the present section will examine textual features highlighted by Hays and Robbins. As mentioned in ch. 3, Hays gives primary attention to allusions and echoes of the HB within the Pauline epistles, while Robbins expands this interplay to include both Jewish and Hellenistic literature, culture, and traditions. As such, the ensuing analysis examines two texts which lend themselves to these approaches.

Intertextuality with the Hebrew Bible

First Corinthians 9 presents three cases of intertextual elements, two of which are made explicit (vv. 9, 14) while the source (and presence) of the third is indeterminable (v. 10b). Of these, Paul's reference to the deuateronomic law in v. 9 provides a prime specimen for illustrating Hays's method. In the middle of his first argument, Paul quotes the Torah citing a command which forbids muzzling a laboring ox (Deut 25:4).[31] Many have

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[31] Paul introduces this citation with his customary formula, γέγραπται. In 1 Corinthians alone see 1:19, 31; 2:9; 3:19; 10:7; 14:21; 15:45. An overview of Hays's criteria for determining the presence of an allusion can be found on p. 21n8 above; however, as the present quotation is explicitly introduced, those criteria are unnecessary here.

questioned Paul's hermeneutical method, describing it as a form of allegory, rabbinic

rhetorical figures (*qal wa ḥomer*), or midrashic exegesis.[32] Hays's theory, however,

presents an alternative, as allusions function "to suggest to the reader that text B should

be understood in light of a broad interplay with text A, encompassing aspects of A beyond

those explicitly echoed."[33] An interpreter must here ask if the broader context of Deut

25:4 sheds light on the use of this text, or if Paul is simply proof–texting.

In Deuteronomy, ch. 21 moves from the previous discussion of civic and martial

laws to social matters, which continues through the end of ch. 26. This section addresses

how to treat myriad social situations and within this context, 25:4 is anomalous. It is the

only passage in its immediate setting to address the treatment of animals, offered in a

concise verse, quoted in its entirety by Paul.[34] An examination of the preceding context

suggests that Paul does not allegorize or reinterpret the verse, but rather exegetes it in

light of its context. The section of 24:19–22 addresses what might be labeled "gracious

practices" while harvesting, such as leaving behind fallen crops for others to glean, with

the concern of how a land–owner aids those in need in light of their prior status as slaves.

Next, the passage discusses the handling of disputes within the community (25:1–3), yet

even in the judicial setting, the concern remains for how the punished brother (MT: אחיך;

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[32] W. C. Kaiser offers a brief overview of these arguments in "The Current Crisis in Exegesis and the Apostolic Use of Deuteronomy 25: 4 in 1 Corinthians 9: 8–10," *JETS* 21, no. 1 (1978): 11–13.

[33] Hays, *Echoes*, 20.

[34] Paul's Greek differs here from the LXX in its use of κημόω instead of φιμόω. Κημόω is a hapax in the NT, while φιμόω is slightly more common, though it functions figuratively ("to put to silence") on all but one occasion (Mt 22:12, 34; Mk 1:25, 4:39; Lk 4:35; 1 Pet 2:15). In 1 Tim 5:18 the author quotes this same passage in conformity with the LXX, against the present rendering. The Göttigen LXX cites this passage as the only attested variant using κημόω, and many NT MSS witness the LXX reading: P[46] א A B[2] C D[1], *inter alia* (*Deuteronomium. Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum, Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum*. Vol III, 2 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977], 274).

LXX: ὁ ἀδελφός σου) should be treated in order to avoid humiliation (25:3). Following the interjected comment regarding the ox, v. 5 resumes the discussion of brothers and levirate marriage.

This context supports Paul's reading. He asks, "God is not concerned with oxen, is he?" (9:9b) and the literary setting suggests that God's concern is, in point of fact, with the fair treatment of others and more specifically with "brothers," that is, those who live together in community.[35] Thus, Paul does not employ any of the above claimed methods, instead extracting the theological significance of the verse from its immediate context.[36] Paul's understanding of this verse, i.e., that God desires for the Israelites to treat the worker with no less respect than they would a laboring animal, is then affirmed by the deuteronomic context.[37]

How do these allusions enhance Paul's argument? First, as Hays argues, the purpose of citations in Paul's work is often to conjure the greater context in support of one's argument. Such a strategy works well here in light of the concern for the fair treatment of community members, even in avoiding humiliation when exercising one's just rights. Second, Paul amplifies the force of this citation by boldly claiming that this verse was uttered δι᾽ ἡμᾶς.[38] Such a maneuver heightens the rhetorical *appeal to*

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[35] See HALOT, s.v. אח 5, 6 for usage as fellow tribesman or countryman.

[36] Robbins remarks upon this verse, noting that Paul allows "traditional social logic to guide the interpretation of a verse from scripture" (*Tapestry*, 122).

[37] Frédéric L. Godet has long since recognized the congruence between Paul's interpretation and the original setting of the citation. He notes, "Does not this whole context show clearly enough what was the object of the prohibition quoted here? […] It was the duties of *moral beings* to one another, that God wished to impress by this precept" (*Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians.* Vol II [Edinburgh: T& TClark, 1898], 11; emphasis original).

[38] Hays notes, "Paul reads the text as bearing direct reference to his own circumstances and reads this commandment of the Law of Moses as a word addressed directly to Gentile Christians" (*Echoes*, 166). For Hays's treatment of δι᾽ ἡμᾶς see his comments in *First Corinthians*, 151–2. There he notes that the

authority by declaring that the truest meaning of this command is now revealed in the current situation. For the Corinthians to deny Paul's claim to compensation is to deny the present reality foreseen by Scripture.[39]

Athletic Imagery in Light of Greco–Roman Traditions

Turning to Robbins's methodology, several features allude to Greco–Roman literature and cultural traditions, most readily seen in the concluding metaphor of the chapter. Paul begins this section with οὐκ οἴδατε, suggesting that the ensuing statement regarding athletic endeavors would be common knowledge in Corinth. The city played host to the Isthmian games, a biennial festival that occurred ten miles east of the isthmus and was accompanied by raucous crowds, hucksters, artists, performances, and festivities, though the main attractions occurred in the stadium and theatre built specifically for this event.[40] The games were a major event for the region and their frequency ensured they were not easily forgotten in the Corinthian mind.

In light of this historical context, the relevance of Paul's metaphor is evident. The

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fundamental meaning of Deut 25:4 has been "eschatologically disclosed" in the situation of Paul and his companions (151).

[39] N.B. Paul's similar use of this tactic in 10:6, "So, these things happened as examples to us…" On the other allusions present in the text, some suspect the presence of a quotation in v. 10b beginning with ὅτι (Fee cites Weiss, Lietzmann, and Conzelmann as advocating the presence of a citation, though he himself does not [*First Corinthians*, 409]). If a citation is present, its source cannot be determined and thus any reference to the greater context lie out of reach. NA[28] marks the text as a possible undetermined citation ("unde?"), sharing features with Sir 6:19. Raymond Collins suggests an early version of a later Mishnaic saying (*Baba Meṣiʿa* 7:2), which shares stronger similarities than the above Sirach citation (*First Corinthians* [Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical, 1999], 340). The other allusion within 1 Cor 9 is found in Paul's reference to a teaching of Jesus in line with that of Luke 10:7, reflecting an engagement with early Jesus traditions. Here, the setting and context of the citation is plainly relevant so a detailed exegesis need not be pursued.

[40] For an overview of the Isthmian games and their significance for the Corinthian culture see Victor P. Furnish, *Second Corinthians.* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 13–14.

imagery of an athlete being cheered along by the crowd can be understood to echo in the recent memories of the Corinthians, the cheers of the crowd reverberating with Paul's exhortation, "Run! Don't let others pass you!" (v. 24b). The Corinthians would have witnessed firsthand the self–discipline required of an athlete as they observed the arrival of ambitious new–comers to the games. Even Paul's "perishable wreath" reflects the distinctive reward placed upon the head of the winning athlete—a wreath made of withered celery stalks, perhaps influenced by the wild celery known to have grown in the area.[41] Paul's use of such imagery hints at an intimate knowledge of the relevance of these games to the Corinthian culture.[42]

Beyond cultural interplay, the themes which Paul draws from this metaphor bear semblance with Greco–Roman literature. As Mitchell notes, the utilization of athletic imagery to highlight the value of self–control is a common motif in ancient literature.[43] Because of both the similar thematic content and Paul's *reconfiguration* of the motif (as SRI terms it), Lucian's *Anacharsis* provides an illuminating parallel to the present metaphor, in which the speaker, Solon, argues that the training of the body (διαπονεῖν τὸ σῶμα) yields benefits beyond the impending competition. Only a few will gain the actual prize, but all will gain a greater reward in a "wreath not of pine, olives, or celery(!)

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[41] For an examination of the archaeological and literary evidence regarding the Isthmian wreath, see Oscar Broneer, "The Isthmian Victory Crown," *American Journal of Archaeology* 66, no. 3 (1962): 259–263.

[42] Some have suggested that Paul may have been present in Corinth during one occurrence of the games in 51 CE (See Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 10).

[43] *Reconciliation*, 137–8, esp. n435, where she mentions the parallel with Lucian explored here.

[στέφανος οὐ πίτυος οὐδὲ κοτίνου ἢ σελίνων]."[44] Rather, their crown will be that of

freedom (ἐλευθερίαν) and of the most beautiful things (τὰ κάλλιστα).[45] Solon's responses

indicate that the skills cultivated by an athlete in physical training have a morally

formative effect. This self–discipline leads to a greater reward than a wreath made of

perishable, organic materials—a wreath woven from the benefits accrued through a

disciplined life.

In light of Lucian's writing, three comments may be offered. First, if Paul's

teachings bear such similarities with those of popular literature, it is plausible that Paul's

audience would have been familiar with this characteristic function of athletic imagery. In

light of the usage of this imagery as heuristics for self–discipline, the placement of the

present metaphor in ch. 9 may have proven more sensible to the Corinthians than to later

interpreters, who provide wide–ranging explanations for its placement and function

within Paul's argument.[46] Second, the ethical principle is not new, but rather common

material re–purposed for the Christian context.[47] Paul borrows popular imagery and uses

its inherent exhortative qualities to advance his argument; in a sense, he relies upon a

tried–and–true method to conclude his appeal rather than inventing anew.[48] Finally,

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[44] Lucian, *Anacharsis*, 15. The translation here is my own in order to draw out the meaning of σέλινον (rendered "parsley" by A. M. Harmon [LCL, 19]). LSJ notes the term is used "of the chaplets with which the victors at the Isthmian and Nemean games were crowned" (s.v. σέλινον).

[45] Lucian, *Anacharsis*, 15 (Harmon, LCL). Solon's next response also mentions, τῶν Ἰσθμοῖ γιγνομένων καὶ Ὀλυμπίασι καὶ ἐν Νεμέᾳ (16).

[46] See Victor C. Pfitzner's remarks on the difficulty of this passage for interpreters (*Paul and the Agon Motif: Traditional Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature.* [Leiden: Brill, 1967], 82–86).

[47] On paraenetic discourses, Martin Dibelius notes that a degree of *Internationalität* can be expected, as the *ethische Imperative* often expressed within the texts do not require a specific religious leaning in order to be effective (*Der Brief des Jakobus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoech & Ruprecht, 1984), 36. See also Pfitzner, *Agon*, 82–83.

[48] In his analysis of this passage, Robbins points to additional thematic similarities between the work of philosophers and Paul. Drawing heavily upon the dissertation of Russell Sisson, he notes frequent

because the Isthmian games were second only to the Olympics in popularity and occurred with twice the frequency, the impact of this imagery upon the Corinthian psyche should not be underestimated. The modern interpreter must recognize the degree of resonance such an illustration would have for an audience whose city was steeped in athletic events and general festivities every two years.

Exegetical Considerations

What, then, does an intertextual analysis contribute to the evaluation of Paul's rhetoric? First, it claims to demonstrate from within the text the extent to which Paul engaged with his broader culture. He did not shy away from borrowing common elements, traditions, and interpretations from other sources and re–tooling them to serve new functions. However, neither author aims to produce an exclusively historical reading of the text. With this approach, a subtle shift occurs in which the historical setting still contributes to interpretation, while modern analytical approaches are employed. Hays's self–description here is illustrative, "Stated positively, my design is to produce late twentieth–century readings of Paul informed by intelligent historical understanding: to undertake a fresh imaginative encounter with the text, disciplined and stimulated by historical exegesis." [49] Second, engagement with popular tropes and themes reveals a level of artistic craftsmanship not explicitly highlighted by the classically–oriented approach. Here, the

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themes associated with athletic imagery include a connection between freedom, enslavement, service, and an obligation to a higher power or moral order (*The Apostle as Athlete: A Socio–Rhetorical Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 9.* [PhD diss, Emory University, 1994]). Accordingly, Paul's usage of such imagery falls inline with Greco–Roman literary and philosophical traditions.

[49] Hays, *Echoes*, 27.

concern is less with the formal arrangement of Paul's argument and more with the proofs he deploys in enhancing the argument among his readers. Paul is, to some degree, a popular thinker who crafts his argument as to reframe common motifs for the purpose of advancing his Christian claims.

Finally, modern readers must recognize that if Paul successfully identified imagery that would effectively resonate with his audience, then his argumentation could have proven more persuasive, or at least emotive, to its original audience than to interpreters nearly two–thousand–years later. Paul's appeals are more than strict logic— they often employ subtle affective appeals that, even if recognized by modern audiences, fail to carry the same relevance or resonance. Here, Paul's rhetoric is more than its formal structures, it is an attempt to appeal to the Corinthians through culturally and religiously relevant material.

The Persuasive Power of Paul's Rhetoric

While the New Rhetoric offers many avenues for analyzing a discourse, the features which have received most significant attention in Paul's letter's are Perelman's definition and interaction of audience and speaker, the (re)definition of the epideictic genre as educational discourse, and, most significantly, the restoration of *persuasion* as the single most important feature of rhetoric. Many of these are addressed by Wuellner's works, but the present consideration will be restricted to how these theories inform one's reading of

1 Cor 9.[50] In Perelman's work, he notes that the myriad *schemes* involved in

argumentative discourse can be distilled down into the two basic processes of *association*

and *dissociation*.[51] *Association* aims to bring together disparate elements for the sake of

demonstrating unity or for offering a comparison; conversely, *dissociation* differentiates

between elements that are perceived to be intrinsically connected. While emphasizing one

or the other, the two are complementary and always occur simultaneously, i.e.

d*issociation* necessarily constitutes *association* of a new ideas and vice–versa. As will be

demonstrated below, dissociative techniques play an important role in the discourse of 1

Cor 9.[52]

    Dissociation can be argued in two ways—first, by presenting a positive case for

the reconstitution of present elements, as seen in Paul's argument of 1 Cor 3 where he

reframes a perceived rivalry within the imagery of co–laborers in God's service (N.B. the

dissociation of rivalry also necessarily constitutes an *association* as co–workers).

Alternatively, *dissociation* can be forcefully demonstrated by pointing out the

incompatibility of certain elements in light of a newly proposed arrangement. In this case,

the utilization of an "appearance–reality" pair is the most common technique, which

serves to "dissociate those appearances that are deceptive from those that correspond to

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[50] Wuellner offers a general overview of the contributions of NR to rhetorical criticism in his essay "Rhetorical Criticism," in *The Postmodern Bible* (ed. George Aichele; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 149–86.

[51] Perelman, *New Rhetoric*, 190.

[52] Perelman differentiates between *dissociation* and *breaking connecting links*. The latter he compares with one who dismantles a building and preserves the original materials intact, while the former consists of a fundamental reconstitution of the material into a new form. This process of "remodeling our conception of reality" works to achieve a more lasting solution by treating the present elements in a new manner, rather than leaving them disjointed only to be re–assembled later (*New Rhetoric*, 413).

reality," and is a basic strategy that permeates this text. [53]

It was noted in the previous section of the historically oriented analysis that although the form and logic of 9:16–19 are wanting by classical standards, the theme of these verses—though logically muddled—supports the larger claims of the text. The NR, however, has less difficulty in integrating these verses, where the persuasive force of Paul's argument is highlighted by the dissociative techniques employed within. In vv. 16–17, Paul introduces a new category of workers who work under obligation and thus do not expect a reward (μισθός), apparently contradicting his above claims that all who work deserve compensation. The dissonance becomes even greater as Paul describes just what his reward is: "That while preaching I can provide the Gospel free of charge in order that I not make use of my right in the Gospel" (v. 18). This clause introduces a dissociative effect into Paul's argument, by which he aims to separate *appearance* from *reality*. The *appearance* of the present situation is that Paul, an apostle, deserves physical compensation for his work; the *reality* of his service to the Gospel is actually the exact opposite—living out the Gospel means reveling in the ability to *freely* work for the benefit of others. The seemingly contradictory claims of the present section illustrate this effect. Paul points out the inherent incompatibility of self–beneficial rewards within the context of Gospel–living. The paradoxical conclusion of Paul's argument necessarily requires a dissociative effort, as only dissociation makes it possible to understand the incompatible elements placed together within such a conclusion.[54] For the reader to make sense of Paul's present argument requires the redefinition of one of the incongruous

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[53] Perelman, *New Rhetoric*, 415.

[54] Perelman, *New Rhetoric*, 443

elements—either Paul has fundamentally misunderstood his work for the Gospel, or

personal benefit cannot be the anticipated reward for service to the Kingdom.

Further, the entire argument of this brief section is dissociative, as the aposiopetic

conclusion of v. 15 sets the expectation for the following verses. With the exclamation of,

"No one will make my boasting empty!", the author sets up the reader to anticipate an

enumeration of Gospel accomplishments; instead, Paul declares that his work has

deprived him of boasts. Through this, Paul aims to re–align the Corinthian thinking so

that personal strengths or religious accomplishments are no longer worthy of boasting,

but, in fact, just the opposite. He works to dissociate pride from physical works and to re–

associate it with selfless service.

The climax of the dissociative effect of the argument in the present section and

the entire chapter is reached in the chiastic restatement of Paul's thesis in 9:19:

> A   Ἐλεύθερος γὰρ ὢν
>   B   ἐκ πάντων
>   B'   πᾶσιν ἐμαυτὸν
> A'   ἐδούλωσα,
>   ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω·

As Perelman argues, paradoxical expressions require dissociation, and few terms could

be more diametrically opposed than freedom and enslavement. This verse introduces the

theme which Paul will subsequently develop in one of his most well–known passages

(vv. 20–23). He aims to reconstitute the Corinthian understanding of Christian freedom,

which they have failed to grasp, as evinced by their treatment of one another in light of

personal liberties. Paul challenges a worldly view of "freedom" by reframing it within

true reality, i.e., their present existence in light of the Christic event.[55] Setting himself as

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[55] Lucian's *Anacharsis* is again illuminating here, as he links freedom with the living independent of others and using force to preserve and enforce such status. He notes, "That, Anacharsis, is the training

the paradigmatic servant, he demonstrates that although he has every right to "freedom"
in light of his apostolic status, in *reality* this translates into servitude. Dissociation seeks
to take what the audience perceives to be real and reveal through contrast with a new
standard the apparent incompatibility of that understanding in light of a new definition.
This process results "in a depreciation of what had until then been an accepted value and
in its replacement by another conception to which is accorded the original value."[56] This
is exactly Paul's aim within the present argument, to depreciate the present understanding
of ἐλευθερία and ἐξουσίαι which the Corinthians hold in order to reassign this value to
servitude. It is only through living out the self–sacrifice exemplified in Christ and
imitated by Paul that the Corinthians can discover the true meaning of freedom in the
Kingdom (cf. 10:32–11:1).[57]

Exegetical Considerations

The multi–faceted nature of Perelman's enterprise makes classifying *a* method for the NR
a near impossibility. Giving attention to persuasive effect over formal elements means

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we give our young men, expecting them to become stout guardians of our city, and that we shall live in
freedom through them, conquering our foes if they attack us and keeping our neighbors in dread of us, so
that most of them will cower at our feet and pay tribute" (*Anacharsis*, 30).

[56] Perelman, Chaïm, "The New Rhetoric: A Theory of Practical Reasoning," in *The New Rhetoric
and the Humanities: Essays on Rhetoric and Its Application* (Boston: Reidel, 1979), 24.

[57] Another result of the NR that cannot be fully explored here is the "decentering" of traditional
readings, as Wuellner labels it, remarking, "Which is the persuasive unit? There is no right answer because
one's sense of the argumentative unit and one's sense of what is being argued are interdependent; one has a
hermeneutical circle" ("Rhetorical Criticism," 178). Here, the full effect of giving priority to a text's
persuasive features over against formal elements is fully felt, as these latter elements are disregarded for the
sake of analyzing hidden persuasive features. Antoinette C. Wire embodies this *decentering,* as her study of
1 Corinthians eschews traditional structural and rhetorical divisions, positing that argumentative threads run
throughout the letter (*Women Prophets*, 15).

that texts formerly neglected by other methods demand renewed attention. The strength of this method can be see in the implementation of only one feature of the NR offered here. A text that was identified as problematic from a historically oriented approach has been significantly treated by the NR through recognizing the persuasive aim that underlies the logic of the construction. The verse is shown to possess a rhetorical function within the present argument. That the structure of the text does not neatly fit either with what precedes or follows is of little concern; the function of the text reinforces Paul's central persuasive aim—to convince the Corinthians to give up their personal liberties for the sake of serving others in the community. This aspect of the NR has been a long touted benefit of the approach and the present assessment demonstrates how the end result differs from that offered by formulaic analyses.

Surveying the Field

The aim of the present chapter has been to demonstrate that not only do the methodologies and ideological underpinnings of these "rhetorical approaches" differ significantly, but that these differences correlate into widely differing interpretations and textual foci. In the first section we examined how historically oriented rhetorical criticism provides a framework for understanding the various sub–units of Paul's argument and anchors the chapter to the surrounding texts. When successfully executed, the approach (presumably) demonstrates Paul's adherence to the norms of Greco–Roman rhetoric, though the danger of introducing circular logic is ever present in such speculation. This approach faces the difficulty of accounting for ill–fitting segments of a text without stretching the rhetorical norms beyond recognition.

In the second section we turned to those who examine the world of the text, specifically how the author employs external elements (both textual and cultural) to enhance the argumentative appeals. In such an analysis, the formal structure receives less attention instead giving primacy to the cultural, social, and religious context of the author and audience. Like the first approach, this method grounds interpretation as a historical enterprise in so far as it seeks to explore the context in which the writing occurred, but introduces modern methods and theories for the subsequent analysis of these elements. Finally, it recognizes a level of "craftsmanship" within the work, as the author is imagined as discerning what external allusions will most resonate with the audience and enhance the present appeal. This shift in focus to the effect upon an audience is also significant, against the previous concern for how an argument conforms to proposed standards. A difficulty with this approach is determining the familiarity and knowledge of the author and the ancient audience with the parallels perceived by modern interpreters.

Lastly, the application of the New Rhetoric restores *persuasion* as the primary concern of the rhetorical enterprise. This approach examines the persuasive force of an argument apart from its formal or structural elements, thus freeing "rhetoric" from the handbooks and exemplars of antiquities. This approach can provide insights into difficult texts by allowing for a broader interplay between distant elements within the larger text, thus permitting digressions, recessions, and seeming inconsistencies to exist as a result of informal reasoning. The question remains, though, what methodological constrains exist to limit the presuppositions of the interpreter when approaching a text? As we have seen, however, such methodological restraints are not a point of concern for all who practice this approach.

What then can be said about the "rhetorical analysis" produced by these three techniques? As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the present aim is to illustrate how the methodological and theoretical differences of each author bear direct influence on the exegetical results produced by each method. We may offer two observations in light of the above exercise. First, the differing interpretative aims and techniques employed by each author give priority to differing elements within the text. Features which receive significant attention under one methodology may be devalued or completely untreated by others. For those interested in classical rhetoric, tropes, rhetorical figures, and structuring receive significant attention. Such analysis can be fine grained, paying attention even to word patterning and repetition. Alternatively, those concerned with exploring the intertextual nature of a text seek out allusions to scribal or cultural traditions. This approach highlights thematic similarities with popular motifs, such as freedom in the present text, or textual references and borrowed imagery. Lastly, those who pursue an analysis of the persuasive force of a text seek out the *quasi*–logical argumentative techniques employed therein. This concern is less with the form in which these techniques appear and more with the manner in which the author seeks to achieve the adherence of his audience. To offer an analogy: as these interpreters approach a text they are not unlike a fisherman who casts a wide net, gathers the catch, and tosses back what does not meet expectations. Each fisherman's "catch" reflects his own desired prey. Similarly, each author "catches" the elements which they set out to discover, and may well discard those features that are unnecessary to their intended aims.[58]

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[58] In discussing the differences present between his own method and that of Gail O'Day, Robbins makes precisely this point remarking, "The informative thing, so far a socio–rhetorical criticism is

The second observation builds upon the first—because each method highlights differing textual features, these elements shape the final interpretation offered of each text. For the historically oriented critic, form is not only significant but contributes directly to interpreting how the sub–units operate. Form, in a sense, dictates function. An example of this can be seen in the above classification of vv. 24–27 as the *peroratio*. A complete analysis following the recommendations of the handbooks would demand that an argument end with a *peroratio*, so the athletic metaphor *must be* interpreted as offering the final exhortative conclusion to the text.[59] Here, the expectation of the rhetorical genre guides how a text is interpreted.

Similarly, intertextual elements not only highlight the interaction of the author with outside traditions and texts, but require the interpreter to understand their function within the passage. For Hays, this means exploring the original context of an allusion to understand how this setting might influence the present reading.[60] Paul's rhetorical strategy is assessed by how he employs Israel's narrative to shape his audience's perception of their present reality. As the elements are interpreted within their new context, they take on a theological significance that can far surpass their terse appearance by linking the Christian church to the history of Israel. The question must be asked, however, if such concise references—here only four Greek words (9:10)—can bear the

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concerned, is the manner in which this ideology accompanies every arena of texture either she or I addresses. Also it guides what we include or exclude in our analyses" (*Tapestry*, 100).

[59] A proper conclusion should detail the points already made, demonstrate how the author has fulfilled the audiences expectations, and enjoin the audience to decide in the authors favor, none of which is accomplished in the present text. See Aristotle (*Ars Rhetorica*, 3.19.1) and Cicero (*De Inventione,* 1.52.98–1.56.109; *Topica*, 25.98–99) for the components of an effective *peroratio*.

[60] Hays notes that these HB allusions "characteristically require the reader to engage in serious sustained deliberation about the relation between Scripture's *mundus significans* and the new situation that Paul is addressing" (*Echoes*, 175).

theological weight hefted upon them.

This method also examines how Paul subverts or inverts the original meaning of these elements for his own rhetorical aim. This is seen above with Deut 25:4, in which Paul concludes that God's concern is not with the oxen, instead asking, "Does he not speak altogether for our sake?" (9:10). Paul transforms the meaning of the text to illustrate that it not only reflects a concern for the human worker, but that it reaches its fullest meaning in his present situation.[61] A similar tactic can be seen in the appropriation of Greco–Roman elements, as with the athletic metaphor (9:24–27). *Freedom* is a persistent theme in Greek athletic imagery, yet Paul subverts this by employing the topic in order to assert that true Christian liberty means surrendering one's own rights for the benefit of others. In this approach, interpretation is influenced by the embedded themes of allusions and citations.

Finally, the NR makes available a vast array of strategies and techniques for interpretation. As this approach seeks to identify non–formal persuasive elements at work within a text, the method offers few restrictions on how such analysis can be pursued. Here, perhaps more than any of the above methods, the interpretative process is influenced by both the text itself and the audience (or interpreter) reading it. The NR frees the exegete to pursue novel approaches that subvert standard interpretations or methods. This feature is in fact one of the aspect of NR praised so highly by Wuellner, who notes:

> Here is the challenge of the new rhetoric: by definition of its proper domain, it must subvert the familiar Western distinctions between content and form, between theory and practice, or, in hermeneutical terms, between interpretation and application. Contemporary rhetorical criticism needs to become a sustained effort

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[61] See Hays discussion of this Pauline technique in *Echoes*, 165–8.

> to subvert every tendency to solidify exegesis into some encompassing and imperialistic system… [Rhetorics of opposition] need to be cultivated in biblical studies if readers of sacred scriptures are going to accomplish their rhetorical work of cultural criticism, of "transforming society" by decentering the oppositions and revealing the indeterminacies that an oppositional and hegemonic rhetoric tries to obscure.[62]

For Wuellner, the decentering power of the NR is precisely one of the benefits it offers NT criticism, and one of the features that makes its results so difficult to categorize. In what may be labeled a *modest* application of the NR above, we found that the text challenges the reader to dissociate perceived *freedom* and *rights* from worldly expectations and to instead define these concepts in light of the Christ event. The central theme here is that living in the realm of Christ redefines structures of power and authority.

In summation, the analysis of the current chapter has demonstrated that the mixed methodologies and ideologies employed in the various corners of *rhetorical criticism* yield a diverse, divergent, and often conflicting array of results, further illustrating the assorted approaches which cohabit under the auspices of *rhetorical criticism.*

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[62] Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism," 184–5; citing Conley, *European Tradition*, 304.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

> "What rhetorical criticism cannot rule out is that critics
> working on the same text and even within the same sets of
> interpretive procedures may produce, because of the
> different hidden agendas, different interpretations of that
> text's intentionality or rhetorical genre."
>
> – Wilhelm Wuellner[1]

In a popular introductory handbook to the study of Paul and his letters, David G. Horrell

provides a brief description of rhetorical criticism within a discussion of letter writing in

the ancient world.[2] The section moves from a history of rhetoric in the ancient world to a

presentation of two modern authors who employ these tools in their analysis of Paul's

letters (Betz and Mitchell). Before turning to address the concerns with this method,

Horrell makes only a passing mention of the "diverse work that has been done in this

area."[3] In three sentences he mentions both socio–rhetorical criticism as practiced by

Witherington and approaches utilizing more modern tools, such as the New Rhetoric.

While the acknowledgment of diversity is laudable, it nonetheless illustrates the difficulty

of addressing the existence of such disparate methods under a single umbrella term. In

the very next sentence, Horrell notes, "Rhetorical criticism can certainly claim to help us

to understand better both the structure and the aims of Paul's letters. By comparing Paul's

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[1] "Rhetorical Criticism," 183.

[2] David G. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark, 2015), 70–77.

[3] Horrell, *Study of Paul*, 73.

writings with examples of rhetoric from Paul's own time…"[4] The sense gained here,

especially by the un–initiated reader, is that there is a singular *rhetorical criticism* which

places Paul's letters alongside ancient exemplars to understand their structure and aims.

The "diverse work" of this area is framed within the (seemingly) shared goals of the field

writ large, giving the impression that although diversity exists, it is of the sort found

between Betz and Kennedy rather than between Mitchell and Wuellner. While Horrell is

not to be faulted for failing to give a detailed exposition of every position held in

rhetorical criticism, the generalized nature of these comments is symptomatic of the

inherent confusion within this discipline.

A Review of the Present Study

The aim of this project has been to highlight the above confusion by pursuing parallel

lines of investigation. First, by examining the methodologies and presuppositions of

prominent authors in the field we demonstrated the wide array of approaches and

interests that exist under the aegis of *rhetorical criticism*. In ch. 2 we examined the

historically oriented approaches of Betz and Kennedy, who ground their approach(es) in

the world that lies behind the text, specifically in the widespread influence of rhetoric in

the ancient world. They consequently employ ancient rhetorical manuals and related

literature to examine how Paul, a first–century thinker, crafted his argument to persuade

his first–century audience. Chapter 3 turns to those who examine the text itself and how

the elements and imagery employed within the text spurred change among the audience.

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[4] Horrell, *Study of Paul*, 73.

Here we examined elements of intertextuality as pursued by Hays and Robbins, who justify their method in both historical and modern claims. The approach examines the cultural, social, and literary interplay evinced within a text, while engaging modern analytical theories in executing this method. Chapter 4 completes the movement away from historical constraints as it turns to focus upon the persuasive effects of a text upon an, not solely *the*, audience. This concern with the world in front of the text gives attention to text–reader interactions and applies ahistorical, general principles of persuasion as posited by Perelman and advanced in NT studies by Wuellner. Having demonstrated the disparate approaches and ideologies employed by these authors, ch. 5 introduced the second line of investigation which aimed to demonstrate the extent to which these front–end differences affect the final exegetical product. We found that when considering a shared base text, these methods not only yield potentially different interpretations, but also highlight quite different elements within the text (consequently neglecting other elements).

At the end of these five chapters we are left with the task of synthesizing these findings, and here, we might take our cue from the Apostle, who ends his discourse in 1 Cor 9 with an athletic metaphor. We might ask: Do you not know that all who compete in a race strive for the *same* goal and compete according to the *same* rules? In light of the above analysis, the question must be asked, if these approaches all compete by different rules and all strive toward different goals, are they truly running the same race? The preceding analysis has aimed to demonstrate the wide disparity between the *rules* and the *goals* by which these authors "compete." The study has demonstrated that it is, at a minimum, problematic to refer to *a* rhetorical criticism, and worse, easily results in

confused methods and readers.

Confused Rhetoric and The Pursuit of Clarity

In a 1979 essay produced from the workings of a SBL research group, John Collins presented a proposal for the re–definition of the genre of apocalyptic literature. The impetus for this group was the growing realization within the discipline that term *apocalyptic* held little descriptive value and its muddled usage contributed to further confusion, rather than clarity. This group sought to address the "the current, loose and inconsistent scholarly use of 'apocalypse'" and in its place to provide a clear and precise definition.[5] The field of rhetorical criticism has reached such a juncture; the discipline is in need of self–reflection and clarification. The present study raises several questions for future consideration.

First, what is the ultimate aim of rhetorical criticism? Is it to produce a historical reading of a first–century rhetorician, or is it to understand the persuasive tactics present in the writings that bear the name of "Paul"? Or is it both? If both, is such a goal attainable with the limited knowledge concerning Paul's education? Second, in this same vein where does rhetorical criticism fall along the spectrum of historical and ahistorical approaches, or diachronic and synchronic orientations? Must the field be limited to the deployment of ancient rhetorical literature or can modern methods and theories of

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[5] John J. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (Semeia 14; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 3.

persuasion be employed? If the latter question is affirmed, then why should such methods be limited to theories of rhetoric and not engage in cognitive and social sciences, which help shed light on how the human mind process information, assess claims, and perceives religious claims?[6] Third, what are the parameters within which rhetorical criticism may be practiced? To those with an historical bent, must the sources be as limited as those utilized by Betz, or are other genres or later works, such as the epistolary theories of Pseudo–Libanius, helpful for this analysis? And for more modern exegetes, are there appropriate limits to be placed upon the field, or should the lead of Wuellner be followed in allowing each exegete to pursue personalized interests? Finally, if these various approaches continue to be gauged as *rhetorical*, how can sub–disciplines be identified and delineated? Such clarification will require a much broader and engaged debate which, if the present internal conflicts are any gauge, may prove contentious. Nonetheless, it is a discussion that must be had if the term *rhetorical criticism* is to carry any meaning and clarity for readers and interpreters alike.

<center>Initial Steps Toward Reclaiming Clarity</center>

In the absence of a discipline wide discussion to provide answers for these broad questions, we may presently offer a few proposals to help the field as it moves forward. Most of these can be classified as simply methodological best practices for any discipline,

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[6] A few examples of recent work in this area include Laird R. O. Edman, "Applying the Science of Faith," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity.* 34, no. 3 (2015): 240–51; Mauro Pesce, "Mind, Morality and Magic: Cognitive Science Approaches in Biblical Studies," *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 31, no. 2 (2014): 257–60; John Nightingale, "What Can We Learn from the Cognitive Science of Religion?," *Modern Believing* 52, no. 3 (2011): 14–21.

yet they are often missed in the execution of exegetical work. First, as mentioned above, there is a need for clearer definitions and precise terminology both by those who practice rhetorical criticism and those who speak of it from the outside. Clarity for outsiders, however, will not arrive until internal confusion has been addressed. This places a greater burden on interpreters, who bear the onus of defining even the most basic terms at the outset and of adopting thicker descriptions rather than settling for facile, yet unclear, terminology.

Second, the field needs consistent descriptors. Presently, two approaches surface in referring to different types of rhetorical criticism. Some refer to *camps* of interpreters, such as a Betzian or Kennedy–esque approach. The difficulty with such labels is that they fail to acknowledge that the positions of these authors shift over time. A prime example is that it is not uncommon to still find Betz and Wuellner early work mentioned together without recognition of the wide divide now present between these respective approaches.[7] The other approach is to label the methods as *diachronic* and *synchronic*, yet these terms do very little convey to the reader a sense of *how* the exegete approaches the text. Is Hays's approach best labelled *diachronic* because it demonstrates a concern for reading the text within its cultural milieu, or *synchronic* because it engages modern literary methods? Such labels are imprecise.

At the outset of this study the practice of addressing the *worlds* of the text was

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[7] Often, these remarks are mentioned in recognizing the origins of the modern revival of rhetorical criticism, but authors should still take caution to differentiate how these two positions separated in the subsequent years. See, for example, C. A. Wanamaker, "Epistolary vs. Rhetorical Analysis: Is a Synthesis Possible?," in *Thessalonians Debate: Methodological Discord or Methodological Synthesis?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 269–70; J. A. Marchal, *Hierarchy, Unity, and Imitation : A Feminist Rhetorical Analysis of Power Dynamics in Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Academia Biblica (Series) (Society of Biblical Literature) ; no. 24; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 3–4.

embraced as a heuristic aid for guiding the present analysis. It was even hoped that such a

division would provide a way forward from the present terminological quagmire. Alas,

through the course of this study it has become clear that even within the framework

provided here these authors cannot be so easily classified. Of the *world behind the text*,

Betz and Kennedy differ in the theoretical foundations of their approaches, especially as

Kennedy's later works worked out a refined *general theory* of rhetoric, at which he

hinted in his NT handbook.[8] In the *world of the text,* we found that Robbins and Hays

differed in the scope and type of intertextual references they aimed to explore. Finally,

the *world in front of the text* provided even greater variety, both between Perelman and

Wuellner (the latter showing a greater concern for melding rhetorical criticism with other

modern criticisms) and between those NT interpreters who applied NR to various aims.

Even these categories, while helpful for the present analysis, fail to provide a clear label

to be applied unilaterally to these sub–disciplines.

The ultimate word that can be offered on the present state of rhetorical criticism

of the Pauline letters, and NT at large, is that there is no easy way forward—but that does

not mean that the present state should be resignedly accepted. Instead, this observation

should be taken as a call to action by those who engage in various forms of *rhetorical*

criticism to work toward greater clarity of terminology in their own practice and to

demand it from others in the field. The reformative work launched by Collins's *Semeia*

essay initiated an arduous task of self–reflection and self–definition for the field of

apocalyptic literature, but what emerged was a stronger and more productive

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[8] See George A Kennedy, *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross–Cultural Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

conversation, though hard–fought over many years. Similar efforts must be taken by the field of rhetorical criticism if it is to continue contributing to NT studies in a productive manner, rather than adding further confusion through the use of imprecise terms. By way of closing, it is fitting to offer a restatement of the aim of the present study, borrowing from the similar declaration Collins offered of his field: the purpose of this endeavor is to attain consistency and clarity in the use of this term on the assumption that the single name "rhetorical criticism" should refer to a single coherent and recognizable type of biblical criticism.[9] Such coherency and clarity will require a concerted effort from all who engage in this discipline of NT criticism.

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[9] Collins's description reads, "The purpose of this volume is to attain consistency and clarity in the use of the term on the assumption that the single name "apocalypse" should refer to a single coherent and recognizable type of writing" ("Introduction," 2–3).

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