

**From Heidelberg to Heidelberg: Rhetorical Interpretation of the Bible
at the Seven "Pepperdine" Conferences from 1992-2002**

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In George A. Kennedy's *Festschrift* published in 1991, Duane F. Watson wrote:

It is well known in horticulture that crossing diverse strains of plants often yields a hybrid more vibrant than the parent strains. The same can be said of crossing diverse branches of knowledge. The integration of biblical and rhetorical studies has yielded the new hybrid of interpretation – rhetorical criticism.¹

This statement reveals just how new and daring rhetorical interpretation of the Bible felt to many biblical scholars at the beginning of the 1990s. A major reason was the challenge biblical interpreters faced to master entirely new fields of study. After describing Kennedy as one who "bravely and successfully traversed the domain of biblical studies to chart new territory," Watson continued with the assertion that "Biblical studies is now awash in a flood of creativity in which rhetoric is a major part...."²

Since 1991, Thomas H. Olbricht, with the support and sponsorship of Pepperdine University, Malibu, California, has overseen the basic organization, hosting, and publication of papers of seven conferences on rhetorical interpretation of the Bible.³ At the seventh conference, the byword was "From Heidelberg 1992 to 2002." The seven

¹ Duane F. Watson, "Preface," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (ed. D. F. Watson; JSNTSup 50; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 7.

² Watson, "Preface," 7.

³ This essay refers to the six published volumes by Roman numerals: (I) *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (ed. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht; JSNTSup 90; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); (II) *Rhetoric, Scripture & Theology: Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference* (ed. S. E. Porter & T. H. Olbricht; JSNTSup 131; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); (III) *Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference* (ed. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht; JSNTSup 146; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); (IV) *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference* (ed. S. E. Porter and D. L. Stamps; JSNTSup 180; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); (V) *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible* [Essays from the 1998 Florence Conference] (ed. S. E. Porter and D. L. Stamps; JSNTSup 195; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); (VI) *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference* (ed. A. Eriksson, T. H. Olbricht, and W. Übelacker; Emory Studies in Early Christianity; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002).

conferences and published volumes exhibit the movement of biblical rhetorical criticism beyond formal Greco-Roman, literary, and historical categories into social, cultural, argumentative and ideological modes of rhetorical analysis and interpretation. This movement in biblical rhetorical criticism is characteristic of the field of biblical criticism overall during this period of time. Since 1970, biblical criticism has experienced an energetic incursion of social, cultural, ethnic, and gender-based strategies of interpretation into its traditional practices. The seven rhetoric conferences from 1992 to 2002 exhibit remarkable movement from the application of formal categories from Greco-Roman literary rhetoric to modes that interweave multiple practices informed by strategies of people as they interact with one another both within bounded social, cultural, and political spheres and across ethnic, national, cultural, and religious boundaries.

Heidelberg 1992

Thomas H. Olbricht hosted the 1992 Heidelberg Rhetoric Conference at facilities of Pepperdine University at the Moore Haus and downtown in Heidelberg, Germany. The volume of essays from the conference contains a dedication to Wilhelm Wuellner and a bibliography of some of his most important works. Among the words of praise is the statement that "More than anyone else, Professor Wuellner has been in contact with scholars in the United States, Canada, Europe, South Africa, Australia, Japan and elsewhere."⁴ The preface begins by asserting that Hans Dieter Betz's commentary on Galatians "marked the rediscovery of rhetorical analysis of Scripture in America." It continues with a statement that "A South African in a moment of euphoria declared that the conference roster was a veritable who's who of rhetorical scholars."⁵

Wilhelm Wuellner's "Biblical Exegesis in the Light of the History and Historicity of Rhetoric and the Nature of the Rhetoric of Religion," standing at the end of the 1992 Heidelberg volume, introduces the range of issues that moved gradually but persistently to the forefront at the conferences during the following decade. Briefly recounting the history of rhetoric from Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and the sophists to the present, Wuellner pointed to the Ramist reform of the liberal arts curriculum during the sixteenth century as

⁴ Thomas H. Olbricht, "Dedication to Wilhelm Wuellner," in I:17.

⁵ Thomas H. Olbricht, "Preface," in I:9.

fateful for modern biblical interpretation. Separating "the study of rhetoric's *officium* from the study of rhetoric as *technē*" evolved into "the separation of the study of thought or content (in biblical studies: theology, or ethics) from the study of form or feeling (linguistic or literary forms or style, and religious experience)."⁶ For Wuellner, this led to "the largely still unreconciled conflicts between advocates of theological orthodoxy focusing on doctrine elaborated in terms of topics, dialectics, and logic, and advocates of religious experience focusing on what 'moves' the heart (e.g. Pietists, Quakers, etc.)."⁷ Pointing to Arabic contributions to Jewish and Christian rhetorical interpretation during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Wuellner identifies a thread of Jewish rhetorical interpretation into the last half of the twentieth century in the works of David Daube, Henry A. Fischel, D. C. Kraemer, J. Neusner, L. Rabinowitz, and D. Stern.⁸ From this "history of rhetoric" Wuellner moves to "the historicity of rhetoric," by which he means that every rhetoric is a particular cultural rhetoric. He understands historicity especially in terms of "the materiality" of reading and of history,⁹ and emphasizes the importance of analyzing "the unexamined ideology of the material base" of language, text, history, and culture.¹⁰

Wuellner's first move was to envision a mode of rhetoric that integrates the study of thought or content with form or feeling. This move evokes the image of an individual person unified through continual social, cultural, and religious experiences and interactions. Thought is not separated from feeling, content is not separated from form, and speech is not separated from action. People's linguistic interactions are deeply embedded in their social and cultural practices, and people's cognitive and emotive processes are deeply intermeshed with their social, cultural, and religious perspectives, purposes, and goals. Wuellner's second move was to envision a mode of rhetorical interpretation that puts religious doctrine in a dynamic relation with religious experience. This is a move beyond social, cultural, religious, and ideological boundaries with a goal of establishing communication rather than separation. This communication interweaves

⁶ Wilhelm Wuellner, "Biblical Exegesis in the Light of the History and Historicity of Rhetoric and the Nature of the Rhetoric of Religion," in I:497.

⁷ Wuellner, "Biblical Exegesis," I:497.

⁸ Wuellner, "Biblical Exegesis," I:496-99.

⁹ Wuellner, "Biblical Exegesis," I:503.

¹⁰ Wuellner, "Biblical Exegesis," I:505.

dialectics and logic with "movements" of the heart, and it blends philosophy and argument with emotions and motives. Wuellner's third move was to envision an intercultural mode of rhetorical analysis and interpretation. Not only Jewish and Christian modes of interpretation, but also Arabic modes of interpretation need to be understood as particular cultural rhetorics that have a potential for contributing to rhetorical interpretation. Wuellner's fourth move was to envision the inclusion of materiality and ideology in rhetorical analysis and interpretation. In various ways, these four moves in Wuellner's essay point forward to practices that would be introduced in papers that were read at the seven conferences from 1992 to 2002.

Six essays in the 1992 Heidelberg volume explicitly state a goal of moving beyond older modes of biblical interpretation toward rhetorical modes that include various kinds of pragmatic, linguistic, social, cultural, motivational, and ideological strategies of interpretation. Klaus Berger produced one of these six essays by focusing on the rhetorical determination of text-type in the NT. He describes his approach as a movement beyond "traditional form-criticism" to "pure form-criticism," which he perceives to be a mode of rhetorical criticism.¹¹ The difference between the older form criticism and his, he explains and illustrates, is movement beyond a primary focus on the form of the text to an emphasis on "everything that leads the reader's psyche towards a goal."¹² Hermeneutics, therefore, "is based on rhetoric, because application does not merely rely on theoretical comprehension (against Bultmann), but mainly on the pragmatic effect (function)."¹³ The way forward, Berger suggests, is to practice form criticism as a particular mode of rhetorical criticism.

Three more of the six essays work programmatically with the relation of textual rhetoric to semiotic, sociolinguistic, and socio-cultural phenomena. Angelico-Salvatore Di Marco, citing publications on chiasmus in antiquity and the Bible in 1980-81, discusses the importance of "the linguistic-rhetorical pattern of *chiasmus*, *circularity*, or *circular structure*" in rhetorical interpretation.¹⁴ Gathering terminology like *inclusio*,

¹¹ Klaus Berger, "Rhetorical Criticism, New Form Criticism and New Testament Hermeneutics," in I:390-96.

¹² Berger, "Rhetorical Criticism," I:393.

¹³ Berger, "Rhetorical Criticism," I:395.

¹⁴ Angelico-Salvatore Di Marco, "Rhetoric and Hermeneutic – On a Rhetorical Pattern: Chiasmus and Circularity," in I:479-91.

ringcomposition, and *palindrome* together as instances of *circularity of language*, Di Marco asserts that "*religious language is especially a circular structure*"¹⁵ related to the concept that "God is a qualification of ourselves" and to the topic of "the *hermeneutical circle*" in interpretation.¹⁶ His use of J. M. Lotman's concept of the *semiosphere*, which describes culture as a semiotic *continuum* containing ontological circularity, and its relation to the semiotic universe that texts build,¹⁷ underlies the discussion and gives it special sociolinguistic strength. Bernard Lategan's essay shows a relation to Di Marco's by working with "social space" as defined by P. Bordieu and relating social space to "textual time and space" in Paul's letter to the Galatians.¹⁸ Exploring social positions, dispositions, and positioning in relation to textual indicators of time and space, Lategan shows how "an argumentative text par excellence"¹⁹ in the New Testament leads to "a new perspective on reality, setting a series of pragmatic social, ethical and political consequences in motion."²⁰ In turn, Vernon Robbins's essay explores multiple types of cultural rhetoric in the New Testament with a taxonomy of dominant culture, subculture, contraculture, and counterculture gleaned from J. M. Yinger, G. F. S. Ellens, M. Bouvard, and K. A. Roberts.²¹ A major goal of the essay is to explore the manner in which various early Christian writings helped to formulate multiple Christian rhetorics through interaction with diverse cultural rhetorics in Jewish and Hellenistic-Roman writings.

The other two essays among the six that articulate a goal of moving beyond older modes of interpretation focus on particular ways to explore the power of biblical rhetoric. Jeffrey A. Crafton uses the work of Kenneth Burke to explore "the dancing of an attitude" in 2 Corinthians.²² Burkean criticism, according to Crafton, looks for the elements that "working together manufacture a text's power"²³ and guide the critic toward a

¹⁵ Di Marco, "Rhetoric," I:485.

¹⁶ Di Marco, "Rhetoric," I:486-87.

¹⁷ Di Marco, "Rhetoric," I:483-84.

¹⁸ Bernard Lategan, "Textual Space as Rhetorical Device," in I:397-408.

¹⁹ Lategan, "Textual Space," I:401.

²⁰ Lategan, "Textual Space," I:407.

²¹ Vernon K. Robbins, "Rhetoric and Culture: Exploring Types of Cultural Rhetoric in a Text," in I:443-63.

²² Jeffrey A. Crafton, "The Dancing of an Attitude: Burkean Rhetorical Criticism and the Biblical Interpreter," in I:429-42.

²³ Crafton, "The Dancing," I:431.

reconstruction of "the motivational design of the text."²⁴ Crafton explains that the approach begins with "logology," the study of words: "It listens closely to recurring words or sounds, the patterns in which they appear, and the rhetorical function these patterns suggest."²⁵ From this beginning point, the approach connects "literature to real life" with the aid of the dramatic pentad of act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose.²⁶ Another essay by Lauri Thurén seeks to understand the power of biblical rhetoric through its "ideological structures." Interpreters can gain a better understanding of the rhetoric of biblical texts, he asserts, through a focus on argumentation rather than persuasion. Viewing dialectic and logic in Aristotle in particular as a predecessor to modern theories of argumentation, Thurén argues that S. E. Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument*²⁷ and C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric*²⁸ should become central to rhetorical interpretation of the New Testament. Asserting that "there is a quantum leap from logical demonstration to practical reasoning," Thurén describes these two works as bridging the gap between logical demonstration and practical reasoning by sharing "the basic theoretical view that ordinary argumentation cannot be adequately analyzed with traditional, logical methods."²⁹ Focusing on ordinary argumentation, he concludes, will put biblical interpreters in touch with "the 'rhetorical turn' in general philosophy" at the end of the twentieth century³⁰ and provide the opportunity for biblical interpreters to "state something universal" about the function of all the motifs and topoi in a text.³¹

These six essays point forward to the advances that occur in the conferences during the next decade, with the exception of the inclusion of feminist criticism. There is no woman author in the 1992 Heidelberg, though there is reference to work by Elisabeth

²⁴ Crafton, "The Dancing," I:436.

²⁵ Crafton, "The Dancing," I:434; cf. the focus on inner texture in Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, society and ideology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 44-95; *idem*, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 7-39.

²⁶ Crafton, "The Dancing," I:435-36.

²⁷ S. E. Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

²⁸ C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969).

²⁹ Lauri Thurén, "On Studying Ethical Argumentation and Persuasion in the New Testament," in I:473.

³⁰ Thurén, "On Studying Ethical Argumentation," I:473.

³¹ Thurén, "On Studying Ethical Argumentation," I:478.

Schüssler Fiorenza in two essays.³² This changed with the 1994 Pretoria conference when Schüssler Fiorenza was invited to give the opening address. The emphases in the 1992 Heidelberg volume on pragmatic effects and goals within texts; linguistic-rhetorical patterns; textual time and space in relation to social space; pragmatic social, ethical, and political consequences; multiple types of cultural rhetorics; the power of biblical rhetoric; the motivational design of the text; and the argumentative nature of biblical texts point forward toward essays and discussions at future conferences.

There are twenty-seven essays in the 1992 Heidelberg volume, including the six mentioned above. In total, there are seven essays on the history, historicity, or theory of rhetoric; five essays on Luke-Acts; fourteen papers on Pauline epistles; and one essay on Hebrews. This means there are no essays on the book of Revelation or on writings in the Hebrew Bible, HB Apocrypha, HB Pseudepigrapha, or NT Apocrypha. There are extensive references to H. Lausberg's *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* in essays by Folker Siegert,³³ David Hellholm,³⁴ Duane F. Watson,³⁵ A. H. Snyman,³⁶ Johannes N. Voster,³⁷ and C. Joachim Classen.³⁸ This changes in the future volumes, where the references to Lausberg become fewer. In the essays for this initial Pepperdine Conference, therefore, substantive appeals for new modes of rhetorical study occur in the context of essays that enact traditional rhetorical interpretation using Lausberg as a guide to ancient rhetorical theory and practice. The volume is rich in detail and promising in multiple ways. It was a wonderful conference to launch the decade of conferences, and the mix of traditional analyses and creative moves in the published volume points toward the future with great promise.

³² Dennis L. Stamps, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation: The Entextualization of the Situation in New Testament Epistles," in I:194, 197, 199; Duane F. Watson, "Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15," in I:233-34.

³³ Folker Siegert, "Mass Communication and Prose Rhythm in Luke-Acts," in I:42-58.

³⁴ David Hellholm, "Amplificatio in the Macro-Structure of Romans," in I:123-51.

³⁵ Duane F. Watson, "Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15," in I:231-49.

³⁶ A. H. Snyman, "Persuasion in Philippians 4.1-20," in I:325-37.

³⁷ Johannes H. Vorster, "Strategies of Persuasion in Romans 1.16-17," in I:154, 157.

³⁸ C. Joachim Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric," in I:270, 280.

Pretoria 1994

After the Heidelberg Conference in 1992, a group of young scholars who had especially been in touch with Wilhelm Wuellner during the 1980s organized a conference at Pretoria, South Africa, in 1994. This conference featured a location on a different continent and included a wide range of new voices. Pieter J. J. Botha and Johannes N. Vorster begin their introduction to the volume with a statement that "The rhetoricity of religious discourses is not something easily acknowledged.... Religion is usually associated with certainty, stability, objectivity, truth."³⁹ At the end of the introduction, they observe:

Obviously our own context played a role in our aims for organizing the conference of which these are the proceedings. It is of the utmost importance that biblical and religious scholarship in South Africa be challenged in a fundamental way for their complicity in our sad history. Scholarship cannot foster the "consumer-oriented use of authoritative texts" (to use Craffert's phrase) but should rather promote an awareness of the power of language, the power that binds *and* liberates that which we call "real." Hence, a rhetorical awareness will also create respect for the plurality inherent in human discourse.⁴⁰

The stated goal of the editors, then, concerns the power of biblical language, which had been addressed in particular in the essay by Lauri Thurén in the 1992 Heidelberg volume. But their special interest was the use of that power in specific social, cultural, ideological and religious contexts, rather than in a manner that could be described universally. Focus on specific contexts was to become more prominent as the conferences proceeded, and the challenge was to integrate this focus with organized practices of attentive readings of biblical texts.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's essay in the 1994 Pretoria volume⁴¹ addresses issues in the editors' introduction by building on her earlier work on political rhetoric in

³⁹ Pieter J. J. Botha and Johannes N. Vorster, "Introduction," in II:17.

⁴⁰ Botha and Vorster, "Introduction," II:25.

⁴¹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn: Feminist and Rhetorical Biblical Criticism," in II:28-53 = *idem*, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 83-102.

the book of Revelation,⁴² on rhetorical situation and historical reconstruction in 1 Corinthians,⁴³ and on a rhetorical-ethical approach that challenges the social location of biblical studies in programs of research formulated by men.⁴⁴ The opening footnote indicates that Schüssler Fiorenza changed her original title and focus after reading the essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference. Reading those essays motivated her to focus "on the problematic relationship between feminist and rhetorical criticism rather than put feminist criticism at the service of rhetorical criticism."⁴⁵ Her essay "challenges rhetorical studies to engage with feminist biblical studies and feminist theory to create a theoretical space in which a radical democratic politics of meaning and a religious rhetoric of transformation can be articulated."⁴⁶ Her basic criticism is that "biblical scholarship has not yet made the full epistemological turn to a rhetoric of inquiry insofar as it has barely recognized the contributions which feminist and liberationist scholarship have made to the New Rhetoric."⁴⁷ The result, she says, is that "Most recent malestream works on the reinvention of rhetorics or on new approaches in Christian Testament studies barely take note of feminist and critical liberationist theories because they remain caught up in the scientist and objectivist ethos of the modern logic of identity."⁴⁸ Schüssler Fiorenza's essay, then, focuses the issues of the power of biblical language on the issue of gender relations.⁴⁹ This focus emerges in various ways in the future volumes

⁴² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

⁴³ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 33 (1987): 386-403; in revised form in *idem*, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 105-128, incorporating Paul Hernadi's rhetorical model of communication on pp. 123-128; cf. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 18-43; *idem*, "Social-Scientific Criticism and Literary Studies: Prospects for cooperation in biblical interpretation," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 274-89.

⁴⁴ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Ethics of Interpretation: De-Centering Biblical Scholarship," *JBL* 107 (1988): 3-17.

⁴⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza, "Challenging," II:28 = *idem*, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 83.

⁴⁶ Schüssler Fiorenza, "Challenging," II:29 = *idem*, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 84.

⁴⁷ Schüssler Fiorenza, "Challenging," II:30 = *idem*, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 84.

⁴⁸ Schüssler Fiorenza, "Challenging," II:30 = *idem*, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 84-85. See an initial response in Vernon K. Robbins, "The Rhetorical Full-Turn in Biblical Interpretation: Reconfiguring Rhetorical-Political Analysis," in V:48-60.

⁴⁹ For example, Schüssler Fiorenza observes in note 5 on p. 30 that L. Olbrechts-Tyteca is a woman and "is hardly mentioned although she has for ten years collaborated with Perelman in the study of rhetorical discourses." Then she adds that "Olbrechts-Tyteca is a good rhetorical example of how women and their intellectual work are 'written out' of history. While she does not reveal the first name of L. Olbrechts-Tyteca to the reader of her essay, a library search reveals that the L. at the beginning of the name in the publications is an abbreviation for Lucie.

and is prominent in the present volume as a result of the participation of Schüssler Fiorenza in the 2002 Heidelberg conference.

While issues of gender rhetoric are present in the 1994 Pretoria volume, the dynamics of culture, ideology, and rhetoric in South Africa are even more prominent. One of the frequently cited authors in the volume is Dirk J. Smit, a South African scholar who at the time was Professor at the University of the Western Cape and now is at the University of Stellenbosch. Smit published essays on biblical interpretation during various stages of apartheid in South Africa⁵⁰ and wrote an essay for the Pretoria volume entitled "Theology as Rhetoric? Or: Guess Who's Coming to Dinner."⁵¹ Pieter F. Craffert's essay, entitled "Reading and Divine Sanction: The Ethics of Interpreting the New Testament in the New South Africa,"⁵² builds on Smit's description of three stages in NT scholarship in South Africa: (1) scriptural legitimation of apartheid by prominent scholars; (2) an ethos of scientific research that objected to the apartheid interpretation but did not bring politics into scholarly interpretation; and (3) a phase of committed, socio-politically involved reading of the New Testament.⁵³ Craffert describes his position as an ethics of interpretation that "challenges biblical scholarship in a fundamental way" and ends with the statement: "It is when human dialogue claims divine sanction that adverse viewpoints and alternative voices are also damned or exorcised by means of something more than human power, the power of divine sanction."⁵⁴ His deepest concern in the essay focuses on "the investigation of alien systems of belief, whether text or culture." In his view, only when a person is able to stand back from one's "own prevailing assumptions and structures" and to discover "their contingency" is it possible to pave "the way for a greater degree of understanding, hence tolerance, of

⁵⁰ Dirk J. Smit, "The Ethics of Interpretation: New Voices from the USA," *Scriptura* 33 (1990): 16-28; *idem*, "The Ethics of Interpretation – and South Africa," *Scriptura* 33 (1990): 29-43; *idem*, "A Story of Contextual Hermeneutics and the Integrity of New Testament Interpretation in South Africa," *Neot* 28 (1994): 265-89; cf. *idem*, "Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Initiation into Theology: The Rich Variety of Theology and Hermeneutics* (ed. S. Maimela and A. König; Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik Publishers, 1998), 275-317.

⁵¹ Dirk J. Smit, "Theology as Rhetoric? Or: Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," in II:393-422.

⁵² Pieter F. Craffert, "Reading and Divine Sanction: The Ethics of Interpreting the New Testament in the New South Africa," in II:54-71.

⁵³ Craffert, "Reading," II:54-55.

⁵⁴ Craffert, "Reading," II:68.

cultural diversity."⁵⁵ For Craffert, therefore, the issue is not so much gender relations as it is a matter of investigating cultures with modes of analysis that treat them as alien systems of belief. Only in this way, he believes, is a person able to gain some perspective on their own assumptions and structures, and thus on their own use of language in powerful ways to create social, cultural, ideological, and religious "reality."

H. J. Bernard Combrink broadens the issues of gender, ideology, and power of language by applying the works of Kenneth Burke⁵⁶ as a launching pad to discuss the nature of sacred scripture in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.⁵⁷ Combrink is the only author in the seven volumes to address sacred texts of religions other than Judaism and Christianity, but rhetorical analysis of texts from other religious traditions was beginning to appear during this decade.⁵⁸ Overall, the issues of context, culture, and ideology reverberate through the volume as it features essays by eleven South African scholars⁵⁹ and the introduction written by two more.⁶⁰ Rhetorical interpretation becomes intricately intertwined with social, cultural, and ideological issues by means of multiple references to works by Bernard Lategan,⁶¹ whose leadership in creative biblical scholarship in South Africa is well known, and by Jan Botha⁶² and Johannes N. Vorster,⁶³ who have made substantive contributions to rhetorical study of the Bible in South Africa. The essay by Elna Mouton, a South African scholar who was at the University of Port Elizabeth but is now at the University of Stellenbosch, gives the volume the additional presence of a woman author as it addresses "the delicate tension

⁵⁵ Craffert, "Reading," II:66.

⁵⁶ H. J. Bernard Combrink, "The Rhetoric of Sacred Scripture," in II:105.

⁵⁷ Combrink, "The Rhetoric of Sacred Scripture," II:105-19; cf. R. Marston Speight, "Rhetorical Argumentation in the Hadith Literature of Islam," in *The Rhetoric of Pronouncement* (ed. V. K. Robbins; Semeia 64; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 73-92.

⁵⁸ In the specific context of biblical rhetorical interpretation, one thinks in particular of Gordon D. Newby, "Qur'anic Texture: A Review of Vernon Robbins's *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse and Exploring the Texture of Texts*, JSNT 70 (1998) 93-100.

⁵⁹ H. J. Bernard Combrink, Pieter F. Craffert, Paul Germond, Yehoshua Gitay, D. P. Goosen, Richard Lemmer, Elna Mouton, Philippe-Joseph Salazar, Dirk J. Smit, Gerrie Snyman, J. P. H. Wessels.

⁶⁰ Pieter J. J. Botha; Johannes N. Vorster.

⁶¹ Cf. Bernard C. Lategan, "Aspects of a Contextual Hermeneutics for South Africa," in *The Relevance of Theology for the 1990s* (ed. J. Mouton and B. C. Lategan; Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council), 17-30.

⁶² Cf. J. Botha, *Subject to Whose Authority? Multiple Readings of Romans 13* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity 4; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994).

⁶³ Cf. Johannes N. Vorster, "Toward an Interactional Model for the Analysis of Letters," *Neot* 24 (1990): 107-30.

between *identification, alienation and reorientation*" in the epistle of Ephesians.⁶⁴ The contributions of these authors and their references to other authors in the context of South Africa exhibits the special relation of the rhetorical dimensions of the Bible to social, political, gender-based, and ideological formulations, traditions, and movements.

In the context of multiple references to political rhetoric and ideology in the 1994 Pretoria volume, there also are multiple references to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's "new rhetoric."⁶⁵ The volume contains only one reference to Lausberg, where Lauri Thurén cites it to support his view of the *exordium* and *peroratio* in 2 Peter.⁶⁶ An important moment arises concerning gendered readings when Jeffrey L. Staley queries Sandra Schneiders' *The Revelatory Text* for separating the personal life of the author "from the search for definitive 'norm[s] against which interpretation can be judged'."⁶⁷ Staley, in an exercise of uncovering areas of an author's writing "where their subjective, personal autobiographies inadvertently cross the boundaries into their objective, public scholarship,"⁶⁸ asserts that "Sandra Schneiders's consciously constructed self is a bodiless person, one who is strongly unified by a determined will and a focused intellectual quest."⁶⁹ The volume also contains an informative essay by Bruce J. Malina on the relation of rhetorical criticism to romanticism, in contrast to the relation of social-scientific criticism to socio-rational empiricism.⁷⁰ His comparative table listing twelve items of difference between social-scientific criticism and literary criticism⁷¹ is an excellent launching pad for ascertaining what might be major emphases in a social-rhetorical, rather than a literary-rhetorical, approach to analysis and interpretation.

In the midst of multiple references to writings by Wuellner, Kennedy, Betz, and Classen in the 1994 Pretoria volume, there also are multiple references to writings by

⁶⁴ Elna Mouton, "The Communicative Power of the Epistle to the Ephesians," in II:280-307. See now *idem*, *Reading a New Testament Document Ethically* (Academia Biblica/Society of Biblical Literature 1; Leiden: Brill, 2002).

⁶⁵ Seventeen references to Perelman and ten to Olbrechts-Tyteca outside of Schüssler Fiorenza's essay, which refers to them on p. 30.

⁶⁶ Lauri Thurén, "Style Never Goes out of Fashion: 2 Peter Re-Evaluated," in II:344.

⁶⁷ Jeffrey L. Staley, "The Father of Lies: Autobiographical Acts in Recent Biblical Criticism and Contemporary Literary Theory," in II:145, citing Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 145.

⁶⁸ Staley, "The Father," II:134.

⁶⁹ Staley, "The Father," II:145.

⁷⁰ Bruce J. Malina, "Rhetorical Criticism and Social-Scientific Criticism: Why Won't Romanticism Leave Us Alone?", in II:72-101.

Burton L. Mack, Thomas H. Olbricht, Vernon K. Robbins, and Margaret M. Mitchell. The volume contains seven essays on theory, four on the Hebrew Bible, one on Acts, four on Pauline epistles, one on 2 Peter, and one on *Acts of Thomas*. This means there are no essays on a Gospel or on the book of Revelation in this volume, but there are essays on the Hebrew Bible and NT Apocrypha.

As the decade continued, various developments within biblical rhetorical interpretation began to open the area of interest beyond the confines of the biblical canon to non-canonical and post-canonical texts, and to sacred texts in religious traditions beyond Judaism and Christianity. But programmatic rhetorical analysis of texts outside the canon still lies beyond 2002. The Pretoria volume contains significant journeys into political rhetoric and ideology, intertwining issues of malestream and feminist interpretation with the power of biblical interpretation in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. This meeting anticipated the meetings of the SNTS in Pretoria and Hammanskraal in 1999⁷² and the International Society of Biblical Literature in Capetown in 2000. More than a decade of productive interchange between South African, European, and American scholars yielded a substantive interweaving of international issues in rhetorical interpretation of the Bible at this conference. The result is a decisive movement in rhetorical biblical interpretation, in a context where biblical interpretation overall is moving into the challenging issues of politics, ideology, gender-based interpretations, and intercultural modes of analysis and interpretation.

London 1995

When Thomas H. Olbricht planned a rhetorical conference in 1995 at Pepperdine University's Prince's Gate facility in London, five South African scholars contributed essays that appeared in the published volume.⁷³ The lead-off essay at the conference was by Vernon K Robbins entitled "The Present and Future of Rhetorical Analysis."⁷⁴ The essay introduced socio-rhetorical criticism as an "interpretive analytics" to negotiate the

⁷¹ Malina, "Rhetorical Criticism," II:94.

⁷² W. R. Telford, "Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas: The Fifty-Fourth General Meeting, 3-6 August 1999," *NTS* 46 (2000): 284-86; "Report of the SNTS Post-Conference, Hammanskraal, August, 1999," *NTS* 46 (2000): 287-89. See the essays at Hammanskraal in Mary N. Getui, T. S. Maluleke, and Justin S. Ukpong (eds.), *Interpreting the New Testament in Africa* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2001).

⁷³ See the discussion of their topics below.

dynamics of social, cultural, gender-based, ideological, and intercultural analysis of sacred texts. An interpretive analytics, a phrase evoked by the practices of Michel Foucault, "uses the strategies and insights of both theory and method, but it uses these strategies and insights in a manner that perpetually deconstructs its own boundaries and generates new ones in the ongoing process of interpretation."⁷⁵ Thus, it proceeds in a manner strikingly different from traditional literary-historical criticism in biblical studies. Rather than proceeding as though a major shift in the discipline has occurred when an interpreter moves from textual criticism to source criticism to form criticism and then to redaction criticism, even though all are literary-historical practices, an interpretive analytics consciously and programmatically negotiates multiple practices from different disciplines in a manner that generates significantly new modes of rhetorical analysis and interpretation as it proceeds.

Robbins's essay begins by exploring the historical-ideological relation of Schüssler Fiorenza's gender-based commentary on 1 Corinthians to Betz's commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. The essay observes that:

She, like Betz, discusses "them" rather than "us." Her focus is on the historical, social and cultural intertexture of the biblical text, namely the relation of the text to the historical, social and cultural context of the Corinthians. She merges this historical mode of commentary with an ideological mode of discourse that focuses on Paul and on women in the context of varying social and educational status in the Corinthian community. Paul does not foster "independence, freedom and consensus" but "subordination and silence."⁷⁶

Pushing toward a goal of "Reconfiguring the Discourse of Commentary," Robbins's essay explores the manner in which Elizabeth Castelli used Michel Foucault's proposal for analysis of power relations in a text to present discourse that "includes the ideological texture of modern commentary discourse on 1 Corinthians."⁷⁷ The essay observes that after showing how Paul constructs his

⁷⁴ Vernon K. Robbins, "The Present and Future of Rhetorical Analysis," in III:24-52.

⁷⁵ Robbins, "The Present and Future," III:29.

⁷⁶ Robbins, "The Present and Future," III:45.

⁷⁷ Robbins, "The Present and Future," III:46.

authority within the discourse, both Schüssler Fiorenza and Castelli "reenact this aspect of Pauline discourse themselves, adopting a powerful, authoritative rhetorical mode of discourse filled with rich inner textual images and intertextual recitation." The paragraph concludes with the comment that "In many ways, then, their own discourse is imitative of the powerful and richly-textured discourse the New Testament writings attribute to Paul."⁷⁸

Robbins's essay continues with praise for the manner in which both Schüssler Fiorenza and Castelli explore and exhibit a wider range of rhetoricity in Pauline discourse than many other commentators, "since they use multiple strategies and insights from rhetorical method and rhetorical theory to enrich their analysis and interpretation of the ideological texture of Pauline discourse."⁷⁹ The essay concludes: "We have been entering a postmodern era of interpretive 'self-awareness' for some time now, and my recommendation is to build upon traditional, modern and postmodern rhetorical method and theory by reinventing it into an interpretive analytics both of biblical discourse itself and of past and present commentary on biblical discourse."⁸⁰

J. D. H. Amador's essay, entitled "The Word Made Flesh: Epistemology, Ontology and Postmodern Rhetorics,"⁸¹ followed by Erika Mae Olbricht's "Constructing the Dead Author: Postmodernism's Rhetoric of Death,"⁸² explore dimensions of rhetorical interpretation in a manner fully consonant with the function of rhetorical interpretation as an interpretive analytics. Amador's stated interest is "an approach to the rhetoric *of* the Bible that considers the ideological echoes and reverberations that are at work below/within a culture's discourse practices which do not purport to be specifically religious or theological."⁸³ He continues: "A rhetoric *of* the Bible ... would *speak* what is left *unspoken*, but is nevertheless *present* and at *work* in the rhetoric of a particular system of thought (political movement, system of punishment, economic, social

⁷⁸ Robbins, "The Present and Future," III:46.

⁷⁹ Robbins, "The Present and Future," III:47.

⁸⁰ Robbins, "The Present and Future," III:48.

⁸¹ J. D. H. Amador, "The Word Made Flesh: Epistemology, Ontology and Postmodern Rhetorics," in III:53-65.

⁸² Erika Mae Olbricht, "Constructing the Dead Author: Postmodernism's Rhetoric of Death," in III:66-78.

⁸³ Amador, "The Word Made Flesh," III:54.

structures and academic discourse)."⁸⁴ Erika Mae Olbricht's essay explores the birth of the reader in the context of the death of the author in postmodernism. Above all, the essay is an exploration of the disappearance of origins as one approaches a text. She ends with: "Of course there are 'origins'. But they are always already indebted to culture, to identity, to theory and history, even as writers and readers. They are always shifting, always modifying, never still or static."⁸⁵ Both of these essays embed practices from programmatic cultural and ideological disciplines that emerged during the last half of the twentieth century into practices and strategies of rhetorical interpretation of the Bible. Their essays, alongside the opening essay, exhibit a significant movement in the seven conferences toward strategies and practices of biblical rhetorical criticism as an interpretive analytics.

The initial essays on rhetorical theory in the 1995 London volume continue with Thomas H. Olbricht's "The Flowering of Rhetorical Criticism in America,"⁸⁶ followed by Robert G. Hall's "Ancient Historical Method and the Training of an Orator."⁸⁷ The volume concludes with reflections on the London Conference by David Jasper.⁸⁸ Jasper adopts a highly critical approach, asserting that even though many of the papers "recogniz[e] the 'postmodern' situation within which we are writing, nevertheless the parameters of the project ... remain on the whole comfortably lodged within the traditional critical limits of authorial intentionality and historical criticism."⁸⁹

Perhaps the index of modern authors cited in the London volume bears out Jasper's assertion. The most frequently cited authors in the 1995 London volume are George A. Kennedy and Burton L. Mack, each with references on twenty-three pages. Close behind are Perelman (20), Betz (19), Wuellner (19), Olbrechts-Tyteca (18), Robbins (16 outside of his own essay), David E. Aune (11), Thomas Olbricht (10), Stanley K. Stowers (10), Schüssler Fiorenza (9) and Margaret M. Mitchell (9). It is true that even the South African scholars at the London conference did not present political-rhetorical essays. But their papers are truly elegant, creative, and forward-moving. J. P.

⁸⁴ Amador, "The Word Made Flesh," III:54.

⁸⁵ Olbricht, "Constructing the Dead Author," III:78.

⁸⁶ Thomas H. Olbricht, "The Flowering of Rhetorical Criticism in America," in III:79-102.

⁸⁷ Robert G. Hall, "Ancient Historical Method and the Training of an Orator," in III:103-118.

⁸⁸ David Jasper, "Reflections on the London 1995 Conference on the Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture," in III:476-82.

H. Wessels explored the celebration of differences in Judges 2:20-3:6,⁹⁰ Hendrik Viviers probed why Elihu is ignored in Job 32-37,⁹¹ Pieter J. J. Botha probed why Mark's story of Jesus persuades the reader,⁹² Lambert D. Jacobs explored a new value system in Corinth,⁹³ and Johannes N. Vorster investigated the construction of culture through the construction of person in the *Acts of Thecla*.⁹⁴

Johannes N. Vorster's paper in particular, setting forth a bibliography and a programme for interpreting the relation of body and culture, made a contribution that has been growing in importance in biblical rhetorical interpretation. Indeed, the theme of the Eighth International Conference on Rhetoric and Scriptures in Pretoria, South Africa, in 2004 was "The Rhetoric(s) of Body Politics and Religious Discourse."⁹⁵ Vorster's programme, which engages "the materiality" of reading and history about which Wuellner spoke in his 1992 Heidelberg essay, was an overarching guide for the conference. Vorster's analysis of the relation of the body to culture in rhetorical interpretation at the 1995 London conference moved biblical rhetorical criticism yet one more step toward an interpretive analytics that uses social, cultural, gender-based, and ideological practices of analysis and interpretation to generate new rhetorical modes of interpretation.

Studies by two scholars from Canada also moved rhetorical criticism toward the new modes that were emerging as Willi Braun investigated the relation of argumentation to authority in the Synoptic Gospels⁹⁶ and L. Gregory Bloomquist analyzed the social context of cynic rhetorical practice.⁹⁷ Each essay represents a forward-reaching mode of rhetorical interpretation, incorporating fascinating new material to guide the investigation and conclusions. Braun's discussion of the emergence of a "rhetoric of dissent" in

⁸⁹ Jasper, "Reflections," III:476.

⁹⁰ J. P. H. Wessels, "Persuasions in Judges 2.20-3.6: A Celebration," in III:120-36.

⁹¹ Hendrik Viviers, "Elihu (Job 32-37), Garrulous but Poor Rhetor? Why is he Ignored?," in III:137-53.

⁹² Pieter J. J. Botha, "Mark's Story of Jesus and the Search for Virtue," in III:156-84.

⁹³ Lambert D. Jacobs, "Establishing a New Value System in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 5-6 as Persuasive Argument," in III:374-87.

⁹⁴ Johannes N. Vorster, "Construction of Culture through the Construction of Person: The *Acts of Thecla* as an Example," in III:445-73.

⁹⁵ The papers, delivered August 9-12, 2004, are forthcoming in *Scriptura*, published by the University of Stellenbosch.

⁹⁶ Willi Braun, "Argumentation and the Problem of Authority: Synoptic Rhetoric of Pronouncement in Cultural Context," in III:185-99.

Mediterranean literature, and his presentation of Apollonius's abandonment of his full forensic oration to respond with a few sententious retorts and disappearance from the courtroom⁹⁸ holds remarkable potential for a new analysis of the passion narratives in the Gospels and the defense speeches in Acts. Likewise, Bloomquist's analysis of the cynic use of royal language could generate a new analysis and interpretation of Jesus's use of kingdom of God in the Gospels and his death as "king of the Jews" in the Gospels. Thus, each essay in its own way creates new possibilities for analysis of NT literature as it turns issues from social contexts in the Mediterranean world back onto discourses in Mediterranean literature outside the NT.

If the 1995 London volume does not fulfill the expectations of a postmodern rhetorician, nevertheless it contains deeply researched, theoretically informed, and elegantly formulated essays. Twelve of the essays, more than half of the twenty-two in the volume, address a topic of rhetorical theory in a programmatic manner.⁹⁹ Indeed, many of these incorporate in a substantive way the work of interpreters outside the arena of traditional rhetorical interpretation of the Bible. Excluding David Jaspers's reflections at the end of the volume, there are multiple references to Michel Foucault (14), Wayne C. Booth (6), Kenneth Burke (4), and Jacques Derrida (3) in a context where there also are multiple references to H. Lausberg (8) and E. P. J. Corbett (5). There are eleven essays on Pauline epistles, including three on historical or theoretical issues; two on Romans; four on 1-2 Corinthians; one on Philippians; and one on Titus. This means that half of the volume also is devoted to the Pauline corpus in the New Testament in the context of twelve essays on rhetorical theory, two on the Hebrew Bible, three on the Gospels, and one on New Testament Apocrypha.¹⁰⁰ The London conference represents a dramatic step forward in biblical rhetorical criticism at mid-point during the 1990s. The formulation of rhetorical criticism as an interpretive analytics and the use of practices that turn dynamics that are present in the discourse back onto the analysis itself were major steps forward for biblical rhetorical criticism in general, and rhetorical criticism of the NT in particular.

⁹⁷ L. Gregory Bloomquist, "Methodological Considerations in the Determination of the Social Context of Cynic Rhetorical Practice: Implications for our Present Studies of the Jesus Traditions," in III:200-31.

⁹⁸ Braun, "Argumentation and the Problem of Authority," III:196-97.

⁹⁹ V. K. Robbins, J. D. H. Amador, E. M. Olbricht, T. H. Olbricht, R. G. Hall, P. J. J. Botha, W. Braun, L. G. Bloomquist, G. Holland, S. E. Porter, J. T. Fitzgerald, J. N. Vorster.

Traditional rhetorical analysis and interpretation are substantively evident, evoking appropriate criticism from David Jaspers that biblical rhetoricians should be more creative and venturesome. Yet substantive shifts were present that were moving biblical rhetorical criticism beyond formal Greco-Roman, literary, and historical categories toward an interpretive analytics that perpetually deconstructs its own boundaries and generates new ones in the ongoing process of interpretation.

Malibu 1996

The Malibu conference, which convened at the Malibu, California, campus of Pepperdine University in 1996, featured debates about the relation of biblical rhetorical criticism to other practices of analysis and interpretation. One of the key issues concerned the potential for incorporating practices identified with biblical hermeneutics, literary-historical interpretation, functional grammar, classical rhetorical criticism, and ideological interpretation into biblical rhetorical criticism. Other issues were the relation of historiography, apocalyptic, stasis theory, epistolography, and autobiography to rhetorical interpretation of Luke-Acts, Paul's letters, and the writings of Ignatius of Antioch. The focus of the Malibu conference produced a series of programmatic essays in which authors articulated differing views concerning the feasibility or appropriateness of integrating rhetorical criticism with other disciplines of analysis and interpretation.

The Malibu volume opens with a dedication-tribute to Thomas H. Olbricht and his curriculum vitae. Then the opening essay is an interview by Erika Mae Olbricht of Thomas Olbricht on his autobiographical book *Hearing God's Voice*.¹⁰¹ This interview exhibits, in my opinion, guiding forces underlying the seven rhetorical conferences from 1992 to 2002 that make them the launching pad for exciting advances in biblical rhetorical criticism during the 21st century. Olbricht explains how his deep Christian theological interests have been shaped by an audience-reader based approach to rhetorical analysis and interpretation. This audience-reader orientation has led him beyond a foundationalist approach to a hermeneutical-rhetorical approach focused on living bodies

¹⁰⁰ As in the 1994 Pretoria volume (II), so in the 1995 London volume (III) there are two women authors of essays. In this instance, they are Erika Mae Olbricht and Verena Jegher-Bucher.

¹⁰¹ Erika Mae Olbricht, "Acting on the Center: An Interview on Rhetoric and Hermeneutics with Thomas H. Olbricht in the Wake of *Hearing God's Voice*," in IV:28-47.

in the context of culture, specific situations, and materiality.¹⁰² He describes how his first move into rhetorical interpretation took him toward the specific lives of people, including the living, autobiographical journey of his own work.¹⁰³ His second move was the relation of the analytical-logical to storytelling. He is careful not to separate the two by saying that narrative is only emotive. Rather, every mode of biblical discourse potentially "contains the discrete and the emotional, but without either upstaging the other."¹⁰⁴ The third move took him beyond the formal categories of traditional biblical interpretation to analysis and interpretation of discourse, which he perceives to be a merger of rhetoric with hermeneutics.¹⁰⁵ The fourth move led him beyond literary-historical categories to cultural categories. This move yields an awareness that hermeneutical-rhetorical presuppositions are embodiments of multi-cultural and trans-cultural practices and commitments. In his words: "All human existence is ensconced in culture. Efforts to purge humanity of culture result in purging humanity itself. In the biblical witness, God did not eschew culture. He embraced it through choosing Israel, a people with a culture, and sending a Son who emptied himself in order fully to embody humanity, culture and all."¹⁰⁶ The fifth move was to link the cultural specificity of biblical discourse with the material conditions of the body, which means "that both hermeneutics and rhetoric must embrace the whole of humanity, not just the senses, the mind or the emotions."¹⁰⁷ In this context, he presents a vivid mental picture: "To me, any effort to set forth a transcendental hermeneutic which in turn can identify a transcendental theological core is like buying petunias from a nursery, carefully purging their roots of all the soil with water, and setting them out in a newly fumigated soil so as to grow pristine petunias. Rather than thriving, petunias treated in this way die."¹⁰⁸ The sixth move was to observe that "the foundations" agreed upon by an audience are those agreements Aristotle labeled "enthymemes."¹⁰⁹ Each person's "starting points for reality" are communicated through culture. Enthymemes are socially and culturally configured

¹⁰² Olbricht, "Acting on the Center," IV:42-47.

¹⁰³ Olbricht, "Action on the Center," IV:29-31.

¹⁰⁴ Olbricht, "Acting on the Center," IV:32.

¹⁰⁵ Olbricht, "Acting on the Center," IV:35-41.

¹⁰⁶ Olbricht, "Acting on the Center," IV:41.

¹⁰⁷ Olbricht, "Acting on the Center," IV:43.

¹⁰⁸ Olbricht, "Acting on the Center," IV:42.

¹⁰⁹ Olbricht, "Acting on the Center," IV:45.

sylogisms, which may be only partially stated, since the presuppositions are so well known. This means that people's agreements concerning what is true are culturally configured. Indeed, cultures regularly configure truths the people of that culture consider to be "universal." The final move was to assert: "What is required before much progress can be made in the rhetorical analysis of the Scriptures is the maturing of the discipline of rhetoric through observations of endless forms of diversities in rhetorical situations and strategies."¹¹⁰ In other words, the appropriation of categories from classical rhetorics and 19th-20th century literary-historical criticism are too limiting to achieve a dynamic, full-bodied mode of rhetorical interpretation. Rhetorical critics must formulate categories that work dynamically in unlimited forms of diversities in rhetorical situations and strategies.

This interview essay exhibits well the gradual emergence of new modes of biblical rhetorical interpretation during the 1990s. Participants in these conferences became more and more aware of the necessity to develop multiple strategies of analysis and interpretation. In addition, they experimented with various ways to integrate these strategies with one another in different contexts of rhetorical analysis and interpretation. T. H. Olbricht describes well in the interview the manner in which rhetorical criticism must incorporate sophisticated modes of cultural criticism.

There is a dimension the interview essay leaves unexplored, namely ideology. Olbricht states that his "cultural" starting points for reality rest "in God – creator and sustainer, and the father of the Lord Jesus Christ."¹¹¹ What one person describes as cultural, however, another may describe as ideological. Cultural presuppositions regularly are nurtured through a decade or more of "growing into" a mode of perceiving reality and its challenges. Ideological presuppositions are more a matter of temperament, decision, and alliance with some groups rather than others.¹¹² The more global a person's "context of life" becomes, the more one may face an "ideological" choice among cultures. If one's religious culture remains somehow in place in this global context, then one's choice among alternatives of militancy, diplomacy, pacifism, philanthropy, evangelization, etc. become ideological choices and alliances within one's religious or non-religious culture. Ideology was the real newcomer on the scene of biblical

¹¹⁰ Olbricht, "Acting on the Center," IV:47.

¹¹¹ Olbricht, "Acting on the Center," IV:45.

interpretation during the last decades of the 20th century, and it undoubtedly is the most startling and bothersome thread in the fabric of current biblical interpretation for some people. The ensuing conferences brought this issue more and more to the forefront, insisting that ideology must be included alongside other dimensions in biblical rhetorical analysis and interpretation.

The essays in the 1996 Malibu volume exhibit a variety of opinions about whether biblical rhetorical interpreters should travel the journey articulated by T. H. Olbricht in the interview essay. A number of authors of essays in the volume do not address the issues Olbricht raises. Instead, they discuss Greco-Roman theory and practice either to present a critique or to adopt and/or adapt some aspect of classical rhetoric for today's interpretive purposes. A significant irony in the volume is that Thomas Olbricht himself contributes an essay focused on the use of classical rhetorical criticism to reconstruct historical contexts, without reference to most of the issues he discusses in the interview essay. In the essay he himself authors, he reaches a conclusion that recent attempts of rhetorical critics to construct historical contexts have produced some interesting results, but few of the results have been definitive.¹¹³ His final comment is that "no substitute has yet been discovered for astute historical exploration and analysis."¹¹⁴ Duane Watson addresses the same issue as Olbricht, with somewhat different results. The rhetorical exigence of Paul "would certainly be tied to the facts of the historical situation in order for him to communicate with an audience working with the same historical situation."¹¹⁵ Therefore, once interpreters construct the rhetorical situation of a Pauline epistle, they are in a position to reconstruct the historical situation. This final step, he suggests, "will initially find voice in interdisciplinary studies incorporating classical, social-scientific and rhetorical studies."¹¹⁶ Kota Yamada uses Hellenistic-Roman rhetorical historiography as a resource for rhetorical analysis and interpretation of the preface to Luke.¹¹⁷ He concludes that "the real author and real reader are not known to us in the

¹¹² Robbins, *Exploring*, 95-119.

¹¹³ Thomas H. Olbricht, "Classical Rhetorical Criticism and Historical Reconstructions: A Critique," in IV:108-109.

¹¹⁴ Olbricht, "Classical Rhetorical Criticism," IV:124.

¹¹⁵ Duane F. Watson, "The Contributions and Limitations of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Theory for Constructing the Rhetorical and Historical Situations of a Pauline Epistle," in IV:150-51.

¹¹⁶ Watson, "The Contributions and Limitations," IV:151.

¹¹⁷ Kota Yamada, "The Preface to the Lukan Writings and Rhetorical Historiography," in IV:154-72.

preface," since the first person 'I' or 'we' is "a narrator of the story-world and 'Theophilus' is a narratee." The historical story-world of Luke, in turn, is a result of the rhetorical program announced in the preface and developed by "the *dramatis personae*" in the discourse.¹¹⁸ Ira J. Jolivet, Jr. analyzes Paul's conversion in Acts from a perspective of the stasis theory of Hermagoras.¹¹⁹ This approach creates a context for Jolivet to identify the conventional rhetorical topics of honor, advantage, and necessity in the legal strategy attributed to Paul in Acts 26. Glenn Holland uses the rhetorical device of "speech-in-character" to examine the self against the self in Romans 7:7-25.¹²⁰ He concludes that "Paul's identification with the situation of the 'wretched I' in Rom. 7.7-25 is fully in keeping with his rhetorical strategy in writing to the Romans."¹²¹ Instead of offering his own example in paraenesis in this letter, he "evokes a fellowship with a common wretched past and a common blessed present, a fellowship strengthened by mutual forbearance and mutual support."¹²² Anders Eriksson identifies tradition as "special topics" in Aristotle's discussion of rhetoric as a way to analyze rhetorical proof in 1 Cor 8-10.¹²³ In his terms, this is a move from *dispositio* to *inventio*, for the purpose of analyzing the rhetorical situation, the rhetorical strategy and the argumentation in the text.¹²⁴ Exhibiting the "power of the text" by means of its argumentative pattern, he identifies special portions of the argument that produce enthymemes. These enthymemes appeal to traditional knowledge in a manner that produces syllogistic reasoning that appears not only to be plausible but definitive.¹²⁵ A key to the persuasiveness of these "proofs" is the "interplay between inductive and deductive rhetorical proof" that is "an important aspect of Paul's way of applying his theology in specific church situations."¹²⁶ Timothy W. Seid identifies the ancient rhetorical device of synkrisis in Hebrews 7 and analyzes it in the overall context of an epideictic outline of Hebrews that exhibits

¹¹⁸ Yamada, "The Preface to the Lukan Writings," IV:172.

¹¹⁹ Ira J. Jolivet, Jr. "The Lukan Account of Paul's Conversion and Hermagorean Stasis Theory," in IV:210-20.

¹²⁰ Glenn S. Holland, "The Self against the Self in Romans 7.7-25," in IV:260-71.

¹²¹ Holland, "The Self," IV:271.

¹²² Holland, "The Self," IV:271.

¹²³ Anders Eriksson, "Special Topics in 1 Corinthians 8-10," in IV:272-301.

¹²⁴ Eriksson, "Special Topics," IV:273.

¹²⁵ Eriksson, "Special Topics," IV:276-301.

¹²⁶ Eriksson, "Special Topics," 301.

synkrisis from the beginning to the end of the writing.¹²⁷ This approach enables him to identify a series of conventional epideictic topics in Heb. 7:1-25 which confirm the conviction in the audience-reader that "the superior priest is the one who has offered a one-time sacrifice, who is not weak in susceptibility to death, and who, on the basis of God's oath, will remain as priest forever."¹²⁸ Mary W. Patrick uses an extensive range of classical rhetorical data to analyze the rhetoric of Ignatius' *Philadelphians* toward a goal of assessing how many kinds of opponents Ignatius had and how these opponents should be characterized.¹²⁹ Her analysis suggests that "miscommunication, misunderstanding and failure to respond with adequate sensitivity" are clearly present, but there is not sufficient evidence to posit "heretical sects of intruders with their antibishops, counter-eucharists and coherent theological agendas."¹³⁰ In this instance, then, detailed rhetorical analysis serves as a corrective to historical analysis.

In contrast to these essays, which reflect the "familiar business" of rhetorical criticism as it was nurtured in particular by Hans Dieter Betz, George A. Kennedy, and Robert Jewett during the 1980s, a number of essays move out from the issues raised in the interview essay with Olbricht. J. D. H. Amador wholeheartedly becomes a fellow traveler with the interview essay as he criticizes "interpretive unicity" in traditional modes of interpretation. By unicity he means "the assumption that a singular governing theme, a singular intentionality or purpose, governs the direction and goal of the text."¹³¹ Interpreters who presuppose that a Pauline epistle must have a "monological" voice presenting one main argument either strive "to 'prove' argumentative unicity of coherence" or attempt to splinter an epistle apart "under the assumption that coherent and complete argumentative structures are signs of source documents behind the supposed compilation of the canonical text."¹³² Calling this approach a "monotheistic ideology of author workshop,"¹³³ he presents an alternative of assuming multiple "intentionalities" at work in every writing. These intentionalities include authorial desires that work against

¹²⁷ Timothy W. Seid, "Synkrisis in Hebrews 7: The Rhetorical Structure and Strategy," in IV:322-47.

¹²⁸ Seid, "Synkrisis in Hebrews 7," IV:346.

¹²⁹ Mary W. Patrick, "Autobiography and Rhetoric: Anger in Ignatius of Antioch," in IV:348-75.

¹³⁰ Patrick, "Autobiography and Rhetoric," IV:375.

¹³¹ J. D. H. Amador, "Interpretive Unicity: The Drive toward Monological (Monotheistic) Rhetoric," in IV:49.

¹³² Amador, "Interpretive Unicity," IV:51.

¹³³ Amador, "Interpretive Unicity," IV:60.

linguistic expressions the author produces; material effects, like works being bound together in a single communicative product; starting points and frameworks of argumentation, which authorize priorities of origin and hierarchies of rank; and critical analytics that bolster traditional interpretations and power relations.

L. Gregory Bloomquist also becomes a fellow traveler with his analysis of rhetorical argumentation and the culture of apocalyptic in Luke 21.¹³⁴ His interpretation of innertextural patterns, intertextural argumentation, social and cultural topics, and ideological configurations in Luke 21 was perhaps the first programmatic analysis and interpretation of an apocalyptic chapter in the NT guided by a rhetorical approach informed by social, cultural, and ideological strategies of communication. This essay set the stage for a volume of essays by various authors on rhetorical interpretation of apocalyptic texts that appeared in 1999.¹³⁵ Then the Rhetoric and the New Testament Section in the SBL held a special session on "The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament" in Boston in 1999, which brought forth another volume featuring rhetorical analysis and interpretation of apocalyptic discourse guided by social, cultural, and ideological strategies of interaction and communication.¹³⁶ One of the major achievements of biblical rhetorical critics during the 1990s, therefore, was the launching of a new rhetorical approach to biblical apocalyptic literature. This approach moved beyond issues of literary genre and social history into dynamics of communication and persuasion that lure audiences and readers into a worldview focused on the end of time.

Three authors in the 1996 Malibu volume become fellow travelers with Olbricht's interview essay by emphasizing the Christological nature of New Testament discourse. Dennis Stamps uses the topic "Argumentation versus Rhetoric" to launch his participation in the journey Olbricht describes.¹³⁷ For him, "rhetoric" refers to "Graeco-Roman rationality associated with the classical rhetorical tradition," and "argumentation" refers to "any means of persuasion in order to convince the other party."¹³⁸ He cites

¹³⁴ L. Gregory Bloomquist, "Rhetorical Argumentation and the Culture of Apocalyptic: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of Luke 21," in IV:173-209.

¹³⁵ Greg Carey and L. Gregory Bloomquist (eds.), *Vision and Persuasion: Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1999).

¹³⁶ Duane F. Watson (ed.), *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament* (Symposium 14; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

¹³⁷ Dennis L. Stamps, "The Theological Rhetoric of the Pauline Epistles: Prolegomenon," in IV:253-54.

¹³⁸ Stamps, "Theological Rhetoric," IV:252.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric* as the source of this shift from rhetoric to argumentation, and appeals to Wuellner as a predecessor who "in effect collapses rhetoric into argumentation and argumentation into rhetoric."¹³⁹ His next step is to identify Paul as "perhaps the Church's first great theologian" whose "contribution to Christianity has remained a bedrock for Christian theology every since."¹⁴⁰ The essay ends with the assertion that "the essence of Christian rhetoric is its Christology."¹⁴¹ Lauri Thurén presents a similar point of view in his essay while addressing a criticism launched by James D. G. Dunn that argument over Paul's letters as epideictic or deliberative seems "fairly pointless" with regard to the study of Pauline theology.¹⁴² Though Thurén uses Greco-Roman rhetorical terms throughout the essay to analyze Paul's discourse, he asserts that he is presenting a "derhetorized" analysis of Paul's writings. His approach, he says, allows an interpreter to see "the ideological religious system" behind Paul's letters, namely, "Paul's *theological* universe."¹⁴³ Thurén makes no reference to Olbricht's work, and Olbricht may hesitate to call Paul's theology an "ideological religious system." Focusing on Pauline "theology" and argumentation, Thurén's essay exhibits interests that develop issues central to Olbricht's approach. In the end, however, Thurén's approach has deep affinities with the approach of Stamps as it uses oppositional categories like "derhetorizing Pauline discourse" to achieve its goals. Thurén's approach in this essay differs by its use of traditional Greco-Roman categories for its analysis. This changes in the essays for the succeeding conferences, where this terminology will be replaced with vocabulary from modern argumentation analysis and theory.

A number of essays in the 1996 Malibu volume feature oppositional presentations of "rhetoric versus ..." or "... versus rhetoric." This dimension in the essays of Stamps and Thurén has already been mentioned above, where Stamps pits argumentation versus rhetoric and Thurén pits derhetorized theological discourse versus rhetoric.¹⁴⁴

Oppositional presentations are especially characteristic of a number of essays in the volume for the 1996 Malibu conference. On the one hand, Amador's essay pits

¹³⁹ Stamps, "Theological Rhetoric," IV:254.

¹⁴⁰ Stamps, "Theological Rhetoric," IV:257.

¹⁴¹ Stamps, "Theological Rhetoric," IV:259.

¹⁴² Lauri Thurén, "Was Paul Angry? Derhetorizing Galatians," in IV:302-20.

¹⁴³ Thurén, "Was Paul Angry?", IV:303.

¹⁴⁴ Thurén, "Was Paul Angry?", IV:301-304, 320.

monological or monotheistic unicity versus multiplicity to develop a "post-humanist rhetorics."¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, Dale Patrick and Allen Scult pit a humanistic hermeneutics of affirmation versus ideological interpretation to present rhetoric, which is good, versus ideology, which is bad.¹⁴⁶ Gustavo Martín-Asensio presents Michael Hallidays' functional grammar as a sounder, better informed and more capable method of reaching "the fundamental goals of rhetorical criticism of the New Testament," which "seem both worthwhile and attainable."¹⁴⁷ Using words of R. Hasan, he implies at the end of the essay that the goal of rhetorical criticism must be "[t]o arrive at the truth – the theme(s) of a literature text"¹⁴⁸ Thus, it appears that he may be after something more like scientific truth than culturally configured truth about the world and life in it. Stanley Porter pits Paul the epistolographer versus Paul the rhetorician. He concludes: "I am compelled to conclude that we cannot find Paul the ancient rhetorician in the letters, primarily because Paul was a letterwriter. To be a letterwriter was to be doing something different than being a speechmaker in the Greco-Roman world. On the basis of the letters, we cannot examine Paul as a rhetorician in terms of the categories of construction of speeches in the ancient world."¹⁴⁹ Then he asks if it is possible to have "access to the historical Paul as speechmaker," and decides that the answer is no, because the speeches in Acts "were shaped and presented by its author."¹⁵⁰ In this instance, one notices a categorical disqualification of one category for the other, even though many biblical interpreters consider ancient rhetorical writing to be deeply embedded in epistolography.

If David Jaspers was critical of the 1995 London conference for not moving decisively into postmodern analysis and interpretation, he would have condemned the 1996 Malibu conference for returning to the deep trenches of modernism and scientism. In my view, a special contribution of the volume lies in the programmatic journeys the authors take through strengths and limitations of classical rhetorical criticism, epistolography, rhetorical historiography, special topics in Christian literature, the

¹⁴⁵ Amador, "Interpretive Unicity," IV:48.

¹⁴⁶ Dale Patrick with Allen Scult, "Rhetoric and Ideology: A Debate within Biblical Scholarship over the Import of Persuasion," in IV:63-83.

¹⁴⁷ Gustavo Martín-Asensio, "Hallidayan Functional Grammar as Heir to New Testament Rhetorical Criticism," in IV:84.

¹⁴⁸ Martín-Asensio, "Hallidayan Functional Grammar," IV:107.

¹⁴⁹ Stanley E. Porter, "Paul as Epistolographer *and* Rhetorician?", in IV:248.

¹⁵⁰ Porter, "Paul as Epistolographer," IV:248.

functional grammar of M. A. K. Halladay, socio-rhetorical interpretation, the nature of theological rhetoric, and expressions of anger and reflections on self in ancient texts. The 1996 Malibu conference exhibits the deep divisions that currently exist in the field of biblical studies. On the one hand, there are interpreters who think it is possible, and indeed mandatory, to find ways to negotiate multiple practices and disciplines of interpretation with one another. On the other hand, there are interpreters who think it is necessary to put the most scientifically grounded methods of analysis in a position of priority over other approaches. It is obvious that this division will not go away. It is also clear that the majority opinion among biblical rhetorical critics at the beginning of the 21st century is that rhetorical criticism must not repeat the mistake of dividing disciplines from each other, like the Ramist movement and 19th-20th century hermeneutics did. Instead, rhetorical criticism must find diverse ways to negotiate multiple strategies and disciplines of analysis and interpretation. Only in this way will an approach emerge that can exhibit the richness, vibrancy, power, vitality, and aptness of biblical discourse for human life.

Florence 1998

According to the editors of the essays published from the conference on Pepperdine University's facilities in Florence, Italy: "Over 30 participants from seven different nations (Canada, Denmark, Great Britain, Finland, South Africa, Sweden, United States of America) gathered to discuss the rhetorical analysis of Scripture."¹⁵¹ Also they observe that at least ten of the papers are "marked by a growing interest in the tapestry or textures of socio-rhetorical criticism."¹⁵² As the editors worked with the papers in the volume, they perceived a "shift to a rhetorics of how a text constructs a new sociology of being, a concern about the 'power of texts'."¹⁵³ They comment further:

... rhetorical critics are becoming more interested in how textual discourse constructs new sociological understanding and identity. In this perspective, rhetoric is more than how a text communicates and whether

¹⁵¹ Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, "Editors' Preface," in V:9.

¹⁵² Porter and Stamps, "Editors' Preface," V:9.

¹⁵³ Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, "Introduction: Rhetorical Criticism and the Florence 1998 Conference," in V:18.

that "how" is effective, but what a text communicates. Rhetoric becomes the means of positing a new reality and persuading others to adopt it.... Perhaps a key to understanding this shift is the ... interest ... in how Christianity established its identity as a religion in the Greco-Roman world and culture, which included, of course, Judaism – and beyond that, how early Christians expressed this identity and persuaded others to adopt and retain this world-view. It is a fascinating project to uncover how these early followers of Jesus took the cultural and social ideas and conventions of their day and age and converted them into a continuous, but distinctive, new cultural and social pattern.¹⁵⁴

Occurring six years after the initial Heidelberg Conference in 1992, the Florence Conference reveals that the "new hybrid of interpretation" to which Duane Watson referred in 1991 was indeed yielding "a hybrid more vibrant than the parent streams." The rediscovery of rhetorical analysis of Scripture in literary and genre rhetorical analysis during the late 1980s was giving birth to richly informed social, cultural, and aesthetic rhetorical analysis. Instead of staying with H. Lausberg's *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* and J. Martin's *Antike Rhetorik* as the two major guides to rhetorical analysis, author's of various essays work seriously with insights from the writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein, C. S. Peirce, K. Burke, Bernard Lonergan, M. F. Burnyeat, and the anthropologist Bradd Shore in debates about the rhetorical nature of social, cultural, ideological, and aesthetic reasoning and argumentation. The "new rhetoric" of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca is a launching pad for many of the discussions, with twenty-one references to Chaim Perelman and twenty references to Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca in a context of sixteen references to Burke and twelve references to Wittgenstein in the volume.

Thomas Olbricht's essay on the allegorical rhetoric of Philo and Clement of Alexandria at the beginning of the volume¹⁵⁵ is complemented with an essay by Richard

¹⁵⁴ Porter and Stamps, "Introduction," V:17.

¹⁵⁵ Thomas H. Olbricht, "Greek Rhetoric and the Allegorical Rhetoric of Philo and Clement of Alexandria," in V:24-47.

Lemmer on rhetoric, metaphor, and the metaphysical in Ephesians,¹⁵⁶ and an essay by James D. Hester on fantasy theme analysis of 1 Thessalonians.¹⁵⁷ Hendrik Viviers builds on Vorster's earlier study with an essay on the rhetoricity of the body in the Song of Songs.¹⁵⁸ An essay by Vernon Robbins on oppositional political rhetoric in writings of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Luke Timothy Johnson¹⁵⁹ is complemented with an essay by Gerrie Snyman on identification in the discourse of fundamentalism,¹⁶⁰ an essay by Johan Coetzee on politeness strategies in enemy psalms,¹⁶¹ an essay by Craig Evans on Jesus' rhetoric of criticism,¹⁶² an essay by Anders Eriksson on contrary arguments in Paul's letters,¹⁶³ and an essay by Lauri Thurén on derhetorizing Romans 7.¹⁶⁴ An essay on programmatic correlation of textures in socio-rhetorical analysis by L. Gregory Bloomquist¹⁶⁵ is complemented by an essay on the need for and nature of socio-rhetorical commentary by Duane F. Watson,¹⁶⁶ socio-rhetorical construction of discipleship in Mark by Paul Danove,¹⁶⁷ socio-rhetorical construction of a Christian utopia in the Gospel of John by Gerhard van den Heever,¹⁶⁸ and the rhetoric of honor, suffering, and hope in 1 Thessalonians by K. K. Yeo.¹⁶⁹ An essay by Arthur Gibson on the relation of rhetorical and philosophic logic near the beginning of the volume¹⁷⁰ is complemented by an essay

¹⁵⁶ Richard Lemmer, "Rhetoric and Metaphor, and the Metaphysical in the Letter to the Ephesians," in V:458-80.

¹⁵⁷ James D. Hester, "A Fantasy Theme Analysis of 1 Thessalonians," in V:504-25.

¹⁵⁸ Hendrik Viviers, "The Rhetoricity of the 'Body' in the Song of Songs," in V:237-54.

¹⁵⁹ Vernon K. Robbins, "The Rhetorical Full-Turn in Biblical Interpretation: Reconfiguring Rhetorical-Political Analysis," in V:48-60.

¹⁶⁰ Gerrie Snyman, "Identification and the Discourse of Fundamentalism: Reflections on a Reading of the Book of Esther," in V:160-208.

¹⁶¹ Johan H. Coetzee, "Politeness Strategies in the So-Called 'Enemy Psalms': An Inquiry into Israelite Prayer Rhetoric," in V:209-36.

¹⁶² Craig A. Evans, "Jesus' Rhetoric of Criticism: The Parables Against His Friends and Critics," in V:256-79.

¹⁶³ Anders Eriksson, "Contrary Arguments in Paul's Letters," in V:336-54.

¹⁶⁴ Lauri Thurén, "Romans 7 Derhetorized," in V:420-40.

¹⁶⁵ L. Gregory Bloomquist, "A Possible Direction for Providing Programmatic Correlation of Textures in Socio-Rhetorical Analysis," in V:61-96.

¹⁶⁶ Duane F. Watson, "Why We Need Socio-Rhetorical Commentary and What It Might Look Like," in V:129-57.

¹⁶⁷ Paul Danove, "A Rhetorical Analysis of Mark's Construction of Discipleship," in V:280-96.

¹⁶⁸ Gerhard van den Heever, "'From the Pragmatics of Textures to a Christian Utopia': The Case of the Gospel of John," in V:297-334.

¹⁶⁹ K. K. Yeo, "The Rhetoric of Election and Calling Language in 1 Thessalonians," in V:526-47.

¹⁷⁰ Arthur Gibson, "Relations between Rhetoric and Philosophical Logic," in V:97-128.

by Dennis Stamps on the Christological premise in Pauline theological rhetoric,¹⁷¹ and an enthymematic reading by Marc J. Debanné of Philippians.¹⁷²

The Florence conference, then, exhibits a significant turning of the road in the Pepperdine conferences. According to the index of authors, the Florence volume contains only one reference to the writings of Hans Dieter Betz, and this is to his essay on Jesus and the Cynics.¹⁷³ There is no reference to Lausberg's *Handbuch* in the volume. There are references on fourteen pages to the works of Stanley K. Stowers, on seven pages to Wilhelm Wuellner, and on only four pages to George Kennedy. There are ten references to the writings of Johannes N. Vorster and six references to Charles Wanamaker, both authors in South Africa. There are seven references to writings by Anders Eriksson outside of his own essay in the volume. There are multiple references to the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in an essay where Vernon Robbins responds to her 1994 Pretoria essay about moving beyond a rhetorical half-turn into an epistemological rhetoric of inquiry that includes political rhetoric. The volume contains five essays on rhetorical theory, three on the Hebrew Bible, three on the Gospels, and nine on Paul.

Lund 2000

Prior to the Conference in Lund, Sweden, all the rhetoric conferences except the one in South Africa had been hosted at a Pepperdine University campus, with Thomas H. Olbricht as the special host. Pieter J. J. Botha, Johannes N. Vorster, and their colleagues at UNISA in Pretoria were the special hosts in South Africa. Anders Eriksson and Walter Übelacker were hosts for the Lund conference, and it had a special nature since it was magnificently funded by their research project on "Early Christian Letters in the Light of Ancient Rhetoric and Epistolography." Special funds came for housing, food, and publication of the volume from the Swedish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences and the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

¹⁷¹ Dennis L. Stamps, "The Christological Premise in Pauline Theological Rhetoric: 1 Corinthians 1.4-2.5 as an Example," in V:441-57.

¹⁷² Marc J. Debanné, "An Enthymematic Reading of Philippians: Towards a Typology of Pauline Arguments," in V:481-503.

¹⁷³ Craig A. Evans, "Jesus' Rhetoric of Criticism: The Parables Against His Friends and Critics," in V:259, citing H. D. Betz, "Jesus and the Cynics: Survey and Analysis of a Hypothesis," *JR* (1994): 453-75.

Frans van Eemeren, who had been specially invited to the conference, presented an overview of argumentation theory to introduce the participants to the relation of rhetoric to argumentation. Since the participants did not have the overview beforehand, few made reference to Eemeren's work throughout the conference. Eemeren emphasizes in his essay that "[a]ll modern approaches to argumentation are strongly influenced by classical and post-classical rhetoric and dialectic," Eemeren groups the approaches under six headings: (1) Toulmin's Model of Analysis; (2) Perelman's New Rhetoric; (3) Informal Logic; (4) Radical Argumentativism; (5) Modern Rhetorical Approaches; and (6) Modern Dialectical Approaches.¹⁷⁴ He introduces his discussion of argumentation theory in two ways. First, he describes the general aims in the study of argumentation as:

... determining which soundness criteria a reasonable critic applies when evaluating the point of departure and the organization of argumentation and making clear how these criteria are to be applied in the analysis, evaluation, and presentation of argumentative discourse.¹⁷⁵

Second, he identifies five components of a research program that integrates normative and descriptive dimensions of the study of argumentation: (a) philosophical; (b) theoretical; (c) empirical; (d) analytic; and (e) practical.¹⁷⁶

To introduce a perspective located in the rhetoric of New Testament literature, Vernon K. Robbins presented a socio-rhetorical program for analyzing six kinds of early Christian rhetorical dialects (rhetorolects):¹⁷⁷ (1) wisdom; (2) miracle; (3) prophetic; (4) suffering-death (priestly);¹⁷⁸ (5) apocalyptic; and pre-creation.¹⁷⁹ His approach in the essay is based on three analytical steps: (1) identification of rhetorical topics in the

¹⁷⁴ Frans van Eemeren, "Argumentation Theory: An Overview of Approaches and Research Themes," VI:12-19.

¹⁷⁵ Eemeren, "Argumentation Theory," VI:10.

¹⁷⁶ Eemeren, "Argumentation Theory," VI:10-12. Discussion of the normative and descriptive dimensions is in Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst, *Argumentation, Communication, and Fallacies* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992). The research program is in Frans H. van Eemeren, Rob Grootendorst, Sally Jackson, and Scott Jacobs, *Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993); Frans H. van Eemeren, Rob Grootendorst, Sally Jackson, and Scott Jacobs, "Argumentation," in Teun A. van Dijk (ed.), *Discourse as Structure and Process. Discourse Studies* (London: Sage, 1997), I:208-29.

¹⁷⁷ Vernon K. Robbins, "The Dialectical Nature of Early Christian Discourse," *Scriptura* 59 (1996): 353-62.

¹⁷⁸ Subsequently, Robbins has identified suffering-death discourse focused on the removal of sin as "priestly" rhetorolect.

¹⁷⁹ Vernon K. Robbins, "Argumentative Textures in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation," VI:27-65.

context of elaboration analysis; (2) analysis of rhetorical topics in rationales, conditional clauses, and adversative clauses; and (3) enthymemic analysis.

There are two special points of relation between the essays by Eemeren and Robbins. First, both authors emphasize the importance of reconstructing implicit reasons or unexpressed premises.¹⁸⁰ Second, both emphasize the progressive texture of argumentation, Eemeren under the rubric of "the structure of argumentation" and Robbins under the rubric of "rhetorical elaboration" (*[ex]ergasia* in the *Progymnasmata* and *expolitio* in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*).¹⁸¹ There is, however, a major point of difference. Eemeren emphasizes the importance of normative evaluation as well as description in the study of argumentation. Robbins focuses solely on a description of different kinds of early Christian argumentation, without attempting to evaluate the arguments as sound reasoning or as fallacies. Eemeren introduces Douglas Walton's conclusion that "there are various types of dialogues, constituting different types of argumentative contexts," but he argues against Walton's opinion that "fallacies are incorrect *dialectical shifts* from the one type of dialogue to the other" which may, in certain contexts, be correct or effective moves to make.¹⁸² Eemeren asserts that "any violation of a discussion rule should be viewed as a fallacy that endangers the resolution of a difference of opinion. On the basis of various discussion rules it can be indicated exactly what went wrong."¹⁸³ This point of view creates a very different program of research than the systematic socio-rhetorical analysis and interpretation of all early Christian discourse in which Robbins is engaged.

In the essays that follow in the volume, only Lauri Thurén's essay, "Is There Biblical Argumentation?", addresses the "normative" interests of Eemeren that focus on sound reasoning versus fallacies.¹⁸⁴ Thurén discusses the relation of rhetoric to argumentation in a manner related to Arthur Gibson's discussion of the relation of

¹⁸⁰ Eemeren, "Argumentative Theory," VI:19-20; Robbins, "Argumentative Textures," VI:38, 41, 48-50.

¹⁸¹ Eemeren, "Argumentative Theory," VI:23-24; Robbins, "Argumentative Textures," VI:31-63.

¹⁸² Eemeren, "Argumentative Theory," VI:25. Douglas N. Walton, *Arguer's Position* (Wesport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985); *idem*, *Informal Fallacies* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1987); *idem*, *A Pragmatic Theory of Fallacy* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995); *idem*, *Argumentation Schemes for Presumptive Reasoning* (Mahway, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1996); Douglas N. Walton and Erik C. W. Krabbe, *Commitment and Dialogue* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1995).

¹⁸³ Eemeren, "Argumentative Theory," VI:25.

¹⁸⁴ Lauri Thurén, "Is There Biblical Argumentation?", VI:77-92.

rhetoric to philosophic logic at the Florence Conference in 1998.¹⁸⁵ The question is whether biblical interpreters can determine if aspects of biblical discourse exhibit sound reasoning. When Thurén asks if there is biblical argumentation, he means, "Is there 'activity aimed at gaining the audience's assent to the author's theses and opinions'?" The alternative, he suggests, is rhetoric that "may (but need not) use argumentation in order to persuade the listener to obey him so that the latter becomes motivated to do something."¹⁸⁶ For Thurén, the key verb for argumentation is "convince," in contrast to rhetoric where the key verb is "persuade." The goal of argumentation analysis for Thurén, in agreement with Eemeren, is to determine if there is "sound reasoning" in biblical literature aimed at establishing a consensus of opinion and belief, and, if so, what it looks like. An alternative could be that there is "simply rhetoric" in the Bible, namely persuasion that produces obedience but neither presupposes an "appeal to reasonableness"¹⁸⁷ nor aims at resolving differences of opinion, namely "convincing" people.¹⁸⁸ This approach leads Thurén only to analyze sections of NT text that are, in Robbins's terms, "wisdom" discourse, namely they contain standard "features" of argumentation. He does not try, as Robbins does, to analyze argumentative techniques in miracle, prophetic, priestly (suffering-death), apocalyptic, and pre-creation discourse. Thus, Thurén's essay excludes rhetorical analysis of the full range of NT discourse for the purpose of determining whether there are certain portions of NT literature that are "truly" argumentative.

The Lund conference was dominated by papers that proceeded from some kind of rhetorical approach to analysis of argumentative aspects of a particular writing or set of writings. A number of the essays used the rhetorical enthymeme as a way to approach argumentative dimensions of various kinds of literature. As a way to probe some first century B.C.E. and C.E. Mediterranean literature, Manfred Kraus began with Quintilian's view of the enthymeme. Quintilian introduced three views of an enthymeme as: (a) anything conceived in the mind; (b) a sentence accompanied by a reason; and (c) a

¹⁸⁵ Gibson, "Rhetoric and Philosophical Logic," V:97-128.

¹⁸⁶ Thurén, "Biblical Argumentation," VI:83.

¹⁸⁷ Eemeren, "Argumentation Theory," VI:10.

¹⁸⁸ Eemeren, "Argumentation Theory," VI:25.

conclusion of an argument drawn either from consequents or from incompatibles.¹⁸⁹

From this beginning point, Kraus discusses the enthymeme as a figure of speech in early Roman rhetoric and as a Stoic syllogism arguing from incompatibles in Cicero's *Topica* and subsequent literature. Then he describes the birth and practice of the "elliptical enthymeme," namely "a syllogism with one premise (or the conclusion) omitted or suppressed."¹⁹⁰ At the end, he concludes:

... Paul ... does not use elliptic enthymemes exclusively. He, rather like the Younger Seneca or Quintilian, appears open to a richer variety of formations.... Especially in the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E., different views were still competing. If this were more taken into account of in rhetorical analysis of scriptural texts, it might open up new ways to new insights.¹⁹¹

Rodney K. Duke, focusing on both enthymeme and example in 1-2 Chronicles, reaches a conclusion that "[t]he Chronicler used a supportive balance of demonstration through enthymeme and example"¹⁹² to present a "seeking argument" throughout the text. L. Gregory Bloomquist, asserting that "rhetoric is about persuasion sometimes, but always about the consent involved in making communication work,"¹⁹³ analyzes blending of wisdom and apocalyptic discourse in Luke and Acts. His focus on a variety of audiences "(audience expressed, invoked, expressed/invoked, implied, peripheral, etc.),¹⁹⁴ provides a way for him to analyze multiple forms of argumentation in a sample of short spans of texts in Luke and Acts. Russell B. Sisson, asserting that "the Mission Discourse [in Matthew] is best characterized as an 'opening-middle-closing' pattern of elaboration,"¹⁹⁵ uses a case/rule/result approach to identify syllogistic rhetorical argumentation that blends prophetic discourse with wisdom instruction. Harold W. Attridge analyzes

¹⁸⁹ Manfred Kraus, "Theories and Practice of the Enthymeme in the First Centuries B.C.E. and C.E.," VI:96.

¹⁹⁰ Kraus, "Theories and Practice of the Enthymeme," VI:107.

¹⁹¹ Kraus, "Theories and Practice of the Enthymeme," VI:111.

¹⁹² Rodney K. Duke, "The Strategic Use of Enthymeme and Example in the Argumentation of the Books of Chronicles," VI:139.

¹⁹³ L. Gregory Bloomquist, "The Role of the Audience in the Determination of Argumentation: The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles," VI:157-73.

¹⁹⁴ Bloomquist, "The Role of the Audience," VI:172-73.

¹⁹⁵ Russell B. Sisson, "Instructions for 'Broker' Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of Matthew's Mission Discourse," VI:177.

argumentation in John 5 from a perspective of the "perfect argument" in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, concluding that "the ancient rhetorical tradition does illuminate the structure and function of this persuasive discourse. Yet the rhetorical models in themselves do not tell the whole story, since they were not designed to explore the complexity of a persuasive discourse embedded in a narrative laced with irony."¹⁹⁶ C. Jan Swearingen uses the rhetorical lexicon, structure, and contexts to address argumentation in Romans and 1 Corinthians from a perspective of composite methodology.¹⁹⁷ Anders Eriksson, perceiving that a "search for enthymemes" in NT literature "shows the social and cultural nature of the reasoning in the text,"¹⁹⁸ uses a case/result/rule approach to enthymemes to display major lines of reasoning in 1 Corinthians. Duane F. Watson, approaching 2 Corinthians 10-13 from a socio-rhetorical perspective informed by the common social and cultural topics of honor and challenge-response (riposte), concludes that "Paul's honor defense conforms to the conventions prescribed by notables of his day. However, there is also a counter-cultural thread running throughout the honor defense. In keeping with countercultural groups, Paul rejects the dominant culture's criteria for honor, and offers a different set of criteria that he hopes will be its replacement."¹⁹⁹ Rollin A. Ramsaran analyzes the argumentative dimensions of Phil 1:19-26 with a focus on Paul's use of two rhetorically effective maxims to "sum up his entire Philippian message and exhortation in a memorable way:

For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

I can go all things through him who strengthens me."²⁰⁰

Jerry L. Sumney investigates argumentation in Colossians from a perspective of ethos, pathos, and logos, drawing the conclusion that, "[r]ather than simply copying the pattern of Pauline letters, the writer of Colossians puts together an impressive argument using means that were known to be persuasive in Hellenistic rhetoric."²⁰¹ Thomas H. Olbricht,

¹⁹⁶ Harold W. Attridge, "Argumentation in John 5," VI:199.

¹⁹⁷ W. Jan Swearingen, "The Tongues of Men: Understanding Greek Rhetorical Sources for Paul's Letters to the Romans and 1 Corinthians," VI:232-42.

¹⁹⁸ Anders Eriksson, "Enthymemes in Pauline Argumentation: Reading Between the Lines in 1 Corinthians," VI:244.

¹⁹⁹ Duane F. Watson, "Paul's Boasting in 2 Corinthians 10-13 as Defense of His Honor: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis," VI:260-75.

²⁰⁰ Rollin A. Ramsaran, "Living and Dying, Living is Dying (Philippians 1:21): Paul's Maxim and Exemplary Argumentation in Philippians," VI:325-38.

²⁰¹ Jerry L. Sumney, "The Argument of Colossians," VI:352.

building on an earlier essay that presented the Epistle to the Hebrews as an amplification as recommended by Aristotle, exhibits how "[t]he major affirmations for the high priesthood (5-7) are carefully crafted upon commonly accepted outlooks (that is, enthymemic propositions), and proofs that depend mostly upon Scripture, except in the exhortatory materials."²⁰²

Additional essays in the volume discuss pitfalls that may occur when an interpreter uses Heinrich Lausberg's *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* as a guide to ancient rhetorical literature;²⁰³ the social and economic conditions underlying letter writing;²⁰⁴ the argumentative dynamics of ambiguity in Hebrew Bible narrative;²⁰⁵ the importance of the chiasmic center of an argument;²⁰⁶ obscurity as an essential part of Paul's persuasive strategy in Romans;²⁰⁷ *topoi*, dissociative strategies, narrative threads, and relational developments as keys to a rhetorical theory of argumentation that exhibits the unity of 2 Corinthians;²⁰⁸ the role of fiery hyperbole in Paul's letter to the Galatians;²⁰⁹ the use of evocative, extra-verbal, and very human sensibilities in Ephesians to persuade effectively;²¹⁰ and the blending of apocalyptic and romance in the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Acts of Peter*.²¹¹

The conference in Lund provided a robust opportunity for a wide range of interpreters to come together and explore argumentative dimensions of biblical literature from a wide range of perspectives. Only two essays addressed the strategies and goals of interpreters directly engaged in modern studies of argumentation. A majority of the essays at the conference, and in the published volume, approach argumentation from

²⁰² Thomas H. Olbricht, "Anticipating and Presenting the Case for Christ as High Priest in Hebrews," VI:355-72.

²⁰³ R. Dean Anderson, "The Use and Abuse of Lausberg in Biblical Studies," VI:66-76.

²⁰⁴ Carol Poster, "The Economy of Letter Writing in Graeco-Roman Antiquity," VI:112-24.

²⁰⁵ Alan J. Hauser, "Should Ahab Go to Battle or Not? Ambiguity as a Rhetorical Device in 1 Kings 22," VI:141-54.

²⁰⁶ Roland Meynet, "The Question of the Center: A Specific Device of Rhetorical Argumentation in Scripture," VI:200-14.

²⁰⁷ Johan S. Vos, "'To Make the Weaker Argument Defeat the Stronger': Sophistical Argumentation in Paul's Letter to the Romans," VI:217-31.

²⁰⁸ J. David Hester (Amador), "Re-Reading 2 Corinthians: A Rhetorical Approach," VI:276-95.

²⁰⁹ Michael R. Cosby, "Galatians: Red-Hot Rhetoric," VI:296-309.

²¹⁰ Roy R. Jeal, "Rhetorical Argumentation in the Letter to the Ephesians," VI:310-24.

²¹¹ John W. Marshall, "Revelation and Romance: Genre Bending in the Shepherd of Hermas and the Acts of Peter," VI:375-88.

various rhetorical perspectives for the purpose of understanding special aspects of biblical literature.

Retrospect and Prospect in the Context of Heidelberg 2002

In 2002, Thomas Olbricht invited scholars to return for a tenth anniversary meeting at the Pepperdine facilities at the Moore Haus and downtown in Heidelberg, Germany. He established the topic of "Rhetoric, Ethics and Moral Persuasion in Biblical Discourse" for the conference to complement the sessions he had organized at the 1999 International Society of Biblical Literature meetings in Helsinki and Lahti, Finland, on *pathos* in biblical literature.²¹² In addition, he asked me to give an overview of the seven "Pepperdine" conferences in the context of movements within biblical rhetorical criticism from 1992 to 2002. I would like to start my final comments with retrospective statements that lead into statements about challenges that lie ahead.

The rhetorical conferences from 1992 to 2002 have, in my opinion, made major advances on the topics Wilhelm Wuellner introduced in his programmatic essay at the end of the 1992 Heidelberg volume.²¹³ A significant number of papers in the published volumes have produced rhetorical analysis and interpretation that interweave thought, emotion, dialectics, ideology, logic, materiality, topics, and autobiography. This decade of conferences, then, has moved biblical rhetorical criticism decisively beyond the separation of dialectics from religious experience that set the stage for biblical interpretation from the sixteenth century onwards.²¹⁴

The preceding rehearsal of information in this essay has shown that a significant number of participants in these conferences moved toward a reintegration of rhetoric with the actual dynamics of life, including life's materiality in the body, by moving beyond formal and causal literary-historical categories toward interactive frameworks for interpreting discourse in contexts of society and culture. Movement beyond history and literature toward culture, society, and discourse in rhetorical interpretation has been decisive, and it has been strengthened by vigorous and persistent participation of South

²¹² The papers on Pauline literature have been published in Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney (eds.), *Paul and Pathos* (Symposium 16; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).

²¹³ Wuellner, "Biblical Exegesis." I:492-513.

²¹⁴ Wuellner, "Biblical Exegesis," I:497.

African scholars in the conferences. The occurrence of the 1994 Pretoria conference in the context of the movement of South Africa from its apartheid era to its reconfiguration into the New South Africa was decisive for biblical rhetorical criticism during the 1990s. It was not until five years later that the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* held its first meeting in South Africa (1999 Pretoria) and the International Society of Biblical Literature met in Capetown six years later (2000). The infusion of dynamics from the interplay of culture and religion in South Africa has helped to alert biblical rhetorical interpreters to the cultural embeddedness of biblical interpretation in every century. This awareness calls for modes of rhetorical interpretation that use self-analytical and self-critical powers of observation to invite "the other" into the middle and "the alien" into the familiar. In many ways, the move of rhetorical interpretation toward culture represents a reversal of the neo-orthodox movement away from culture during the 20th century. Instead of moving away from culture toward a foundationalist, transcendent mode of biblical interpretation, rhetorical critics have been moving more and more toward cultural, contextual modes of analysis and interpretation.

When biblical rhetorical interpretation began to move decisively toward culture, it moved beyond text and tradition to discourse. Rhetorical analysis and interpretation of biblical text and tradition as discourse was the major topic of the opening address at the 1995 London conference.²¹⁵ Also, the relation of rhetorical criticism to discourse analysis was the specific topic of an essay in the same volume.²¹⁶ The move from text to discourse analysis in rhetorical criticism is well articulated in an essay near the beginning of the 1996 Malibu volume.²¹⁷ In addition, a number of scholars have presented essays in the conferences on interpretation of biblical texts as rhetorical discourse in the context of other kinds of cultural discourse.²¹⁸

Ideology began to emerge in the 1990s as a significant issue in rhetorical criticism, and it remains an issue of significant debate. Ideologies emerge in cultures as a

²¹⁵ Robbins, "Present and Future," III:30-48.

²¹⁶ Porter, "Ancient Rhetorical Analysis" III:249-274.

²¹⁷ Olbricht, "Acting on the Center," IV:34-36, 41-47.

²¹⁸ Combrink, "The Rhetoric of Sacred Scripture," II:105-19. Also L. Gregory Bloomquist in "Methodological Considerations," III:200-31; *idem*, "Rhetorical Argumentation," IV:173-209; *idem*, "A Possible Direction," V:61-96; *idem*, "The rhetoric of suffering in Paul's letter to the Philippians: Socio-rhetorical reflections and further thoughts on a post-colonial contribution to the discussion," *Theoforum* 35.2 (2004) 195-223.

result of particular alliances of people and groups. In a global world, the manner in which people choose to live in the midst of one or more culture becomes an ideological choice. The issue of ideology was raised at the 1992 Heidelberg conference, and the preference was stated for an ideology that drives rhetorical analysis and interpretation toward universal statements.²¹⁹ A strong statement was made at the 1996 Malibu conference that ideological criticism should be kept out of rhetorical criticism.²²⁰ Clearly the trend during the decade of conferences has been toward the contextual rather than the universal and toward inclusion rather than exclusion of the ideological. The thrust of modernism was toward the universal in a context driven by objective science that considered ideology to be subjective. The movement during the 1990s clearly has been toward an inclusion of the subjective in a context of moving toward the contextual and the ideological.²²¹

Ideology moves toward inclusion of the body and materiality in interpretation. Many rhetorical critics now make the charge that scientific analysis has a goal of bodiless interpretation. Scientific analysis regularly considers inclusion of the body in one's interpretation to be an "intrusion" of the subjective. Focusing on ethos in the 2002 Heidelberg conference was a way of signaling clearly the need to include the body and materiality in rhetorical interpretation. This is a natural move once an interpreter has begun to attend to pathos, which had occurred in an earlier setting outside the Pepperdine conferences. Inclusion of the body in rhetorical interpretation became central at the eighth international Conference on Rhetoric and Scriptures in Pretoria, South Africa, which was entitled "The Rhetoric(s) of Body Politics and Religious Discourse."²²²

Rhetorical interpretation of biblical literature during the initial years of the 2000s exhibits a growing interplay among modern, antimodern, postmodern, and transmodern strategies of analysis and interpretation, with a few representatives of ultramodern

²¹⁹ Thurén, "On Studying Ethical Argumentation," I:464-66, 478.

²²⁰ Patrick and Scult, "Rhetoric and Ideology," IV:63-83.

²²¹ Explicit discussion of ideology in rhetorical interpretation is present in eight of the fourteen essays in David B. Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist, and Duane F. Watson (eds.), *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins* (Harrisburg/London/New York: Trinity Press International, 2003).

²²² The conference was held August 9-12, 2004, and was organized by Johannes N. (Vossie) Vorster, Gerrie F. Snyman, Hennie Viviers, Pieter J. J. Botha, and Lizel Voges-Bonthuys.

strategies.²²³ The Pepperdine Conferences from 1992 through 2002 have featured significant interplays between modern and antimodern strategies of interpretation, with some significant introduction of transmodern strategies in most of the volumes. The conferences, and the published volumes, have made a truly remarkable contribution to rhetorical analysis and interpretation of biblical literature, with some interesting journeys into second and third century Christian literature. The thrust of transmodernism is to integrate universal and contextual modes of reasoning through relationism. The issue in transculturalism is dynamic, interactive travel back and forth through various disciplines and interdisciplines of analysis and interpretation. Will the next ten years of rhetorical biblical interpretation exhibit substantial progress in transcultural biblical interpretation? Or will rhetorical biblical interpreters insist on staying primarily in the cultural boundaries established by nineteenth and twentieth century biblical interpretation? Only time will tell.

The death of Wilhelm Wuellner on February 15, 2004, hovers over us as we look now to the future of rhetorical biblical interpretation. A volume honoring Wuellner's work, entitled *Rhetorics and Hermeneutics*, appeared shortly after his death.²²⁴ As indicated earlier in this essay, many of the scholars who attended the first Heidelberg conference in 1992 came together as a result of their earlier contacts with Wuellner. As I sit in my study in May, 2005, a sentence near the end of his 1989 essay entitled "Hermeneutics and Rhetorics"²²⁵ at first startles me. In Wuellner's words:

Compared to twenty years ago, when rhetoric was barely mentioned in either narrative or epistolary exegetical, let alone theological study, there has been a veritable revolution in both Jewish and Christian biblical exegesis: - suddenly, rhetorics is everywhere!²²⁶

²²³ For a definition of these positions, see Vernon K. Robbins, "The Rhetorical Full-Turn in Biblical Interpretation and Its Relevance for Feminist Hermeneutics." in Caroline Vander Stichele and Todd Penner (eds.), *Her Master's Tools?* (Global Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship Series; Atlanta: SBL and Leiden: Brill, 2005).

²²⁴ James D. Hester and J. David Hester (Amador) (eds.), *Rhetorics and Hermeneutics: Wilhelm Wuellner and His Influence* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity; New York/London: T & T Clark International, 2004).

²²⁵ Wilhelm Wuellner, "Hermeneutics and Rhetorics: From 'Truth' and 'Method' to 'Truth' and 'Power'," *Scriptura* S 3 (1989): 1-54.

²²⁶ Wuellner, "Hermeneutics and Rhetorics," 37.

But of course! Hermeneutics, rather than rhetorics, had initially guided Wuellner, as is evident from the title of his 1958 Ph.D dissertation: *The Word of God and the Church of Christ: The Ecumenical Implications of Biblical Hermeneutics*.²²⁷ Wuellner did not publish an essay with "rhetoric" in the title until 1976: "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans."²²⁸ The 1992 Heidelberg conference occurred, then, fourteen years after Wuellner had published his first programmatic "rhetorical" interpretation of a book in the Bible. Next year (2006) will be thirty years since Wuellner published that "first" rhetorical essay. Perhaps we can revise Wuellner's statement only a little and accurately say: "Compared to thirty years ago, suddenly rhetorics is everywhere!" We are grateful to Wuellner and colleagues of his, like Thomas H. Olbricht, for transmitting to us such a rich heritage of rhetorical biblical interpretation. Don't you wonder what people might say in 2022? That, of course, will be thirty years after the 1992 Heidelberg conference!

²²⁷ Wilhelm Wuellner, "The Word of God and the Church of Christ: The Ecumenical Implications of Biblical Hermeneutics" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1958).

²²⁸ Wilhelm Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate Over Romans," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38 (1976): 330-51. Reprinted in Karl Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977). This conclusion is based on Wuellner's bibliography as recorded in Hester and Hester, *Rhetorics and Hermeneutics*, 241-47.