THE TAPESTRY OF EARLY CHRISTIAN DISCOURSE

Rhetoric, society and ideology

Vernon K. Robbins

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REDRAWING THE BOUNDARIES WITH SOCIO-RHETORICAL CRITICISM

When we look at a thick tapestry from different angles, we see different configurations, patterns and images. Likewise, when we explore a text from different angles, we see multiple textures of meanings, convictions, beliefs, values, emotions and actions. These textures within texts are a result of webs or networks of meanings and meaning effects that humans create. One person has explained in the following manner how the term 'text' itself signifies these networks or webs:

> Writing and the texts produced by writing are, from the first, expressions of a metaphor of figuration as 'weaving'. The word 'text' itself derives from Latin *texere* ('to weave') and we still speak of weaving or 'stitching together' (cf. *rhapsode*, 'stitch together') a discourse in which the 'seams' are not obvious, or one that makes a 'seamless web'. This weaving metaphor occurs in story after story as a symbol of order, and order itself is another weaving metaphor, derived from Latin *ōrdō*, a technical term for the arrangement of threads in the warp and woof of a fabric. And, do we not still speak of the 'fabric' of a tale, the 'thread of discourse', or words as the 'clothing of thought', of the 'network' of ideas in a text, and of 'spinning a yarn', which others may 'unravel'?
>
> (Tyler 1987: 35)

With socio-rhetorical criticism, the metaphor of texts as a thick tapestry replaces the traditional metaphor of texts as windows and

mirrors (Krieger 1964; Petersen 1978: 24; cf. Abrams 1953). The idea has been that the interpreter who is truly interested in literature as literature treats all the characters, actions and episodes in a text as mirrors that reflect back and forth on one another. All of the reflections create the world 'inside the text'. Historians in contrast to literary interpreters, so the understanding goes, use the text as a window either to look briefly in at the text or to look out at the outside world, rather than as a set of mirrors, to find out what is inside the text. They look in or out of the windows of texts for the purpose of creating a story, namely a 'history', outside of texts.

This metaphor of mirrors and windows has served a very useful purpose, but it is my opinion that it is now causing us problems. The problem is that it separates the 'internal' mind of a text from the 'external' body of the world in a manner that is not true either to the texts we read or to the lives we live. The metaphor of windows and mirrors reflects a polarity between literature and history that is part of the dualism between mind and body in modern thought and philosophy. This approach overlooks the nature of language as a social product, possession and tool. Language is at all times interacting with myriads of networks of meanings and meaning effects in the world. Texts exist in the world, and we exist in the world. Interpreters who talk about reading texts from the perspective of a text's own internal mirrors actually bring their own view of social reality to the language in the text. Every reader does this. On the one hand, it is appropriate for an interpreter to place a text in a laboratory that temporarily seals the outer edges of the text with a 'poetic' boundary for special kinds of systematic analysis. The term 'poetic' comes from a Greek word meaning 'to make', and the idea is that writing is such a special activity that language is made to function in a special way in a text. This special function of language creates a 'language border' between itself and other language that calls for special attention. On the other hand, it is an exaggeration to approach a text as a language object 'unto itself'. The problem is that a text is not simply a 'thing unto itself' but is also a 'message which is read'. As a message, it is a communication. To be what it truly is, a text must be read, which may mean 'read aloud'. Social, cultural and ideological meanings at work in the environment of reading — whether aloud or privately to oneself — are the medium through which the text becomes communication. There is no way, then, for a text to be what it is and to be outside the world.

The boundaries some literary critics have established around a text for the purpose of sustained analysis of language in a text are not the only boundaries interpreters should use and reconfigure in the act of interpretation. Interpretation is more like a ritual than a single act (Robbins 1994c). Exploring phenomena within one set of boundaries should be understood as one phase of an extended process. At any one particular time in history, the perception of the beginning, middle and end of the process will differ, much as the laboratories scientists create today look significantly different from the laboratories of the nineteenth century. The creation of boundaries in and around texts is a necessary step if an interpreter is interested in systematic analysis. It is improper to think, however, that the text itself contains these boundaries. The socio-rhetorical approach in the following pages invites interpreters to explore a wide range of textures of text through a process of creating and dismantling various boundaries to create arenas of understanding that interact dynamically with one another. A text is a thick matrix of interwoven networks of meanings and meaning effects. These networks extend far beyond the boundaries we construct to analyze and interpret phenomena; they interconnect phenomena inside and outside of texts in ways quite difficult for us even to imagine. Therefore, no interpreter should allow one arena of texture to be an environment for creating boundaries that separate this arena permanently from other arenas of texture. We must learn both how to create boundaries and how to take boundaries away. At the outset, then, we should admit that it is impossible for us to think without boundaries. Even the most simple use of language creates them. In addition, however, we should see that language continually moves boundaries it initially evokes for the purpose of communicating 'beyond itself'. This approach to language and boundaries within language provides the context for socio-rhetorical criticism.

Figure 2.1 represents a diagram for socio-rhetorical analysis and interpretation as it currently exists. The outside rectangle represents boundaries around the world of the interpreter. Every interpreter has a limited experience of and relationship with the world, even though many interpreters consciously attempt to take a large part of the world into account as they approach a text. No matter how large the world of an interpreter may be, there are limits to the interpreter's knowledge of that world.
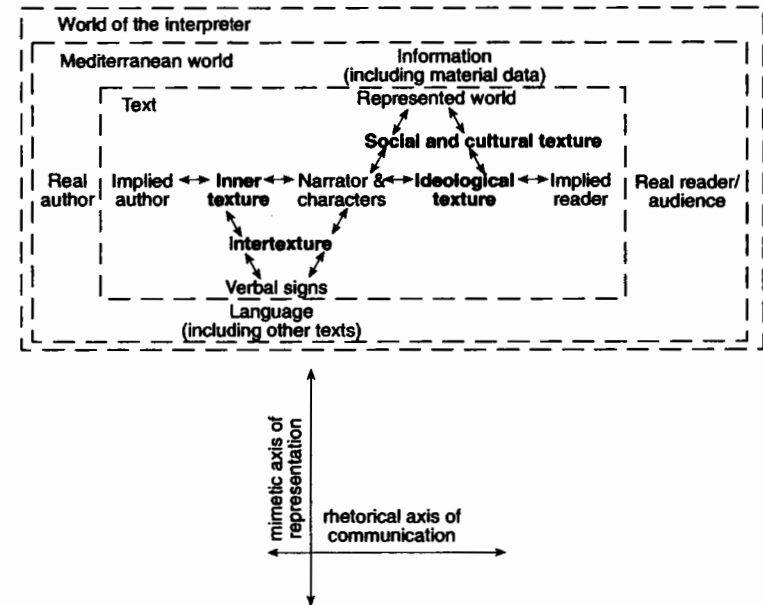
Figure 2.1 Socio-rhetorical model of textual communication

The rectangle inside the world of the interpreter represents the boundaries to the world of the author who wrote the text. For the New Testament, this is the ancient Mediterranean world. The innermost rectangle represents boundaries around a text. The real author, language, information and the real reader/audience are phenomena inside the Mediterranean world. Real authors are historical persons. The texts they make somehow are extensions of themselves. Literary critics use the term 'implied author' for authors as they can be known through manifestations of their expressions in texts (Powell 1990: 19–29). Words in texts 'imply' authors, and the kind of author a reader constructs on the basis of words in a text is the implied author of the text. Thus, 'real author' is in the rectangle representing the Mediterranean world and 'implied author' is in the rectangle representing the text. Likewise, the language of New Testament texts is a phenomenon in the Mediterranean world. Texts contain signs that imply language. Instead of using the phrase 'implied language', which would be appropriate, the diagram uses the term

'verbal signs'. Verbal signs stand in relation to language in the Mediterranean world in a manner similar to the relation of implied authors to real authors. This relation continues around the rectangle that represents the text. The diagram uses the phrase 'represented world' for the 'implied information' in the text that stands in relation to information in the Mediterranean world. Again, the phrase that designates information as it is manifest in texts signals that a particular manifestation of the world, a distinctive configuration, is implied by the verbal signs in the text and inferred by readers in particular ways. Finally, the phrase 'implied reader' designates the reader the text implies and the interpreter infers in relation to real readers and audiences both in the Mediterranean world and in the world of the interpreter today.

All the boundaries in the diagram are broken lines, because they are human-made boundaries for the purpose of focusing analysis on a text. All kinds of meanings and meaning effects travel through the gaps in the boundaries. Meanings and meaning effects travelled between the Mediterranean world and the text when the author wrote the text, and they travel through the boundaries from the world of the interpreter through the Mediterranean world when a person reads these texts today. Language and other texts travel through the boundaries just as information and material data travel through the boundaries. Many, though not all, interpreters build boundaries to keep various things from their own world out of the ancient Mediterranean world and to put certain things 'foreign' to their own world into the Mediterranean world in which they embed New Testament texts. Since New Testament texts were written in the Mediterranean world of late antiquity and are also located in our world, both the ancient Mediterranean world as we infer it and our own world, conscious and unconscious to us, flow into the text. Texts are in the world and of it. Nevertheless, interpreters can focus on an inner world of the text that calls for special attention on its own terms.

Literary interpreters have concluded that the inner texture of a narrative text contains a narrator who tells the story and characters who think, act and have their being in the story. The narrator and characters exist in a context of 'images' of the real author, language, information and the real reader/audience. In other words, the inside of a text is a combination of 'show' and 'tell'. The narrator tells the story. The reader hears the narrator and sees the characters, who may themselves speak and 'look'. In this context the image of the

author of the text, the 'implied author', appears. The implied author is the image created by everything the reader sees in the text. Also, readers give 'voice' to verbal signs as they see them. That is, readers turn the signs into sounds that are 'language' among people. This is the means by which the verbal signs in a text become 'implied language'. In addition, readers hear and see phenomena in the context of the action and thought that are 'implied' information and material data. Finally, readers of texts create an image of a reader who can read a particular text with understanding. This is the 'implied reader'. If they themselves cannot understand the text, they create an image of a reader who the implied author imagined could read and understand the text. Whether or not all of this is clear to the real reader who is now reading this, literary interpreters have drawn these conclusions about the inner texture of texts. These conclusions guide socio-rhetorical criticism as it approaches the inner texture of a text, and the goal is to create activities for an interpreter that will make it possible to investigate these and other inner phenomena in texts.

At the bottom of the diagram are horizontal and vertical arrows. The horizontal arrow represents what literary interpreters call the rhetorical axis. An axis is an imaginary line through the center of something, like the imaginary line through the center of the earth as it spins, as we say, 'on its axis'. Through the center of a text is an imaginary 'rhetorical' line between the author and the reader. The term *rhetorical* is related to the word *orator*, a person who speaks a message to people. The rhetorical axis in a text represents 'speaking' or 'communicating' both from the author to the reader and from the reader to the author, since the author creates 'implied' voice in the text and the reader actually 'gives' voice to the text. The text speaks or communicates, then, through reciprocal action between author and reader. In addition to the horizontal arrow there is a vertical arrow at the bottom of the diagram. The vertical arrow indicates a 'mimetic' axis. The word *mimetic* comes from the Greek word *mimesis*, meaning 'imitation'. As indicated above, the written signs in the text 'imitate' the sounds of language, and the narrator, actors and things in the 'textual world' imitate information and material data in the world. Thus, the vertical lines represent an axis of 'imitation'. This axis exists in angles in the diagram, rather than straight up through the center, since the horizontal movement of the communication from the author to the reader and from the reader to the author causes the vertical axis to run up and down at

angles. In other words, the diagram is meant to exhibit action. In the dynamic movement from author to reader and from reader to author, words, characters, represented world, implied author and implied reader all 'imitate' the world.

In the midst of all of these phenomena in the text are four arenas of texture printed in bold print: (a) inner texture; (b) intertexture; (c) social and cultural texture; and (d) ideological texture. One of the special features of socio-rhetorical criticism is its identification of these four arenas in a text. Pointing to these arenas, the approach gathers practices of interpretation for each arena to enable a person to investigate each arena both on its own terms and in relation to other arenas. The remainder of this book works carefully through each part of the diagram displayed above, using various New Testament texts to illustrate how socio-rhetorical criticism works with each part of it, then focusing specifically on 1 Corinthians 9 at the end of each chapter. Each arena is given a name for its own particular 'text-ure'. In order to explain more about each arena, the remainder of this chapter dismantles the model for the reader and rebuilds it in four steps after it focuses for a moment on the world of the interpreter.

THE INTERPRETER'S LOCATION AND IDEOLOGY

The outside rectangle in Figure 2.1 calls for attention to the world of the interpreter. Interpreters construct this 'world' interactively with phenomena in their own personal lives and with the historical, social, cultural, ideological and religious worlds in their world. I will begin, therefore, with some open reflection about my own 'theological ideology'. My own ideology includes feelings, convictions, beliefs and points of view that were formulated in the context of the circumstances into which I was born, raised, schooled, married and employed. I have engaged seriously with 'traditional' biblical interpretation and theology, both North American and international. In the end, it has been necessary to develop strategies of analysis and interpretation that would carry out my own view of reality and truth in the world. I was born and raised on a small farm on a sandhill outside a village with a population of 139 people, not of my own choosing. We did not have electricity until I was in the second grade, again not of my own choosing. I did not choose to milk cows by hand morning and evening until I was in high school

when we milked cows on Treptow's hill where we could use milking machines and sell grade A milk. I did not choose to grow up in an agonistic, rural culture. I did not choose not to have a political voice of any kind because I had no daily newspaper, radio or television that would give up-to-date, firsthand news about what was happening in Washington, DC and New York City. I did not choose to be born and raised as a WASP who is supposed to hate and suppress blacks, Jews, women, native Americans and all kinds of other people. I did not choose these things.

So what am I supposed to do about these things now? Should I join in an academic project that was envisioned, launched and nurtured to maturity by city dwellers who know how to use the power structures of the university, the large metropolitan areas and the national and international scholarly organizations and book publishers? Even if I join these things, should I contribute to strategies of New Testament interpretation that only see the big power plays as the significant parts of early Christian history? Should I pretend that I do not hear the voices and see the plights of the 'little people' who cry out in biblical texts? Should I pretend that I do not know what it is like to live in a family where the father and mother are tenant farmers? Should I pretend that I do not know what it is like to live in a family so indebted that the father has to sell out and go to work in a city in the humiliating job of a school janitor? Should I pretend that I do not know what it is like not to have honor?

But there is also another part to the story. Should I pretend that I did not have the opportunity to achieve a college and seminary degree, yet another master's degree and a Ph.D.? Should I pretend that I have not been gradually inducted both into cosmopolitan urban life and into the central power structures of professional biblical interpretation? The truth is that most stages of my life have involved me in at least two worlds, or two 'cultures', at the same time. As a rural farm boy I also lived in an evangelical Christian culture. As a college student I worked during the summers in a job that combined dairy and agriculture farming with a union construction job in urban areas. As a married seminary student I rode a large motorcycle, which I personally repaired, around the cosmopolitan urban city in which we lived, simply because it was inexpensive transportation like that to which I had been accustomed on the farm. As a doctoral student I repaired cars and drove a bus to deal with the onslaught of inflated living expenses in a cosmopolitan

center of urban America. As an assistant professor, I repaired bicycles to keep in touch with my 'working body' as I pursued the 'inner recesses of the scholarly mind'. As an associate and full professor, I have rather fully taken my 'working body' into my teaching and publication of articles and books.

So the truth is that the experiences of my life, body and mind are now coming to expression in socio-rhetorical criticism. This approach is not somehow based in 'objective' reality, except insofar as my life is based in objective reality. This approach is based in the realities of my life. I have regularly experienced being an insider and outsider at the same time: in relation to some people I have regularly been an 'insider', in relation to others regularly an 'outsider'. And this is the principle that lies at the foundation of socio-rhetorical criticism – namely the dialogical relations between inside and outside, center and margins, power and weakness, influence and exclusion, success and failure.

Therefore, when faced with the question of what kind of biblical interpretation I myself should enact and teach, the situation is like when Camden Gowler, at 2 years old, was playing with the bubble solution his mother Rita had mixed for him, and spilled some of it on the floor of their storage shed. When Rita told him he wasn't supposed to do that, he said, 'What am I 'posed to do?' That is the question. Just what are some of us white male Protestants supposed to do when we hear the voices, sight the boundaries and see both the plights of the people on the margins and the flaws of people at the center of the New Testament texts we read?

Socio-rhetorical criticism is my answer to what I think I must do to perform biblical interpretation in a manner that embodies who I am. As I do this, the image of my father looms before me – that tenant farmer turned janitor who died while I was writing this book. Many people, including me, tried to persuade him to be less pessimistic about his own life and less critical of those whom he loved, in a context where he did so many good things for so many people every day. But he did the best he could. He let his voice be heard in the best way he knew how. And this view of the world was no crazier than the views of many highly sophisticated philosophers and theologians. He did not have all the words they have. But he had plenty of the experiences, most of the visions, many of the insights and various ways to communicate most of them. He was a philosopher and a theologian in his own right, but he never wrote a book, never ran for public office and was always afraid he would

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bring shame on himself if he asserted himself too strongly in public. He was one of the 'little people'. His voice is still around in many places. The only question is whether anyone can hear it.

I happen to think that we *can* hear the voices of the little people throughout history. But we must also realize that most people regularly live in two, three or more worlds at the same time. I am thankful that I have many colleagues who have been showing me and others how to hear the voices and see the worlds in which people live. I feared for many years that I could not be a truly academic professor of the New Testament and remain true to those voices and worlds at the same time. But little by little – with the help of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Bobby Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, Garrison Keillor, Desmond Tutu, Mikhail Gorbachev, Bill Clinton, Nelson Mandela, Toni Morrison, Cornell West and many others – I have begun to find a way. We simply have to find ways to be true to ourselves as we are being true to both the little people and the great traditions of the past, and to the many worlds in which people, both powerful and weak, live in the present. I cannot change myself to a woman, a person of color, or a fascinating mixture of Catho-Ortho-Prote-Asio-Native-Christian. I must be what I am, and one of the ways is to bring to consciousness and evoke the interactive body and mind that continually take me into many different worlds at the same time. Socio-rhetorical criticism, then, is my way of finding and exhibiting a way of living responsibly in the 'worlds of our time' as we rush toward the third millennium CE.

INNER TEXTURE

The first arena in the text to which I turn is the inner texture of the text. When a person first looks at a text, one only sees signs on a flat surface. A reader or interpreter knows that these signs represent what an author, or someone writing for an author, has written on the page. If the text is written in a language one understands, a process of reading can begin. Since this is a very complex process (Grimes 1975; de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981), it is necessary to give an extremely abbreviated account here. In very brief terms, with the act of reading, a person may begin to explore the 'inner texture' of a text. This means that the inner texture of a text concerns communication. What is in a text is 'part of a communication transaction' (Vorster 1989: 22). For a text to 'be itself', it must have a

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reader who activates it — a reader who 'receives' the message. In other words, inner texture is only one part of the communication transaction. Because a reader must engage a text in this way for it to communicate, it is very difficult to determine what is actually in a text itself in contrast to what a reader 'puts into' a text. At the very least, readers put their own ability to speak, hear, see, think, act, smell, taste and feel — their nature as 'subjects' — into texts. Only in this way can a 'nonhuman' object become a 'human object'. Or would it be better to say that a nonhuman 'subject' becomes a 'human subject'? The concept of object versus subject raises a major issue. A subject is a person, and a text is not a person. A text has an inner nature that is somehow different from a person but which somehow 'comes to life' when persons read it. In turn, however, a person can be treated by an interpreter either as a subject or as an object. One of the special issues, then, is whether an interpreter treats narrators, characters, authors and readers as 'objects' or as 'subjects' when he or she 'brings them to life' in a text. Since this is a lifelong commitment one way or another, we will not try to solve this issue at this point. Some interpreters prefer to treat all people as objects while others prefer to treat them as subjects. And there is much to be gained by both approaches, just as there has been incredible gain by medical investigation of people as 'objects' and there has been incredible gain also by investigating them as 'subjects'. The goal of socio-rhetorical criticism is to approach people as interactive subjects–objects. Not only do people treat other people as both objects and subjects, but we treat ourselves interactively as objects and subjects. We have the ability to think about our own bodies and minds both as objects and as subjects, and we alternate between our ways of thinking about them. Socio-rhetorical criticism attempts to nurture such interactive subject–object, body–mind interpretation of texts.

The inner texture of a text appears primarily among the implied author, the narrator and the characters, who work together to communicate a message. Various literary critics have displayed a horizontal diagram to exhibit this communication process, 'the whole narrative-communication situation' (Chatman 1978: 151; Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 86), and this is the beginning point for building a socio-rhetorical model for interpretation. Adapting the diagram so it includes the concept of inner texture creates Figure 2.2.

At this stage of analysis, interpreters were identifying the real author and real reader/audience outside the text, but not language
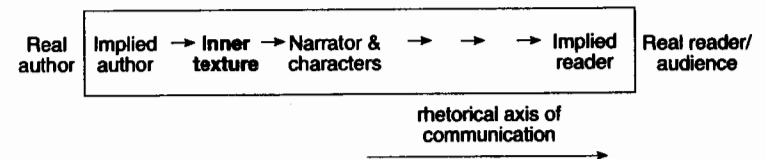

Figure 2.2 Inner texture

and information. The reason was that only the rhetorical axis of communication, the movement of the message from the author to the reader, was the focus of attention. Inside the box, thus inside the text, interpreters identified and defined the implied author and the implied reader — the images of the real author who caused everything to be as it is in the text and the real reader who is able to read and understand the text — and the narrator and the characters — who are the agents and voices in the text who tell the story. Socio-rhetorical criticism identifies the environment among the implied author, the narrator and the characters as the arena where interpreters investigate the inner texture of a text. In other words, analysis of inner texture regularly does not concern itself with language or information outside the text. Literary and narrative critics who have contributed significantly to this kind of analysis have focused on the text, with both the author as producer of the text and the represented world evoked by the text in the background of the analysis. Anglo-American New Criticism, Russian Formalism and French Structuralism have represented special attempts to maintain a completely 'intrinsic' or 'text-immanent' approach to texts in this manner. With important exceptions that cannot be discussed here, representatives of these approaches considered an intrinsic focus to be a disciplinary activity that set literary interpretation in opposition to historical criticism and its subdisciplines, either because the latter impose 'extrinsic' data on texts or because they simply use texts as treasure houses of data that can be used to construct a story extrinsic to texts.

Socio-rhetorical criticism does two things with intrinsic or text-immanent analysis. First, it sets these 'disciplinary' results in dialogue with other disciplinary results that are the product of exploring other textures of a text. Second, it adds the real reader/audience as an interactive counterpart of the real author in the construction of the inner texture of the text. In the diagrams throughout the rest of the chapter, therefore, arrows point not only from the author to the reader, but from the reader to the author. As mentioned above, a text does not truly become a text until someone reads it. Prior to its being read, it is a written artifact with webs of signification buried in it as if it were a tomb. Only readers can bring the webs of signification into the world of meanings and meaning effects. As soon as readers do this, however, their own world of meanings and meaning effects works interactively with meanings and meaning effects from the ancient Mediterranean world to create the meanings and meaning effects of the text. Thus, socio-rhetorical criticism approaches the inner texture of a text as an interactive environment of authors and readers. Authors create texts in their world; readers create a world of the text in their own world. Socio-rhetorical criticism interactively explores the world of the author, the world of the text and the world of the interpreter to interpret the inner texture of a New Testament text.

INTERTEXTURE

In a context where interpreters were focusing on the inner texture of texts, the concept of 'intertextuality' arose when some interpreters observed that not only are author and reader involved in the writing and reading of texts, but other texts play a decisive role. Every text is a rewriting of other texts, an 'intertextual' activity. To display the dialogue that occurs between texts in the context of the communication from the author to the reader, a vertical axis has to be added to the horizontal axis. With the addition of a vertical axis that represents the dialogue between the text itself and other texts (Kristeva 1969: 145; Hutcheon 1986: 231), an interpreter sees the 'intertexture' of a text. To investigate this aspect of a text thoroughly calls for comparison between the text under investigation and other texts. Analysis of a number of texts brings into view language outside of texts, because the interpreter sees language

'between' texts in addition to 'inside' one text. Therefore, the vertical axis features language itself, and other texts are a specific manifestation of language outside the particular text under investigation. Again, the reason the vertical axis becomes angled lines is that the text evokes language and information only in the context of a communication transaction, which the diagram depicts as dialogical interaction that moves back and forth from author to reader and reader to author.

Adding 'intertexture', then, produces Figure 2.3. Language stands at the bottom of the vertical axis, outside the boundaries of the text itself, and other texts represent a manifestation of language that plays a special role in authors' writing of texts. When the intertextuality of the text comes into view, the boundary around the text becomes a broken line. It becomes obvious to the interpreter at this point that the boundary is a human-made boundary for the purpose of focusing analysis on a text, since all kinds of meanings and
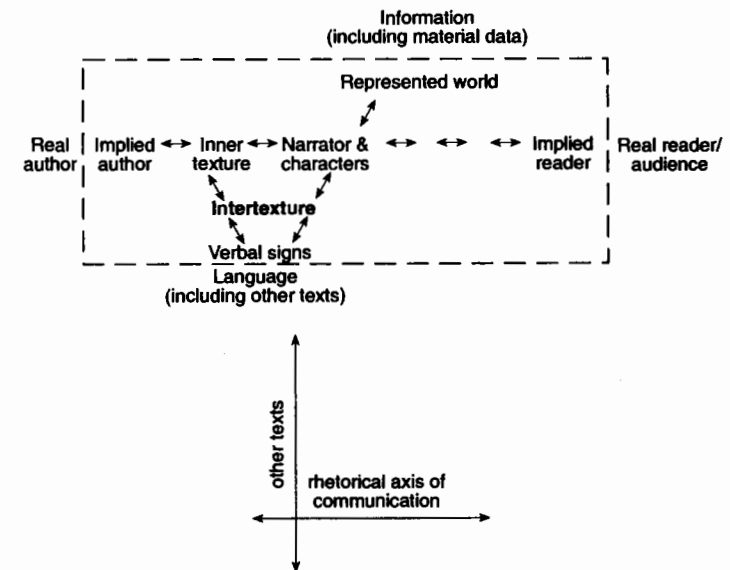

Figure 2.3 Intertexture

meaning effects travel through gaps in the boundary. At this stage of analysis, the interpreter focuses special attention on the relation of the verbal signs inside the text to verbal signs in other texts. In addition, the interpreter compares the represented world evoked by the text with the represented world evoked by other texts. One of the results is that the interpreter 'textualizes' not only the 'represented' world in the text but also all language and information outside the text. For the intertextual interpreter, 'the world' is limited and structured by 'textual' communication; 'the world is a text'. The arena of intertexture as it is defined in socio-rhetorical criticism, then, emphasizes the author as producer of the text over the reader as constructor of the meaning of the text. The interpreter investigates the act of production by comparing verbal signs in the text under investigation with verbal signs in other texts. In other words, the interpreter begins with verbal signs in the text that explicitly evoke verbal signs in other texts. Thus, analysis of intertexture begins in an environment among the inner texture, the verbal signs, the narrator and the characters. This analysis reaches out into language through the verbal signs in the text, and it reaches into information in the world through the narrator, the characters and the represented world in the text. The implied reader and the real reader stand at a distance from the analysis. At this stage, the interpreter presupposes their presence but pays more attention to the language in texts than to authors and readers of this language.

For intertextual interpreters, then, while real authors, real readers, language and social, historical and material information lie outside of texts, texts intrinsically incorporate these phenomena within themselves through language. This is immediately noticeable when a text contains fragments of other texts in the form of explicit quotations and allusions. But cultural, social and historical phenomena are also in texts, and intertextual interpreters perceive them to be present in a 'textualized' form – that is, in an ordered, patterned and structured form related to language. This nature of a text is its intertexture. Texts stand in a dynamic relation to phenomena outside them. Language, which is the medium for texts to be what they are, comes from outside any particular text and is embedded in them, indeed shaped in them, bearing the data that language carries with it.

Analysis and interpretation of intertexture in a socio-rhetorical mode, then, appropriates and refigures source, form and redaction criticism in biblical studies. Source and redaction criticism become

environments for investigation of the dialogue between structures, codes and genres in a particular configuration. Intertextual investigation analyzes and interprets the dynamics of recitation, recontextualization and reconfiguration when different sources, traditions, redaction and amplification stand in relation to one another.

It is generally recognized that intertextuality emerged in the context of 'cross-fertilization among several major European intellectual movements during the 1960s and 1970s, including Russian formalism, structural linguistics, psychoanalysis, Marxism, and deconstruction, at the least' (Morgan 1989: 240). My analysis suggests that the current terminology of 'intertextuality' collapses three arenas of analysis and interpretation together in a manner that is confusing. For this reason, socio-rhetorical analysis separates the three arenas out and uses different terminology to refer to them. Intertexture in socio-rhetorical criticism represents the arena of intertextual analysis that maintains a close relation to verbal signs in the text. Socio-rhetorical criticism identifies two other arenas of intertextuality – social and cultural texture and ideological texture – on which it focuses separately. In the arenas of intertexture as defined by socio-rhetorical criticism the goal is to analyze the manner in which signs and codes evoke a textual form of cultural, social and historical reality. Since this mode of analysis approaches all literature within a closed system of signs, it is a disciplinary practice of interpretation with its own data, strategies and goals. Socio-rhetorical criticism puts this disciplinary mode in dialogue with the disciplinary practice of analysis of inner texture, social and cultural texture and ideological texture. This dialogue interactively deconstructs and reconfigures insights from other arenas as the analysis proceeds. The interpreter faces a challenge to allow the tension and conflict that emerge from the different approaches to inform the overall process of analysis and interpretation rather than to allow one arena substantially to close down information from the other. The tensions and conflicts are to remain significant data for analysis and interpretation even as the interpreter draws final conclusions.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TEXTURE

Mikhail Bakhtin, Kenneth Burke and Roland Barthes have been most responsible for the appearance of the social and cultural

texture of texts. Bakhtin contributed to it by exploring the social and ideological location of the voices in texts (Reed 1993). Burke contributed by developing a method of interpretation that uses the resources of philosophy, literature and sociology to understand language as symbolic action (Burke 1966). Barthes contributed by interpreting a text as a product of various cultural discourses, 'a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centers of culture' (Barthes 1977: 146).

Approaching a text from the perspective of symbolic action that puts many socially, culturally and ideologically located voices in dialogue with one another calls special attention to the arena in the text between the represented world and the narrator and characters. The voices in the text are 'mimetic' in relation to the action and speech of people in the world. When Paul Hernadi assessed both axes of the diagram that arose when intertextuality emerged, he called the horizontal axis the rhetorical axis of communication and the vertical axis the mimetic axis of representation (Hernadi 1976). In other words, the vertical axis exhibits a text's 'representation' or imitation of the world through language. When the emphasis on the vertical axis is the 'mimetic' nature of language in a text, the social and cultural nature of the arena between represented world and the narrator and characters becomes a special focus of attention. Adaptation of Hernadi's diagram so it includes the arena of the social and cultural texture of a text produces Figure 2.4.

The social and cultural texture of a text concerns the dynamics of 'voice' as they function among the narrator and the characters in texts. Socio-rhetorical criticism views voice in text as the medium for the 'consciousness' or 'vision' of the characters and the narrator, who are 'concretizations drawn from a represented world' (Frow 1986: 159). In addition, analysis of the social and cultural texture of texts focuses on the full range of rhetorical topics in the text rather than only the four topics of traditional literary criticism – metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony (Vickers 1988: 435–79). Rhetorical topics – which ancient rhetoricians divided into material (specific) topics, common topics and final (strategic) categories – are manifestations of social responses to the world, enactments of social and cultural systems and institutions, and performances of cultural alliances and conflicts. Investigation of the social and cultural texture of texts moves beyond the mimetic environment of the verbal signs to the mimetic environment of the action and speech of the narrator and the characters that evoke the represented
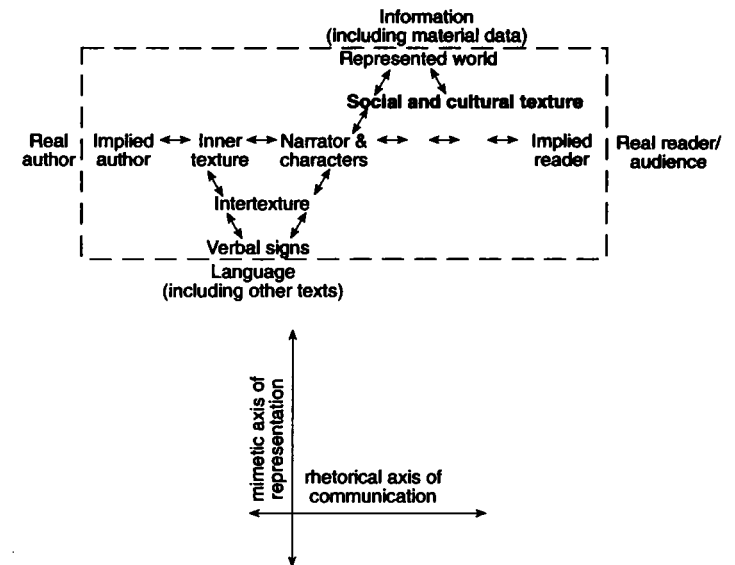
Figure 2.4 Social and cultural texture

world. In contrast to the kind of intertextual analysis that textualizes culture, society and history, social and cultural analysis invites the full resources of the social sciences into the environment of exegetical interpretation.

Extensive resources are available for analyzing the social and cultural texture of texts with greater detail than literary critics have yet achieved. Agents and actors in the text interact in discursive modes that evoke a wide variety of social, cultural and ideological vocabularies, dialects, attitudes and dispositions. As these voices dialogue with one another in the context of the represented world of a text, the work of Clifford Geertz on 'local cultures' and the work of sociologists of culture furnish insight into dominant culture, subculture, counterculture, contraculture and liminal culture (Robbins 1993c, 1994b). In addition, Bryan Wilson's social typology for religious responses to the world furnishes specific resources for analysis of texts (Wilson 1969, 1973). Social-scientific

critics of the Bible have gathered extensive data that can enrich analysis of the social and cultural texture of texts with insights into honor and shame culture, patronage, hospitality, health systems, relation of countryside to cities, purity systems, etc. (Malina 1993; Neyrey 1991; Elliott 1993). Both biblical and literary studies are poised to engage in a fully interdisciplinary analysis of the social and cultural texture of texts if interpreters bring insights from the social sciences into a dynamic environment of textual analysis and interpretation.

IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE

Investigation of social and cultural texture takes the analyst to the doorstep of ideological texture. The term 'ideology' has meant, and still does mean, different things to different people. From a socio-rhetorical perspective, ideology is

> the ways in which what we say and believe connects with the power-structure and power-relations of the society we live in . . . those modes of feeling, valuing, perceiving and believing which have some kind of relation to the maintenance and reproduction of social power.
>
> (Eagleton 1983: 15)

Ideology concerns the particular ways in which our speech and action, in their social and cultural location, relate to and interconnect with resources, structures and institutions of power. Kenneth Burke, who almost singlehandedly brought the social, cultural and ideological texture of texts into view (cf. Jameson 1981, 1988), and Roland Barthes, who introduced the concept of readers as 'writers' of the texts they read, opened the ideological texture of texts to view for interpreters (1967, 1972, 1974, 1981). Clifford Geertz adapted Burke's work to reconfigure sociology of knowledge as sociology of meaning. Michel Foucault analyzed discourse as a 'relationship between truth, theory, and values and the social institutions and practices in which they emerge', which brought 'increased attention to power and the body' (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: xxv). Mieke Bal, in turn, has reworked narratology to bring special attention to the ideological nature of texts (1985, 1991). The ideological texture of texts features the arena between the implied reader and the narrator and characters. The particular way in which

the narrator and characters evoke the message and the particular way in which the implied reader and real reader/audience receive it concerns ideology. Thus, adding ideological texture to the diagram produces Figure 2.5.

Reciprocity between the empowerment of the narrator and characters, the verbal signs and the represented world by the implied author and the implied reader represents the ideology *in* the text. In turn, reciprocity between meanings and meaning effects of the text in its world and meanings and meaning effects in the world of the real reader represents the ideology *of* the text. In other words, now the emphasis lies on the arena of the text where the implied reader and the real reader/audience receive and empower the message of the text.

Analysis and interpretation of the ideological texture of texts raises, in the end, the issue of spheres of truth and how we attempt to approach them. It has been traditional to think that truth can be
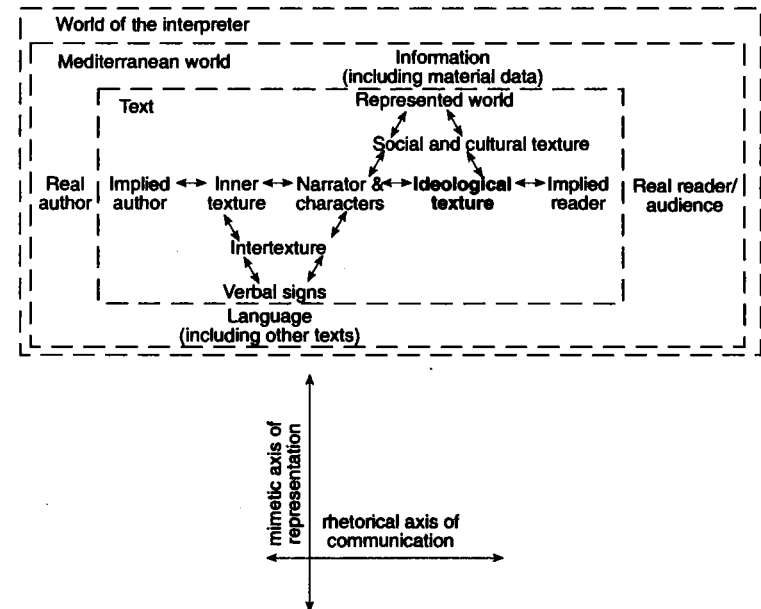

Figure 2.5 Ideological texture

'captured' in ideas or concepts. In other words, truth can be captured in frames of understanding. It has now become obvious that this is an illusion. Truth always escapes us. Our best chance for getting insights into the nature of truth is to understand the relationships things can and do have to one another. Things stand in relation to one another. There are different kinds of relationships. Some relationships are close enough that we can rather successfully talk about them in terms of sequence in time. In other words, some things stand in relations of quite direct 'influence' one way or another on each other. But other things stand in relations that will have 'influence' only if someone 'brings them into a particular sphere of influence'. These other things were there before they were brought into this sphere of influence, but traditional historians and scientists may not include these other things in their analysis. Socio-rhetorical criticism focuses on the relation of things to one another. In the context of relationships, some things stand in a relation of 'influence', of cause and effect. In interpretation, these phenomena are regularly perceived to be 'historical', and the historian includes them in the 'correct interpretation' of a text and excludes phenomena that do not have this 'relation of influence'. Socio-rhetorical criticism includes data in the Mediterranean world that stand in various kinds of relation besides a directly perceivable 'relation of influence' to a biblical text and uses comparison to analyze the nature of the 'relation' in terms of difference and similarity.

The issue of ideology comes into full prominence with the focus on readers of texts. Prior to the twentieth century, methods focused on some combination of a text and its author. Rarely did interpreters include readers in the analysis. During the twentieth century, the inclusion of an author in analysis of a text became more and more problematic. Many texts exist for which there is no certainty concerning the author, in certain instances authors write in the names of other authors and in other instances the only information about an author comes from the text which is the focus of interpretation. In this context, formalist literary critics, structuralists and linguists began to focus entirely on phenomena in the text itself. The author either completely disappeared from the context of interpretation, receded far into the background as an 'implied' author or simply existed as a way of referring to phenomena in the text itself, like 'Mark' says (meaning 'the text of Mark' says). Even if significant information was available about the author, interpreters

regularly perceived their task as ascertaining the nature of the text. If interpreters said anything about the author, they were simply referring to the 'implied' author evoked by the text itself. In this context, something of a division of the house arose among historical critics. Some historical critics retain an interest in the authors of texts as historical figures, even if it was uncertain exactly who the person was. Some 'sceptical' historians focused their interests on the activity and location of the author of a text in a historical and geographical location, even if they were working with an unnamed or falsely named author, or perceived the author to be an editor of data produced by a 'community' of people. Whether the focus was somehow on the author or somehow on the text, however, rarely did this focus seriously include the reader.

During the twentieth century interpreters began to include the reader in the context of interpretation, and ideology began to appear in the context of this emphasis. From the perspective of socio-rhetorical criticism, a 'complete' interpretation includes the interrelation among the author, the text and the reader. This vision comes from rhetorical analysis, which traditionally focuses on a speaker, a speech and an audience. In the context of analysis of a text, interpretation includes presuppositions, implicit or explicit, about the author, the text and the reader. Socio-rhetorical criticism brings all three into the arena of textual interpretation. The reason is that language is produced out of social interaction among people: there is not simply a speaker or writer; the speaking and writing presuppose the presence of a hearer or reader. There is not simply a text; texts were produced by authors and they are meaningless without readers. There are not simply readers; readers are meaningless without texts to read and authors who write texts. All three presuppose historical, social, cultural and ideological relations among people and the texts they write and read.

Analysis and interpretation of ideological texture raise the issue of readers in the twentieth century and authors and readers in the first century. What is the relation of our reading of a New Testament text to the way in which a first-century person might have written or read a text? The answer is that all people choose ways to write and to read a text. For this reason, socio-rhetorical criticism interprets not only the text under consideration but ways people read texts in late antiquity and ways people have interpreted New Testament texts both in the past and in different contexts in our modern world. Each interpretation of a text is a text on its own

terms, inviting socio-rhetorical analysis and interpretation as much as each New Testament text invites analysis and interpretation. This produces the two rectangles outside the boundary of the text which complete the diagram of socio-rhetorical criticism. Between the text and the world of the interpreter lies the world of the author who wrote the text. Especially with ancient texts, the world of the author calls for special attention since it clearly is a foreign world to the interpreter. Interaction among the world created by the text, the world of the author and the world of the interpreter represents the environment in which socio-rhetorical criticism explores and interprets a text.

CONCLUSION

A text intrinsically contains textures of meaning that cover a spectrum from the most intricate details about discourse itself to extensive details about historical, social, cultural and ideological phenomena. Socio-rhetorical criticism provides an intricate environment for analysis and interpretation in the context of interaction between rhetoric and mimesis, communication and representation, in texts. There are, of course, many implications that come with this model. I will introduce a few of these to bring this chapter to a close.

First, this model presents a 'system' approach to interpretation. This means that presuppositions and strategies in one arena reverberate throughout the entire system. For example, if interpreters emphasize 'opposition' in the inner texture of a text, they are likely to investigate intertexture which features texts that this text opposes, social and cultural groups against which this text pits itself and an ideology of separation from other people in the world. In contrast, if interpreters emphasize 'dialogue' in the inner texture of the text, they are likely to investigate intertexture which features texts that this text reconfigures, social and cultural groups with which this text is in conversation and an ideology of interaction with other people in the world. When interpreters are at work in any one arena of a text, therefore, implicit if not explicit presuppositions about the other arenas are at work in the analysis and interpretation.

Second, socio-rhetorical criticism uses a strategy of reading and rereading a text from different angles to produce a 'revalued' or

'revisited' rhetorical interpretation. This means that the mode of interpretation is explicitly interdisciplinary. The goal is to use the resources of other disciplines 'on their own terms' and to allow these resources to deconstruct and reconfigure the results of a particular focus and set of strategies in a particular discipline. In this deconstructive and reconfiguring environment, no particular discipline should be allowed to achieve a position of hierarchical authority. The rule of the game is that various disciplines engage in conversation with one another on equal terms, rather than dismiss one another through their power structures. The final result is at least as conflictual as intradisciplinary debate, and in some instances more so. The difference is the range of insight brought to the conclusions the interpreter draws. Socio-rhetorical criticism presupposes that the skills of specialization are well enough in hand in textual interpretation that much is to be gained by bringing 'specialized' conclusions of various kinds into active dialogue with one another.

Third, socio-rhetorical interpretation uses the same strategies of analysis on other people's interpretations of the text under consideration as the strategies for analyzing the biblical text itself. The reason is that both texts and interpretations of texts are symbolic actions that create history, society, culture and ideology. If the interpreter does not subject interpretations of the text to the same kind of interpretation as the text itself, some interpretation somewhere will hold the trump cards and dictate the final conclusions without yielding to the responsibility to give audience to its presuppositions, strategies and conclusions.

In conclusion, a four-texture approach was not explicit in the earliest socio-rhetorical interpretations, including my own. Rather, I began to use strategies of one kind and another designed to explore social and discursive aspects of texts, and only within time have the four arenas of texture emerged. While multiple textures of interpretation were becoming evident in New Testament interpretation during the 1970s and 1980s, it was difficult to discern the relation of these textures to one another. It has become common in certain circles, as a result, to present one's analysis as a 'fragment' of interpretation and to leave unattended the relation of one's analysis to other analyses. Socio-rhetorical criticism is the result of a concerted effort to integrate new practices of interpretation. The four arenas of textures, each with its own range of strategies and data, represent a significant refiguration of historical criticism and theological

criticism (Montrose 1992: 397–8, 412). The impulses underlying the refiguration are an embedding of disciplinary research and interpretation in an interdisciplinary mode, an embedding of literary modes of interpretation in rhetorical modes and an embedding of historical modes of analysis and interpretation in social, cultural and ideological modes.

A tendency within much historical and theological criticism is to make every new specialization a subdiscipline of historical and theological reasoning. This means that additional disciplines are not allowed into the exegetical arena as equal partners. The disciplines of history and theology maintain the role of judge and jury, issuing restraining orders, establishing laws that govern 'accurate' exegesis and deciding when an interpretation has gone beyond the bounds of acceptability. One of the strategies has been to declare various kinds of interpretation 'unrelated' to historical and theological interpretation.

The goal with socio-rhetorical criticism is to bring disciplines into interpretation on their own terms and engage those disciplines in dialogue on an equal basis. No discipline stands in a privileged position that allows it to disqualify the observations of another discipline. Each discipline exhibits its data with its own particular strategies and point of view. This creates a somewhat different experience in biblical interpretation. The traditional environment presupposes that certain historical and theological approaches stand in an authoritative position over other disciplines. A truly interdisciplinary environment presupposes that intensive dialogue and debate occur in contexts where interpreters with specialties in other disciplines show interest and respect for data gleaned by interpreters using other methods and presuppositions. This creates a context of deconstruction and reconfiguration of each other's data which is more characteristic of conversation and conflict in a global world than conversation and conflict in the context of multiple cultures 'colonized' by another culture. The overall goal, therefore, is to create an approach that can serve us well as we live in the global world of the third millennium CE.

To enable this dialogue, socio-rhetorical criticism creates spaces among and around arenas of specialty that normally function in a strictly disciplinary manner: historical, social, linguistic, literary, theological, aesthetic and ideological. The next four chapters discuss the appearance in biblical interpretation during the 1970s and 1980s of the four arenas socio-rhetorical criticism uses for

analysis and interpretation, and apply these arenas in succession to 1 Corinthians 9. A concluding chapter assesses the promise of socio-rhetorical criticism for the field of New Testament study in particular, but also for interpretation in other fields of study.