CHAPTER 1

Rhetorical Analysis of Pauline Texts—Quo Vadit?

Methodological Reflections

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The label "rhetorical analysis of the Pauline letters" decorates a colorful spectrum of methodologically different research projects. Keeping an overview becomes increasingly difficult, even more so integrating the various approaches. Already the ambiguous term "rhetoric" is clouded in fog. On the one hand, it denotes the practice of orating; on the other, the theoretical reflection about it: the "oratology." The discipline of New Testament studies does not account for this diffusiveness. The following essay attempts to pose questions for future research.

1. Rhetorical Analysis since Late Antiquity

Since late antiquity, the Corpus Paulinum has been analyzed rhetorically—if "rhetorical analysis" is understood as identifying rhetorical structures and describing individual rhetorical elements in early Christian texts. Origen, Augustine, and John Chrysostom, who wrote a commentary on the Letter to the Galatians, as well as Melanchthon, Luther, and Calvin, deserve credit for detecting rhetorical phenomena in New Testament texts.[1] In the same way, the exegesis of the nineteenth century used an explicitly "rhetorical" method by detecting tropes and figures, that is,

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1. For the rhetorical analysis of the New Testament since late antiquity, see the bibliography in D. F. Watson and A. J. Hauser, eds., *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography with Notes on History and Method*, Biblical Interpretation Series 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), esp. 101–25; see also J. Fairweather, "The Epistle to the Galatians and Classical Rhetoric: Part 1," *Tyndale Bulletin* 45 (1994): 1–22; C. J. Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht, JSNTSup 90 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 270–80; idem, "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik," *ZNW* 82 (1991): 16–26; additional literature in D. Sänger, "Vergeblich bemüht (Gal 4.11)? Zur paulinischen Argumentationsstrategie im Galaterbrief," *NTS* 48 (2002): 379 n. 6.

rhetorical ornament, in individual sentences,[2] as well as by analyzing Paul's way of piecing clauses and sentences together,[3] or by debating Paul's style and the level of his linguistic competence and cultivation.[4] Thus, this kind of rhetorical analysis is neither new, nor is it exhausted.[5] It should still be accepted as a useful approach. Today, though, in addition, we try to determine how the individual rhetorical elements, such as figures and tropes, function within a Pauline letter's overall argumentative strategy, as is demonstrated by Duane Watson's article "The Role of Style in the Pauline Epistles" in this volume.

2. Rhetorical Analysis since H. D. Betz and G. A. Kennedy

What has been new in the last three decades is the attempt rhetorically to analyze a Pauline letter in its *entirety* and to understand the flow of thoughts and arguments within the framework of the entire structure of a letter. In 1975, Hans Dieter Betz discovered that the disposition of an ancient speech and the structure of the main part of Galatians are alike, thus laying the cornerstone for his groundbreaking commentary on Galatians.[6] His method became popular[7] also because Betz's colleague

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2. See, e.g., C. G. Wilke, *Die neutestamentliche Rhetorik: Ein Seitenstück zur Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms* (Dresden/Leipzig: Arnold, 1843).

3. See, e.g., J. Weiss, "Beiträge zur paulinischen Rhetorik," in *Theologische Studien*, FS B. Weiss, ed. C. R. Gregory et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897), 165–247.

4. See, e.g., E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* (1898; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1958), 492–510; C. F. G. Heinrici, "Zum Hellenismus des Paulus" (1898), in *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther*, KEK 6, 8th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900), 436–58.

5. Cf. more recently, e.g., R. D. Anderson Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 146, 150–57, 161–63, 170–71, 180, 182–83; P. Lampe, "*Reticentia* in der Argumentation: Gal 3,10–12 als *Stipatio Enthymematum*," in *Das Urchristentum in seiner literarischen Geschichte*, FS J. Becker, ed. U. Mell and U. B. Müller, BZNW 100 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1999), 27–39; idem, "Theological Wisdom and the 'Word About the Cross': The Rhetorical Scheme in I Corinthians 1–4," *Interpretation* 44 (1990): 117–31; R. I. H. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters*, JSNTSup 111 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1995); anterior: J. Jeremias, "Chiasmus in den Paulusbriefen," *ZNW* 49 (1958): 145–56 = *ABBA: Studien zur neutestamentlichen Theologie und Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 276–90; N. Schneider, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, HUT 11 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1970).

6. Hans Dieter Betz, "The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *NTS* 21 (1975): 353–79 = *Paulinische Studien: Gesammelte Aufsätze III* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 63–97, as a program for his commentary on Galatians following in 1979: *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979, 2nd ed., 1984) = *Der Galaterbrief: Ein Kommentar zum Brief des Apostels Paulus an die Gemeinden in Galatien*, trans. S. Ann (Munich: Kaiser, 1988).

7. Cf. the bibliography mentioned above in n. 1. For a history of research particularly focusing on Galatians, see Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory* (n. 5 above), 111–23. For monographs on Paul, see, e.g., M. Bünker, *Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition im 1. Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984); H. Probst, *Paulus und der Brief: Die Rhetorik des antiken Briefes als Form der paulinischen Korintherkorrespondenz (1Kor 8–10)*, WUNT 2/45 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); M. M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, HUT 28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); further D. F. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and*

George A. Kennedy formulated a handy, five-step guideline for the rhetorical analysis of early Christian texts.[8] Within this branch of research, on the one hand, it has always been important to discover the structure of an ancient speech in a New Testament letter, from *exordium* to *peroratio*, and, on the other hand, to assign this letter to one of the three classical genres of oration (*genera orationis*): the forensic (*genus iudiciale*), the deliberative, advice-giving (*genus deliberativum*), or the demonstrative, lauding speech (*genus demonstrativum*).

The school of research initiated by Betz and Kennedy intentionally remains within the framework of *historical* analysis; only categories of ancient rhetoric are used as tools for description, that is, the categories unfolded in ancient rhetorical guidelines such as those by Aristotle (*Ars rhetorica*), Cicero (*De inventione; De oratore*), Quintilian (*Institutio oratoria*), or, for example, in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Exclusively ancient models and theories of text are applied to the Pauline letters—a principle that still is fruitful and whose possibilities have not yet been exhausted.

However, in the twenty-first century, Betz's and Kennedy's course can no longer be followed without some corrections. Their school has been under fire from three different directions.

3. The Relation to the "New Rhetoric"

At first, possible competition arose in the field of the so-called New Rhetoric. Based on classical rhetoric, but moving beyond it, New Rhetoric owes its profile to modern communication theories and language-philosophical reflections.[9] In numerous variants,[10] it was established apart from New Testament studies before radiating into

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Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter, SBLDS 104 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); L. Thurén, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions* (Åbo: Åbo Academy, 1990). Additional literature in Sänger, "Argumentationsstrategie" (n. 1 above), 378–80 nn. 4 and 7.

8. George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill/London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 33–38. In more recent times, it was endorsed again by, e.g., W. B. Russell, "Rhetorical Analysis of the Book of Galatians," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (1993): 343–51.

9. For a first introduction into "New Rhetoric," see, e.g., K.-H. Göttert, *Einführung in die Rhetorik,* 2nd ed. (Munich: Fink, 1994), 201–18. H. Holocher (*Die Anfänge der "New Rhetoric,"* Rhetorik-Forschungen 9 [Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996]) mainly focuses on the primarily language-philosophical oriented beginnings (1936–1953) of the New Rhetoric in England and the United States: on I. A. Richards, S. I. Hayakawa, K. Burke, R. Weaver. "New Rhetoric" is a label that pools various different approaches (argumentation theories in the aftermath of C. Perelman, J. Habermas's approach, deconstruction in the aftermath of J. Derrida, etc.).

10. This heterogeneity provoked G. Ueding and B. Steinbrink (*Grundriß der Rhetorik: Geschichte, Technik, Methode,* 3rd ed. [Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 1994], 165) to charge the New Rhetoric with terminological false labeling. According to them, the label "New Rhetoric" subsumes very different ways of dealing with the tradition of the classical rhetoric. These different approaches have in common only that they verbally declare some common ground with the rhetorical tradition, and, second, they share the pathos of a new beginning. But this is all, according to Ueding and Steinbrink. In their overview, they concentrate mainly on (a) the psychological, communication-theoretical rhetoric, which, in the aftermath of Carl J. Hovland and others, deals with the processes involved in persuasion, (b) the philosophically oriented argumentation and communication theories that pick up Aristotelian rhetoric, (c) the linguisti-

Pauline exegesis.[11] Those who work "historically" and thus, at least at first, factor out this ahistorical approach, should not disclaim it in principle. They need only to differentiate cleanly between the two approaches and possibly use both, like the height and depth of a room, not mixing them onto one level. Parallel to and apart from my own "historical" analyses,[12] I myself, in constructivist and sociology-of-knowledge studies,[13] have tried to challenge the Platonically molded axiom of ancient rhetoric that *res* and *verba,* the matter of the speech and its verbal expression, the content and the form, can be clearly distinguished and that the *verba* "represent" the *res.* For many postmodern philosophers, the distinction between *res* and contingent *verba* has become problematic. These postmodernists no longer define the search for truth as a verbal rapprochement to a reality that is preset and given apart from language, but understand "reality" as constructs of human brains. For them, the *verba* do not "represent" reality, but "create" it; it is no longer the category of "representation" that characterizes the relationship between words and reality.[14] From this language-

cally and/or semiotics-oriented rhetoric (especially I. A. Richards's theory of metaphors, U. Eco's concept of tropes, R. Barthes's analysis of visual advertisements).

11. See esp. F. Siegert, *Argumentation bei Paulus gezeigt an Römer 9–11,* WUNT 34 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985); S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht, eds., *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (see n. 1 above), therein, e.g., the introduction by Porter (21–28); J. D. H. Amador, *Academic Constraints in Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction to a Rhetoric of Power,* JSNTSup 174 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999). Inspired by deconstruction in the aftermath of Derrida and by Burke's concept of rhetoric as an instrument of power, Amador developed a "rhetoric of power" that aims at exposing the power structures inherent in each text. The power of a text manifests itself in the behavior of the recipients who react to the text and are prompted to new statements and expressions. The history of interpretation and of the effects and impacts of the Bible, *including* today's exegetical scholarship, are part of the text's power web, and therefore part of the object of investigation by the "rhetoric of power."

12. See n. 5 above.

13. E.g., P. Lampe, *Die Wirklichkeit als Bild: Das Neue Testament im Lichte konstruktivistischer Epistemologie und Wissenssoziologie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2006; Eng. trans. forthcoming in 2010 (from Continuum); idem, "Wissenssoziologische Annäherung an das Neue Testament," *NTS* 43 (1997): 347–66; idem, "Die urchristliche Rede von der 'Neuschöpfung des Menschen' im Lichte konstruktivistischer Wissenssoziologie," in *Exegese und Methodendiskussion,* ed. S. Alkier and R. Brucker, Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 23 (Tübingen: Narr, 1998), 21–32; idem, "Die Gleichnisverkündigung Jesu von Nazareth im Lichte konstruktivistischer Wissenssoziologie," in *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu 1899–1999: Beiträge zum Dialog mit Adolf Jülicher,* ed. U. Mell, BZNW 103 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1999), 223–36; idem, "The Language of Equality in Early Christian House Churches: A Constructivist Approach," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue,* ed. D. L. Balch and C. Osiek (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003), 73–83.

14. The "New Rhetoric" drew consensus-theoretical consequences from this insight, e.g., Chaim Perelman in his argumentation theory (C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* [Notre Dame, Ind./London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971]; C. Perelman, *Das Reich der Rhetorik: Rhetorik und Argumentation* [Munich: Beck, 1980]). According to Perelman, if reality is understood as a construct, then any statement that this or that is "truth" is based on consent to constructs, a consent that can always be revised: "Da sich die Argumentation auf Thesen richtet, denen unterschiedliche Öffentlichkeiten mit jeweils unterschiedlicher Intensität zustimmen, kann der Status der in eine Argumentation eingehenden Elemente nicht wie in einem formalen System unveränderlich sein, da er ja von der . . . Übereinstimmung des Auditoriums abhängt" (*Reich der Rhetorik,* 55). Similarly, e.g., S. Toulmin, *Der Gebrauch von Argumenten* (Kronberg: Scriptor, 1975): Truth is found in the consensus of people ready to dialogue, not in "ultimate criteria."

philosophical perspective, the foundation of classical rhetoric crumbles and with it the concepts of "artistic representation" and "objectivity."

The question arises why New Testament exegesis should still work on the basis of *ancient* rhetorical text theory at all. From the *historical-critical* point of view, the answer is that it still makes sense to confront the then-speaking and then-writing people with the then-current theories of text and language—no matter how adequate or inadequate, from today's philosophical perspective, these ancient theories might have been. In other words, a New Testament interpretation method influenced by New Rhetoric does not rival a method molded by ancient rhetoric. Both approaches complement one another, and both should be applied.[15] The New Rhetorical approach to confront the then-spoken and then-written with modern and postmodern theories of communication and literature remains a legitimate, even necessary, project.

Furthermore, New Testament studies badly need to define the relationship between narratological methods, which draw heavily on modern theories of literature, on the one hand, and the various rhetorical-analytical methods, on the other, in a satisfactory manner. It remains a fascinating task to explore ancient texts anew through the lenses of today's theories of literature, not just those of New Rhetoric.[16] This volume, however, fades out the modern instruments, but it does so for economic reasons, not for reasons of principle.

4. The Relationship between Ancient Rhetoric and Ancient Narratological Beginnings

Furthermore, within the "historical" approach itself, scholarship has not yet satisfactorily defined the relation between ancient rhetoric, on the one hand, and ancient poetics and historiographical reflections on the other—that is, between ancient theory of speech and the admittedly less elaborate ancient beginnings of a theory of narration. Paul's letters comprise narrative and biographical parts (e.g., Gal 1:13–2:21), and narrative works, such as Acts, comprise many rhetorical structures. How is ancient rhetoric to be related to ancient narratological beginnings, and how, in this combination, can both be made fruitful for New Testament research? This is still a theoretical task to be tackled.

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15. Then each historical-critical, institutionally established scholarship about Paul (SNTS, chairs at renowned universities, etc.) also may be asked by deconstructivists like Amador (see n. 11 above, e.g. 289) if it focuses on the "historical" also for the purpose of maintaining its power: by stressing the historical importance of the biblical text (e.g., as one of the most important foundations of Western culture) and the importance of the historical expert knowledge that is needed to understand the text, biblical scholarship claims the status of an authoritative interpreter and thus, deliberately or unconsciously, tries to maintain power, ensuring research money, social recognition (academic titles), control of the hermeneutical access to the Bible in our culture, and so on. However, with all due respect to their critical potential, deconstructivists like Amador conversely may be asked where, in all of their celebration of chaos (cf. Amador, 123), there is a method of interpretation left that is clearly defined and therefore can be checked, criticized, and possibly even falsified. Because of its own presuppositions, Amador's creativity suffocates itself.

16. For the field of classical philology, see, e.g., the introduction by T. A. Schmitz, *Moderne Literaturtheorie und antike Texte* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002).

4.1. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, in a parallel movement to the rhetorical analysis of the Pauline corpus, the research of the Gospels increasingly used analogies in Greco-Roman literature for comparison. Especially Charles H. Talbert,[17] since the middle 1970s and contemporary to Betz's beginnings of his Galatians commentary, attempted an "architecture analysis" of Luke/Acts, trying to discover the structural composition of this literary work, its rhythms, and its literary patterns. His goal was to locate the Lukan narrative within the ancient history of literature. With his critique of composition, he contributed considerably to the especially Anglo-Saxon turn away from diachronic (redaction and source-critical) Gospel analysis to narrative criticism as a tool to analyze the conceptional design of the entirety of a Gospel.

Parallel to the development of rhetorical exegesis of Pauline letters (see section 3 above), the narratological analysis of the Gospels and Acts very soon involved modern theories of literature, also because ancient theory building in the field of narratology was not as developed as in the field of ancient rhetoric. Today, the narrative-critical exegesis of the New Testament is fruitfully molded by modern theories of literature.

4.2. When it comes to defining the relation between ancient rhetorical theory and ancient narrative-theoretical beginnings, one cannot avoid entering into a dialogue with Vernon K. Robbins and other representatives of the so-called Socio-Rhetorical Criticism. It is not a coincidence that Robbins first presented his—historical-critically oriented—method of interpretation by using Mark's narrative Gospel as an example.[18]

At first, (a) Robbins analyzes the "rhetorical-literary" features of a New Testament text, whether of a logion *or* a narrative. (b) In a second, intertextual step, he compares these "rhetorical-literary" features with literary forms and contents of the Greco-Roman and Jewish cultural environment.

Without a doubt, it is necessary for New Testament scholarship to draw on ancient conventions of giving speeches and of narrating, and to bring both into a relationship. But Robbins probably needs to be asked whether he should have rather named his method "socio-narratological" instead of "socio-rhetorical." Why? It is not the evangelist's redactional work that Robbins analyzes "rhetorically," although his book's subtitle insinuates this.[19] He uses "rhetorical" analysis only when he looks at the narrated orator Jesus, asking in which way Jesus' logia could be compared with the ancient rhetorical handbooks,

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17. Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts,* SBLMS 20 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1974); cf. M. C. Parsons, "Reading Talbert: New Perspectives on Luke-Acts," *SBLSP* 26 (1987): 687–720; and U. E. Eisen, *Die Poetik der Apostelgeschichte: Narratologische Studien,* NTOA 58 (Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 24–37.

18. Vernon K. Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984, 1992). See also his "rhetorical" studies of narrative texts (e.g., "Pronouncement Stories and Jesus' Blessing of the Children: A Rhetorical Approach," *Semeia* 29 [1983]: 43–74; "Pronouncement Stories from a Rhetorical Perspective," *Forum* 4.2 [1988]: 3–32; about the makarisms: "Pragmatic Relations as a Criterion for Authentic Sayings," *Forum* 1.3 [1985]: 35–63). The introduction of the 1992 edition of *Jesus the Teacher* presents Robbins's method as a handy four-step procedure. Only the first three steps are reported here.

19. See n. 18.

especially with their deliberations about the *chreia*. The *chreia*, the concise aphorism, is an excellent example to illustrate the combination of "speech" and "narrative," because often the *chreia* is illustrated by an accompanying anecdotal narrative. However, as soon as a speech text shows such a combination, it is not a speech text but a narrative text, in which a speech element is quoted. It follows that the analysis of this text necessarily would be a narratological analysis, even if it could be shown that the quoted speech element uses rhetorical devices.

The question whether Robbins should have labeled his method "narratological" rather than "rhetorical" lingers when we look at another example. Whoever wants to assign the Sermon on the Mount with its antitheses to one of the three ancient speech *genera*, as Robbins[20] does (when he characterizes this text as a *deliberate* text for Matthew's Christian readers), confounds the categories and contributes to terminological fog. The evangelist was no orator, but a narrator who, in his narrative, lets an orator enter the stage. And in the narrated situation, this orator addresses an audience other than that aimed for in Matthew's Gospel. Given, the addressees of the Matthean narrative are supposed to identify with the narrated addressees of the Sermon on the Mount, but this does not make this Jesus sermon, which undoubtedly has a message to Matthew's readers, a *speech* to the Matthean readers, a speech that could be assigned to one of the three ancient speech *genera*. The Sermon on the Mount, as a message to the Matthean audience, is adequately understood only if it is seen as a narrative, that is, if its *narrative* context is taken into account. The ethical claim of the Sermon on the Mount with its very demanding imperatives is embedded in stories that illustrate the indicative of grace. The Matthean Christians are strengthened by miracle stories that frame the Sermon on the Mount.[21] In these narratives, Jesus heals; he helps the disciples "of little faith"; he walks with them on the path of "righteousness." Christ is portrayed as the supportive Immanuel, the "God with us."[22] Thus, the Matthean Christians are not left alone with the burdening imperatives of the Sermon on the Mount. Immanuel himself lifts them up when they risk falling. He forgives when imperatives are not met.[23] Thus, the Sermon on the Mount *as a message to Matthew's readers* remains an integral part of a narrative, and the *genus* of a "deliberative narrative" did not exist in antiquity!

It is legitimate, however, to ask, within the frame of a *narratological* analysis, whether a speech by Jesus that is woven into the Gospel narrative was meant by the narrator as a deliberative, juridical, or demonstrative speech in the imagined *narrated* rhetorical situation between Jesus and his listeners sitting on a mount. Because the narrated rhetorical situation is different from the communication situation

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20. Vernon K. Robbins, "A Socio-Rhetorical Response: Contexts of Interaction and Forms of Exhortation," *Semeia* 50 (1990): 261–71.

21. Matthew 4:23–25; 8:1–17, 23–34; 9:1–8. All of these stories show a caring Jesus as contrast or supplement to the teacher of radical imperatives. For the Sermon on the Mount and its radical ethics, see further, e.g., Peter Lampe, "Die matthäische Bergpredigt—Zumutung oder Ermutigung?" in Peter Lampe, *Küsste Jesus Magdalenen mitten auf den Mund? Provokationen, Einsprüche, Klarstellungen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2007), 45–48.

22. Matthew's whole Gospel is framed by this title: 1:23; 28:20.

23. Matthew 9:2–8; 12:31; programmatically already in 1:21. Jesus takes over a traditional role of God when forgiving.

between Matthew and his audience, the right methodological question to be asked is: what does the assignment of genre (as a "deliberative" or as a "juridical[24] speech" for people sitting on a mount) mean for the understanding of the Gospel narrative? The categories should be clearly distinguished, not muddled.

(c) Finally, Robbins adds a third step to his method by synthesizing the first two. This step allows him to call his method "*socio*-analytical." Now the primary focus is not the text anymore, but the social environment of the text and its first recipients, which needs to be reconstructed. Which social structures, which belief systems, which implicit and explicit social values and norms, which behavioral conventions, and which literary forms characterized this environment from which the text emerged and to which it responded? And which expectations and which silently understood presuppositions of the author and of the first recipients can we infer from this reconstruction of the cultural environment? Last but not least, where does the biblical text also differ from the conventions of the environment?

For Robbins, the reconstruction of the ancient environment of a text is important especially because texts do not possess meaning per se; they make sense only in connection with the knowledge that the readers already have.[25] For Robbins, a historian, this means: the text's meaning in the first century was dependent on the knowledge of the ancient recipients, that is, dependent on the ancient sociocultural context of the text. Correspondingly, for modern readers the text can make sense only if they learn about the (foreign) ancient sociocultural context of the text.[26]

From a methodological point of view, one can object that all of these steps (a-c) also have been and are being taken and combined by New Testament scholars without the Robbins label of "socio-rhetorical." Even though I myself, also for the sake of a better understanding of texts, have been working in the important field (c), I do not think that, after steps (a) and (b) showed little basis for such labeling, step (c) qualifies as "rhetorical." The tag "rhetorical" is still misleading.

Robbins's material results, however, are exciting, for example, his intertextual comparisons within the ancient Mediterranean world or his idea to use the *chreia* research for creating an additional criterion for identifying authentic sayings of the historical Jesus.[27] It is his methodological terminology that provokes objection.

5. Critique of the Betz-Kennedy Approach from the Historical-Critical Camp: *Dissimulatio Artis* and Relationship to Epistolography

A train of thought left in section 3 needs to be picked up again. Headwinds against the Betz-Kennedy approach are not only blowing from the direction of New Rhetoric.

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24. In Matthew 5–7, the Matthean Jesus proclaims and interprets God's will in an authoritative way, revealing God's law, which seems to be more than just "deliberative."

25. See, e.g., Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher* (1992; see n. 18 above), XXIX.

26. Whether this "only" is justified or not can be left open here.

27. See Robbins, "Pragmatic Relations" (n. 18 above).

As pointed out above, the critique raised by the New Rhetoric is based only on using false either-or alternatives, that is, on a confusion of categories, which can be easily corrected. Other headwinds from the historical-critical corner itself, however, are blowing more strongly. There are two of them.

5.1. At first, exclusive focus on the ancient rhetorical handbooks is criticized; real speeches have to be considered as well. According to the self-understanding of ancient orators, handbook theory and actual rhetorical praxis were two pairs of shoes. With *dissimulatio artis,* speakers even strived to conceal the theoretical model that had inspired them, so that in praxis the speeches were more flexible and multifaceted than the theoretical rules pretended.[28] Future research will have, theoretically and methodologically, to reflect this gap between ancient theory and praxis. That means, in the process of analyzing ancient texts rhetorically, it will no longer suffice only to point to this gap conveniently whenever we are irritated that theoretical norms of handbooks and other ancient instructions do not fit closely like a glove over a particular Pauline text. More profound theoretical-methodological work is needed.

The analysis of *narrative* New Testament sections has to reckon with the same gap between theory and praxis. Even though Aristotle (*Poet.* 1451a) and Horace (*Ars Poet.* 23), on the basis of ancient poetic theory, called, for example, for the unity and coherence of narrative texts, ancient practice often happily differed from such theoretical designs.[29] The narrative texts of the New Testament were no exception in this respect. Modern narrative critics, therefore, are well advised not to continue to force the Gospels into the harness of a coherency postulate.[30]

In the future, narratological as well as rhetorical analysts of New Testament texts will increasingly have to learn that we cannot read these texts only in a deductive way, that is, only with the guideline of certain principles of poetics and rhetoric in mind, but rather in a careful inductive way that helps also to highlight and appreciate the *particularities* of the texts and all those features that do *not* fit into the mold of theoretical standards. We can learn from the wisdom of the grand seigneur of narratology, Gérard Genette, who shied away from subjecting the entire object of his research (Marcel Proust's "A la recherche du temps perdu") to the dictatorship of his own method—which would have been an exclusively deductive way of interpreting.

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28. See, e.g., Classen, "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik" (n. 1 above), esp. 31; F. Vouga, "Zur rhetorischen Gattung des Galaterbriefes," ZNW 79 (1988): 291–93; G. Strecker, *Literaturgeschichte des Neuen Testaments,* UTB 1682 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 91.

29. See, e.g., M. Heath, *Unity in Greek Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 9.

30. See D. Rhoads, "Narrative Criticism: Practices and Prospects," in *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism*, ed. D. Rhoads and K. Syreeni, JSNTSup 184 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999), 268; P. Merenlahti and R. Hakola, "Reconceiving Narrative Criticism," in ibid., 23–33. In Pauline exegesis, Amador, for example, pushes to highlight the tensions within the Pauline writings more relentlessly und thus to dismantle the rhetorical genius Paul (J. D. H. Amador, "Interpretive Unity: The Drive toward Monological (Monotheistic) Rhetoric," in *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference*, ed. S. E. Porter and D. L. Stamps, JSNTSup 180 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999], 58, 61 et al.).

5.2. An even stronger headwind blows from the following direction. These contesters also work strictly historically, that is, with only ancient text theories and ancient parallels in mind, but they subject the Corpus Paulinum to an *epistolographical* analysis.[31] For many years, this alternative to rhetorical analysis has been circulating, voicing strong reservations against the school of "rhetorical criticism" initiated by Betz and Kennedy. Critics like S. E. Porter and C. J. Classen[32] quoted ancient

31. Cf. ancient epistolographical theories assorted by P. Cugusi, *Evoluzione e forme dell'epistolografia latina nella tarda repubblica e nei primi due secoli dell'Impero con cenni sull'epistolografia preciceroniana* (Rome: Herder, 1983); A. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, SBLSBS 19 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988). Epistolographical analyses, of course, include letters from everyday life, such as papyri or letters quoted in literary works, when they look for comparable material. See, e.g., J. A. D. Weima, *Neglected Endings: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings*, JSNTSup 101 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994); M. L. Stirewalt, *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography*, SBLSBS 27 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993); E. R. Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, WUNT 2/42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); D. Trobisch, *Die Entstehung der Paulusbriefsammlung: Studien zu den Anfängen christlicher Publizistik*, NTOA 10 (Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989); F. Schnider and W. Stenger, *Studien zum neutestamentlichen Briefformular*, NTTS 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1987); S. K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, Library of Early Christianity 5 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); J. L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986); R. Buzon, *Die Briefe der Ptolemäerzeit: Ihre Struktur und ihre Formeln* (Diss., Heidelberg, 1984); C.-H. Kim, "Index of Greek Papyrus Letters," *Semeia* 22 (1981): 107–12 (incomplete); J. L. White and K. A. Kensinger, "Categories of Greek Papyrus Letters," *SBLASP* 10 (1976): 79–91; T. Y. Mullins, "Formulas in New Testament Epistles," *JBL* 91 (1972): 380–90; J. L. White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter: A Study of the Letter-Body in the Non-Literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle*, SBLDS 2 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1972); idem, "Introductory Formulae in the Body of the Pauline Letter," *JBL* 90 (1971): 91–97; K. Thraede, *Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Brieftopik*, Zetemata 48 (Munich: Beck, 1970); C. J. Bjerkelund, *PARAKALO: Form, Funktion und Sinn der parakalo-Sätze in den paulinischen Briefen*, BTN 1 (Oslo: University Press, 1967); G. J. Bahr, "Paul and Letterwriting in the First Century," *CBQ* 28 (1966): 465–77; H. Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Ideologie und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n.Chr.*, AASFB 102.2 (Helsinki: Academy of Sciences, 1956); M. van den Hout, "Studies in Early Greek Letter-Writing," *Mnemosyne* 4 (1949): 19–41, 138–53; O. Roller, *Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe: Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom antiken Brief*, BWANT 58 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933); F. X. J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1923); F. Ziemann, "De epistularum Graecorum formulis sollemnibus quaestiones selectae," *Diss. Philolog. Halenses* 18.4 (1910): 253–369; H. Peter, *Der Brief in der römischen Literatur: Literaturgeschichtliche Untersuchungen und Zusammenfassungen* (1901; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1965). Further literature in Sänger, "Argumentationsstrategie" (n. 1 above), 384 n. 25. For histories of research, see D. Dormeyer, *Das Neue Testament im Rahmen der antiken Literaturgeschichte: Eine Einführung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993), 190–98; Strecker, *Literaturgeschichte* (n. 28 above), 66–95; J. Schoon-Janssen, *Umstrittene "Apologien" in den Paulusbriefen: Studien zur rhetorischen Situation des 1. Thessalonicherbriefes, des Galaterbriefes und des Philipperbriefes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 14–19; K. H. Schelkle, *Paulus: Leben–Briefe–Theologie*, EdF 152, 2nd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 3–6; D. E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, Library of Early Christianity 8 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 158–225. For the various genres of letters—the instructing letter (e.g., Epicurus), the artistic letter (e.g., Ovid), the various forms of private letters—see, e.g., the collections of sample letters by Pseudo-Demetrius (*Formae epistolicae,* ed. Weichert) and Pseudo-Libanius (*Libanii opera 9: Libanii qui feruntur characteres epistolici prolegomena ad epistulas,* ed. R. Foerster [Hildesheim: Olms, 1963]).

32. S. E. Porter, "The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature," in Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (n. 1 above), 100–103, 115–16; Classen, "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik" (n. 1 above), 13 et al.; idem, "Zur rhetorischen Analyse der Paulusbriefe," *ZNW* 86 (1995): 120–21. For the discussion, see also Strecker, *Literaturgeschichte* (n. 28

theorists who clearly distinguished the written from the spoken word and thus made it look inadequate to analyze written letters with the categories of ancient rhetoric, that is, with a theory of orally delivered speeches. Demetrius (*De elocutione* 224–26, 229–31, 235) concedes that one has to put an effort into the elaboration of a letter, like into finding a present, but that it would be ridiculous if we, in a letter, tried to compose sentences similar to those in our speeches in court. According to him, the epistolary style differs completely from commemorative, demonstrative speeches, from forensic speeches or public disputes. Cicero can use jargon of ordinary people in letters, because speech and letter, according to him, are very dissimilar (*quid enim simile habet epistula aut iudicio aut contioni? Ad fam.* 24.1; cf. *Orat.* 64). And Seneca, in letters, prefers the casual tone of friends taking a walk together instead of careful stylizing (*Ep.* 75.1). In Pauline exegesis, is all "rhetorical criticism" out of place,[33] an inappropriate wardrobe, a tailcoat at a county fair? Epistolography, indeed, teaches that letter writers have to follow certain patterns only when formulating the pre- and postscripts as well as some introductory and transitional formulas, but that otherwise one is free to do what one wants. Why, of all things, should letter authors, in this zone of freedom, follow rhetorical models?[34]

New Testament scholarship has maneuvered itself into a corner. In the topography of research, epistolographical and rhetorical analyses for the most part stand unconnectedly side by side.[35] And instead of working more intensely on their

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above), 89–95; Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy* (n. 7 above), 57–64. Additional literature in Sänger, "Argumentationsstrategie" (n. 1 above), 380 n. 9.

33. Thus esp. P. H. Kern, "Rhetoric, Scholarship und Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle," *Tyndale Bulletin* 46 (1995): 201–3.

34. As Cicero's secretary Tiro demonstrates, the freedom even goes to such lengths that letter authors delegate some of the shaping and formulating work to their secretaries (cf. Richards, *Secretary* [n. 31 above]; also J. D. Hester [Amador], "The Use and Influence of Rhetoric in Galatians 2:1–14," *TZ* 42 [1986]: 386–408). This might yield far-reaching consequences for the interpretation of the Pauline letters, for example, for the understanding of the Letter to the Colossians, which E. Schweizer attributes to a coworker of Paul (*Der Brief an die Kolosser*, EKK 12 [Zurich: Benziger, 1976]). Schweizer's hypothesis could be reinforced by this epistolographical finding. Can 2 Thessalonians be interpreted analogously? Both in Colossians and 2 Thessalonians Paul's signature with "his own hand" might secure his de jure authorship despite the far-reaching freedom of the secretary (Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17). Maybe the phenomenon of the Pauline pseudepigraphy needs to be revisited from this angle.

35. Sometimes even in one and the same study (cf., e.g., the two beginning chapters in V. Jegher-Bucher, *Der Galaterbrief auf dem Hintergrund antiker Epistolographie und Rhetorik: Ein anderes Paulusbild*, ATANT 78 [Zurich: TVZ, 1989, 1991]). On the other hand, interesting bridges between the art of letter writing and legal certifications are explored. R. Buzon (*Die Briefe der Ptolemäerzeit* [n. 31 above]) demonstrated how close the standard forms of ancient *letters* were to *legal documents*. On the basis of this insight, (a) D. Kremendahl (*Die Botschaft der Form: Zum Verhältnis von antiker Epistolographie und Rhetorik im Galaterbrief*, NTOA 46 [Friburg: Academy Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000], 32–119) hypothesizes that Paul's letter to the Galatians claims to be a quasi-officially binding writing that highlights Paul's apostolic authority. I also place Phlm 18 in this context, where Paul certifies his own indebtedness in a legally binding way (although Philemon never would have used this piece of paper to obtain money from Paul, given his status in relation to the apostle). Yes, Phlm 18 is purely rhetorical, but in regard to its format it is at the same time legally binding (cf. P. Lampe, "Der Brief an Philemon," in N. Walter, E. Reinmuth, and P. Lampe, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, Thessalonicher und an Philemon*, NTD 8/2 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998], 224–26). In both cases, in Galatians and Phlm 18, it is especially Paul's "own hand" that creates the impression of legal bindingness (Phlm 19; Gal 6:11; cf. also 1 Cor

integration, the drifting apart of both analytical methods is sped up by mutual accusations that the respective other method is inadequate. For the integration of both approaches, theoretical work is needed. Only very rudimentarily has New Testament scholarship worked on theoretically reflected bridging.

Let us put some building blocks together for this bridge. (a) On the one hand, the freedom of an ancient letter writer prevents the modern exegete from postulating a priori that the corpus of a letter must have been molded by rhetorical models. That means whoever plans to analyze ancient letters rhetorically needs to be aware that this project could be doomed to failure.

(b) On the other hand, the freedom of the letter author also included the liberty to follow rhetorical models in the letter corpus. Indeed, all analyses of letter corpora (either in New Testament scholarship or in classical philology) that actually succeeded in detecting rhetorical patterns prove that the freedom often was used in exactly this way. Classical philology succeeded in finding typical speech elements even in a short letter by Pliny that only comprises a few lines (*Ep.* 1.11; cf. also 2.6)— with an introductory thesis, an objection, an *argumentatio,* and a *peroratio.* Even in some letters by Seneca, a classic speech structure can be discovered, although Seneca, as we saw, did not like to stylize letters, but preferred to talk informally when he wrote letters.[36] Like Paul, who explicitly distanced himself from using rhetorical means,[37] Seneca shows a discrepancy between what he says and what he does.

(c) In view of the prominent role of orality in ancient culture, it is likely that Paul's letters were read aloud in the congregations.[38] In other words, at least secondarily, there was a rhetorical situation that Paul as author could count on and anticipate. It is therefore impossible to reject the possibility of interpreting the Pauline letters as written speeches framed by typically epistolary elements. The messengers who carried the letters to the congregations delivered Paul's writings orally in front of the addressed audiences. And even Paul himself delivered them orally when he dictated them, at least some of them (Rom 16:22).

(d) Ancient authors themselves have tried to bridge epistolography and rhetoric,

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16:21; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17). (b) Second, the bridge to the world of official writings and legal documents allows Kremendahl to explain the epistolary particularities of Galatians, which supposedly surprised the Galatians (no thanksgiving, no names of co-senders, no plans to visit, no greetings; instead an unusually long ending in his own hand). Since Kremendahl labels Galatians a quasi-officially binding writing, he identifies several verses as standard elements borrowed from the judiciary: the two *subscriptiones* 5:2–6 and 6:11–15 (see below), the assimilated oath formula in 1:20, the personal description in 6:17b, the theologically reinterpreted threat of punishment in 1:8–9, and the quotation of a document in 2:7–8.

36. For Pliny, see M. v. Albrecht, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur: Von Andronicus bis Boethius,* 2nd ed. (Munich: DTV, 1994), 409–14, esp. 411. For the thirteenth, fourtieth, and fiftieth *Epistula moralis* by Seneca, see Kremendahl, *Botschaft* (n. 35 above), 27 n. 26. For the first Demosthenes letter, see F. W. Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric and 2 Thessalonians,* JSNTSup 30 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 47–50.

37. 1 Corinthians 2:1, 4; Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:5; cf. 1:5. In 2 Cor 11:6, Paul excludes ever having enjoyed the highest levels of rhetorical education.

38. Furthermore, the bearers of letters often supplemented them with oral news. See W. Riepl, *Das Nachrichtenwesen des Altertums mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Römer* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913); S. R. Llewelyn, "Sending Letters in the Ancient World: Paul and the Philippians," *Tyndale Bulletin* 46 (1995): 337–56.

even though only hesitantly and late. As A. Malherbe correctly observed,[39] the ancient professors of rhetoric themselves slowly also began to plow the field of letter theory, although this piece of land originally had not belonged to their theoretical territory; it is absent from the earliest extant rhetorical handbooks.[40] Apparently, rhetoric professors perceived how much the practice of letter writing had become influenced by rhetorical theory and therefore had to include epistolography in their theoretical reflections.

Already in the first or second century C.E., the *Progymnasmata* of Theon of Alexandria, a teacher's handbook, tried to bridge rhetoric and epistolography. Theon recommended composing fictive letters in the classroom, and he lists this activity under the *rhetorical* rubric of *prosopopoeia*. This is an interesting attempt to combine rhetorical exercise with letter writing (10, p. 115, ed. Spengel). *Prosopopoeia* and also *ethopoeia*, the shaping of a character, stand for the rhetorical art of developing the roles of persons in an authentic way and of putting words into the mouths of these characters that fit the respective situations. The students of rhetoric were required to learn the empathic ability of walking in the shoes of others if they later wanted to be able to relate to their audience in effective ways, anticipating feelings and reactions. For Theon, practicing fictive letters was a method of *prosopopoeia*; in this exercise, the students had to place themselves in the situations of other persons, that is, fictive letter authors, and to imitate their ways of speaking. The authors of the Pauline "school" practiced this very enterprise when they wrote letters such as Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles that re-presented Paul to congregations after his demise.

Even though this bridge between rhetoric and episotolography is only sporadic, it shows an interesting pursuit of integration already in the first or second century C.E. Furthermore, in my view, it marks a fascinating point where ancient rhetoric and epistolography were tangent to ancient narratological and historiographical theory. Luke, for example, exercises *prosopopoeia* when he intersperses fictive letters into his narrative; when he uses mimesis in the speeches of Acts, choosing optatives on the Athenian Areopagus and having Peter talk in a language that has a Septuagint-Semitic touch, and shows the patina of the early days of Christianity, of a period gone by for Luke;[41] when he, in his narrative, skillfully paints authentic local color into narratives

39. Malherbe, *Epistolary Theorists* (n. 31 above), 2.

40. For the at-least-loose theoretical bridge between rhetoric and epistolography already in antiquity, see also J. T. Reed, "The Epistle," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 B.C.–A.D. 400)*, ed. S. E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 171–93; Sänger, "Argumentationsstrategie" (n. 1 above), 381–82, with reference to the late authors (fourth cent. C.E.) Libanius (*Ep.* 528:4) and C. Julius Victor (*Ars rhetorica* 447–48 = *C. Julii Victoris Ars rhetorica*, ed. R. Giovini and M. S. Cementano, BSGRT [Leipzig: Teubner, 1980], 105.10–106.20). More than two centuries earlier, Quintilian cared only little about letter writing and held that the letter has its own nature compared to the speech (*Inst. orat.* 9.4.19–20).

41. See P. Lampe and U. Luz, "Nachpaulinisches Christentum und pagane Gesellschaft," in J. Becker et al., *Die Anfänge des Christentums: Alte Welt und neue Hoffnung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987), 185–216, esp. 205–6; Eng. trans. P. Lampe and U. Luz, "Post-Pauline Christianity and Pagan Society," in *Christian Beginnings: Word and Community from Jesus to Post-Apostolic Times*, ed. J. Becker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 242–80.

that play, for example, in Athens or Ephesus.[42] All narrators use *prosopopoeia* when breathing life into the persons of their stories and when forming them into "rounded characters." Once again, it remains a desideratum to define the relationship between ancient rhetoric and ancient theoretical beginnings of a narratology.

(e) Luckily, we do not have to work from scratch when trying to combine the rhetorical and epistolographical methods of analysis. F. Schnider and W. Stenger, although in a disputable way, attempted a *rhetorical-epistolographical* analysis by interpreting the standardized part between the thanksgiving and the letter corpus, which they called "epistolary self-recommendation" (*briefliche Selbstempfehlung*), as an analog to the *exordium* of a speech.[43] Other researchers examined the *rhetorical* function of Paul's typically *epistolographic* postscripts.[44] On an even broader scale, the Galatians dissertation of the classical philologist and theologian Dieter Kremendahl[45] (1999) tried to combine both analytical methods. Kremendahl applied both methods to the entire text of Galatians and thus tried to synthesize epistolography and rhetoric.[46] In this way, he succeeded in appreciating adequately the fact that Paul's messages for his congregations are put in *writing* and not just oral presentations, a simple but important fact that Paul himself highlights twice in meta-communications (Gal 1:20; 6:11).[47] In my view, Paul's written communication with his congregations was not just a lesser evil due to geographical distance; his letters were not just would-be oral speeches. For the apostle, the written medium was a welcome alternative to oral communication, a gladly embraced compensation for the problems that he had when delivering in person. He and his audiences seemed to know about weaknesses of his when speaking and about problems he faced when they responded to his oral-personal appearances (cf. 2 Cor 11:6; 10:1, 10–11; 13:10). In this perspective, the written status regains its own importance and value for interpretation, which rhetorical analysis alone cannot appreciate. Only both approaches, the epistolographical analysis, which considers the written status, and the rhetorical, which reflects oral speeches, do justice to the text—but only if both work together in scholarship.

Kremendahl presents an example of a synthesis of the two approaches.[48] From a rhetorical point of view, the parenetic passage of Gal 5:1–6:10 is an unfitting, perturbing block within the flow of Galatians, a crux for the rhetorical exegesis of Galatians.

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42. See P. Lampe, "Acta 19 im Spiegel der ephesischen Inschriften," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 36 (1992): 59–76.

43. Both epistolary self-recommendation and *exordium* allegedly helped to create ethos: Schnider and Stenger, *Briefformular* (n. 31 above), 50ff.

44. See I.-G. Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, JSNTSup 81 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); A. Pitta, *Disposizione e messagio della lettera ai Galati: Analisi retorico-letteraria,* Analecta Biblica 131 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1992); Jegher-Bucher, *Galaterbrief* (n. 35 above); B. H. Brinsmead, *Galatians: Dialogical Response to Opponents,* SBLDS 65 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982), 57–87. For typical epistolary elements also in parts other than the post- and prescripts, see G. W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts,* JSNTSup 29 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 19–94.

45. See n. 35 above (= Diss., Marburg, 1999).

46. Similarly, in regard to the entire First Letter of Peter, see Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy* (n. 7 above), 58.

47. See n. 35 above.

48. Kremendahl, *Die Botschaft der Form*, 120–50.

Can it be explained convincingly? The passage impedes a satisfactory rhetorical structuring of the letter; it prevents ancient rhetorical theory from fitting like a glove on Galatians. Correspondingly, modern rhetorical exegetes attempting to determine the rhetorical genre of Galatians—an apologetic, juridical speech (Betz) or a deliberate speech (Kennedy)—differ significantly; their solutions depend exactly on how this parenetic piece is weighted.

If we analyze epistolographically, this rhetorical-analytical aporia can be overcome. From an epistolographical perspective, Gal 5:6 is a preliminary *endpoint* of the apology, and 5:7–6:18 is the postscript of the entire letter.[49] That means, considered epistolographically, that 5:7 is a new beginning. Between 5:6 and 5:7, Paul places a formal caesura and changes the genre from rhetorical apology to epistolary parenesis. In the praxis of writing and of orally delivering the letter, this caesura would have corresponded to a short pause while taking a deep breath, as was customary before postscripts.[50] All the objections using the parenetic part of Galatians as an argument against Betz's classification of Galatians as an "apology" lose ground once we integrate epistolography and rhetoric and identify the ending of the apology in 5:6.

Furthermore, Kremendahl,[51] with his integrative approach, overcomes Betz's narrow *forensic* focus. He pays tribute to the apologetic character of Galatians[52] by convincingly documenting the genre of an "apologetic letter." Especially the second Demosthenes letter and the corresponding note in Demetrius's collection of sample letters evidence this genre. The apologetic *letter* served the self-defending self-portrayal of an author, and, differently from the forensic apologetic *speech*, it could abstain from mentioning the names of the opponents and from specifying the accusations in detail. This explains Paul's restraint at this point.[53]

For all Pauline letters, it is worth further pursuing this integrative path that Kremendahl chose for Galatians. We might be able to solve impasses of an exclusively rhetorical analysis. The articles by Troy Martin and Christopher Forbes in this volume lead us further into this minefield.

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49. With epistolary parallels, Kremendahl convincingly proves that not only 6:11–15 but also the structurally similar passage 5:2–6 meets the requirements of a *subscriptio* (writing with his own hand, the author personally formulates and concisely recapitulates the content). As legally binding authorizations, such subscriptions can be also found particularly at the end of legal documents (see n. 35 above). Consequently, the part of the letter that was written with his own hand already begins in 5:2, not in 6:11.

50. Even before the formulation of the first *subscriptio* with its recapitulation of content (5:2–6), Paul probably went over the previously written part of the letter; see Kremendahl, *Die Botschaft der Form* (n. 35 above), 268; cf. 146: "Paulus hat mit 5,6 seine Verteidigung abgeschlossen und—wenn man antizipiert, dass sie von den Galatern akzeptiert wurde—zugleich auch seine Position als maßgebliche Autorität in der Gemeinde behaupten können. Erst im Rang dieser zurückgewonnenen Autorität und aufgrund des damit gegebenen Hierarchiegefälles zwischen Apostel und Gemeinde fügt er die Paränese an." From a rhetorical point of view, the parenesis of 5:7–6:18 is a second complete speech that, like the first one in 1:6–5:6, runs through a whole speech program from *exordium* to *peroratio*. In this way, the results of epistolographical and rhetorical analysis supplement each other seamlessly.

51. Kremendahl, *Die Botschaft der Form*, 127ff.

52. Every association of a fictive "court" in front of whose "judges," the Galatians, Paul defends himself is presumably to be discarded—*pace* Betz.

53. In the past, this restraint served as an argument against Betz's genre categorization as an "apology." See, e.g., Aune, *Literary Environment* (n. 31 above), 207.

6. Manifold Tendencies within Ancient Rhetoric

Rhetoric is not the same as rhetoric. Already in antiquity, rhetoric presented a multi-colored picture. New Testament scholarship has to do greater justice to the hues and shades.[54]

As a starting point, it makes sense to choose the mentioned discrepancy between Paul's expressed distancing of himself from rhetoric (e.g., 1 Cor 2:1,4) and his actual practice of using rhetorical means. F. Siegert hit the nail on the head when characterizing this critical distance of Paul: the apostle rejects a "logos" that assimilates to the standards of the rhetorical guild and to the stylistic criteria of the educated by pursuing the ultimate goal of manipulating the audience by means of emotions without respect to the truth.[55] Thus, Paul does not rebuff any rhetorical art in general, but the one that specifically tries to invoke *pistis* in Christ by means of bedazzling and seductive rhetoric. But if the gospel, when clothed in modest and humble rhetorical attire, reaches the people and nonetheless awakens *pistis* in them, then Christians may be confident that God's own power, and not human persuasion, is at work here (1 Cor 2:5).

Ancient readers must have understood Paul's attitude. They were aware of the difference between the rhetoric of the sophists, on the one hand, and the Platonic[56] and Aristotelian rhetoric, on the other. Thus, Paul abhors a sophistic complacency that manipulatively aimed at quick success in the listeners' minds and was uninterested in the quest for truth. With radical skepticism, sophists even denied in principle that truth can be found. For them, only subjective opinions standing side by side existed, and whoever was able to pump a weak position into a strong one was the better orator.[57] This attitude, which is still used in today's advertising industry, alienated platonically or peripatetically oriented rhetoricians. Ancient rhetoric, with its different camps, was divided, and this furnishes the background for understanding the Pauline discrepancy at stake.[58] 1 Thessalonians 2:5 rejects very clearly the *sophistic kolakeia*, which Plato also criticized, using the same term (*Gorgias* 463B).[59] But this Pauline critique did not preclude that Paul, especially when he organized his material, felt free to use rhetorical structures that had been described already by Aristotle and in imperial times were known even by schoolboys.[60] The alleged tension in Paul mirrors a discrepancy within the ancient rhetorical world at large.

In conclusion, whoever prepares to analyze Pauline texts rhetorically by comparing them with ancient rhetorical documents first has to account for the heteroge-

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54. See, e.g., Betz who prematurely identified rhetoric in general and sophistic rhetoric in particular (*Galaterbrief* [n. 6 above], 70).

55. Siegert, *Argumentation* (n. 11 above), 250.

56. See esp. the dialogues *Phaidros* and *Gorgias*.

57. See Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1402a,24: τὸ τὸν ἥττω δὲ λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν.

58. Cf. thus also Siegert, *Argumentation* (note 11 above), 249 ff.

59. Cf. similarly Seneca's critique of the empty sophistic drivel and cavil (*cavillatio*), of quibble, hair splitting, and false rhetorical syllogisms that impede ethical progress (*Ep.* 45.5; 49.5–6; 48.6ff; 108; 111). The critique of a *particular* camp of rhetoric does not prevent Seneca—or Paul—from using rhetorical means anyway, such as rhetorical ornament and well-thought-through structuring of the material.

60. See, e.g., the material in Kremendahl, *Die Botschaft der Form* (n. 35 above), 28ff.

neity of these ancient benchmarks. What is needed is a clearly differentiating eye for the rhetorical landscape of antiquity.[61] Its entire spectrum needs to be kept in mind.

7. Greco-Roman and Jewish Art of Speaking

The term "entire spectrum" needs to be understood in an even more radical sense than described so far. When comparing ancient rhetoric with early Christian literature, we need to have in mind not only the pagan Greco-Roman culture, but also the *Jewish* rhetorical (and epistolary) practice, both in its Hellenistically influenced and its apocalyptic specifications. However, lacking convenient handbooks that were meta-communicative systematizations already in antiquity, we mainly need to observe the Jewish rhetorical and epistolary communication *praxis*, trying to systematize it and then compare it with the New Testament. Some work has already been done in this field.[62] Studies of Jewish-Aramaic epistolography,[63] for example, are at hand. In the future, we will have to use such tools more intensively for the exegesis of the Pauline letters. There might be still a lot to discover—also in the overlapping zones of pagan and Jewish rhetoric.

8. *Christian* Rhetoric?

We approach the end of the tour by discussing a last aspect of the *dissimulatio artis*. Future research should carefully note also the features of Paul's rhetoric that *cannot* be "compared" and thus have become typically Pauline and Christian rhetoric. W. Harnisch dubs Pauline rhetoric a "language of love."[64] K. Berger identified the genre of the Pauline letters as a genuinely Christian genre ("apostolic letters"), whose roots at best can be traced back to Jewish models.[65] Whatever one thinks of such

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61. A well-done differentiation between sophistic, Platonic, and Aristotelian rhetorical elements in the Pauline letters can be found in Kremendahl, *Die Botschaft der Form* (n. 35 above), 25–27.

62. See, e.g., K. Berger ("Apostelbrief und apostolische Rede: Zum Formular frühchristlicher Briefe," *ZNW* 65 [1974]: 231). Already decades ago, he tried to compare the allegedly genuinely Christian genre of "apostolic letter" with written speeches of Jewish religious authorities. Whatever one wants to think about Berger's essay, the direction of his quest deserved recognition. Also V. Robbins, within the framework of his socio-rhetorical method, compared, for example, literary structures in Mark with elements of prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible, or Mark 13 with Jewish valedictories. See Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher* (n. 18 above), 58, 173–78, etc. Further, see the works by H. A. Fischel, e.g., "Story and History: Observations on Greco-Roman Rhetoric and Pharisaism," in *Essays in Greco-Roman and Related Talmudic Literature*, ed. H. A. Fischel (New York: Ktav, 1977), 443–72; *Rabbinic Literature and Greco-Roman Philosophy: A Study of Epicurea and Rhetorica in Early Midrash* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); "The Uses of Sorites (Climax, Gradatio) in the Tannaitic Period," *Hebrew University College Annual* 44 (1973): 119–51.

63. E.g., I. Taatz, *Frühjüdische Briefe: Die paulinischen Briefe im Rahmen der offiziellen religiösen Briefe des Frühjudentums,* NTOA 16 (Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991).

64. W. Harnisch, "'Toleranz' im Denken des Paulus? Eine exegetisch-hermeneutische Vergewisserung," *EvTh* 56 (1996): 74ff.

65. See n. 62 above. See also already Kennedy's deliberations about a specifically religious, that is, "radical Christian," rhetoric (*New Testament Interpretation* [n. 8 above], 6, 158, etc.).

positions, the question is legitimate: Does a genuinely early Christian rhetoric begin to emerge already in New Testament times? Christians in later antiquity, especially Augustine, clearly developed their own rhetoric. In his rhetoric, Augustine put forward a revolutionarily single-handed text theory for the Bible, a hermeneutical and kerygmatic-homiletic theory. It no longer circled around *finding* the truth in dialogue or even around pondering probabilities. Under the influence of the Platonic-ontological concept of truth, it rather aimed at *conveying* an eternally preset and given truth. But again, can beginnings of a genuinely Christian rhetoric be detected already in early Christianity? The answer requires a great deal of work, because proof of *dissimulationes* can be given only when *all* possibly comparable texts have been examined. Nevertheless, the more intense look at *dissimilitudines* might yield fascinating results, even theologically.

Beyond the dissimilarities between Pauline rhetoric and the pagan or Jewish rhetoric, it will be theologically and hermeneutically equally exciting to ask what happens if we subtract the conformities and similarities with ancient rhetoric from Paul's letters. L. Thurén postulated not only demythologizing, like the Bultmann school, but also "derhetorizing" the biblical texts.[66] According to him, the rhetorical, persuasive character of the ancient biblical texts obstructs the understanding of today's readers, even more than the mythological language does. However, we might want to ask critically if it is possible at all to subtract the rhetorical language from the thoughts. In my view, this program of emancipation from the situational, contingent persuasive character is based ironically on an ancient axiom that in itself was contingent and out of date: the platonically oriented axiom that *res* and *verba* can be distinguished from each other (see above). Does liberation from the rhetorical (and mythological)[67] attire of Pauline letters have to be much more radical than Thurén imagined so that today's readers gain access to the text? At this point, interesting dialogues are still to come. In this volume, especially J. S. Vos reflects on the relationship between theology and rhetoric.[68]

9. Can We Still Talk about Intention of the Author and Deliberate Use of Rhetorical Means?

Finally, a quick glance at the development of the secular studies of literature is advisable. At the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars still centered their literary studies on the author and his or her intentions. In this focus only did it seem possible

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66. L. Thurén, "Was Paul Angry? Derhetorizing Galatians," in *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture,* ed. Porter and Stamps (n. 30 above), 302–20; idem, *Derhetorizing Paul: A Dynamic Perspective on Pauline Theology and the Law,* WUNT 124 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

67. Do the mythological contents and thoughts themselves belong to the contingent *verba*, and not to the *res*? Or is the alternative *verba/res* simply wrong? Making a crystal clear definition of the relationship between "mythological" and "rhetorical" is another task still ahead of us.

68. See also Vos's corresponding German article "Theologie als Rhetorik," in *Aufgabe und Durchführung einer Theologie des neuen Testaments,* ed. C. Breytenbach and J. Frey, WUNT 205 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 247–71.

to make sense of texts. In the first half of the last century, however, the concentration turned away from the author to the text itself, to the structures immanent in the text, its *intrinsic structures,* which helped to create "sense," possibly even apart from or against the authors' intentions. At the end of the twentieth century, we finally experienced the turn to the recipient: reader-response criticism, *Rezeptionsästhetik,* historiography of the effects and impacts of a text, of the different ways it has been received throughout history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*)—all of these methods focus on the readers, who alone produce "sense" and "meaning."

In philosophical epistemology, the weights have shifted in a parallel movement. The active subject of perception now stands in the center: the recipient of sense data creatively constructs his or her reality. An "objective reality" is lost and, with it, the cognitive possibility to get close to it in an assured way (see above).[69]

All of the three "secular" approaches to literature are being practiced in biblical scholarship; they supplement one another. I propose using all three of them as avenues into the rhetorical analysis of biblical writings, particularly the second and third ones. Then the question becomes obsolete whether or not Paul deliberately and consciously used rhetorical building blocks when creating his texts. The confining concentration on the author's intentions, still prominent in Kennedy's concept,[70] becomes superfluous. The important question is: which rhetorical elements could ancient recipients, on the basis of their previous rhetorical knowledge, detect in Paul's letters, independently of what Paul himself had in mind? *Such* possibilities of discovery should be pursued—discoveries of, for example, various instruments of deliberate or apologetic speech or even of double meanings of texts.[71]

"New Rhetoricians," moving beyond this approach, will explore which rhetorical elements today's readers, on the basis of their modern or postmodern rhetorical knowledge, can detect in the Pauline writings. This exciting question, however, reaches far beyond the present scope into the neighboring field of New Testament hermeneutics.

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69. See further, e.g., Lampe, *Die Wirklichkeit als Bild* (n. 13 above).

70. According to Kennedy (*New Testament Interpretation* [n. 8 above], 12; cf. 3–4), rhetorical analysis aims at "the discovery of the author's intent and of how that is transmitted through a text to an audience." Nevertheless, Kennedy and Betz already conceded that the ancient *recipients* need to be considered too so that the historical rhetorical situation to which the text responded can be reconstructed. See Betz, *Galaterbrief* (n. 6 above), 47; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation,* 4: "Rhetorical criticism . . . looks at it [i.e., the text] from the point of view of the author's . . . intent, . . . and how it would be perceived by an audience of near contemporaries." Amador ("Interpretive Unity" [n. 30 above], 48–62) acidly deconstructs the concept of a singular author intent. According to him, exegetes are in danger of imposing their own intentions on a construct of an author. The exegete needs to consider several possible intentions inherent in the text.

71. For 1 Corinthians 1–4 as an example, see Lampe, "Theological Wisdom and the 'Word About the Cross'" (n. 5 above). 1 Corinthians 1–4 contains long passages that conceal a second, unspoken meaning in their background.